

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021  
Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

## Syracuse Orange

## Jim Boeheim

### Postgame Press Conference



Virginia 72, Syracuse 69

JIM BOEHEIM: I thought we played a great game. Virginia is a great team. The first half we did a little better job of staying on Hauser and Murphy. Second half started out with -- was trying to get Alan going and he gave up two corner jump shots right off the bat, and just wide open. Robert did a really good job defensively. He was really good offensively the first half, and then his whole game he was really good defensively.

I thought Marek and Quincy were really good inside defensively, but we got beat on a pick. Had already got beat on the pick play at the end, got -- ran into this pick on Kihei, you've got to go underneath that, and that got him a wide-open shot. Beekman is the one we want to shoot it there. We don't want to give anybody a shot, but he's the one guy we would want to shoot it. He hasn't made a three, he's not a good three-point shooter. But that's the way it goes, he knocked it down and that's to his credit.

I thought we played great. I thought it was just -- Kadary before the game said his knee was hurting, told Brad Pike, our trainer, he didn't know if he could go. This is the same thing that happened once before. I told him let's give it a try. He seemed all right. He must have been -- he didn't seem quite like himself, but he didn't complain about it once the game got started.

But again, it was just a great effort. I can't even describe Buddy's play. They had a guy all over him the whole game. They were holding him and pushing him the whole game, and he was tremendous. I mean, you couldn't ask anything more out of a player than what he gave us today. I haven't said much about him because I think his play speaks for itself, but I mean, he was phenomenal today against that team, absolutely. Absolutely phenomenal.

**Q. Do you feel your team has grown up over these last**

**two weeks?**

JIM BOEHEIM: You know, we've had spaces this year where we've played really well, and we've had some games where we haven't. But this group has competed every game, every game. They've won a lot of games against good teams.

We didn't get any quadrant 1 games at home. They were on the road. But this team has really -- I think they've given everything they have this year. I think that Kadary -- I wanted to use Jesse a little bit more today. He just seemed intimidated when he got in there and missed a lay-up, and he just didn't seem comfortable.

Marek was doing such a great job, and he helps Buddy get shots. He's a big key. Even when he doesn't get assists, he gets the screen to get Buddy open. I mean, his statistics are very deceptive. He does a lot of screening to get him open and makes some secondary passes to get him open.

I thought Quincy really stepped up in the second half. I just talked to him. He can get going earlier, but he was really strong and physical in the second half. He took it to the basket and really did a great job. Made a couple passes.

We got Robert a couple good looks at three. He did a good job in the first half, and they didn't go down in the second half. That's what happens. He got a couple really good looks, the same kind he got in the first half, he just didn't knock it down.

Really proud of this team. We played the best team in the conference today and a really, really good defensive team, and they're hard to score against. You put 69 points up against Virginia, you've got to do something right.

A lot of it -- Buddy just -- he made some of the toughest shots that I've seen him make all year. He was going in the lane against 6'4", 6'5" guys, 6'6" guys, he was getting shots up. It was incredible what he did today. Really proud of him. Incredible performance.



**Q. If you do continue to play, will the versatility that you've been able to develop over the last few weeks or so with different guys able to give you different contributions? How might that help you?**

JIM BOEHEIM: Well, certainly Kadary has helped us and now Robert has helped us, so we've got eight guys we think can help us and will help us.

**Q. Any doubt in your mind that you've done enough to make the NCAA Tournament?**

JIM BOEHEIM: It's not up to me. We've done everything we can do, and I think if you watch us play today and you don't think we're a tournament team or watched us yesterday -- I mean, we're a good team. There's no doubt in my mind, and I don't think anybody's mind that follows the sport and knows what they're doing.

I mean, we've got a good team. We've had to play all of our quad 1 games on the road or neutral here today, and all the 2s and 3s we've beaten. I think we're 12 or 13 and 2 against quadrant 2 and 2. We've only had like two games in quadrant 4. A lot of teams in this thing have got 10, 12 games in that quadrant. I think we've got a good team. I think we've proven we're a good team and certainly belong in the tournament.

**Q. You touched on it a little bit, the defense on that last play that set up Beekman's shot. Is it just as simple as Kadary getting picked and everyone needs to react, or is there anything else you maybe would have liked to see there?**

JIM BOEHEIM: No. Once he got by there, we had to react to him and protect the basket. The forward had to protect the basket, and that guy is open. That guy is going to be open. He made a great play. He's a really good player, smart player, and he made a really good play there. But, again, that's the one guy we want to shoot it in that situation.

**Q. I was wondering what your thoughts were regarding the Duke situation today, and is that the concern of basically every coach and player entering March?**

JIM BOEHEIM: Absolutely. I mean, it can happen. It's unfortunate. That's why I think going to the NCAA and what they're trying to do is if you isolate everybody and keep the chips in, if one guy gets it, you don't have to not play. You can still play. I mean, we have guys on our team -- we keep the chips every day, and most of our players are not near each other at all. They have their own rooms, and we space them out as much as possible.

