

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 10, 2026
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA
Spectrum Center

Stanford Cardinal Coach Kyle Smith Ebuka Okorie

Postgame Press Conference

Pitt 64, Stanford 63

KYLE SMITH: That was a classic postseason grind. Hats off, Pittsburgh just competed really hard, especially on the glass. We gave up 20 offensive rebounds, which resulted in a lot of second-chance points for them.

Proud of the way our guys really played the second half down eight at halftime, took a big punch. We came back. Really proud of Ebuka. Challenged him to play the right way, did as a point guard, really got us back in there, made a big shot, made his free throw. We needed one stop and we just couldn't come up with it.

Hopefully we'll learn on that, but we defended well enough to win. We took care of the ball, shot it well enough, but we just couldn't keep them off the glass.

Q. You get off to a slow start. Was that more about you trying to get your teammates going?

EBUKA OKORIE: Yeah, so when I would come off the ball screens I was seeing a lot of defenders, multiple defenders, so I was just trying to get off of it early and just continue to flow into the offense.

Q. Kyle, obviously it's going to be discussed, your status for the NCAA Tournament. How do you plan to spin Sunday, and what's the case you'd like to make if the committee is listening?

KYLE SMITH: I haven't given it much thought. I just know we're really, to be honest, still in the heat of the moment. We have one of the best players in the country, and we've got a lot of Quad 1 wins in a really competitive conference.



It would be a shame if like Oklahoma gets to go last year being 6-12 in the SEC and the ACC doesn't get rewarded the right way. I think our league is awesome. Any other bullet points you have for me, I'll put this on Twitter.

But I thought it was a farce last year when the SEC got this narrative or whatever. Our league is good, and I'd be shocked if we're not in it.

Q. Going off of that, just how the ACC from last season into this season has evolved, progressed and shown that they have earned the right to have multiple bids no matter what happens in the ACC Tournament.

KYLE SMITH: Just a lot better talent. I think that our out of conference was really impressive, and I think we led all the Power Four conferences in Quad 1 wins and had the most wins and winning percentage versus other Power Fours. Argument to me, we're really the best conference, and under Jim Phillips leadership and everything else -- and our coaches, we met last year, and we made it a big point to earn the respect.

This is the basketball conference. Like I said, Stanford has elevated their program because of the ACC. Cal, too. This is the first postseason tournament. This is the ACC. This is Tobacco Road. Time to start beating our chest a little bit. We've got the best team in the country, and when you're running around out here you've got to play them. That ain't fun.

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