

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 7, 2025

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

DePaul Blue Demons

Coach Jill Pizzotti

Jorie Allen

Postgame Media Conference



Xavier 80, DePaul 73

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from DePaul, interim head coach Jill Pizzotti, and student-athlete Jorie Allen. We'll have an opening statement from Coach and go to questions from Jorie and close out with questions for Coach.

JILL PIZZOTTI: Just a really tough game. I give a lot of credit to Xavier for coming out ready to play, and a couple of kids having really big, big games.

Jorie Allen for us, as watch her play, you can see she does everything that she possibly can to try to get a win for us, and that's how she's been all year. She's been an unbelievable leader for our team. And we tried to make her do everything again tonight.

But just I'll give some credit to -- give credit to Xavier, but then also really wanted to speak about the fact that Jorie Allen has been an unbelievable leader for this basketball team this year.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Jorie.

Q. Jorie, you had a double-double. I just wanted to ask, what has playing for DePaul meant to you so far?

JORIE ALLEN: DePaul has been a home for me the past five years. I've met a lot of really great people. I'm extremely loved and supported in everything I do there. It's made me who I am. It's allowed me to grow into who I am today. I'm going to be forever thankful for all my experiences at DePaul on the court, off the court. That's what it's meant.

Q. Then at halftime I just wanted to get, what was the message in the locker room before you guys started

climbing back in that game despite the loss?

JORIE ALLEN: We just talked about competing. I thought Xavier did a tremendous job of taking it to us in the first half, and we did not respond well, which was on my part almost -- I was expecting us to get off to a rough start because we're a young team, and tournament time is always -- you always feel those nerves for that first time in that first game. But I just told my girls, you know, it might be tough in the beginning, but just stay together, weather the storm, stick to the game plan.

But Xavier was making plays and we weren't, and that was the difference. In the locker room Coach Jill was telling us get back to our fundamentals and be strong with the ball on the offense and defensively to do what we talked about in practice. Be in rotations, be there for each other, know what we're trying to do as a team.

I was really excited to see everybody come alive in the second half. That was a lot of fun. That's what March Madness is all about. I'm glad we made everybody a little bit nervous. And we just couldn't pull it out.

It was a fun second half. It was a bumpy season for us, I think, but very enjoyable on my part.

Q. Jorie, of course, it was your last game as a Blue Demon. How are you feeling?

JORIE ALLEN: I'm very hungry right now. Besides that, I don't have a great answer for you. I think I got a lot of my emotion out last weekend at Senior Day. That day was almost overwhelming. And just the appreciation and love I got from DeWayne Peevy, my athletic director, to the guy I say hi to every day when I walk into the building.

Everybody just made it known that I put a smile on their face. And in turn, I hope that everyone knows that, yeah, the best part of this whole experience for me was coming in every day and seeing my people. And the joy of the game is not always in the big moments. The joy of the game is practicing, and I firmly believe that.

I loved coming in every day and getting to work and going



through our routine and seeing the ball go through the hoop and imaging what it's going to look like on the floor in a game. So I guess a lot is going through my mind right now, but at the same time, I'm looking forward to going and having dinner with my parents right now.

Of course, I'm disappointed, but at the same time I'm proud.

Q. You've been a leader and you call your team your girls. What would be your message to your girls after this season?

JORIE ALLEN: I tell them all the time to find what makes them happy and pursue that on and off the court. You don't have to conform to any particular position or path. It can be exactly what you want it to be. I think I'm a great example of that.

I mean, I made one three this season, but I still was a scorer. You don't have to -- and I can shoot threes. I just don't. I was never out there.

Academically I thought I was a political science major and I thought I wanted to go to law school. Then I got into creative writing, and now I just want to write books.

I tell them all the time, you come in, you work hard, and enjoy the people around you, and everything is going to work out with you. With each year they're here, their experience is going to pile up and they're going to get more confident.

In situations that are difficult at the college level, upper classmen always see themselves in younger classmen because we've been there, we've gone through it, whether it be injury or things off the court or relationships with coaches and stuff like that.

Like I tell them, just enjoy the time and be them.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time.

