

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

DePaul Blue Demons

Coach Tony Stubblefield

Nick Ongenda

Umoja Gibson

Jalen Terry

Postgame Media Conference



NICK ONGENDA: I was extremely excited. I knew it was a block for real. I didn't really have to wait for the review. I saw my teammates hyped and that's where it was. So that's my ability; I'm good at blocking shots. It was a good look.

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: Let me say this, what we've asked Nick to do is extremely hard. Nick missed 25 games. Nick had one of the best summers and falls of any guy I've ever coached, and unfortunately had a severe injury four days before our first game.

A lot of guys wouldn't have even come back to play this year, and Nick really wanted to help this team. And he gave up a full year to come back play these six games and not just six games but six games in the Big East against Marquette, against UConn, against some of the better teams in this league. What he's done is extremely hard.

Q. Jalen and Umoja, can you explain what happened with the sequence where you're down two and on the inbound getting the steal and then, Umoja, you getting the (indiscernible) and getting fouled to go to the line to take the lead?

UMOJA GIBSON: J.T. made a good play. We were just watching it on our phones, I think, on the Big East. The media posted it. I said he looks like a DB out there the way he read it. He snuck behind him and stole it.

And then he had an awareness to hit me on the trailing 3. And I was able to get the shot up and get fouled.

JALEN TERRY: I thought he hit the 3. I thought he was going to hit it. He's a great shooter, trusted him and you can see what he did at the line.

Q. Coach and Umoja, this could have been your last game, and you had lost 12 games in a row in the regular season. How big was that getting that off your back (indiscernible) and not continuing (inaudible)?

UMOJA GIBSON: It's very big. We lost 12 games, you

DePaul - 66, Seton Hall - 65

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: First of all, I'm just really happy for our guys. They could have very easily gave into it a couple times during the course of that game. And these guys really stuck with it and didn't put their heads down. And our motto is find a way, and these guys were able to get the job done tonight.

But even more so than that, just all that we've dealt with throughout the course of the year, with the injuries, all the setbacks we've had, just this is actually the third time we've had our full team. We had them for all of eight minutes against St. John's a couple of weeks ago. We had them all against Creighton and then tonight.

So just really happy for our guys, all that they've been through throughout the course of the year. And just to come together and be able to pull out that win tonight, just really proud of them.

Q. Can you go through the emotions of the last couple of seconds? You didn't know if you were going to win. Were you ever in that time as an assistant in a wild situation like that?

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: I don't recall. I didn't know if it was a goal tend, if time ran out, I don't know what they were looking at the monitor. Sitting there waiting like everybody else, but I don't recall a time in my career when I've been through that one.

Q. Nick, (inaudible) shots, (indiscernible) what were you thinking?



said, but this is a new season. This is the postseason, everybody is 0-on-0 right now. We knew, like, we didn't have all our players the full year. Just unfortunate this whole year. And now we got our full roster and we're ready to rock and roll.

Q. (Inaudible)?

NICK ONGENDA: It was extraordinary. A lot of emotions running. And I feel like we all locked in, we all knew what was going to happen because we put in the work and we trust each other a lot.

Like you said, we finally got our whole team back. We all had the energy to compete and show up.

JALEN TERRY: All I would say is that was a lot of emotions because we felt good snapping that streak. We had a lot of tough losses, close losses and it felt good to get up on them.

Q. Tomorrow, (indiscernible) the adrenaline is flowing?

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: It better be (laughter).

Q. The last question I asked for you Umoja and same for you, Coach, how big is it, the relief, you got some momentum after the 12-game losing streak, you don't end the season like that and keep going?

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: Getting that 12-game losing streak, it was very hard. And during the course of that 12-game losing streak I really felt like there were three or four games in there we really should have won, without a doubt.

And there were some hard times. But, again, to these guys' benefit, they stuck with it. They kept a positive attitude, kept coming to practice with great energy and they stayed with it. They could have gave into it. And they knew the potential that this team had.

Q. Nick, you had 11 of your 15 points in the second half. What changed at halftime? And what did you find in your game in the final 20 minutes?

NICK ONGENDA: Definitely my teammates, I feel like I was in a slump during the first half. But Coach came up to me. He said, put your head up. All my teammates came up. They said don't worry about it, we got you.

So that really hyped me up and got me right for the second half. And it showed out. It paid off because it really got me out of that slump.