

Penn State Basketball
Micah Shrewsberry Postgame Press Conference
vs. Minnesota - February 17, 2022

Opening Statement: It feels like a Saturday, a four o'clock game, it's different. It doesn't feel like a Thursday afternoon. First off, thank you to our crowd and our students that showed up for us again. We've played well at home, and we haven't played so well at home at times, but our fans have showed up for us and the students have showed up every single time and I'm very appreciative of them. I tell our guys about our resiliency as a team. If you look back at this team at the end of the season, what is our calling card? I think it's our resiliency. Whether that's in game in terms of coming back from deficits or doing different things, but also from game to game. This was a pretty tough stretch for us playing Saturday, Tuesday, Thursday. Not much preparation time, not playing a lot of guys and guys playing a lot of minutes. The way that they responded and how they played today, I'm just proud of those guys. We've gotten our last two home games, now we have a tough road game against Maryland and then we get to come home and play two more. We need to play with that same resiliency, that same fight. We need everybody, all of Nittany Nation, to come and help us so we can close it out the right way at home next week.

Q: Can you speak to the versatility that Jalen has, which you see a lot of at the next level but maybe not so much at this level?

A: I thought offensively he was really good in terms of getting to the spots where he wanted to get. We worked on some things yesterday, we couldn't do very much in between days, but we worked on some things offensively. I didn't call it, I let him call it, like this is what you see this is what you're looking for, you call it every single time and I think he was really comfortable in what we were doing. We attacked it the right way. He got to his spots, he got to his spots to score, he got to his spots and he hit the guard on the left. He kind of did everything. He was really good and he had been struggling a little bit, so for him to break out and have this game was key for us.

Q: How would you define Penn State basketball and what does that brand really look like to you?

A: If you listen to John, it's gritty not pretty, like how we play, 67-46. I hope there were a lot of people watching and I hope there were a lot of people that turned it off. Like, man, I can't watch this, but that's the kind of style we want to play. We know how we defend and we're going to make you earn everything. After the Michigan State win, I gave them the Nick Saban rat poison line. It's like you're walking around class, walking around campus, walking around your apartment, dorm wherever you are, everybody is telling you how great you are. But just last Saturday, we went to Minnesota and played our fourth-worst defensive game of the season and hats off to them. They played great offensively. We were terrible defensively. I told them, I said, think about how you felt when you left UMass. Think about how you felt when you left Indiana, how you felt when you left Michigan State. That game in Minnesota defensively was right there with those, we just scored the ball, so it didn't feel as bad because the game was close. But it was the same defensive effort, and they came back, and we played one of our best defensive games of the year.

Q: How important was it to get Jalen off the court for a little bit? I think he averaged over 40 minutes a game because of the overtime games over the last four or five games.

A: I got him 30 seconds of rest last game against Michigan State. I think he felt that. It's probably why he played great. I went through that and didn't even realize Seth played 40 minutes when Myles got in foul trouble against Michigan State. We tried to get Jalen a little

bit of a break earlier in the first half, tried to get it around the timeout so he got some extra rest as well. We were playing well in that stretch, so he got to stay out longer. He still played 31 minutes, 15 seconds, but that's not 40. He's going to be dancing around all night, probably feeling great and ready to play again. It was really important. Get him a little bit of a break, give John a little bit of a break. Jevonnie's energy, Jalanni, when he got in, it allowed John to sit a little bit more. Caleb coming in and doing some good things allowed Seth to stay out more, Sam and Dallion. We kind of utilized everybody and allowed guys to get that little bit more rest that we need.

Q: Micah, you talked about how you had one of your worst defensive performances on Saturday, and then one of your best today, what changed from that five-day span?

A: I'm going to start letting you guys come in and listen to my pregame speech. I told those guys being in the NBA, right? I was there, I was a part of 10 playoff series in five years. I told our guys, this is similar to a playoff series. You play game one, and then you play game two at the same place. There's usually one day in between. Then there's a gap before games three and four, because you traveled to give you more time. But between games one and two, you don't have much time to tweak things. So as a coach, you spend that time preparing for a team, like before you start the series, and then if you lose that first game, you think about your game plan. I told our guys our game plan was good, but now we need to do it harder, and we need to do it better. So our game plan didn't change against these guys the first time. We did it hard and we did it better. There were other factors. These guys just came off the road, they're traveling, they just played Ohio State. There's other things too that I thought of, our effort, our activity, which wasn't there. Eric Curry shot a lot of jump shots in game one and nobody helped off the ball and swiped at him and stunted or did anything. You saw the activity today from the other guys. We got a bunch of deflection steals, he catches it, guys are swiping at him. We executed the same exact plan. We just did it harder and better.

Q: Talking about perception and emotion in team momentum if you look at the three games that got canceled, those are three games that you probably win or, or at least you would be favored in and if you add to the hypothetical and the perception of how the season goes changes a little bit, the emotion, the momentum. Is there any value in games that never get played that you can go, 'We feel good about our chances and add that to the emotional cachet of how you feel about how the season is going'?

A: We wish we had them, to be able to play and look at it a little bit differently, but at the same time I always want us to be improving at the end of the year. How it looks and how our record looks, if we're not improving, then it doesn't really matter. I feel like we're improving, I feel like each and every game we are getting better. Guys are getting comfortable and we're doing the right things. I wish we could have gotten a couple of those back. We tried. It didn't quite work out to get those games back in terms of our schedule and the Big 10. Everybody else was getting canceled at that time. They made it hard, but I feel good about where we're at. I can tell you right now until I look at the box score, I have no idea what our record is. I know what our conference record is because I look at it and try to figure out where we're going to be, where we need to go, what's upcoming. I wish we had them, but I feel good about where we're going. We're beating teams in our league, which is really important. If you beat Michigan State, you beat Minnesota, you feel good about those wins. I felt good about how we played. I messed us up at Michigan, we should have won that game. I have to be better during that stretch. Wisconsin we were right there with them. Even when we don't play our best basketball, we're in games. I feel good about how we're progressing as the season goes on.