

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

Creighton Bluejays

Jim Flanery

Kennedy Townsend

Grace Boffeli

Postgame Media Conference



Creighton - 57, Marquette - 44

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

JIM FLANERY: About today's game, just really proud of our group. I think to have 24 points up at half and be ahead is a compliment to how far we've come defensively. These two have been really -- have had special senior years. I think when you look at how many young players we're playing, it seems like I'm either complimenting our freshmen or I'm complimenting these guys because it just -- it takes a lot to make it work the way it's worked.

Again, I would love to have a few games back early that we didn't win, but the progress that this team has made is undeniable in terms of just how much better we are, and to win a game like today where we only made four threes is, I think, a testament to -- I told 'em, It's a testament to the habits that you've built and the progress that you've made.

There's a lot of teams I've coached at Creighton that couldn't win a game like today only making four threes. So really proud of 'em. And congrats to Marquette. They have had a really good year and hopefully they can compete in post-season well and represent our league.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. How sweet is it to be winning in March and moving on to the next round?

KENNEDY TOWNSEND: Yeah, any wins at this time of the year are -- they're not given and everyone's fighting for their life right now. Yeah, we really had a great week of practice, just knowing this is going to be a really tough

game for us. I thought we came out and competed and we executed our game plan really well. So, yeah, winning in March is always special. So you take what you can get.

GRACE BOFFELI: Yeah, we're a young team, but I think us two, we do a good job. And, like, it's survive and advance in March, so today we just played super hard, and I think that's what kind of sealed the deal on the win today.

Q. You've had some post-season experience and success. How do you use that success to kind of get through this game and gut out a victory?

GRACE BOFFELI: Yeah, I think through my post-season experiences, it's been a lot. You've just got to enjoy every moment. Like I said, it's survive and advance, so you lose, you're done. So you just got to take every opportunity and just enjoy it with your teammates.

KENNEDY TOWNSEND: Yeah, this is the third time we've played people at this point, so just knowing that little things are going to separate wins and losses, like, transition offensive rebounds, our defensive game plan, and so I thought we did a really good job there.

And we just really stressed that this week to our kids who haven't played in the post-season before, and I'm really proud of how they came out and they executed. They played really hard tonight and I'm just really proud of them.

Q. Grace, your team had a handful of plays, in the second half especially, where you were able to turn defense into transition offense. In a low-scoring kind of defensive game where you know baskets are hard to come by, how much does that fuel you in this kind of format?

GRACE BOFFELI: I think today we really focused on our defense. Marquette really wanted to get the ball inside, so I think our post players and then the guards, we did a really good job of just congesting the paint, and then we got really big steals that led to offense. We dove on the ground. Those are momentum-changing plays. So I think we did a really good job with that.



Q. What do you think went differently today compared to the first time, and then the last time you guys played Marquette, obviously being a different style of game, not going to those extra five minutes and kind of being more one-sided this time? What do you think kind of went differently today?

JIM FLANERY: Well, after playing 'em the first game, you know, we decided we couldn't be quite as motion -- I mean, we're a motion offensive team. We decided we couldn't be quite as motion-heavy, just based on their experience allowed them to guard most of our screening actions pretty well, and we couldn't really create separation. We're a young team, so in some ways, we're not quite as good as some of the teams we've had motion-wise in the past.

So we said we got to throw the ball inside more, to Grace in particular, and we probably have to be a little bit more ball screen-heavy than we normally are. So when you look at Game 1, I think we had 12 points in the paint. Game 2, 44. Then today 34. So that was the difference. We guarded them reasonably well the first game. I think it was 29-24 at half. So it wasn't necessarily our defense -- I mean, our defense was better today, but it was that we couldn't score.

Again, their length -- I mean, they're six-one, six-two, and six-three. And then defensively, they were able to guard our motion probably better than most teams just because of their experience level. So Ava and Grace went from scoring 12 points in the first game to 48 in the second game, and then I don't know what they had today. But, you know, I said if we can split the difference and those two can get to 30, and by God they got to 29 -- 27. Had Grace made a couple more layups, you know (laughing).

But that was it, I thought. I thought just better -- you know, a little bit more of an understanding of how we could score. Grace has opened our eyes in terms of being able to throw the ball. We've had posts who like to shoot threes more than they like to post. Grace is not that post, in a good way. Yeah, she did. She won in the first.

GRACE BOFFELI: I thought it was in (laughing).

Q. You had a lot of turnover, obviously, from last season, one of the best classes to come through Creighton, and then you brought in a really talented freshman class. What's your approach to recruiting to kind of make sure you get those regional talent players that you built relationships with? What's your approach to recruiting to bring in that level of talent every year that fits your system?

JIM FLANERY: Well, first of all, it became hard to recruit -- we had five fifth year seniors who stayed. Lauren Jensen was only here four, but we had five of 'em that stayed the whole time. So it became kind of hard to recruit behind them because we weren't able to say, Hey, you're going to come in and play. That group was so connected, we were pretty confident that they were going to stay the entire time.

So we knew this was a big class for us both numerically and from a quality standpoint. We were going to fall off a lot if we didn't bring in a group as talented as this group. So our only, our real only portal aim was an experienced post. And 24 is kind of, is kind of experienced (laughing). Not, No. 42 -- I know she's 24 years old. She's 24 years old. Come on now. So she's super experienced, and so that was the aim.

We're going to -- it's not like we're not going to take somebody from the portal, but we're going to build through freshmen. I mean, that's just -- I think at Creighton that's the ticket, that's the way we can be successful. We're not going to be successful trying to flip our rosters with transfers or take three to five to seven transfers. That's just not going to be who we are. I think Kennedy's a great example of somebody who, you know, stayed the course. I mean, I considered her a starter last year as a junior because she played a lot and I trusted her. But that's how we're going to try to be successful.

Q. You talked about earlier about facing UConn tomorrow. Obviously you guys faced off in last year's championship. How important is it to face a team like UConn, No. 1 in the country, in the conference tournament, knowing that after this you might face similar competition in a different tournament.

JIM FLANERY: God, I hope not (laughing). Geez. Yeah, UConn's only been in the league now five years, but the thing they do is they help you measure where you are, right. You think you're pretty good, and then you play them and you find out what you need to work on. So, yeah, look, if you don't look at it as an opportunity to get better and be exposed, then you ought to go do something else. It's an opportunity to compete. And they are really, really good. I almost stopped watching -- I did watch the first game, you guys. I know who won. But I almost stopped watching because I was not enjoying how good they are. But we're going to show up tomorrow, and we've got a bunch of competitors, a bunch of kids who have really done that all year. So we'll do what we can. I mean, it's obviously a quick turnaround, and they expose you in so many ways. They're so good defensively, and they're pretty good on offense too. But, you know, if you're a competitor, that's what you want. You want that. That's kind of what we've talked about in recruiting is like, Do you want to play against the best? Come here and you're going to play

against UConn.

So tomorrow's a special opportunity. I mean, when you think about where this group at Creighton was -- and let me just say this: A lot of people are like, Oh, you should have been in the other bracket. And I'm like, No, I want to win as many games as we can with this group and finish as high as we can. If we end up in UConn's bracket, we end up in UConn's bracket, okay. That's not trash talking, that's just being like you want to win as many games as you can. And there's no tanking in college basketball. I know it's in vogue in the NBA now, but we're excited about the challenge. And it's going to be a great environment. It's going to be great environment. So it will really, really, really test our kids. And to your point, it will help, hopefully we get into post-season and it gives us a great kind of measuring stick. But I still hope we don't play anybody in the post-season quite that good.

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