

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spectrum Center

**Pittsburgh Panthers**

**Jeff Capel**

**Omari Witherspoon**

**Nojus Indrušaitis**

Postgame Press Conference



NC State 98, Pitt 88

**JEFF CAPEL:** First and foremost, congrats to NC State. They have a really good offensive basketball team that was on full display this afternoon. They have a unique team in that they have a really unique guard in Copeland, who with his size -- I think most importantly, his spirit and his IQ, he can control the game in different ways. He can control it with his passing. But today he scored. He's a difficult matchup.

I'm really proud of our team for how we fought. We put ourselves in a position to win. We got off to a good start. We were in a lot of foul trouble in the first half. But, man, our guys continued to battle. In the second half when they went up 15, just like we've done most of the year, we responded, and we had our chances. But we just weren't able to stop them.

Really, no one was able to stop each other. They just made a few more free throws, a few more baskets than we did.

Individual performances, Omari, Nojus, Cam, all having their career highs. I thought some guys did some really good things for us. Unfortunately, we came up short.

**Q. I'm curious how you were feeling coming into today. Was there any doubt you would be able to give it a full go this afternoon?**

**NOJUS INDRUŠAITIS:** Not really. I just trusted in our athletic staff and the people behind the scenes to help me get better. A little banged up, but you've got to play through stuff. That's what I tried to do. It affected it a little

bit, but we had more opportunities in that game where we could have done better, so I wouldn't say it affected it that much.

**Q. For both players, you had made 12 threes before today. Was the basket big, or does that speak more to NC State's lackluster three-point defense?**

**OMARI WITHERSPOON:** I think we were just feeling good today. Once you see a couple of your teammates hit some, it just inspires everybody, gives everybody else an extra boost of confidence. So I think that's what it was.

**NOJUS INDRUŠAITIS:** Yeah, I feel like we just moved the ball well, played off mismatches, and just passed it around. I feel like we got looks, so knocked them in today.

**Q. Omari, you were thrown into the fire a lot as a freshman. How do you reflect on your first year of college basketball at Pitt and what you were able to do?**

**OMARI WITHERSPOON:** Yeah, it was everything I dreamed for. I dreamed about being at a Power Five school and just being out here on the floor at these moments. I remember going to the ACC Tournament when I was in D.C. and I was just dreaming about being on the floor.

This year I'm just all glory to God. I'm healthy this year. I got through a full season. I'm going to take what I learned from this year and improve on it next year, come back better.

**Q. For either of you guys, there was a recent Pitt player press conference where a lot of guys went to bat for Coach Capel. What is it about the man next to you that makes you play hard all the way to the end and made your teammates make those statements?**

**NOJUS INDRUŠAITIS:** Yeah, he just always gives us confidence. There's a lot of ups and downs during the season but he's always there to pick us up, motivate us every practice, try to get on us just to get better. That's



really the main goal. I really appreciate what he's done for me and this program. I'm just happy to be here.

OMARI WITHERSPOON: He loves us. He shows up for us each and every day, and no matter what's happening with the team, whether it's certain inconveniences or things like that, he's there for us and he cares for us.

**Q. Jeff, back-to-back 20-win seasons, you start 12-2 the year after. Are you able to put a finger on how you get this point, a 20-loss season, after where you had been?**

JEFF CAPEL: I'm not going to make any excuses. We didn't play to the standard which we feel like we've tried to create in this program. We just didn't get the job done. I didn't get the job done.

**Q. It wasn't that long ago that you were in the NCAA Tournament and won a game. High hopes for this year but a lot of difficulties with injuries. I've known you since you were a junior at South View. Can you tell us what this year has been like for you?**

JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, first of all, we won a couple games in the NCAA Tournament. I thought we should have been a tournament team the next year. I thought we were better the next year, especially how we were playing at the end of the year. It was our highest finish in the ACC, and then last year starting out 12-2, we were a top-20 team until our best player got hurt.

We had high expectations of ourselves. I'm not sure anyone else did. I think we were picked 13th or 14th. So I don't know outside of that.

It's been a challenging season for us. We've had a lot of injuries. The team that we put together last spring and last summer is not the team that we put on the floor this year, for whatever reason. The thing that I'm grateful for is the guys that we have in that locker room, they continue to show up. They continue to believe, and they continue to fight.

It would have been very, very easy to drop the rope, very easy. In the middle of January, it would have been easy to do that. Certainly as we got into February.

My job as a leader is to be there for my guys. I've told each of them, every guy that's ever played for me, at VCU, at the University of Oklahoma, and here since I've been a head coach, the only thing I've ever promised them is that I'll give them all of me, every day, as long as I'm with them. That's not just for one year or two years, three, four years they're with us, that's for the rest of their lives. I hope I've

done that.

That's what I've tried to do every day. That's what I'll continue to try to do, as long as I'm in this.

**Q. I've known you a long time, so I totally respect if you don't want to answer this question, but do you feel the desire to defend your broader body of work at Pitt in a world where you're getting a lot of criticism and some calls for your job?**

JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, I don't feel a need to do any of that. My career as a coach speaks for itself. I don't need validation from anyone else. I know I'm a good coach. But we did not get the job done this year, so I didn't do a good job this year. We didn't do a good job.

I'm the head of it, so I take all responsibility for it. But I don't need validation from anyone else. I know what I know. I know I'm a good coach. So whatever happens happens.

**Q. Have you been given any assurances from Allen Greene that you'll be the head coach --**

JEFF CAPEL: I haven't talked to Allen. I've gotten no assurances from anyone nor do I expect any assurances from anyone.

**Q. I know the season didn't go the way you wanted it to, but maybe just elaborate on what you think did go well this season that you're most proud of?**

JEFF CAPEL: I'm most proud of how we finished the season. Prior to this game, we had won four out of six. And if you look at our team, Cam Corhen is playing his best basketball at the end of the year. Nojus Indrušaitis playing his best basketball at the end of the year, Omari Witherspoon playing his best basketball at the end of the year. I thought those guys got better.

I thought from the beginning of the season to now how much better Roman Siulepa got, how much better Macari Moore got, and continuing to show up in practice every day, even though his playing time was up and down and really more down than up. But when his number was called, he was ready.

I'm proud of that. I know we got better as a basketball team. Again, we dealt with a lot of stuff this year, with injuries, with, again, not having the team having to change how we felt like we would play a couple different times during the season. But again, the guys, man, they showed up every day. They believed. They had a great attitude.

As a coach, I'm really, really proud of that.

**Q. I know you said that Allen hasn't given you any assurances. Do you have a plan to meet with him at some point? What's sort of your pitch --**

JEFF CAPEL: I have no idea. I'm not pitching anything. I have no idea. I try not to have expectations over things that I can't control. I'll control me.

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