

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Final - NC State vs Duke

Saturday, March 30, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

American Airlines Arena

**Duke Blue Devils**

**Coach Jon Scheyer**

**Kyle Filipowski**

**Tyrese Proctor**

**Jeremy Roach**

Elite 8 Pregame Media Conference



**KYLE FILIPOWSKI:** It's great having that familiarity with them and already having a sense of their style. But, yeah, we're doing a great job with how things have been going lately. We're going to keep the main thing the main thing and keep doing what we've been doing.

**JON SCHEYER:** Well, it's unique. Obviously the fact you've played them twice in the last month, but it's the same preparation for us as a staff last night, watching film, watching our games back against them.

Clearly you don't have to get familiar where it's a new opponent because, for me, I'm always -- whoever the first game is, I'm all the way in. The staff is getting ahead. So you're very familiar. They're familiar with us too, so it's unique. But the preparation is still the same for us.

**Q. This is for Kyle. What's the biggest key to limiting DJ Burns in the post as well as Mohamed Diarra who has been a force on the glass the last couple games for NC State?**

**KYLE FILIPOWSKI:** I think the biggest thing for -- it's not just myself; it's going to be a whole team effort on the defensive end with controlling DJ and limiting Diarra's rebounding as well. It's going to be a whole team effort.

Just sticking to the game plan, listening to what the coaches have to say because we've been doing this for a long time now, and we have all the trust in each other. It's just going to be that type of game.

**Q. This is for Jon. Just curious what changes you've seen at NC State since you played them at their place late in the regular season?**

**JON SCHEYER:** Well, one, they continue to get better and better. I think you can see their confidence and their togetherness has continued to grow.

They're a really good defensive team. They've become very disruptive. Thief always been disruptive, but I think even more so in the half court creating turnovers. They've been a better rebounding team.

**THE MODERATOR:** We are joined by the Blue Devils of Duke University. Questions, please.

**Q. Obviously playing a familiar opponent. You don't have -- it's kind of a different -- you don't maybe need to scout as much. How is the approach for this different than maybe it would be if it was an unfamiliar team? That's for everyone.**

**JEREMY ROACH:** I think the approach is the same for every team. The tournament, you have to lock in. It's a quick turnaround. You want to make sure you're on top of your game, just with the scout, the play-calling -- with even us, it's watching the game back, just finding stuff that we did wrong, finding stuff that we did right.

I think just focusing on ourselves is the biggest thing going into this game. NC State is a great opponent. They're playing their best basketball right now. They won eight in a row. They're here for a reason, so we just have to go out there and compete.

**TYRESE PROCTOR:** I would agree with Jeremy on not changing the scout. It's good that we have two games under our belt against them at a neutral site and away at NC State.

I think just getting familiar with how they play and DJ down low and how they have sort of two different teams when he goes out and when he is in. I think it's been really good how we've gotten to play them twice, and we get to play them a third time now.



Offensively I think the biggest thing that you've seen is just the connectivity. Horne is a dangerous player any time he steps on the floor, his ability to shoot beyond the 3. But really everybody is playing their best basketball. I can go down the list.

They're much different than the second time -- than the first time we played them. I think they're even better than the last time we played them at the ACC Tournament because your confidence grows through your experience on the court. And when you win the ACC Championship the way they did, five games in five days, and then went three games in the tournament really in convincing fashion -- obviously they had the one overtime game -- but I've been very impressed watching them on film.

**Q. Considering the team has gotten to this point, is there any way of explaining any differences or similarities this team has to maybe some past Duke teams you've been around as a player and a coach just overall season?**

JON SCHEYER: Absolutely there's some similarities with other teams. This team is unique with how they've done it, especially the fact you consider where we are in college basketball in 2024 and the fact that these guys -- you know, we didn't have any transfers this season. We are younger. They've just continued to double down on the belief they have in each other.

Ultimately, the tournament is about competing. I mean, that's really what it comes down to. The teams I've been fortunate enough to be on as a player or a coach, be on staff with, the teams that have done the best just competed the best in the tournament when it matters most. And these guys have stepped up to that challenge.

