

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

Marquette Golden Eagles

Coach Megan Duffy

Lauren Van Kleunen

Liza Karlen

Postgame Media Conference



Marquette - 105, DePaul - 85

COACH DUFFY: Just overall completely thrilled about our effort and performance this afternoon. I couldn't be more proud of the collective effort of the Marquette team, how we fought, the way we scored the basketball. We were relentless on the glass. Just a fun March atmosphere for our team today.

Q. Liza came out 7-for-7, ended the first half with 16 points. What kept you with a sense of urgency throughout the game?

LIZA KARLEN: I think we know DePaul is a team that can go on a run at the snap of your fingers, so coming out with that toughness and mentality to keep pushing the ball was huge for us.

Q. This was a clinic in efficiency, 65 percent from the field. Could you talk about your trust in each other and the chemistry of this team? What gave you so much confidence out there playing together and passing the ball well with the frantic team of DePaul?

LAUREN VAN KLEUNEN: I would say the way that we play, there's five scorers on the floor at all times. So being able to adjust in-game, even though they're pressuring us, we were able to get different looks every single time, whether it was high-lows or dribble penetration to kickouts. We were so sound and our toughness showed down the stretch. We were able to get looks even with our pressuring.

LIZA KARLEN: I would just say playing out things. I think us as a team, we definitely emphasized execution. But DePaul is a team that sometimes takes away that first

option, second option. So playing out of it, playing basketball and doing our thing.

Q. You guys outrebounded them 49-17. Doug Bruno says that's the game right there. But you also shot 20 percent over your season average. What was going on? You guys shot over 60 percent in four consecutive quarters?

LIZA KARLEN: One thing going into this tournament was just having that playoff mentality. I think last time we played DePaul we definitely took that personally just in the sense that we didn't play nearly as close as how we wanted to.

So they outrebound us the last time we played them. That was something we took to heart this time.

In terms of the shooting percentage we knew we would have paint touches and we knew we would have mismatches, and runs in transition. I think that definitely helps the percentage go up a little bit when you're shooting layups.

LAUREN VAN KLEUNEN: I would say collective effort, rebounding on the boards -- we know how great a rebounder Morrow is. And the guards and post players were coming in and cleaning it up. We understood trying to lock her down as much as possible. But the other four girls on the floor did a fantastic job fighting and getting rebounds.

I think what Liza just hit on about getting to the second, third, fourth option when teams take away that first or second, percentages go up obviously when you get wide open shots. That's why we were able to get such a high percentage and high efficiency.

Q. You put up 105 points. In that second half you didn't need a single 3 to do that. I mean, for the old heads who grew up not having a 3-point line, like my father, it's gotta be a nice throwback, but what does it say about this team where the 3-point shot is so commonplace that you can still put up 105 points with



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only 12 of them coming from behind the arc?

LIZA KARLEN: I think we hit on this a little bit, but just in the sense we knew DePaul was going to overplay us. We knew that backdoor options were going to be there. We knew those mismatches were going to be there. I would just say getting our paint touches and inside looks.

LAUREN VAN KLEUNEN: I would say also in transition that was huge, the way the guards pushed the ball and got into me and Lize on early post-ups or just the kickouts and that. We know Karissa will knock down those 3s when we hit her. But their pace to get down hill and get us the ball inside and what Liza is talking about with paint touches was big.

Q. Lauren, you are a graduate student, super senior. What's your mentality coming into this final postseason of your career?

LAUREN VAN KLEUNEN: I think we talk about it a lot. In the postseason, in March you raise your level. And that's what we've talked about as a team, what Coach Duffy's message to us is as well. I think that's what separates the teams in March. So just trying to raise our level as much as possible. We did this tonight but enjoy this one and get back to it for round two.

Q. I covered you when you were a player.

COACH DUFFY: Oh, wow.

Q. That's how old I am.

COACH DUFFY: We still look the same.

Q. Well, you do.

COACH DUFFY: Thanks.

Q. Have you ever been on a team that scored 105 before? That's an easy one, then I'll follow it up.

COACH DUFFY: We're really not built too often to score 105 points. You mentioned the 3-point line. We don't shoot at a very high clip from there and don't take a lot of them. Not that I wouldn't love to, but we're not built like that with our roster right now.

It was just really phenomenal to be a part of, just the way the ball was moving and the way we saw mismatches. When you play a team like DePaul they're going to pressure you but they're also going to give you opportunities to make those shots and go downhill and get easy shots. And I thought we took advantage of that.

In the second game we played them earlier in the year we did the exact opposite. To see your team transform when it mattered the most to execute was great.

And Morrow is so good inside, always around the rim trying to rebound. If you can get the rebound then, you're going to have opportunities going the other way. And I thought we took advantage of that pretty much through four quarters. And then it starts to get contagious and you get confident and maybe shots you don't normally hit start going in. That's the greatest part about March Madness, I guess.

Q. Tell us about that approach to Morrow on the boards. She said they were sending three people at me all the time. Was that your plan? And how do you feel about the way it was executed?

