

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 13, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spectrum Center

**Miami Hurricanes**

**Coach Jai Lucas**

**Shelton Henderson**

**Dante Allen**

Postgame Press Conference

Virginia 84, Miami 62

JAI LUCAS: Just credit to Virginia. They obviously were the better team tonight. I thought they played to their strengths really well. First time we played them in Charlottesville, the glass was a big part of the game and a big part of the reason why we were able to be where we were at the end of the game, and we didn't control the glass like we needed to. Our identity and who we are didn't show through.

I thought they really exceeded our physicality and just really put their imprint on the game. When you're playing games like this against really good teams, I thought we missed our moment to kind of pull away. I thought they had a rough start, but we didn't capitalize on it to give ourselves some momentum going down, and then they just continued to play.

They're really good. They've got really good players, really well-coached. They were the better team today.

**Q. It was you guys' first back-to-back game since November. Were there tired legs? What went into the slow start and struggles from three?**

SHELTON HENDERSON: I think it doesn't really matter because they were tired. They played a game the other day just like us. We didn't come out with the energy that we needed to. We got stops early on, but that dwindled down as the game went on. We just couldn't play the intensity of the defense that we really wanted to.

DANTE ALLEN: Then I think in terms of just the shots, I



don't know if we got the best shots we could possibly get, especially a team like us, a very heavy paint team. But when we kick out, we're also very good shooters then. I think maybe we just didn't get to some of those this game which kind of led to us not having as many threes as some other games.

**Q. Shelton, at the end of the first half when Virginia went on that big run, Mallory gets the steal and pulls up for the three. What did that do to your team's confidence level, or was that very disheartening when he makes it at the buzzer to send them into the locker room like that?**

SHELTON HENDERSON: I don't think it was disheartening. We went to the locker room knowing what we had to do in the second and punch back. We made a little run, kind of late in that second half, but they just punched us right back, so we couldn't really pull it out the way we wanted to.

**Q. What has been your favorite part about this team knowing you have more games to play?**

DANTE ALLEN: I think how far we've come, especially with everybody being new, trying to learn everything about everybody basketball-wise, maybe outside. I think the fact that we've come this far to be a 3 seed in the ACC, to be a 25-win team shows a lot. I think we've also grown. Everybody wants the best for each other. Everybody enjoys seeing each other succeed. Obviously I think we're disappointed with the outcome today, but I think the fact that we've come this far, I don't think people really expected us to get here. So I definitely think it shows a lot from where we started.

SHELTON HENDERSON: I think the way we came together as a team, no one believed in us, no one thought we would be here except us. We stayed inside our circle. But not the way we wanted to end it in the ACC conference. But we know we have more games to play in March, and hopefully we can bounce back from this one and turn the page.

**Q. It's always difficult for young coaches, first-year coaches to get the respect from everybody in this ecosystem. With what you guys have accomplished this year, how much do you think people have grown to respect you in this program?**

JAI LUCAS: I don't know. We'll find out, I guess, coming up with just, one, the seeding, where they put us in the tournament. I think it's just a credit to our guys to be able to put us in this situation, to one, give us a double bye, two, finish third in the ACC.

For me, this is just the foundation. This is the building blocks of what we're going to be and how we're going to compete the whole time I'm here at Miami.

**Q. You guys hit your first three with about eight minutes left in the first half, I think it was 16 minutes of game without another one. Talk about those struggles and how they guarded you. What went into that?**

JAI LUCAS: You know, for us, we played to who we are, and I didn't think we played to who we were at the highest level. We're not Virginia. We're not going to shoot a bunch of threes. We're not going to make a bunch of threes. We can make the right ones if we take the right ones.

But I didn't think our violence, our drives, our urgency, our speed, our pace with how we executed offensively, and the same defensively, wasn't to the level of the game. Not when you're playing a top-10 team in the country and playing a team who's also trying to win the championship tomorrow.

So I think that was the case. I don't necessarily think it was the shooting because we've won multiple games like this and having these type of nights. I didn't think the things we were supposed to do really well, we did them really well to the level.

**Q. That run Virginia went on at the end of the first half really decided the rest of the game. From your vantage point, what did you see that was the problem for you guys?**

JAI LUCAS: I just thought we were looking for fouls. We were just looking around. You know, we got punched, and this was the first time we didn't punch back and didn't do what we normally respond to do. I thought the adversity kind of hit us, and we let it get the best of us in this moment. And it's a great teaching point moving forward.

But we've been there before. We've responded before. Today we just didn't have it.

**Q. Beyond today, you guys top 4 in this league, regular season, top 4 in this league in this tournament. It feels like if Tre Donaldson had not gone from good player to great player and Malik had not gone from good player at his previous school to great, you wouldn't be here. How does that happen, three years of good to one year of great?**

JAI LUCAS: I think it just speaks to our environment and what we're about and what we build for those turnovers and those guys. It gave them the opportunity to kind of come and be who they're supposed to be and it's putting them in the right environment. And it goes into our development of how we teach and how we work and just showing that you can go from being somewhere for three years, being somewhere else, and there's still more you can get out of your game and more we can pull out of you.

Both those guys ended up being All-Conference. They didn't have their best games today but we wouldn't be anywhere close to here without them.

**Q. What's your favorite part of this team knowing you guys have more games to play?**

JAI LUCAS: It's just kind of what they said. You could kind of see our messaging from how they responded, so I'm glad they listened to me. We kind of have this us-against-everybody mentality of where we were picked, where people saw us, and what people thought of us in the league and how we finished.

And we just really, from day one, stuck to each other and talked about it and then just continued to grow and get better throughout the season, you finish in the top 3 of the league, you make it to the conference semifinals. It's disappointing how we performed, but that part of the season it's okay to reflect on it as over. I'm just proud of where we started as a program and where we are today.

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