

Maui Invitational presented by Novavax

Monday, November 25, 2024

Lahaina, Hawaii, USA

Lahaina Civic Center

North Carolina Tar Heels

Coach Hubert Davis

RJ Davis

Drake Powell

Seth Trimble

Postgame Press Conference

North Carolina 92, Dayton 90

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the guys.

Q. Drake, can you take us through that three-pointer you knocked down.

DRAKE POWELL: Just when you have a very talented player like RJ on your team, I feel like he draws so much attention, so it's just important to always stay ready. I feel like he can trade for others very well.

Yeah, just set my feet, knocked it down. It was a good experience.

Q. Second largest second half comeback in program history. Third 18-point comeback today in this gym. Describe what it was like playing in this game.

SETH TRIMBLE: It was electric. It was like a high school-type atmosphere, something we all kind of miss. It was a super loud gym. We had I don't know however many percent of the gym packed out with our fans.

Just have to us behind our back making the comeback was amazing. We knew we were super capable of it. We knew we were going to do it.

Just to do it in this type of atmosphere, how loud it was, it was super fun.



Q. RJ, down 21, what was the conversation in the locker room at halftime? Mostly Coach Davis or anyone on the team speak up? When did you truly feel like you had the daylight to pull off this level of comeback?

RJ DAVIS: There was a lot of motivation going into halftime for myself and Seth. We were kind of like the voice in terms of just trying to get guys going and just build our spirit.

Obviously we went down big in the first half. Wasn't the first half we like to play. Myself and Seth, we just told them, like, We got to stop shooting ourselves in the foot. We always putting ourselves in this positions and got to climb our way back into games.

If we can just put together the second half like we did tonight in the first half for a full 40 minutes, we'll be more than fine. I feel like in the second half, the way we battled, competed, we just chipped away possession by possession.

I think that's when we knew we would come back from this game. That was from everyone, not just one person. It was a collective contribution from Drake hitting the corner three, Seth fastbreak layups, Elliot making nice passes to J Wash. J Wash talking on the defensive end on the switches.

Just those little plays and details make big things happen, and that's why we was able to come out with the win.

Q. With the game set tomorrow against Auburn, how are you preparing for that?

SETH TRIMBLE: We'll get back tonight, eat, start prep right away. Watch our personnel, watch what they did today, watch their plays in the year.

Auburn is a really good team. They're very competitive. They're very physical. I mean, I think they're a top five team. We have our hands full. It's going to be a good game. We know we have to prep ourselves mentally because we got to put two halves together tomorrow. We can't sustain this 15-point comeback every second half.



Prepping ourselves that way.

Q. Obviously you had just been touching on it. I know you're not thinking about past games, but the Kansas game was a similar one. What do you think was the difference of coming out on top this time around?

RJ DAVIS: I would just say it's heart and not giving up and wanting to compete and wanting to win. The starting five and the bench. We went into that locker room, obviously some explicit words being said. That was in a way of trying to get everybody to compete hard irrelevant. They were kicking our butts on both ends of the floor. Out hustling us, out toughing us. We didn't allow that no more in the second half.

Like you said, we kind of did that against Kansas. It's not sustainable for the whole year because it's a long year and teams are really good. We can't keep coming out flat in the first half and then trying to put a comeback in the second half.

I'm really proud of the group effort that we had tonight. Just shows how really talented and gifted this team is. But we just got to do a better job of putting both halves together.

SETH TRIMBLE: One more thing. I don't know if we made a promise to ourselves, but we really bet on ourselves that we weren't going to let this be like Kansas, end up like Kansas, losing the last 30 seconds of the game.

We said it at halftime, We're not going to let this be Kansas. We set it about three seconds left to go. We kept reiterating it.

Q. RJ said there were some explicit words. Who was saying those?

RJ DAVIS: Me, Seth.

SETH TRIMBLE: Me.

HUBERT DAVIS: Not me.

RJ DAVIS: Not Coach Davis (smiling).

Q. RJ, can you take us through the play where you found Drake in the corner. You were hot in the second half. What did you see to trust him in that moment?

RJ DAVIS: Well, I remember Elliot had the ball. We called five up. J Wash was setting the screen. I kind of lifted up. I realized I brought my defender towards Elliot as I was driving. I spaced out, did a little backdoor cut.

As I was driving I saw the big pull in. I was able to get around the big. Their defense shifted and rotated. I found Drake in the corner. Trusted him. I knew he was going to knock it down. That was a big-time shot from him. That's what I saw. That was the play that happened.

Q. RJ and Seth, you both have four fouls for extended periods, as well as Elliot. Does that change your approach?

SETH TRIMBLE: We got to be maybe a little bit more timid on defense, on the defensive end. It kind of allows us to play smarter. Honestly it kind of helps us. It has its cons as well.

