

Women's Basketball Invitation Tournament: Belmont vs Villanova

Sunday, March 30, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Hinkle Fieldhouse

Villanova Wildcats

Denise Dillon

Maddie Webber

Jasmine Bascoe

Semifinal Pregame Press Conference



is so important. And then just working together and doing it for each other has helped us win most of our games.

JASMINE BASCOE: A really big emphasis, like Webb said, just playing how we know we can play. Like at certain times we strayed away from that but we are at our best when we continued to play Villanova Basketball. We showed that we can push through a tough game -- the teams are really good. They played really well against us but we showed we can push through and win the games.

THE MODERATOR: Let's talk the familiarity of coming to a place that's in your conference, and what edge, if any will that give you.

MADDIE WEBBER: I think playing here helps us a lot. I month-to-month like home-court advantage. But since we've played here before, it definitely helps. We say all the time that we really like this gym. So that helps a lot, too.

JASMINE BASCOE: It's an historic place and just knowing that we've been here before, we have that sense of familiarity. But you've just got to go play.

THE MODERATOR: One of the questions I would have for you is teams go through different phases throughout the year. Talk about the phase that you feel your team is in right now, competing at a championship level against teams that you haven't seen.

DENISE DILLON: I have to say, it's impressive. I can't credit this group enough for their commitment to each other, commitment to getting better every day. For us to be playing our best basketball at this point is exceptional. You know, you have teams at this point, whoever wants to play, gets over that mental fatigue, and this group certainly does.

I go back to just the leadership. Maddie Burke has been that person for us from the start of the year, showing up every day, commitment to work and getting better and taking a lot of the young ones under her wing.

You're impressed by the numbers that Jasmine Bascoe and Maddie Webber are putting up, but it's certainly

DENISE DILLON: It's great to be here. Extremely excited to continue the season and to participate in the WBIT Finals. It's exciting with the two right here to my right in Jas and Maddie, who have done such a great job leading the way on the floor and just to get us here.

We want to continue to work. We want to continue to make this season last, so we're ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Just talk about what these extra two to three weeks do for your team building, and how important it has been and what this experience has meant to you.

MADDIE WEBBER: So I think just like coming in with, like, a completely new team, like, playing together for as long as possible is, like, it just makes everything so much more fun, and, like, getting to know everyone even more. And I mean, we want this season to last as long as possible, and continuing to play, it just feels great.

JASMINE BASCOE: Like Webb said, we have a really fun group of girls now. So just being able to stretch the season out as long as we can. It's going to be sad when we're over, so just going to keep going. Keep playing.

THE MODERATOR: Through this experience of the WBIT and the three games that you had to play, what did you maybe learn about your team through those experiences, and how will you be able to take that moving forward?

MADDIE WEBBER: I think we just learned to keep playing Villanova basketball. The first game we stopped doing that a little bit. But just continuing to play like we know how to



because of the leadership of our veteran players who are just continuing to push them and give them the confidence that they need, and then they are confident in their own ability.

Just a really great group, and again, just have a new group throughout the year get better and work together has been a great experience for me as a coach. I think I'm just getting better because of them.

THE MODERATOR: I know you guys talked about having a relatively new group this year, but you were here last year, and from those experiences last year, what have you been able to pass on to everyone? And also, postseason is about enjoyment.

DENISE DILLON: Right.

THE MODERATOR: Not about pressure.

DENISE DILLON: Exactly.

THE MODERATOR: What did you learn from last year that maybe you're passing on to this group?

DENISE DILLON: I do think it's amazing. The only two players for us are Kaitlyn Orihel and Maddie Burke who had played in this tournament last year at Hinkle.

So Maddie Webber was injured, and as we say, with having so many new ones, it's really, I think, the focus and attention for this group has been to just work to get better every day, and not putting emphasis on what game it is or the importance of it.

Every game is important. If you embrace that, then the results take care of themselves, and I think that's just been the message we've delivered as a staff to this group. Just continue to work in practice to get better. They enjoy the game so much, as you would think every player does, but it's not the case.

But this group does. They just show up every day to get better and have eliminated the noise of what the situation is and again focusing in on the results taking care of themselves; that they do what they are capable of doing.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously when you get to this level, the competition is intense. The competition, you're facing great teams. First give your thoughts about Belmont and what challenges they present to your team coming up tomorrow.

DENISE DILLON: I'd just say the mentality of everyone being a threat, everyone being an option for Belmont.

They score the ball in so many different ways, but the three ball most importantly. They have got to get them off the three-point line because if they are feeling it there, it makes for a long night. Just their intensity. They are on the defensive end crowding the paint, doing a lot of work to get the ball out of scorer's hands.

I would say with Belmont, a lot of what I'm talking about of players just wanting to continue to play and the season continue on. They are never out of the contest, and I think in that Northern Arizona game, it really showed. Just continue to battle through each possession. Continue to play for each other, and they got it done.

They then flipped the script and took it to JMU from the jump. We know this team is extremely talented. Yeah, it's going to be a battle and looking for that possession game, and hope we have that last possession.

THE MODERATOR: As you're going through the scouting and preparation, is there any team that you faced in your conference that you would say, you know, remember this team, and remember how we prepared and played against this team, is there any comparisons that you can use for Belmont in terms of maybe who you faced in the BIG EAST or nonconference?

DENISE DILLON: Yeah, I would say within their system what they look to do with their cuts and screens and threes, I compare it to Creighton, how they run their offense with having multiple scorers, and really trying to get the three with three-man game, two-man game, whatever it might be, a little bit of that. I think that's always easier when you talk to the team about players that they have faced or styles that they have faced. That's one.

I think even here, Butler, how they play with constant movement, cuts, the fills. Yeah, something we have seen but obviously different personnel. So being locked into what the tendencies of Belmont's players are looking to get.

THE MODERATOR: If you can talk about personnel availability for you, any concerns? Everybody ready to go? How are you entering tomorrow's game?

DENISE DILLON: Yeah, again, when you're playing your best basketball together, it couldn't be a better time. But having everyone healthy is really great for us.

It's a long season for all, but you had times with Lara Edmanson out a stretch early in the season; RYANNE ALLEN. I could go down the list of players; BRONAGH POWER-CASSIDY. So they are all back and ready to go.

Maddie Webber took a heck of a hit in the last game to
hour mouth, a little trauma there. But she's ready, all fixed
up, patched up, ready to go. Happy to have the full roster
ready to battle.

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