JORIE ALLEN: Thanks, guys.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. I just first wanted to ask, kind of like how this game went, I'm assuming through your season, you fought through adversity. How do your team and you personally fight through adversity through the season?

JILL PIZZOTTI: Well, just the kids, our team was dealt with adversity in September when Coach had to go on

medical leave. And you just talk about coming into work every day and work to get better. We had a very young team. Ten freshmen and sophomores, a couple of transfers that hadn't really played at this level. It was all about focus and working to come in every day and get better.

Then we dealt with several injuries to several guards. And it's just an opportunity. It's an opportunity for people to step up. And then we had a really tough nonconference schedule.

They've been used to dealing with adversity and just fighting through it. I thought this group did a great job with fighting through all of that and really believing in themselves for Big East play.

At halftime when we're down and Kanerva hits the three at halftime, hey, it's just dig in, and you got to get stops on the defensive end and then come down. And, again, fundamentally do what we're trying to get done on offense.

I give a lot of credit to Mayo. She hits six threes. And she wasn't a secret. We did know about her. We were trying not to allow her to catch and shoot threes. But it's just a matter of battling.

And then when we start to battle, we said let's try cut it at the end of the third quarter to 123, and we came in down 11. Then it was just possession by possession. You just have to battle. You got to battle. There was a timeout when the score was tied 62. You fought yourself up the mountain. Now you got to keep fighting. You got to keep fighting.

Again, to Xavier's credit, they answered with a bucket. They're a team that doesn't necessarily -- they're a team that shot extremely well from the free-throw line given their season stats. That's what you've got to do in games like this.

In the locker room afterward, it's March basketball. If you want to survive and advance, as they say, you have to execute game plan, and you still have to make big shots, and people have to step up. You know, we ended up on the short end today. And it's great to see us battle back, but you know, our job is to always to fight hard and to do that.

So it would be have been great if we could have completely turned the corner and came away with a W. Again, I give Xavier credit for going down the stretch, making a bunch of free-throws, and handling the game.

Q. Kind of going off that, of your team's ability to

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battle back, when you think about it, down 22 points and then to even have the opportunity to potentially win at the end. When you look at the youth on your team, who really took a step forward today?

JILL PIZZOTTI: Natiah Nelson, No. 21, she did a tremendous job today coming in. She earned her way on the floor, and it took her most of the season before she earned her way on the floor, yeah, in February, late January.

On the defensive end of the floor she got to play because she was defending extremely well. She was capable of rebounding. So she earned her way on the floor defending, and we worked with just playing to her strengths offensively.

Then she went in today and did a good job defensively. And then when we needed to press, she did a great job up the floor. She had an incredible motor. She just kept getting after it. She did in a very, very good way play to her strengths on the offensive end of the floor. Put the ball on the floor and just did a tremendous job.

So for Natiah she saw herself play her best college basketball game tonight.

Q. In the previous question asked, you talked about executing a game plan. I just wanted to ask, were there any parts of the game plan that you felt weren't executed tonight?

JILL PIZZOTTI: It's hard for me to see Mayo hit those threes because we just talked so much about not leaving her on the strong side. If you're on help side and you are guarding her, adjust and help so that she cannot catch and shoot a three.

Again, you've got to give credit to Aizhanique for getting open and banging down shots. But that was really tough to watch her do that. I would say that would be the biggest part of the game plan that we didn't execute.

Q. You stepped in for Doug Bruno and ended the season with a 13-19 record. How are you feeling currently after this whole season?

JILL PIZZOTTI: I had visions of us really coming in here and playing great. That's what I thought our players did a great job of this year, just hanging in there and staying with it and dealing with the adversity. I wanted them to be rewarded by coming in and having a great weekend. I wanted this to be their moment, but you got to work. You got to make it be your moment. We didn't get that done.

So right now I'm just thinking about the fact that I wanted this to be our team's moment. You've got make it, and we didn't make it our moment. That's really all I'm thinking about.

And, again, like I stated, I just thank Jorie Allen again in the locker room for just being a tremendous leader for us this season.

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