

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

DePaul Blue Demons Coach Tony Stubblefield Javon Freeman-Liberty

Postgame Media Conference



St. John's - 92, DePaul - 73

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: First of all, let me just say I'm proud of our guys and the fight that our team had this year. We had a lot of adversity with our team, a lot of injuries, a lot of ups and downs. And I thought these guys really fought hard, night in, night out, the whole season.

Obviously I wish it could have ended on a different note tonight. But I'm really proud of our guys, the way they competed, what we're trying to build here at DePaul, what we will build here at DePaul and the direction this program is headed.

We've got a lot of work that's got to be done. But we definitely will get there. But this man to my right, Javon Freeman-Liberty, had a great year; played injured for the last 10, 12 games of the year but still competed night in, night out.

And just all the things that he brought to the table for us throughout the course of the year, even besides the scoring, but his leadership, his playmaking, couldn't be prouder of this young man and the guys in the locker room.

Ran into a very good St. John's team tonight that played very well and a team that's capable of winning some games in this tournament.

Q. Obviously you got off to that 12-2 start. What happened after that timeout when they came out after the 12-2 run and what kept up their intensity?

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: I think they turned it up a notch. I have to really look at the film and study it to see where it got away from us a little bit.

But I think they turned it up. They got some transition

baskets. They got a couple of baskets off of turnovers. And it changed the game. We got off to a great start.

But getting us a game of runs, we knew they would make a run. They came back and made a great run.

Again, we came back in that first half and made a run, took a couple of bad shots and got back up to 15 points.

Q. Ten days ago, when St. John's came to Chicago, you scored 99 points against them. Tonight, not as much efficiency on the offensive end. Why do you think you weren't able to replicate that performance?

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: You know, they locked in a little bit more defensively. They changed up some of their defensive coverages with doubling. So they changed some things. Their press was a little bit more effective tonight than it was against us in Chicago.

And again, gotta take my hat off to St. John's and Mike and some of the adjustments that they made.

Q. St. John's only had two turnovers today to your guys' 14. What was that about, you guys weren't able to create as many turnovers against them and they were able to get out in transition more often?

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: I just don't think our defensive intensity was where it needed to be. We weren't getting enough deflections and we weren't disruptive enough.

They were too much in a flow offensively in transition, kind of getting what they wanted. We weren't disruptive enough.

Q. Javon, you guys have played really well these last couple of weeks. How frustrating is it that you guys weren't able to replicate it tonight against a team you beat just ten days ago?

JAVON FREEMAN-LIBERTY: I wouldn't say it's frustrating at all. Things happen. Sometimes they don't go your way. You can't (indiscernible) your team; you've got to keep



fighting and keep going.

Q. Could you just reflect on the season? And the second part is, do you know what you're going to do after the season; are you going to weigh your options to go pro?

JAVON FREEMAN-LIBERTY: Well, it's been ups and downs this season. We hit adversity pretty hard with the injury coming, I missed a lot of games. But sometimes we have to fight through stuff. And I understand that. I just took on the challenge.

Second answer, like you said, I'm going to weigh my options. I have a lot of options, but I'm not just going to throw out anything.

Q. St. John's had 49 points off the bench today. You guys only had 19. Do you feel like the lack of depth finally caught up to you guys today in not having as many offensive scoring options?

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: We don't have any excuses. We haven't made any excuses throughout the course of the year. And that's not going to be something that I'm going to complain about tonight.

We just didn't get the job done. We beat them with the same eight in Chicago 10, 12 days ago, whatever it was.

We just weren't on top of our game tonight. They played a really good game and we didn't get it done. But the eight guys we have tonight have played very well for us throughout the course of the year. And just didn't get it done tonight.

Q. Javon, so I don't know if you knew this, but your three-game winning streak prior to the regular season, that's the first time DePaul has done that since 2014-15. Being a Chicago kid how special was it -- I know that tonight didn't end the way you wanted it to, but how special was it to be a Chicago kid, play for a DePaul team that did something that hasn't been done in nearly a decade?

JAVON FREEMAN-LIBERTY: Like you said, I didn't know. Just being from Chicago, growing up, putting on this jersey, it's a dream come true. It's bittersweet, as I should say, playing every night in front of your family and friends at Wintrust Arena. You really can't beat it. And I love it.

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: I really want Javon to explore his options. I do think in my heart that Javon is an NBA player. Obviously I'm not the one doing the picking, but I want him to explore those options and to test the waters

and see where he's at. If he gets the feedback that he and his family are looking for, I'm going to always advise a young man to do what's best for he and his family. And, obviously, if he decides to come back to DePaul another year, the door's open.

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