

# Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

**Pitt Panthers**

**Coach Jeff Capel**

**Cameron Corhen**

**Brandin Cummings**

**Men's Press Conference**

JEFF CAPEL: First and foremost, good evening to everyone. Hope everyone is having a great day. It's an honor for me to be here once again to represent the University of Pittsburgh at the ACC Media Day.

I'm excited about our group and what we are becoming each day. Excited about the two young men that I have here with me. I feel honored to get a chance to work with them every day, so work for them, with them, and to try to help them in their development as young men and as basketball players.

We're excited about our season. We're excited about who we have and what we think we can become, and we look forward to trying to be our best every day of this journey. We don't take it for granted.

Questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

**Q. Coach, we know the history of Pitt was inside of the Big East. I see Providence. I see Villanova, West Virginia on the nonconference schedule. What does it mean to you to have that Northeast connection? And as the ACC lowers from 20 to 18 games inside of the conference, the importance of scheduling difficult games outside?**

JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, well, certainly where the University of Pittsburgh men's basketball program, they made their name was in the Big East. When the Big East was established in the '80s, Pitt was one of the teams that joined the team somewhere around the mid-'80s and had a lot of success, especially starting in 2002 and until they entered the ACC in the 2013-14 seasons.



This program was multiple times No. 1 overall seeds in the NCAA Tournament, multiple Big East championships, top-10 finishes. It was one of the best programs.

Since Pitt entered the ACC, obviously the program has tried to find its footing, and so when we looked at scheduling, and it's something we've tried to do since I've been here, trying to get some of the Big East flavor back.

And so the Providence game is an exhibition game. Now that you can do it and open it up, that's something that we are really excited about. We'll play them at home this year. We'll go there next season.

Villanova, starting at home, at home with them. Obviously, West Virginia, the long-time rivalry when Pitt left to go to the ACC, that rivalry ended. They didn't play. Then shortly before I took the job, they started playing again.

Certainly going from 20 to 18 gives you more opportunity to do some different things in your schedule. We took advantage of that with scheduling Penn State and doing that at a neutral site. Hopefully that's something in the future that we can continue to do maybe with them, but perhaps maybe looking at some more Big East teams. That's something that we're already in discussions for the following season.

So we're excited to challenge ourselves in the nonconference. We feel like we have a great mix. We have two home games in the SEC Challenge. We'll have Texas A&M at home and Ohio State at home. We'll have neutral games against Penn State and Central Florida so a Big Ten and Big 12 team. We'll be on the road at West Virginia and at Villanova.

So we're excited about who we have in the nonconference.

**Q. You are only a year removed from having a 20-win season. I know it's a lot of sports cliches when coaches give speeches about their teams and realistic goals. What's the realistic goal you tell your team behind the scenes what Pitt is looking like this season?**



JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, our goal -- and maybe this is cliché, but it's to get better every day and to really enjoy and embrace the journey. You know, we don't limit ourselves with expectations. We look at opportunities to try to improve each day and to try to max out who we can be individually and collectively as a group.

We understand that it's a journey. It's a long season. There are going to be great moments. There are going to be adversities. There are going to be tough times. What we have to do is to have the perseverance and stamina and spirit that when those adverse times come, that we're strong enough and the culture is tight enough where we can fight our way through it.

That's where we got in trouble last year. You know, last year was like the tale of two seasons. We were a really good team in November and December. We were a top-25 team. Started out 3-0 in the conference. We had an injury to a guy that was a really big injury, and we were never able to recover from it. That's on us, and it's on me as the head coach.

But I really like the group that we've put together. I think we have a group of guys that are super competitive that have a chip on their shoulder, and feel like individually we have something to prove, which means collectively we have something to prove. Now it's on us to go out there and do it every day.

**Q. A few hours ago Commissioner Phillips got up here and talked about historically how good the ACC has been and how everyone is trying to get back to where the ACC was both from a winning perspective and perception perspective. What's Pitt's role in helping the ACC get back there? How do you attack that just as a program and as a conference?**

JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, well, as a member of this conference, we all have a responsibility for that. You know, we took a step back last year. The previous two years you could easily say that, okay, this narrative is not true, and it wasn't true, but coming in right now if you want to say that about our league, because of what we did specifically in the nonconference last year as a league, it gave a lot of credence to that narrative that's out there.

Now, it's on us collectively as a group of teams as member institutions of this conference to fight our way out of that and to prove once again that we are the premiere basketball conference. You can look at it historically, and there's no doubt historically, but if you look at it in current terms, then you could have some questions about that.