So you're trying to get it so that if there's one guy gets it that you can isolate him, and the other guys haven't been near him enough, and you hope that's the case. But yeah, I mean, we don't know what's going to happen. I think we've been very fortunate to get all these games in, to have a good season.

The players have done an unbelievable job of isolating themselves. I mean, it's 75 degrees out here and we've been in the hotel since we got here. I mean, it's really difficult. Really difficult to do that. I think the players just have been great. I really do.

Anything can happen. You know, it certainly looks like we're headed in the right direction in the country. I hope everybody is getting vaccinated when they can and still being smart about everything.

Hopefully we can get through this thing and get back to some sort of normalcy, I hope.

**Q. Can you even imagine the emotion with the Duke players and coaches upon learning this news?**

JIM BOEHEIM: I can't. I can't. To just not be able to play? I can't. I can't imagine it. I don't even know. Was it one player? I don't even know what it was. I haven't heard anything. I don't know what it is. I don't know. I don't have enough information to really comment on it.

**Q. Kind of along that same line, a year ago tomorrow is when everything got shut down. I know you'd rather be in definitely at the tournament, but just to kind of have the possibility of playing in the NCAA Tournament, can you talk about the difference in emotions from a year ago?**

JIM BOEHEIM: Yeah, I mean, I'll make it clear to you. We should be in the tournament. Whether we get in the tournament or not, you never know. But just looking at the profile and watching us play, we should be in the tournament. I mean, I don't want to discuss it really and look through everything, but we've got a really good team, I think.

**Q. The guys on the telecast were speculating that you probably played your way in anyway. But I guess I was kind of looking for the difference from a year ago when everything got shut down. Now at least you have a chance to keep playing.**

JIM BOEHEIM: No, I mean, listen, we're happy to have a chance to move forward. There's no question about that. I can't overstate how proud I am of this team because

remember back when we went down to Pittsburgh and got beat? People again -- our fans have been great. It's the people on social media, they're all done. They can't -- they won't even go into -- they won't even make the NIT. If weathermen made predictions like that, they wouldn't have a job for more than two days.

They gave up on this team after that Pittsburgh game, and then a couple other times they gave up on this team. This team never gave up on themselves. They just kept going. They kept getting better. Guys really stepped up. I mean, yesterday Buddy just put us on his back. NC State was playing great the first half. He just broke their spirit. They played a great first half and they're still behind, and then the second half starts and everybody started making shots.

But it really hurts us when Alan plays like that. He's done it. I don't know why he does it. The last time I put him in -- two times I put him in, specifically said try to go and if it's not there, make the pass. And he got in the lane and just tried to shoot over a 6'9" guy, and even after the game, he said I thought I had a good shot. If you're thinking that way, that's a big problem. That's a big problem. And defensively he was -- he just was completely out of it. It was very disappointing.

Like I said, Robert saved us. I felt all along that Robert was a good player. I felt all along he could make shots, and yesterday and today he showed some of that. I think Robert is a good player. He's good on defense and he can make shots, and he made some nice cuts today.

I thought Joe had a really good floor game. He just couldn't get it going from the field. He just couldn't make shots. But I thought he had -- he's been very positive in what he was doing. I thought he was really good.

And I think Kadary is hurt -- his knee is bothering him. He doesn't look like he can get to the basket. He doesn't look as explosive as he was. He's had this knee thing for -- it's been a while now. It's been a while. He's been hurt for a while.

Again, I just think this team -- I can't say enough about Marek. He's got a really bad finger. He can hardly -- he doesn't practice because he can't take any pressure on that left hand. He just comes and plays in the games, and he just -- the stat sheet doesn't tell what he does. He just does so many things out there, moving, screening, flashing, telling people where to go. He's a really terrific player. He's got such a big heart to be out there doing what he's doing.

But again, I'm very proud of this team, whatever happens. They've really done an amazing job to get to this point, I

think. To play the way they played down here in tournament shows what they can do. I know we'll be a very good tournament team. A hundred percent.

**Q. Do you mind expanding on Robert's growth, especially since he came on as a freshman almost three years ago now and where he is today?**

JIM BOEHEIM: He's put on 20, 25 pounds sitting out last year. We know he's a good shooter. He did it against Pittsburgh, but he struggled shooting all year. He has struggled. He's good in our defense, and when he makes shots, he's really good. He's probably one of our better forwards, if not -- him and Quincy might be our best forwards when he's making shots. He's really good, long defensively. Really helps us there, and he catches the ball -- if he doesn't have something, he passes it. He moves the ball, and we move the ball better, and that's a big part of our offense when we move the ball.

Right now Alan is really good if he gets shooting, gets going, but if he's got a good tough matchup and can't get going he's still trying to take the same shot and it's not there, and the ball stops there.

Again, Robert has really stepped up big for us. I'm really proud of him. He's been really good.

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