

**March 20, 2014**



Michigan State – 93  
Delaware – 78

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

COACH MONTE ROSS: First of all I would like to say congratulations to Coach Izzo and Michigan State. They are a very, very, obviously, a very good basketball team. And a very good basketball program.

They were up to the challenge tonight. The shame of it was, in the whole spectrum of this whole thing, I thought that they were just two teams and I just didn't want to play because I just thought that they were playing at a high level and coaches were tournament tested and you weren't going to sneak up on them or anything like that. Michigan State was one of them. But, I can't say enough about our team and our program. One of the things that we wanted to make sure that we did was that we played, that we didn't just participate in the tournament, that we actually competed. And I thought our guys did that for 40 minutes tonight.

We have gotten the program to the point where we're not into moral victories. Even though this is our opportunity to play in the NCAA tournament, we're not into moral victories and these guys are so competitive, and I was really proud of their effort tonight and proud of the way that they played.

But, I've been proud of them all year long and it's just, it was a special group for us to be involved with and be associated with. And all we wanted to do was represent our university in a classy way and represent the CAA, our conference in a classy way, and hopefully, we did that.

THE MODERATOR: Take questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Devon, I'll start with you. Defensively, what made it so difficult to stop those guys, in particular, Adreian Payne.**

DEVON SADDLER: It made it difficult to stop Adreian Payne because he's a big that can step out and shoot 3's and he's good inside too. So, they were setting the wrong way ball screen and it was confusing the defense a little bit and he kept getting open shots. So, it was difficult to stop that.

**Q. Davon, a year ago you were at Mississippi Valley State not knowing what you were going to do, the year after you didn't have a school to play with. Now, you're sitting on a podium in a game after the NCAA tournament. Can you talk about the emotions going through your mind right now. Obviously a tough loss, but still a great year for you?**

DAVON USHER: Well, I wanted to win a conference championship and that's what we did, that's the reason why I came here. And coming into this game we felt like we could play with those guys, we weren't scared, and things didn't go our way, unfortunately.

**Q. Jarvis, how well -- how much better would you guys have had to play offensively today just because of how well they played offensively. Just to kind of be able to cope with the fire power that they had.**

JARVIS THREATT: Well probably the main thing was just to hit more 3-pointers, hit more open shots. You can't really go into a game banking on the refs or anything of that nature, but

probably would be just hit more shots and the rest was defensively for us. How do we stop those guys and make them make tough shots?

**Q. Jarvis, it looked, at least initially, that you guys had a lot more trouble penetrating against their defense than you did against some of the other teams in the CAA. Talk about the level of defense that you saw today as opposed to what you saw throughout most of the year.**

JARVIS THREATT: Well, obviously, when you play up it's going to be a change in the defense and the style of play, but I felt like we got a little stagnant on offense and that was on us. But, also, you want to give credit to Michigan State. It's a level up. Those guys, they're used to going against higher level guards all year and really we just -- it's a change starting out the game. But. As the game goes on we get a little adjusted to it and it opened up a little bit.

**Q. Davon, did you guys feel like you had a lot of good looks early that maybe you didn't convert on? That would have helped you kind of stay with them early and maybe not fall behind a little bit.**

DAVON USHER: It wasn't really all our offense, we ain't going to make every shot. We missed some layups and some free throws. It was pretty much on defense where we needed to get some stops at because we knew our shots would eventually fall. And we didn't play the defense that we wanted to play, so that's what happened.

**Q. Devon, your last game as a Blue Hen, has it really hit you that it's over now?**

DEVON SADDLER: It hasn't really hit me that it's over because my guys and the coaches, we put our all in this game, but Michigan State is a great team and we played hard. So, there's no tears, we fought the whole time, we could have made more shots, in the beginning of the game we missed a lot of open layups because we didn't know we were going to be that open. Because they have great defense. But it hasn't hit me yet.

**Q. Coming into the second half you guys were down 11 and you got it to five. Talk about what changed after that point to allow them to pull away.**

DEVON SADDLER: The game of basketball is about runs, so we made a run and then they made a long run. We couldn't get no

stops on defense. That's what changed the game after that point.

**Q. Devon, how would you like to see what you guys did this year benefit the program moving forward? Let this kind of be a springboard, a start of something.**

DEVON SADDLER: I would like to see it go as far as it can get. I want them to get back to the NCAA tournament next year, Jarvis and Kyle, because them guys worked hard and we always are in the gym and the coaches are always on us and the coaches are working too. So, I would like them to go as far as they can and I'll be rooting for them.

**Q. I kind of asked you this yesterday, but did you give yourself a moment today to kind of take in the surroundings at all, just the moment, or was it just kind of seeing Michigan State on the other guys' uniforms that let you know the magnitude of the game that were you playing in today?**

DEVON SADDLER: I didn't -- I don't really pay attention to the surroundings, it was just us versus Michigan State. And we just came out to play. But, I don't really get into all that, so we wasn't impressed about the surrounding and all the people here.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll excuse you to the locker room and take questions for coach.

