

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 6, 2022

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

Seton Hall Pirates

Coach Anthony Bozzella

Lauren Park-Lane

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova - 64, Seton Hall - 55

COACH BOZZELLA: Congratulations to Villanova. They made more plays at the end of the game than we did. I'm really proud of Seton Hall. I thought we fought all year, all game. We obviously didn't shoot the ball particularly well. And give some credit to Villanova's defense on that.

But we're all frustrated because we felt we had a golden opportunity in front of us. But we have a really talented team, that takes a lot of pride starting with the point guard on my left, and we're going to come back and be really good. We finished the season 11 of our last 13. The lack of respect we receive from the national media and honestly from everyone around is really disgusting and disappointing.

I don't understand how we can win 11 of 13 and no one talked about us being one of the best teams. We lost to Creighton in double overtime and we lost to Villanova in a close game. We beat Villanova before we got here. We beat Creighton yesterday. We've beaten Princeton, which is a Top 25 team in the country. We've beaten Toledo, which only has four losses, is a top 60 team in the country. We won at DePaul.

And all everyone did is talk about everybody else. It's disgusting and disrespectful. And those people that look at the net and don't (expletive) cover women's basketball anymore. You have to watch the teams play.

If we're only going to watch a number, we don't need anybody out there. We don't. If you're going to watch a number then don't cover the game. Cover the game and watch the teams play. We have a damn good team, and the lack of respect we got was disgusting.

Q. You guys made a great run. What was going on?

What do you think the difference was there where you were able to do some stuff on offense, and then before they were able to put the finishing touches, looked like you guys can get back and win the game actually?

LAUREN PARK-LANE: I think the game came down to us getting stops and we just couldn't do it today. It's like one of our, I think this is like the third game in five days --

COACH BOZZELLA: Fourth.

LAUREN PARK-LANE: So, of course we're tired, but we just didn't do enough to push through. I feel like the game for us came down to defense.

Q. In the third quarter, Villanova's up. You guys have been playing a lot the last week. You could have easily folded. They had a lot of momentum. But you guys didn't. Can you describe just the fight that you and your teammates put together to give yourselves a chance at the end of the game?

LAUREN PARK-LANE: This is a very competitive group of girls. We don't like to lose. And we knew, like, 20 minutes left in the game it was do or die time. So I feel like we all came together and we decided we're just going to give it all we got and see where that takes us.

Q. Lauren, you play a lot of minutes. I'm sure you're exhausted. But can you just talk about the relationship with Coach and the trust he has in you to really manage the team the entire game and be the leader that you are?

LAUREN PARK-LANE: Coach B has a lot of confidence in me. And that's been built up over the three years I've been here Seton Hall. It hasn't always been easy, but we have a really good relationship now that we've built over the last two years.

And I feel like the whole staff has a lot of trust in me. And I just really appreciate that from them. Like I said, it hasn't always been easy, but they never fail to show me the amount of confidence that they have in me.



Q. Wanted to know if you wanted to expound on your comments from your opening statement.

COACH BOZZELLA: I do. I do. I think when we're constantly overlooked, talking about getting into a bid and at-large and everyone says, well, you know, your net is this number. I don't care. You can take my resumé and put it next to everybody else.

If we're only going to consider the net and we're going to talk about the net for teams, then none of you need to work. Just take a number, take the top 64 -- eight teams and let's just move on.

When you watch Seton Hall play, yes, our net number wasn't great, not because of anything other than we started off slow because of COVID and because of injuries, but when we got our whole team back and won 11 of our last 12 games in here and we're never mentioned and DePaul is still mentioned and Marquette is still mentioned and Villanova should be a lock, that's ridiculous. That's disrespectful.

You want to look at my non-league wins versus Villanova non-league? They don't compare. We beat Princeton. They didn't. I'm telling you there's not a bigger supporter here for Villanova than Tony Bozzella. I'm on the committee, regional committee. I talk about Villanova. I do everything.

But to have us not respected and not brought up in numerous meetings, numerous conversations within the league and within the national media is disgusting. And we took it as a chip. I thank them.