They've never been a group that makes excuse, which is why I think they've gotten better the last two seasons. They've gotten better through the course of the year. They played their best basketball at the end.

Last year was the same way, and this year has been the same. And it's a credit to having the right people and having the right guys.

**Q. This is for any of you. As a unit, you all have really developed a strong personality, maybe a stronger personality and charisma than a lot of recent Duke teams. Maybe it remind me of maybe comparable to the 2019 team with Zion and them. How much do you all credit Jared McCain for that, from his TikTok dances to everything to really get you all maybe out of your element a little bit, but grow in personality-wise?**

JEREMY ROACH: I think that's just him with the TikToks. I haven't really been in too many -- I ain't really been in too many TikToks. Yeah, I was in one last night, but that was my only one.

Just his growth throughout the season, I mean, he started off kind of -- as a freshman you have to go through those trials and tribulations. And Tyrese goes down, and he had to step up. Him and Caleb had to step up and had to grow up fast.

In the Baylor game I think that's really when he took his stride and just played himself. And I know his capabilities. We all know what Jared can do. He's just been doing whatever it takes to win.

He's had four or five games where he has had 10 rebounds in the game, and he just plays. He just plays to win. That's just someone you want as a freshman. He always has that positive energy and just keeps our spirits up too. He is just a joy to be around.

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah, I think his energy and confidence spreads throughout the team, through practice, through games. He puts so much work in. It reflects on court with his performances.

And we all have so much confidence in him. He has so much confidence in himself in terms of personality and stuff. I feel like just his energy all around campus, it just brings all of us up. Even if he is not having the best shooting night or not playing the best, I think that's the way he has improved this season, just playing for all of us and letting the game come to him instead of trying to force it.

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: Just backing up what they were saying, Jared is one of one. Even when he's having a bad day or a bad game, you won't know it because he's just so uplifting and positive. It's really great to have on this team because, they said it, it reflects on us as well. And it helps us have each other's backs through the tough times too.

**Q. The question is for Jeremy. Of course, being from the DMV, I just wanted to kind of ask you, obviously you've experienced success at this level already. Can you kind of talk about how being from the area has prepared you for moments like this?**

JEREMY ROACH: Well, it's the best area in the country for basketball. We just have to throw that out there right now. I don't care what anybody says -- West Coast, New York, New Jersey. DMV has the best basketball in the country. I think Coach Scheyer would say that too with his recruitment too.

JON SCHEYER: We keep going back there, so there's something about it.

JEREMY ROACH: I just think the competitive edge and just the high school leagues that we come from, the (indiscernible), the IAC, all the Catholic leagues around, even the public school leagues, like the DC Public School leagues, they prepare you for these moments. You're always playing in front of big crowds. And people are talking to you, talking crazy.

It just keeps that competitive spirit. I think that's where I get my competitive edge from. But just always playing with great players too, just competing against great players just kind of prepared me for these moments.

**Q. For Jeremy and Jon, a couple of years ago you play UNC in the Final Four, now NC State in the Elite Eight, the biggest game in this rivalry. What can you say about the rivalry with NC State and what it means to Duke?**

JEREMY ROACH: It's a huge rivalry. 25 minutes from Durham, 20 minutes from Durham. Played them twice. I mean, that tri-state -- that UNC, Duke, UNC is always a great matchup, just playing them. It's always a competitive matchup, and it's just fun playing against those guys.

We compete at a high level. We also have the respect for one another too.

JON SCHEYER: I'll just say growing up as a player and as a coach at Duke you learn very quickly it's the best area in college for basketball. You know, when you have really the triangle, but then you add in Wake Forest all within an hour of each other, I think that's unique.

For me it hasn't gone into my mind at all about the fact of a rivalry, about the battles in past years against NC State. I think it's just the respect level. We've always had big-time games against them, very competitive. They've had their style of playing. So have we.

It's going to be a big-time battle regardless of whether it's in the NCAA Tournament, ACC Tournament, regular-season game. There's always a lot at stake, and this is no exception.

