

Atlantic Coast Conference

Operation Basketball

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Jaron Blossomgame

Avry Holmes

Clemson Tigers

Q. Jaron, just what you can say about the experience of at least putting your name initially into the NBA Draft, what you took away from it, and ultimately what brought you back here on this stage for this season?

JARON BLOSSOMGAME: Well, the experience is really fun, going to the Combine and working out with a few teams is very fun, very challenging. But it was something I definitely learned a lot from. Being able to learn from some of the top players in the country and being able to be coached by some of the guys you see on TV. It was really fun. I learned a lot in that whole process.

But with the uncertainty of the Draft, I felt like being able to come back and improve and play on a better team will do me a lot of good with the whole NBA thing.

Q. What's it going to be like to have an actual home schedule in which you're playing in your home?

JARON BLOSSOMGAME: It will be big time for us. Obviously played our games 45 minutes from campus last year. So we had to drive 45 minutes just to play a game and then drive back. So being on campus will be really good for us. Obviously, Littlejohn is complete this year and a lot of fans are definitely excited about it, as we are too. We were very good at home in Greenville last year, but I think we can be even better at home actually being on campus.

Q. Following up, did your team learn something about itself knowing that you had to be not so much in a different building every game in Greenville, but just having to be these nomads, is there something about the chemistry of your team that really sparked?

JARON BLOSSOMGAME: I think we gel really well right now. Even last year, being able to have to play away from campus, we built toughness. We're a really gritty team. I like what we have this year. We have some really talented pieces, and transfers being eligible is definitely going to make a difference for us. I'm very excited about what we have moving forward.

Q. Talk about some of the newcomers, and talk

about how good you think this team can be this season.

JARON BLOSSOMGAME: I tell everybody, this is the most talented team I've been on since I've been at Clemson. Transfer, Shelton Mitchell from Vanderbilt, he's an elite point guard. He's speed point guard wants to push the flow of the game. He always makes the right pass. And Marcquise Reed, former Rookie of the Year in the NEC. He can score the ball and make tough shots and that's something that we need. Elijah Thomas, the big guy from Texas A&M, he's very talented. He can score with both hands in the post. He can defend and rebound. I'm very excited about what these guys bring to the team.

Q. How difficult is it playing against a guy like Tyler Lydon at SU?

JARON BLOSSOMGAME: It's very difficult. He's very tall. He's at the four position, so it's kind of a mismatch. He can really shoot the ball. He can rebound. He's versatile. He's a really good player in this conference.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk about how your place on the floor has changed from being maybe more of an interior baseline player to being more of a wing player?

JARON BLOSSOMGAME: Well, in the off-season I really worked on my ball-handling and perimeter skills a lot. I think the big thing for me was obviously shooting the ball at a high level like I did last year. Coach has to put me on the perimeter if I can make those shots and being able to create off the dribble. Also playing at the four, having bigger guys on me puts me at an advantage to be able to drive them and make reads for my teammates or go in to score.

The big thing for me was just improving every year. Early in my career I was a post. But I think it goes to show how hard I've worked to really improve and be able to play out on the wing, being versatile and being able to play down low also.

Q. What does it mean to you to be nominated for the Erving award? How do you build off what you did last year? What are you preparing for this season?

JARON BLOSSOMGAME: Well, it definitely means a lot to me considering what I've been through and all the

injuries and all the things I've had to overcome to get to this point where I'm at now. I'm very appreciative of that. Coming off what I did last year, I'm very excited for what I can do this year with my teammates. Very excited for what we have and the opportunity we have ahead.

Q. With no surprise you got to the free-throw line 170 times last year. Percentage 78%. Pretty decent from the line. Did you work on any of that during the off-season?

JARON BLOSSOMGAME: Oh, yeah, for sure. Something big for me this year is being a consistent shooter. Shooting the ball at high level from beyond the arc, mid-range, and obviously from the free-throw line. Free throws are something small, but they win a lot of games. That's important for me and also my team.

Q. Avry Holmes at the podium. Obviously coming in last season as a transfer, what you can say about transferring and how important that can be to a career with someone like yourself, and the fact there are so many people transferring? Just what you take away from that?

AVRY HOLMES: I would say in a sit-out year you've got to take advantage of it. I try to take advantage of a sit-out year. It prepared me for last year. But being able to play under Coach Brownell for actually one year is a big difference. So I'm feeling really confident this coming season.

Q. First off, what was your reaction when you heard Jaron was coming back? And how do you see your role changing this year with some of the new arrivals?

AVRY HOLMES: When Jaron decided to come back, everybody was excited just because we feel like we're having a great season this year. He's a really elite player, has great leadership.

Q. How do you see your role changing?

AVRY HOLMES: Just being more of a scorer, better leadership, but being more aggressive offensively.

Q. Avry, you yourself have been to a ton of different venues. Your life over the last couple years has been in transition. Will it be nice to have a bit of stability in your world?

AVRY HOLMES: Yeah, most definitely. Having this new arena and actually playing in the gym that we practice in means a lot. I mean, Greenville was a great experience. I appreciate the support out there, but being able to actually have students come to our games, I feel like it's going to be a fun thing for us.

Q. Kind of defining this year's team, just what you

can say is an accurate depiction of what the team will be and what the mission statement is this year and what you see coming?

AVRY HOLMES: I feel really good about this team. Confident. I know we're going to work hard each and every game. But being here, I feel like Jaron said, it's one of the best teams I've been on, so I'm just ready to play.

Q. Can you describe Coach Brownell with just one word?

AVRY HOLMES: A character. He's a good guy, I guess. I don't know, there's a lot of different things you'd say. Probably humble, a humble guy.

Q. In the past you've been known for defense (no microphone).

AVRY HOLMES: Yeah, Coach emphasized defense, so we're known as a defensive team and that won't change. During each and every practice, he emphasizes that hard work on defense is going to win us games.