

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - North Carolina vs Ole Miss

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Fiserv Forum

## North Carolina Tar Heels

Hubert Davis

RJ Davis

Seth Trimble

Media Conference



win and keep going. You want to get more games with your team, keep winning, creating more memories. That's kind of what hurts most right now.

I love that I had my people here, but my biggest focus was this team and doing what I could do to win the game.

**Q. RJ, you obviously had a really successful five-year career at North Carolina. Can you just kind of put into perspective the last five years and what it's meant to put on that uniform?**

RJ DAVIS: It's meant everything to me. The past five years has been the greatest five years of my life. It was bigger than basketball. Just the relationships and the friendships I've built here from HD down to the coaching staff to Doug and Jonas, as athletic trainers and strength coach, to Hoots as Director of Ops, to Shane, our equipment manager. I could go down the list to our managers.

Everyone has impacted and played a role in my five years of being here that I remember for the rest of my life. Like basketball's one thing, but I think life is more about who is impacting you and who you bring along with. For sure, the teams I've been around, the years I've spent here, I'll keep that with me forever.

Just for my career, I'm just proud of the way each year I improved and each year I set goals. Sometimes I didn't even set a goal and I surprised myself.

So it's just knowing I'm capable of anything I put my mind to. I'm grateful for putting this jersey on because not a lot of people get the chance to.

**Q. To follow up with Seth, you've been in the Carolina program for a couple of years. What have you learned in observing RJ in being a successful basketball player in a college program?**

SETH TRIMBLE: I've learned so much from RJ. The second I stepped on campus, he was there. I asked him, hey, can we workout in the summer? I mean, basically, I asked can I follow you? Can I do everything that you do?

I'm fortunate enough for him to accept me and just share

Ole Miss - 71, North Carolina - 64

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the North Carolina student-athletes, please.

**Q. RJ, I'm just wondering the up-and-down game, obviously what are the emotions after such a Herculean comeback falls short like that?**

RJ DAVIS: I have a lot of emotions going through my head right now. It's hard to pinpoint at just one direct emotion. But just battling through the first half, obviously not playing a pretty good game and coming to the second half and battling all the way to the one-minute mark, it's a two-point game, it just describes our whole season from being up-and-down year, being a difficult year, and persevering.

I think that's the best way to put it. And we were resilient, so I think that's just -- and to come up short like that, it sucks, it hurts. So, yeah, but I mean just for us being a resilient team and persevering when things don't go our way, when we get knocked down we get right back up. I think that's what we did in the second half. We just came up short.

**Q. Seth, if I could just ask you, obviously I'm sure you had a lot of support from family and friends in Menomonee Falls. Talk about the emotions of this game for you, please.**

SETH TRIMBLE: This game was really emotional for me. Not necessarily because I was back home. That played a factor. I wanted to play well. I wanted to get a win for my people. But, I mean, the biggest thing in this time is just



with me all the knowledge he's shared over the years. I've learned how to be a better leader. I've learned how to be a more confident basketball player. I've learned a whole lot from RJ. Real fortunate.

**Q. RJ, can you describe what was going through your mind when you converted the and one to cut this game to two, and does it make it harder to swallow when you come back from 22 down to get within one possession in a game like this?**

RJ DAVIS: I mean, yeah, just got the and one and momentum was on our side. That was the first thing going through my mind. It was more about making sure I knock down this free throw.

Obviously, coming back from an 18-point game going into halftime and clawing our way all the way through to the end, it sucks. It's a game we should have won, but, I mean, I can't be more proud of the team because this is our journey, our season, and how things went. So yeah.

**Q. For RJ or Seth or both, reflecting on the two halves, what went wrong in the first half? At what point in the second half, did you start to get momentum and say the game isn't out of reach? There's a chance to make a comeback.**

SETH TRIMBLE: We were really lifeless in the first half. We had no passion. We had no joy. We looked like the group we were a few months ago.

We were fortunate enough to listen just to what the coaches had to say in the second half. We checked ourselves. We got checked. And everybody kind of just looked in the mirror, and, I mean, that second half it was clear we just played with passion, with joy, and we played for each other. We were a team in that second half. That was the biggest difference. We weren't in that first half.

**Q. Seth, RJ sort of touched on that a lot of games were like this. You kind of mentioned it there. Why do you think this team had so many games like this or had so many stretches where you go from, like you said, maybe lifeless to fully engaged?**

SETH TRIMBLE: I don't know. I think with this team, it took a lot of guys -- I mean, it took us. It took us being hit first. A lot of times, I think it was just as simple as that. That's why a lot of games these first halves, we get down with these heavy leads, we get buried deep and we dig a hole for ourselves that we've really got to climb out. It's because we had to get hit first.

We tried to overcome it. We recognized it the whole year.

We tried to learn from it and grow from it, but I don't know. It just happened today. I think we did, but it was unfortunate that it happened today.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Appreciate your time.

We'll now entertain questions for Coach Davis, please.

**Q. Hubert, when you think back on this season as a whole, not just this game, what will you remember most about what this team did, the journey that you guys took?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, I mean, you know, this game just ended. To sit and think about the entire year, there's a lot of things going through my mind right now.

