

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Duke Blue Devils

Coach Jon Scheyer

Maliq Brown

Caleb Foster

Men's Press Conference

JON SCHEYER: Very proud to have Maliq and Caleb with me, and it's an honor to be here. For me it's actually hard to believe we're already in this moment where we're playing games in a couple of weeks. Start of the season is less than a month.

Our team has worked incredibly hard. We've had a big-time offseason, focused on individual development from everything from their bodies to their skills to, most importantly, how to be connected together, and that's in every way possible.

For us with Maliq, he's close to coming back. We still have not seen our full group together, so I think for me as a coach that's the biggest challenge that we're missing a key guy, and we haven't been able to see what that looks like, but also, for the other players to understand what it's like to have Maliq out there on the floor.

So for us, very hungry to start the season. We know it's going to be a really difficult schedule that we have to play, but these guys are up for the challenge. I think part of the identity of this group in a world of so many players transferring and the instability started with the fact that we have five guys decide to come back and give us a strong base to this team, along with five newcomers.

And then we had several transfers come in that basically gave up the opportunity to play to come make an impact on our program.

So thankful for this group that we have. Really believe in this team. Now it's a matter of getting connected, building that continuity, and developing a great toughness for the games that we're going to play.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.



Q. Oftentimes everybody asks about the players and how they develop and grow, but I think an unknown question or a question that needs to be asked more is how have coaches kind of grown and developed and adapted over the time? How would you say you've grown from last season into this season, and the impact that you've made on the success that you've had in such a short period of time?

JON SCHEYER: Well, I think for me I'm always -- before I'm asking Caleb to do something or Maliq or any of our players, it's most important to look in the mirror and always think what I can do better.

So every season we debrief, think about areas we want to continue to do that are really good, but also, we address areas that I can do better or our staff can do better.

I'm proud of the success we've had. I think the thing that I've learned going from my first year of coaching to year two, just because something worked last year doesn't mean it's going to work this year, right?

So it's important to identify what you feel transfers over, and then also, what doesn't and not be stuck in a certain way, while making sure you have a strong identity.

I think through these three years now going into year four I feel we've developed a strong identity, but then understand you have to still adjust and adapt according to what your strengths are as a team and who your players are. That's something we're feeling out right now as we go.

Q. Kind of going off of that, sustainability in a positive sense is a very difficult thing to do in the climate that we have today, but you have found a way to do it at Duke. Just what can you say to that, that people use the word "culture," but then there's actually living culture and having sustainability and what can you say to how Duke does it and does it so well to be in the national spotlight and respond to change positively as opposed to running from change?

JON SCHEYER: Well, I think that the advantage that I



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have is the fact that I've gone into a world in coaching where there's been changes every single year, so the only way to survive or to be really good is to adapt, and not reluctantly, but you have to adapt willingly and aggressively.

As far as retaining the group that we have, I think it starts with the character of the guys we recruit. I think it starts with their families.

Then I think on our end we have to make sure that, one, they're always getting the truth from us. Like, we're always sharing our vision in how they can become better, and then they have to feel they're getting better.

So the decisions that these two guys have made behind me or the other three players we have coming back, Darren, Isaiah, Pat, they had to feel those things. I feel that's our responsibility.

At the end of the day, it doesn't mean you're not going to have a guy transfer. That's part of the world we're in. And thank God Maliq did come here. It's hard to imagine our team without him, but we've decided to be selective with that where guys that can come in through high school see their path, and then when we go after a Maliq, in his case, he sees a great opportunity for him to make his impact as well.

That's something we'll continue to try to do.

Q. The construction of your roster this year is quite a bit different than it was last year. Is it easier or more difficult, and what are the challenges of incorporating so many guys who are back as opposed to last year where you only had two guys, where it was basically a new roster?

JON SCHEYER: Well, it's different from the standpoint of just naturally, right? If you take out that COVID year, you think about Sion James for us or whoever. Well, there isn't a Sion this year. For us, instead of having to go in the transfer portal, our guys, the experience for us, comes from within, and nobody greater than these two guys behind me.

I think that's important as you look at the balance of a team. Yeah, I believe we're the least experienced team in the ACC, but I think our experience comes from different places. Dame's experience playing for Barcelona is important and translatable, but it may not be experience in college.

I think the other guys from high school that we've recruited are natural competitors and winners, and, of course, the experience that these guys bring back is so valuable. They

just can't assume and we can't assume that it's now just our turn and it's going to happen again or we're going to have great success. We have to go make that happen.

