

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 5, 2023

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

Villanova Wildcats

Coach Denise Dillon

Maddy Siegrist

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova - 63, Creighton - 61

COACH DILLON: Well, excited to be in this position. What a great battle against an extremely talented Creighton team. And we knew it would be a good matchup. But it was certainly matched evenly. Pulled out a close one and super excited to get another chance to play.

Q. What does it say about the tenacity and the will of this team now to have two straight games come down to the wire yet you're able to pull it out?

MADDY SIEGRIST: I think we knew coming into this tournament that every game was going to be a battle. And we practice late-game situations all the time. Just trying to stay calm and execute down the stretch. I think we've been able to do that the last two games.

Q. You obviously had a big-time night. How important was it to see the role players stepping up like Kaitlyn Orihel hitting a corner 3 to give you the biggest lead of the game in the fourth quarter?

MADDY SIEGRIST: It's huge. Nobody can do it all by themselves. I need my teammates. I think Chris stepped up huge today and Kaitlyn. And Lucy always facilitates and she had an unbelievable game today.

And I think everyone's just confident when they shoot the ball. And I think that's the biggest thing. And you see the results like games like today, they were able to hit some big shots down the stretch.

Q. Last defensive possession, looked like the team came out with such a sense of purpose. What did you say to each other after the timeout?

MADDY SIEGRIST: One stop, that's how we end practice all the time, just get one stop. Just going like that. We weren't going to bail them out. We knew what we were doing on the screens. We had to get the rebound. I think we did a good job with that.

Q. Looked like in the second half, the on-the-ball defense and maybe even defensive communication had improved. Did you see that? And can you talk about the impact it had?

COACH DILLON: Well, to be honest, I think it was more -- it was a combination. I thought the first half Creighton was just shooting lights out, getting looks that they wanted. I thought we were stepping off a little bit, and then recognizing that.

We talked about that at halftime, just having them turn it up on the defensive end. And just the pride, that's something that this group really understands that in order for us to have success, to get the result that they want, it's got to be on the defensive end. So everyone did turn it up a notch.

But I think it was as that second quarter was wrapping up. Taking a couple of charges against them, that just fired up the defense a little bit more. And just the recognition. They can all score. All the players on the floor for Creighton can score the basketball. So it was each individual for us had a little gut check to find a way to get some big stops.

Q. Your team is now 7-2 in games decided by five or fewer points. What do you think it is about your team played more games than decided by five or fewer than any other team in the conference? What do you think about your team gives it that advantage when it comes down to the wire and when things are close?

COACH DILLON: Well, I think it's what we often talk about, making it a possession game. Some teams you're going up against you can be outmatched in some areas. But continuing to try and keep it as a possession game and then give yourselves the best shot of having that ball at the end.



Just as Maddy said, just understanding in today's case it was a matter he have getting that final stop. So working on all those situations maybe we should switch it up a little and do some more, some longer periods of time instead of focusing in on those last four minutes of games.

But they're finding a way, just being in that spot and just connecting and doing whatever is necessary to get the win.

Q. That last possession, with the 11 seconds left, you go to the timeout thinking you have a tie-up and your ball. Come out, it's an intentional foul, two shots. Now you're only up two, and they have the ball. What were you saying, what was the message because it really flipped the script almost a complete 180 right there?

COACH DILLON: It sure did. We took the time because I don't think the players were aware of what was happening. And we just looked at them and said, all right, now it's time to really get the stop that we need.

And I felt it was great growth by all of them. Maddy had the mindset throughout, every time we had a timeout, like, settle in; we have it. But for some of the younger ones to realize, okay, we don't have the ball; we've got to get another stop; let's go. I was really proud of the growth.

Q. Tomorrow will be the second straight Big East championship against Villanova and UConn. What are your thoughts ahead of that matchup about what you guys have done in the past few days and what UConn has done in the past few days?

COACH DILLON: Your ultimate goal is to get to that championship game. Everyone talks in conference play of winning a championship. So you've got to do a lot of work in order to get there. So this team has done what's necessary to get there, and they're familiar with UConn, and they know to beat the best you've got to be a lot better. So we've got work to do.

Q. In terms of the complete contrast in games like UConn's blown both their opponents out and you've eeked one out each time out. I guess the big question I have now is seeing how UConn has been defensively and the spark they've gotten with Azzi back, how do you try to get your offense ready? Obviously Maddy is more than game to take that defense on but getting the rest of the troops ready to challenge them like you did in the regular season twice?

COACH DILLON: I think the biggest thing is everyone on the floor being a threat, being an option. Not trying to make something happen, allowing the offense to work for them. So you know you're going to get the pressure. The

physicality aspect will be there. Just kind of settling in, taking one possession at a time, not getting caught up or worrying about what didn't go our way maybe the first time.

Q. A year ago this time you got here, the whole talk was on the outside, bubble, whatever. And the question was, do you feel you've done everything you needed to get in. And it was a positive. You think you've done everything necessary (inaudible)?

COACH DILLON: I do. And looking at our body of work to date and getting here in the tournament and two great wins going into that third, I think we can solidify it if we do it, if it's really necessary. But certainly we're in the conversation and we'll continue to be.

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