

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 5, 2023

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

Seton Hall Pirates

Coach Anthony Bozzella

Postgame Media Conference



Creighton - 75, Seton Hall - 74

COACH BOZZELLA: Hell of a game. I've got to tell you, I'm so proud of -- congratulations to Creighton, of course. They kept fighting. They hit back-to-back big 3s at the end of regulation. And I probably should have fouled when we were up three with 11 or 10 seconds and they put the ball on the floor. We should have fouled there. I know it. It's my fault. And so I'll take the responsibility for that.

In overtime, it was great overtime. We ran a great play. I thought the staff did a great job preparing us. Coach DeFalco, Jose, everybody did a great staff job preparing us and the kids followed the game plan tremendously.

I was so proud of the kids. We asked a kid like Victoria, on a bad knee, to play 40 minutes today, and while she didn't score she was tremendous out there.

And Lauren Park-Lane was, you can't even put into words what she did. Sidney sprained her ankle. She's a little sore. Azana made a great pass at the end of the game. I thought Mya Bemby played her heart out.

Just really proud of the kids, again, for competing so hard and playing so tough against an outstanding team that Creighton is, and they have great players and great coaches. And we defended their last play really well. And they grab an offensive rebound, laid the ball in the basket.

But we followed our game plan to a tee, and we said there was no way we were going to let them score 25 points or less in the paint. And they had 24.

And I'm so proud of my girls and my staff. And it's hard after a loss to be happy, but as disappointed as we all are because this is a program that we expect to win games, I thought this was a great job by our student-athletes. I really did.

Q. Can you just speak a little bit more to Lauren's performance and just how incredible she was for you guys in this game.

COACH BOZZELLA: She's incredible every day. She's a wonderful human being, great person. And we're proud to have her. And she's just going to go down as one of the greatest players ever to play here.

I'm really proud of her. I would have loved to have gotten this win for her. And she would have wanted to get it for her team. But she was tremendous today.

Q. Creighton was just firing on all cylinders in the first half from behind the arc. What kind of adjustments did you make in that going into the second half to limit their 3-point production and race out to that eight-point lead that you got to in the fourth?

COACH BOZZELLA: Honestly none. We followed the game plan perfectly make them shoot as many 3-pointers as possible and not give them paint points. We're not going to hold them -- we're going to guard the 3 and run all the way out there, so instead of the 13 3s they make, they make 11 or 10, but they score 50 points in the paint or 40.

They scored 24. That was our game plan. We did a great job. Obviously in the last two shots we didn't want them to make 3s. But when we really wanted to defend them we did a great job.

It's just hard to lose 13 to 2 from 3, but we took 14. And Jala and Victoria had great looks to win the game. They make either one of them we're winning the game.

We're going up nine or 10 points and they just miss; they're great shots. But those kids played their hearts out.

Again, people look at, oh, they made 13 3s. They made eight in, like, the first 10 minutes of the game, I think. They had, in the first half, in the first half they had eight. They had five the rest of the half, and they still only scored 24 points in the paint. And we outscored them 34-24. We did a great job. I'm proud of the kids. It was just a tough loss at the end to lose that way. Just difficult.

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Q. You seem so proud of this team. What was your message to them in the huddle right there on the court?

COACH BOZZELLA: I told them hold your heads up high. Last year we lost on a last-second shot. This year -- we won on a last second shot, this year they won. Just a great game. Sticks that on an offensive rebound to lose. Our kids played hard. Lost to a really good team. It's not like we lost to a team that stunk.

They're really good. I thought we did a great job our game plan was to attack, then drive it at them. We took 24 foul shots. We did a great job. I'm just proud of the kids for that. They followed the game plan, did exactly what they were supposed to do after playing yesterday. And we lost to a really good team.

Q. Mya played just 12 minutes yesterday against Xavier. She played 41 today and almost delivered again for a second year in a row. What in the game plan allowed her to be so much more involved in today's game?

COACH BOZZELLA: I think Mya did deliver. She scored. But she played great defense all game. She guarded Morgan Maly, held her to 13 points, one of the best players in the country.

Mya is a veteran, a team player. She wants to do what's best for the team. We told her yesterday she wasn't going to start, wanted to go more athletic and we needed to get a little bit of ball pressure in.

Today, we knew we were going to go back to her today and she was ready and look at how great she played. Her stat line doesn't even indicate how great she played.

Mya epitomizes what Seton basketball is all about, a kid who tries hard, a really good student-athlete and wants to do well for the team.

I thought the Big East put on another tremendous show, from all our digital things, to pre and post game shows, having Pam and Lisa do that, and Megan on the sidelines and obviously John and Kim, like this is why this is a great league.

I look around these other leagues, this is a family. This is really a family. Starts with Val running a great program and obviously Pam does an amazing job and Bobby Mullin with all the digital TV stuff. I'm proud of being in the Big East.

And I'm a very emotional guy and I say how I feel. So I think it's very important for me to say how I feel. I'm really thankful for what a wonderful job the Big East did in putting on another great tournament. And I wish the next three games to be as exciting as the last two games were and then we'll all be happy. Thank you again, everyone.

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