

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

**DePaul Blue Demons**

**Coach Matt Brady**

**Jalen Terry**

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova 58, DePaul 57

MATT BRADY: Well, let me give all the credit in the world to Villanova. They have a tremendous fighting spirit. They've had it for a long time. Kyle did a remarkable job getting the team to believe all the way till the last shot.

We're obviously disappointed. You know, I thought tonight our team played with discipline and poise. We showed a fighting spirit. And the truth is that's all I've been working on with these guys since I was named the interim.

And it comes and goes with this group. We haven't been the most disciplined or the grittiest team. But I thought tonight our guys fought with everything they had, and you saw a really good performance. It was a great game for a lot of people. In a very odd way, I'm happy for Villanova. I think the program has been a stalwart in this league, and if this is one step to getting another team into the NCAA tournament, then hat's off to Villanova. Wish them all the luck in the world. A lot of respect for the program.

Really disappointed for our guys. Would have loved to have played tomorrow. Thought this kid played his tail off, and grateful for our guys for playing a 40-minute game.

**Q. How was coaching for yourself in a Big East team in Madison Square Garden?**

MATT BRADY: Yeah, I've been in Madison Square Garden a few times and fortunate that we've won some games here when I've been a part of some programs. It's great to play against quality programs. This league is awesome. You know, I feel like I've gotten a little better as a basketball coach. Feel like we've been up to the challenge a lot.

I was an assistant at St. Joe's for a long time, and we had

some wars with them when I was an assistant at St. Joe's. But to be honest with you, we just wanted to come out with a win. It didn't matter who was on the other side of the court. And we felt like we prepared. And we felt like finally we had our guys' attention. For whatever reason, they gave us 40 really good minutes, so I'm proud of our team.

**Q. I thought you did a nice job with your timeouts. Take us through, 2.7 seconds and the inbounds. Just what the guys were thinking, what you had as far as running it.**

MATT BRADY: I think we had a guy, the first cutter I thought was open on the back cut. That was the first look. The second look -- the shooter coming to the corner was JT. He was not the look. It was really to get Da'Sean to roll back to the rim and get a play through contact. We wanted to throw it to him coming back. He popped, and that's not what I wanted.

And so I'm disappointed that -- it's one of the symptoms of this team is we don't always execute well. I haven't done a lot with this team offensively. Spent a lot of time on the mental toughness part of the group. And that was an example where as soon as it happened, I felt like I didn't want Da'Sean to catch the ball there. And he panicked, but at least we didn't turn it over.

But we wanted him to roll back and play through contact at the rim on the first pass. But I do think we had the first cutter open on the first back screen.

**Q. You mentioned a little bit you think this was a matter of better execution or better mindset.**

MATT BRADY: For ourselves. Yeah, I think our mindset was excellent. We showed really good poise. This team, we've been in some close games at halftime, and we've lost the first four in eight minutes in dramatic fashion because this team didn't really believe.

And for whatever reason this team believed, and if you would watched us practice two days ago, you wouldn't have thought this team was prepared to win this first round



game. But I give our kids a lot of credit. They've listened. I think they've gotten tired of my voice a little already, but I thought they really fought.

We played with a lot of poise. We had much better player and ball movement tonight. This team hasn't done that since I've been here. That was the best we've moved the ball. It's the best we've moved. And we really passed the ball well. In fact, I think our first seven baskets were all assists.

**Q. I don't know what your future with the DePaul program is, but the game you just had, you had 15 rebounds. Can you discuss this game?**

JALEN TERRY: Yeah. Like Coach said, Monday when we practiced, it just felt like we weren't ready. But Tuesday we came back and it was like a different feeling, different energy. And today I just kept preaching to the team like we can get this. It was something in the air to me, like I was saying. It just felt good today.

So we went out there and I just played as hard as I could for my team.

**Q. So one of the things I got to cover the St. John's game last week and what I saw last week and this week is you guys had tremendous effort. You were getting destroyed at one point by I think it was 44 points, and you made a great comeback to get as close as you could before time ran out. And tonight you guys showed tremendous effort. You guys were locked in all game. What were you doing inside the locker room and inside the timeouts to get the team focused in both games?**

MATT BRADY: Yeah, for the last couple of weeks, we've worked on player movement. When I took over the job late in January, there wasn't a lot I could do offensively. Offense is so nuanced there's not a lot you can do to create offense in late January, beginning of February. So I really focused our staff's attention on getting this team to play harder and tougher for longer stretches. And we wanted to become better defensively, both in transition and on the glass.