COACH DUFFY: I can't say enough about that young woman, Aneesah Morrow. What she's done this year in our league and the numbers she's put up. I think every coach comes in with maybe a plan A, B and C, and you hope you'll do a little bit of it against her. She's just relentless, her footwork, her hands, her size, her motor.

What we try to do is keep size on her and keep bodies around her. And then her greatest strength sometimes is that second-chance opportunity because she's so quick off her feet, by the time you turn she already scored and probably has an and-1 at that point. So just tried to gang rebound a little bit, where we had five people around the paint where we could scoop up a couple more loose balls -- not saying that she wasn't going to get a couple of them.

But I thought we did a much better job the second matchup we played them, I thought we were just standing around and watching one person help with the rebounding or whoever her matchup was. But hopefully just having more bodies around her wore her out a little bit. And I thought we did probably -- still had 29 points, but probably did the best we could on her and maybe our size helped a little bit.

Q. Was moving the ball part of your game plan because at the end of the game you ended with 21 team assists?

COACH DUFFY: We have a lot of teams in our league that really have a high assist-per-made-basket percentage. We try to do the same thing. We have a really strong inside-outside, attack mentality. And the ball was moving really well to get open shots.

Obviously the more DePaul presses the more opportunities you'll have to get those easier kind of outnumbering

situations, the 3-on-2, 2-on-1 opportunities. And today I thought we took advantage of almost all of them.

So just really happy with just the way the ball was moving. And as you can see down our stat line, if you have our two main post players in Karlen and Van Kleunen, with the numbers they had, that opened up the 3 ball for McLaughlin.

And I thought Jordan King was equally impressive. But just managing the game, she was over by me every other second, let's switch up things on offense. Just the chess match of discussing it with your point guard through a game was really fun today.

And there was just a look in their eyes. And DePaul's a very, very good team and high octane offense. But I just thought we had just that little extra today across the board.

Q. You guys scored the most point you've guys scored in a half, the first half, and opened up the second half -- I believe DePaul outscored you 7-2. And you guys called a timeout. And you finished, I don't think DePaul scored a field goal the last four minutes. What kind of changed after that timeout? What went into that?

COACH DUFFY: I mean, as a coach when you prepare enough for DePaul you know the run's coming. And as much as we were trying to ride the wave of the beginning of the third quarter, we knew it was going to happen. We were dropping the ball, kicking it off our foot for a couple minutes.

But the overall theme of today, we kept responding and bouncing back. I thought the timeout, just to go over our game plan again, get back to just a couple of our key points on both sides of the ball. And we just knew every possession was going to be critical to not lose your focus.

And you could see, they had their last push in that fourth quarter to just kind of go small and run and jump everything hard. And, again, I thought we didn't have the mentality just to break it. We were breaking it to score, which was pretty impressive. And I say that because we've been on the other end where we can barely score. So we'll enjoy this one.

Q. Karlen had a career high 26 points after the UConn game at home. You talked about her having big games against big opponents. What did you think about how she played in her first game of the Big East Tournament?

COACH DUFFY: I thought Karlen was terrific, just the way

she's continuing to grow every day. I think about them as freshmen last year in the world we were living in, it was very hard to find success. And to see her in her sophomore year contributing on the glass and obviously being a great front-court mate with Van Kleunen is really big.

Van Kleunen's been doubled and triple-teamed throughout the year. And Liza has been a beneficiary of that. To see her kind of be the lead almost in some things today is great. She has a great future ahead of us. And she was very serious there.

But she's very focused, and she wants to help her team in any way possible. I just loved her mindset to score and had the size advantage today as well.

Q. So next comes a real different team. DePaul is not known as a great defensive team. They're not very big. How do you make a shift from the plan for DePaul to the plan for probably the best defensive team in this league?

COACH DUFFY: No, they are. They are, for sure.

Q. And they have some bigs. So what do you do? Clearly you haven't beaten them yet this year but you haven't played like this either?

COACH DUFFY: Correct. You hit it on the head. It's going to be a complete switch of what the game will feel like. You kind of obviously -- their defense continues to be taken up to another level as they get all their bodies back. Some of the easy baskets we got will not be there tomorrow. We understand that.

But we're going to try and enjoy this a little bit longer. Enjoy this stage. I think when we came to the XL Center, it was probably, what, a week ago? Not too long ago -- just being in this crowd with the UConn fans here. We love that. It's fun for us.

And we've learned the last -- last year, especially, they turned it up to a different level as well. We'll try to counter that. We'll try and get some rest. We exerted a lot of energy with that pace today. Concern will be our legs and we might have to use our bench a little bit more.

But I'm just thrilled that we finally showcased the team we can be. We've really gutted out some wins. So just the opportunity to have a kind of a beautiful win today with a lot of scoring and a lot of great plays for the fans in this environment is great.

And we just really appreciate the opportunity to play one



more day. And the opportunity to play against another hall of fame coach for me, and Lauren Van Kleunen to play one more day in postseason. We're going to soak it in no matter what that score looks like or how big they are and keep, keep fighting.

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