**Q. What did you think of Payne out there and what made him so impossible to stop? Not that he hasn't been impossible to stop for other people, as well, with the myriad of skills he brings to the basketball court.**

COACH MONTE ROSS: No, he's a special player. He showed that today. You just don't bank on him going 4-4 from three in the first half. And that's what really set the tone for them. He sort of, I would have to say this cautiously, he sort of cooled off, I would say, a little bit in the second half. We got him to miss a couple jump shots.

But 41 is 41. He was a load in there. He was probably the best big man that I've faced probably in 21 years of college basketball. I haven't faced a guy like that and because he has a myriad of skills where he can step away and make 3's, he's a load down there on the block. He goes

to the foul line, he goes 17-17, that's -- someone would have asked me earlier in the week, where are the holes? Well, I don't see a whole lot of holes. And if you look at his game, there were no holes tonight or this afternoon, for sure.

**Q. Before the game, if I had told you they were going to shoot 53.6 percent from the field, 52 percent from three, 92 percent from the foul line, would this be the kind of result that you expected?**

COACH MONTE ROSS: No, I would have expected to have found a way to win. That's what we have been doing all year, is finding away to win. And I would say we didn't want them to shoot that, we were desperately trying to guard them. I've always said that the points don't really concern me, it is the field goal percentage, but we're one of the best field goal percentage defensive teams in our league. The shame of it is that, to be quite honest with you, I've been saying it a lot here, the one two, three, four seeds, all right, it's not really a big deal. The fact that Michigan State was a four seed hurt a very good 13 seed, because they're not a four seed. If they were a four seed, the whole world wouldn't be picking them to win the NCAA tournament. You know what I mean?

So, we're the ones who were hurt by them being a four seed, because a very good 13 seed had to play them. And I told Coach Izzo after the game, I said, if we would have played the way that we played tonight and had faced probably 62 other teams, or I guess now it's 60 teams, or 58 other teams or whatever it is, we would have won the game. It's just a shame that we had to play arguably the best team in the country as a four seed.

**Q. Do you think that -- winning your conference championship, having the season you had, you deserved a better matchup than the Big-10 champ?**

COACH MONTE ROSS: I'm not complaining, don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining. I'm just stating that we probably got, you know, they said we were a 13 seed and I'll go with that. I'm just really reiterating what the whole country is saying -- if the whole country is saying that you are the odds on favorite to win the National Championship, you're not, if you want -- you're not 16th best in the country. So, I would just have liked for them to be where they are or be what they are. I don't know that they are a four seed. They're terrific. They're very, very good.

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They will advance a long way in this tournament. They're good. They're really, really good. And we played high level teams before this year. And they're the best that we have played by far, it's not even close.

So, it's just the way that the -- and I think the tournament committee does a heck of a job. I think they did an unbelievable job. They're in that room, they have all these numbers, they're crunching them and doing all that, I mean it's a thankless job, you know what I mean? But, again, I think they do a heck of a job. I just don't think they were a four seed.

**Q. How do you guys use this going forward as a benefit to maybe get back again or at least put the program in a position to have future success when you graduate three really, really good players it's going to make it hard?**

COACH MONTE ROSS: Well, that's what recruiting is for. You got to replenish. You got to get good players. And we have three good ones that are leaving us. But, we have some good ones that are coming in and we have some young guys in our program that -- the important thing is not only the NCAA tournament, but they got a taste of what it takes to win in the CAA. Which I think is a very, very difficult league to win in.

They understand that. They were able to go through those experiences and I think that's going to be the springboard for us to get back here is the experiences that our young guys had this year. Jarvis and Kyle Anderson and Marvin King, those guys leading next year in a positive way. So, I think all of this is tremendous. I think the support on campus is tremendous, the students. I got so many texts about watch parties that were going on today. I think it's a wonderful thing. I think that this NCAA tournament just does things to people, to programs, and what it has done for the University of Delaware I think is just outstanding. And I'm just happy to be a part of it.

**Q. When Adreian had that 12-0 run by himself, what did it mean for your team to be able to come back and score 11 points on their own right afterward?**

COACH MONTE ROSS: One of the things that we talked to the guys about before the game is we're going to hit some type of adversity during the game. And we have hit it in every single game we played in our 35 games this year. We knew we

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were going to hit some type of adversity, it was about us staying together and sticking true to what we do best. And I thought our guys did that. We got down 18, we eventually cut it to five. But that's what we're going to do all year.

It just so happens that they have some really good players on the other side that like Devon Saddler said, its a game of runs. And when we made our run, they had some answers. There are not a lot of teams that had those answers this year when we made a run at them. When we did make a run at them, we were able to overtake them, mostly every time, every team that we played this year. But again, when you're playing one of the best teams in the country, they have some answers. They have answers to a lot of questions. They have answers to even when there's no questions there, they have answers.

THE MODERATOR: All right thank you, coach.

COACH MONTE ROSS: All right. Thank you.

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