

# Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

**Villanova Wildcats**

**Coach Denise Dillon**

**Brianna Herlihy**

**Maddy Siegrist**

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova - 76, St. John's - 52

COACH DILLON: Really excited about a big win here in the quarters, getting here. Feels like we've been here a week, it was really great to get out on the floor and just led by these two to my left. Just sheer will and determination to keep this team going. Appreciate their efforts for sure and their team following their lead. Good stuff for the Cats.

**Q. Brianna, can you talk about the importance of how rebounding St. John's and the flow of the game and the sense of accomplishment that you had setting a career high in rebounds?**

BRIANNA HERLIHY: That was my main goal for today was just keeping No. 20 off the board. She's a huge rebounder. We watched her game yesterday. She did a lot of offensive rebounding and putbacks. I knew my main priority today was to keep her off the board. That resulted in me getting the rebounds, but worked out, yeah.

**Q. What kept you going through the whole game to not let up?**

BRIANNA HERLIHY: I just knew that my job, obviously, rebounding was very important, as I said. And this is March. You either win or go home. So it's just that determination. I want this team to continue playing. I want to play with them as long as I can. So that really got me through the game today.

**Q. Maddy, talk about the start of the game when you and Lucy were hitting 3s. The importance of that in a tournament setting, when usually the first game if you don't establish yourself there could be trouble, but the team did in this game?**

MADDY SIEGRIST: That was huge. We knew everyone was going to have to step up. St. John's is a smart team. They had a good game plan. With Lucy and Li hitting those shots right off the bat then they have to guard them. And that makes them a threat offensively. It gives those kids confidence, too. I think that's huge playing so many games in two days.

**Q. Brianna, in the third period, they made a little bit of a push and a run and then you went on a 7-3 run of your own. Was that designed? Was it in the timeout or was it just how the flow worked?**

BRIANNA HERLIHY: It wasn't designed. It just kind of came with the flow. As I said before, you win or go home. So they kind of went on a run. And I kind of was, like, we're not going home today. So I guess that mindset kind of just pushed me to start hitting shots in that little run there, too.

**Q. Brianna, it's the second time in the last 10 years that someone's had a 15-15-5 game for Villanova. Could you talk about how you saw the energy today. I think you were on the ground more than anybody else. Just talk about how you're just staying composed through, I don't know how many minutes you played.**

BRIANNA HERLIHY: My teammates definitely helped me out. We all celebrate each other. That's a big thing that Coach puts emphasis on. I think when you have your teammates behind you, it really helps you when you know that they trust you, they trust you to make shots, make big plays. And obviously when you're passing the ball and people are making shots you're getting assists, my trust with them in that. I think just having a team around you that supports you really keeps me going.

**Q. There's less than 24 hours until your next game. What's the game plan there and how are you resting up before that?**

MADDY SIEGRIST: Just the importance of recovery. Luckily we got to get a little bit of a break at the end of the



fourth quarter today. But just the recovery starts now -- ice baths, [inaudible], all that stuff, whatever Coach wants.

BRIANNA HERLIHY: Same thing. We're just focusing on anything that happened during the game, any aches and pains we have, taking care of them right away, and just making sure we get to bed early. Get a good dinner in and back at it again tomorrow.

**Q. I know I talked to you two in the preseason where I really compared you two to Batman and Robin. And obviously Lior emerged over the season as that second leading scorer. But was it nice to have the throw back where Maddy was back to being Batman, and Brianna, just having a great all-around game and being that great complement like you had last year and prior to that?**

MADDY SIEGRIST: Playing with Brianna is so much fun. She just brings it the whole time. When she's in she plays so hard. To have a million rebounds, all the points she had and the assists. It just shows she's an all-around player. It's a lot of fun to play with her. And I always trust her, and I think everyone else feels the same way.

BRIANNA HERLIHY: Same here, a lot of trust in Maddy. I look to her a lot, her passing. Obviously Lior has been a huge influence on the team this year, doing amazing. So if people are hitting shots it's okay to take a back seat, find other ways to impact the game in rebounding and assists. It was fun today, though.

