

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Duquesne vs Illinois

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

CHI Health Center

Duquesne Dukes Keith Dambrot Jimmy Clark, III Dae Dae Grant

Media Conference



Illinois 89, Duquesne 63

THE MODERATOR: Duquesne Dukes are with us, Head Coach Keith Dambrot, Jimmy Clark, III and Dae Dae Grant.

Comments, Coach?

KEITH DAMBROT: Hats off to Illinois. I thought they played well. We couldn't quite get our feet underneath us to guard them well enough to be in the game. It was actually a typical offensive game for us, but a little atypical defensively. Some of the things they do are different from what we have seen most of the year, and we had trouble guarding the ball, which was ultimately our undoing.

Q. Keith, can you walk us through the final moments of your last coaching game of your career and what is going through your head?

KEITH DAMBROT: It wasn't quite the way I wanted it to end. But one thing I know in life after being here almost 66 years is you have to take the good with the bad. And you have to -- you know, you have to rally yourself back when things don't go well.

What's remarkable to me is just the fan support from Duquesne. We were laughing in the locker room, that when we first got there, we couldn't get ten people to come to the game and look at all the people that came out for this.

I know my dad will be pleased about that, wherever he is right now.

That to me, we've set the foundation for great things to come in the future for Duquesne basketball, for Pittsburgh basketball, and really didn't matter what the score was. It's irrelevant, because we've laid a good foundation for Duquesne to be a good program in the future.

Q. Keith, just emotionally I know you're still processing. What's the emotional wheel for you now and to both of you, how do you feel being able to send Keith out in a winning way like this with reshaping this program?

JIMMY CLARK, III: Just I feel blessed, you know, just to have him as a coach, him as a player on my team. Just going out like that with the way that we did, I can't do nothing but feel accomplished especially with the way we started with the season coming in 0-5. I don't feel nothing but blessed, proud of my guys and happy to be a part of it.

DAE DAE GRANT: I would agree. It's an unbelievable accomplishment for the three of us to have gone out on a note of winning the A-10 championship and being able to get that history, winning the BYU game and winning the tournament game as well. It's a blessing and high appreciation and trying to just let the stinger go away right now after these last couple hours.

KEITH DAMBROT: I mean, this is it for me. Like I told these guys, I said, don't forget about me. I need somebody to go watch next year. So I'm going to watch all my guys that are still playing and spend time with them and figure out what I'm going to do next. Get my wife healthy first and then go from there.

I was just thankful to be around a bunch of guys that never quit. Just to see the brotherhood really grow, see these guys do anything for anybody. People don't -- like Dae Dae at the very end, he said, hey, make sure you get those guys in the game. He didn't say put me back in. He said make sure this guy gets in and he gets in. That tells you a lot about what kind of person he is. All of them are like that. They're just great guys.

Q. Dae Dae and Jimmy, what's it going to be like for you guys to know there is a banner hanging at the UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse. This being what it is you lost to Illinois, but there is going to be a banner



... when all is said, we're done.®



because of you guys, what does that mean, Keith, in terms of the game tonight against Illinois, I know you take great pride in never having anybody speed you up. Did they speed you up to a degree that you didn't like tonight?

DAE DAE GRANT: Well, it's like Coach said, it's a blessing. Not many people can do that and a high appreciation to all the guys, my brothers, the coaching staff and everybody who was with us from the jump, since we were 0-5 starting in conference, that accomplishment and that success, that's just a blessing to be able to have that banner hung up and not many people can do that and have been in the position we have been in these last few weeks and even couple months.

JIMMY CLARK, III: I have to say the same. Just being able to say you were going to do something and then see it happen, it was just good to see that, especially with these guys.

KEITH DAMBROT: So you know me, I'm always going to tell the truth. He's a Bob Huggins disciple, and they bullied us tonight. And we got a little frazzled and unravelled, and we had trouble with their physicality and their quickness.

I think if we played again, we would play better. I don't think we were quite ready for the quickness level and the strength.

Shannon is one of the strongest guys in the country going to the basket. If you watch tape on him, he did the same thing in the Big Ten in the last five or six games. He was just putting his head down and getting there, and he's getting there quickly. So I think they sped us up, but I think they were physical, which most Big Ten teams are.

Q. Dae Dae and Jimmy, can you try and put into words the impact Coach Dambrot has had on you guys as individuals?

JIMMY CLARK, III: It's hard, you know, especially coming in from JUCO already playing in the A-10. It was good for me, especially having a coach like this to stay on me, a guy that's going to tell you the truth whenever.

So just having that in my life, especially playing with this team, I felt like it helped me grow as a person and a basketball player. Just being able to describe it in words, I can't really describe it in words right now, but I'm definitely grateful for it for sure.

DAE DAE GRANT: Piggybacking and agreeing what Jimmy said because they coached us similarly. Me and Coach's relationship grew and it grew as well on the court,

because we had a meeting earlier in the season, and I was basically asked to be coached harder. And Coach took the initiative as well as the other staff, and they did that, and I accepted that challenge. But before then, that wasn't the case, and our relationship wasn't as balanced.

I think after that time, Coach was starting to coach me harder, that our relationship just grew, and I just became much more appreciative just to have him as a coach, just to be under his wing, learn more, whether it's off the court or on the court things just to make me a better man.

Q. Both of you guys started your college careers off at different schools but closed it out at Duquesne on this run. When you are looking back on this in the future what will you think about Duquesne and what does Duquesne mean to you?

DAE DAE GRANT: To be honest, speaking from a duo standpoint, me and Jimmy's duo is going to go a long way. He's going to be my brother forever. We have so many similarities and so many things we are alike and we can hold each other accountable in any hostile or adverse situation.

Just speaking on that, we can look back at this success and be like, damage, we really did it. We turned things around. We can say whatever we like as far as a positive manner, but we're just young, humble young men to where we can find things we can work on rather than looking back at success all the time.

JIMMY CLARK, III: I have to say the same. We talk about this sport a lot, we talk about life a lot. So just being able to accomplish what we did here and probably in a few years from now looking back on it we are probably going to say we could have did certain things better than we did, but more than ever we're going to remember the memories that we have, especially with our teammates. Being able to come here and complete what we did even though we wanted to go further, it was just a blessing.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