**Q. Tyrese, coming from Australia, you obviously knew about Duke, but when you got here to Durham, did anybody talk to you about how everybody hates Duke? I mean, you play outside of Cameron, and you guys are the team that everybody wants to see lose. Did anybody like Jeremy or anybody say, hey, look, get**

**ready for this because it's really kind of tough?**

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah. I mean, I knew about Duke obviously getting recruited and stuff like that, but I didn't realize how hated we were until I actually got here and experienced it firsthand. Guys prepared me for it, stuff like that. But I mean, going through it firsthand, you see it for yourself.

I think it just gives us an edge and gives us that edge throughout the whole season and allows us to play our best basketball.

**Q. You mentioned after the last time you played NC State you held a players-only meeting afterwards. Could you just talk about kind of the focus of that meeting and how much it helped you guys reset for this tournament?**

JEREMY ROACH: We're not going to talk about that, being players-only. It was definitely a good meeting. Definitely a lot of meaningful words that came out of that meeting. We don't want to get into all that, but definitely just kind of re-energized us, re-focused us and got us to where we are at right now.

**Q. If you have an opinion, do you get to watch much of the women's game? And what do you think of the women's game particularly in the last year or so as it's on TV more and maybe some of the personalities?**

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: I think it's been great what's happening to women's basketball for college. And just them getting more of the popularity and people giving them the respect they deserve has been great for basketball in general.

They're playing the game they love, just like we are. And they deserve just as much as we do. Just seeing that finally start happening and them getting more credit is great to see.

TYRESE PROCTOR: Having a younger sister, I've always watched women's basketball. And just watching even last year the uplift that the Final Four and stuff like that brought, I think they're finally getting the stage that they deserve and the respect that they deserve.

And shout-out Duke women's basketball. Good luck tonight.

JEREMY ROACH: 7 o'clock, watch.

TYRESE PROCTOR: UConn.

JEREMY ROACH: It's always a joy watching women's basketball. I grew you up watching my sister play, my cousins play. And now I'm going to every Duke women's game. We're always supporting.

They're getting the respect that they deserve. They put their shoes on and their jerseys on the same way we do, so I feel like they should pretty much get everything that we get. It's just a joy watching them.

The stars that they have -- Angel Reese, Caitlin Clark -- we go to Duke's team, Reigan, T, Ashlon -- the list goes on. They have a lot of great players, and I think they should definitely get the recognition that they deserve.

**Q. Talk about the support the brotherhood has given you here especially since last night. A bunch of them were in the stands, but then countless former players on Twitter. Have you all had a chance -- do you all have time to interact with any of them? Talk about the sport in general, and have any of them reached out to you personally?**

JEREMY ROACH: I think, for me, the support that they give to us on a daily basis, whether -- Duke is such a prominent school. We get a lot of hate and stuff like that. But they're always the ones saying, keep going, keep going, we have your back and stuff like that.

Knowing that we have the support of the older guys who came before us, it means a lot. It makes us want to play that much harder. Guys like P, like Mark, Trev, Wendell, (indiscernible), those guys, I still keep in contact with them on a daily basis.

Their support means so much to me, just the confidence that they give to me and then guys like Quinn and Amile Jefferson who has been here too. Just those guys, I mean, they mean so much to us and the support that they give us, it means a lot.

TYRESE PROCTOR: I agree. I think just the support. That's why where he came to Duke, outside of basketball and the networks and relationships that you form while being at Duke at K Academy and events like that, something that you can cherish forever and keep in contact.

Everyone is supporting. Everyone is always reaching out telling us what they see. I mean, it's just great because we trust one another. They've all been through the same road we're going through. Some advice will never hurt.

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: Like they said, they've gone through this experience before, and it's great to get feedback and

support from them as well. Just them cheering us on because there are so many people rooting against us. Just that brotherhood connection does run deep, and it's great to have their support.

THE MODERATOR: We will dismiss our student-athletes. Questions for Coach Scheyer, please.

**Q. Jon, you guys have obviously done a really good job recruiting, particularly if you look at the recruiting rankings. You get five stars, McDonald's All Americans. But this team is more than just talent. It seems like they really click and like each other. Maybe that's a little social media that you see from them dancing. How much do you consider personalities and kind of team fit when you are recruiting for Duke, because you could just go down the line and say, I want this five star, I want this five star. How do you consider that as you're trying to build a team?**

JON SCHEYER: It's as important as anything. Just the personality and makeup from a character standpoint -- obviously off the court, but then the competitiveness you have to have to succeed at Duke and the mental toughness feel has to be at a high level.

