

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets

Jose Alvarado

Postgame Press Conference



Georgia Tech 70, Miami 66

Q. Jose, obviously a very scary moment there in the first half when you banged knees with Wong. Kind of what happened and how were you able to get back out there to help your team in the second half?

JOSE ALVARADO: Obviously like you said, it was pretty scary even to me when it hit. It hurt so bad that obviously I got a little worried. But as I was walking off and as I was in the training room, as my adrenaline kicked in, I mean -- calmed down, and the pain just went down a little bit so I knew it wasn't that serious. And we got on -- and as I walked it off, I was like, I want to play, and that's about it.

And when I came in in the second half -- my knee could hurt -- not tomorrow. It can't hurt tomorrow, it can't hurt Saturday. It could hurt Sunday. It can't hurt today, though. It can't -- I told myself that it just can't hurt right now. So I tried to dial it in and my brothers had my back, and they just made me look good when I was out there.

Q. Jose, what changes did you see that Miami made in attacking your zone in that first half to make them so successful?

JOSE ALVARADO: Miami, man, they're better than their record. They're really good. They had it going, and they're a really good team. They tap the gaps. And the guys making plays -- those two point guards was making good plays, and we just had to dial down and take pride on defense and try to stop them. And that's what we did and got the win.

Q. You're a defensive guy. What can you say about that second half defense from your team?

JOSE ALVARADO: Oh, man, good. We got the stops that we needed to to get the win. We needed to focus on more

being better and taking pride on defense, especially against a good team playing Virginia tomorrow. But we're going to watch film, we're going to get better, and we're definitely going to play better defense tomorrow.

Q. Obviously one of the biggest plays of the game you tracked down the pass from Michael. Can you describe kind of what happened first when you saw it and you're thinking, I've got to go get it? What happened on that play from your perspective?

JOSE ALVARADO: That press, we needed to -- they got us off guard and we need to be better on it. That's about it. It was just more about being better, and I'm glad we just finished how we finished.

Q. When you saw Michael throw it and you saw it bouncing out of bounds, were you worried you weren't going to be able to get to it in time?

JOSE ALVARADO: No. I just saw the ball and I was like, I've got to take off, and Bubba just did a good job of trailing me. And I knew once I got it, I could throw it to him.

Q. Hustle plays are not uncommon for you, but can you just talk about -- it kind of goes to that play a little bit -- how much this season and this tournament means to you? You spoke about it the other day, wanting to win one game in this tournament and what it means to you.

JOSE ALVARADO: Oh, man, it's special. This is my first game winning in the ACC Tournament. I've been here four years, obviously. It's special. Miami is a good team. This is a good win for us. We've been sitting down for a while and they've got their little mojo going, and it was a good game to win and a good game to play. I'm just glad we got our first win here, and we've just got to focus on Virginia on Friday because it's going to be tough.

Q. Of course, you know, Isaiah Wong is one of the best scorers in the ACC and you held him to 3 of 10 shooting. You're also ACC defensive Player of the Year. But at what point in your development did you

realize that you're a shut-down defensive type of player?

JOSE ALVARADO: I want to say when I was playing guys in the park, because I swear those are the most talented guys I ever played against down in New York in the park. They hand-do, they rhythm and, you know, and I just hate when I -- I said this before. I just hate when they look at me when they score or when they pump their chest like me, and I just don't like that personally. I take it -- like I take it personal. Every day I'm going to come in and try to be the best defender on the floor, try to shut down the best player, and that's just my mindset every game.

Q. Jordan was sort of quiet in the first half. What was said in the locker room and what got him fired up in that second half?

JOSE ALVARADO: Man, he's a big part why we won today. His energy, his voice, his play making decisions out there. Man, he did a really good job. When we first came in at halftime Coach Pastner gave it to us and he told us the truth. We're playing soft, they're playing better than us, and we've just got to go out there and play Georgia Tech basketball.

Usher stepped up and he did what he needed to do, and he's part of the reason why we won today. And I'm glad he's on my team, and we've got to keep him going.

Q. There's a lot said about sort of the top six guys, but seemed like your bench came up really big and gave you guys a lot of spark, Rodney and Bubba and Kyle even when he came in. Can you just talk about those guys? They don't get a lot of press, but they came up big for you guys tonight.

JOSE ALVARADO: Big, big time. I'm glad you mentioned that because I should have said that the first time coming on here. Those guys did a good job. They stepped up when we needed them the most, and without them, we wouldn't be in this situation without them, and they just did a hell of a job.

Kyle, man, he's getting better every day. Rodney is getting better every day. And Bubba comes in when we need him the most, and them three guys, they did a really good job.

Q. I know you've been playing on a bad hamstring in general and then you hurt your knee late in the first half. Looked like late in the game, you also went down with a bad ankle. How do you feel right now, and how can you stand up?

JOSE ALVARADO: Man, I can't get a break, right? Thank

God, I'm only 22, I guess, right? So my body is a little -- it's still getting banged up, but it's okay. I'm just of the mindset ever since I was a kid, like I just want to play so bad, so my body can hurt later on, it just can't hurt right then. That's my mindset.

Obviously I hurt my knee pretty bad today, but tomorrow like I've got a brand-new knee. It's just something I am. It can't hurt during the game because there's no excuses on the game, and obviously I take pride on defense. And if somebody scores, it's not because I'm hurt; no, it's because I need to play defense.

I'm just going to take recovery today and try to do the best I can and just play the game tomorrow.

Q. I'm curious how many different ice bags are you going to have on if you don't already?

JOSE ALVARADO: Oh, man, I need an ice bath. I think I need to get one of those, a portable one.

Richard is going to do a good job taking care of me and I'm just going to get the most treatment I can and try to get my body ready for tomorrow.

Q. You mentioned Coach was saying you guys are soft, and I'm wondering, the Wake Forest game -- I think some of the guys were nervous because the stakes were higher, and was it kind of the same thing today where it was a new environment, you needed to kind of get in a rhythm before maybe the first --

JOSE ALVARADO: It wasn't that we were nervous. I think when you take a little break and then you've got to come out and play against a team that's in a little bit more of a rhythm -- it's no excuse we've got to come out and play. I think that's what happened. I think we were sitting down too long, and we're more of a team that likes to be in rhythm and keep going.

But I'm just glad we got a good win against a good team today and we got that little rusty stuff out and we play tomorrow and play against a really good team.

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