We had one team make the Final Four last year. That's

great, but in this league, you know, we didn't have teams advance in the NCAA Tournament. That's not the norm for this league.

Last year I'm hoping was a little bit abnormal, but we have to get off the mat. There has to be alignment across the board in every area, in investment to each program, to athletic departments. That's from universities, athletic department, everywhere.

College athletics is very different now, and we can't be stuck in the past as a league of, well, we're the ACC. We can't have arrogance and just think that it's supposed to happen because we're the ACC.

Other leagues, other programs are making significant investments into their departments to have success, and we collectively as a league have to do that as well.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you. We'll spend a few minutes with Cameron Corhen. Questions for Cameron.

You may not be aware of the stat, but Pitt lost 53% of its scoring production from last year, so when you think about where you are in practice now and where the season will begin, how will you know that your team is on schedule to be scoring the points to be working the system the way it should be?

CAMERON CORHEN: I think Coach did a great job of putting together a group that can collectively bring production. We won't have to rely so much on just a few dudes. I don't think that 53% will mean as much as people would think.

**Q. Cameron, obviously in today's game stretching the floor is a big thing everybody wants to address. Have you practiced any three-point shots in the offseason, adding that to your game, or is your goal still to be the most dominant big man down low that you can be?**

CAMERON CORHEN: Obviously being down low is a big part of my game, and I can't forget that, but I have put in countless hours on my three-point shot working before and after practice, working hard on that, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of that height, by my count -- one, two, three, four, five players at 6'10" or taller. What's it like to have such a big team to be around?

CAMERON CORHEN: Just so disruptive on the defensive end. So much versatility. We don't really have any dudes that are just slow and can't move. Everybody can guard one through five. It's just a tough defensive team.



**Q. Looking at the transfers that have come in and then looking at from Sydney at Henry, just what can you say about what this does for the team, transfers, just newcomers in general in the front court and how that might bring Pitt back to being as tenacious as it has been in the past on the boards and around the glass?**

CAMERON CORHEN: Like I said, Coach did a great job with the makeup of this team. Everybody is tough. I feel like just physically, like I said, the makeup of this team is different. A lot of older dudes, stronger dudes, physically more dominant. So I feel like rebounding and on the boards will be much better.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. We'll spend a few minutes with Brandin Cummings. Questions for Brandin.

**Q. When you think about the 31 games that you played in last year and you think about the makeup of this team this year, what's your role? Are you going to be same, different? How are you going to play it?**

BRANDIN CUMMINGS: I mean, obviously going from your freshman year into your sophomore year it's always a big step up in the role, but I think most importantly, I worked on my game this summer, and the role that I have is be a leader, kind of show guys the ropes. We have a lot of new guys, a lot of newcomers, a lot of transfers. Go out there and be the best version of myself every game.

**Q. You had a pretty solid season last year, and coming back, what are you doing as an upcoming leader in this team to help this team move forward with Capel who has had some pretty good success since he's come to Pitt?**

BRANDIN CUMMINGS: I think most importantly, I'm working on my game. Like I said, I'm showing guys the ropes. Pittsburgh is tough. That's a culture that we have as a team and as a city. I kind of want to spread some of that toughness on everybody on the team.

I think this year we have the guys, and we have the tools to be the toughest team in the country. I think we're going to execute our plan the way we say we are.

**Q. Kind of related to that, you chose to come back. How weird is it as a player when you see guys hitting the portal and you have so much transfer influx, outflux. How weird is that as a player? What do you do and Coach do to kind of help make sure that the one year is as good as it can be?**

BRANDIN CUMMINGS: I mean, it's a different era in college basketball. You know, it's not just us. It's

everybody. The majority of the teams, you know, are adding a lot of guys, are losing a lot of guys. That's just something that college basketball as a whole has to accept. Everybody is adapting to it, as we are.

We get on the floor, it is what it is. You got five guys out there, and you got to be a team. You got to be together. I think we're more together than everybody else, and I think we're ready.

**Q. You spoke about this is the world we live in now. With Damarco coming in from Oregon State and Barry from South Alabama, what do they do immediately for this team in your opinion?**

BRANDIN CUMMINGS: For one, they bring toughness. Where they come from, they got to be tough. That's just kind of how you got to live life.

They add a lot to the team. Damarco, amazing point guard. One of the best point guards I've been around. One of the best defenders that I've played with.

Barry, you know, he shoots the leather off the ball. Spaces the floor really well, defends really well. He's very athletic.

They bring a lot to our team, and they're going to be really successful this year.

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