

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - Duke vs Houston

Thursday, March 28, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

American Airlines Arena

**Duke Blue Devils**

**Coach Jon Scheyer**

**Jeremy Roach**

**Tyrese Proctor**

**Kyle Filipowski**

Sweet 16 Pregame Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Head Coach Jon Scheyer.

**Q. We saw Jaylen out there practicing everything early. Can you tell us how his week has gone and the way he has recovered from that really scary fall?**

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, that was really scary in the moment. Fortunately, Jaylen got back the next morning. You always wonder the next day how they feel and with a fall like that, and Jaylen has been great. He's felt really good.

We didn't do much as a team on Monday anyway, so it gave him a chance to get back, but he's been full-go ever since, and he'll be ready for tomorrow night.

**Q. You mentioned last week in Brooklyn that Jared is different and built for moments like this. What led you to that conclusion, and how did you identify those traits?**

JON SCHEYER: Well, you know, Jared -- I would hope you can see it in the recruiting process when you're evaluating a player, but you really get to know who they are when they get to campus. Like everybody on the team, you want to play, right? Every player, you want to earn minutes and play as much as you can. You want to start.

I learned very quickly with Jared -- you know, we have in our practice the white team is the first group and the blue is the second group. Anytime I put him in a blue jersey, he



would be talking smack, he would be making sure -- I think the blue group won every time he went to blue.

By the way, when I say talking smack, to me too. He would be running up and down talking to me after making shots. In a positive way, when I say that. He's just so motivated.

The stage doesn't bother him. I think that's a motivating factor for him. When I've seen him play at Peach Jam or the City of Palms with his high school team, he's been at his best, and he just lives for those moments. The thing that Jared did -- I mentioned putting him on blue or white -- he's never given us an option. Since he's got to campus, he said this is what I'm doing. I'm not going to apologize for it.

The way he has competed has been -- that's what's so different. The maturity with how he competes has been so refreshing and been great to coach.

**Q. Jon, the regular season finale in the game in D.C. you were disappointed with your team's defensive intensity and effort. After last week's two games, I think both teams held to 20 points under their season average. What turned the page and allowed the defense to click again last week?**

JON SCHEYER: It was just refocusing on ourselves. Look, I think our guys have shown throughout the year, we're a really good defensive team. Sometimes when you have a couple of games that don't go your way, our guys, they don't have to -- you have to get over it quickly. So many teams that happens, unfortunately.

For us it was just getting back to the work. It was having each other's backs. You got to guard the ball. You need to rebound. I thought the consistency of just having five guys on the floor moving together was the difference.

Sometimes, at least for us, you get into February and then March, and the practice time you have is focused so much on other opponents. For us this last week-and-a-half has been a lot on us. That's been really important.

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

**Q. When you look at Houston's defense, what just jumps out at you in terms of how they play and the personnel that they have to do what they do?**

JON SCHEYER: I think anytime you look at a really good defensive team, but for Houston, look, they probably -- if not the best defense in the country, they're right there. You have to talk about their effort. Their effort is terrific.

They make multiple efforts protecting the basket, defending in pick and roll, defending throughout the shot clock. They have really good one-on-one defenders. Obviously that's the best way you can break a defense down is by getting by. They make it hard on you to get by. Then when you do get by, there's going to be somebody else that's always there waiting to help.

If you try to play disconnected or not together, they're going to make you look bad. It's a great challenge. They have different ways they can defend. They've not just done it one way. I think since they've had some injuries and some things like that, they've also -- they've had a smaller group out there at times. They still do an amazing job. I think the challenge comes down to not allowing them to stand you up. Obviously they're very physical. They play with great force on that end, but you have to get in the paint, and you have to make them help, and then you have to make the right plays from there.

They score a ton off of turnovers. They do a good job turning you over and making you pay for it. So it's a great challenge, and I'm really excited for our team to have that opportunity to go against a great Houston team, but a great Houston defense.

**Q. Kind of a historical perception on this game. You look, Duke has been in a lot of Sweet 16s. Houston in the last five or six years is kind of now getting back to the point. What do you see now in this Houston team that's so much different than what it was for so long when they couldn't do it? Well, they didn't do anything after Phi Slama Jama.**

JON SCHEYER: I can't comment on Houston the last how many ever years or so and what has or hasn't been good, but I focused on them, who they've been this season. Obviously this group has been together not just this year. It's been a few years in the making, right?

