

# Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 7, 2024

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

**Miami Hurricanes**

**Coach Katie Meier**

**Shayeann Day-Wilson**

**Lazaria Spearman**

Postgame Press Conference

Miami 60, North Carolina 59

KATIE MEIER: First of all, North Carolina and their coaching staff, they're so well prepared. They're so smart. They have such a great basketball IQ. It's really hard to do what you want. They don't let you be yourself, okay.

In the first half -- I don't know if something was wrong with that basket on that one end, but we couldn't make a shot in the first half and they couldn't make a shot in the second half. That's true. But I do think there was a ton of adjustments.

Both staffs, trying to be a head coach in that game -- I'm sure Courtney's head is blown off like mine is right now, because everyone has this really vital piece of information that's going to matter for this victory. And the staffs were coaching their tails off and the players were playing their tails off.

I think our offensive rebound put-backs -- and I haven't looked at it yet -- but yeah, 16 second-chance points, there's the game right there in crucial moments. And our twin towers with Z and Tash were really crucial down the stretch. That's a really big moment for our young bigs.

We were not going to let Deja Kelly get the last shot, and Ja'Leah Williams who had two crucial turnovers, we're like, okay, we'll make up for it, you got it. And Jaida Patrick, the veteran came in, walled up on that drive, and it was beautifully executed.

Carolina did the right thing to go to Deja, and Miami did the right thing to say no.



**Q. A pretty chaotic finish, that fourth quarter, even the last 24 seconds. You talk about how much information you receive. What is it like as a coach?**

KATIE MEIER: Well, it wasn't calm, either. It was like everybody is in a thing. It's kind of in a filter of like what information do I need right now. Foul trouble, foul counts, how many fouls, who's got the arrow? There was a lot of stoppage which allowed us to sort of filter through some of the blah blah blah and then what was really important. I think that helped us. I think that helped us.

The intentional foul, I haven't seen it, but that was dramatic. Missing free throws was dramatic. Two travels was dramatic. But when you look at how the game went, they had 20 in the first quarter, 17, and then it went 10, 12. That's Miami basketball, and that's why we're an NCAA team, because we always show up in March and we always slam the door on people.

**Q. Can you talk about your post rotation throughout the game and then the heart of your point guard to play the entire game.**

KATIE MEIER: It was really hard to get Shay free. It was really hard. The reason it was hard is because their bigs were blocking up, so we needed Z and Tash to do some stuff behind the plays, the backside of the play, the backside rebounding. So Shay off a ball screen maybe didn't get a lot of clean looks, but maybe that's why we had the second chase wide open. Because it was like, Okay. You're wide open. If she can't get you, get a shot up and go rebound it. I thought they were just relentless in the fight, the fight.

We've had some issues this year with us feeling sorry for ourselves when things didn't go our way, and they heard me, and I'm sure the whole stadium heard me. I said, we're going to win anyway. I screamed it like I was like a lioness because it -- enough, we're going to win anyway. Quit pouting, get over yourselves, we're going to win anyway.

I saw their shoulders go back. And even if I wasn't certain -- it worked out. No, I was certain.

**Q. You lost in Blacksburg in January; what do you need to do better tomorrow in the rematch, and given how big a game Kitley had against you in January, how huge a difference will that be if she's not out there tomorrow?**

KATIE MEIER: It's funny because, first of all, we walked past Virginia Tech on the way out, and we just have so much respect for the program, the coaching staffs, the players. I saw Liz and just smiled at her and said, hope you're doing all right.

I hope she's available because I hope that for them and for her. But if you think I've processed that we still won this game and who we're playing tomorrow yet, I really haven't. But I'm sure my assistant coaches are doing that right now.

Liz is just so -- I said this when we -- the time per touch. You never see a post player with such a short time per touch, and that's kind of a soccer term that's become a basketball term. You can do whatever scheme you want to, but she thinks and moves the ball quicker than your scheme. And that's why I think she's the class of the posts in America right now, because you can play through her, and then she still drops 30 on you.

**Q. 47 fouls combined tonight for both teams. How do you manage foul trouble, especially in a close game like this down the stretch?**

KATIE MEIER: Well, somebody like Ally Stedman came in and gave us some minutes in the first half, three minutes, and she was plus four. That's the stuff that people don't notice. But like Ally could be the hero of the game. She could get the game ball for those three minutes where she was plus four while she was in. That's what you need in March. People need to humble themselves and do what's needed.

The thing that -- Bob Dunn is my analytics guy and he scouted, and our goal was to keep Deja Kelly off the free-throw line. And this is enormous that she only had one free throw. It's enormous. I didn't like my discipline early. I thought we were fouling like crazy. I was mad at halftime about it, but in the fourth quarter, we locked up and our legs were there and we were underneath and we didn't foul.

**Q. How much did last year's tournament experience, getting to the final here, how much did that help in this tight game?**

KATIE MEIER: Last year I think we lost the second round. Two years ago.

Yeah. I had the three juniors that have experienced that before. Listen, we are in a one-game season and we know it. We knew it. We haven't done this like walk down memory lane type thing. I think the Elite 8 run, the confidence -- when we were down, I called a time-out in the first half. What were we down? About 14, and I was like, we were way worse than this in Chapel Hill, and we came back and had to ball to win it. That's the kind of stuff. Short-term memory.

**Q. This seemed very similar to the game at home, away for you guys, home for UNC where you guys clawed back, and it went y'all's way this time. What were you telling your team, like, we need to do this differently and like reflecting on the game in Carmichael?**

KATIE MEIER: In their dinner last night -- we edited -- but they watched a good portion of that comeback while they were eating dinner. Just as a team, y'all watch this, get your confidence up, know what special plays you made, know what defensive special stops you made.

Carolina is just such a great offensive team. But to be honest, I'm telling you in the first half, I felt the same way. I'm sure Courtney thought in second half. Just staring at it, going well, that looks in. And it wasn't going in. It wasn't.

So some of it was our defense, and then some of it was literally like they had some clean threes in the second half that -- I don't know what they scored, but I was like, wow, they're missing. I couldn't believe it.

**Q. For both the players, when you're down 14 in the second quarter, Coach can say stuff to you in the time-out, but you've got to go do it on the floor. How do you keep the focus and calmness to battle back?**

SHAYEANN DAY-WILSON: It's just what we go through every day. We just have each other's backs. Obviously it didn't go our way. Like Coach said, we got some clean looks, we got some shots that just didn't go in. But I just told my team, they're not going to -- we're not going to keep on missing forever, so just stay confident and just have each other's back.

LAZARIA SPEARMAN: Honestly, I just told my teammates, like we're in practice right now. This is practice. We know how we've got to get three stops and we're out. I told them, get this stop and we're going home.

It was just all about passion and just wanting to win the game.

