

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 15, 2025
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA
Spectrum Center

Louisville Cardinals Pat Kelsey Terrence Edwards, Jr. Postgame Press Conference

Duke 73, Louisville 62

PAT KELSEY: I want to start by congratulating Duke. Great team. Jon is a heck of a coach. They were the better team today, and I give them credit.

I'm very, very proud of our players. I told them in the locker room that in the last three months, they've lost twice. Right?

I think strongly in my heart that the best is still yet to come for this team, but I told them the disappointment that they're experiencing right now shouldn't keep them from realizing the special season that they're having right now.

I told them that they are beloved by the citizens of our great city in Louisville. Our town was a bit beaten down, and this team has done a lot -- just how the last couple years had gone, and this team has done a lot to resurrect this city. Basketball in Louisville means a lot.

It's a tremendous group of young men, and our fan base has seen how they poured their heart and soul into trying to make that name across our jersey be great once again, and they've done that. We're very excited and fortunate to play in the national tournament starting next week. We're excited to find out where we're going and who we're playing tomorrow. I believe it's the greatest spectacle in American sports, and we're excited and fortunate to be playing in it.

Our guys have been absolute warriors over the last three days. They've played to exhaustion. They played their hearts out. They left everything out on the floor.

Last night was one of the most physical games that I've



ever coached in. These guys got out of here at 12:30 and played another very, very tough physical team today and they're spent. It's important that we recover, rest, get our minds right, get our bodies right, have an opportunity to attack the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Terrence, obviously not the result you wanted, but this week for you, obviously, has been great. Just wondering what you felt like was clicking and your mentality was heading into the tournament.

TERRENCE EDWARDS, JR.: Headed into this tournament, my mentality is always with the team and trying to accomplish something as a whole. My mentality was come here and win a championship. Came up short. And yeah, I just didn't want to let this guy to the right of me and those guys in the locker room down.

Going into here, I just left everything on the line. Sometimes you don't get the outcome you want, but if you keep doing that, something good will happen. Like Coach said, we're far from done. We worked too hard to get here, and we're just so excited that we worked so hard to get ourselves a spot, and we'll hear our name called tomorrow, so that's great. I've never been part of something like that. I come from mid-major where you have to win your conference.

I'm down for sure, but it'll most definitely feel good knowing that your name is going to be called tomorrow.

Q. Terrence, I know you guys won't make excuses, but how grueling have the last three days been, and how much did that play a factor in the second half tonight?

TERRENCE EDWARDS, JR.: It's been rough. We played three great teams. Duke did the same thing, so there's really no excuses in that area. We have the best coach in the country. He got us ready and prepared for this moment.

We was beaten up just like every other team here, and we're just not using that for an excuse. In a tournament, it's just like that. You've got, probably, Friday-Sunday, Thursday-Saturday, so you got to (indiscernible) on the



next game.

Q. You mentioned about hearing your name called. What do you feel like after the last six months of you guys being together, nine months, whatever it's been, to get to that point to now know your name is going to be called, what's it going to feel like?

TERRENCE EDWARDS, JR.: It's going to feel great. We all came here for one common goal, and that's to hear our name called tomorrow. Even more than that, make a run in the tournament. We feel like we'll accomplish that. We'll accomplish a lot that we don't even look into because we're so worried about the next thing.

And the next thing is recovery and getting ready for practice next week. We don't even think what we accomplished because we just want more as a team and as a program, so it's kind of hard to celebrate your accomplishments when it's not done, when it's one month left in the whole season, and we're just trying to get to where we want to go. We're not satisfied.

Q. How do you take lessons from the experience of this tournament and help prepare for an NCAA Tournament run?

TERRENCE EDWARDS, JR.: Like Coach said, the physicality. Guys don't want to go home, so it's going to be a different type of physicality coming in March. Just based off my experience playing in it last year, guys don't want to go home. You've got seniors out there like me that's going to leave it all on the line, both ways, our team, their team. Guys don't want their college career to end because it's so fun playing in an atmosphere like this. Everyone is going to leave it on the line, and anything can happen in March. That's what I learned.