For us, I learned quickly coming on staff, you have to say no more than you say yes. Being a former player, I feel an even greater responsibility for the guys that we bring in.

Talent is never going to be enough. You have to have chemistry. You have to have guys that want to unpack their bags and be all-in from the time that they're at Duke, whether it's a year or four years.

I'm fortunate. When we recruit, too, it's full disclosure. We talk about who else we're recruiting. We put it all out on the table because all of a sudden if there are surprises along the way or you don't have the buy-in that you need to from the beginning.

It gets harder to do that when you don't know who is coming back or who is leaving and all that. But we still do our best to be transparent and here's the way it looks now. And I think that that's created a great togetherness for our group, just to stick with it and stay together.

**Q. I know you said that there's not a lot different about playing State here as opposed to other times, but you guys did go through this two years ago. You did play Carolina in the Final Four. That is different. I mean, it's a different venue. It's a different environment. What can you and to a certain extent Jeremy sort of take from that experience of playing a team you know so well, there are such deep feelings, on the national**



**stage -- what can you and him take into Sunday that you learn from that?**

JON SCHEYER: I'll say two things from that. One, it feels different to me because there's not such a long time in between, and two years ago there was. There's a lot more you can think about. There's a lot more that can happen in between the two games that you play. I'm talking about the game versus Arkansas in the Elite Eight to then when we played North Carolina.

This year -- so then the second thing for me is just focusing on the prep and just focusing on what you can control. It ultimately does not matter that it's a team that we've played twice. It matters, are you getting back in transition defense? Are you blocking out? Am I preparing the way that I need to? That's been my whole focus.

I mentioned earlier the thing that makes it a little bit different, we just played these guys twice. They just played us twice. It's not like there's a lot of secrets out there between either one of us. I think it's pretty clear both ways.

You just have to execute it, have to follow the game plan. You mentioned what can Jeremy and I do? I think it's setting the tone for the prep and the edge you have to have.

**Q. With conference expansion, you guys aren't seeing teams like NC State nearly as much as you had in the past. The ACC is getting kind of a facelift after this year. Is there any significance to you to have this kind of game, this kind of setting with two traditional ACC powers playing with these kind of stakes?**

JON SCHEYER: I haven't thought about that as much, but in a world of uncertainty and not knowing what the future holds, you want to take advantage of every opportunity you have.

Look, NC State, I've had as many battles against those guys as a player, as a coach almost against anybody. The respect level is there. The history between the two programs is clear to me, but you have to put all that aside. You really do. You have to put it all aside and focus on what you need to do to win an Elite Eight game. You want to take advantage of the opportunity when you are here.

**Q. Your opponent last night, with Houston, is a team that's been 1 in the rankings most of the season. And the team that you are about to play is playing with house money in that you're not even supposed to be here. It's almost like UNC two years ago when they made that run to the championship game. Do you**

**prepare your team differently when you are facing a team that sort of has these loose, team-of-destiny vibes to it compared to a team that maybe has a little bit more expectations and pressure about where they expect to end the tournament?**

JON SCHEYER: I think it's important for our team to understand context and not just the X-and-O scouting report of a team, but the mental makeup and where they're at.

The thing I'll say about NC State is they went into yesterday's game -- every game they've played, including ours when we played in the ACC Tournament -- believing they're supposed to win. There's no surprises with them. They're not leaving the court celebrating. They believe they're supposed to win.

So to me I know it's unorthodox how they've gotten here, winning the ACC Tournament that way, but you're playing a team right now that is as confident as anybody we'll play, including Houston.

Although it's different how they've gotten here. To me it's the same approach. And it doesn't matter if you are favored, doesn't matter what you are seeded. What matters is what you control when the ball goes up.

The further the season has gone along for us, the more that's been our talk and the more that's what we focused on. We're not going to stop doing that now for this game.

