

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

**Villanova Wildcats**

**Coach Kyle Neptune**

**Eric Dixon**

**Justin Moore**

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova 58, DePaul 57

KYLE NEPTUNE: Proud of our guys. This is March, man. This is tough games. They came out, we took our best shot I thought. They made a lot of shots early, kept making tough shots late. I think we're a resilient crew. Proud of our guys, resiliency. We just kept coming, and thank God for Justin Moore at the end.

**Q. Coach, in that final timeout that you pulled off, what were you telling your guys before you guys hit the game winner to be up by one?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: I mean, we were just -- we just drew up the play. We knew where we were going, we knew who we were going to. Went to a two-man game, and we just relied on those guys' decisions.

**Q. What a difference, first half, second half, and what you got yourself into and got yourself out of as well. What did DePaul do besides beginning to weave a little with the basketball, a little more careful to the very end of the game, that threw you guys off?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: I didn't see the stats.

**Q. We don't have them yet?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: But I thought we were decent defensively. They made some tough shots, made some tough pullups, made some tough pivot, flip up shots. We had some breakdowns. But this is what it is this time of year. We couldn't make a shot, and we pride ourselves on defending and rebounding through tough times. And I thought our defense carried us through not being able to make a shot.

**Q. Kyle, there are going to be some that have a lot of questions about your team after that performance. What do you have to say to people who would question you after that performance?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: You know what, yeah, we understand the sports game. Fans are great because they draw interest. They make this game popular. It's why I got a job. It's why this is here in Madison Square Garden. But we gotta focus on us. We gotta focus on the next game. And we're happy that we got another game to go to. We're happy we get to play in this unbelievable environment and we get to play for the people in our locker room.

**Q. Justin, did you have options on that play? Might have been -- I think a couple people were talking it was a little surprising you didn't back your man down. Did you go into it saying I'm going to take a three, I'm going to win this or did you have options or was the three all the way?**

JUSTIN MOORE: It was a ball screen. I was just reading the situation and they gave me too much space so I'm going to let it fly.

**Q. Justin, I know you had some problems with injuries, but to come back from all that and hit a big shot at the Garden to put your team in front, how do you feel after that and what's it mean to you?**

JUSTIN MOORE: Yeah, I'm proud of our guys. Like Coach said being resilient. That was a tough game, and we never gave in, no matter what was going on, and I'm proud to be able to come out with the win.

**Q. Kyle, seeing that ball go in, what are the feelings that went through your head? Was it relief? What was going through your head?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: Sprint back. Sprint back. Sprint back, get a stop. That's what I was thinking.

**Q. And Justin, with that last shot, was there any**



**feeling of I don't want my team to go out this way, I don't want my Villanova career to end this way?**

JUSTIN MOORE: In the moment it wasn't. Just wanting for win. I'm a big time player so I was trying to make big-time plays to end the game.

**Q. Can you describe, if at all what the emotions are like late in that game, Madison Square Garden, back and forth the whole way?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: I'll say for us -- oh, I'll say for myself, I mean, you're in the game. You're just competing. You're a competitor. You're looking to figure out any way to help the team. As a coach, that's what you're thinking as a coach, what can we do, what can we do strategy wise, what positions can we put our guys in, what's the next way, what's the next defensive assignment. That's how you are thinking in those moments. That's how I look at it.

**Q. Coach, how does this game change your approach with the next game?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: No change. We got another game. We got another opportunity to play, like I said, for the people in our locker room. We've had -- it's now towards the end of the season. We feel like we got a lot of basketball left. We feel like we can get a lot better from this game. You look at that game, they got 57 points, you know, they shoot 27 percent in the first half, 45 in the second, 36 for the game. 36 percent for the game is pretty good.

We look at it like, all right, who else can go and miss the shots we did and still get stops and hold a team at 57 points and find a way to win in the end, and that's how we're going to look at it.

**Q. Kyle, at half just up two against DePaul, obviously coming in 19-game losing streak. What was the message, the vibes to the guys at half?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: You said at the half?

**Q. Yeah, the message at the half?**

KYLE NEPTUNE: It was the same message throughout the game. We knew it was going to be a grind. Again, this is towards the end of the season. Everyone is fighting for their lives. So we knew that they were going to come out with a great game plan. We knew they were going to play hard. We wanted to give it a full 40 minutes. I thought we did that defensively, and thank God we did.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

