

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Vermont vs Duke

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Brooklyn, New York, USA

Barclays Center

Duke Blue Devils

Coach Jon Scheyer

Kyle Filipowski

Tyrese Proctor

Jeremy Roach

Media Conference

Q. You guys are coming into this tournament with a two-loss -- two losses under your belt. How do you change your mindset into now going into the tournament ready to play and go against Vermont?

JEREMY ROACH: Obviously we lost two games. We learned from it. Really doesn't phase us anymore. We already lost two games before during the season. I think this kind of brought us together even closer. Made us more together but everybody is 0-0 right now so, at the end of the day, it really doesn't matter.

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: Yeah, I think for us, the most important thing is just staying confident. Keeping our group tight, because like Jeremy said, everyone is 0-0. The only thing that matters now is what lies ahead, and we can totally go on a run if we can just focus on what we can control.

TYRESE PROCTOR: To back up what they said, it's a new season. So everyone is 0-0 going into March and into this tournament. So I mean, we learn from it and we just move forward closer.

Q. What's the biggest lesson you took away from that loss, considering they continued winning?

TYRESE PROCTOR: What was it she said?

Q. What is the biggest lesson you learned from that game?



JEREMY ROACH: The last game we played? We weren't us. Give credit to N.C. State. They were in the flow of the tournament and they won five games in five days. I mean, I felt like we were not as connected as we should be.

But we watched that game. We watched the game before. So I feel like we are the most connected right now. Like I said, those losses can't faze us and can't break our confidence. Everybody is 0-0 and everybody is in the same predicament, and it's a one-game season right now and just focus on that.

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: Keep battling. We didn't play our best game that game but you know, the most important thing is just keep on fighting, keep playing together. Don't lose that trust in each other.

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah, same, we just have to learn from it.

Q. If you can reflect on the season as a whole, what do you think is the biggest improvement the team has made from day one, and maybe also a little bit about the freshmen, what you've seen how they have developed this year?

JEREMY ROACH: We have had a hell of a season. Obviously people might not think that right now, but in our eyes, we had a great season. We have been Top-10 all year. I mean, beginning of the season, we had some injuries obviously and that kind of is what made the freshmen grow up a little bit quicker than expected.

But I mean, the ups and downs, everybody stayed the course, stayed locked in and stayed true to ourselves. Like, when we have losses, everybody learns from it. Nobody starts putting the blame on anybody. We just start coming together even closer and do what we've got to do.

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: Yeah, we had a really good season. Obviously it's not done yet. Not close to being over. We should be proud of what we accomplished. We persevered through a lot of injuries, a lot of things, and during that time, the freshmen did grow up a lot. They grew their confidence. They got more comfortable being out there on



the court, and just doing the -- playing the way we play, they fell into that really good.

TYRESE PROCTOR: For me, I think the biggest thing that I've seen our group do is just how resilient we are. You know, we have had three or four, two games in three days. You know, how we responded from two losses at the start of the season, all the injuries we've had and different lineups we've mixed and matched. Everyone has been really coachable and locked in, and I think that's why we are in the position we are now.

Q. For any one of you guys here, in terms of the slow starts the last couple games, how will you be able to not get those slow starts and how can you turn that to an advantage?

JEREMY ROACH: I think it just starts with me. Really, it's us three, the returning guys. We've got to come out there and set the tone defensively. We know offense is going to come and we can score with the best of them. But if we come in and set the tone defensively, set the tone how physical the game is going to be, the paces that we're going to play at, I don't think it will be ^ slow starts.

But just give credit to the teams. They have been locked in at beginning of the games.

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: Yeah, Jeremy said it really good. It starts with us three and the tone we set on the defensive end, and the offense will come as we go. It really starts with us setting the tone, giving the energy for the rest of the team to feed off of.

TYRESE PROCTOR: I think they both just said it. I think it just starts with us and that's all it is.

JON SCHEYER: It's always such an honor to be in the NCAA Tournament. Our team is excited. It's been a little while since we've played and our team has had a great week of practice. Very focused and grateful to get this opportunity to play Vermont. A lot of respect for them and Coach Becker. They have an amazing winning program. And any time you're playing somebody that's a champion of their league, their tournament, we know it's going to be a big-time game.

For us now, we are not fully back healthy like we thought. We might have a chance to. Caleb Foster is going to be done for the season. My heart breaks for Caleb because Caleb has done literally everything you could ask from a guy who has an injury and trying to get back out there.

We have gone multiple second opinions. He tried to practice earlier this week. He wasn't able to really be

himself. And so he's going to be out. He has a stress fracture in his ankle, and it's a unique injury. And so we'll be missing him.

But everybody else needs to step up and we have to get Caleb healthy and taken care of, but we want to share that before we get started with the rest of our team.

Q. With Foster out, how does that impact your rotations and how do you plan on attacking Vermont?

JON SCHEYER: Well, there's no replacing Caleb. He's got a big heart. He's a tough competitor and he's just somebody that makes everybody better on the floor. And unfortunately we've had to play without him since the Wake Forest game, and there's no replacing him.

But we have really capable players off the bench, Jaylen Blakes and TJ Power. And we need Jeremy Roach to be Jeremy Roach, we need Tyrese Proctor to be Tyrese Proctor. And obviously Jared to be him. I think there is a little bit for our team disappointed with Caleb, but there's also the feeling of wanting to have his back.

Obviously we are a different team, no question. But we've done this before. We've done this throughout the year with different guys being out, and it's no different now of how we need to step up and do it collectively.

Q. What is the biggest improvement you've seen from day one from this team, and also, second part, what's your biggest improvement from last year as a head coach? What have you learned the most?

