

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Duke Blue Devils

Coach Jon Scheyer

Caleb Foster

Tyrese Proctor

Men's Press Conference



We have emphasized really control what you can control. That's the work you put in. That's the preparation. We want to be a team that's tough and together. That's the most important thing.

You have to have the right people. I feel we do. These guys have been consistent with the work, and now we have to take steps forward with understanding strengths and weakness of each other and how to put in a little bit more structure and how to develop that.

The people, the character of the guys on the team, they're ready for that. I've been proud to be their coach just to go through this preseason.

Q. Speaking of culture, your first game is against an historically black college and university. What is the importance of playing against those teams?

JON SCHEYER: Well, it's something we've always done, right? There's been a couple of years we haven't, and I've learned a lot about Lincoln since we've scheduled to play them.

You know, it's an honor. It's an honor and a privilege. They have a new coach, a coach that Duke fans know well in Julius, but it's been a great honor for me ever since I was a player to play in those games and have that connection, and it's something I hope we can continue to do.

Q. How do you handle having those difficult conversations with players that ultimately enter the transfer portal or leave the program in general? I know Jeremy Roach recently stated that he wanted to stay at Duke, and I guess you all didn't see eye to eye on certain things. How do you all kind of balance that conversation with a player ultimately wanting to leave the program or stay in the program?

JON SCHEYER: Well, just to clarify, first and foremost. Jeremy and I have had -- one, we still have a great relationship, but two, we've had nothing but honest, great conversations from the end of the season throughout his career. I feel that's just what a relationship is all about, is

THE MODERATOR: We will get started with questions for Coach Scheyer.

Q. Coach, I don't know if you realize this, but in April it will be the 15th year anniversary of y'all's 2010 national championship. So let me ask you this, let me take you back in time real quickly: As Gordon Hayward pulls up the half court shot Kyle Singler, smack dab face on the ground. What is going through your mind as the ball almost goes in and then rolls right on out? Are we going to see an anniversary from that team?

JON SCHEYER: Just one thought went through my mind. This can't go in. This can't go in. That's how I kept thinking, and it didn't go in, but obviously it was close.

I didn't know it was 15 years. It's hard to believe. It's really hard to believe, actually. I don't know about reunion, but keep in touch with those guys and the team often.

It's hard to -- Mason Plumlee holding down the fort playing in the NBA, so I know he couldn't come back. Guys are all over, but it is hard to believe it's been 15 years.

That was a special team. Proud of what we accomplished.

Q. We had Leonard Hamilton with Florida State, we had Kevin Keatts with NC State, and they kept preaching culture and identity. For Duke with the young guys you have coming in, what is the culture and identity for the Blue Devils this season?

JON SCHEYER: It's a key thing, right? It's no surprise those guys are talking about it. It's what we've worked really hard on. These two guys are the only ones who have experienced wearing a Duke uniform.



just telling the truth.

I'm sure these guys will tell you. Many times we've spoken. He this may not like what I have to say. I'm sure yesterday in practice or whenever it is, but they know it's from a place where I care and then they know it's real. Then it's their job to tell me how they're feeling too. I think it has to be a two-way street.

At the end of the day whatever the outcome is in terms of portal or not or throughout the course of the season, the relationship has to be built on trust. I try really hard to develop that. It has to be in a short period of time. It has to be two-way, but that's honestly the most important thing to me above all including Xs and Os and strategy. It all comes down to that. That's what I would add.

Q. Obviously you bring two guys back from last year. Can you talk about some specific things that you asked Caleb and Tyrese to work on over the offseason and what you have seen them improve on?

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, well, both of these guys are obviously key guys for us. They've both gone through different experiences.

Tyrese, his first two years, let's keep in mind still he came a year early. He's not the normal age of a junior. He's younger, but going through these two seasons he's matured a lot. He's shown flashes of being as good of a perimeter defender as there is in the country. My challenge for him is to do it every game, all the time.

Then he's been a guy -- we've asked him to do so much for us, when his scoring and shooting can take a back seat at times. I wanted him to not pass up any shots. When he's got open threes, to take him. His shooting is a big-time weapon.

Then just his ability to make others better. For Caleb, we've played -- I don't know if people forget. We played the last part of the year without him, and we were finding our groove with Caleb really coming on towards the end of last season.

I think just for him it's playing a whole season consistently and following his instincts. He has great instincts. He has great ability to get in the paint and score and create for others.

I've joked with him in the past. When I first saw him in AAU, he was directing, passing, doing all this. The next year I saw him. He is scoring like crazy. Did you lead the EYBL in scoring? He was up there. I want those two versions to come together, just right in the middle.

The thing I didn't see is defense as much in AAU, and he's going to do that too. So he's going to converge the two, defense, and these two guys, man, they're as good of guards as there is in college basketball.

Q. Transfer portal gives, and it takes away. Maliq Brown coming in from Syracuse inside of this conference. What can you say about him on and off the floor and why you believe he could be a good part of the Duke Blue Devils?

JON SCHEYER: I'm glad you asked about Maliq. I haven't been asked about him as much. He's been terrific for us, man. You should ask these guys if they like trying to score on him. We track deflections. His deflections are off the charts more than any player I've ever coached in terms of his activity on the ball and off the ball.

Great versatility. Really does whatever you ask him to do. Just the ultimate -- great competitor, but just such a great teammate. Selfless, doesn't care about his own stats probably to a fault. That would be my biggest thing with him, is he can even be more aggressive, right? That's what we talk to him about.

