

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

Friday, March 22, 2024

Brooklyn, New York, USA

Barclays Center

Duke Blue Devils

Coach Jon Scheyer

Mark Mitchell

Jared McCain

Media Conference

Duke 64, Vermont 47

JON SCHEYER: One, I thought it was a great college basketball game. Great tournament game. We knew going in, Vermont, John Becker, his staff, the job they have done, we knew it was going to be a battle. And I thought they threw in -- not threw in, but I thought they made some really tough shots at the end of the first half.

The beginning of the second half they made a great run. I thought our response is what I'm really proud of. Literally I could go down the line with each of these guys that stepped up and made big shots, big rebounds. But really big defensive stops, to hold them to 47 points.

They are tough, man. They spread you. They drive you. They post you. Just thought it was a terrific job by these guys and showing a lot of toughness, a lot of heart and really proud of this win.

Q. You guys, as Coach just said, you responded there and you held them scoreless for over four minutes to close the game. Can you speak on how you guys locked in defensively and just relied on that end of the floor to really lock them down and pull out this win?

MARK MITCHELL: Obviously they hit some shots there in the middle of second half and went on a run. We just tried not to panic, went back to the huddle and fixed some things in our communication and tried to lock in and dig down deep and get stops. That's what we talked about the last week when we get in these tight moments to go deeper, get stops and we did that.



JARED McCAIN: We stayed poised down the stretch. They hit tough shots and we stayed poised. And we worked on it all week, get defensive stops, defense is going to win these games. We have the talent for offense; it's going to be defense.

Q. Kyle has been such a huge focal point of the offense, only took one shot and didn't make a field goal, and they were doing a lot of double-teaming. How about the effort that you guys showed and how did you overcome the fact that he didn't do what he normally does tonight?

JARED McCAIN: I have to give a huge shout to Flip. He got me these open shots. So even though it doesn't show on the stat sheet, even if I miss some of those shots, he won us a lot of those plays, those possession. I got a lot of love for Flip when he finds me outside the post.

MARK MITCHELL: Obviously I didn't know he only had three points. I thought he affected the game, his passing and rebounding was great. Just did what it took to win. He played good defense for most of the game and just affected the game every way. And we ran our offense through him and we got good looks and open shots and that's all you can ask for.

Q. Can you both talk about how it feels to play at the Barclays Center, Jared, for your first March Madness and Mark, your second?

MARK MITCHELL: It's great. Obviously playing at Duke, getting to play in the Garden. Barclays is a first for me and it's a special place obviously. Has not been open for the longest amount of time. But just the moments, being in New York City, the basketball culture and being able to be here and playing in an arena like this, one of the cooler arenas I've been so, it's really special.

JARED McCAIN: I was excited to play out there. Always grateful for the moment any time I step on the floor. This is March Madness, I have watched this since I was a kid, so to play in it is a blessing and I'm just happy to get the win.

Q. Do you feel you're building momentum for this



victory?

JARED McCAIN: For sure, I feel like a lot of people count us out, obviously the past two losses we had, but I feel we're playing our best basketball versus Virginia. So, you know, like Jeremy said, stay on that side. But I think we have some momentum and when we get stops and we play defense, we can win a lot of games.

MARK MITCHELL: Any time you can get a nitty-gritty win like that, it helps your team, helps your camaraderie and helps your togetherness. I think we are going to use that going forward the rest of the weekend to help us.

Q. Can you reflect on the poise of Jared, first NCAA Tournament game. We are seeing freshmen across the country, and it's not easy for every one of them, yet he made it look easy for large periods of the night. How proud are you of the way that he played?

JON SCHEYER: Well, Jared is -- one, I'm not surprised by what he did. Jared, he's built differently. He's made for these moments, in my opinion. And, look, I don't think there's one way you can skin a cat with, how you put together a team to win. And, you know, look, I believe in this group that we have. And obviously do I wish Caleb was out there? And we had some injuries with Christian Reeves and Jaden Schutt, of course.

But I believe in this group. And you have a guy in Jared, like some of the shots he hit. The one, I think they cut it to two and he hit the three to go up five, and that was maybe the biggest shot of the game and he's not fazed by it. He's not fazed by anything. And I'm just really proud of his effort and just him being different.

Q. What did you see out of Jaylen?

JON SCHEYER: I thought Jaylen gave us a boost. You could feel him on the court, his defensive intensity. He knows what he's doing. I'm sure he would want back those opportunities in transition in the full court, but to me that doesn't define how hard and how well he played. Like he gave us a big lift there.

And we just felt like we needed some -- we needed to inject some energy into our team, and Jaylen is giving that to us in the past. We need our bench, Ryan, obviously, and Sean who has been there, and TJ just to stay ready. It can be a little bit on who you are playing against in matchups, but also just we need that energy, and Jaylen brought it.

Q. Obviously it's a bad ending for Long, getting hopped off. Proctor's defense on him during the

game, holding him nine points below his average, he's their leading scorer. How nice a job do you feel like Proctor did with him and how big a part of your defensive strategy was that?

JON SCHEYER: Well, look, obviously Long is a key to their team. He's their leading scorer but his shooting is scary. And you know, look, I don't think Tyrese necessarily gets the attention he deserves for his defense. Like he's a big-time defender. And you know, we are fortunate, Long had a couple good looks that he missed, but also the effort that you have to have for an entire possession because of the way they move and screen and cut. It's unorthodox and it's difficult to defend.

Q. What do you make of your leading scorer having one shot in the game and what you have to do moving forward --

JON SCHEYER: I'm glad you asked the question because Flip, so many guys get caught up in stats, especially young players, it can be about scoring. Look, he's our leading scorer, and he led us in assists during conference. He led us in rebounding. He does so much for our team. But for him to be such a willing passer, and we have so much shooting on the floor, I thought it was just a big-time game by him to be honest with you. And it's a lesson for any high school player that's trying to make it. Like he impacted the game taking one shot. He's rebounding.

I should have said it with those guys up here, but I thought our guards screwed him a little bit. I thought they missed some open shots, too. He ended up with four assists. I thought it could have been more. But just really proud of him, and he competed the whole game. Competed the whole game.

So again, do we need to give him more shots? Yes. But tonight I thought he made some great reads.

Q. How great was it to have the atmosphere, although it was not an indoor stadium, but for your fans to travel up to Brooklyn, New York to support your team?

JON SCHEYER: I thought our fans were incredible. We felt it from the beginning. One of the things, when you get in the first round game, at least, maybe the second-round game as well, but you have -- when you're the first game, it can feel like it's not full because you still have other teams that are playing after us. They have tickets, as well. And so what happens is all of a sudden halfway through the game, you feel it even more.

And so when a team is making a run, especially I don't think the other teams are rooting for us, but that's the



feeling that I get sometimes.

But our fans were incredible, and I thought it was an electric environment. To have the tournament here in New York in Brooklyn, I think is a great thing. And you know, our fans travel as well as anybody in the country. So we need everybody back on Sunday, and can't wait for this opportunity. Thank you. Thank you very much.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports .

