

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 6, 2026

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

St. John's Red Storm

Joe Tartamella

Sa'Mya Wyatt

Brooke Moore

Postgame Media Conference



St. John's - 53, Xavier - 48

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions.

JOE TARTAMELLA: Proud of our group. We have been resilient pretty much all year in terms of games, but we were struggling early to kind of find ourselves. I thought, obviously, we still were struggling in the third. I wasn't sure if we were going to get out of there. But the fourth, we were able to do a lot more in a lot of areas. Just proud of their resilience. And when you get in this tournament, seeds really don't matter in a way, but you're playing a team for the third time, everybody knows what you're doing, you know what they're doing, for the most part, and you're going to have games like this that you've got to be able to gut out.

So really pleased with our group in terms of being able to gut it out. Obviously, these two young ladies were terrific in what they have been doing all year, but certainly tonight, and we'll need that again as we turn to tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. You both had big moments in the third and fourth quarter. Can you walk us through 'em?

BROOKE MOORE: Okay. I would say that, yeah, we had some big moments. We understood that Xavier's a great team, so we had to turn the momentum some way. So I feel like we just did a good job of being more aggressive on defense, moving the ball, and attacking the paint and just finding the open person. That's what led to all those good looks in big moments.

SA'MYA WYATT: Yeah, coming into halftime we were down, so I just felt like that just helped us pick up the energy.

JOE TARTAMELLA: She's still working on it. (Laughing.)

Q. You had with the shot clock expiring, under a minute to go, you had a huge offensive rebound and put back that kind of sealed it a little bit. Can you walk through that play, specifically kind of what was going through your mind or was it just feeling the moment and kind of rising up?

SA'MYA WYATT: I would just say feeling the moment, crashing the boards. Me and Coach V and Coach Steve, we always work on put backs, layups, just having that soft touch around the basket, so I just felt like it just implemented at that point in the game.

Q. I had to make sure my eyes weren't deceiving me, Sa'Mya. Double double. What was it about tonight that you were able to get on the boards and really help your team basically just get in the mud and win it?

SA'MYA WYATT: I would just say just focusing on rebounding. I have been really trying to work on that. Honestly, I would just give all the credit to my teammates, having that trust to give the ball to me and just have me go to work.

Q. You've had some close matchups this year with Seton Hall, and you face them tomorrow. Coach Bozzella and you go way back in the Big East conference. Can you talk about preparing for them? You spoke about playing a team for the third time. How do you turn around and get ready for them tomorrow?

JOE TARTAMELLA: They're very talented. Certainly our two matchups were grind-it-out games, as they always usually are. They're certainly -- they have the ability to be explosive. But at the same time -- we played each other twice -- this is the first time ever, I think, we played each other twice in the last month. They're the only team we



didn't play early. Usually we have an early game.

But, yeah, look, they provide different challenges in how they play, and they do a great job of putting their players in positions to be successful. So certainly we got to get our rest tonight, regardless of who we're going to play tomorrow, to make sure we put our plan in place and get out here and play and have the energy level you're going to need. But at the end of the day, this time of year no one's tired. You're not allowed to be tired.

Q. What was your message at halftime? And can you just talk a little bit about Grant's play tonight since she's been stepping up as of late?

JOE TARTAMELLA: Yeah, honestly, after the game, I just said we were in the same position at our place. We were down one. It was a little different. We made the shot at the end of the half. This time they did. But the way that we started the game, I was pretty pleased. We made that little run and got ourselves righted a little bit.

So for us being just down one at that point and how we were playing, I said, Look, at the end of the day, you got 20 minutes to be able to kind of fix it, which we wanted to start in the third quarter, which didn't really happen, and then try to turn that in the fourth, which we did.

So messaging was simple. Do the things that we're good at and don't fuel that in terms of how they play. They were 16-6 points in the paint. It was 6-0, I think, from turnovers. We finished the game 10-8. Then we won the other categories we needed to or were even.

So I think that fourth quarter was a great push. Nu-Nu played 35 minutes. I'm not sure if that might be the most. Is that the most? I don't know. It's a lot. But she was great and she got stronger through the game. And, again, she's -- and then Brooke being able to be back on the floor helped us too.

I think in terms of the messaging, we needed to play the way that we want to play. So I thought we were a little bit frantic in the first half, and I thought we slowed it down much better in the second.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOE TARTAMELLA: I'm sorry. Yeah, I got caught in my own question. I'm just kidding. They don't laugh at my jokes, ever, so it's okay. It's not a joke anyway. Sorry.

Janeya was great. She was aggressive. That's what you want. When she's playing really well, she helps these guys tremendously because she can stretch the floor. Again,

she's a kid who really is only playing in her first year of basketball, coming off what she went through in high school when she got here. So you see what she can do. I'm just happy she was aggressive. We needed her to be early because, obviously, Brooke was out with foul trouble. She just put stress on the defense, and then it opens it up for other players, even like Nu-Nu, to be able to do what she needs to do on the floor. So she was great. I told her that too. But when you watch her do certain things, her athleticism is like sneaky. But she was terrific. And we'll need it moving forward. Sorry, I forgot the question.

Q. Your family is up here front row. How special is it to have them by your side throughout all this?

JOE TARTAMELLA: It's pretty cool. We got J.J. here who thinks he's on the staff, which kind of he is. There you go. He tells me the report after the game. He analyzes who played well, what I did poorly. And then who else played well. But no, it's great. Look, they have grown up in it, so for me it's pretty cool. My older guy's not here because he has baseball tryouts -- cross your fingers -- at a very, I would say, competitive high school. So we're hoping that he does well here tomorrow. But, yeah, no, to have them here is great. My wife's been through it, not only just as my wife, but as a coach, and has seen it and has been stressed through it. I try not to look at her during the game because she has more anxiety than probably anybody in there. But, no, it's a lot of fun. They enjoy it. They enjoy Krispy Kreme four times a day, I think, which is probably bad for us in a couple days, but, no, it's great. So I think watching them all grow up, Tierney now being six, she's going to be the one that's got most of the personality, as we can see. But, yeah, it's nice to see them be able to enjoy it along the way.

That was always something that I wanted to make sure that I did when I started in this profession. I watched Kim do it with her kids when I worked for her. So to be able to have them be around in all aspects is great. I don't think they know the players too much, so it's good.

Q. I think Sa'Myah made you the spokesperson, so I'm going to ask this question for you. It's March, you look up at the scoreboard, and you're winning and you're on to the next round. Can you speak to the joy of winning this time of year?

BROOKE MOORE: Yeah, it means a lot. We have one goal, to get that championship, so every win counts. I'm just happy to be here with my team competing and just working hard. So it's been fun.

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