

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - TCU vs Duke

Saturday, March 21, 2026
Greenville, South Carolina, USA
Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Duke Blue Devils

Jon Scheyer

Cameron Boozer

Patrick Ngongba II

Maliq Brown

Media Conference

Duke - 81, TCU - 58

JON SCHEYER: TCU coming in, we knew how this would be a hard-fought game. I just keep coming back to the character of these guys. For Pat to come back to this game, was not easy by any means. He was fighting like crazy. He even came up to us before the first game, and just in the best interest of him, and ultimately our team also -- well, we always want him back out here, but we tried to get him ready for this game. That was pushing to begin with. But the fact that he's fighting to come back.

It's ironic we have our front line here because the job these guys have done. You look at the rim protection, you look at the rebounding, 42-25, these guys are big-time winners. It's as good of a front line that there is.

Again, we're more whole with Pat being back, obviously Caleb's working every day like crazy. I just thought the defense in the second half was big time. We found it, and really that's what willed us.

Q. Cam, you started out slow in the first half. You opened up the bag in the second half with 17 points. How much was it controlling the game for you guys, or was that part of the game plan?

CAMERON BOOZER: They're a great team. They did a great job swarming the point, protecting the rim. So I just didn't have a lot of looks really. Second half we figured out some things that got me going downhill, got some high-lows.



Sometimes it's just the flow of the game. You try to get the best shot available. Sometimes it's not you. Sometimes it's the other guys. Sometimes it's lay-up at the rim. I should have found ways to be more aggressive and found a way to get shots up, but at the end of the day, if we're getting the shots available, it doesn't matter who it is.

Q. Pat, can you just talk about how you prepared mentally making your return right into the round of 32 against this very physical TCU team?

PATRICK NGONGBA II: Our first game, I just tried to be locked in on the bench, just doing whatever I can just to engage myself, just like doing whatever I can, just seeing if I was out there, plays I would make. Then like today I would say, just doing everything that I would do like regularly.

Q. To the other two, I was wondering if you could speak to Pat's return and the lift it gave you.

MALIQ BROWN: We've seen Pat working his tail off to get back. Knowing Pat was going in this game gave us a lot of energy and a lot of boost going into this game. It just shows how important he is to the team having him on the court.

CAMERON BOOZER: Yeah, he gave us a lot of juice coming back. Even just walking through. To see him out there, we all got happy, ecstatic. I almost started jumping around and stuff, just because we know how hard he works and we know how much he means to the team. We're just super happy to have him back for sure.

Q. Cam, Thursday you were kind of critical of your guys about the way that you started the game. How much better was it today, and how much more like Duke do you kind of feel like you guys looked? Also, Maliq, how much did it help you to have him back?

CAMERON BOOZER: We definitely started better. Obviously TCU is a great team. They made some tough shots in the first half. They got some great players who can get baskets. Just overall intensity was great.

The second half, that's where we felt the Duke defense,

intensity, rebounding, protecting the rim. I think we made it really tough for them scoring in the second half, and I think that's how it has to be for us moving forward for the rest of the games we play.

MALIQ BROWN: Like I said, just having him back, just a lot of emotions, a lot of energy going into the game, just knowing, if I came out, he was going to be on the court. Obviously we know he was going to protect the rim. Obviously knowing he was going to be a big factor for us on the offensive end, just knowing he was a big presence for us on the court.

Q. Any of the players, you guys faced adversity coming out of the half with a 6-0 run, and then responded with your own 6-0 run to take the lead back. Just talk to me about what was said in the huddle and how you guys regrouped to take that lead back.

CAMERON BOOZER: We were just talking about how we came out soft, we gave them confidence, and we said just now's the time. Let's get stops. Let's get a run going. Let's do what we do. We came out and we did that, and we went on our run, like you said.

Just getting the stops, protecting the rim, being the more physical team. That's what we hung our hat on all year long, and we've got to continue to do that the rest of the year.

Q. I know every game, every half, every possession is different. What are some things that you guys took out of the first game that you implemented this game that you can take to go further in the tournament?

MALIQ BROWN: I feel like just obviously the way we started off the first game, going into this game, just not pacing, going out there and leaving it all on the court. Obviously just knowing Pat was there, I felt like going into the game, I felt like the whole energy in the locker room going into this game it was there. Honestly, from last night knowing he was going to be on the court, his presence there all day, I feel like it uplifted everybody on the team.

Q. Coach, you're 34-2 now heading into the Sweet 16, it's kind of hard to find many weaknesses. If you had to find one weakness right now heading into this next stretch, one point of emphasis moving forward, what would that be?

