

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Wake Forest Demon Deacons

Isaiah Mucius

Postgame Press Conference



Notre Dame 80, Wake Forest 77

Q. Can you just kind of take us through those closing sequences, what you guys were trying to do on offense and how you tried to fall back on defense for that final shot?

ISIAH MUCIUS: I think Coach wanted us to take the last shot and we defended it well, and then they got in transition and we were kind of back -- we weren't really -- everybody wasn't back on defense, and they hit a tough shot. I mean, congrats to Notre Dame. We were up the whole game and they continued to battle back, came and hit a big shot. It is what it is at this point.

Q. What was the first half like? And just kind of gaining that lead and you were playing one of your best games of the season, what kind of got you guys going like that?

ISIAH MUCIUS: Yeah, we just remember we went to Notre Dame and they kicked our tail. They came out that first -- we had a chip on our shoulder just going back into that game thinking back like we owe these guys. So we came out super hungry and just wanted to battle it all night. So we came out hot and we continued to do it the second half, but they just hit a tough shot at the end.

Q. What do you think caused the long drought? You guys missed 11 of your last 12 shots. You got some good looks during that mix. What was causing them not to go down?

ISIAH MUCIUS: We were getting good. Sometimes it's just the ball doesn't fall in the hoop, I think. You get fatigued sometimes and, you know, those shots that you make in the first half might not fall a little bit when you got a lot of legs.

We were getting good looks and moving the ball. I think we had like 14 assists on 17 turnovers, which I think as a team was amazing. And if we continue to do that going into next season, I think we can be a really good team and a sleeper team coming into the ACC next year.

Q. What kind of set you guys up so early to take the lead that you did? It seemed like you guys were trying to use your speed and really trying to get inside. Was that the approach or what was the approach there?

ISIAH MUCIUS: Make them uncomfortable defensively is the first thing that we just wanted to do. I think we forced them to take tough shots, we were in the gaps, stripping and ripping. We weren't letting them get any easy looks from three, which they're a great team that does that, shooting from three. And then we just tried to get in the paint. That's what we tried to do, get in the paint, create shots for others. Get in there and play with two feet and finish it, and I think we did that, you know, coming out hot and then we continued to do that throughout the whole game.

Q. What kind of a gut punch was it to play so well for so long and then just kind of have the last four or five minutes kind of let it all go away?

ISIAH MUCIUS: I mean, that last -- we played hard, I think, the whole 40-minute game until that last maybe two, three seconds of the game. Like we had the lead and we played hard. Like it hurts. It's emotional because you play so hard and you give it your all, and losing by a buzzer beater sucks because you know you're right there.

I'm proud of the guys. They played hard. Everybody contributed tonight, and this is something that I'm going to take going into next season and make sure that we get this sour taste out of our mouth and we're on the winning side.

Q. What would you say was the biggest thing that caused you guys to miss those 11 shots over the last eight minutes?

ISIAH MUCIUS: Probably just fatigue. You get into that

time of game where everybody is giving their all. Like we were playing hard. Everybody is connected, and sometimes you've got to fight through that fatigue. And sometimes that fatigue might get you a little bit, but mentally, you've got to try to fight through it. And I think you miss a couple shots because you're tired, but at the end of the day, we'll make those. I know we will. Because we did it in the first half.

Q. How painful is this to swallow especially because of the way the last few weeks have gone? You guys really looked like you were a different team than the one that's been playing lately.

ISAIAH MUCIUS: It hurts, man. This is tough because I think we were clicking, I feel like. We would have won this game, and I think we had a really good chance of making a run. We've been so connected defensively, how we've been moving the basketball. We've been playing our best basketball maybe the past two or three games. We didn't come out on the results, but I just see the growth and progression that we came to as a team from those losses, from Florida State to those losses like Duke.

We're getting there. We're in the right direction. Coach Forbes is doing a great job of getting us in the right direction, and we're going to flip this program around.

Q. Watching the way that Carter played tonight, how bright is the future for this program?

ISAIAH MUCIUS: Oh, man, Carter played amazing tonight, assisted the ball, hit open shots. Just ran and ran the offense. This is what he's going to do for the next two, three, four years he's going to be at Wake. And being able to go out my senior year with him and having him side by side with me, him and Daivien is going to be fun. So I'm excited for Carter to just continue to grow, continue to get better. I think this year was perfect for him to get his feet wet in the ACC and next year become a really dominant guard.

Q. I'm sure you've talked about the ending, but as they block the shot and they're going the other way, was there any particular point in that, what transpired, did you think, oh, man, this might go in? Did you have a good look at how it was developing and did you think something bad was happening?

ISAIAH MUCIUS: No, I mean, the first thing I thought of was try to get a stop. They're in transition, I think it was like a one on two, and I tried to make sure that Cormac Ryan didn't get to the rim because it was a tight game. So I tried to force him to get to the rim, but no guy was trailing, so it was a tough shot, and he hit the shot. So congrats to

him. He's a great player. But we're going to bounce back from it and make sure we come out on the next side next year.

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