Q. Terrence, you said before that it was kind of a grueling three days. I assume that you're referring to Duke kind of wearing you down in the second half, you, as a team. You shoot 25 percent in the second half. What was Duke doing that wore you down that made that difference there?

TERRENCE EDWARDS, JR.: Like I said, they kept it physical. We already knew that, though. They're well-coached. They've got good players. In a game like that, we've got to take more control and throw people off, get a catch, earn our catches. We know all this stuff. They just hit us in the mouth, and we've got to take our hit and we've got to bounce back.

Q. Any update on Reyne Smith heading into next week?

PAT KELSEY: Yeah, Reyne is going to be ready to go for the NCAA Tournament. He's really, really close today. We're excited. Medical staff has done an unbelievable job. He's been working tirelessly on his rehab and his recovery, but he's going to be ready to go.

Q. This team, what it has done to turn around, is there anything you can pinpoint? You've got to have the players, obviously, but there must be something else to turn around from going from 5 and 37 over the previous two seasons against ACC teams to what you've done here this year.

PAT KELSEY: Well, we have a special group. When I say "group," you talk about our players and our roster, but we have this term called "25 strong," which is everybody in our organization, players, coaches, managers, administrators, everybody goes about their job every single day with an amazing amount of excellence, and when everybody does that, great things happen. That's just been this team's approach.

We have a goal of trying to have the No. 1 culture in the country, and we cultivate that every single day, and we said, if we can accomplish that, then amazing results will take care of themselves.

You have to fight for that every day because human nature seeps in, adversity seeps in, success seeps in, and our guys have been amazingly consistent in their approach every day. They're winners. They're tough. You've seen how they battled over these last three days. Heck, over the last six months. They're a joy to coach.

I'm excited to continue this journey in the NCAA Tournament next week, but I think it's just in the minds and hearts of everybody in our organization.

Q. Edwards over the last six games, has averaged I think it's 24.8 points per game. When you combine him with what Chucky has done, that gives you, certainly, more versatility, more scoring going into the NCAA Tournament. How is his development, emergence going to help you going forward here?

PAT KELSEY: Yeah, he's on a tear for sure. He's just so much more than a scorer. You talk about 24 points a game over the last however many games, I don't know what it is. You saw the quality young man that he is. He's a great leader. He's become an exceptional defender. That's been well documented in Louisville media, just his rise on the defensive end, which I think was one of the major catalysts to our defense getting better, and that's what's made us a really, really good team.



Q. What in your mind was kind of the biggest factor that let Duke get on that big run there during the second half to take control?

PAT KELSEY: They shot it in. I know that. I would say just without watching the tape, it just seems like there were several possessions kind of grouped there together where they were getting loose in transition and got some open threes and knocked them down.

Throughout the tournament the last two days, they haven't shot it particularly well, but they're a very, very good shooting team, and our number one key to the game was defend the three. They make it difficult because they got good players and a good scheme, but gosh darn, I felt like the ball was leaving their hands, every one of those things were going in, and it seemed like they did for a while.

But they made shots, and you tip your cap to them. They deserved to win today. They were the better team.

Q. What about Duke's defense makes them so difficult to play against? Is it their length or on-ball pressure or a combination of those things? In the second half, they hold you to 25 percent, which really turned the game.

PAT KELSEY: Yeah, all of that. Everything you just said. They have great pieces, good length, great size. They're tough. They play really, really hard. They're extremely physical. They're well-coached. All those things go into what makes them a really good defensive team.

I've got to go back and watch the tape and see how many good looks and open shots that we generated in the second half that just didn't go in. But you've got to credit Duke and tip your cap to them, especially in the second half when they turned up the heat. They did a phenomenal job, and credit them.

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