

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

Seton Hall Pirates

Anthony Bozzella

Savannah Catalon

Postgame Media Conference



Villanova - 62, Seton Hall - 48

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

ANTHONY BOZZELLA: Congratulations to Villanova. Obviously again they came out and they played like an NCAA team. They took it right to us. They went boom, boom, boom, and all of a sudden we're chasing the whole game. And it's hard. It's hard when you're at full strength to chase, it's hard when you're at full strength to chase a really good team, and on top, we're not at full strength, so now we're chasing. So it was really disappointing for us.

But give Villanova credit. They just game out and they played better than us again for the third time. They're an NCAA team, very-well coached, and they have good players. But we have some good players too, and I'm proud of the team and for us to get here.

I was worried about how fatigue would affect us, but their defense affected us too. So I give them credit. Like, you know, everyone always talks about we didn't do this, we didn't do that. How about they did what they were supposed to do and we caught them on an off shooting night and we still couldn't put a dent in that. But their defense is much, much improved from maybe last year's Villanova team, and I think that's why they have a chance to not only be successful, obviously, in the regular season, but in the post-season as well.

THE MODERATOR: Take questions.

Q. With Big East play now coming to an end, how do you evaluate your team's play in the conference this year?

ANTHONY BOZZELLA: I mean, it's hard. You finish in third place. You know, that's obviously still really good for the third time in 13 years. The third place team won't go to the NCAA tournament, and that's us all three times. But when we got our injuries, we didn't do enough to win the games we needed to get through. But I'm proud of the team. I think we had a good, solid basketball year. We're not done. We're going to get invited to a post-season tournament, and while it's not the NCAA tournament, the BIT is a very prestigious tournament now too. Hopefully we'll get a home game or two out of it.

I think if I can get these kids healthy, we've got about, you know, seven, eight, ten days off -- we have about ten days before we play. I think if we can get them healthy, I think we have a chance to do well.

I mean, Mariana is obviously very hurt. Savannah's playing with a broken bone. And Shailyn Pinkney is hurt. And even Ari is hurt. So I think if we can get these kids healthy -- I've got to give Jordana some rest, she's been playing a lot of minutes, we have a chance to do well, and I'm hoping it's home and I'm hoping we get a great crowd.

Q. You mentioned for the third straight year the conference isn't getting as many teams in the NCAA as it used to. What can you guys do to change that to get the conference back to where it was before getting multiple teams, more than just one or two?

ANTHONY BOZZELLA: I'm so happy you asked me that question. This is going to be a really crazy answer. People think I'm crazy. We need to have teams 6 through 11. 7 through 11 suck. That's what we need to do. Because that's what happens in these other leagues. No offense, but then we can just easily beat all those teams and beat 'em by 30 and 40 points, skew the metric, get it balanced off with the metric that, you know, UConn does to you, and then two, three, four, five can win all those games.

The problem with our league is we have a lot of good coaches and a lot of solid basketball teams. The team that finished in sixth place this year won, I think, 22 basketball



games. Why don't we take a look at these other conferences, you know -- you know the ones I'm talking about. Their sixth place team didn't win 22 games. And their sixth place team didn't have two other MAC losses in their league. No offense to everybody, but UConn's that good.

So what our league has to do is either get really bad at the bottom or we got to get a lot more respect from the NCAA selection Committee. It's one or the other, because I will tell you this right now, our first place team ain't losing to anybody in any league, and our second, third, fourth, fifth place teams and sixth place teams are really good. I watched Creighton play yesterday. They were really good. I watched Marquette win over 20 games, I watched the sixth place team win over 20 games. That's the problem. We're losing to teams in our league that are have nets of 70 and 80 when these other leagues, they're beating these teams by a hundred points that still have the same quad number as we do. So really that's what we have to do.

Q. Savannah, this is not the outcome that you wanted today, but it's March and you still have the possibility of playing more games. What are your thoughts about that?

SAVANNAH CATALON: I mean, yeah, it sucks to lose. I'm a winner. But the good thing is that we are able to make it to the post-season. I know a lot of teams aren't fortunate enough to make it to the post-season. So all we can really do is just move on and learn from this loss, and I'm just grateful that it's not totally over today.

ANTHONY BOZZELLA: I mean, I think the hard thing for us is we are an NCAA tournament team. We lost our starting point guard, First Team All-Conference point guard. We lost her for a period of time. We lost Ja'Kahla Craft, our starting 3, for a period of time. We've lost so many kids for so many games, it's hard to overcome that. That's the other thing. The other way to make it is, you know, have a blessed year, don't get anyone hurt, and then win pretty much every game that you have to win. And it's hard.

I mean, we had our chances, though. We lost to Princeton this year at full strength. We lost to Columbia at full strength. Those are games we have to win. But even winning those games, our league is so difficult from top to bottom, to go on the road to a Creighton, to go on the road to St. John's, it's not easy. And I say those teams because those teams have nets of, like, 93 and 100. They're way better than that.

You know, I'm proud of the kids. We are going to play in the post-season. We deserve it. We earned a bid.

There's only 32 teams that can get that bid. In fact, that bid is sometimes harder than the other bid. So we have to get back to getting healthy, but for next year and for us to make the tournament, we have to stay healthy and we have to win some of those non-league games that we had the opportunity in our schedule, and we've got to do that on top of the other things I said. Sorry.

Q. Savannah, congrats on all your accomplishments this year. For a season, as Coach talked about, where you've had to fight through adversity and you've had different players step up different games, for you to -- for fans of the sport who watch, and watch this league game-in, game-out, when they see you kind of leave it all on the floor, they see your teammates tonight, through adversity, fighting right until the very end, giving a really good Villanova team everything they could handle and making runs at 'em, that inspires a lot of people to watch. What is it basketball-wise that kind of brings out the joy in competing for you?

SAVANNAH CATALON: I feel like me personally, I just -- I try to have fun on the court. I try not to be too hard on myself and I feel like that kind of got the best of me today, honestly. But just the people, I feel like the people really make it enjoyable. I have a lot of great teammates and playing around them makes the game even more fun. So, like, yeah, just the people.

ANTHONY BOZZELLA: I just want to say, first of all, the Big East did another amazing job, their staff, the courtesy, the ability to make things happen that are difficult. We needed a bike. It got here. And they have been above and beyond, the whole staff. Val has a great crew, and Jackie and I appreciate everything they do, and we do as a team, because it's really a first class, well-run tournament, and I can't thank you enough for that.

And I will say, our new TV partner is fantastic. I got to tell you. We feel such love and such courtesy and such, you know, interest through this new TV partner. It's fantastic. I know our kids have enjoyed it. I know we have enjoyed it as a program. And I just want to thank NBC and Peacock because I have to tell you, it's been wonderful. And again, thank you to the Big East as well. They do a wonderful job.

And we'll get into the post-season and we'll represent the Big East really well. I got no one better than her. I mean it. Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports