

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

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

## Syracuse Orange Coach Adrian Autry Nate Kingz Tyler Betsey

Postgame Press Conference

SMU 86, Syracuse 69

ADRIAN AUTRY: I thought today's game really came down to, for us, the ability to rebound, second-chance points. And then offensively our guards, our perimeter, we didn't make enough shots, didn't play well enough. You've got to keep score with a team like SMU. I thought that was the difference.

It was a challenge to keep those guys off the glass, but I thought we did a good job in the first half. The second half, I think as the game wore on, they started making some shots, and that was the difference. We really couldn't make a ton of shots besides these two guys right here, Tyler and Nate. They kept us afloat.

But we need more outside shooting when you play against a team that scores as well as SMU.

**Q. Nate, you had 25 points in the game and, Tyler, you did a lot from three-point range in the second half. What can you say about your performance and giving your all despite the fact that everything ended today?**

NATE KINGZ: You know, really it was just a win or go home mentality. I was just trying to leave it all out there on the court and go as hard as I could. My last game, I don't know what the future holds for me, so I just wanted to leave it all out there and do whatever I could.

TYLER BETSEY: Yeah, like he said, just win or go home. There's nothing to leave on the table. I just wanted to play good for my team, my coaches, Coach that believed in me. I just wanted to prove them right, so left it all out there.



**Q. There were high hopes for this team coming into this year. Why didn't the season maybe go the way you guys had hoped for?**

TYLER BETSEY: I'd just say inconsistencies with each other, whether that's practice, just people working. It just shows versus good teams when you're just not consistent, teams take advantage of that.

But I feel like obviously the people in that locker room, we know what we had in there, what type of coaches we have. We feel like we could have did something special this year, but it just didn't go that way.

**Q. You mentioned that inconsistency. Why do you feel like that was there?**

TYLER BETSEY: I don't know. I'm not sure.

**Q. Nate, obviously you've been through college basketball a long time. What did this season and this opportunity mean for you, and what would it mean to get another year?**

NATE KINGZ: It was definitely a good year. Coach brought me in, and the whole coaching staff believed in me, and really appreciative of that. I just wanted to try and give my all, whatever I could each game.

Yeah, man, just grateful for the opportunity that Coach Red gave me before I got here, and just see what the future holds.

**Q. When the two of you think back on this season, what are your takeaways going to be from the year? Obviously it's pretty fresh right now, but think big picture about what the year has meant to both of you.**

TYLER BETSEY: For me personally, just coming off a year where I didn't really play that much as a freshman, I'm just grateful Coach took a chance on me and allowed me to play big minutes at a high level, high level school, one of the top schools in the country. Just grateful for the



relationships I've built. That's what I take away from this season.

NATE KINGZ: Yeah, I would just say relationships that will last a lifetime. All the guys, all the coaches, all the staff, just really grateful for them.

Yeah, I'd say that's probably the biggest takeaway. Learned a lot playing at this level, and just try and continue to grow throughout the future.

**Q. For Tyler, you didn't get a lot of opportunity last year, and then like you said, you got a lot more opportunity in minutes this year. Where do you feel like you grew the most as a player?**

TYLER BETSEY: Probably just my motor. A lot of days Coach Red was just screaming at me. Some days I don't understand it, some days I'm mad at it. But when I go back to my dorm and stuff like that, talk to my family, I always know it's coming from a good place from him. It's never personal. He screams at us hard, but off the court, talks to us regular. Just being able to have a relationship like that, that's what I'm going to take away.

**Q. Adrian, I was just wondering, at any time today, maybe even walking off the court or talking to the guys after the game, did you have any kind of thoughts with the way the season ended and your future personally?**

ADRIAN AUTRY: You know, not as you're preparing for the game, and not during the game. Obviously now when the game is over with, you think about those things. I think the one thing I'll say is with this group in particular -- you asked him about the inconsistencies. I think the one thing is it was a group that we put together with the hopes of being able to work through those things, work through that development, to try to be able to develop on the job, so to speak.

I think that's where the inconsistencies were because even some of our older guys that came to play hadn't played a ton at their other places. We knew it was going to be a learning curve. But we thought we had a group that could kind of push through that.

But that didn't happen the way we wanted to. You always think about when the season is over with, about your future. No different than last year. I'll have more thoughts again, like I always do. Right when a game is over with, there's a lot of emotions, there's a lot of feelings. That's what we'll do, I'll continue to do as we move forward.

**Q. Before the season started you said you were going to build your team with J.J. and Donnie. Did you**

**overestimate how good they would be this year and how much they could help you? Curious about your thoughts on their performance this season.**

ADRIAN AUTRY: You know, Donnie coming back, J.J. returning for his senior year, I thought that was a good building block and foundation to have some people that have been here that kind of understand it.

Again, you don't know how the development will go, and in Donnie's situation, he only played 13 or 14 games. So he was excited to get back.

But he was still technically like a freshman. I think he really just exceeded the freshman season amount of games being played. So he had to learn on the job, and then he had an injury, which kind of set him back, as well.

