

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 10, 2022

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

**St. John's Red Storm**

**Coach Mike Anderson**

**Julian Champagnie**

**Stef Smith**

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova - 66, St. John's - 65

COACH ANDERSON: Excuse our guys. It's a really emotional locker room there. And you can understand why. I thought our guys left their heart, guts and everything on the floor. And just came up a little short.

Congrats to Villanova. They hung in there, hung in there. And I guess their experience kicked in gear at the end. But I thought our guys, defensively, I thought we were there. And we know a lead against a Villanova team in the second half, they're going to make a run.

They have been there; they've done that. But even with that being said, as we had an opportunity to make some plays, we didn't. And they made some plays at the end.

But, again, I've got a hurt locker room in there. But I can't say enough. I love those guys. Love each and every one of them. I thought they brought it. They brought it. If you watched the team, they just kind of rolled over the whole season. You saw a team that probably could and should have been NCAA.

But this was our ticket to get in there. And so that being said, we'll just go for some questions.

**Q. How significant was Posh's foul trouble? He got that second late in the first half that looked like a charge. How much do you think him being on the bench changed the game?**

COACH ANDERSON: I thought it had an effect. I thought we had some guys that came in gave us some significant minutes. But it have an effect from the standpoint of even coming out in the second half, how he's going to play when

he picks up the third -- then you get the fourth.

But I was proud of the other guys. I thought Stef, guys came off the bench. Stef came in and gave us great minutes. Dylan did as well. We just started doing some things by committee.

**Q. You touched upon this season and that this was the ticket in. What can you say about this entire season as you look back on at the fight in these players? And to you guys, just what you can say about leading the majority of the game and what it all came down to?**

COACH ANDERSON: I'll start it off. It was a team -- I said it had a lot of question marks. We had to find some answers. Through practices and through games, we found some of the answers. And some of the answers were we didn't come together quicker. I wish we would have come together a lot quicker in terms of guys understanding their roles.

But like everyone else, you've got COVID and nine new players. You've got guys injured. You had guys -- Jul had surgery before the season. Dylan had surgery, didn't even go to the offseason -- didn't go to the fall practices.

So we just had a lot of things that took place, adversity, and of course -- I thought guys still stayed true to who they are. They worked every day and got better. We had a lot of games that came down to a play here, play there. Just like tonight.

The thing I was more disappointed tonight more so, the free-throw line discrepancy. That took place here and it took place at their place. I just -- I thought our defense was pretty good. And that's the difference. And then the free-throw line tonight.

**Q. Julian, can you sort of describe for us having played so hard and having come up just so short at the end? And what are the emotions like? Can you describe them at all?**



JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: I think everybody can see our faces. It's rough. I feel like the guys, we gave it our all. And I think we did (indiscernible) a lot like this. I feel we played hard. And I wouldn't change it for nothing. The guys, we played hard today. We came out, we executed on defense. Even on offense. It's just hard.

**Q. Stef, as you saw things during the -- you guys led by 17, but you guys put it together to get the lead back with a couple of minutes left. At that point, are you feeling like you guys found yourself and it's going to go your way?**

STEF SMITH: No, not necessarily. Because, like Coach said, there's been a lot of these type of games where it's close and it just comes down to one play that changed the outcome of a win or loss.

When it comes down to that, we're not really thinking about that. We're just thinking about how we can make that one extra play. And we came up short today. We didn't to that.

**Q. Mike, the play at the end of the first half with Posh. You seemed like you were pretty adamant or upset on the bench about it. Did you get an explanation why that was a block instead of a charge?**

COACH ANDERSON: It was a charge. I mean, it was a charge. That's what it was. And so that's what I'll say on that. That's why I got excited about it. I guess I got excited about it.

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