

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 11, 2022

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

UConn Huskies

Coach Dan Hurley

Tyrese Martin

Adama Sanogo

Postgame Media Conference



We rarely lose when we outrebound teams. We stuck to our identity tonight. We did everything we had to do, but we just came up short.

Q. Adama, how would you assess how these two games went for you and what you learned from this whole experience?

ADAMA SANOGO: Like today, we have to win this game to go to the final, to play the final game tonight. We came up short. And I think I did a lot of mistake on last game yesterday, today's game we're going to go back and watch film because I think I did a lot of mistakes. I need to fix it, going into March Madness.

Q. Adama, could you talk about Tyrese a little bit? He had 19 points tonight. What does he mean to you guys?

ADAMA SANOGO: He means a lot to us. We all know what Tyrese can do and what Tyrese means to this team. Yesterday's game, he was like -- he carried us. And today we were able to stay in the game because of him. He meant everything to us.

Q. Jay was in here saying he thinks you guys are going to make a run in the NCAA Tournament and you could beat anybody in the country. Just despite this loss, how confident are you going into the tournament and about making a run?

TYRESE MARTIN: We're real confident. We're not going to let it break us. We're going to go back and learn from it, see what we can get better at, knowing that there's teams like tonight we'll have to play March. We'll have to win those games to go deep.

We're not going to let this break us. It will hurt tonight. But come Selection Sunday when we see where we're at and where we're playing, it's going to be a whole different energy.

ADAMA SANOGO: I agree with Tyrese. The only thing we can do now is put this game behind us, go back and watch

Villanova - 63, UConn - 60

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions for the UConn players.

Q. You guys left it out on the floor. Is that how you feel that you left everything you had out there?

ADAMA SANOGO: For sure. We're playing to get to the championship game tonight, so we had no other option but to leave everything out there. And I feel like we did that and we just came up short.

Q. Tyrese, as bad as you wanted this game this tournament, is it incumbent upon you to get past this loss and focus on next week, things you can still do this season?

TYRESE MARTIN: We definitely gotta look and see different areas where we didn't capitalize. Going into this tournament, we're going to play a lot of teams of that caliber. In order to go deep, we'll have to win those games. We can't let this break us right here. We've just got to learn from it, see what we can do better so we can make a great run in March.

Q. Tyrese, you outrebounded them and your effort was good. What prevented you from winning today?

TYRESE MARTIN: Just capitalizing on the opportunities we need to. That team is not a team that makes a lot of mistakes. So when we get the opportunities off their mistakes and things like that, we've got to be able to convert. I feel like we didn't do that to our best of our ability tonight.



film and be ready for the next game.

COACH HURLEY: For me, I would say this, if you would have said to me just going into the game that we would hold Gillespie to five on only five shot attempts, Moore to six points on 3-for-9 shooting, and Daniels 2-for-10 -- so, five, six and six -- I would have said, how many did we win by.

The plan was to make their others beat us. And guys that, for the season, or throughout their career, they've shot in the high 20s or low 30s from 3, they stepped up tonight, in Slater and Samuels, and won that game.

Q. Compared to last year at this time, you lost to Creighton a year ago, do you feel that you guys are better prepared, better equipped for what's next than you were a year ago at this time?

COACH HURLEY: You know what? Villanova is really good. Villanova is the type of team that you'd be facing in a Sweet 16 game, potentially, to go to an Elite Eight. That's their quality.

So obviously we had a bunch of opportunities in and around the basket that, in the end -- Villanova beat you, Tyrese said it well, they make so few mistakes and we made a couple too many.

And, again, two older guys -- 21 and 12 and 15 -- and for Slater, that was the difference in the game. Those guys beat us. And we dared them to beat us.

Q. What did they do so well, just in terms of kind of neutralizing your advantage in the interior?

COACH HURLEY: If you watched the game, the ball got in there pretty good. We missed some opportunities there around the basket. They're obviously an excellent defensive team. So usually excellent defensive teams make it hard on you.

But Villanova usually makes it really, really hard for the teams they play against because they're just an excellent defensive team. Their switching and how hard they work to front the post once they switch and just being in the gaps. They don't make a lot of mistakes.

Q. Did they make any different -- did they do anything different against Adama than the last time?

COACH HURLEY: No. I think Adama probably wishes he had a couple of those back. Particularly beginning of the second half, there's a chance for him to really take over. And unfortunately, just a couple of those spun out.

But I'll take that all day long with him, because he's carried us, when he started with the program the past few years has been substantial.

Q. Looked like you guys came out in the zone for the last stretch there. What was the rationale, and how do you think you executed there?

COACH HURLEY: We've done that at times. Listen, the two back-breaking plays defensively for us was Longino's midday fade-away as the shot clock was running down and then the late switch roll to beat the shot clock with Dixon.

So just something just to try to -- they're so good against pressure, like full-court diamond, that they just slice and dice you.

The 1-3-1-3 quarter court was something we were saving for some point in the second half. It created opportunities for us to have a chance, obviously a chance down three to get that defensive rebound.

Q. You've come so close in two straight semifinals now. Is there anything you can pinpoint that you need to do to get over that hump, or is it just a matter of execution?

COACH HURLEY: I just think, first of all, it's hard to do. I mean, I don't know, 2004/2005 was the last time UConn was back-to-back semifinals. So what this group has accomplished in two years in this tournament is very hard to do.

It's deflating. Gotta set lofty goals and really high standards. And this team wanted a regular season championship and wanted a Big East Conference championship.

We didn't get either, but we strived for them, I think, in an honorable way. And this team has had a very, very good year. And nothing to be ashamed about here. It's going to hurt like shit probably until Sunday morning and we start thinking about the Selection Show.

But this is a formidable team. Villanova is outstanding. They're very, very hard to beat. And again that's the type of team that we'll face if we're fortunate enough to advance in the NCAA Tournament, that's the type of team you're probably playing in a Sweet 16. And we're right there.

Q. Generally, I'm wondering what do you think is the next step for Adama? And specifically with him, do you think he had a few opportunities to finish today if he went up, power for a dunk?

COACH HURLEY: I don't want to micromanage a guy that was like the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, top five centers in the country, first-team all-conference. This guy has carried us. In large part, we would be nowhere where we are without Adama Sanogo coming into our program. Since he's been here, the whole program has changed.

And he's still a young player. This guy's a sophomore. And he is a special player. And he's just got to put this behind him and get ready for the NCAA Tournament. But this guy's carried us the whole year and had incredible accolades.

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