JON SCHEYER: Well, it's been two amazing up-and-down, challenging, two years. First I'll talk about our team because that's what you're asking, right, like our team first.

I think just the connectivity. I think our team learned early on, even though you had a core group returning, one year doesn't translate to the next. You know, it's still a completely new year, and so these guys have done a great job of just reacting to how people play us, the strengths of our team.

We have different strengths than last year. Our scoring and shooting is way better. You don't have a guy like Derek Lively protecting the rim, but we have still -- our defense has been top 20 in the country and had a great defense. We just had to do it a different way.

So the connectivity for me has just gotten better and better and better as the season's gone along. And I'd say the same for myself. The more -- look, I think we've gone

through a lot of adversity in two years. I think we have seen a lot of -- unfortunately we haven't had the same starting lineup for a stretch of games the way you would hope. But that's part of the game. That's part of it.

And being in different environments, different situations, it just makes you better. And so for me, I'm very confident with obviously our program moving forward, but for me it's all about here and now with Vermont and preparing for tomorrow.

But I'm thankful to have this group, to have been able to coach them, to get better every day, and we've seen a lot thrown at us. It's going to make us ready.

Q. The slow starts the last couple games have hurt you guys. What can you attribute to those slow starts and how can you change that?

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, well, it's really important. And I wish it's something you can really point to one specific thing or put your finger on. But, you know, the slow start like last game against N.C. State, we played great defense. They didn't score for three and a half minutes. Our offense really hurt us last game. Other games, it's just been slower to the ball and the defense wasn't at the level.

We spent a lot of time talking about it. If you go back, you know, a few games ago, we did have a quick start against UVA. And we've done it. It's just, you can't go into a thing where you make it contagious. So we've had that the last couple games. We've simulated start of games in practice which has been great for us. We've simulated start of halves.

And these guys know how important it is, and I'm anxious to get off to a big start tomorrow, but also not make it bigger than what it is. Let's have our foot on the gas right away and good things will happen.

Q. Some big news coming out of Dartmouth pertaining to college athletics overall. Curious your thoughts on the men's basketball team unionization efforts.

JON SCHEYER: You know what, I've seen -- since I've become head coach or the coach-in-waiting, the amount of change that's happened in college athletics I think has been more than any time in history. So for me -- I think in the beginning you get concerned about how everything is going to go or what does change look like, and there's a lot of reaction to team dynamics with NIL and how are we going to handle that.

Everything is going to work out. We have to continue to adapt. I am excited about what can happen, but also I'm

not going to sit here and say exactly what that means.

I'm always going to be for our student athletes having their fair share and rights, and they deserve all that. But for me, it's always step-by-step. And so I think our sport is going to look a lot different in the next year, in the next five years, and I'm all for it. But just, you have to continue to get more information and understand what's what.

Q. Your first year on the staff at Duke, you guys played Vermont very early in the season. What did you kind of learn about the Vermont program during that game and what have you learned kind of in your time since about making sure that your team is ready to play against the underdogs, really?

JON SCHEYER: Vermont, you're playing a team that never feels they are the underdog, you know what I mean. They have -- I mentioned it right away, the job that Coach Becker has done there, his staff. I've known his guys on staff on the road recruiting for a long time. They do a great job, and they have a winning culture, just like we do.

So there's a ton of respect. I remember that game like it was yesterday. You know, they didn't get a shot off right then, but the shot went in. You know, told our team about it. That's the last time we played.

So the respect level, the appreciation for how good they are, but also how good their program has been, is they are at the highest level. Any time you go into this tournament, it starts with that. And then obviously you get into the game prep and understanding who they are as a team and following the game plan. Ton of respect for them and who they are.

Q. You mentioned a few times throughout the season about honest conversations that you've had with your team and how coachable they are and how they respond after not-so-good moments. What have you talked about with them for the last week in those kind of conversations?

JON SCHEYER: It's more of the same. Just addressing them honestly.

I'm genuinely really lucky to be the coach here and to coach the group of guys that we have in our locker room. Because wearing this Duke uniform means a lot. There's a lot that comes with it. When things are going really well, you can feel like you're better than maybe what you are. And when things aren't going as well, you can feel like you're a lot worse than what you really are.

And I think it's no exception when you lose in the ACC



tournament, we lose our last regular-season game, and it can feel like the world is ending a little bit even though this is what all these guys came back to do and came back for is this moment right here.

So one is a reminder of that. And, two, it can't be -- we have to learn from what's bit us this year. It's more of the same in that N.C. State game. Every single one of our guys has taken responsibility, specifically our leadership. When you think about a Jeremy Roach, Tyrese Proctor. Flip had a terrific last game, 28-14, the way he competed. Just the veteran guys, Mark Mitchell. So when you are having conversations with them, it's putting it all on the table. They gave me some good thoughts, actually, some different perspective.

So I think the way we are connected going into this is great, but I'm just proud of the way they have responded. And we've been here before. You know, we've talked a lot about after Georgia Tech earlier in the season. I don't feel like it's a whole lot different now except for the time of year and knowing it's one-and-done time.

Q. How do you think Vermont will guard Flip?

JON SCHEYER: I don't know. Do you have any ideas? I wish I knew exactly. The one thing I would say is this season, I feel we've kind of seen it all. I don't want to say we've seen it all because I'm sure there's something different. But teams have doubled. Teams have cross-matched with us.

And so I do feel confident in however they are playing, that we've seen it before, or we know how we have to attack it.

You know, obviously he's a key guy for us with not only how he scores, but how he can create. I don't know. We'll be ready. But he's got to be himself. That's the biggest thing, no matter how they guard him, we want him attacking, aggressive, and just like he was last game.

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