

# Atlantic 10 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday March 8, 2017

## Phil Martelli

## Brendan Casper

## Chris Clover

Saint Joseph's

UMASS 70, Saint Joe's 63

PHIL MARTELLI: Just offensive struggles in the first half. We were 4-for-21 on twos. We were holding on to the ball too long. Not letting the ball go out. A little bit better in the second half.

They made some threes that we didn't anticipate and we had to change up our defensive look. And then when we got it tight, you know, our bugaboo all year has been foul shooting. We were 2-for-6 in a tight stretch at the end, could have made it a one-possession game a little earlier than we did.

**Q. You guys have battled all season despite all the struggles. Talk about coming back from that 19-point deficit to get it to a one possession game?**

BRENDAN CASPER: That's what we've been about all year, just battling, playing, segment by segment, just trying to grind. We got ourselves in a hole but we got ourselves out but it wasn't enough.

So you know, that's not really going to do it for us, and that's something those guys are going to have to work for next year is just improvement on the offensive end. We can't shoot 37 percent in this kind of game. It's just not good enough.

CHRIS CLOVER: Yeah, we just worked hard each possession. We tried to incorporate, Coach always says, segment by segment. We just wanted to do that and hopefully when we got back into the game, but it wasn't enough. We worked hard and we went out there and played really hard. It just wasn't enough tonight.

**Q. The game just ended obviously but when you're looking forward in terms of what this team, especially you, want to do in the months just ahead, what comes to mind?**

CHRIS CLOVER: Just work on my play-making ability. Just being a team player, just going out there and playing hard. I just want to continue to get better each



and every day. Hopefully be able to play hard next year.

For the team, finishing games. We had a struggle this year finishing games, so we just want to work on finishing games and taking each segment seriously and playing a 40-minute game, doing that and hopefully getting better at that.

**Q. When you think back on this team and everything they went through, I know you're not into moral victories, but what are you going to think about this team?**

PHIL MARTELLI: To be honest with you, I'm going to think I was right in August. I was concerned in August about our basketball maturity. That carried all the way through. It's not knocking them, and the mirror tells me; like what I have to look at and say, what do I have to do to make them more grown up in basketball terms. Not off the court; they are nice kids. They do what you ask them to do. Today with midterms exams, and we're going to stay overnight and take exams in the morning. I don't have any issues with.

But we need men. We need men to be in this league. And you know, the two men that we have really are Brendan and Javon, and they are gone. So who is the next man to step up? So there's nothing, moral victory here. Like we just got into a hole because of skills, not because of will. And in the first half, we got into it because of skill.

But when you break this out and look at the numbers and say, look at their three-point percentage, look at their foul shooting percentage; you know, and I said to them at halftime, we're trying to do this with players, not a position.

We played with, since Fresh has been out, we played without a point guard and that's what offense looks like without a point guard. It's just not very appealing.

**Q. In terms of what you guys need, with everything that happened --**

PHIL MARTELLI: Well, I give them a lot of credit because they never stopped and said, oh, but Coach, so and so is out or this guy is out. That would make a difference.

This has been humbling, for all of us. And I don't think you can get better as a player until your humbled. So you know, we'll start again. They go home for a week next week and then we'll start. And those that are humbled will get better.

But there will be no, like, well, Chris Clover played a lot of minutes so he'll be better next year. That's not true. Not unless he gets better. And James Demery, unless he gets better; and Charlie Brown, unless he gets better.

You know, I say it to the point of people being, older is not better. Experienced is not better. Better has to be better. And we have a lot of -- that's the only thing. That's the only thing. With the injuries, we haven't had skill practice because we've had to do everything to get ready for a game and figure out how are we going to play with, you know, out this position. And we just haven't had time to go in there and break down -- like Nick Robinson had several assisting but his shooting form is off.

So as long as they are humbled, and they will accept coaching, then we'll get better.

**Q. Along the exact same lines, just thinking, okay, Fresh comes back, whatever, Newkirk comes back, same lines, you can't make assumptions, is what you're saying, right?**

PHIL MARTELLI: No, I know nothing about, don't want to know anything, and will not engage in any conversations about, you know, well, what if, and then when.

I have no idea. I have no idea. I will say this. The other day I walked out to practice, and for the first time in seven months, I saw Pierfrancesco shooting a basketball. Didn't touch a basketball in seven months. So anybody remember his game? I don't even remember his game. I don't know what he does. I know he's a basketball player.

But there's no assumptions here. Like if the doctor came in and said two months, four months, six months, that's, to be honest with you, that's part of the dilemma in going into the spring. Like what are we going to do, when will we have certain guys to kind of, you know, we know our freshmen don't come until June 20-something. What's that eight weeks going to look like? What's this period going to look like? It just can't be wandering in the desert here. We're walking out of here with 20 losses, and we will not repeat that.