

# Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

St. John's Red Storm

Coach Joe Tartamella

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova - 76, St. John's - 52

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by St. John's coach Joe Tartamella.

COACH TARTAMELLA: Listen, obviously frustrated with the outcome. But I thought we played with energy. I thought we started the game the way we wanted to.

And then we just weren't able to adjust to the things that have hurt us really all year. Obviously we had a plan to try to allow Olsen to be able to score. She did that enough for them. And then but once she didn't that was the bigger problem. So we were allowing people to get rebounds off her shots, and that what was part of our plan, was hopefully going to be able to rebound the ball better.

But it's been a problem for us all year. And it came back to us here. And obviously they're good at it. And Siegrist obviously is always attacking the rim.

So we come out of that category minus 10. And they make nine 3s and we only make three. It's not going to equate for you when you do that.

But I thought our kids played really hard. They're obviously a very good team. And they did a great job tonight. A lot of credit to the way Villanova played and the way they played all year.

**Q. The other disparity I noticed was in assists. I think you guys had four for the game. Can you comment on why that is? Looked like it was a lot of one-on-one attacks, not a whole lot of systematic cuts and passes.**

COACH TARTAMELLA: Yeah, that's why you score 52 points. I mean, it's the same thing we talk about. But to Villanova's credit, they did a good job in denying us in certain ways. We didn't attack or react the right way.

I thought we did a really good job in the first quarter of doing that. I thought we did enough to create some fouls and put ourselves in a position to be on the line. Instead, it went the other way in the second quarter. That's how it got to 14 by half.

They did a good job of trying to disrupt us, bottom line. And so that's why you see four assists. When you don't react the right way, when you don't have the mentality to have teams guard multiple actions, it looks like it's one-on-one. And that's what it was. And that's not how we play.

So certainly it's part of the reason why we didn't have as much of an output of that all year on the offensive end.

**Q. Leilani, credit to her. Obviously as your top scorer was very aggressive. She didn't really get it going. Kind of similar to last night. But today, though, Kadaja Bailey providing that big spark off the bench, 19 points, when it seemed like your offense was kind of stalling a little bit. How important was it for Bailey to come off that bench and provide that spark plug?**

COACH TARTAMELLA: I'll be honest, I've never had the situation we had before the game with her. And the fact that she played in the game, with what she dealt with medically before the game, is pretty insane of what she did.

So she was really good. She's a big part of us being successful. And so to have her play through, having a hand injury before the game, it was pretty impressive by her. So proud of her effort because she could easily probably have been taken out of the game today. I'll leave it at that.

She was great. We needed her to be really good. And Leilani, Leilani didn't get going. Leilani has a lot on her plate, doesn't get enough credit for her IQ, what she has to do on a daily basis. It's frustrating for me as a coach. Hard for her to get going because everybody's getting on her. They're trying to key on what she's doing.

The fact that she even gets to where she is, is a testament to, I think, her mindset and how she plays. And so I'm proud of the fact for a kid who got here as a transfer, as a freshman, becomes the sixth woman of the year, probably could have been rookie of the year, freshman of the year, and is a first-time All-Big East kid the last two years, there's not much more you can say about her and what she does for us. So regardless of how she plays and what the stats look like, we're not where we are without her.

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