

# Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 6, 2026

Duluth, Georgia, USA

Gas South Arena

**Louisville Cardinals**

**Coach Jeff Walz**

**Tajianna Roberts**

**Reyna Scott**

Postgame Press Conference



Louisville 87, Syracuse 61

JEFF WALZ: Obviously Uche goes 9 for 15. She's got 22 and 9, so we didn't do a very good job of stopping her. But we were trying to get them to play fast, and I thought in the first half our tempo was really good. We got out, we were running, scored some in transition. We had a few turnovers trying to attack, but I was okay with that.

Phelia is a dynamic player. We played her in '22 when she was a freshman at Michigan in the Elite 8 game. I've got a ton of respect for her, the way she plays. I thought we made it difficult making sure we had a hand up, contesting as many shots as we could.

Overall, when you're used to playing with Dom at the point and she's so good at it, she controls that offense, and she can score the ball, it's an adjustment when all of a sudden, now you're playing in the quarterfinals of the ACC Tournament and you've got to try and make an adjustment.

But I thought Felisha did a great job because it's a 12-point game at the half.

**Q. Your team had 40 points off the bench. What does that say about your team when anybody can come into the game and score for your team?**

JEFF WALZ: That's something that we've done all year. We have a group of kids -- we've got seven or eight that can score the basketball. If we can continue to keep that balance, then we're going to have a chance to make a run. We're obviously going to have a ballgame tomorrow. No matter who we play, that's going to be very competitive and

very tough. But that's what's made us good all year is our ability to have seven, eight that can score the basketball.

No matter who's on the floor, you have to guard them. Even Elif tonight, she only had five, but she's been one of our top scorers through all ACC play. So when they're focused on her, it opens it up for everybody else.

In the first half she had four assists and zero turnovers, so she was a big part of getting everybody involved.

**Q. I was wondering specifically about the first quarter. You guys outscored Syracuse 25-12 and the first time it was even more dominant, 28-6. How were you able to limit Syracuse out of the gate so effectively in both of these matchups?**

JEFF WALZ: Well, in both of these, we came out shooting the ball well. I think we made our first four shots of the game today. When you can start off and the ball goes in, then it also gets them to believe on defense that we can create some things. Then we created a few turnovers that we scored off of.

But give them a lot of credit because it's the same thing as the first game. They came back in the second quarter. If Imari Berry doesn't hit that shot at the end of the half, they outscore us 21-18. So we've got to get better at really just putting four quarters together.

**Q. Speaking on putting four quarters together, is that something that you can continue do throughout the tournament, or is it hey, you kind of are what you are heading into the NCAA Tournament after this?**

JEFF WALZ: No, I don't believe in that at all. I've coached long enough to -- our '22 team got beat in the quarters or semis of the ACC Tournament by Miami and then we went on to a Final Four.

What you do in this tournament does not mean that's going to carry over. It's a two-week break, which is a long break to have off. So there's a lot of things we can fix, I think, and get better at. That's what we're hoping for because

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we'll watch some film here tonight and get prepared for tomorrow, and hopefully you'll see us just get a little bit better.

**Q. Coach, I think this is Mac's second straight double-double. What is clicking for her right now?**

JEFF WALZ: Well, Mac competes rebounding the ball as well as anybody on our team. What she does is anticipates. Instead of just watching, she'll see the shot go up, and she can kind of tell if it's short, long, left or right, and then she'll go after the ball. She pursues the ball.

It's effort. It truly is. When it comes to that, Mac knows she's just not going to out-jump everybody on the team, so she's doing her work early. And then offensively, she started the game 3 for 3, and then she started worrying about getting her shot blocked. She had a lay-up she missed. Then she had a great drive and shot it sideways and missed it.

But then she got herself back. Because she will always compete, and not only the 12 and 10, but the three assists and her one turnover was pretty impressive, as well.

**Q. Traditionally you've been the team that people are trying to hunt. What do you consider the team this year? Are you the hunter or the one that's doing the hunting?**

JEFF WALZ: Well, I mean, I think it's a little bit of both. We're sitting here at 15 and 3 in this league and our three losses are by one, two, and three points. I think we've done a really nice job of winning basketball games. But it might not be how we've done them in the past.

