

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 14, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

Creighton Bluejays

Coach Greg McDermott

Baylor Scheierman

Ryan Kalkbrenner

Postgame Media Conference



we're going to play next week, and that's a comforting feeling.

But we've been to the championship game four times. We want to get there again and see if we can knock that door. This has been a really special group and they've had a heck of a year. We knew we were getting Providence's best shot.

But the other side of it, to your point, we'll go home, we'll get some rest. We'll have an opportunity for a day or two to work on ourselves and maybe sharpen some things up that we need to sharpen up before we find out who we play next week.

Q. Coach, when Oduro got the fourth, was there anything that didn't happen that you wanted to do or you were hoping to do during that time that maybe you could have done differently when you went out?

GREG MCDERMOTT: I thought we were able to establish Kalkbrenner, which we wanted to do, in the second half. I didn't think we did a very good job of that to start the game. Now I have to watch the film.

I also thought we had some pretty looks that we didn't make and we've got a bunch of guys that have really shot the ball pretty well all season long. But we wanted to establish him regardless of who was in the game. But obviously Josh had some big baskets for them.

Q. Providence held you to 23.1 percent three-point shooting. Did you think the Friars did something different that gave you guys trouble in that area?

GREG MCDERMOTT: Until I watch the film, I'd hate to judge that. There were certainly some possessions where we got deep into the possession, and we had to take a very difficult shot because of their defense. But there were also a number of possessions where we had pretty good looks and we didn't lock it down. It's no secret that's a big part of our offense. And 6 and 26 isn't going to get it done for us most nights.

Providence 78, Creighton 73

GREG MCDERMOTT: First of all, congratulations to Providence. I thought, obviously a very physical game. We had some chances late. I'm proud that we didn't quit. We weren't quite ourselves, you know, defensively for a good portion of the game.

But having said that, you know, Oduro gets 17, but takes 20 shots. Carter gets 22, but on a low percentage, inefficient. But he killed us at the free throw line. And I thought we had some decent looks from three and didn't make them.

And then during that stretch -- I think there was a three-possession stretch, we missed the front end of a one on one. Ashworth had a three that was basically all the way down and popped out, and we missed two free throws the next possession. And when you're trying to win a close game against a good team, we couldn't afford those empty possessions.

MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. In the big scheme of things -- and this could be for the guys or Coach. In the big scheme of things, when you lose an event like this, which you're going to be in the tournament anyway, is there any negatives that -- other than just losing, I mean, going into the tournament, is it -- I guess what I'm saying is how much of this do you consider a setback?

GREG MCDERMOTT: I mean it's a setback as we came here to win a championship. Now, we don't -- we didn't have the pressure on our shoulders that maybe some of the other teams that are still playing have. So we know



Q. Baylor, going off of that last question, you struggled, I guess. You got off to a good start and struggled in the last 30 minutes or so. What did Providence do? Do you feel this is a hiccup or what can you do to get back? You've had such a good season. What can you do to get things back before the NCAA Tournament?

BAYLOR SCHEIERMAN: You gotta move on to the next game, trust my preparation and the work I put in. Steph Curry has games where he goes for 12, and the next game, he comes out firing. I mean, the guys have a lot of trust. The coaches have a lot of trust in me because of the way I prepare, and nothing changes for me going into the next week. I'm going to prepare like I always do. And sometimes the result isn't always what it is.

Q. Coach, you held Devin Carter to 6 of 16 from the floor today. How hard is it to control or stop keeping check a guy like that?

GREG MCDERMOTT: He's so talented, and you could -- there's a lot of guys that really made a lot of improvement this year, and certainly Desmond Claude was most improved. I thought Davis at Seton Hall made a big jump. But you could also argue that Devin was one of the most improved players in the league, which is -- to improve on what he did last year is pretty incredible.

But we had some different guys on him. Trey started on him, got in some foul trouble. Baylor spent a fair amount of time on him. Farabello guarded him some. So we tried to give him some different looks, tried to keep it out of his hands. Tried to make his life as difficult as possible.

He's so complete and he can get to that mid range, and he's creative and he can get to the rim. And obviously he shot the three well all year. It's the reason he's the Player of the Year in the league. He's really talented and at a very good three-level scorer.

Q. Baylor, what role did Ryan play in the comeback you guys had in the second half in the offense and defense?

BAYLOR SCHEIERMAN: We were able to get him involved offensively, and a couple of times he got offensive rebounds and put backs as well. And defensively he had a couple blocked shots. In the ball screen coverage we play, he was able to veer switch on and make Carter's life difficult and we were able to switch it back. So he played a big part in it.

Q. You guys have hit the 40 minute mark a number of times this season. Do you want to speak to your

preparation that gets you guys ready to take on that load of minutes and maybe are you going to change anything moving into the tournament as far as you guys get prepared to playing big minutes again?

RYAN KALKBRENNER: That's the process that you start all year. Even in the summer, you kind of go into it knowing you're going to be playing a lot of minutes. So that's where it kind of starts.

And our strength and conditioning guy, Jeremy, does a really good job of -- like he's really smart. He knows what he's doing. So he pretty much just says what do I need to do and he tells you what you need to do. And if you do it, you'll be able to play a lot of minutes. And I've been playing a lot of minutes all year and I feel just normal.

Like you're going to have end-of-the-year aches and pains, but I feel good heading into the NCAA and I'll be ready for another heavy minutes game.

Q. You had mentioned earlier you might need to iron a couple of things out before the tournament. Anything in particular that you think you definitely need to work on a little bit more?

GREG MCDERMOTT: Yeah. I mean, I didn't like the 11 turnovers. We can't -- we forced 5 and they forced 11, and those extra 6 possessions end up -- some of them were breakout points, too. So 9 points to 4 points and points off turnovers doesn't jump off the page. It's pretty big in a 5-point game.

So we have to clean some of that up. They're not turnovers that are born out of selfishness. They're turnovers about trying to make the right play, trying to get their teammate the ball in the spot where they can be successful. And I thought we made a few foolish decisions at times that we have to clean up.

And then defensively I thought, especially during that stretch in the second half, we lost -- the point of the screen is so important to our defense and Providence's because we were both playing the drop coverage. Whoever can win that point of the screen, whether it's the defensive player when we're on defense or the offensive player when we've got the ball in the hand, that really dictates the kind of shot you get oftentimes.

And there was a stretch there when they made the run where we really lost that battle on both ends of the floor.

Q. Coach, what does it say about how special this conference is and how deep this league is when Providence is a 7 seed with the Big East Player of the



Year and you guys had a great season and they gave you trouble all night and you guys still battled back.

GREG MCDERMOTT: The league's been great all year. I think the strength of the league speaks for itself. And you've seen St. John's make a great run late in the season. Really every team has had their moments where they've played really good basketball, and we're one of the few that hasn't really had a sustained tough stretch. We've had some bumps in the road, but we've kind of been able to get through it.

And I hope this is just a little bump in the road as we get ready for next week. But the league has been outstanding. I've said it many times. It prepares you for just about anything you're going to see in the NCAA tournament. So I'm hopeful that we get five or six teams in, and I think once we get teams in there, I think what we've gone through during the season competing against each other really prepares us for what's ahead.

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