

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

Creighton Bluejays

Coach Jim Flanery

Postgame Media Conference



Georgetown 55, Creighton 46

JIM FLANERY: Congrats to Georgetown. They were clearly the better team today. I thought what they did on the glass in the first half put them in a position to win the game, and then they came out in the third quarter and punched us again.

I thought some of our younger kids -- was frustrated obviously with some of our starters, and I thought some of our younger kids came in and did a great job, got us back in the game with a position to maybe fight back.

Just made too many mistakes, and they defended us really well. We just couldn't get into any offensive rhythm. But I didn't think we did a good enough job sharing the ball with our core kids. Went with that other group, and I thought they did a great job of moving the ball and sharing the ball.

I think it's a good lesson for us. We've had a great year, 25-5, and we're going to be playing again.

But losses aren't bad things if you take things from them and use them as fuel to get better.

Q. Could you please tell us what you told the team in the locker room, and what are the things you hope they will take away from this Big East Tournament?

JIM FLANERY: Sure. I said I didn't think we played with an edge today. I think that we're going to have to have that going forward.

I thought there was just a touch of complacency. We have great kids. They work hard. But I thought there was -- I just didn't think we worked quite hard enough. We have to have an edge. If you watch UConn play live, you see that edge. You see how hard they play and how well they communicate, and I didn't think we had that.

Then I thought when you play a good team like Georgetown and they get confident and play from the lead, I thought we struggled to kind of get out of that.

Like I said, everything is fine if we learn and be just a little bit more mindful of how competitive we're going to need to be in practice.

That group that I put in in the third quarter, they do some really good things in practice. I'm happy for them, and I think it's great that I now feel like I can put them in in a pressure situation. I think that gives us something out of a disappointing day.

Q. You've said all year that you trust McKayla and Brit offensively, but you needed them to take a step defensively. They held Georgetown in that long stretch in the third quarter to four minutes. Did you see them take that step today?

JIM FLANERY: Yeah, I think I've seen it in practice, and I felt like, yeah, there's just a different mindset when you haven't gotten to play a lot and you get an opportunity to play. There's a hunger there.

I'm not saying our seniors don't have that, but I think there can be a different level of hunger. Okay, we're playing back to back. We haven't played back to back all year except one time over Thanksgiving, so there's this urge to kind of give into I'm a little tired. Georgetown is playing their third game in three days. I thought we kind of had that mindset.

But yeah, I'm pleased with what they've done. I think they've improved, and in some ways, it's been hard to get them on the court because of the experience we have.

I think today is a good reminder to me that I can trust them, and I think it's a good reminder to our starting group that they're not in a position where they can't be replaced at times probably in a much greater volume than we've probably done all year.

Q. You kind of mentioned a little bit, but can you explain the thought process behind doing hockey line



substitutions with one group, putting them all in together as opposed to substituting here and there?

JIM FLANERY: Well, it started out I was frustrated with that starting group. It was 36-23. I think it was 26-23 at half. It's 36-23, it's 10-0 in that third quarter, and I just felt like we were playing a little selfishly off -- we don't have a selfish group, but there's times where a lot of teams play selfishly for X amount of time. I felt like we didn't do the things we talked about at halftime, and our activity level defensively was under what I had thought.

So I said I'm going to put all these guys in, because I've done that before. I'm a little bit of a risk taker from that standpoint because I do think sometimes those kids need to be reminded how hard you have to play. It's easy to kind of get into, oh, I'm a good player, but part of being a good player is playing really, really hard.

Then it just kind of evolved from there.

Then in the fourth quarter, I did some offense for defense, I mean, certainly down the stretch. But I just wanted them to play at a higher level, and we were down 10ish in a low-scoring game where it was really hard to score. I felt like just having fresh people would help our ball movement, which I thought it did.

But we missed some shots that we needed to convert, and I thought a lot of times our passes were a little bit too late on cuts.

But I thought what Creighton basketball is supposed to look like was much better that last quarter and a half.

I wouldn't say I'll probably do it exactly the same way again, but I thought we needed a jump start.

Q. Georgetown has not been very good the last couple years. They've struggled, coaching changes and such. They obviously went through a tough situation before the season started. Are you impressed with what they've done this year and being able to get to the final for the first time?

JIM FLANERY: Absolutely, Darnell and his staff have done a great job. Graceann and Kelsey, they're easy to admire. I got to talk to them at media day right after Tasha passed. They're easy to cheer for when you're -- even today, I felt -- I hurt for our kids and I'm disappointed in our effort, but I feel good for them because they've hung in there and they've been great ambassadors of the Georgetown program.

Sometimes tragedy can galvanize a unit, and I feel like

they've done a good job of getting their kids to buy into that. I do think they've got good talent, too. Their size and their ability to rebound the ball, and then obviously Ransom has been a really good player in our league, and Cowan is a great addition for them, and Bemby has been in the league 12 years.

They've got experience, too, on top of that.

Q. You've played Georgetown before this season. The way it seemed on the court, it got real physical. It was a real physical matchup. Any time you're playing a team in your conference, it's going to be physical play. The type of physicality you saw on the court today, was that expected? Were you surprised, or did you think it was up another level because of the championship that was at risk?

JIM FLANERY: Yeah, I thought it was pretty high. Again, we only played them once this year, which is odd. We played every team twice except Georgetown and Providence. Had a little less to fall back on, plus it's a new staff, so you're kind of guessing a little bit.

But I knew they'd be physical. It's just odd the first game we played them it was 77-72, and we had 43 points at half. What did we finish with today, 46? So way different game. Way different game.

I thought for the limited prep that they had and the fact that they didn't get off the court until 11:30 last night, they played great. They played with a lot of -- they're deeper than a lot of teams in our league. I think that helps. They played from the lead.

It was physical. The nine O-boards in the first half and nine second-chance points were big. I told the team at halftime, in football terms, their time of possession was probably one and a half times ours because they'd shoot it, miss it, get it back, make us have to guard, but they had the ball a lot longer.

It looked like 23 points -- we weren't very good on offense, but part of it was we didn't have enough possessions because of their offensive rebounding.

Q. It felt like you were struggling to find Emma offensively. What went wrong that you weren't able to get the ball into her, only five field goal attempts?

JIM FLANERY: Yeah, I don't know. She's had a great year. I just think sometimes it gets a little mental, and she came off a game where she didn't put it in the basket. She had a basket disallowed early, and I don't know if she got shy about that. But she's fought foul trouble the last two

games, and I think that just changes a young person's mindset sometimes.

They were attentive to her. I thought they did a good job, a really good job on her. She'll be fine. She's had a great year. That's just part of basketball is you don't have it every night.

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