**Q. You talked about playing them twice, and you saw them at their lowest point in the regular season and now in the tournament. What does it say about Coach Keatts, and you as a coach know how he has been able to turn it around and get the team to buy in over the last eight games?**

JON SCHEYER: It's funny. We actually spoke after they won the ACC championship. I just reached out to congratulate him. And he called me. I was just so impressed. Obviously I said I wish it didn't happen against us, but that was a big-time run you guys went on.

He has done an amazing job. I think you learn a lot about yourself, but also about your players, your team in moments like that where your back is up against the wall. Clearly his guys will do anything for him. And the way they've played, the way they've responded, the coaching job he has done is clear to me.

It's a ton of respect for him. He's got his guys playing the best basketball of the season. That's what you want to do as a coach. If you can do that in March, it says a lot about

you and the job that you have done, and he's clearly done that.

**Q. Obviously there's three ACC teams in the Elite Eight. Year after year it seems like the ACC has success. Is there something unquantifiable about the ACC that maybe metrics overlook? Or what do you think the reason is that ACC teams seem to overperform year after year?**

JON SCHEYER: I don't know as a league -- I don't think as a league right now we've figured out how to do our nonconference schedule. That is if you look at a couple of different leagues they've been better with that. And ultimately you can say it's not fair or whatever. You have to do what is going to qualify you for the tournament.

That's something we need to get organized with and on the same page with, the position we put ourselves in once we start playing each other. Other leagues have less games against their conference teams. We have 20 games. So that's one thing.

The second thing is, I've always felt with the ACC the diversity of opponent that you see prepares you to play anybody. We play up-tempo. We play some teams that are slower-paced. You see physicality. You see athleticism. You see shooting.

Up until Syracuse this year you always saw zone. You still see some zone, but you always knew you would see that. You see switching defense. So the styles I think is what helps prepare different teams.

I think the success of having almost half the teams in the Elite Eight, three out of eight -- last year, really every year the success, I think, is based on playing different opponents through the ACC season.

**Q. I kind of wanted to go back to you when I asked the question to Jeremy. I heard you say we keep going back as far as the DMV. Can you kind of share a little bit just what you see in players from the DMV? Jeremy, of course, is there now. Trevor was there. Even if we went years back even before your time, you had a guy named Kenneth Blakeney that came from the area. Can you just talk about the DMV?**

JON SCHEYER: Are you from the DMV by chance?

**Q. Yes, sir.**

JON SCHEYER: I respect that. The history of our program -- you can go all the way back to Johnny Dawkins and Tommy Amaker, and to Grant Hill, Brian Davis, Nolan

Smith, Kenny Blakeney. Obviously most recently Quinn Cook. Quinn would be so pissed at me if I didn't mention him. He is the ultimate DMV guy.

We've had a great tradition of guys from that area. And Jeremy spoke about it, but the level of competition, how guys are battle-tested, that's always been something that's important for us.

Most recently have you Jeremy, you have Trevor Keels. We have two guys signed, Darren Harris and Patrick Ngongba, who are just terrific players. They've gone to PVI, which is one of the premiere schools in the country. Playing for Team Takeover.

They're in big-time moments, so by the time they get to us, you know they're not afraid of competition, and they're not afraid of the spotlight or the moment, which is half the battle.

We'll continue to recruit that area. And hopefully guys still see the picture and the vision at Duke. But it's definitely been one of the best places for us of anywhere.

**Q. The first three games here in the NCAA Tournament, the points allowed is very similar to 2010 and 2015, holding every opponent under 60. The first part of this question is how does maybe in Duke defense stack up to those two or all-time great Duke defenses? Then I'm curious how often you use as an inspirational tool past Duke games, signature wins like the UNLV game in '91. Is any of this required watching for your team? Do you require them to watch or learn some of this, or is that healthy? Should they find their own identity?**

JON SCHEYER: To your first question about our defense, I'm just proud of what we've done. You have to guard the ball, first and foremost. Our perimeter has done a great job. Our back line has really moved well helping each other. That's been great to see.

To hold our three opponents to well below their season average, it's what your defense needs to do in the tournament. It needs to be elevated.