His versatility, his ability to play multiple spots on the front court. Then the last thing is how smart he is. He's a great passer, natural feel for the game, but I've loved coaching him. I like coaching him better than seeing him have 26-7 on us in Cameron.

It's better having him on our team. If he wants to do that in a Duke uniform, then great. Maliq has had such a consistent approach, and he's been a great guy to have in the locker room as well.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you. You can switch spots with Caleb. Questions for Caleb, please.

Q. Coach mentioned your season-ending injury last year. Could you just talk about what that was like for you mentally and then the rehab and recovery process following that injury?

CALEB FOSTER: It was definitely hard. Going out, nobody wants to go out, and it's the longest time I've been without basketball. I had great teammates. Tyrese and them kept me positive. I got to live through them, experience the tournament through them. I learned a lot sitting on the bench from a new perspective. I think it's going to help me this year.

Q. I'll bite the bullet and ask the question that Jon suggested. How tough is it to score on Maliq?

CALEB FOSTER: No, Maliq is one of the best defenders I've ever played against, like he said. His activity on and off the ball is just unmatched. I think he has a chance to be the best defender in college basketball this year.

Q. Coming into this season what was it like getting back into workouts after said injury over the offseason?

CALEB FOSTER: Oh, yeah. It's great. I'm blessed to be back out there 100%. I feel the best I've ever felt. I'm ready to get the season kicked off and get to work.

Q. My question for you is, do you have any expectations after missing last half of the season?

CALEB FOSTER: Say it again.

Q. Do you have any expectations for yourself coming back from your injury?

CALEB FOSTER: No. I'm just here to win. I've been playing in a Duke uniform my whole life, so I'm just here to make the most of my time and win ball games.

Q. You're here with Tyrese today, and just what can you say about how you push each other on and off the floor and that relationship that you have built together with so much change happening at Duke, just that relationship and leaning on each other?

CALEB FOSTER: Yeah, me and Tyrese -- Coach often doesn't put us on the same team, so we go at each other a lot. He's a great defender. Possibly one of the best defenders in college basketball too. He pushes me to be great on and off the court.

He's my roommate, so we talk a lot. He introduced me to stuff off the court, FIFA, and stuff like that. I love Tyrese, man.

THE MODERATOR: Caleb, thank you. You can switch places with Tyrese. Questions for Tyrese, please.

Q. Being at the one you have to be a leader on the court. This year you have a lot of incoming freshmen who are going to start. Can you tell us what your mentality is when you second-hand coach these 18- and 19-year-olds?

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah. I mean, ever since I've sort of been here I've been a leader. Obviously playing point guard at Duke, it's what I've dreamed of as a young kid and just being able to be in that position and help them get

them up to speed as quickly as possible on and off the floor. That's my job as a leader on this team.

I feel that me and Caleb have done a great job so far in the summer just making sure everyone is on track and, you know, just competing every day and those things.

Q. Going through the NCAA Tournament last year, close games. You guys got to focus on execution, focus on the Xs and Os. What can you take from that tournament and use and translate into this season?

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah, just the environment. I've been through two NCAA tournaments now and haven't got as far as I wanted to. I feel like just being there physically, you know, you can share a lot with the other kids that haven't been there.

Me and Caleb obviously being on the team last year and when we went down, it fueled us even more for this year. I feel like my whole summer was targeted towards that last season and just trying to improve every day as a group.

Q. Last year that Sweet 16 game against Houston, we saw some of the best perimeter defense we've ever seen as Duke fans. What goes into your mindset when the offense isn't kind of clicking the way it is and we need to step it up on defense? How do you get into that?

TYRESE PROCTOR: I think it's just pride. I mean, Coach always talks about how defense wins championships, and obviously we want to be good on offense, but I mean, if you don't let the other team score, it's going to be hard for them to win a game.

I think just being defensive-minded first and foremost is a big thing. Like I said, I think it's just pride. I actually used to not be a defender whatsoever. Just coming into college, just knowing that it's a personal battle every game and just not wanting my man to score the ball on me.

Q. I want to piggyback off that. I believe after the Houston matchup there was a narrative around the media that Duke was soft or they weren't playing hard. I believe Coach Scheyer stood up for you all and said you're busting your butts in practice and doing whatever it takes to elevate the team as a whole. What does that mean for a player, a point guard, a floor general to have a coach, to be a reflection of your coach to have your back?

TYRESE PROCTOR: That's what you want. I have full trust in Coach, and Coach has full trust in me. He's going to be honest with you.

We hear the narrative every year that I've been here that we're not tough, and I feel like it's a big thing that individually I've had conversations with guys. As a team we've had conversations just making sure we are always together no matter what the situation is, all the expectations that come with being at Duke, period, let alone with the guys that are always incoming and stuff like that.

I think it's important we just stay together within our locker room and the 15 guys within our locker room.

Q. Tyrese, just what can you say about the new additions to this team and what it looks like to you stepping into the season?

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah, I'm really excited. I think we have a great team. A lot of veteran leadership. Mason from Purdue obviously being in a national championship game and had multiple 30-plus win seasons. I think his leadership has been great for us.

Sion from Tulane, Maliq, Syracuse. Just their knowledge of the game and everyone bringing different aspects from where they've come from. Obviously the freshman class that we've got, great group of guys. They compete every day. They always are competing, and everyone just wants to win.

I feel like it's going to be a great year.

THE MODERATOR: Duke, thank you very much.

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