I think you just have to point to their culture. They just have a winning culture. You're playing a team that expects to win. Coach Sampson, the job that he's done, the staff, the program they've developed that edge and that belief. That's something that I've known -- I've known no other way since I've been a player at Duke. It's no different since

I have been an assistant coach here, the head coach. We expect to win.

Both programs you have a winning culture. You expect that. It makes for, I think, what can be a really high level game. But with them, that's what I point to. I point to their culture, their belief in each other, their toughness. I've been impressed with when they haven't been at their best this year, you know, just watching them on film, they still find a way to be right there in the game. That's the making of not just a great team, but a great program.

**Q. Being back in this state, do you have a favorite memory of the time you spent in Edinburg?**

JON SCHEYER: Time I spent where?

**Q. Edinburg.**

JON SCHEYER: Edinburg?

**Q. The Vipers.**

JON SCHEYER: All good. I remember McAllen like it was yesterday. That was a big moment in my life, not just my career, going to play in Rio Grande because it was right after I had an eye injury in the summer, and I got cut by the Clippers in the preseason. I played at Duke for four years, and I had to go start my professional career, and that's where I went to start with Rio Grande Valley.

I was fortunate to be with Chris Finch, you know, who is now the head coach of the Minnesota Timberwolves. He was my head coach. Played with some really good guys at the time. Jerel McNeal, Matt Janning. I can go down the list. We had a good team. We played in the championship with the G League that year against Iowa, I think it was when, with Nick Nurse and his team..

For me it was just you're taught a different way of playing. We sent four guys to the offensive boards, shot a lot of threes. Then obviously the town of McAllen and being down there. They love basketball. Found my love again for the game. That was such a meaningful experience for me to get back to playing. So to be back here is obviously -- in Texas we've had some great memories with Duke here, but I'll never forget those moments playing the G League there. It was The D League then. Now it's the G League, yeah.

**Q. Last year you guys were a young team that got knocked out by an old team. When you reflected back on that, was that just sort of one result in your mind, or were there things about that that you take forward to say, hey, this is how we have to build Duke basketball**

**in this era where maybe older teams are getting the upper hand in a lot of these tournament games?**

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, sure. It's 100 percent every experience that I've had as a head coach, any step of the way through Duke. Obviously the last few years have been different with the landscape, but every experience has led to action. You have to take action from it.

For us, core group from that team is back. Obviously we added in four freshmen as well. Those experiences harden you. They make you tougher as long as you don't make excuses and you are really honest with what happened in the moment. The honest truth was they were tougher than us that day, Tennessee was. Obviously there's other games where maybe we didn't execute as well. You always learn something from those moments, but the tournament, it's one and done time. It's precious.

For us that's been a reminder for us along the way. I've used it with our guys, and it's part of the development and the growth of this team.

Look, I don't think we're -- we're not old by any stretch of the imagination, but we have guys who have experienced the tournament before, which I think matters. Tyrese, Jeremy, Mark, and Filip, those guys -- well, Mark didn't play in the game you're talking about. For us, having the experience of playing in the tournament in addition to some of our freshmen who it's their first time, I think is very valuable. For me, for our program, every moment is motivation for me. Every moment is motivation for us with what we're looking to do as we move forward as well.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, we'll let you go. Thank you.

Let's continue with the Duke Blue Devils. The student-athletes from Duke, Jeremy Roach, Tyrese Proctor and Kyle Filipowski.

**Q. I'll start with Jeremy. When you look at this Houston team that's -- they, in the last few years, have been here and done that. Talk about what you see in this group this year and facing them and trying to get past them.**

JEREMY ROACH: They're a tough group. They have the best defense in the country. Top 10, top 20 offense too. We know it's going to be a battle. I think for our mindset we just have to come out and kind of impose our will the first four minutes. I think that's the biggest thing.

Physicality, if we match their physicality everything else will take care of itself.

**Q. When you look at them defensively, do they remind you of anybody that maybe you have played, and how difficult does it become when they don't allow you to get those looks that you may normally get?**

TYRESE PROCTOR: I feel like we've played teams like them all season, like the physicality aspect of it. I think just playing poised and just limiting turnovers is going to be a huge thing for us.

They try and muck up the game and try and make it harder than it is, and I think if we just are disciplined and poised, we'll be fine.

