

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 9, 2023

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

**DePaul Blue Demons**

**Coach Tony Stubblefield**

**Javan Johnson**

Postgame Media Conference



COACH STUBBLEFIELD: Very much so. I'm not into moral losses. And, again, I thought we played well enough to win the game. I think the biggest discrepancy, we won in a lot of those areas but we didn't get to the line enough.

They shoot 27 free throws and we shoot seven. There's a difference of 20 free throws there. Just didn't get to the line enough. That's one area where we got beat.

**Q. What was it that the other team was able to do so successfully that was able to shut you down on the offense? What was it about the defense that made them so successful?**

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: I don't necessarily know if they shut us down. We shot 61 percent. Again, I think that's as high as we shot all year. But they're a good basketball team. They're going to get some stops. They have very good basketball players. They're a very well-coached team.

I think the last couple of possessions of the game they switched to zone, they were able to get a couple of stops, and we had a couple of turnovers that hurt us.

**Q. You mentioned the free throw disparity. What do you think was because of that, with that?**

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: I can't pinpoint it without looking at the film. But I guess we fouled. That's the best way I could put it without going back and looking at the film.

I'm not here to say the officiating was bad by any means. We have the best officials in the country. The Big East has great officials. I'm not here to say that by any means. We just had too much fouling.

**Q. Despite the outcome, what things do you think you could have fixed in the remaining five minutes of the game?**

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: We weren't able to get the stops, I think, when we needed them. We gave up some second-chance baskets or second chance when they got

Xavier - 89, DePaul - 84

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: I'm proud of these guys and their fight and being a resilient bunch. These guys went through a lot of adversity throughout the course of this year. And they could have gave into it a lot, dealing with all the injuries that we had and things that happened to our team.

And it wasn't what we envisioned it to be over the course of the summer and even in the fall. But these guys really stuck with it. They kept a positive attitude. They came to work hard every day. Obviously went through a losing slump through the course of the year. But these guys never gave into it. These seniors never gave into it. And I really appreciated them for that, the fight they gave tonight.

I thought these guys were deserving of winning a basketball game. And we got beat by a very good Xavier basketball team, won a lot of games throughout the course of the year. I take my hat off to Sean who I know and respect a lot just for them getting the job done and wish them the best of luck. And he's got a very good basketball team.

But I was really proud of our guys for the fight that they put up tonight. And just want them guys to know that we didn't have the year that we envisioned having, but we got things in place with our administration and all of our people to be able to get the job done at DePaul.

**Q. Wanted to share some numbers here. Your team shot 61 percent, 50 from 3, 85 from the line. You had more points in the paint. Only lost a rebound by one. That's a really good recipe for a win. Are you disheartening finding you did play well but you did lose?**



to the line. There were a couple of loose balls I wish we could have got to that would have helped us. Then we had a couple of turnovers late in the game that I think hurt us a little bit.

**Q. Just your emotions the last two days. After a big win yesterday and coming up just short tonight, what are your emotions that you're feeling right now?**

JAVAN JOHNSON: We were pretty high yesterday after the win, but we just wanted to just stay level headed and come out and play hard tonight. And I feel like we did, but just came up short.

**Q. Obviously with how you shot the ball in the first half -- 69 percent from the four, 70 percent from 3 -- in the locker room, was the expectation it's hard to sustain that kind of shooting range. Was the expectation that, sure, you might not shoot that well, but just keep scoring points enough to have the separation you needed to beat a really good team like Xavier?**

JAVAN JOHNSON: We were really focused on getting stops more so than anything because we were playing good offensively, so we were just trying to buckle down and get stops.

**Q. To let you know because I don't see it on the stats, at the 7:49 mark Gibson picked up his fourth foul. You had to take him out of the game. You were up eight points at that stage. You guys were doing well. You reinserted him about two and a half minutes later and he hit another one, wound up with another five points, I think he had 17 at that stage. And you guys were flowing. And then things...**

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: We did a little offense/defense thing there, obviously knowing that he had the four fouls. And, again, it changed the game a little bit when he did pick up the four fouls.

**Q. With last night's win and that very close game that you built on, could you give me your assessment going into next year and who is coming back and how you plan to reshape this roster going forward?**

COACH STUBBLEFIELD: By no means am I happy with the year that we had. We had some unfortunate circumstances. It's not what I envisioned.

I do think we finished stronger, but I think it helped that we had our entire team. Obviously I was happy with the outcome that we had last night. I thought these guys put a great fight up for 40 minutes tonight against a very, very

good basketball team. And we've got to build upon this and take this to the next level. That's the reality of this.

Again, with DeWayne Peevy, our athletic director, our president, the commitment they're making, everything is in place for us to be able to do that. And that's my job to make it happen. So that's where I'm at with this.

Really disappointed that we didn't get the job done tonight and just gotta put more work in and work harder to get to that next level. But everything's in place for us to do that. So it's now on me to make it happen.

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