Going into the season, you don't kind of expect those things. I thought J.J. for the most part, a lot of the stuff that he did for most of the year was really more of him growing himself and being a complete player. And I know everyone at Syracuse was used to him putting up big numbers, but I thought he grew as a complete player that year.

And that was the challenge. We knew the numbers would go down because of the players we were bringing in. And I think especially towards the end, players go through those types of slumps. But unfortunately it happened at the end of the season.

But overall I thought J.J. grew on both sides of the floor, which we were preaching, and I give him a lot of credit, and I thank him for trusting in that and trying to actually go out and do it.

**Q. Adrian, you and I spoke years ago about your desire to be a head coach. Even though it hasn't gone necessarily how you wanted it to go these three years, what do you reflect on? What have you learned about yourself and the standard of Syracuse that you've talked about a lot?**

ADRIAN AUTRY: Well, when I took this job -- and obviously I went here, and I know the expectations that this job comes with, I was a player and part of it. And every day that was what I tried to do, honoring that, with my players, with my staff, the way I coached.

The thing about what I've learned is that it's a lot of different variables in today's world that to get to that standard again, you just can't overlook. It's just the reality.

I think that's the one thing that I learned. The landscape of college athletics has changed, and to be where we want

our standard to be, a lot of those things change. I think that was the struggle for me to try to adapt to that.

I think you've got to have it. To be able to compete nationally, it's different now. To be able to be relevant, top 25 and compete for tournaments and be in championships, the investment has to be there from top to bottom. There's no way around it.

I think that was me trying to keep up pace and I was trying to keep up pace in that arena. But still, I don't shy away from the job that I did. I'm harder on myself than anybody. I didn't get the results that we wanted. So I don't shy away from coaching.

But things are just different now, and I think that's the one thing I learned the most in these first three years about trying to get the program back to the expectations and the standards.

**Q. Adrian, first off, are you supposed to meet with anybody? Do you know if there's any plans in the immediate future?**

ADRIAN AUTRY: Yeah, we'll have all our meetings tomorrow.

**Q. As you were talking about looking back, is there anything that three years in you look back and say, I wish I had done differently, or what maybe you learned that you would do differently again?**

ADRIAN AUTRY: I don't know if we have enough time for that. But no, again, I think the biggest thing is the amount of work and the amount of -- so many good programs, so many good teams. But the amount of work that you really have to every day put in with your staff, really with your staff and trying to really articulate the vision, the culture, really hammering that in every day. I think that's the one thing that you hear about it, you know you've got to do it. But to really actually to it every day, I think that's the one thing that sticks out.

**Q. You mentioned working through that development. Why do you feel like it didn't play out the way that you had hoped, and what do you expect about your future at Syracuse?**

ADRIAN AUTRY: Well, you know, again, it's a lot of things that -- not a lot of things -- but it stings that you typically -- we were starting from a different place when I took the job, obviously following behind Coach. Those were big shoes to fill. Like I said before, being able to have continuity, I think that impacts. Not being able to have continuity with the things that happened.

Every team is different. Obviously you have your idea of how you think that team and how you want that team to perform, but every team has its flaws, every team has its struggles. And I think every coach has to adapt to that as you go through the year, and I thought we tried to adapt to it as best as possible. I think that's what you have to do as a coach is try to adapt to your talent, and we tried that.

**Q. Jim Boeheim is here today. If you are to speak to him afterwards, what will you talk about? Before this game, what have you talked about leading up to this point? What has he been telling you?**

ADRIAN AUTRY: I have not talked to Coach. I'm sure if I talk to Coach, he would say we've got to rebound the ball better in the zone and find the shooters, right?

No, Coach has been a great mentor for me as a coach and as a man. I think our conversations have always been about him trying to give me different things to look at, different things to worry about, different things not to worry about, ignore different things.

But he's just been a mentor and guided me as being a first-time coach and going through the process, and obviously the expectations at Syracuse because he had been here for so long.

Whenever he did talk to me, it was really more advice about how to handle different things and different situations.

**Q. Adrian, you had mentioned in Syracuse in the last press conference and this one, too, about variables that have happened over the last couple of years that you thought you could have handled better. Could you be a little bit more specific about what those variables might be?**

ADRIAN AUTRY: I think to be able to -- it's not an excuse and it's just the reality. Again, I own up to everything. But to be able to operate and to be able to do things -- the NIL is a real thing. The transfer portal is a real thing. Those are the variables that I was referring to. Those are always going to be challenging.

Again, if you fall a little short in those things, it makes it that much more difficult to be able to have the consistency that you want to have.

Those variables, they matter; where in the old model, they didn't matter. They matter now, how you operate, how you budget for recruiting, retention, being able to help your coaches, develop your coaches, the growing staffs, being

able to have all those things. Those things matter now.

I think those are the variables that I talk about. Probably before I took the job, I probably didn't put that much emphasis into it. But now sitting here, and especially in the last three years, the way it has progressed, I don't know if anyone knew it was going to progress to this extent.

So anybody that says, oh, what do you mean? Yeah, we knew it, but to this extent, and just being able to talk to my peers and other people in the business, I think that's the biggest thing.

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