

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

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Madison Square Garden

Creighton Bluejays

Greg McDermott

Ryan Nembhard

Ryan Kalkbrenner

Postgame Media Conference



opponent? Was it us? What can we take from both of those and put it to use for the practice floor as we prepare for our first NCAA opponent.

Q. Greg, will you as a staff as team, since you're going to have a gap, you'll have to sit six or seven days before you play again, will you look back at everything attached to the season, highest preseason ranking. You played a helluva final in Maui. You had a skid, came back, had big wins and assessed what you accomplished. Will you use that into a springboard into next week? Or are you more in the moment, let's not think about things that happened in November, December, and use it as fuel?

GREG McDERMOTT: We talked about it in the locker room. I thought there was some self-doubt on our faces and with some of the body language in the first half. I haven't seen that from this team hardly ever.

And part of that allowed us to get through the six-game losing streak. When you go through a stretch like that, it's really easy to point the finger at somebody else. Sometimes it's really easy to point the finger at yourself and lose confidence in yourself.

To their credit, they didn't do that. They really tried to uplift one another. They were very process oriented in practice in terms of what do we have to do to try to get better so we get out of this slide that we're in and at the same time continue to move forward as a basketball team and a program.

I think something like that serves us well when something like this happens, because it isn't -- everyone thought the sky was falling at that time on the outside. We never felt that in the locker room.

That allows us to get over one like this. You have some games where you don't recognize your team. It's happened to almost every team in the country this year. Unfortunately, it happened to us on this stage tonight.

Q. You held Souley to a season-low back in Omaha.

Creighton, 60 - Xavier, 82

GREG McDERMOTT: Congrats to Xavier. Really from the jump, they had us out of rhythm offensively and forced us into some uncharacteristic turnovers. And then we really got beat up on the offensive glass. We've been one of the better teams in the country from a defensive rebounding percentage on the season, and we weren't tonight.

All the credit goes to Xavier. They played really well on both ends of the floor. We didn't have much juice tonight for whatever reason, but we've got to get past it and get ready for hopefully a big week next week.

Q. Obviously, you like Kalkbrenner on Hunter, Kalkbrenner can roam around. What did you see today that they took advantage of?

GREG McDERMOTT: I don't know that Nunge really hurt us that much in the first half where they really stretched it out. It allows us to keep Ryan a little closer to the basket. If you got him on Nunge, he's got to stretch out. And it worked pretty well in Omaha with the combination of Freemantle and Hunter. So we went back to it tonight.

Q. You mentioned about next week. What does your schedule look like in terms of moving past this game, resetting yourself? Do you kind of just start going over your own stuff? Do you throw away this film? How do you handle it?

GREG McDERMOTT: I was talking to these two. You don't throw it away. You watch it, try to learn from it. You try to gain an understanding of why it happened. You also watch last night's game and try to gain an understanding of why that happened. What are the differences? Was it our



What did you feel went differently with him today? Obviously, it felt like it became harder to get over the screen. What did you see differently today?

RYAN NEMBARD: He just got some good looks early. Felt like he saw the ball go in early, and it grew his confidence. He's a good player. He's going to make some tough shots. He's been great all year. So credit to him.

Q. Coach, a lot has been said about northeast basketball and how the league's roots are in the northeast. What are the results of the tournament and tomorrow's final say about midwest basketball?

GREG McDERMOTT: I don't look at it, our league as, you know, five, six northeast teams and five midwest teams. I view it as the Big East. There's good basketball played in the Big East. Because you have good basketball played with 11 different schools, you'll have different teams that end up in the finals at different times.

We've been fortunate. We've been in the semifinals three or four years in a row and been to the final a couple years in a row. We want to get back there.

The league is healthy. There's good teams everywhere. Obviously, that first game, Marquette and UConn could have gone either way. Marquette had a great win. Providence has had a heck of a year.

There's been some really good basketball played by all kind of teams in the league. We don't view it at Creighton that we're stuck in the midwest in an east coast league. We're a proud member of the Big East and we like to fly that flag whenever we can.

Q. Last night, you didn't get back into the locker room until after midnight. How much of a factor was fatigue in this matchup tonight?

RYAN KALKBRENNER: I think that's just something that both teams had to deal with. Obviously, we played a little later. But, I mean, you play back-to-back nights. It's going to take a toll on your body any time you do that. It's just one of those things you've got to manage as best you can. And I don't know, it definitely played a role, but I feel like it plays a role for everyone in the tournament.

Q. Obviously, you've been here some time now. You've come up short in this tournament. The expectations, there's still more to play for. Obviously, people expect you guys to go deeper. How much weight is there now on the tournament run?

RYAN KALKBRENNER: I think this team from the

beginning of the year had expectations to hold ourselves to a high standard to go on a deep tournament run. No matter what happened in this tournament, no matter what happened in the season, we had the goal of going on a deep run. There wasn't any more pressure. We wanted it as bad as before, probably a little more now. I wouldn't say there's more pressure on us. I want to go play and win some games now.

Q. Kalk, for you, obviously, tough loss. Perfect from the floor, 7 of 7, knocked down a 3. Given you've got the tournament next week and you went down in the first round game in Ft. Worth a year ago, how motivated are you to get personal pay back and to get to the second week and beyond?

RYAN KALKBRENNER: It's a great opportunity. Obviously, my freshman year, we made it to the second weekend. I didn't have as big a role in that team. Last year's team was fun to be part of. I got hurt the weekend before. Another great opportunity this year to hopefully stay healthy, win a few games, go into the next weekend, have some fun, and make a great trip out of it.

THE MODERATOR: Creighton, thank you.

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