

Atlantic Coast Conference

Operation Basketball

Wednesday October 25, 2017



Josh Okogie

Ben Lammers

Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets

Q. Josh, just what you can say about building off of some of those key ACC wins last season, just what you can take away from that.

JOSH OKOGIE: You know, there were a lot of wins that we got last year and there were a lot of lessons learned as far as how to prepare for games and how to properly equip yourself, and I think that we can take those lessons that we learned and apply them to this year and be able to teach the young guys this is how we do things and kind of teach them the culture and get more wins this year.

Q. You exploded onto the scene last year, obviously a selection for All-ACC freshman. Did you expect to have the type of year that you had?

JOSH OKOGIE: Going into the season, you know, a lot of -- I didn't really expect that, but I worked really hard for it day in and day out, just trying to make myself the best basketball player I can be, and it's a credit to my teammates, always looking out for me, and when I get low, they kind of was my support and they always had my back, and that was a really big factor in how I did last year.

Q. You and Josh Pastner came onto the scene at the same time. What did you guys learn from each other?

JOSH OKOGIE: I learned definitely about myself and Coach Pastner is a really good coach and pushing you past your threshold. Right when you think you're doing enough, he tells you, no, that's not acceptable, I need you to do more, and he pushed me, and I think we taught him just how energy is contagious and how energy can just win you games.

Q. Josh, being in such a highly competitive conference, what motivates you to advance your game and rise above the competition that you have?

JOSH OKOGIE: Just seeing all the great talent in the ACC, you know how hard those players are working and you know they're going to come at you even harder year by year, which means that you've got to make your skills up to par and you've got to be in the gym just as much as the opponents. That kind of drive just

makes you want to be in the gym and makes you be the best player you can be.

Q. When you're a new guy, you're looking for leaders, looking for people you might be able to affix yourself to. Who were the people last year that you really sidled up to and learned a lot from?

JOSH OKOGIE: The two guys I would say I learned a lot from was Corey Heyward and Quinn Stevens. From Corey I learned that winning is more important than anything else. He would always tell me, look, man, I'm here, this is my fifth year here, I don't care if I start, I don't care if I do this, I just want to win, and he just always preached to me how important winning was.

Q is one of the most hardest working guys I've ever been around. Q, even when he's having a bad day, a good day, he's always in the gym, and what surprised me the most about him, like I just said, is when he's having a good day, after most good days guys will go home and just reflect on how good their day was, but you see Q in the gym working even harder because he wants to have an even better day than he had, and I think those are two big lessons that I learned, and it's really important for my growth.

Q. Josh, we see you out on the court, but do you have a pregame ritual that gets you ready to play?

JOSH OKOGIE: I love music, so just listening to some of my favorite artists really helps just get me going, and really just being the first one on the court, if I'm not the first one, one of the first, just getting my shots up, shots that I love, getting to my sweet spots and just kind of getting my form right for the game. I think those two things are the biggest factors.

Q. Who's on your play list?

JOSH OKOGIE: A lot of Drake. I love Drake. I like Young Thug. I like a lot of new artists. Anything that gets me going.

Q. Ben, what you can say about Georgia Tech turning the tide; do you feel like that's happening? Are you coming off of last season feeling like you are turning the tide, turning that corner for Georgia Tech?

BEN LAMMERS: Yeah, I definitely feel that way. I think last year we did a great job by creating a culture, and I think the whole entire school as well as other people

started to follow along with that. So I think we'll build off of what we did last year and hopefully improve on that.

Q. Speaking of improvement, last year your improvement was incredible. What was it that you did leading up to last year to do that, and now this past off-season to come up to this year?

BEN LAMMERS: I think one of the main differences going from my sophomore to junior year was just kind of building up an overall conference. Sophomore year I didn't really get that many shots, didn't do a whole lot besides defense and rebounds. I think junior year I had to kind of accept that I was going to be one of the main guys, realize that I maybe have to shoot more often and not be as hard on myself if I miss a shot. So having that confidence that my teammates are behind me no matter what I do definitely helped out. And then going on to this year, I think I've obviously worked on all the general skills like post play, all that, but then I also tried to extend my range a little bit out to the three-point line. If a 5 guy can extend out a little farther it makes it harder for teams to guard, and hopefully that will help the overall flow of our offense.

Q. Watching you last year, one of the rare things you mentioned the three-point shot, but you actually had the low post moves, and that's so rare now that a big man actually has those low post moves. Is that what you pride yourself on? Is that just an added dimension of your game. Having a three-point shot, or do you want to be the low post guy?

BEN LAMMERS: It's definitely -- the three-point is just an added dimension. I'm a 5 player, I play the low post guy as the distributor, so I see that as obviously one of my main assets to the team. I still definitely worked on that, I was just trying to add on a little bit.

Q. It seems like you just got to Georgia Tech. How did it happen that you got to be so old so fast?

BEN LAMMERS: I don't know, it went by insanely fast. It's one of those things, I feel like the older you get, the faster time goes by or something like that. I remember it felt like yesterday I was just a freshman coming in in the summer, freaked out because I had never played against anyone that was over 250 and I had to go against a guy that was like 280 and 10 percent body foot. It's been an interesting ride.

Q. What do you think your biggest takeaway from the college basketball experience is going to be?

BEN LAMMERS: I think it's just maybe the importance of competing against the best you possibly -- the best competition really because no matter what it is, if it's basketball, football, or if it's in the business sense, going against the best always makes you a better

person or better at what it is that you do.

Q. We asked one of the other schools if there are any comedians on the team. Any on your team this year?

BEN LAMMERS: All the guys think they're comedians. I'd say Josh O is probably one of the biggest ones. Then we've got maybe Sylvester, who is going to be a redshirt sophomore this past year. He's going to be actually a post player that has made a lot of improvement. But I'd say either Josh O or Sylvester are the two biggest comedians.