

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 4, 2023
Uncasville, Connecticut, USA
Mohegan Sun Arena

Villanova Wildcats Coach Denise Dillon Maddy Siegrist Lucy Olsen

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova - 71, DePaul - 70

COACH DILLON: It was an amazing game. You expect tournament play for it to be a battle. Extremely proud of our group for just sticking together and finding a way against -- DePaul, they were on fire today. They were feeling really good. I'm really proud of our group.

Q. Maddy, there was a play in the first half where in transition you kicked it out to Burke on a 3, and as soon as you passed it to her you sprinted down the floor like you knew it was going to go in. What kind of trust do you guys have in each other? What can you say about that?

MADDY SIEGRIST: Every shot that Burke takes I think is going to go in. I figured I better run down, get back on defense. DePaul is really fast. But as soon as it left her hand, I thought it looked good.

Q. And Lucy, what was your mindset kind of stepping to the line with .7 seconds left with a chance to steal the game? What was your mindset there?

LUCY OLSEN: My teammates had my back. They're all, you're good; you do this every day in practice; basketball is fun; just shoot it; you'll make it; you're good.

It was all the teammates putting the confidence in me.

Q. Maddy, I noticed sometime in the third quarter it seemed like Christina, after fouling Morrow on a 3, she seemed very heated. You went over essentially to like talk her off the leverage. What were you telling her? And she scored on the next possession right after. So how impressed were you by her response?

MADDY SIEGRIST: I thought she was doing a great job defensively on Morrow. Morrow is a great player. She's going to get her points. She's going to take her shots. I thought it was a tough -- I thought it was a great contest. And she went a little too far and fouled her.

I was like, Chris, we can't lose you right now. You are too valuable to this game. We need you to like not shut down. And she didn't. She responded. She got a couple of baskets in a row. I thought she did an unbelievable job rebounding.

Q. Maddy, you guys were down, I think, six with a little under three minutes left in that fourth quarter, and then you and Lucy combined to make that run to get the win. What does it say about this team to stay composed down the stretch and come back from that?

MADDY SIEGRIST: I know like I lean on experience, how many times we've been in this situation -- feels like a million. And I think for this team we were down, like, 15 with five minutes to go versus St. John's at home.

So that's something we always lean on. And just keep saying that, reminding them it's one stop, one play at a time, not trying to get it all back in one possession.

Q. Lucy, obviously on the final possession, I think, everyone in the building had a feeling of who was going to get the ball and obviously DePaul clearly denied her. On that final possession what were you seeing and ultimately leading to the drive that drew the foul, and ultimately going to the line and sealing the deal?

LUCY OLSEN: Yeah, I mean, Maddy, being such a great player, you have to deny her the ball. I knew if my opportunity came I would have to take advantage of it. And it did. Luckily I was ready for it.

Q. Before the game Maddy was honored with scholar athlete of the year and player of the year. Could you just talk about the impact she has on the university and the community in Villanova?

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COACH DILLON: It's an amazing journey that Maddy has been on. And taking us all along with her has been an absolute pleasure. Just seeing her growth in so many areas. And I think hearing her speak, even today you see how she is with her teammates.

We talked about last year, I think the success we had was based off of Maddy being one of our captains and leaders and just convincing the younger ones that they were ready, that they could do it. And she just continues.

Just the power of persuasion is a great thing. When it comes from your peers, it's even more empowering. And that's how Maddy is. She's a competitor. She wants to win. She wants to be the best at what she does and is recognized for that.

But she wants to make sure that everyone around her is getting better as well because how much the program means to her. And she wants to leave her mark but certainly leave it in good hands moving forward. It's going to continue to be great.

Q. Maddy talked about Chris' ability to bounce back and stay composed in that moment. Earlier in the year that might not have been how she responded. What have you seen in her growth and maturity and her performance today overall?

COACH DILLON: Chris, it's been fun to watch her. If you guys got to know Christina off the court, it would be even more enjoyable. She's a great personality, a lot of fun. Teammates love her. That's why they want to see her succeed on the floor.

And just with the experience of this year. She's in there. She wanted the responsibility to defend and rebound, and just locking back in with knowing, we can't lose you. It was a matter of her picking up a couple of fouls but being able to then get back in the game, be disciplined enough not to end up in foul trouble or back on the bench.

So just seeing that, the importance, I think that sense of urgency especially in a game like today, she realized and she heard what Mad was saying. She knew her teammates needed her and stuck with it.

It's been really good, her growth, and just I think Chris has so much farther to go. Like she's just tapping into the talent that she offers. She keeps working, we'll see a lot more good things from her here in the Big East.

Q. I know Maddy mentioned the St. John's comeback. Essentially almost like déjà vu in a sense, being able to

pull off the probable, dare I say, with your team's mental toughness to pull this off again basically, dare I say, your Cats have nine lives?

COACH DILLON: That's a good one. They don't quit. They don't. You see it every day in practice. When you see them slipping a little bit, you call them out and they respond.

It comes down to just that will to win and willing to do anything necessary. We were tag teaming people in there. We threw Kaitlyn Orihel in. We threw Bella Runyan, like, everyone is going to do give everything they have and just work it out together.

I was really proud of that. I'll say their commitment today to just finding a way to get a win. It may not have been the result that we got, a couple balls bounced nicely for us down the stretch with DePaul missing a few foul shots and it gave us an opportunity. But you just feel like you've got to leave it all out there, and this group certainly does.

Q. This is third time you played DePaul. Each game was closer, seven, three and now the one-point. What does it say about the matchup you had against them and the league and the competitiveness?

COACH DILLON: I was mentioning it with our coaches. You talk about, in our league, playing each team twice is always a battle home-and-home. And so you look at it early and you figure you might split and try and get that home game and you don't know what's going to happen in the tournament.

So for us, to your point, it got closer each time and we only played them a couple weeks back. They're playing good basketball. They're tough. They score the ball. They rebound the heck out of the basketball.

So we knew perfectly well that this was going to be as hard as any game you're going to play. So really fortunate that again some shots went our way and we found a way. But credit to DePaul. Our girls never quit, they didn't quit. They kept battling to the very end.

Q. It seemed like DePaul came out with a level of intensity and aggression that was maybe not seen earlier in games. Offensive out-rebounded you guys by 14. How do you feel your team responded to that sort of level of physicality that DePaul brought today?

COACH DILLON: Well, again, DePaul's case, they're playing, they continue to go and try and get postseason bid. So they're just giving everything they have. You saw it in the Providence game yesterday. They came out on

fire and just kept going at it.

Today, they knew their strengths would be on the boards against us. I thought we did a little bit better job crowding the paint some. But even for us, like there's a lot to learn. I said it to our group. You can't just stand there and watch Christina rebound. You can't count on Maddy rebound. I feel our guards need to mix it up, get in there a little bit more. And sure enough Brooke Mullin probably had the biggest rebound of the game. That last missed foul shot, she came up with it for us to be able to call the timeout to be able to run something.

It is, it's recognition. I think DePaul did even a great job of making adjustments today. Took us a little bit longer in some cases. It was like two possessions, we mess up on the defensive end, and then it was like, oh, we can't do that. I just thought that they played what you see often in DePaul basketball, just battling the extra possessions for kickout for 3s and they were making them.

Again, you're super happy. You're excited for your team. But that was a game, if you watch it back, how the heck do we win that one?

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