

# Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Monday, March 6, 2023

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

**Villanova Wildcats**

**Coach Denise Dillon**

**Maddy Siegrist**

Postgame Media Conference



Connecticut - 67, Villanova - 56

COACH DILLON: I'm extremely proud of our group for not quitting. We certainly knew that was going to be the case; we knew they would fight until the end. And we'll regroup and see what we have for the NCAA Tournament.

**Q. Maddy, the first quarter you guys were getting every offensive rebound. I think you had 25 shots in the quarter, the shots just weren't falling. How did that affect things? You were in it with them but couldn't get the ball to go in the basket?**

MADDY SIEGRIST: Yeah, it's tough. But that shouldn't dictate the other side of the floor. I think we let it -- I definitely let it a little bit today. Yeah, I thought we came out really, really hard. And we were getting anything we wanted. And we didn't really take advantage like we should have.

**Q. What about the UConn front court is so tough to deal with?**

MADDY SIEGRIST: I mean, there's nobody you can help off of. They're five top players in the country. So you've got to guard everybody, and you're getting it one-on-one a little bit inside. And then when you're playing with fouls, it's really tough.

**Q. In the last matchup with UConn you guys got significantly outrebounded on the boards. Today you matched them 40-40. What was the biggest difference there and what did you see personally as a team?**

MADDY SIEGRIST: I mean, that was something we emphasized that we had to do in this game. They kill everybody on the boards. So I couldn't be more proud of our team that we were able to rebound well tonight.

**Q. Obviously you gotta wait, a little under a week or so to find out where you'll be going -- hopefully you don't have to go anywhere, (inaudible). But knowing you have this bid for the NCAA Tournament and a Sweet 16 lining up potentially, to clench that at home is that one of those things you might not have tonight but you've got bigger fish to fry next week?**

MADDY SIEGRIST: Yeah, for sure. For sure. That's the biggest difference between where we are this year and where we were last year. Last year we really didn't know. So it makes you feel a little bit better. This is going to sting. It stings tonight. It will sting tomorrow. But you've got to move on and get ready for the next game.

**Q. You mentioned how the team didn't quit. You were down 25 and you cut it to almost single digits in the end there. Just how much does that help you guys going forward for the NCAA Tournament knowing that you didn't give up at that point? The other half is this UConn team, they seem to have a different energy and level to them now that Azzi is back. Do you see that? Do they seem more like a confident UConn team as opposed to the team you played before?**

COACH DILLON: Yeah on both. I complimented our group for sticking it out together until the end. That's something that this team has done from the start. That's why I said they're an absolute joy to coach because they bring it every day. Their effort is there and sometimes you can't make up for some other areas.

And we did, we got shots today. But a lot of them were rushed shots. But, again, not for lack of effort. Tough to see it not go their way. They definitely have worked for these situations.

And then to your point about Azzi Fudd, her level, her skill set is so high, her ability to play the game in many different spots. And it just gives them that dynamic scorer, gives them a deeper bench with her and Ducharme back. Getting back to full force.

**Q. As you came out, looked like the team came out**

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**very aggressive, you were getting contributions from different players. Was it just a situation where the shots weren't falling that kind of turned things in the other direction?**

COACH DILLON: Yeah, I think a little bit, the panic button gets hit a little earlier when shots aren't falling. And then you start second-guessing yourself on the defensive end, just being out of position, not talking as much, not communicating, and them getting some looks.

But it definitely is us trying -- we tried to create too many shots on our own instead of allowing, sharing the ball, making some plays within our system as opposed to just trying to force something because we may not have made the shot prior. Gotta continue to just get that look play after play.

**Q. Your team is now 1-6 against ranked opponents.**

COACH DILLON: Cool.

**Q. Does that worry you at all going into March as opponents are going to get tougher?**

COACH DILLON: No, you just have to use it as a motivational factor. You see that, they're aware. And just be battle tested and just look to continue to improve each time you're out on the floor.

**Q. Maddy alluded to it, the difference between this year and last year. Last year you were looked at as a bubble team leading up to Selection Sunday. This year it's pretty clear you'll be in and potentially host. Do you see a different mindset of the team? Do you notice that amongst you guys? Is there a difference in confidence level at all?**

COACH DILLON: Definitely, but it's the position they've put themselves in this year. And we challenged them from the start with an incredibly out-of-conference schedule was tough, and they stepped up on those challenges.

And then throughout the Big East, I think the Big East was so strong this year. And for us to finish second in the position we were in and just finding different ways to win, you can just see it in our younger players.

You see Lucy Olsen, Christina Dalce out there, Zanai Jones got in there. The younger ones, this is what they expect and there's nothing greater. It's now our responsibility to continue to find players like that who want to play Villanova basketball and just tough it out no matter what. Keep putting them in these positions.

**Q. Maddy seemed to be really stifled in the first half, and despite all that she still keeps her streak of scoring 20-plus in every game this season. What's that say about the kind of competitor she is to even despite being stifled by that stingy UConn defense to do what she does best, putting the ball in the bucket?**

COACH DILLON: She does it better than most, scoring the ball. So it was, as you said, not quitting, not stopping, just finding different ways to score, just sheer determination. Because they didn't let up.

It wasn't -- we spaced it out a little bit more so it was more than one-on-one coverage. And she just found spots and created a couple looks around the basket. But rebounds, putbacks, she got fouled a few times there.

But she knows how important it is for us to succeed, she's got to put points on the board. And she's done it consistently. But as we had said going into this game, we needed everyone to contribute.

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