But we were one basket away or two baskets away from winning the game today. We're one point away from winning the game at Creighton, at home versus Creighton a couple weeks ago. We should have won 13 games in a row. And you wanna tell us that doesn't matter because your net was 80. What do we have to do, go 30-0?

And the lack of respect our league gets is disgusting. When you talk about getting two teams in from the Summit, from the A-10, from the WCC, and you're talking about only two teams from the Big East, are you a fool? Have you not watched basketball?

We don't get to play all those teams those teams play. Every game we play is hard. What Lauren Park-Lane said is true -- we played Tuesday. We chose to play Tuesday to finish our league schedule because that's what you're supposed to do. You're supposed to play all your league games, not pick and choose who you want to play when

you want to play.

We found a date. We can play our last league game and we flew to Ohio and we played Xavier on Tuesday. And then we played on Friday and we played on Saturday and we played on Sunday. And it's not an excuse. But that's what you're supposed to do.

But for us to not get the respect that we have earned is disrespectful. We've earned that respect Seton Hall. If you don't think we're every bit as good as any of these other teams you just don't watch basketball.

So I'm tired of the net. I really am. I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to hear about it. Because you think UConn is the eighth or ninth best team in the country, you're a fool.

Q. Was looking for your assessment and your thoughts on how Cooks and Espinoza-Hunter played today and during the course of the season, what those two specifically meant to the team this year?

COACH BOZZELLA: They've been tremendous players and Andra helped recruit Sidney. And Sidney has come a long way. And clearly it's amazing to me, a kid with that skill and that play around the basket takes one to two foul shots a game. It's just wrong. It's just completely wrong. It's completely wrong.

All these coaches and all these teams, specifically one, want to splice up tape and talk about fouls. I can splice up a freakin' movie that's longer than "Ten Commandments" on how many times Sid gets fouled and they don't call it. I don't because I give respect to the referees because their job is hard.

Other teams in our league don't want to give respect to our team. I choose to.

Sidney has had a really good year and is only going to get better. Andra has played her heart out every single game, gets held, grabbed, pushed, tripped, yelled at, everything and it's one foul shot a game. It's a problem.

So maybe that's why we're just a little physical on our end every now and then. We didn't get a foul called on Villanova for the first 15 minutes of the game today. 15!

But I'm telling you, the officials do a great job. They do their best. I'm not criticizing that. I'm just saying we are a really good basketball team that deserves the benefit of having a skilled team.

Q. So, Coach, I know you brought up Andra and I



noticed in the third quarter Villanova was making an early surge and you called a timeout and you gave the official an earful. And Andra, who just hit a jumper, literally jumped right in front of you to intercept and prevent anything from happening. And Andra, and I've seen it on social media, she's about as right or die for you, maybe even more than any other coach she's ever had. But what does that mean to you for her to help you out, get in the middle between you and the official and essentially calm things down and maybe set the tone for that comeback that you made in the second half?

COACH BOZZELLA: I thought our kids need to know that as coaches we're backing them. It's really difficult. I don't even know if we had taken a foul shot at that point yet. Our kids are fighting. And it's hard.

We took four foul shots last night and five foul shots the night before. Jesus. So I want to protect our kids and support our kids. And Andra's just trying to protect me. That's what family is about. And that's why I love my kids. I love my staff. And I love my school. But these kids deserve to be supported and protected.

I want to conclude as we talk about the league, there's no doubt in my mind that Villanova is not only an NCAA team, they're a very high seed.

For all this talk about them not being is disgusting. They've won 19 out of last 21 games. They won at Connecticut; they won at home versus Oregon State. They played eight games without their best player; 6, she didn't play at all; 2, she played with a broken hand.

And again, that kid's playing with a broken hand, trying to support her team. But people watching the net. Well, she lost. That's ridiculous. What's the kid supposed to do? Not be a hero. She's one of the best players in the country. She goes down, plays with a broken hand, and she's being punished for it now? And their team is being punished? It's absolutely disgusting.

Those who don't think they're a top 64 team, (indiscernible) I'll tell you this right now. When they get in and they better get in. They will win the game. That's how good they are. Thank you.

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