

# 2021 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship

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East Hartford, Connecticut, USA

## North Carolina Tar Heels

### Joe Breschi

Media Conference



Virginia - 12, North Carolina - 11

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much for joining us today. If you could give us an opening statement, please.

JOE BRESCHI: First and foremost, congratulations to Virginia. We've had three great games with them over the course of the year, and the resilience of both teams, they all left it out on the field.

I couldn't be more proud of our guys' effort, energy, down 9-4 at the half, after probably our toughest quarter of the year, our second quarter, and the resiliency of the senior class and the group that just battled, and that statistically in the second half, we put ourselves in position to score, to win. We won 8 of 12 face-offs in the second half. We cleared the ball 100 percent. We rode the ball back four times, outshot them 29-16. We were just 0 for 5 man up.

So we had our chances. I give our kids a ton of credit. All year they've been resilient, they've been tough, they've been gritty. It wasn't going our way at the face-off X in the second half. Tucci turned it around and just kept fighting and battling, and we just ran out of time.

**Q. Coach, can you describe with Rode seeing the ball so well today, can you describe how important Will's shooting from the outside was in your comeback time?**

JOE BRESCHI: Will's our best shooter just from range. He can stretch the defense. He does such a wonderful job of putting them in spots. I think the other guys do a great job of drawing attention and creating opportunities, and Will's a step-down shooter, whether it's man up or other, in all even situations. He's done that all year. He's stretched the defense, and he was able to put some big holes in when we needed it to make a run in the end.

**Q. I was wondering if you could kind of expand upon that. Obviously, their face-off was great in the first half**

**there, but just the way you guys were able to bounce back. What were you telling them at halftime because they came out and looked different, obviously, especially in the fourth.**

JOE BRESCHI: We talked about sticking to our game plan, but we had out-ground balled us in the first half, especially in that second quarter, that was a difference. We were 0 for 9 at the face-off X, and they out-ground balled us 20-6 in the middle of the field. As you saw, in the second half, it became a scrum, ground ball scrums in there, and we out-ground balled them in the second half.

So it was really possessions. We just didn't have possessions in the second quarter. You have a senior laden team who works their tail off and has put us in this position, and we just kept battling. We talked about ground balls as the key to the game, and if we could put our -- get more possessions by picking up loose balls in the middle of the field -- and our ride.

These guys laid it all on the line and gave us everything we had throughout the year. They certainly did here. When the chips were down 9-4 at halftime, they weren't rattled. They didn't flinch. They just came out and played the way we've been playing all year, and it gave us a chance to win. We just ran out of time.

**Q. In that last sequence, were you basically trying to get it to Chris to see if he could make something happen there?**

JOE BRESCHI: Yeah, we had tried several different looks. We had opportunities. We had man ups to tie it. We had different looks and picked plays behind the cage. We tried some picks above the cage. We did some exchanges. At that point, everybody's scrambling, they're double-teaming quickly, and we got a short stick matchup, I think on Perry or Chris at the end there on the right-hand side. They came quickly.

Again, we had our opportunities, and it's just unfortunate it didn't fall, and it's a credit to Rode in the cage.

**Q. Less than half of their goals were assisted. You**

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**rolled out Macri and Bowen, kind of switched them in the second half. How did that impact your run there in the third and the fourth?**

JOE BRESCHI: I thought our defense settled down. I think we were creating opportunities. We played a ton of defense in that second quarter, but we were creating opportunities that were getting some inside looks, particularly in that second quarter.

But I thought Macri did a hell of a job on Shellenberger, and Matt Moore is exceptional, but Will Bowen is as well, and I think we kind of clamped down defensively. Then we were able to clear the ball 100 percent the second half. We rode it back, as I mentioned. So it took some of the pressure -- and we won face-offs in the second half.

So I think winning the possession battle in the second half was a huge piece to being able to come back. To cut it to 10-8 and be down 12-8 and then just keep fighting and scrapping is -- you know, I'm just so proud of our guys, all of them, for continuing to battle.

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