

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 12, 2026  
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA  
Spectrum Center

## Louisville Cardinals Coach Pat Kelsey J'Vonne Hadley Ryan Conwell

Postgame Press Conference

Miami 78, Louisville 73

**PAT KELSEY:** Give credit to Miami. It's a really good team, tough, physical, well-coached. They'll be a handful to deal with in March.

I'm proud of my team. I'm always proud of my team. This is a great group of guys to coach. I feel like from a kind of mojo or momentum standpoint, we're in a really good place. The locker room is in really, really good condition.

I feel like these last several games we've really hung our hat on our defense and our toughness, and that's always going to be the center part of our program. We just came up a little short tonight. We got down nine and fought back into it and got back into it because of our defense.

They shot a lot of free throws; that was a big difference in the game, and in the turnover margin were the two things that failed us tonight.

I think our team is in a great place, and I'm excited about what's to come.

**Q. J'Vonne and Ryan, I spoke with you going into the season about your faith in yourselves and your faith in each other, that belief. Even though there's a loss that comes tonight, just what you can say about this team, what you're building, and what's still to come in March?**

**RYAN CONWELL:** Yeah, first and foremost, I want to give all glory to God. We're just blessed to be in this position, to be able to play the game that we love every single day. I



would just say it just shows our togetherness.

We've been through a lot of adversity just throughout the season, the ups and downs, the highs and lows. But each and every single day, we always preach staying together, trusting the process and taking it one thing at a time.

That's just what we did today, although we didn't get the job done. Despite the adversity, we stuck with it.

**J'VONNE HADLEY:** Yeah, I mean, like Ryan touched on, God is great. He continues to do great things for all of us. None of us would be in the position that we're in without him. So we're extremely grateful for that.

Like Ryan said also, we're in a really good spot going into March, going into the big tournament that everybody looks forward to. I'm excited. Our team is excited.

We didn't get the result that we wanted tonight, but give the credit to Miami. They're a really tough team. They're going to be tough to deal with in the big March Madness tournament.

**Q. J'Vonne, what was the matchup like with Malik Reneau? He had I think 17 of his points in the second half. How tough was it going against a bigger guy like that?**

**J'VONNE HADLEY:** Yeah, I mean, we have a lot of really good defenders on our team. He's a really good player. Obviously he has got whatever awards and whatever -- but he's a really good player, tough, physical, big body.

All game he's going to just try to lower his shoulder right into you the whole game. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't. But he's a really good player; credit to him.

**Q. Ryan, you guys made a combined total of 12 three-pointers in these last two games. Will it be a matter of going to the NCAA Tournament and not having teams as familiar with you? Do you feel like that might be something that helps you guys from three-point range? You're playing against teams that**



**know your system and kind of guard it accordingly. Or is it just a matter of you guys had some open shots that you missed?**

RYAN CONWELL: Yeah, I feel like honestly, we got some really good looks and they just didn't fall, to be honest.

But I think we're a really diverse team. Even when our shot is not falling from the outside, we know how to go inside. All those threes didn't fall tonight. We're just going to continue to stick with it, trust the game plan and try to just be effective as we can on the floor.

**Q. Pat, you alluded to the turnovers. It seemed like the kind of turnovers you got led to runouts for Miami as opposed to just being dead ball. What do you attribute kind of what happened in terms of those today?**

PAT KELSEY: Well, they're a good team, and they're a good defensive team and they have a couple guys with really high steal rates so you're always going to credit your opponent first for things like that, like turning us over.

But yeah, you said it right. Live ball turnovers, I think Coach Izzo calls them turnovers for touchdowns. You'd rather have the type of turnovers where you punt it up to the 17th row, the ones they can get out in transition. Those hurt you the most.

But in any sport when you lose the turnover battle, it's not all the time, but that's a lot of times tough to overcome.

But the free throw discrepancy and then the turnover discrepancy was the two things. We've got really good players. Our bubble gum card says we're good in terms of our assist-to-turnover ratio. Just got to value the ball more and make better decisions, and we'll clean that up.

**Q. Mikel is obviously an all-ACC talent. He seemed very engaged during time-outs, during the game. What can you share about his status moving forward, and what is the biggest challenge when a keep player misses a lot of practice time?**

PAT KELSEY: Yeah, we announced it, I believe, the other day and just said he would be out for this tournament with the goal of having him 100 percent for the NCAA Tournament.

In terms of what that means when somebody is out, that's sports. That's life. Stuff happens. You face adversity.

We make no excuses and we give no explanations. It's simply a next-man-up mentality, and I'm really proud of the

guys stepping up into different roles and things like that.

It's been good to see. I'm proud of my team.

**Q. Coach, having J'Vonne and Ryan represent the team after the game despite the loss, they were an integral part of the comeback opportunities that you had. Just what they've meant leadership-wise to you, not only in this game but all the way through the season and how they fought?**

PAT KELSEY: Gosh, those are two guys that you want to marry your daughter, first of all. Yes, they are world-class human beings. Their approach to life, their approach to their work, their approach to everything they do, it's all about excellence. Literally are phenomenal human beings; great leaders.

You mentioned those two specifically but I could go on about our entire roster. But those two are high-level dudes, winners, great teammates, all about winning. You could see it here. They're going to play basketball for a long time professionally, but if not, hire those guys and thank me later.

**Q. Kind of a similar game to some of the ones there to end the regular season where there's a bit of a disconnect between how you guys started the second half and then how you closed it. What in your mind was the difference for them to get out to a 12-3 run to start the second half?**

PAT KELSEY: You know, there was that lull in the second half when they were -- they rammed the ball at the rim constantly. You could see they put -- to their credit. To their credit, they do it really well. But they put the officials in a really tough position. They do. It's one of the things that make them really good because they are attacking you and driving you even when nothing is there. Like, they're going.

We just told our guys, you have to plant your feet in the ground and take charges or when they're driving the ball, like, they're just going to attack, put their shoulder down and just try to barrel through you.

I thought there was a stretch where they were beating us in the box close to rim in a lot of different ways, whether it's on No. 5's post-ups. He's hard to trap because he just bulldozes through them.

I thought No. 10 had a stretch where they just put him in isos and dribbled around and got to the rim.

Against those guys you have to have a really tight floor.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

The gaps got to be really tight.

Down in Miami did a good job of that. I think there were a lot of times throughout the game. We were good at that tonight, but during that stretch, plus turnovers, a combination of all those things.

But it happens. Basketball is a game of runs. They made a run, we made a run. When you get to those media time-outs, because of the leadership we have, those guys know what needs to be fixed. They know what needs to be broken. My job is in there to lose my mind a little bit and try to fire them up.

But they knew.

We went out and flipped the switch and started really guarding, and that got us right back in the game, cut it to one. We had our opportunities, but you tip your cap to them, credit. They found a way to get the win.

**Q. How important are some of these really tough physical games where you have to, in some instances, really lean on your defense? And then having to do a physical battle today, just how important is that for your team to get ready for next week and to get ready for March Madness?**

PAT KELSEY: You mean in terms of what the physicality of the game today --

**Q. Yeah.**

PAT KELSEY: All the really good teams in the country are tough and physical. College basketball, it's at the top. It's football. It really is. We know the teams that we're going to have to beat to advance in the NCAA Tournament are going to be tough and physical and nasty, but so are the Cardinals.

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