I think we've got really good players. And I share it with them, it's not that I haven't told them. We don't have what I would call an alpha, a Dana. At the end of the game -- and this is what I like about these kids -- end of the game if we're trying to draw a play up for a shot, they will all be like, hey, Taj has made three in a row, let's run it for Taj. Reyna has made -- well, let's get it for Reyna, Amari.

It's always this person. Because they're smart enough basketball players to know, hey, whoever's night it is is who we're going to. That's one of the things that's made this team different, I think, than teams in the past that we've had here.

But when you play like we did tonight, shooting the basketball where Taj and Reyna are both 7 for 10 from the field, Taj 2 of 4 from three, Reyna 1 for 1, it's pretty impressive. And then I'm challenging all of our guards to rebound the ball better.

If you want to win in March, you've got to rebound the ball and then you also have to make free throws, which we struggled tonight. We're 4 for 10, which is not normal for us. But those are the two things in March if you want to win and make a deep run, you have to do.

So I'll have Taj out tonight at the outside goal. She'll be shooting free throws. I saw one at the Marriott. At least it's not raining.

**Q. For either of the players, as Coach mentioned, early on you guys were really able to create some turnovers and cause some havoc there. I was wondering what the defensive game plan was like specifically for attacking Syracuse's backcourt and limiting Phelia and Burrows?**

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: I think it's a thing we've been talking about all year, which is pressure the ball, get up and guard the ball because you have help on the backside. And I think our pressure is what allowed us to get turnovers, take away that next pass when we get a trap. And I think we really focused on that. The coaches were preaching that, to pressure the ball and get in the passing lanes and anticipate the next pass because we know our defense will fuel our offense.

**Q. For the players, regular season can be a grind. What has it felt like just practicing, getting ready for this tournament, getting out there on the court for the first game, getting off to that fast start, just in a second season really?**

REYNA SCOTT: I would say not taking anything for granted. Every game coming up is not guaranteed, so just putting it all out there. Our losses wasn't the best, but like he said, it's been like one, two, three points.

Just putting it out there and trying to take advantage of every opportunity that we have.

**Q. Jeff or the players, in the fourth quarter you looked a little frustrated even though you were up pretty solidly. Was there something specific you were frustrated by?**

JEFF WALZ: Well, we kind of threw the ball to them, which isn't something I really appreciate much. That's something I don't care who I put in the game when, you've got to be able to go out there -- and I'm not saying make every shot you take -- but perform. You've got to know if you're catching the ball at the free-throw line, the top person of the three two is coming to try to steal it. So if you put it above your head or just hold it, they're going to take it from

you.

Those are the things I'm trying to challenge them with, that if you're on that bench and you're going in at the end, you should have been watching for an entire three, three and a half quarters going, okay, I know what's coming. They're not going to take it from me.

But unfortunately, we had it happen three or four times. So yeah, it's frustrating to me.

That's something that we're going to work on because we're going to need them. We're going to need Grace. We're going to need everybody to be able to contribute, if it's 3 minutes, 10 minutes, 5v, 20. But when you go out there, you've got to be able to make a positive impact.

Again, you might have zeros across the board on a stat line, but you can still bring positive energy. And that's what we have to get to. You can't go out there and turn the ball over. I wasn't happy with either of them at times.

**Q. Coach, when Syracuse cut the lead to about 10 points in the third quarter, what was the message to the team to get them to regroup and finish as strong as you guys did?**

JEFF WALZ: Well, just to stop turning the ball over. When we attacked with a purpose and we actually looked at the basket, good things happened. We shot 56 percent from the field, but during a stretch there, we were turning the ball over too much. As I keep telling them, it's hard to score if you throw it to them.

I'm not the smartest in the room, but I'm not the dumbest. I just keep telling them, whatever color jersey you're wearing, throw it to that person.

It's high level. I'm the one who's colorblind. If I turn it over, that's my fault. I can at least have an excuse.

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