

Penn State Basketball
Micah Shrewsberry Postgame Press Conference
vs. St. Francis Brooklyn – November 18, 2021

Opening Statement

Winning is hard at all levels and the one thing you learn when you coach for a really long time – not to say that I've coached for a really long time, but I'm upwards of 20 years already in my career – you learn that winning is hard and you learn to celebrate every single time. No matter what you feel like, no matter what it looks like, you learn to celebrate it, and then you've got to learn from it. We'll look at it and then see where we can get better, see what we can do better, and we'll take tomorrow off to rest our legs, try and get healthy, and then get back to work and get ready for Monday.

Q: With 15:31 left in the second half, you pulled out everyone on the court but John Harrar. What did you see that spurred that decision?

A: We talked about this after the UMass game. I don't know how many teams they are in the country, I think it's 351, but we are 325th in 3-point defense. A lot of these things we're trying to fix are positioning wise, like changing where we are, getting through screens better, or being there on the catch. Then they start the second half, and we were very comfortable defensively. They started getting comfortable offensively and making threes. So, the one thing that I told those guys in the timeout and I told them after the game, we're going to play to a standard. I don't care what the score is, and I don't care who's in the game. The game needs to be played the right way and those guys weren't playing the right way. So, we found five guys that were going to go in there and play it the right way. And you know, some of those guys never been in before especially not at that point in time. But I wanted them to go in and play as hard as they possibly could. I told the three walk-ons that were sitting there that they were next if those guys didn't get it done. We were going to find five guys. I think the rules tell me I have to start with five, but I could probably play four at some point in time if we need to. So, we're going to keep finding the right mix. I think the point got across and they played a little bit harder when they got in there. But you don't want guys to get comfortable. If you're not doing what you're supposed to with your minutes, somebody else needs to get them and they need to play as hard as possible. We are going to play to a standard and that's what I was trying to get right there.

Q: You weren't super pleased with how you guys handled the press against UMass. What did you think of how you did this time around?

A: We didn't value the basketball. Our goal was 10 turnovers or less. If you would come and watch us practice, we do stuff every single day that is passing and catching. You would think you're at elementary school practice, but that's the game right there, passing and catching. Can I throw a hard pass? Can I meet my pass? Can I catch it with two hands? Can I pass fake and deliver it? That is where we need to continue to get better. We worked against the press for two-straight days, and we still weren't great at it. So, we'll get back to work out again on Friday. You know, even if Cornell doesn't press, we'll work against the press because we need to get better at it. I think our poise needs to get better. Then, every possession value the basketball. I thought we were just little loose with it tonight. And that's something where, you know, luckily those balls were going out of bounds instead of to the other team and they're sprinting down and getting layups. So, I guess that was the only positive of us turning the ball over. Hopefully no fans got hurt.

Q: How important will the confidence Sam Sessoms has to get in the dirty areas and really finish going forward?

A: It's really important that our spacing in terms of the other guys, where they are on the floor, allows him to get to the basket. I think that's been a point of emphasis of our team early

on. These guys, how they play defensively, they really try and get in the passing lanes. They overplay a lot. So those driving lanes were open, but our other guys being in the right spot, not clogging the lane or taking up his space to drive, I think that's important. We can continue to do that. I think him getting into the lane and then making the right decisions from there, that's a huge step right there. Our goal is to score, if I can't score, I find the next guy. Find the open guy. Now people are behind plays to close them out, they're scrambling. Now we can attack more. I think it's going to be important for us in terms of how we play and him making the next step as a playmaker, as well.