I've seen great hunger, which is what gives me great confidence for this team. So do I wish we had a little bit more experience? Yeah, of course. But at the end of the day, you want the best combination of skill sets complementing one another, but then also, you need really good talent that fits for how we're going to play, which I believe we have.

Q. On the last two titles that Duke has had back in 2010 you were moved to the point guard position and back in '15 Quinn and Tyus putting their prized Eagles aside and playing together. What are the main sacrifices you've seen from Caleb throughout this offseason to generate this team for a national title this upcoming season?

JON SCHEYER: I think Caleb's mindset, we talk about the 98%, and that's the ability to impact the game without scoring or the plays with the ball. If you really think about it, 98% of the time when you play, you don't have the ball in your hands.

For me, it's his ability to fully embrace that, to attack that. In order for him to reach his full potential and our team, we need for him to do the 98% at a high level.

Yesterday's practice he had nine assists and zero turnovers. Obviously that's with the ball, but those kinds of things of just impacting others. He can score and impact with the ball, but the areas without the ball is where I've seen a ton of growth.

That shows maturity, and it shows how coachable he is and how badly he wants to win a national championship.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you. Questions for Maliq.

Q. Spent time covering you at Syracuse and obviously at Duke. We've heard Jon Scheyer speak very highly of you over the years since you came in and just now. From your point of view, what has Duke done to elevate your game, elevate you as a person, and continue to be the right fit for you for this college experience?

MALIQ BROWN: Yeah, definitely. Just the mindset, obviously, on and off the court. Since I've been here I feel like I've become a better player and a better person off the court.

Just from Coach Scheyer and the rest of the coaching staff, just the habits they've taught me since I've been here from day one. I've got a lot more to learn too, so I'm glad I've been here.

Q. Coach talked about connectivity for you guys. Throughout the offseason, what has the chemistry and connectivity looked like for you guys with another year under your belt?

MALIQ BROWN: Definitely. It's obviously been a little difficult just from last year to this year just knowing, like what coach said, the things that we did last year might have worked, but not everything is going to work.

So just being with Caleb and the rest of the returners just trying to figure out things that we can all do as a team that we know will build each other's habits and being more comfortable outside of the basketball court.

Q. Can you tell us an update on your knee and where your progress is in terms of getting back on the court?

MALIQ BROWN: Yeah. I'm feeling comfortable right now, just feeling good. Yesterday I practiced a little bit, so hopefully coming out the next week and stuff, just be ready to go on the court with the rest of my teammates and start practicing the whole practice.

THE MODERATOR: Maliq, thank you. Questions for Caleb.

Q. How have the conversations been with you in regards to the chemistry with you and Cayden this season coming to the point guard position?

CALEB FOSTER: It's been good. I mean, we both played together. We played against each other. I don't think it's going to be a problem. It's whatever Coach wants. When he puts us out there on the floor, we're just going to do whatever it takes to win.

Q. Can you talk about your relationship with new development coaches, Tyler Thornton and Evan Bradds, and how that's helped your game this offseason?

CALEB FOSTER: I mean, it's been phenomenal. Obviously new additions. Ty coming from Howard, and Coach Bradds coming from the Utah Jazz. They came right in and made an immediate impact. They come and bring energy every day. We watch film with them every day. It's been a great process, smooth transition. Happy to keep building with them.

Q. After your injury freshman year there were a lot of expectations coming into your sophomore season, but I'm wondering this year what expectations have you set for yourself and how might that be different than last year?

CALEB FOSTER: Not really any expectations. Just trying to take it day by day, go hard, get better each and every day, lead, and do whatever it takes to win, ultimately.

Q. We know during the offseason a lot of other teams vie for your services to transfer from Duke. Can you talk about that decision to return with Coach Scheyer and Duke to win a national title?

CALEB FOSTER: Yeah, I mean, obviously growing up, I've been a Duke fan my whole life. I didn't really think about transferring at all. Duke is where I want to be. It's where I want to call home. It's where I want to leave my legacy.

Q. To represent this team, like Coach said, and to be one of the returners on the team in a world where we don't see a high volume of returning players, what can you say not just about yourself and Maliq, but about everyone that has that kind of leadership role to return and lead Duke this season?

CALEB FOSTER: It just goes to show who we are. It's what Duke's program has been made of, people that fight through tough times and battle back time and time again. It's going to be a great season, and I can't wait to get started.

THE MODERATOR: What do you think about Maliq's shoe game?

CALEB FOSTER: It's pretty fire. I would say top 2 on the team, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Top 2. Who is number one.

CALEB FOSTER: Darren Harris. Not Coach Scheyer. Darren Harris.

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