I don't know where it compares right now to 2010 or 2015, but I do know it's at the level that it needs to be to have a chance to win in these moments. And then each round you go it needs to take another step up. NC State is a heck of a challenge, and we need to do that.

Then I always bring up personal experiences or past history of our program because I think it's important to understand the jersey that you are wearing, what it

represents.

Teams don't just play you for individually who you are. They play it for what Duke means and the success throughout the history of our program. Obviously Coach K has taken to a completely different level during his time.

Going into the tournament I brought up my first experiences, playing as a freshman in Buffalo against VCU. I brought up great moments too that I've seen, that I've watched. We just actually shared back there with the guys. My first memory was the '92 team and then '94, which is you look at the history of our program, five national championships, it can easily be more off one play, and it can easily be less off of one play.

Just using past moments to understand the value of every possession, just being present in the moment, and that's been something I'll always talk about as long as I'm the head coach here because I'm so proud of the history. And you can't take for granted where you come from, what the guys before you have done to put Duke in the position it's in now.

**Q. Leading up to I guess this entire NCAA Tournament run, it seems as if Duke was kind of playing an underdog role. Even nationally people were picking JMU and then heading into Houston. Do you feel like your team has thrived in that space of underdog and maybe even proving doubters wrong?**

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, I would be lying to you if I said our guys don't see that or if we don't see that stuff, right? It's impossible not to hear anything or hear nothing. So I think that's fuel to the fire for our guys and our team.

At the same time it's been a different kind of season. I mean, the preseason people are saying you can't lose and things like that. It's so hot and cold. It's incredibly hot and cold how it can be. You just have to stay steady.

I tell our guys all the time -- they probably get sick of hearing it -- but you're not as bad as people say you are right now after you lose, and I tell them after wins you're not as good as people say you are. You just have to be really steady.

I told them right before we found out where we're going, I said, look, you're going to hear predictions on air. People are going to say what's going to happen in our bracket. It literally does not matter.

2010, they said we would be the first 1 seed out. We won the whole thing. Last year I think a lot of people picked us to win it, and we lost early.

I could go through each season. It's why nobody has ever had a perfect bracket. There's lots of reasons. You can't predict. You have to focus on what you can control.

So I don't know about what our players would say if they feel they're the underdog or not, but I do know they're proud, they're competitive. And so when people say they can't do something, I think that gets them more motivated to prove people wrong, but also to do it for themselves that they can win, they can accomplish what they want here.

**Q. I was wondering what you might think of some of the personalities of the women's coaches, including the men who coach the women. It seems like they're not quite as careful as maybe some of the men's coaches.**

JON SCHEYER: I have no idea. I can't speak on that. I have no idea. I don't pay attention to the men's coaches and what they say. But I don't know what you mean by that. I can't speak on that.

**Q. Just a general, what do you think of Caitlin Clark's deep shots and just her game in general?**

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, Caitlin Clark is a killer. She's who I always want to be as a player, to shoot with range and not afraid of any moment. She's off the charts.

As a coach you want any of your players to have her competitive spirit. Her shooting and scoring is elite and special. But to me it's the heart that she plays with, the competitive spirit that separates her.

I've loved watching her play. They've had a terrific year. She's had a terrific career, and she's been a joy to watch.

**Q. State runs seven players primarily, but they still find a way to kind of go two, three deep one through five. And then, of course, Burns and Horne are the key guys, but the other five seem to find a way to contribute every game. How unique is this NC State team from a coaching perspective to look at? And how difficult is it to prepare for this version of what the Wolfpack are right now?**

JON SCHEYER: They've developed great role definition. Horne and Burns are a lethal combo, the two of them, they score. The other guys do such a good job playing their role. They have good size, good positional size. They have good versatility.

So they can go big if they need to. Middlebrooks and Burns have played together. They can go small with Diarra

playing the five, which they haven't done, but they can if they need to. They can play four guards on the court.

So, like you mentioned, it's seven players primarily that play, but the versatility allows them to put a lot of different line-ups on the court.

That's what I think is challenging. No matter what, they can match down to you, they can match up. They can speed you up, their athleticism.

To me, though, it's the role definition they've created and developed the last couple of weeks that has allowed for that to happen.

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