

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 15, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

Villanova Wildcats

Coach Kyle Neptune

Eric Dixon

Mark Armstrong

Postgame Media Conference



Marquette 71, Villanova 65

KYLE NEPTUNE: Give Marquette a lot of credit. They played extremely hard. I thought they had a great game plan. They made some really tough shots when they had to, got some tough stops when they had to, attacked offensive glass, made it hard for us defensively. So give them a lot of credit.

On our side I'm really proud of the way our guys just kept fighting. Get it to the overtime and overtime kept fighting till the very end. So proud of our guys' effort.

Q. This is consecutive seasons not getting past this day in this tournament. This program hasn't done so well. Are you able to summarize the disappointment?

KYLE NEPTUNE: You know what, honestly just right now just still digesting all this stuff right now. Obviously, put everything into this. Again, was really proud of our guys' effort. Just kind of digesting what just happened.

Q. Kyle, what did you guys do over the last 24 hours in the wake of the DePaul game and the closeness of that game and your performance in that game to get your guys to come out and play the way you did tonight?

KYLE NEPTUNE: Yeah. I thought, you know, that game is over. I thought we had moved on from that game. I loved the way we came out. I thought we came out with a lot of energy, thought we came out great defensively. I thought we just grinded. We grinded till the very end of the game. It's an overtime game in the Big East tournament, going against a really good opponent, the margins are very small.

Give them a lot of credit, man. They're a really good team. They battle and they were just a little bit better than us tonight.

Q. Do you think there was more pressure or defense on Justin Moore tonight?

KYLE NEPTUNE: Yeah. Obviously he's one of the marquis players. So they did focus on him, made it tough for him, loaded to him. They attacked him in the post. So I thought he made some great plays. He rebounded. I thought he was a play maker. Had a good amount of assists. I don't remember exactly how many. But he definitely made some plays for our team.

But it is what it is. This is the end -- this is the Big East tournament. You can't 100 percent rely on making and missing shots. And either way I was proud of the way our guys competed, especially defensively.

Q. Obviously things are out of your hands now. Do you think your name should be called on Sunday and if not what do you think about the NIT appearance?

KYLE NEPTUNE: Again, we're just literally digesting this right now. Obviously a tough loss for us. The guys in this locker room, we fully expected to play through, to get through. We wanted to win this thing. So that's kind of what we're doing right now. We're just kind of digesting this.

Q. Kyle, in regulation Mark gets the block on the defensive end. You guys go back offensively. No timeout called. Is that more about not going into a rhythm offensively or just trust your guys?

KYLE NEPTUNE: We trust them. Obviously Shaka Smart is a really good coach. He switches his defenses up every single time you come out of a timeout. So we wanted to give our guys a shot to win it. We got a shot for Justin Moore, a makeable shot.

Q. Coach, despite this outcome, what are the things



you told your team in the locker room?

KYLE NEPTUNE: I told them I was proud of them. Like I said, I thought we came out, I thought the guys played extremely hard. I thought we were really good defensively for most of the game, got some key stops, made some key tough offensive plays. And like I said, it's the Big East tournament. This is the best league for college basketball in the country, got big-time players, big-time programs, coaches. The margins are very small.

Q. For Eric, the defensive job on Oso, season low four points. NBA pick, shut him down. Any comments on just the defense you played today?

ERIC DIXON: He's a great player. He can impact the game in many ways, not just scoring. Plays defense, rebounds, he talks. He facilitates for that team. Just to put him in to score (inaudible).

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