

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Mount St. Mary's vs Duke

Friday, March 21, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Lenovo Center

Duke Blue Devils

Jon Scheyer

Tyrese Proctor

Cooper Flagg

Media Conference

Duke - 93, Mount St. Mary's - 49

THE MODERATOR: We are now ready to begin the Duke press conference.

Coach, could you please give us an opening statement.

JON SCHEYER: Well I thought it was a workmanlike performance by our team. Any time you only have two turnovers in a game, that's pretty good.

I just thought that these guys were incredibly mature without necessarily even playing in the NCAA Tournament besides Tyrese and Mason. Proud of the performance. We have to move on very quickly, but really good to get our feet wet and understand what the tournament is all about.

Q. Cooper, you had early in that game a fast break opportunity. You got the basket, came down. Was that kind of an, okay, yeah, I'm all right kind of moment?

COOPER FLAGG: I think what I would say is I've done a great job with the medical staff preparing and just being ready. So I already felt completely 100 percent and confident going into tonight's game.

Q. Tyrese, I believe this might have been the best assist-to-turnover ratio amongst the backcourt as a collective, 21 assists to 2 turnovers for the entire backcourt, including Cooper. What was your assessment on just that backcourt side?



TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah, I thought we were great. I thought we were poised, controlled the tempo of the game. Just read what the defense gave us, and I think we're playing our best basketball when we all move the ball and get great looks.

Q. Tyrese, when you have that kind of night from behind the arc, how much confidence does that give you moving forward?

TYRESE PROCTOR: A lot of confidence. Obviously shot the ball pretty well tonight and just got to continue doing that moving forward.

Q. Kind of a light hearted question here for Tyrese. Cooper has had this cool Gatorade ad playing throughout March Madness. I wonder if you've seen it and what you thought of it.

TYRESE PROCTOR: Is it the bingo one?

Q. No, that's the AT&T. He's in it with Paige and JuJu.

TYRESE PROCTOR: I've probably seen it, yeah. It's cool.

Q. When did you start to feel like there was no doubt that you would go today? What was the breakthrough for you?

COOPER FLAGG: I think honestly for me, after watching the whole ACC Tournament, it was more of just like a plan to just be ready for this game, and we just put a plan in place. We have phases, a strategy of just getting back, getting prepared, and being ready.

So we just followed it step by step. I worked with our medical team really well, and they did a great job just getting me ready.

Q. About 22 minutes for Cooper, got to do probably a little bit of everything --

THE MODERATOR: I'm sorry. We need to do questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Cooper, this is basically about the ideal way that this could have played out for you in terms of getting



on the court, getting a sweat in, and playing but not having to go like 40 minutes of intense basketball?

COOPER FLAGG: Yeah, I thought we kind of just came out and executed our game plan, did what we were trying to do. We didn't take them lightly. We came out, and we executed, and we just jumped out to it.

I think it was great execution by us.

Q. Cooper, to your Montverde Academy teammates here in Raleigh, including one you're facing Sunday at some point, just a reaction to that, and have you talked to Liam or Rob about just kind of being in the same areas this weekend?

COOPER FLAGG: I wouldn't say I've talked to them specifically about it. I think, as soon as the selection show happened, I kind of maybe talked to them a little bit. But nothing past that.

I saw Rob yesterday leaving the gym and kind of just walked by him. It's just a cool experience being in this environment and this setting having played together last year, so it's just really cool.

Q. Tyrese, have you thought at all about the way last season ended not getting any points against NC State at the end of the tournament, going into this one, have you used that as fuel, have you used that as confidence in your shot? Has that been on your mind or not really?

TYRESE PROCTOR: I think as soon as that game ended it was on my mind. It's the reason I came back. I think going into this game, just wanted to play at a high level. That comes with scoring. That comes with sharing the ball and stuff like that.

I think it did fuel me. It fueled our team as a whole, honestly. First meeting at the start of the year, we talked about it, and I thought we just played a great game tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, you're excused. Thank you very much. Congratulations.

At this time, we'll open it up for Coach. Do you want to go with your question?

Q. Jon, I'm just curious if this was sort of the ideal plan for you to get Cooper back in there and get him comfortable, or if you would have been comfortable if he'd have had to play a little more than he did?

JON SCHEYER: We were ready for him to play more, but

I think the way it worked out obviously was really good. But we were prepared for him to play as many minutes as he needed to.

