

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

North Carolina Tar Heels

Roy Williams

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State 69, North Carolina 66

ROY WILLIAMS: Okay, guys. Bottom line is their defense late in the game was much stronger than our offense was. We did not get a good shot at all after RJ made three free throws to put us up. We never got another good shot after that the whole time. Their defense was better than our offense.

Throughout the course of the game we missed a bunch of free throws. Yes, that would have helped us, there's no question about that. But they're a fantastic offensive team, but they get you to turn it over. So the second half, we didn't turn it over nearly as much, but I'm looking here, we shoot 39 percent in the second half. It's a lot better than the 27 we shot in the first half, but the bottom line was their defense was a lot stronger than our offense was.

Q. You mentioned how those last couple of stops there their defense was better than your offense. That one possession in particular where Garrison looked like he may have been trying to find Caleb, what was supposed to happen there and what did FSU did to complicate that?

ROY WILLIAMS: It was not anything complicated. We were playing basketball, which we play 99 percent of the time. It's freelance, and we wanted one screen early and that didn't work, and Garrison and our guys weren't doing a very good job of getting open. I would have liked for him to be a little more aggressive because he may have been able to take it towards the basket if not take it all the way. But the bottom line is that their defense was stronger than our offense was. We're in freelance there, and they're man-to-man. They switch everything, their size bothers the little guys. That's the bottom line.

Q. Playing such a physical team, how did you feel that the team's energy was down late playing your third

game in as many days?

ROY WILLIAMS: You know, I think the energy level was fine. That's what you can use as an excuse, and we're not doing that. Florida State's team beat North Carolina's team, regardless whether it was three days in a row to not playing. That's part of the game.

Q. Obviously the game is real fresh, but I wanted to ask you, seeing what happened with Duke and seeing what happened with Virginia this morning, you've been dealing with this all season with the pandemic, but you have an extra level of concern as you get ready to go to Indianapolis to get ready for the tournament?

ROY WILLIAMS: I've had a high level of concern all year long, and I think I said it last night or at some point. We should congratulate the young people how they've handled this. It's been an unbelievable challenge. It's been an unbelievable worry on every coaching staff, every medical staff. Every team in the country has asked their young people to act completely different than what they would normally act in college, and I just think our kids all around the country have done a great, great job.

And I think the same thing would probably be -- Tony and Mike would say the same thing about their teams. It's very different times, very difficult times is what it's been all year.

Q. Did you have to challenge Kerwin Walton at halftime to kind of hunt for his shot more? He only took one attempt in the first half. Seemed like he was just more aggressive in the second.

ROY WILLIAMS: Well, everybody did a better job. Yes, I challenged all of them, not just Kerwin. If he's only going to take one shot, that's not helping us. I want him to play defense. I want him to do all those other things. He is getting better, but he's our best outside threat by far. So I told him he had to move better, and everybody else had to do a better job of getting him shots.

But it's been a problem that we've had basically all year of making outside shots other than Kerwin, and we're not



getting him enough looks. We're still shooting a bunch of them but not getting enough makes.

Q. Maybe this is too soon to ask this question, but three games in three nights, what several things jump out at you that you did really well that you're very pleased with in a way that maybe made you guys a better team this week?

ROY WILLIAMS: Well, I think we showed some toughness in last night's game in particular when we were down, and they fought back and then they did the same thing in the game tonight. But we didn't make enough plays the last three minutes to win the game.

But I think that we talked at halftime tonight about, hey, we were down 12 in our own building and came back. And we came back today, but the Polite youngster, Anthony, made a big time three from the corner against us. We had a little bit of a defensive breakdown at that point, but he made a big-time shot. But yeah, we've done some good things, but right now the pain and the negative feelings you have about letting one slip by that you had a chance to win is a lot more dominating than any of the other thoughts.

Q. When you heard about what happened with Virginia today and them not being able to play and being out of the tournament -- and it apparently has put them in jeopardy for the NCAA Tournament too -- when you get that news, does it give you any sort of -- did you think maybe we shouldn't play? Is that even a thought that enters your mind when you hear about the jeopardy for the tournament, the NAAs I mean?

ROY WILLIAMS: Yes. I talked about it with one of my staff members. I did think about it, but I don't think there's any great answer. I mean, I really don't. It's sort of like don't play football. Well, you can get hurt trying to cross the street. All those things. I don't think there's any perfect answer. What's going on in our world has really been a difficult time.

But yes, I talked about that with one of my coaches, and it's something we've been worried about all year, and I'm sure that Duke -- well, Duke has already made their decision, but I'm sure Tony and his staff are concerned about it, as we all are.

Q. You used a lot of different big man rotations throughout this tournament, especially using Bacot and Sharpe together. What do you want to see out of your different big man rotations and what do you especially want?

ROY WILLIAMS: I want us to play better and be more

effective inside. The first half, they got six shots, and it was not just the perimeter players not throwing them the ball. We weren't aggressive enough getting the ball inside, and that's a two-way street. The perimeter players have got to throw the ball in there, and the big guys have got to work hard enough and get open and be demanding of wanting the basketball. I don't think we had that. I don't really care who plays with who. I just want two guys in there that are going to play really, really well.

You know, you guys can look at the stat sheet, you can look at the game tape, you can look at everything, and I think the bottom line is that we didn't play well. But you've got to give Florida State credit for that. Their defense was stronger than our offense was. I'm not saying anything about three days in a row and we were a step slow and all that stuff. Those are excuses. Their defense was stronger than our offense.

The first two games I was very pleased with all of our big guys and one of them one game, one the next, and those kind of things. It did help -- it would have helped us if Garrison had been 100 percent, but that's the game. That's part of basketball. That's part of college basketball. Florida State deserves everything they have and have earned tonight by playing and getting to play for the championship tomorrow night.

They've done a great job all year. They had a blip at the end of the year. Those two games cost them the conference regular season, but Leonard is a great coach and has done great things. And they'll be fighting for a championship for the tournament tomorrow, and they'll be a team that nobody wants to play in the NAAs.

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