

March 29, 2013



Duke – 71
Michigan State – 61

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: We have the Duke University representatives here.

Coach Krzyzewski, go ahead.

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, we beat an outstanding team today. It took a heck of an effort. Possessions were very difficult tonight for both teams. To have Seth -- Seth was at a different level than anybody on the court offensively. To get 29 points in a game like this against an outstanding team is just an incredible performance.

Mason, his defense and inside play, he just gave us strength inside. And I thought our bench helped us tremendously, even though it doesn't show up in points. Thornton played a great game. His toughness, defense, and he handled the team really well.

And then Hairston came in and gave our two bigs a blow and made one of the bigger plays of the game in taking that charge in the full court.

Tyler saved a layup with under like about four and a half minutes to go. Then he made a strip on another layup.

And another big play was when Rasheed went to dunk, missed a dunk and Mason got the rebound. He kind of mucked it up and scored.

We just -- we made some tough plays, and that gave us a little bit of a -- that little bit of difference to win the ball game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Seth, just what were you guys doing to get you open for those 3s early in the second half when you were really on fire?

SETH CURRY: We didn't do too many things too different, honestly. I was just trying to set up my cuts a little bit better. Guys were screening a little bit better, things of that nature. I made some tough shots as well.

Just credit my teammates and just get me open and then give me a rhythm.

Q. Mason, you guys did so much switching and hedging to take care of Nix and Payne inside. What was the game plan going against them and how well do you think you executed that?

MASON PLUMLEE: Well, the first thing was to limit them to one shot. Their best offense is really going and getting it off the glass. In terms of that, I thought we did a very good job. They only had five second-chance points. Ryan did a very good job. And then like Coach said, Josh came in and made big plays.

Q. To both players, could you talk a little about the toughness you guys showed tonight? Especially on the defensive end in the second half.

SETH CURRY: Coming into the game, everybody was talking about how physical they were, how tough they were, and all that stuff. But we took that challenge. Our big guys from the jump were the more physical group down low. Our defense was great on their bigs all night. We didn't give them too many easy layup dunks and things like that. I felt like they felt our big men all night.

MASON PLUMLEE: I think if a team's game plan is just be tough or physical with us, that's not going to -- that's not going to win.

Q. Seth, when did you, for lack of a better term, know you really had it going tonight? When did you feel really good that you were going to light it up?

SETH CURRY: I don't know, honestly. I was trying to hold my shot. I got a few to go early. When I saw the ball go early, I felt good. The coach called a few calls for me to get me going as well.

I feel like every time I take a shot, it's going to go down, and nothing really felt different tonight.

Q. I want to ask Mason mainly about the -- you mentioned the defensive rebounding that's been a concern at times this year. They were supposed to be great offensive rebounding too. What did you do to -- how much of a focus was that, and how did it work that you were so successful?

MASON PLUMLEE: I think it worked well for us tonight because we did it by committee. We got balls in scrums. We had multiple guards down there on the defensive boards. We knew we couldn't really run until we got the ball, but our guards did a good job of getting down in there and coming up with loose balls and rebounds that were getting bounced around.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen.

Questions for Coach Krzyzewski.

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Ask them quick. We've got a game tomorrow, literally. It's Saturday already.

Q. Could you talk a little bit about the timeout at the beginning of the second half? All your players were saying the intensity you showed kind of rubbed off on them. What was the thought process behind the timeout and what was said in the huddle?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, Seth was scoring on every possession, and it was almost like we felt we could relax on defense. And when you got a guy hot like that, and you can put a couple defensive stops with it, then you're going to get separation.

And we weren't doing that. So it was basically to remind them this kid is not going to be able to do this the whole second half. But while he is, let's pick up the intensity on the defensive end. And I thought we did after that.

Q. Coach, I know you just won and it's been a short amount of time. But looking forward to tomorrow, your matchup against Louisville, what are you looking forward to?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I think we'll talk more about that at tomorrow's press conference.

We do have a press conference, right? Then I'll have a chance to study them. We played them a long time ago in November, and they didn't have their center, Dieng, who's a great, great player. So we're fortunate enough to win that game.

But they've been playing the best basketball in the country, and I'll know more -- I love their two guards. I think they're great kids and they're dynamic. They're dynamic. Those two kids are dynamic.

But they're deep. They're a deep team. So we're going to not -- we can't turn the ball over against them.

Q. Mike, how would you evaluate how you guys played defensively in this tournament, and how have you kind of bounced back in that area from a year ago, where maybe it had slipped a little bit?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Our team is totally different from a year ago. I don't even like to compare teams like that. That's a different team and this is a different team.

