

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

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Madison Square Garden

Providence Friars

Kim English

Stefan Vaaks

Postgame Media Conference



KIM ENGLISH: Butler, they were just getting right to the front of the rim. St. John's, we talk about first-possession box-outs, and I think they got four shots the first possession of the game. And if you're not going to defensive rebound, you don't have a chance. It's what they do. They force you to turn it over and they offensive rebound. And it's, like, truthfully a very simple game plan if you can just do it.

But when we went on the run here, it's the only thing we did. We defensive rebounded and we scored in transition.

Q. You assembled a team this year that coming into the season was very highly regarded. Have you been able to put a finger on why this team wasn't able to produce more wins?

KIM ENGLISH: Yeah, you know, we -- well, I would say we didn't finish some games that we had plenty of opportunity to finish. And they're etched in my brain forever, Virginia Tech, home; Connecticut, home; Georgetown at Marquette. The game's right there.

I would say we ended up being a younger team than we anticipated. We didn't know the role Stefan Vaaks would be. We knew he would be a rotational player. We knew Jamier Jones would be a rotational player. Oswin, even back to his freshman year, we didn't think he would be a starting center in the Big East as a freshman. Ryan Mela is a sophomore. We ended up younger than we thought we would be, and that's youth. That's youth. These guys will grow older and become really good players.

Q. There's a lot of positives to take away from this loss. Obviously you guys played really great against two great opponents. What was the clear message for you as a coach for these young guys still going into their senior, junior years, and even guys graduating? What was the clear message after a tough loss to keep their heads up and continue their basketball career?

KIM ENGLISH: Yeah, I'm not a very emotional person. I don't want anyone's sympathy. Like, I don't like anyone's pity. Like, don't text me nothing sad, I hope you're okay.

St. John's - 85, Providence - 72

THE MODERATOR: Do you want to make an opening statement?

KIM ENGLISH: Yeah, tough game. Give St. John's a ton of credit. They were fired up. I feel like we started off a little sluggish. Having such little rest in between games, I think, puts that team at a major disadvantage. I think the 5-4 game should be the first game. Just sitting home not playing, they should probably play the first game, and the 8-9 game should probably be the second game. In the NBA, you're not allowed to play on less than 24 hours rest.

But it is what it is. I thought our guys battled and fought. St. John's, they're in a good place. Since our game here January 3rd, they really doubled down on defense and rebounding in the paint, you know, playing the three bigs. They're playing three bigs, you know. Yeah, they're dominating the possession game. This looks like a trend around college basketball. If you look at the best team, the Arizonas, the Floridas, the Houstons, they're doubling down on playing big.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Maybe you can reflect on your season as a whole here at Providence. What do you take out of it?

STEFAN VAAKS: I think it's been a lot of ups and downs and I think we had the talent, but we couldn't, like, put it together. Yeah, that's about it.

Q. You guys got off to a slow start yesterday against Butler and then today against St. John's. Were there some commonalities there other than the fatigue on the short turnaround?



Keep your head up -- I'm not that guy. I'm like, kick me while I'm down. I'll get up. I never have been more proud standing in the locker room than I was after this season because, you know and I look at Jaylin Sellers and his improvement and growth throughout the season, Stefan Vaaks' growth and improvement throughout the season. All the different -- being able to coach 'em hard. And Ryan Mela and Jamier and Oswin, and I'll go down the entire roster thinking about guys. I couldn't be more proud to be their coach. And as a young coach figuring it out in a league with whales, giants, college basketball royalty, you know. I'm figuring it out. I didn't get to figure it out in the Northeast Conference, you know. I'm just so proud of those guys and their resolve. And in this era, through all the BS they got to hear throughout the day, and the impact that has. I told 'em, I've been in that locker room a lot, in NCAA tournaments, in the NIT, in conference tournaments, I never have been more proud of a group after a season.

Q. I know this was your sixth Big East tournament game and I know that that is a skill set that needs to be developed playing in a tournament setting. Can you speak on kind of that learning curve that takes time to develop playing in such a difficult like with back-to-backs and everything that goes on with that?

KIM ENGLISH: Yeah, we've had pretty good success in this building, I love playing in this building. We have a lot of good memories in here. Again, it comes with growth. It comes with growth and maturity. You got to go through it. I'm really excited to continue to watch these guys grow in their careers and, you know, excited to see what's next.

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