

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Duke Blue Devils

Mike Krzyzewski

Postgame Press Conference



Duke 86, Boston College 51

Q. I'm sure everyone would love to hear an opening statement, comments about the game, but maybe we can start with the start. You got off to a great start in this contest 10-2 and built on it from there. How important was that?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Huge. In the games that we've played well, we haven't turned the ball over and we played good -- and got good shots, and we haven't started out in a hole. Today playing like that to begin with, and then -- we played a really good game. Our perimeter was outstanding. They shared the ball. We had 22 assists. We shot the ball well.

We came here yesterday. We drove in to do our 45-minute practice just to get a good feel because we knew there wouldn't be hardly any warmup for our game. And our kids really -- the perimeter really shot the ball well yesterday. Sometimes you do that the day before the game and not the day of, but it seemed to carry over.

Obviously our defense was good and we had really good balance scoring.

And the contribution from Henry was key, real key.

Q. Talking about sharing of the ball and all those assists, because you guys moved the ball around so well and moved their defense around. Seemed like some of those plays that could have been second assists because they set up so many good shots for each other.

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: That's a good point. A couple of the time-outs when we made those shots, what we reminded the guys of is when the guy makes that extra and then an extra pass, you almost always hit that shot because the

guy receiving it, it's like, the other guy said, look, I have confidence in you to hit it. I could have taken it but I have confidence in you.

Those are beautiful plays, and we haven't had a lot of them, but we had a good number of them today.

Q. You mentioned the shot selection and the extra ball movement being so key. Compared to the past few games, maybe the perimeter hadn't been quite at the level you would have liked.

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Right.

Q. Is the ball movement and the shot selection, is it that simple for the perimeter guys to continue this rate over the next couple of days?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Let's just do it for the next day. We just got to think one day at a time.

No, they do that. We're not a veteran team, so you keep -- when we won those games in a row, you could see some things developing. And then those two tough losses, we -- I don't know. We didn't move it as well. It's not -- that habit, it's not there yet, but it was there today. Hopefully it'll be there tomorrow against Louisville.

Q. You know better than most about what can happen in this tournament when teams pick up momentum. Can you just speak on that and the history of momentum in this tournament and kind of what you saw from your team today that you feel like can carry over?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, I hope we can carry it over. You never know about momentum. Obviously we played really well today. They had fun playing. After losing three games in a row -- two tough ones and then Carolina really kicked us -- you can be down. I didn't think our team was down.

They really practiced well yesterday and very upbeat, and they came in and did that again. They've been good kids.



I just hope we can keep it going against Louisville tomorrow. I'm glad it's an evening game where we get a little bit of a chance to prepare, get our guys some fluids, get them therapy tonight and then see what happens.

Q. How much conversation did you have with your team about playing in this tournament and just having fun and playing loose, and did that translate with their effort today?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, we had a -- really when we got back from Carolina in the locker room, we came back and had a short meeting and said, look, we just got beat badly, and that's it. That's the end of that season. We're not going to show tape. We're not going to do anything; let's start anew. We tried to carry that over and the next day in our meetings, all we did was have a short lift and had some meetings, and everyone was real positive.

The kids were energetic. You know, they -- and yesterday they were very energetic. Again, coming here was really important, that 45 minutes.

You know, the Greensboro Coliseum is a beautiful place, and I really think when our guys walked out on the court, that lifted them, too. And then I told them before the 45 minutes started, before the balls were given out, that -- I just told them a few stories about some of the games that were played there. The first championship that we won in '86, Coach Scheyer against Georgia Tech. It was about 1 for 11 and we called his number, and he hit a big shot that won us the tournament.

I said, you know, look, Greensboro Coliseum is about moments. I said, try to have a moment tomorrow, and if we have the moment tomorrow, maybe you'll have another one. Don't look at it at five games or anything like that. Just try to take advantage of each day that we're given the opportunity to play.

Q. With your team's youth and then obviously the cancellations last year, with the exception of Joey and Jordan, none of your freshmen and sophomores have ever appeared in a postseason game until today. What have you seen from those young guys' kind of mindset coming into postseason play?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Yeah, just excitement, I think the main thing. DJ has had a smile on his face for two days. He's just geeked, he's so excited.

It's neat to see -- for this 74-year-old guy to see these young guys get excited, and that's after losing a few games at the end of the season. So they were able to put that behind them and just play with enthusiasm.

But your point is a good one, and now they have played one. Now we've got a chance to play another, and hopefully we can do well in that.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the two games with Louisville and kind of what you've taken from those two as you get ready to play them for the third time?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Yeah, let me decompress here a little bit. They were both really outstanding games, and their veteran backcourt was the difference. Johnson is terrific. Jones in the last four or five minutes of a game is probably the best in our conference in managing the game and making the right decisions. So we're going to face them again, and we'll try to do stuff where we can limit them.

That's the main thing is to -- I mean, they're really good, but those two guards are exceptional. They're going to be professional guards at some level.

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