

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 10, 2021
Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

North Carolina Tar Heels

Armando Bacot

Postgame Press Conference



North Carolina 101, Notre Dame 59

Q. Obviously you guys scored a season high, but I thought defensively you played extremely well. What was the difference between this and that first meeting against Notre Dame when they were able to get 11 threes?

ARMANDO BACOT: Yeah, I mean, it's kind of bad to put it like this, but it was win or go home. We knew we had to go out there and just compete, and obviously just the way they came back yesterday was kind of scary. And not having Garrison, we just knew we could not let up on them, we couldn't get Laszewski get going or Hubb. And I thought we got out there on defense and got all the right rotations. We did a good job communicating without our defensive leader Garrison, so I thought overall it was a good job by all of us and we stepped up.

Q. What does it say about Walker Kessler's play, just seemed super active and with his length on those blocks, your perspective on his game and his improvement from a couple weeks ago until now?

ARMANDO BACOT: Yeah, Kess, he's special right now and he's going to be even more special down the line. Obviously he probably has the highest upside out of all the bigs, and he's just putting everything along. I think it just speaks to how talented our front court is. Even with Sterling not playing, too. If you see Sterling in practice, some of the stuff he does. I mean, there's days he dominates and makes it tough on me, Day'Ron and Kess, blocking out shots, going in the paint. I mean, it's good front court right over there. I feel like we all just get better from playing against each other.

And that was just one of the main things I was telling Kess at the beginning of the year when it was like a little rough. You're not going to play no bigs better than Sterling or me

or Day'Ron really on a daily basis. So I feel like he's putting it all together, and he's special.

Q. Coach said that knowing that Garrison might be limited, he challenged you guys yesterday. What did he say and how did you guys kind of take that?

ARMANDO BACOT: Yeah, I mean, Coach came up to us, it was not a good chance that Garrison was playing. So he just told us he needed us all to just step up. And he kind of asked a question, like what do y'all think Garrison does the best better than all of y'all. And we all just looked at each other and we said communicate all at the same time.

I knew me specifically just having experience playing in the ACC Tournament last year, that was one of the things added to the our deal was help communicate and try to do a good job of putting us in position and just different coverages and stuff like that, making sure we all were sharp.

Q. Just out of curiosity, what would happen if the four of you guys and Sterling were the starting lineup? How would that shake out?

ARMANDO BACOT: We would have a rebound, I can say that. I don't know about anything else, but I know we would get every rebound.

Q. When you guys are in there and you are dominating, getting all the offensive boards like that, what is that feeling like? Is there a sense of pride? What is that like being in that moment?

ARMANDO BACOT: I mean, definitely, it's so fun. I feel like me and Day'Ron are probably the two best offensive rebounders in the country. And I really don't even really get to play with him because we kind of have a lot of similarities, so we kind of just want to keep one of us on the floor at the same time.

Just being able to play with him today, it was just fun. We talk about it all the time, and I knew me and him would have a fun time on the boards today. And just being able

to play with Kess, too, is fun. We beat each other up in practice all the time, too, every day, make it tough on each other. So just going against other bigs is a lot easier just getting to the offensive glass.

Q. Talk to me about how much the game has slowed down for you and did it lead to your efficiency tonight with your points and rebounds?

ARMANDO BACOT: Definitely. Last year it was more just rushing and just trying to get a shot off. But now I'm more patient, I can take my time, and I'm just comfortable in my situation I can make a play in, just go score.

Q. When you guys are dominating the offensive glass like that, shooters say when they're in a zone they can kind of feel it. What's it like knowing every missed shot that goes up there, you guys have a great chance of pulling it down?

ARMANDO BACOT: It's a fun feeling knowing it gives us a chance to kind of pat ourselves on the offensive boards. We had competitions to go out there and see who could get the most offensive boards. It's just fun just being able to rebound shots and get second chances for us, just pulling stuff like that. But also the shooters on the outside that might have missed, it just makes the game a lot easier, draws fouls. I got a couple fouls on Laszewski today and we got Durham some fouls from just going to the offensive glass. It just makes the game a lot easier.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports