

# Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 4, 2022

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

**Seton Hall Pirates**

**Coach Anthony Bozzella**

**Lauren Park-Lane**

Postgame Media Conference



Seton Hall - 58, Butler - 39

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in Seton Hall.

COACH BOZZELLA: First of all, congratulations to Butler for really coming in and having a great game plan and playing with so much heart and tenacity. It shows just how well-coached they are.

People look at their record and they think, oh, their players are not that good, or their coaches are not good it's been a very difficult year for everyone. And Butler today showed why they have a lot of promise. Kurt is an outstanding coach and has a great staff. They came in with a great game plan. And they executed it really well.

What it shows is when they're down 9-0 at the start of the game, they could have said, listen, we had a bad year, we're not going to win, let's go home. They didn't. That's the mark of a really well-coached team and a really good team with a lot of potential.

They're not there yet. They know that. But today I hope will spur them to have a really great postseason and be the team they're capable of being, wins and loss wise.

For us, it was a game we needed. We needed to be challenged. We needed to fight through adversity. Clearly offensively we struggled and we missed some shots we normally would make. And they made a couple of shots that tested our mettle.

But the young lady to the left of me, this is why she's an All-American point guard. Not the games where she shoots 30 or 35, which she can do tomorrow. I hope so.

But it's when we're struggling and things aren't going right, she turned up her defense. She's in the huddle saying, it's

okay. At halftime she's like, it's going to be fine. That's why she's an All-American in my mind and one of the best point guards in the country.

It shows we have a good team. This team has won 10 out of 11 games. We play a lot of games in the month of February and now March. And the kids are playing every day as hard as they can. And I'm really proud of this group. And I'm really glad we were tested this way today. I really am, because for us to defeat a great team tomorrow we needed to be tested today, and we were.

**Q. Coach said it. You played a lot of games in the month of February. And this is, I believe, your 12th game in a stretch of 30 days. So do you think in this tournament setting is actually some playing to your advantage because you've had so many games in such little time?**

LAUREN PARK-LANE: I think it's definitely playing to our hands a little bit. We've been on a really good 9-1 stretch, now 10-1. We're just coming into February with a lot of momentum. And I feel like our team is playing their best basketball this whole season. We're just bringing that every day in practice, in shoot-around and in the games.

We all have a common goal, all my teammates. We all want to win. We all want to make it to Monday and win on Monday. When you share that with 14 other girls, the sky's the limit.

**Q. We were just told that this is the first game since 2020 where you haven't had an assist. You did it other ways, right? And your team had a really crappy shooting day, with the exception of two of you. So what were the things you were saying to your teammates when the shots weren't falling that kept you guys in the game, kept you guys strong on defense?**

LAUREN PARK-LANE: I think it's really important for all of us not to get down on ourselves. When we miss shots, you have to have a shooter's mentality, like, all of us, when you miss a couple in a row, you have you to have confidence in yourself to keep shooting those shots



because we practice them every day. You know you can make them; you just have to have it in your mind to have that confidence.

I think earlier in the game we struggled with that, me and Andra, Sidney as well. We struggled and we were, like, getting down on ourselves every time we missed a shot. But we keep each other up and tell each other these are the shots we practiced. No one is mad at you for missing these shots. You have to take those shots because those are the shots we take every game. You have to take those shots and eventually they'll fall.

**Q. You were held to nine points in the first half. What types of adjustments did you make for yourself to come out stronger in the second?**

LAUREN PARK-LANE: I definitely saw in the first half they were playing me more to drive instead of shoot. And I feel like my 3-point shot has been a big improvement in my game.

So once they started going under the screen, especially in the second half, I knew I had to let it fly because every time someone goes under the screen you have to make them pay.

**Q. You just said she's an All-American point guard. What can you do to get the rest of the world to see what we see all the time in the Big East?**

COACH BOZZELLA: We as a conference have to do as much as we can to promote each other and promote our teams. And it's a big thing that I'm going to talk about again this summer. As a group of coaches, we have to promote each other and promote our league. The office is doing what they can do. We have a tremendous Big East administration.

But as coaches, each and every interview and press conference and everything we have to talk about how strong our league is.

Our league is a four-bid league. I don't care what anyone says maybe we're going to be a little short. Maybe not. We'll see what happens on the next few days. But you look at a team like Villanova and you look at a team like DePaul and obviously Creighton, who we play tomorrow, they're outstanding basketball teams.

Just because our net number isn't what it should be, I still don't understand the net number. But I will tell you I understand, watching college basketball as much as I do, that we have really good teams in our league.

You look at a team like Butler. You go, they're not good because of their record. But if you put Butler in the Summit League which right now has as many teams being chartered getting into the tournament as we do, and if you put them in the WCC, which has as many teams right now being chartered as we would get into, Butler would be the second- or third-best team in that league.

So the lack of respect that our league gets from everyone else around the country is disgusting. It really is. We have really good teams in our country. You can put Seton right there with everyone. We'll play with anyone. You want to guard those three kids? Good luck.

**Q. Butler actually did have the lead late in the second quarter and tied going into the locker room. Do you think there was some level of shock value that played a role in being a motivating factor to only hold them to 15 second-half points and run away with it by nearly by 20?**

COACH BOZZELLA: I don't think it was shock because we did not prepare for anyone other than Butler this week. We really did. We knew they were going to come out and play really hard.

Did we think we were going to play offensively the way we did in the first half? Absolutely not. That's why we worked on our defense and scout. And Coach Cinella did a great job, along with the staff, at really preparing us for a scout.

And we said to the team at the half, what have we done well. They're like, well -- I said, we held them to 24 points. I really felt in my heart if we held them to 24 points in the second half, with 48, we're going to get to 49. There was no doubt in my mind we would get to 49. That I knew we could do.

So what we couldn't do was come out, feel sorry for ourselves, not play defense. I think we held them scoreless the first, six, seven minutes of the beginning of the second half. But in the past teams, maybe our teams, would have trouble with, you know, feeling sorry for ourselves and they hit a 3, get a two, they get an and-one, they get steel. Now they go on a 7-0 run. We're the ones who are on the run. That shows maturity for us.

At the half, it wasn't about woe is me. They were, like, how do we fix the offense? Are we going to play better defensively and hold them to 24 or less? And we'll be fine.

**Q. Your impressions, your thoughts on the 13-0 run that your team put together there in the third quarter?**

COACH BOZZELLA: It comes with us wanting to play

defense and believing in ourselves. That's why I was so happy we were challenged today because things have been a little easy for us the past couple games. And it's been hard. We played DePaul. It was a really hard game.

But Xavier, we played a little better than this and they didn't play as well. And it wasn't as challenging a game. And this was today. And this helped us a lot.

And I thought the 13-0 run, I kept saying on the timeouts, how many points do they have. They kept saying zero. And I go, if they score zero we're going to win. The girls were great about that.

**Q. Seton Hall and Creighton have gone to overtime four times in the last six seasons. What's made this matchup so tight, so exhilarating? And are you expecting anything less tomorrow?**

COACH BOZZELLA: I mean, no one has more respect for me than Creighton. To forecast them as an 8 seed now or 9 seed, their prognosticator, a joke. They're a top five seed in the country. They have great players, extremely well-coached, come out with a great strategy tomorrow. Ronsiek and Jensen, Rembao is a tremendous point guard. They have really good players. It's going to be a really hard game for us.

One of the things we have to do is just come out play with some confidence. They're good. They've knocked us out of the playoffs last year, knocked us out a couple years ago. They're good. They understand how to play against Seton Hall, and they played really well against us. And we need to play well. I thought last year's game was a couple points. I thought this year, when we played them a week and a half ago, it was a couple of points.

We're right there. But they found a way to win. And we have to find that way tomorrow. And it starts with playing defense. It starts with understanding the scout. But most of all, it starts with us playing with some confidence. We have to play with confidence. If we do, we're going to have an opportunity to win. It will be hard, but we'll have an opportunity.

**Q. You mentioned your team was challenged today. What's the number one thing you took away from the challenge that they faced?**

COACH BOZZELLA: I just was proud of them. They accepted the challenge at halftime. We didn't go in there, we weren't like, oh, my God. We went in there with some -- we went in as confident as the coaches. We got into them a little bit, just to tell them to continue to play with confidence.

When we went out there, I didn't know what I would see, 100 percent. I hoped and what I saw was what I am proud of. At least they played with some toughness and intensity. It's hard to play when things aren't going well especially offense because we're about offense. And we found a way to win.

It's hard to win in the playoffs. It's hard to win in the playoffs. Hard to win anytime. We have a really good league. Like I told you, I truly believe, if Butler played in the WCC, the Summit, Missouri Valley, any of those conferences, they're going to be a second, third, fourth place team. They're good. They just happen to play in a really good league right now. So I was proud of them that they found a way to win a tough game when adversity hit.

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