And we did give up some second shots tonight that we should not have given up, which I thought really cost us. But that's what we've worked on. At the other end on offense, we really wanted to move the ball and have better player movement. And I think in the last couple days, couple games we've done that.

It's taken a long time to get this group -- you know, when I took over this team in January, there was a lot of

individualism in this group. It happens in a lot of places. Didn't have a lot of time to change the mindset or the physical way that we played. And adding offense, I didn't think, was the right way to do it. So I spent a lot of time, and these guys know that, trying to get them mentally attuned to what good players do and how they play.

And so we've done a little bit of that, and they've gotten better. And tonight was a really good example. And I just said to the team in the locker room -- we're all devastated. But I just said, the mind is a powerful thing, and when you put your mind to it, even if it's for a short period of time, you can accomplish great things.

So we don't know what's going to become of these players and this program and nobody does in their programs for the most part. I think our guys learned a valuable lesson again, which is really what I've been trying to do is teach lessons along the way.

I'm really grateful for the players. I'm remarkably grateful for the administration giving me an opportunity. This wasn't the record I envisioned we'd have. I thought we'd have some opportunities. We let them slip away, but I remain earnestly grateful for my opportunity.

**Q. Jalen, overall what's it been like to kind of come back every day, put so much time in, not see the results? What's motivated the group to stick with it even when you guys aren't seeing those results?**

JALEN TERRY: It is kind of tough when you're losing, but to me, I would say just trusting coach, trusting the process, and just buying in every day, just getting better individually, you know. We just came back day after day. Even if we lost by 35, we just came back and just gave the same effort, and today we showed we could play with anybody.

**Q. You guys came back from halftime strong. Was there a certain part of the message that stood out to you at halftime?**

JALEN TERRY: I just feel like we were more connected today than any other day. Like I don't know what it was, but we were just connected. We trusted each other on defense, on offense, and we just continued to -- like we preached like 20 more minutes, like we really can do this, like we gotta believe at halftime.

**Q. If the new coaching staff wants you back, would you be open to it. And for the next coach, whoever it is, what are they getting in the program and the culture?**

MATT BRADY: Well, take the second question really first.

It's a remarkable institution. I didn't know much about it when I got there. I love everything about it. I love where it is. I love the people that are there. I love the history of the basketball program. There's great people all through this university. So they're headed for great things.

With regards to my opportunity to stay, that will be a conversation that I hope that I can have with the next coach. I think people that know me, I've been coaching a long time. I don't really care -- I just want to be involved in a winning basketball program. So I want to coach. I'm going to coach. Doesn't really even matter the level. I just want to help somebody build a champion-caliber program.

Hard to do in this league because of the great coaches and the great programs, but I think the goal would be to develop a winning basketball program and a winning mindset. I've been fortunate to have been around great coaches, and wherever my road leads, hopefully I'll be around another one.

**Q. I gotta ask this question. You did a beautiful job of keeping a final timeout in your back pocket. Before we get to the timeout, I have to ask you, the guys defensively backed up -- in the press box, we were saying just don't give up the three, take the three-point line, push them off the line. And the three happened and you still had a timeout in your back pocket with 8.8 seconds left?**

MATT BRADY: So you were in my timeout. That's what we said. We changed the matchup. We didn't want Da'Sean on Dixon. We knew they were going to run a middle ball screen with Moore and Dixon. I put Elijah Fisher in the timeout on Dixon. We were going to switch up and take away the three, force the drive, not help from the corners, and going to make them make a shot overhand or foul early on the switch.

We had the wrong matchup when we went on the court. Not the matchup we wanted. So I'm disappointed with that. That's the execution that this team so misses sometimes. So we had the wrong matchup coming out of the timeout, although we discussed it. We were going to switch up the floor, take away the three, and if you got beat on the drive, we weren't going to help them. We were going to foul, because we had a foul to give and a timeout to give.

And I said to the team, if it's seven or more, we're going to go the other way and make a play. If it's less, we'll call timeout, throw the ball to halfcourt and make a play at that time. We worked on halfcourt plays. So I thought we covered everything. But we have -- we audibled and I didn't want to audible. And we audibled and gave up the game-winning shot. So for that I had to take some

responsibility.

**Q. And the 8.8?**

MATT BRADY: I didn't mind keeping a timeout in my hand. I actually thought we got Jalen downhill, and I really wanted to get him in the open court. And I thought the floor was broken. I thought we had a chance. And Jalen knew, because my smartest player knew, if he got down the court and he wanted to use the timeout, he knew we had a timeout. I felt like he thought he could get inside the foul line and I was hoping for some contact and Villanova played it pretty well.

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