JON SCHEYER: I'm not going to tell whoever we play this is our weakness. Again, I feel as a coach, I feel there's a lot of things to clean up. What's happened with us the last two weeks is the fact that Pat and Caleb have been out. We didn't practice as much as I would have liked.

Even going forward, that's something we have to be smart with. So just the habits, just the habits we've developed all year. I think especially on the defensive end, the consistency we saw in the second half, I would like to see that all the time.

Then just to me it's habits. I can show you offense, defense, both ways, just those are the things that actually you can lose later in the season. I think that's going to be a big point of emphasis for us -- our passing habits, taking care of the ball, finishes. I can go down the line on defense too.

Q. Talk to me about when you went with the big lineup and you put the ball in Cameron Boozer's hands, having him run the show and bringing the ball up a bit. Tell me how you push the buttons that's way.

JON SCHEYER: He's really a point guard. We have two point guards on the floor with him and Cayden. His ability to play pick-and-roll, his ability to pass, and his ability to create his own shots and get downhill, we call it, starting the dominoes, he does a great job of that. It's a luxury having two guys on the floor that see the game, think the game that way.

He did a great job in the second half of just controlling it.

Q. Yesterday you said that you didn't think your team played to its identity against Siena. How much closer to that were you guys tonight?

JON SCHEYER: I thought the second half was -- it was there after the first minute and a half, two minutes. Even after the first half, you're not going to blow people out. Is it felt like a big-time tournament game. You have a four-point lead, you wish, man, can you have gotten it to nine or ten the way the last few minutes went.

But you have the lead, and I thought when we got back to just guarding the way we can, valuing the ball on the offensive end, that's where we got separation, and that's been the identity all year.

Q. Coach, Duke ended the night with 17 turnovers, its second highest of the season, but you were able to still build that gap later in the second half. What got your team to settle?

JON SCHEYER: We always talk about fighting for the rim. That's the best shot you can get in basketball is a dunk. For us, our best 3s come from when we can hit the post, get a cut, get a drive, where we touch the paint.

I thought in the first half we were just very perimeter oriented. Credit them, they have a very good defense. They pressure you. They have active hands. I thought in the second half we just had more poise of understanding how we're trying to fight for the rim and making more really simple plays.

Q. Coach, just talk to me about Cayden's impact and his growth during this tournament and his confidence that he had. It don't really much show on the stat sheet, but he played a decent game in controlling that offense today.

JON SCHEYER: The thing I love about Cayden is he understands what it takes to win. It's been his scoring the last couple games for us, and tonight we just needed him to run the show. He was very patient, very efficient. Last two games he has 10 assists, 2 turnovers. 5-to-1 ratio is pretty good. And then he's guarding. He's just impacting the game in a whole bunch of different ways.

Q. A lot of the discussion coming into this matchup was that TCU has played all four Number 1 seeds, but nevertheless, I think that people forgot that Duke has the most AP top 25 wins in the country. You look at the schedule that you've played this year, it's top in the country in my opinion. Just speak on orchestrating that schedule and getting ready for a pesky TCU squad tonight.

JON SCHEYER: I hope it gives our guys confidence. No matter who you play when you advance, today's game was a good example. I think we've been in some wars like this. We've been tested and slower pace, faster pace, different kind of defenses that play different coverages.

I think the thing for us is we have a unique team with how we play. So it's hard to look at somebody else and say, this is what they're definitely going to do. Part of that's personnel. Part of that's how we play.

I think the confidence that our guys have from the schedule, I think that really showed in the second half.

Q. Definitely night and day presser for a post-game presser from last game to today's game. What do you attribute the turnaround for you guys today? Was it more so the first game was shaking off the first game jitters or versus today?

JON SCHEYER: I always -- for me, when a game doesn't go the way that it should, I spend a lot of time just thinking about -- again, you can't have a lot of time in this quick turnaround, but I took that night, a few hours afterwards just to think about how I could have helped our guys better.

I think it snuck up on me that our two most experienced guys in the Tournament or a game like that are Caleb and Pat. Maliq is a senior. Maliq has never played in a first-round game, NCAA Tournament game. There's just a different feeling associated with it. It's the first time you're playing where it could be the end of your season. It's your first time playing where the other team doesn't want to go home.

I thought there were incredible lessons there for me, for our staff, for our program, but most importantly for our players. I thought the urgency we had tonight was there from the get-go. That doesn't mean it's going to be perfect.

I'm just really proud of them for coming off three games in a row last week, Thursday finding a way to win. Second half again, just finding a way. And now we have to get refreshed the next two days, find out who we're playing, and keep this thing rolling.

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