We've been here before. We've all played in (indiscernible) before. This wasn't my first time it all; wasn't his. So we were used to it.

Helped us play smarter. We can't play as aggressive. You kind of want to play more aggressive coming back when you're down 21. We were able to do it. It worked out.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, guys.

Questions for Coach Davis.

Q. Of course you had Drake in there a lot in the second half. Defensive versatility was certainly a benefit. Can you speak to Drake's defense in that second half as well as the shot he made in the corner?

HUBERT DAVIS: Drake is gifted athletically. He's elite defensively on and off the ball. I thought his length, athleticism, and pressure on the ball when we were switching caused them problems. Then also his ability to rebound the basketball. I thought he stepped up when he got into the game.

To be able to have the confidence, to be able to knock down that three in the corner to put us up by one was huge. Really happy and really proud of Drake tonight.

Q. In the second half a couple of the guys mentioned Kansas, we don't want to let this be Kansas. What was your message to the guys at halftime?

HUBERT DAVIS: I've said to this group that the growth and the step that this team needs to take is to getting to that level that allowed us to get back into the game, to start the game that way and to stay there.

Yes, it gave us and it gave them confidence on what we were able to do on the road at Kansas, to be able to give

them an example of there's a lot of time to be able to come back. It's not a situation where we have to come back from 21 in two possessions. Just a possession at a time.

Actually the first four minutes of the second half, they came to the bench and I told them, They're not making comeback plays. I said, You're just not. You're not getting the rebounds. You're not getting defensive stops. You're not getting through screens. You're not getting loose balls. You're not taking the ball strong to the hoop. You're not dunking when you get around the basket.

Just not just making those plays. I said, If you would change that, this game would flip.

They were able to do that against a really good Dayton team. I also told them, This isn't sustainable. You can't do this every game. It's just not. That's going to be one of the major steps with this team. Can they play with the sense of urgency on both ends of the floor? Can they start there and can they stay there for a full 40 minutes?

Q. There was something in the air in this gym today, wild comebacks. Probably the best single day in the history of this tournament. After this kind of result, comeback, what emotions are you feeling? Are you feeling concern for your team or elation they were able to pull themselves together?

HUBERT DAVIS: I find myself everywhere. I'm very proud of how they reacted, how they responded. I'm really happy for them. I love those kids. The way they persevered through adversity out there on the floor out there and was able to turn this around, as I said before, against a very good Dayton team, I'm really proud of them. I really am.

I'm also keeping it real with them, as well. There's areas of consistency and growth that we need to move forward with. Those are things that we'll talk about. We talked about after the game. Things that we'll talk about tonight and tomorrow in preparation on playing Auburn.

Q. You did talk about the need to clean things up. Was there a point in the first half where you felt the guys needed to settle down a bit?

HUBERT DAVIS: Prior to this game, I think somebody told me this, I don't know, but somebody told me that we were No. 1 in the country in terms of not turning the ball over. Okay, we flipped it in the first half. How many? We had 12 turnovers for 19 points? I don't know how many. That was uncharacteristic for us.

We talk about all the time defense. They shot 51% in the first half. We talk about rebounding. They were beating us

on the boards. We talk about taking care of the basketball.

In the second half, how many turnovers did they have? We had two turnovers.

Q. Three.

HUBERT DAVIS: Three. Then we ended up out-rebounding them. We held them from 51% in the first half to 35% in the second half. You check those three boxes, you're going to be in every game. We were able to do that in the second half.

Q. Looking at the crowd levels today, UNC was definitely in the front with the amount of fans that made the trip, home-court advantage. What can you say about the fan base showing up?

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, they always show up. It doesn't matter if it's Maui or Chapel Hill or on the road. Our fans are fantastic. The encouragement they gave our team when we were down and we were coming back, giving us that encouragement really helped.

Having that home-court advantage from the crowd is something that we feed off on. I'm very thankful and appreciative of the Carolina fans and the way they have showed up for us here in Maui but also in Chapel Hill and everywhere else.

Q. Seth said that the guys were saying it's not going to be Kansas in terms of a comeback that falls short. Did you feel that sort of level of belief from them?

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, I don't know if you were here, but I told them at I think the 16-minute mark in the second half, I said, You guys aren't making comeback plays. You're not making the plays to be able to come back. You're just not. You're not getting the rebounds. You're not getting the stops. You're not getting the loose balls, finishing around the basket. You're not setting the screens, running the plays right. You're just not. That switched after the 16-minute mark. We just started chipping away.

We do have that experience of not only coming back when we played Kansas, but how we did it. It was just possession by possession. I think that gave our guys confidence that we could still do it against a really good Dayton team.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, coach.

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