



2007 NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FIRST AND SECOND ROUNDS



Game Four • March 16, 2007 • United Center • Chicago, Ill.
#8 Kentucky (22-11) 1-0, #9 Villanova (22-11) 0-1

Kentucky 67, Villanova 58 GAME NOTES

Kentucky improved its record to 22-11 for the season. UK boosted its all-time NCAA Tournament record to 98-42, and its record in first-round games to 39-9. It was Kentucky's 17th consecutive first-round victory. UK is now 6-0 vs. Villanova all-time (6-1 when including the 1988 NCAA regional semifinal game that was vacated by Villanova), and 2-0 (2-1 including vacated game) against Villanova in NCAA Tournament games.

With the victory, Kentucky is now 4-0 in games at Chicago's United Center.

The win by eighth-seeded Kentucky over ninth-seeded Villanova was the only victory by a No. 8 over a No. 9 in the 2007 NCAA Tournament. Previously, No. 9 seeds Purdue, Michigan State and Xavier all were victorious vs. their No. 8 seed opponents.

Kentucky coach Tubby Smith is now 29-12 overall in NCAA Tournament play, including a 23-8 mark as coach at UK. Smith is now 22-6 when Kentucky has been the higher-seeded team.

Kentucky's Randolph Morris recorded a double-double (19 points and 11 rebounds), becoming the first UK player with a double-double in an NCAA Tournament game since Morris had 11 points and 12 rebounds vs. Cincinnati in the second round of the 2005 tourney.

Kentucky plays No. 1 Kansas in the second round on Sunday. UK is 1-0 vs. Kansas in NCAA Tournament play, winning a 92-88 overtime decision in 1999. UK's all-time record in second-round games (since 1985) is 15-4.

Villanova hit its first four three-point field goal attempts of the game, but converted only three of its last 17 attempts from beyond the arc. Kentucky had a total of five three-pointers, extending UK's consecutive game streak with at least one three to 643 straight.

Villanova finishes the season 22-11. The program made its 28th NCAA Tournament appearance and is 42-28 all-time. The 2007 Tournament is the third time Villanova has been awarded the No. 9 seed, but the first time the team has exited after the first round. Villanova is 2-1 as a No. 9 seed.

Villanova head coach Jay Wright is 5-5 in NCAA Tournament games and is 0-1 all-time against Kentucky.

With 1,651 points, Villanova's Curtis Sumpter finishes his career with the 12th most points in school history.

With two assists in the game, Scottie Reynolds finishes the season with 133 and moves into sole possession of 25th place on Villanova's single season assist ledger.

Second Session Attendance: 19,274



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POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE KENTUCKY COACH QUOTES

Head Coach Tubby Smith

Opening Statement:

Villanova is a very talented team. We're just happy to come in and put together a complete game tonight. Randolph (Morris) was able to set the tone inside early. Our defense stepped up and did some great things. I take my hat off to Villanova, though. Without Mike Nardi, who played well on a bad wheel, it was a good college game.

On team defense in the second half:

We started switching a lot in the second half. I think Jodie Weeks did a good job on (Scottie Reynolds)... Jodie is very quick and has really learned how to play defense the right way. It's a team effort though.

On the effect of Randolph Morris:

"Well it depends on who you are playing. Villanova has some nice inside players, but Randolph (Morris) is 6'10", 6'-11" so he's bigger than anyone else on the court. We've been putting the emphasis on him all year. In our league there are some pretty good sized people that can take things away from you. When a team hasn't seen us or played against us though, he can play more aggressive and post up more. He's demanding the ball more, and therefore he's open more for us to throw the ball to him.

On his teams play today:

We finished [the game] the right way. Today I think we seized control of the game and kept momentum and control of the tempo. From start to finish, that's something we've tried to emphasize to the guys. You can't lose your focus as you go down the stretch because teams are going to make runs on you. You've got to stay fundamentally sound, and I think defense was the focus tonight.

On the turning point of the game:

I can't pick out a very clear turning point, but I thought it was just a very complete game. We made some stops. I thought there were some times we could have attacked the basket off the dribble more. We settled for jumped shots a couple times. Otherwise we played a well-rounded game.



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POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE KENTUCKY STUDENT-ATHLETE QUOTES

Randolph Morris

On setting the tone of the game:

It is always an emphasis in getting me started in the game because obviously Coach recognizes that I am the key to a lot of the things we do both offensively and defensively. I need to produce on both ends of the court to put us in a good opportunity to win.

On keys to slowing Kansas down:

They are the No. 1 seed in our bracket, so to slow them down we will probably need to try to control the tempo and control the boards and limit what they like to do. They are a fast paced team and we will have to combat that.

On being in a needed role by team:

The team really plays off a lot of what I bring to the table. If I can draw double teams and free up my teammates and get them going, then that is what I need to do. The more and more that I do that, the more I get my teammates involved in the game.

On last time Kentucky played Kansas:

I have never beaten them. My freshman year, I didn't have a good game against them. I think I was 1-for-10 from the field, so that is definitely engrained in my mind. Kansas is a really good team. I'm just going to look to do the same thing I did today – play smart, play hard and get the win for Kentucky.

Sheray Thomas

On maintaining the lead in the game:

I think when we started rebounding well, sharing the ball, getting easy baskets and making our free throws, the lead boosted up to 10 points.

Joe Crawford

On playing Kansas on Sunday:

They are a good team and have a lot of weapons. When you play for UK (Kentucky) you get a lot of opportunities. We failed earlier this season (against top-ranked Florida) but we have another chance on Sunday.

On their offense:

We had a nice balance, especially going inside-out. We got Randolph (Morris) going and it all started to flow.

