

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Boston College Eagles

Coach Earl Grant

Donald Hand, Jr.

Jayden Hastings

Men's Press Conference



knew exactly what we were looking for.

So we got bigger and longer and more athletic and more experienced out of the portal. Certainly Boden Kapke coming from Butler, being a third-year player, played in the Big East. He's 6'11". He's 255 pounds; a really good player that's budding, ready to break out.

Aidan Shaw was at Missouri. Seen a little bit of everything. He's been to the NCAA Tournament. He's been through a year where they didn't win any games in the SEC, so he has a lot of experience. He's a great person. He's one of the better athletes on our team at 6'9".

Jason Asemota came from Baylor. 6'9" wing. Really good player that's going to flourish eventually.

Then a guy you didn't mention is from South Dakota, Chase Forte. I think in the portal we did great. We had good freshmen come in. Our freshmen really want to be at BC. They're special players and special people. I really like our roster.

THE MODERATOR: Curious about Chase. South Dakota is one of those spots where you don't see a whole lot of transfers coming out of. What was it about his play that put him on your radar screen?

EARL GRANT: Yeah, you know, the last transfer that came out of South Dakota went to Texas Tech and they went to the Final Four. He was a guard.

I think with Chase, we were looking for a leadership. We were looking for experience. We were looking for a good character guy, but somebody that was a worker that had toughness, that fit, you know, kind of our DNA at Boston College, which is high-character, talented person that's willing to work and roll his sleeves up.

We thought Chase fit all of those things that we were looking for. He's from North Carolina, so the ACC meant something to him. He really wanted to be at Boston College. He's getting a master's degree.

But he won. He was the defensive player of the year in his

EARL GRANT: Really thankful to be here. Thankful to have these two young men, Donald Hand and Jayden Hastings, with me. We're really excited about this season. We feel like we have a great team, great leadership, we're experienced. Excited to tip off a new season, '25-'26 in the ACC, which we feel is the best college basketball league there is.

So very thankful to be here. Just excited. Happy for these young men. They worked so hard to put themselves in a position to be here on a day like this, and we feel really great about our team and looking forward to the season.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. You and I were just talking about the transfer portal as well as retention, so I know you brought in some guys from Butler, Baylor, Missouri, to name a few, and then you also were able to retain. What does this roster look like for you this season with that mix?

EARL GRANT: Well, I mean, it starts with these guys here. You know, we retained half of our roster, which was very critical for us, because we feel like we do a good job identifying young men that could really compete in the ACC, but also are great students, have great character.

So once we get them on campus, if we can keep them, they're going to develop and they're going and they are going to become special. So I think it starts with retention. It's more important than the transfer portal.

To have six of our players from last year return and five of those six all play significant minutes, it's very exciting.

But, yeah, I do agree, we needed some help and so we went into the portal. We were prepared for the portal. We



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league. They won. He averaged 18 points. He averaged 25 points the last five games of the year. So he's very capable of scoring, but he really wanted to facilitate and serve and be a point guard and assist his teammates, but he's capable of scoring, and he's a great defender and he's a big, physical athletic guy.

Q. Since you've been at Boston College you've endured the highs and lows of the season, but nevertheless you were able to retain your players to come back and play for you, to build and go through adversity together. What kind of identity are you trying to establish under your players here at Boston College?

EARL GRANT: Yeah, I mean, I think most of my time at Boston College has been great. We've just been climbing towards the top. Every year we got better. We won. We were very good in the ACC tournament. We got to the postseason. We had big wins in the ACC tournament. Everything was upward mobility.

The only year that wasn't was last year, which no big deal. We understood. It's a negative and positive. We lost players going into year four, really good players, four starters. If we didn't lose them, maybe these guys don't flourish the way they did. Maybe they don't play as much.

So them playing a lot last year, even though the season didn't go exactly the way we wanted it to go -- had about six overtime games -- they're ready now. So I think that year was actually a part of setting us up to have a good season this year.

Q. I want to talk about the tempo and the style of play and build on what you were talking about. You shot the three as a team pretty well. You just didn't take a lot of them; about 28% of the total points came from three. Is that something you're wanting to implement a little bit more this season?

EARL GRANT: Yeah, we want to shoot about 12% more this year. We got better shooting. We have more guys that can make them, so we're going to make that an emphasis. We want to shoot good threes, so obviously you've got to get the ball inside, post feeds or driving it into the paint to get the defense to collapse.

