

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spectrum Center

NC State Wolfpack Coach Will Wade Quadir Copeland Ven-Allen Lubin

Postgame Press Conference



I thought Witherspoon played great. He's grown throughout the year. Dunning has been shooting 48 percent the last month from three. He was 3 of 6 today. They've got good players, and those guys made shots.

Q. For Q, 24 points in this game, what you were able to do offensively, the strikes that you had, the chances that you took and just how you took over this game.

QUADIR COPELAND: Just Coach did a great job of finding the mismatches, using my height very well. He understands the spots that's best for me to be efficient.

I got teammates that trust me, and we just went with it. It allowed me to open up more shots also for my teammates, then we got our threes going. They started double-teaming, we got more open shots. So Coach was putting me in the right spots and trying to get me -- to get the team to move, basically, and find advantages.

I think that's really all it was.

Q. Q, I saw you bouncing and bobbing with the band, you waved to the band. You were initiating the ball to Able. You seemed to be enjoying your NC State experience and connecting with everyone. Could you just speak to that?

QUADIR COPELAND: We had talks, just us and the guys came together and realized we're not going to get none of these moments back. When we're in these types of environments and playing these types of teams, everyone matters, the band, the cheerleaders, the people behind the bench, our crowd. Everybody matters. So the people that's into, the more help we got, the more support we feel, the more people we got behind us, and we appreciate all of them. We need them to get us going. That's what fuels. That's what gets us going, and it makes us feel comfortable in these type of environments.

Pitt is a tough team, real physical. You've seen how they were playing yesterday, even today. They're a physical, tough team. Having a little support, a lot of support today

NC State 98, Pitt 88

WILL WADE: Well, good win. We had to find a way to win today. We had six guys in double figures, shot the ball well. It was much needed.

Q. Coach, Pitt hasn't hit 12 threes in an ACC game all year until today --

WILL WADE: And they hadn't seen our defense until today, either.

Q. Just what you saw in the first half on that side of the floor?

WILL WADE: Well, we had to weather the storm a little bit. Look, they hit some tough ones. They hit one off the bounce, they hit one at the end of the shot clock. But we had to weather the initial storm. They were shooting almost 70 percent. I think they were 8 for 12 to start the game, and they finished 4 for 15. We were hoping for some regression back to the mean, and they started playing more through Corhen who was obviously tremendous for them today.

But the one good thing about them taking all the threes was we could rebound, so we didn't get annihilated on the glass like we did when we played them up in Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh played extremely hard. They're down a bunch of guys. What Coach Capel has done with those guys to get them to play like this and hang in there is incredibly impressive. Hats off to them. They played really, really well.

was amazing. It makes everything easier.

Q. Ven-Allen, you forced four turnovers in the second half, but you had Pitt in the bonus by the 12-minute mark and you yourself were in deep foul trouble. How important is it to play Virginia with its size pout falling?

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: Yeah, we have to stay composed on defenses, guard without fouling. I know that Coach emphasized our hand activity and just being a little bit more aggressive on defense, because he feel like guys kind of blow past us being able to get easy buckets.

But we worked on it, and we want to make sure we just be smart, composed on defense. We know Virginia is a physical team. We saw them twice and the results we didn't want and we didn't get. But knowing it's the third time and we've got to learn from our mistakes and our experience and make sure we do as well and not getting guys in foul trouble.

Q. Ven-Allen or Q, it would have been a long wait until Sunday had you guys lost this game. Was there any talk about that before this game, sort of needed to handle your business, make sure you don't give the selection committee anything to think about?

QUADIR COPELAND: I feel like the only thinking there was, like I said before in the last comment, this is our last shot. Let's go make something happen. We ain't going to get none of those moments back. Looking at this five, six years from now down the line, we don't want to have no what-ifs or what if we would have did this. So back against the wall full throttle down.

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: We want to take advantage of every opportunity. Like Q said, we don't get these moments back. Me and him are seniors we've got a couple other seniors, as well, that's going to be moving on to the next level and that we want to enjoy this moment. We don't want it to end anytime soon, make sure we enjoy it and keep winning because that's important for us and that's what we want to continue to do.

Q. Q, this is your third ACC Tournament, I think this is the first game that you've won. Can you remind us what did you feel like as a freshman or sophomore at another school long before maybe you could even imagine being an all-ACC player and being on a contending team?

QUADIR COPELAND: To be honest with you, I never had none of these thoughts in my mind. Especially when going to McNeese, trusting coach and things like. I really followed him and followed the platform, followed the

guidance from him, and he really led the way, made it easier. It all fell into place.

I had to do my part by working hard and trusting the process work, going through the little mishaps that happened seen. But if I could tell you that I seen this happening, I'd be lying to you. I didn't. I just trusted the work, trusted the people around me that really supported me and had my back.

And trusted my team. My team helped me really to get to that. Them making shots, trusting me to be the leader, trusting me to make the decisions with the ball, and them never judging me and things like that. That all led up to me being able to get that award. Really hats off to coach and all my teammates and things. I wouldn't have got it without them.

Q. Will, the connectivity that Quadir has, how many times have you seen that lifted up his teammates? Has it ever lifted you up as a coach?

WILL WADE: Look, the best thing he does is he gives everybody a lot of confidence. He makes you feel 10 feet tall and bulletproof. He gives guys a lot of juice, gives guys a lot of confidence. He's always sure about stuff. He's not always right, but he's always sure.

He has a really good way about him, and people are drawn to him. So he has a natural kind of ability to attract people and to galvanize people, and he certainly helped us.

Q. Coach, at the end of your opening comments, you said that this win was much needed. Given how the regular season ended, how important is the runway of this week to have you guys playing well or gaining confidence going into next week?

WILL WADE: Well, there would probably be no next week if we lost today, so this was important, or we would have been in real trouble for next week. So this was important. And we need to try to play better at Virginia. We've gotten our doors blown off twice by Virginia. We need to try to play better and see if we can make a game of it tomorrow.

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about that matchup against Virginia, what happened the first couple times
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WILL WADE: I'm trying to enjoy this win. Why do you want to talk about that?

Look, they're massive. They've blocked a ton of our shots in both games. The first time we played them, they didn't have the shooter White, and then the second time we

played them, he did what every shooter does against us, which is make a bunch of shots.

Look, they're a really good team. They're really well-coached. Coach Odom does a great job, and they're massive. We're not the biggest. A lot of our defensive issues is our positional size isn't very good, so there's not a lot of answers sometimes with that.

We've got to find a way to see if we can just hang in there tomorrow and see what we can do. But we've been out-classed both times, at home and on the road. We've been out-classed.

Q. You chose Q through the transfer portal, not once but twice. Obviously he came to McNeese and then went with you to NC State. What is it about the evolution of his game that's really stood out to you how he's grown on and off the court?

WILL WADE: I think he's playing a lot better on the court because he's become a lot -- look, how you do anything is how you do everything. He's tightened his life up off the court, which has allowed him to tighten his game up on the court.

Everything was loose. That's why he left Syracuse. You say I chose him at McNeese. There weren't a lot of options for him. It was like Last Chance U down there, so we took him, and he's matured. You've got to give him a ton of credit. You've got to give him all the credit. He's wanted to change his ways. Is he perfect? No, but he's a lot better than he was, and I'm very proud. I don't know if we've had a player in our program over all my years, maybe one or two others that I can think of, that have shown the growth that he's shown on and off the court.

I'm very proud of him.

Q. You mentioned there might not have been a next week had you lost this one. Do you feel now that you've done enough and that the case --

WILL WADE: Look, you never know. You never know. But our metrics are really good. Everything is really good. We needed to avoid a tough loss today on top of some of the other ones. Certainly I'd like to have a couple more wins. We're 2-5 in one-possession games, which is terrible coaching on my part when you only win two out of seven and you're 2-5.

We're not going to take anything for granted. We're going to put everything we have into seeing if we can find a way to chip away at Virginia tomorrow and see if we can hang in there for a little bit and see what happens.

But I think with our Quad 1 and Quad 2 wins -- I know teams with our profile make it about 90 percent of the time, so I would feel pretty good. I would not have wanted to risk it by losing today.

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