On containing Villanova's guards:

Our big men -- Randolph, Sheray (Thomas) and Bobby (Perry) – did a good job helping on screens. Mike Nardi and Scottie Reynolds are great players and we forced them to shoot tough shots.

Bobby Perry

On team's defense:

I thought we did a good job of taking away open shots and even when they were able to get chances at easy baskets, we took some hard fouls and made them earn the points at the free throw line. That intensity carried over onto the offensive end.

On the team's focus:

We tried to keep maintaining our consistency, but give Villanova credit – they have great players and played with great intensity. Every time we thought we had them, they kept coming back.

On team's rebounding:

We were able to control the tempo. We started rebounding and getting out on the break, which helped get us into our sets quicker.

Jodie Meeks

On the nature of the game:

Hey, it's tournament time now. We know they are going to call all the fouls and we knew it would be physical out there.

On closing out the game:

We were definitely focused. Even with 51 seconds left, we weren't celebrating. We learned from the Mississippi State game (loss in SEC Tournament) to play until the clock hits zero.



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POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE VILLANOVA COACH QUOTES

Head Coach Jay Wright

On the game:

It's obviously disappointing when you lose at the end of the year. Again, I've got to give Kentucky credit. We were concerned about their balance. When we committed too much to (Randolph) Morris, (Joe) Crawford and (Jodie) Meeks got it going. Their defense was stifling. They just did a great job. We really struggled getting open looks. I even thought Randolph (Morris) did a great job coming out and playing ball screen, which we tried to take advantage of, but he did a great job. I just give them credit, they're a very, very good team.

On the end to the season:

It's always tough when you end the season. We didn't think we played great. We've got to give Kentucky credit. I just told them, 'I know it's tough finishing when you don't feel like you played great. You've got to handle it tonight, then you've got to learn from it.' We're always learning. That's what's great about coaching college basketball. You've got college kids and they're always going to get better and the seniors are going to move on and they're going to play, so they can learn still.

On the play late in the game:

Mike Nardi had two that didn't go down. You hope to not get to that point. I thought we could have done a better job before that, but Mike Nardi had two great looks there. One would have made it a one possession game and one would have made it a two possession game and we still would have had plenty of time. You'd like to get an offensive rebound on that, but they're good and they're talented. They played hard. I've got to give them credit for that.

On the scoring droughts during the game:

We just haven't been a great offensive team. We've been inconsistent offensively. You try to keep yourself in it defensively and get some offensive rebounds, and that's where Kentucky really impressed me. They killed us on the boards. We can usually come up with some offensive rebounds and keep ourselves in it, but we just couldn't tonight.

On the Kentucky defense:

The way they play defense, they get up and press you and force you to make one-on-one plays. If you do that, then they'll start helping and giving you passes. We just couldn't get by them on the dribble and they were getting out and denying people. We haven't been a great passing team all year, either. I would always like to see us move the ball better, but that's how we've been playing. You also have to make shots to get assists. We missed a lot of good looks. I thought Curtis got some great looks in the first half. I thought we were lucky being down two at the half, and that if he kept getting those looks, he was going to make some of them. We didn't get those looks in the second half.

On what you will take away from the season:

This was one of those seasons where I think we really grinded it out. We weren't a great team, but through injuries and bringing some young guys along I thought we maintained tradition at Villanova which is important to us. I want our seniors to be really proud of that. I really do.



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POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE VILLANOVA STUDENT-ATHLETE QUOTES

Will Sheridan

On his accomplishments at Villanova:

If you look at the big picture, I feel like Villanova basketball, the tradition, all the success, making it into the tournament and being successful in the Big East and the Big Five and in Philadelphia basketball, is definitely what I wanted to do.

On his approach while at Villanova:

I just feel like if you play every game like you're trying to win a national championship, you might get caught up in that and lose every game and never get to that position, whereas I tried to play one game at a time, like seasons at a time, play in the Big Five and the Big East and just try and be more mature about it and I feel like it helped me out when the time comes.

Mike Nardi

On the key to the game:

I think it was more of us not being able to put together defensive stops. Because that allowed us, if we got stops, to get out on the break and we were getting some good looks in our attack but we weren't getting stops, we couldn't run and it was more of a half court game and they could lock in on us.

On the legacy of the recruiting class that came to Villanova in 2003-04:

I think last year's success, and even us in the first year, my sophomore year, getting to the tournament was a big deal for this program, and now for the third straight [year] really says something about our class.

Scottie Reynolds

On the loss of four senior leaders:

We're losing guys that have been to the Elite Eight, Sweet 16. That's just the way of it. They've been through the hard times, the start of it since Coach has been here, the start of it all, the start of this tradition. So, we just have to take what they've built and take pride in what they've done. And you know it's going to be tough. A lot of people have to fill big shoes and it's going to be real tough.

On his future leadership role on the team:

Definitely, I'm going to have to fill those big shoes I was talking about. Like I said, it's tough but learning from three of the best, you just have to take into consideration everything they've done. It's just crazy to see where we are right now and where we started at. We have to take that into consideration.

Curtis Sumpter

On Kentucky's play during the game:

I would say that it was just a battle. We knew what to expect coming in here. We knew it wasn't going to be easy. It was going to be a game of runs. We made a couple, but we just couldn't hold on to them. Kentucky just did a great job of executing its offense, knocking down all its free throws and they did a great job rebounding. They're a great team. They're playing very well.

On the end of his career at Villanova:

Right now, it just feels like a game. We just played and we just lost, but I know once we leave here, that's when it'll all hit.

On bringing Villanova basketball back on the map:

We've done that. We've accomplished that goal. I think we got it started. I think that guys that are behind us are going to keep coming in and keep fulfilling their roles and keep the tradition going, and I think Villanova will be back every single year.