Our guys did a great job. Even as he was coming back with his ankle, he was in the pool a lot, underwater treadmill, just making sure his shape was still there.

Frankly, it's only been eight days. So I think for him it's not like he's lost a ton of shape.

Q. Jon, how did you sort of -- what were you looking for in terms of managing his minutes. You said you were prepared for him to play more, but I would imagine, even if you're confident, you're not seeing him compensate, I would imagine you're still watching carefully. Was there anything you were looking for, I guess, in that regard of how you would handle his minutes and how he was reacting to his first action?

JON SCHEYER: The biggest thing for me was him not pacing. I didn't want him to pace. Then obviously making sure he was moving, where he wasn't off balance or favoring one leg or the other.

We had already addressed that before this game, so that wasn't a big concern. I was just making sure he wasn't pacing. Obviously giving him a few extra minutes, I'm sure that's going to be helpful for Sunday. As it got down in the second half, my thing was to limit his minutes as much as possible.

Q. You forced 11 turnovers, only gave up 10 assists in this ballgame. What is your main assessment of the defense today? And once you get ready for Baylor on Sunday, once you look at film after press conferences, what will be your main assessment on getting ready for Baylor?

JON SCHEYER: I can't tell you that yet. I would rather watch them to be able to be informed about what the biggest thing we have to do is.

I thought our defense was pretty good tonight. I think there's some breakdowns we have to clear up and make sure we're better at, but I thought the effort was there. The rebounding was okay. I thought we were good. I thought we were solid.

Especially for our first game in the tournament, just you have to -- it feels different. It just does. So to experience that and to give really good effort and to have that killer instinct to come out, I think that's the biggest thing I took away.



Q. Slightly more serious question this time. Coach, you have the challenge of with a play-in game, you had to prepare for an extra team, two teams, and you've just lost Coach Lucas. Can you talk about that challenge? Was there somebody on staff who had to kind of step up and do an extra scout because of the extra game and coach leaving?

JON SCHEYER: Look, Jai obviously has been important for us, but the way the tournament works, it's pretty seamless. We had Chris and Emanuel have been really hands on with all of our scouts. I hated not knowing who we were going to play. I was anxious to find out. I think that was the worst part.

But the coaches have it all covered. Our support staff does an incredible job already, our video team, the other coaches on staff.

So the fact you're playing two games -- we just got through a week where we played three in three days, and the opponents, it could have been eight different opponents at that time. So this is simple for us, and our staff has done an incredible job to get us prepared.

Q. As you get ready for a team kind of on short notice, Jeremy Roach, that element of it, he's familiar with you, you're familiar with him. How does that affect your prep, and what are you expecting from Jeremy?

JON SCHEYER: Obviously I love Jeremy. I've been through -- I coached him for four years, two as an assistant, two as a head coach, and he's given Duke everything he has.

I know Jeremy, and he knows me and us. We're not going to make this about that. You're playing the NCAA Tournament. This should be about Duke and Baylor.

But at the end of the day, obviously Jeremy has been an important guy for our program with what he's done, and he's done a really good job this year. But this game for us on Sunday is going to be about what we have to do to beat Baylor, and I'm sure it's the same for Jeremy and their team in their minds.

Q. As long as Cooper was cleared, was there any question that he would go tonight?

JON SCHEYER: No. I mean, look, for me -- and I've been on many sides of this in my playing days, coaching days -- you don't take any game for granted. I think it's very easy to say, yeah, you should just rest. Well, you want to have your best team, and you're not promised the next game.

I think just as important was the fact of him playing. I didn't think he looked like it, but you have some natural rust. You have some -- just the game experience I think is really important to understand what the tournament is like.

So for me, there wasn't a question. I know for him there wasn't a question. But at the same time, like we weren't going to risk anything either. When we knew he was ready, he was going to go.

Q. Coach, one much shorter than the other, but two quick questions. One, Kon looked like he tweaked something in today's game. Is he all right?

JON SCHEYER: He's good. He's good.

Q. Second was Spencer Hubbard getting a lot of applause at the end of the game, kind of carried the ball up. How cool is it to get those kinds of moments in the tournament?

JON SCHEYER: It's awesome. Spencer's given us five years. The rest of us are jealous, we wish you guys cheered for us as loud as Spencer gets an applause. Besides that, I think it's an awesome thing.

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