

Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 6, 2026

Duluth, Georgia, USA

Gas South Arena

Clemson Tigers

Coach Shawn Poppie

Taylor Johnson-Matthews

Mia Moore

Postgame Press Conference



Duke 60, Clemson 46

SHAWN POPPIE: Hats off, obviously, to Duke. They're the conference regular season champs for a reason. We knew we had our hands full coming into today, obviously playing yesterday, tired, beat up, banged up. But I'm really proud of our kids. I thought we really competed, especially the last 20 minutes against, again, a really, really good Duke team.

We'll take this one back home to Clemson and try to learn from it, as I think there's no doubt we should be an NCAA Tournament team. And hopefully we can look back at this here in a couple weeks and use it to our advantage as we move on.

Q. Coach, this morning they have you as a 10 seed. If you're able to make the NCAA Tournament, that would be the first time since the 2001-2002 season. What would that mean to take your team to the NCAA Tournament?

SHAWN POPPIE: Yeah, I mean, obviously it would mean a whole lot, especially to this group. It's kind of where their sights have been set on since coming to campus in June. Candidly, there's probably not very many people that thought we could do that from the outside looking in, being only our second year.

I know we're building something special, but we have a good group of kids in that locker room that have fought for our university, fought for our program, and I feel like there's no doubt they've put themselves there.

Here hopefully a week from Sunday we do a lot of celebrating. When you get your name called, there's no better feeling, and we'll get right back to work. Super proud of them.

With that said, we've got more story to write. That's what we talked about in the locker room. We've had a really good year and there's still a lot more left out on the table.

Again, excited for that and for them.

Q. Mia Moore, very impressive. What are your lessons that you learn from playing a game like this, this intensity in the tournament?

MIA MOORE: Just that I can't take any plays off. I felt like I came out in the first half, wasn't really myself, so that's just a learning lesson for me that I need to be able to play every minute of the game, 40 minutes for me.

Q. Coach, what were you saying to these girls? You're in a 25-point deficit at one point but the fight never stopped. Mia is throwing herself across the floor with an injury and all the girls are going tooth and nail. What did you say to them to keep them so motivated?

SHAWN POPPIE: Well, they're not showing us. I did not think we showed us in the first half, and some of it's not even execution, candidly. I didn't think we had great body language, I didn't think we had good togetherness. And that's what's made this team so special is they've fought for each other, with each other through it all, through injury, through good, through bad.

My motivation to them was let's not let the world think that's us, because it isn't. You have little small gains, can you get it to 18, can you get it to 12? But ultimately it was just, let's compete, let's show the world who we really are and let the basketball fall where it may.

Again, that's what this team is, and that's who they've been. And I'm really proud of how they continued to fight and continued to show the world really who they are. It



wasn't good enough basketball-wise today. We put too much pressure on ourselves to be down as much as we were. But there's definitely no quit in the Tigers. There's a lot of fight in the Tigers.

Q. Mia Moore coming in with the injury today, 37 minutes. A lot has been made about her toughness. What did today show you?

SHAWN POPPIE: It showed not me anything. I know who Mia Moore is. It showed the world who Mia Moore is. I think our kids -- Rachael said it yesterday on one of the press conference or whatever she was on -- that she just gives us a comfort. She gives us a confidence. We all know what she's fighting through and why she's fighting through it. It's not for herself but it's for her sisters.

We were lucky she got in foul trouble yesterday in the first half. It didn't feel lucky yesterday when it happened, but it limited minutes yesterday, and for us to get a win allowed her to have a little bit more flexibility for today. All that being said, it's some of why she sat against Stanford was to get more rest for this tournament.

Again, proud of her effort, her fight. But it didn't teach me anything or show me anything because I already know who she is. That's why I love her, and I know she loves all of us, too.

Q. For the players, either of you can take this. Did you feel anything different today than when you faced them 12 days ago that caused you guys to struggle in that first half?

MIA MOORE: I think it was just a little different. We were on our home court, we had our crowd behind us. I think for us, it was that. Everything was really us. Like I said, the first 20 minutes, we weren't us. They didn't do anything different.

Q. For the players, Coach Poppie has talked about there's no doubt this is an NCAA Tournament team, but for you to hear Clemson's name called in a few days, what would that mean?

TAYLOR JOHNSON-MATTHEWS: It would mean a lot. Like he said, we've been talking about it since the summertime and more than half of us haven't been to an NCAA Tournament, so I think it would just really mean a lot to us.

MIA MOORE: Yeah, like she said, it would mean a lot for us, especially we haven't been there since, I think you said, since the 2001-2002 team. Yeah, it would be a really good experience for us. It just means a lot for the Clemson

family, as well.

Q. Going back to the game for a minute, it looked like Duke came out with a lot of energy. They probably wanted their look back, and you guys were able to really match that for about the first 10 minutes and then the second quarter kind of fell apart. Was it adrenaline fading off, you knew they'd be ready for it and you were up for it too?

SHAWN POPPIE: Yeah, candidly, they switched some stuff up. Their ball screen coverage really messed with us. They did a lot of hedging and showing a little bit at our place. Today they switched a lot. That really affected us. When we see that coverage, we're supposed to go to what we call boomerang, and we did it three times for the whole 40 minutes. We scored all three possessions, we did that. But we just didn't adjust to their coverages on the offensive side. I thought they took advantage of our offense today, meaning we turned it over 21 times. We did not turn it over 21 times at our place, which allowed them to get out in transition.

When we could keep them in the half court, which we did most of the second half, we were in the ballgame. I thought early in the game, they got out in transition and scored on us to where it wasn't a half-court game.

Then the flipside is they had some kids make shots. Mair makes three threes early in the game, Toby makes a couple, and that was all five of them. That was that stretch that extended it to 20 or whatever it was. It was hard to get back into the game.

Hats off to Kara and their group. They executed really well and we did not, but again, a lot of it was the transition phase that led to them scoring, I felt like. Maybe the film will tell me something different.

I thought we competed early on. We did. We talked about they've had a lot of first big punches. And they did at our place. We were down 22-8, if anyone remembers, there at the beginning of the second quarter. When they were punched today, it was still a four-point game. But then they got a couple, they made some shots that are big time for them, and it kind of took the wind out of our sails.

Q. You've already given an elevator pitch, if you will, to be in this NCAA Tournament, but in this last appearance before Selection Sunday, can you kind of give us your last pitch?

SHAWN POPPIE: Yeah, we've won 21 games, 11 conference games. 12 if you count yesterday. We have zero bad losses on our resume. We're as competitive as



anybody. We've got the best scoring defense. We held them again to 60 today, right. So I think we can compete with anybody in the country. I think there's no doubt when you give us now, whatever this is going to be, 10, 12 days of rest to get all the way healthy, we'll be a team that is very, very hard to beat in the tournament, because I don't think we've lost two in a row since way back in November or maybe early December.

We'll be ready. Our name will be called and we'll celebrate, but we'll also prepare because it's not over yet.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