So we got to work on ways to get more quality threes. I'm glad you brought that up. We did shoot 28, 29%. We want to be at 40% of our attempts coming from three. I think we have a very dangerous team that way, and we're going to really try to figure out how to get more three-point shots.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you for your time.

Questions for Donald.

Q. I think you're one of the premiere players in the ACC. You had a great year last year. Rebounded the ball well, scored the ball well, and Coach talked about Chase coming in. How much does him coming in facilitating and being another scorer open up some things in your game?

DONALD HAND JR: Yes, sir. Good morning. He's going to help a lot. He's very experienced. He led South Dakota to some big victories last year. We've been watching film together, and in practice we gel really well together.

So this year should be really fun. We know how each other play. He knows my spots. I know his spots. So I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Want to make sure I quote you here. It says, when I first committed to BC, I committed to change the culture and help BC basketball get back to the top. Where do you believe that culture is currently and where it's heading?

DONALD HAND JR: It's trending to the top. I still believe that. Me and Coach Grant talked about this a couple of times, and I truly believe this is our breakout year right here.

Yes, I would say about last week I was at church, and the pastor said, the storm doesn't last forever. Last year a lot of people seen it as a storm, and it wasn't a storm. It was like me, Fred, Jayden's first time in that position.

Now we know how it feels to be in big games, we know how it feels to play in tight games, and this year it will be a different outcome because we know how it feels. This is our breakout year, and I'll say it right here. Yes, we're not -- we're going to be top 5 in the ACC. I say it confidently.

Q. You just spoke about going through adversity, battling the storms in church with what your pastor said. What is it about Coach that allows you to be confident within his system but also allows you to play your game? Because a lot of time players go to different systems and are not able to flourish and kind of expose their true game. We saw last year you dominated on both sides of the ball, so him letting you play your game, how does that build your confidence?

DONALD HAND JR: It helps build my confidence tremendously. Coach, he always preaches confidence to his guys, and he said, if you work on it, he will never question a shot you take, and he just trusts his guys. Everybody he recruits, he trusts. He's a man of faith. Our



whole team is big on faith.

When you have faith in God and have a great man like Coach Grant, it makes it simple to go out there and play basketball. I feel like I can say this is one of the best coaches in America, and like I said, we can't wait to show the world what we can do this year.

THE MODERATOR: You made history, you and dad, being the only father/son duo in the ACC to win a player of the week honor. Relationship with family, relationship with basketball?

DONALD HAND JR: One more time.

THE MODERATOR: Just your general comment about your relationship with family and how it relates to basketball.

DONALD HAND JR: Yeah, you know, it goes hand in hand. Growing up, I was taught basketball, but even like preaching to be a better man. It's just, I don't know, like we are taught to just share everything, share the ball. Yeah, honestly I don't have a response for that.

THE MODERATOR: That's fine. Just the idea that you said it goes hand in hand tickled me. Thank you for that.

DONALD HAND JR: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Jayden.

Q. Jayden, you're one of the premiere big men coming into this year. What have you worked on in the offseason to better your game for this season?

JAYDEN HASTINGS: Good morning. Something I've worked on is just maximizing my gifts and talents, defensively guarding guards and being able to be stronger in the paint, offensively just keep working on my post game and just maximizing my role, working on lobs and just being the best me I can be.

Q. You heard your coach say they're ready now, and you just heard your teammate speak about this being a breakout year in his opinion. Why do you believe that those two things are true, that you are ready as a team and that this is a season to break out in a positive way for the Eagles?

JAYDEN HASTINGS: Good morning. I think that everything that is good takes time. I think we've had the time to work through the bumps and bruises, and I think that we know what we want from each other. We know what we want to achieve, and this is the breakout year.

This is the year that we can just put our head down and grind and get to the top 5 that D.J. said.

THE MODERATOR: You're known for bringing high energy on the court. We understand that you bring high energy off the court as well. Where does that energy come from? What's that born from?

JAYDEN HASTINGS: The energy comes from -- I remember an AU coach told me, Your attitude should be like you're the worst player on the team. So it's nothing about on the court. It's just about bringing energy. It's just about make your teammates smile. It's about helping your teammates make the next play after they mess up.

Just having that attitude as if that basketball really doesn't matter. It's about the intangibles.

THE MODERATOR: How do you make your teammates smile?

JAYDEN HASTINGS: Honestly I just look at them. They start laughing (laughing). Yeah, we crack jokes all the time. They're like my brothers, so anything and everything we do we're always laughing.

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