Probably the thing that's initially going through my mind is this is the last time that I'll coach RJ, J-Wit, and Tyzhaun. So just thinking about the seniors, thinking about how much I enjoyed coaching them and having relationships with them. But there's a number of things going through my mind right now.

**Q. Hubert, you guys made that second half comeback to get it down to two. Seemed one of the biggest things to adjust to was the physicality that Ole Miss was able to play with. Could you speak a little bit to what went into making that adjustment and I guess, quote unquote, standing up to the physicality that they had?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Yeah, they brought the physical, competitive fight in the first half. Every category, every angle, in regards to physicality, they not only won in the first half, they dominated us.

There was only two choices coming out in the second half, either to respond with that same type of fight or get embarrassed. And I was really proud of how our guys fought back competitively and got back into the game.

But just the whole game, that wasn't us the last two months. That was us the first four months, and I told them that at halftime. I said, I haven't seen this team since Clemson. Against good teams like Ole Miss, it's just not sustainable. I've said this to you guys before.

Coming back from 18, coming back from 22, that's just -- so it's a credit to our guys to get to a two-point game. Just hard, too hard to flip it against good teams.

**Q. Was it in that second half that you noticed it start to turn? What did you see specifically that flipped that momentum for you guys?**

HUBERT DAVIS: It was everything. Unfortunately and fortunately, we've been in that situation before earlier in the season. With 20 minutes in the second half, it's a ton of time. Take it possession by possession. You don't have to make up 20 points in one possession. Whatever it took, we continued to get stops. We were able -- like the discipline and detail and mistakes we made in the first half on both ends of the floor, we made very few in the second half.

We got stops. We got rebounds. We got out in transition. We executed on the offensive end. I think we missed at least eight lay-ups second half. We were stronger at the hole, going to the hole. We made free throws.

It's the little details. It just is what it is. It's taking care of the basketball, shot selection, boxing out, rebound, loose balls, toughness, talking on defense. Those are the little things that make big things happen. Those are the things we did in the second half to get us back into the game.

But in the NCAA Tournament and specifically against good teams, you don't have to be perfect, but that has to be consistent in both halves, and we weren't.

**Q. Following up to what you were talking about with the ball getting to the hole is not sustainable, obviously nobody likes losing in any context. But to come back from that deficit, get within striking distance, do those losses carry a different level of frustration, knowing you had enough in the tank, just at the wrong time?**

HUBERT DAVIS: I think it's equally as frustrating, but I am extremely proud of this team that all season long, they have fought back. Whether it's been in a half, after a game, this team all season, when knocked down, has gotten back up and taken a step forward. Every time. There hasn't been one time where they have stayed down. And so that's something that I'm very proud of with this team.

**Q. Hubert, as you were addressing the team at halftime, saying you haven't seen that in four months, how much did you think they were past that type of half, that type of performance? That you guys had gotten over playing like that and, unfortunately, it happened again?**

HUBERT DAVIS: I don't know. Again, I hadn't seen that since at Clemson. I felt like on both ends of the floor, we were going off script. And the inconsistencies of the discipline and details that you have to have over the last two months, we've been sharp with it. As a result, we've

played our best basketball.

But that first half just reminded me a lot of earlier in the season.

**Q. Hubert, when J-Wit goes down with the injury in the second half, it felt like a tough moment to see the guy who had been so good in the past month and a half go down and have to miss the rest of the game. What can you say about the response of the team? After that, they obviously made a move and got right back into the game.**

HUBERT DAVIS: We have a team. So, you know, other guys were called to step up and they did. I thought Jalen Washington had a productive second half. I thought he was huge for us. Drake at the 4 was huge for us in terms of rebounding, getting steals, getting into the open court, knocking down 3.

So in times like that, guys have to step up, and I felt like Drake and J-Wash, specifically in the second half, were really good.

**Q. I noticed that in the first couple minutes of the first half, you immediately called time-out. Would you say that if your team would have been more aggressive defensively, that the outcome would have been better? Like you guys would have had a chance of winning?**

HUBERT DAVIS: I mean, I don't know. I mean, if we had played a better first half, I don't know. I just know in the first half, we didn't play nearly as well as we needed to play, and what was missing was that competitive fight.

It had nothing to do with Xs and Os. It was just a competitive fight on both ends of the floor to do the things that we needed to do and needed to execute. And that's why I called an early time-out, to let them know that they were very far from where we needed to be in order to beat a team like Ole Miss.

**Q. Hubert, with respect to the fact that this is obviously a very fresh loss and everything, of course the portal does open up soon. What is the breakdown going to look like as far as having conversations with these guys on the current team and evaluating what's out there? Can you break down a little bit what the next stretch of this portal window may look like for you guys?**

HUBERT DAVIS: I think that's a great question. That's something I have not thought about at all. My anticipation was for us to play extremely well today and win and play Iowa State on Sunday.

So it being less than a half an hour, 45 minutes from a loss, that's something that I will have to think about, but I haven't thought about it now, and I'm not going to think about it today.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Davis, thank you.

HUBERT DAVIS: Thank you.

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