

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 11, 2022

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

Providence Friars

Coach Ed Cooley

Jared Bynum

Postgame Media Conference

Creighton - 85, Providence - 58

COACH COOLEY: Take a deep breath on that one. A lot to unwind in that right there.

You've got to give -- I thought Creighton played great. I thought they played well yesterday. They had great energy that carried over today.

Again, something that caught us -- I thought their energy was tough. I thought we pressed and it just snowballed and snowballed. I thought we were pressing -- we didn't play it well. Call it what it is. They played well and we didn't. And they were a big reason why.

I'm happy for Coach McDermott, really happy for him. He's great for our league. He's done great in this league. I think he's been in this championship game now maybe three or four times and his team really earned it.

We picked a bad time to play bad in a great arena. Unbelievable crowd. Unfortunately we didn't have an opportunity to coach today. So I am very, very proud of our team. I told them you can't just look at this game -- and we can be upset, we can be hurt, we can be mad. But our job is to respond.

And I think we earned the right to play next week. It's unfortunate that we played bad today. But it's a game and it's another 40-minute opportunity waiting for us some four, five days from now. But credit Creighton, they were big time today. Made shots and we just didn't. I think they had a lot to do with it.

Really happy for them. Hurting for our players. Life will move on and we'll look forward to preparation in practice and see where we're going next week.



Q. Is there anything that you plan to take away from this game to use for the upcoming tournament?

COACH COOLEY: I've got to process that one, because there wasn't a lot of positive to take from today. Again, I thought we pressed. Honestly, I've got to think about that one. Positive? I don't know what positive you can take from that. There wasn't a lot of positivity out there. But let me think about it for a second. If I have an answer -- I don't have one to give you right now.

Q. When they have a guy like Kalkbrenner who can match up on Nate one-on-one that way, how much did it frustrate not only Nate but getting something going offensively?

COACH COOLEY: I thought he was a big impact in today's game. He was up for the challenge. Nate traditionally has played well against him. And he took it to us today. He was good. He impacted the game in every way in front of the rim. I think we went two days without a basket. And I think he was a big reason why.

Q. You called three timeouts over a minute and a half of game time. What were the messages during those moments?

COACH COOLEY: Again, you feel it. You feel it. You feel it. You're trying to get them dialed in. Probably the first time I've ever done that.

Just trying to change their rhythm, trying to get our attention. Obviously that didn't work. Didn't work too well. If anything it probably helped them because it gave them energy when I called timeout. And that's something I'll learn from and get better because of it.

Q. Six assists as a group tonight. Shots weren't falling but was it more maybe the ball was sticking too much? And how much is that a credit to what Creighton did to you guys?

JARED BYNUM: Probably a mixture of both -- ball was sticking too much and not making shots. In order to get

assists you have to make shots. Definitely want to get back in the gym and work on what we've been working on all year and watch film and try to find that offensive flow we had going into this game. And hopefully we can get it back going into the tournament next week.

Q. Looked like A.J. got banged up at one point, went back to the locker room. Any idea on what his status is going forward?

COACH COOLEY: I don't know. He definitely got banged up and nicked up a little bit. Our team docs will take a look at him. Hopefully we have a couple of days to rest him. And hopefully he can heal up and try to get back on the floor.

Q. You talk about perspective all the time. How do you make sure that the guys know this is just one of 30 this year?

COACH COOLEY: Right. And it's our job as the leaders and as the coach to continue to instill confidence in our men. When you play a game like this, you know, A, your ego can be shattered; B, your confidence can get shattered.

I just want them to understand that it is only one game. Obviously it's a really big stage, great arena, great support, great crowd. That's what the Big East Tournament is all about.

And at the same time we're a confident group. I'm very proud of our group. I love this team. And our best basketball is ahead of us. And, quite frankly, I didn't think we played well yesterday. We just found a way to win. I thought that caught up to us today. We've got some warts, just like everybody else, but we'll get better.

Q. It's 25-25, 6:41 to go, what went wrong in that last six minutes? Kaluma, I think, had 10 down the stretch.

COACH COOLEY: Again, very, very good player. We missed some shots. We missed in layups. We missed a couple of wide-open shots that we'd been making, and then we pressed. It was a big turnover, I think we had a defensive rebound. He just made a basket. Then it was a turnover, then he made a 3.

How about the confidence of that young man to shoot that? It goes to tell you the job and the confidence that Greg instills in his players. So it's a credit to him. I still think we're at 25 points, and it's an hour after the game.

Q. What sort of impact do you think the performance tonight might have on your seeding?

COACH COOLEY: I mean, that's something I can't control. Hopefully our body of work throughout -- I don't want our seeding to be impacted on one game, you know what I mean? I don't know what the committee thinks. That's not my job. I try not to worry about stuff I can't control.

My job right now is to make sure our players know we're a hell of a team. We didn't play well. We have great players, and I want us to know we can win our next game regardless of who the opponent is.

Q. Back on January 4th, Marquette beat you by 32. And you responded from that by winning your next eight straight. So with this loss from tonight, how confident are you, knowing that they responded by getting hot and stringing a lot of wins in a row, that you could do the same in the NCAA Tournament next week?

COACH COOLEY: You know what's funny, were you in that locker room? That's exactly what I told our team. Great question. That's exactly what I told our team. But we don't need to win eight. We don't need to win eight. Whatever it is, I know it's not eight.

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