I think we've continued to improve defensively, this year's team. And in the tournament, we've actually played great defense. Not good defense, great defense. And it's not defense that causes turnovers, but it's -- we put pressure on shots, and we haven't given up many second-chance points.

The 3-point-shooting defense has been probably the best thing that we've done in these last two ball games. Not too much against Albany, they were 9 for 15. But since then we've done a much better job of that.

Q. Coach, your players mentioned about Michigan State's physicality and toughness getting a lot of talk, and they wanted to send a statement. Is that something that --

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I don't if they said they -- I didn't hear them that they said they were going to make a statement. They were going to respond, because they are physical. And you guys write about it, and everyone talks about it, and you're right. They play hard.

And there's nothing wrong with that. In fact, that's pretty good. And so we knew we would have to play at that level.

They're a little bit more athletic than we are. Like Nix is bigger. Payne is a heck of an athlete. Dawson. And so that's what we -- we had

to match, we had to try to match that.

And tonight, we were able to do it. I'm glad it's not a seven-game series because I'm not sure we would continue to do it, but we were able to do it tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Mike, see you tomorrow.

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Thank you.

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THE MODERATOR: Okay. We have Michigan State University here in the press conference area. And we'll go to Coach Izzo for an opening statement, and then we'll take questions for the student-athletes.

Tom?

COACH IZZO: A very disappointing loss. I felt like we never got on track. We were in foul trouble the whole game and it seemed like that wasn't going to end. And they shoot 40 percent, we shoot 40. They shot a little better than us from the 3.

But the difference was in those stretch of -- that one stretch it was just free throw after free throw and we can't do anything about it, and we didn't do a very good job guarding them from the standpoint of I thought they exploited our freshmen a little bit.

And they're a good team. They're a good team. They played well.

Curry hurt us, no question about it, and that's why he's a great player. But we didn't quit. We hung in there. I thought we played poorly for us. But I'm sure Duke had a lot to do with that. And, as I said, the better team won.

So just lick our wounds and live for another day.

THE MODERATOR: Questions now, please, for the student-athletes.

Q. Keith, can you tell us what made Curry so tough to guard today? And a lot of guys had shots at him.

KEITH APPLING: He just made shots. Simple as that. The plays that they ran for him were just right, and he came up hard and just knocked the shots down. That made it tough for us for the whole game.

Q. For either one of you guys, you had the surge late in the first half. Adreian, you had a 3 with 20 seconds to go to closed it to 1, took a lot of momentum to the locker room. Was deflating in the second half early when Curry hits those three 3s?

ADREIAN PAYNE: Yeah, it is. He made great shots and he had good looks at the basket. So when somebody making shots like that, and we had the momentum, it is deflating.

Q. Adreian, you got a lot of different looks from the defense. Saw Mason, saw Ryan, saw some double teams. What were they doing so well to keep you off balance?

ADREIAN PAYNE: They did a lot. They doubled and they took away my right hand.

But it was just mainly myself. I wasn't attacking the basket, being aggressive. And when I started doing that, I started having success.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen.

Now we'll go back to questions for Coach Izzo.

Q. Tom, was it a myriad of things that they did, or is it any one particular thing you can point at that you feel like turned it?

COACH IZZO: I thought Curry did a great job of coming off those screens. He stops, he pops. They kept calling things I didn't agree with.

But got him to the line, Sulaimon, got him to the line and he made those three 3s. We got a little hesitant in how to guard him, and he did the job on Harris. I think Harris is one of the best

defenders they got and this night, he goes 8 for 17, which isn't off the charts, but the 6 for 9 and 7 for 7 from the line and there's no doubt he single-handedly beat us, when you look at all the other guys. We did a pretty good job defensively.

The foul thing bothered me a little bit, to be honest about it. But it is what it is.

Q. Coach, in following Gary Harris just a year ago in high school play, just your thoughts on him coming back home and pretty much struggling this evening?

COACH IZZO: Well, it's hard, I think, as a freshman. It's hard enough to play in this tournament. As exciting as it was to be home for Gary and being in this area, sometimes that adds even more pressure. One thing about this kid, he's tougher than nails, and he just I think got frustrated.

Curry's a fifth-year senior and he's very wise and he's very -- he knows how to come off things. He knows how to get open. And I think our freshmen got a little lesson tonight. I just told him he'll be able to use that now and use it to his advantage.

But Gary Harris has had an incredible, incredible year for us. He's been more than the billing. And I think he has a tremendous future in front of him.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Tom.

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