**Q. I'd like you to comment on the little run I talked about from Brianna, because that was the first time, really, that it looked like you guys were back on your heels. And I think you called a timeout and then she did that coming out of the timeout.**

COACH DILLON: Yes, exactly.

**Q. Tell me about her performance.**

COACH DILLON: I think it just allowed us, calling the timeout, you could see St. John's is capable of scoring quickly and in so many different ways. They got a couple of buckets in the paint and hitting the 3.

And Correa, once you see her feeling comfortable, you want to put an end to it or pump the brakes a little bit. Calling a timeout allowed us to reset. You could see it, like, Brianna, as she said, I could look at her and she was, like, oh, no, this isn't happening.

Made a couple of calls for us to get looks. And we moved the ball well and she was open for the 3 and just felt

confident knocking it down. And then came up, some post action as well, an offensive rebound/putback.

Again, you can't say it enough. You rely so much on your upperclassmen with us only having four upperclassmen, it's even more so you see what Brianna and Maddy have done for this, for the program and for the team this year.

And they say it often, their will, and power of persuasion, and how they have convinced their teammates that they're capable of all that as well and just passing that confidence on to them. Brianna felt she needed to do a little more than just rebounding the ball and she did in that stretch. And everybody kind of settled in, was able to make things happen.

**Q. Were you pleased with the inside/outside balance of the offense today? It looked like the shots were coming -- a good balance?**

COACH DILLON: Again, since I got here last year we wanted to emphasize that. The ball getting the touches in the paint first and higher percentage shots. So getting Maddy on cuts, Brianna -- they moved so well without the basketball. So getting looks around the basket, whether it's post, and then the kickout. I think it's a more natural look.

You saw it with some of the 3s today. When our players were hesitating to shoot the ball, they're, like, I'm open, should I shoot it. It's not a good idea. Then you have to pass the ball, continue to move.

When we're in the flow, getting those touches inside/out is when it's a higher percentage 3 for us. And, again, I can't say enough, Lucy Olsen, I told her, they give you 20 more looks, you're taking 20 more shots. You can't hesitate. I think she could have gotten a lot more off.

But as Brianna mentioned, playing her position, her role when we needed it and knocking down some big shots.

**Q. We've heard from a lot of coaches this weekend that the Big East should have more than just two teams in the NCAA Tournament. Why should this team be in the NCAA Tournament?**

COACH DILLON: I think you saw a lot of it. And the two who were sitting here with me are a major reason. I think the great basketball that we're playing, what we've done since January. Just the roll we're on. And we have Maddy Siegrist, one of the best players in the country. I think she should be on the national stage and seen, how she's leading her team and how we're playing.

We're playing some really good basketball. High level. I think the Big East is a great league, and it's tough night in, night out. And that will be recognized. But I think it needs to be known right now.

**Q. In the beginning of the game you seemed to struggle a little bit defensively with their quickness and them getting looks at the basket. What adjustments did you guys make to kind of prevent that?**

COACH DILLON: We talked about the ability of guarding more than yours. We got too caught up in the personnel; I have 2, I have 30. Recognizing the importance of crowding in the paint on the drive. Being able to take away the drive and helping each other.

And it really -- it was almost like that switch went off, like, we can recover on the drive and kick out. And that's exactly what happened. And it just forced them to take a little bit more time off the clock with each possession.

And again, it was the rebounding. I can't say it enough, with Brianna setting that tone on the rebounding, because if they were coming up with second-, third-chance opportunities, it would have been a different story. We would have been on our heels getting us on the attack, controlling the possession by forcing them to do something they didn't want to and rebounding the ball.

**Q. The 41-31 is an obvious number. But to me maybe a more important number is 17-4 assist numbers. You had 17 assists on 27 buckets, which is, what, 60 something percent. And they had four assists.**

COACH DILLON: Right. And that's the difference. Just our style of play is sharing the ball, moving the ball and everyone being a threat, everyone being an option.

I thought it was great we didn't turn the ball over, either. So we gave ourselves those opportunities for extra possessions by not giving it up.

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