**Q. Just talk about how you guys have responded from the regular season finale and then the ACC Tournament, kind of in this couple of weeks and getting back on track? What's been the difference?**

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: I think the most important thing is just our confidence within ourselves. Obviously it's not the way we wanted to end the season, but that's in the past now. The only thing we're focused on is what lies ahead. I think just staying within our group, staying humbled, but also knowing that we've got to go out there and battle every day, but doing it together is the most important thing.

JEREMY ROACH: I think the biggest thing is confidence. I think just our whole -- I will say really getting that first game against Vermont was a big thing for us. Obviously we knew how good we are, but with the two losses, we didn't get a win for, like, two weeks. It can kind of get a little unconfident. I think getting that first win against Vermont was a big thing, and then it just leads us to the second round and obviously to where we are right now. We just have to keep that confidence getting.

Like Kyle said, at the end we have to play together. Can't do it all on one. It has to be all 15 guys.

**Q. Houston is playing three hours from home. Does that phase you at all? With y'all's following, what is your approach on that in three hours from Houston's home?**

JEREMY ROACH: Yeah, obviously we're playing in Texas. It's basically like a home game for them, but we're not worried. We played in difficult environments all season, so we're kind of used to this.

Like I said, just if the 15 guys in the locker room believe in the coaching staff, we don't have to worry about whether it's home crowd or -- wherever we're playing, we know it's going to be a good crowd, it's going to be a special crowd. We're ready for that environment.

**Q. Jeremy, you're the only starter who has played on this stage in Sweet 16. There's a few of you who still remain from the 2022 team. What have you told the younger guys, as in Filip and Tyrese, just about playing in the Sweet 16?**

JEREMY ROACH: We made it out of the first round, obviously. It's a big thing. I think that's the hardest round. Now you have to kind of just ride momentum into the second round. I think that's the biggest thing.

Obviously it gets harder as the tournament goes on. I mean, the stakes are even higher now, so I think just -- really it's kind of the same mentality as taking it one game at a time. Don't think who we can play on Sunday. We have to win Friday to get to Sunday.

**Q. Guys, the bench is really important now with -- you have three guys out for the season, so the four bench players that you do have, Ryan, and Sean, and TJ and Jaylen, can you talk about their importance and the history of Duke having players come off the bench in big-time games in the NCAA Tournament and kind of their development this year and how they've grown?**

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: Yeah, I mean, just -- obviously this is a team game, and we need everyone that we can get for this time of year. I mean, everyone has a specific role to this team, and I think we do a really good job because of how selfless we are as people, of just carrying those roles out. That's really what's gotten us this far.

So just keeping that up and knowing that each one of us is just as important as the other is a really big thing.

TYRESE PROCTOR: I think they've been great for us. The coach talks about coming in in waves. We have our job as starters to start the game strong and sort of set the tone, and they have a job to come in and just keep attacking and keep bringing those different waves.

Obviously for us it's a learning curve because everyone coming out of high school are the top recruits, but I feel like we're at a point where everyone knows their role and everyone knows what to do on the court, just bringing energy.

JEREMY ROACH: That's the biggest thing. Everybody is learning their roles. Obviously Boogs does what he does, comes in, brings defense, and him and Sean come in and bring energy. TJ, he is coming in to shoot. Everybody is kind of finding their roles and just deciding or really just getting comfortable with their roles and not trying to do too much outside themselves. Just doing what the team asks

them to do, and I think that's the biggest thing.

You never know when it's going to be your night. That's why the bench has done a great job at staying ready. You hear stories about (indiscernible) out in the championship game, getting his moments. So I think just staying ready is a big thing, and I think they've been doing that all season.

**Q. How have you seen Coach put his stamp on this program in a short amount of time in two seasons?**

JEREMY ROACH: He's learned from the best, obviously. He's had a hell of a first season. We won the ACC. People doubted us early on in the season, but I think for him it's really just kind of keeping the group together. Especially last year. I think that was the big thing. Everybody thought that we had a crazy up and down season in the beginning of the year, but then we ended up running off 15 straight and winning the ACC and then ultimately falling to Tennessee in the Round of 32.

I think he's done a great job. Obviously coming into this coaching job is not easy. Especially at Duke. I think he's done a hell of a job. We still have more work to do this year, but he's done a great job this year too.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports