

Penn State Basketball
Micah Shrewsberry Postgame Press Conference
vs. Iowa - January 31, 2022

Opening Statement

A: I asked our guys before the game. They usually come back to the locker room with 40 minutes left, and we talk, then they go and warm up at like 30. And I went in there at 40 and I just told them, I don't have anything to say to you. If your heart's not beating fast right now and you're [not] ready to go, if your care meter isn't as high as it could possibly go right now, then I don't have the guys in the locker room that I think I have in here. I told them I'm going to play the guys that stick to our game plan and I'm going to play the guys that move the basketball and share it and play the right way. And you're going to fight on the glass and do everything possible. But I wanted to see our response, I wanted to see our resolve, and I thought we had that tonight. The way we started the game, things didn't always go well for us. But we kept fighting back, we kept fighting back, we kept fighting back. You get a lead and they send overtime and you have to fight back, you have to bounce back. It goes to double overtime, you got to bounce back, you got to fight back. And these guys did it all night long. I'm proud of these guys, and how we responded. The Big Ten is not easy. And it hasn't been kind to us with this schedule and not playing a home game in 20 days and being on the road and playing in three tough places to play. Right? We're not exempt of what we did. There's a lot of people in the country that are going to go lose at Ohio State, at Iowa, and at Indiana. It's not exclusive to just us. There's a lot of good teams that are going to go do that—everybody can go do that. But that momentum, it takes something out of your team when you don't get home games. But to be back here, I'm proud of Nittany Nation, I'm proud of the Legion of Blue and everybody for sticking by us and showing up tonight and I think our guys they fought. I say it all the time, if somebody gets one opportunity to come watch us play, I hope they left and felt good about how we played tonight.

Q: You seemed particularly demonstrative, especially in the overtimes. Were you feeling kind of weight and the importance of this game, given how well your guys have played and how the last few games have gone?

A: Yeah, a little bit of that and a little bit of also, just stick to the plan. Just stick to the plan. Just stick to the plan and get it done. And yeah, I just want to win. I just want to win. Here's why I want to win: I want these guys to have so much success. Right? Like I said, I've been blessed in my life, man. I've coached in two national championship games, I've coached in the NCAA Tournament for six years, I've been to the Eastern Conference Playoffs, NBA Playoffs for five years. I've experienced success in my career. But I want these guys to feel it man. That feeling is special. And I don't remember what game it was or when it happened, but I told them, I believe in you guys like none other. Believe in yourself the same exact way. I believe in you and I'm going to fight for it, and I want them to have so much success so I'm going to do everything possible [for you to get it]. My staff makes fun of me—they say like, I'm this really nice guy and then game time comes it's just like straight Tasmanian Devil. But I want success for these guys so much that I'll give anything for them to have it.

Q: The way you guys play is more of a grinding style of play. Do you think that benefits you as time went on and Iowa's legs were tired and they couldn't seem to make their shots because you guys were just grinding away?

A: I think so—it helped us throughout the game. You look back and you're like, man, we gave up 86 [points]. But then you're like, it was only 66, or really 64. And Keegan Murray makes a miraculous tip, it was unbelievable. I was like, I guess the game's over now, and I can go back and talk about it. But like, that's why he's [Keegan Murray] going to be playing in the NBA next year. Right? But we guarded man, we really guarded for a game where you look, and you give up 86. We guarded for stretches and made it tough on them and that's a really good

offensive team. If we can continue to do that, we give ourselves a chance. And that's who we want to be. That's who we want to be each and every night. And then, you know, kind of opportunistic offense. Opportunistic to the point of 90 points, but as opportunistic as we can get.

Q: Obviously, things get a little complicated when you start playing double overtime, but you got a couple of guys in 40 minutes. You didn't get much from [Jalanni White] and [Jevonnie Scott] tonight. They also got to start from [Dallion Johnson] tonight. What went into your head with all those rotations?

A: I was thinking about offense. Starting the game, I wanted to space the floor and have a bunch of guys out there that can shoot. [Dallion Johnson] can really shoot, [Seth Lundy] can shoot it, [Myles Dread] can shoot it, and now we saw our offense clicking a little bit because guys are getting into the paint. Now they're worried about them when they kick it out and they're closing out so now those guys are attacking and there's less people in the paint and it's less crowded. We wanted to move the basketball a little bit better and that's kind of the group we went with. [Jalanni White] was gonna play, but he got his contact knocked out pretty early and then I subbed him out and the other guys were just playing well, but sometimes it's just not your night. You get an opportunity and you don't want to waste it, and that's what those guys did. [Greg Lee] was like, "nope, it's my opportunity, I'll take those minutes while you're out, I'm gonna play well." I'm just gonna stick with those guys who were playing well and I thought our offense played a little bit better.

Q: Not to belabor the tip-in, but given the improbability of that, what was your reaction in that moment? How did you process that and then move on from it as quickly as you did?

A: The first thing was trying to get our guys back to the huddle. I knew that ball was in, I saw it like go off his hands before the horn went off. But you can't put your head down in that moment. You can't be thinking about what happened during that moment. You have to regroup as fast as possible, so we had to get into the locker room and start talking right away about, "hey, we gotta win this overtime. We won the game and this tip-in happened. We didn't finish the job, but we won the game, now go win it twice. Do what you need to do win it twice." You can't do that if you're thinking "I didn't box out," you can't do that for anything. We won this game. Now you're not focused on doing your job and trying to get our guys to refocus. I thought they did that. They scored the first points I think in both overtimes, but then we kind of chipped away. We hung around, we scored back and forth and then the same thing second overtime. I thought we responded at every opportunity to match their scoring in overtime. When they scored, we came down and scored and that was us just regrouping in huddles talking about how we got great leadership from our guys and to stay focused and do we need to do to try and win the game.

Q: Shooting 22 percent from the three tonight, I think it's the first game that you've shot under 30 percent from out there. What did you do to compensate for that and still have a pretty nice productive offense?

A: If you go back and look, I guess second-chance points helped us. We have 15 offensive rebounds and some kick outs, we got to the rim at a pretty good rate and our threes just didn't fall. I felt like we got really good shots, so I wasn't stressing over that. I thought we made some in the second half. We kept getting the same quality of look, and I thought we'd make more so I'm fine with it. We shot good shots, we took good shots, we attacked the rim a lot more and we made plays around the rim. But our spacing helped us be able to have opportunities to get in there so we're gonna continue to try and do that, we're gonna continue to play the right way. Continue to attack the basket and then we got to open three shooting with confidence. Water finds its level at some point in time, and we got a boatload coming.