

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

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

## Notre Dame Fighting Irish Mike Brey

Postgame Press Conference



North Carolina 101, Notre Dame 59

MIKE BREY: Well, they're playing good, and they're really good. After watching them against Duke on Saturday night, I was scared to death if we got to them, and my worst fears came true. They just overwhelmed us. I think it was an 11-point game in the second half, and then just the roof fell in and we just couldn't do anything inside, and they certainly have big bodies that just keep pounding on you. Their defense was great, too. Kind of demoralized inside, and they do that on the defensive end.

### **Q. How does a team like this trail by 50 points in a basketball game?**

MIKE BREY: I don't know. That's a great question. I don't know. We just kind of got overwhelmed. I don't know if we had much left after last night either, quite frankly, because we kind of pulled that one out of our backside just to stay alive. And I was very concerned about if we had enough juice to hang around, and we really didn't.

Even though I don't know how it was an 11-point game at the 16-minute mark.

### **Q. When you watched the first half of the game and North Carolina get after it on the offensive glass, what did you notice about --**

MIKE BREY: That's been a weakness of ours all year. We're not a great defensive rebounding team. You know, so I mean, my worst fears -- and it's their greatest strength. The nights we have had success against them we've kept it down a little bit, but it just started off as volleyball.

And they have great bodies that can go get the ball, even if you have a fundamental blockout.

### **Q. You've had so much success through the years.**

### **How do you evaluate where you are right now as a program and how do you recapture that success that you have consistently enjoyed?**

MIKE BREY: I think that's a great question. I would say this group coming back going into my 22nd year is in the same boat as my seventh year. Now, some of you haven't covered me that long. Tom has. We had missed the tournament three years. This will be year three, year four, however you want to count it. So you've got to go back. You have to. You absolutely have to. We did in year seven. We had to go back in year seven, I mean, and we did, and had some momentum.

I think I'm right on that mat again. Been there, done that. There's a nucleus of guys coming back. Hard to evaluate them tonight, but some of them have gotten better this year. We've got a big guy who's a proven low-post player, Paul Atkinson, and we were picked 12th. I don't think people really thought much of us this season. If you notice we weren't on Big Monday at all. If you're not on Big Monday, you're not really thought of as one of the top ones, and rightfully so.

You know, we'll probably be picked a little higher next year, and then it's a dogfight to go back. I told them a year from this Selection Sunday our goal should be to see our name flash up. That's the crossroads we're at, absolutely.

### **Q. It's on that same vein, but you have five regulars basically coming back to augment the new guys coming in with Atkinson and the two freshmen. What is your challenge for the five guys that are really upperclassmen? I know they're not overly experienced with transfers and stuff like that, but what's the challenge you bring to them down the road?**

MIKE BREY: That's a good question. It was a little bit of a challenge tonight. You kind of thank the seniors -- I've been in this boat before where you thank the seniors and then you start talking about next year. And leadership, we only have two captains left, Cormac and Prentiss. Are Nate and Dane going to show some signs to do that? Are they going to play in an in-state tournament before their

career ends?

Those are the things I talked about in the locker room. We didn't talk about the game. We talked about how we get back a year from this Sunday.

We probably will actually get together this Sunday at my house because I want to see if that can be a reference point for us a year from now if we're good enough to earn a bid. But those of you that followed me for 22 years, year 22 is like year seven. The line is drawn in the sand, and we've got to get back. We have kind of been in that mode before, maybe in year seven and I don't know, maybe in year 13 we were back against the wall a little bit, too.

That's where we're at. We've got a -- I hope we have a summer. I think we'll have a summer school. No one has told me yet. That could help us. But yeah, when you look at the five guys -- again, tonight is a tough one to really evaluate. The five guys coming back have played a lot of basketball, and Paul Atkinson gives you six guys that have played a lot, and then it's a matter of who joins the party.

We've got some guys coming off IR, the two freshmen are gifted young guys, JR and Blake are two really gifted young guys, how do they help us.

But those six have played a lot. And you almost need a week to get away from tonight to think about, you know, I think a lot of those guys got better. Wasn't good enough to earn an NCAA bid. I get that. But we have played the hardest schedule we've ever played. We played 11 home games, 15 away from the building. We threw the whole group to the wolves, and I think the challenge is as I told them in there, how do we react and how do we grow from it, and a year from Sunday, we need to show up in that bracket, plain and simple.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports