

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Baylor vs Duke

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Lenovo Center

Baylor Bears

Scott Drew

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are now ready to start Coach Drew's portion of the press conference. Coach, could you please make an opening statement.

SCOTT DREW: It's a blessing to see everybody here today, that's first and foremost. It's better than being at home. Blessed to have an opportunity to coach this team against a great Duke team. Got a lot of respect for Coach Scheyer and what he's been able to do taking over for Coach K.

It will be a great opportunity for us to just see how much we've improved throughout the year.

Q. We didn't used to see as many times guys playing former programs over the years, but now obviously it's become pretty common. Obviously Jeremy's got a lot of experience, so you're dealing with an older guy. I'm curious, do you have any conversations with him, or how do you generally approach that when these things are becoming more common of seeing former reunions, if you will?

SCOTT DREW: I know we've been in the same situation. It's great seeing former players. You just don't like seeing them do real well against your team.

I know Jeremy got a chance to see all of the Duke players the other day. He's a great guy. I know they all like one another, and he's got a lot of respect for them.

At the same time, it is a big help. Tomorrow if any of them aren't running the plays right, he'll tell them where to go and what to do. I think that will be beneficial for us because we've learned a lot just on things to expect and playing for because obviously he's got a lot of experience in that system.

Q. Scott, you had Rob committed, I don't know if you thought he was going to be able to play at this level right away as a freshman, but you do bring in Jeremy. How difficult has that chemistry been with an older guy who probably expected to start, and then you have to make the lineup change?

SCOTT DREW: I think Jeremy did start in the beginning of the year. Again, going through two concussions, I don't know how many college kids have gone through that. He's kept a great attitude.

When we made the decision to bring him off the bench, talked to him, and he said, Coach, whatever's best to help the team, and I think this might help the team.

He's learned a lot from Coach Scheyer and Coach K, and he's a great teammate, he's a great leader, and he's really helped Rob. Those two can play together. You can always have two point guards on the court. What you can't have is none.

I think he'll do a good job in making sure everyone's ready to go tomorrow, like he's done for every game. I know this game means a little more to him obviously, but Jeremy is somebody that is capable of having big games. Hopefully he has one tomorrow.

Q. Scott, you guys are usually the team that's the higher seed at this stage of the game. Do you approach it any differently, being the lower seed? What gives you hope about your team that maybe you can spring the upset?

SCOTT DREW: The great thing about social media and media, you guys do a great job of making my job a little easier when it comes to motivation at times. Definitely the situation when a 9 is playing a 1, people don't expect the 9 to beat the 1, otherwise, we'd be the Number 1 seed.

With that being said, we all know it's a 40-minute game. Anything can happen in a 40-minute game. March Madness is March Madness for a reason.

Again, you don't see many weaknesses with Duke. You don't see many losses with their program. You see a lot of success. For us, we have to play a really good game, and

we're capable of playing really good games.

I don't think we're in awe of anybody. Last I saw, our strength of schedule was fourth in the country. We just got done playing Houston, who's a Number 1 seed. At the end of the day, ball gets tipped, team that plays the best that day for 40 minutes wins.

Q. Duke has the tallest team in the country, pretty much 6'5" and up across the board. What kind of unique challenges does that maybe present?

SCOTT DREW: I don't know, I was talking to Coach Few yesterday, and he said we're the best 6'7" and under team in the country. But I do know size and length, people will always want that rather than not have that.

Duke is blessed because they not only have that but they have great skill with that. Normally taller players might not be as quick or as athletic or skillful, but those guys shoot and pass and dribble, and because of that, it makes it tough.

Coach Scheyer's done a great job of getting them to play great defense. We all know size and length helps defensively, especially when they buy into a team concept.

Again, no weaknesses with Duke, great team. It's a great opportunity for us. At the same time, Norchad has played against Duke. So he knows that. Jeremy obviously was a part of the program. VJ and Coop, I think, spent a whole month or months together on the All-Star circuit, played against each other at Lu High. Rob Wright was Coop's teammate at Montverde. So a lot of familiarity and a lot of respect.

Q. Coach, it's been 15 years since I believe you all met in the Elite Eight. I was just curious if you thought about that game or the full circle moment with Coach Scheyer was on the court and now is on the sideline. I was just curious how that all wraps around.

SCOTT DREW: Great question. When we played in New York, full circle moment because Tweety Carter was on the court too, and now he's coaching, and Jon's coaching. Jon played really well in that game as well.

Obviously I remember that game. There were 43,000 Baylor fans in Houston, and Duke goes on to win the National Championship. So you're like, dang, if we could have won that game, maybe we could have won the National Championship in 2010.

Again, the good thing is Jon's not going to make any 3s tomorrow.

Q. To go back to when you added Jeremy and Norchad, both those guys have played in a lot of tournament games. I know that's probably not a coincidence in how you evaluated them.

SCOTT DREW: Yeah.

Q. What's your process, and when did you look at what you have and say this is what we need to get through the portal, the type of player we need to have?

SCOTT DREW: I think you try to get some balance. You don't want all freshmen. You don't necessarily want all upperclassmen. You'd like to have a good mix.

At the same time, when we won a National Championship, we had two point guards in Davion Mitchell and Jared Butler. Both of them were point guards. So nowadays, if you can have four point guards out there, I think everybody would like that if you can get them all to buy in.

In the NBA, you've got to play with the ball and without the ball. So we thought Jeremy would be a great complement with Rob and vice versa. We thought Jeremy could really help teach some of our younger players, VJ and Rob, some of the things he's learned.

We're just trying to get a good mix. Again, Jeremy Roach had Final Four experience, freshman coming in. A player is always going to listen more to each other than the coaches. You've got a good locker room and good experienced locker room, good culture as far as team first, it makes our job a lot easier as coaches.

Q. Scott, you mentioned the game against Duke in New York. Technically that was just last season.

SCOTT DREW: I know. That wasn't great for us either (laughter).

Q. A lot's changed on both rosters, but is there anything from that game that you can take and use in game planning?

SCOTT DREW: Well, I know Yves Missi really had a great game, and he's doing the same thing he did in that game in the NBA, and that's why he was a month ago odds-on favorite to win Rookie of the Year. Jeremy had a really good game. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, so we got him this time. Hopefully that experience that he has will help tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much and good luck tomorrow.

