

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

North Carolina Tar Heels

Caleb Love

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State 69, North Carolina 66

Q. Roy and Armando both had mentioned just because Florida State was so long and athletic defensively, you guys had to play a lot of freelance. There was that one possession late in the game, maybe a minute and a half left, where Garrison got stuck holding the ball outside the three-point line. Can you talk us through what you saw on that play, what didn't go according to plan?

CALEB LOVE: We were just trying to get some movement, trying to get open and hopefully get an open drive, but they're so long and they denied all the passes and we couldn't really get anything in the flow of the game. We just tried to throw something up because it was late clock and we didn't get nothing done.

Q. To kind of build on that, you had a lead with, I think, 3:15 to play and really struggled to find scoring opportunities after that. How much of that was you guys trying to maybe force the issue a little bit and how much of it was Florida State's defense?

CALEB LOVE: I think it was a little bit of both. They're a good defensive team, and we knew that coming in. They like to deny all the pass, they like to pressure us, full court, 94. So just getting in our offense, we can't really run a set offense against them because they deny so much. So to beat them, you've got to do a lot of movement, got to do a lot of screening on man. And we couldn't really get nothing in the Florida game, like I said earlier. So it was tough to get good shots, and we found ourselves having to throw something up at the end of the shot clock.

Q. Even with the loss today, in what ways would you say this team has come out of this tournament more confident heading into the NCAA?

CALEB LOVE: I think we just found out how deep we are, and we really got guys that come in and gives us a lift off the bench. We really can play 10, 12 guys. It's just tough for us because we wanted that championship. We wanted to get to that championship. But just coming into this tournament, we learned a lot, and we just got to push forward for this next stretch.

Q. Going off along those lines, I wanted to ask you if I could have you look forward just a little bit, for you and a lot of guys on this team, this will be your first NCAA Tournament experience. What are you looking forward to most as you get ready for Indy next week?

CALEB LOVE: Just taking it one game at a time. That's all I care about is winning, just winning one game at a time, focusing on the game ahead of us, and just trying to win. Just doing whatever I can to get us a win and my teammates being locked in and coaches just lifting us so we can get this National Championship.

Q. There is plenty of positives to take away from the three games, even coming back in this contest. What kind of things do you think you have to get better at to play better in the NCAA Tournament?

CALEB LOVE: Myself or the team? I think myself, I've just got to learn how to get better shots and get my teammates more involved. When I don't have the ball, move without the ball. Getting my teammate screens, like for Kerwin, getting him open; for the bigs, feeding the bigs and working inside-out because that's the best part of our game, just working inside-out.

And then as far as the team, I think we've got to defend better, talk more on defense. And then on the offensive end, we've got to move more. We get a little stagnant if we've got to get a late shot clock and nothing good comes out of that.

I think we learned a lot, like I said, and we'll work on it and watch film and get better.

Q. Because of the way the game in Chapel Hill played



out with you guys being able to come back against FSU and win that game, even though it was a struggle out there for a lot of tonight, when you fell behind, did you still think that the comeback, you had it in you because you had done it before against them?

CALEB LOVE: No doubt. I knew we had a comeback in us. No doubt. No doubt in my mind or in my teammates' or coaches' minds, but we didn't have a comeback in us. We had it, and we let it slip away.

But that team is hard because they don't go away. They're always going to come forward. They're always going to push back, fight back, so getting down with them is tough.

Q. You mentioned Florida State is hard to play because they switch so much, but they also are kind of unique because they'll run 12 deep with guys that are all pretty athletic. Is it hard just to keep up with them towards the end of the game when they have fresher legs because none of them are playing in anything close to 30 minutes?

CALEB LOVE: Yeah, it's tough because they do play like 12 guys, and they haven't played a game in the ACC yet -- in the ACC Tournament yet. But that's no excuse. We should have handled business, and there's no excuses that we should have won that game.

Q. You mentioned how you thought you had the comeback in you. What did Coach Williams say at halftime to spur you guys on? How did he challenge you in that moment?

CALEB LOVE: Just telling us to compete. He told us we've been here before and then we came back. And then Coach Davis gave us another speech about how we always dig ourselves a hole, but every time we lock in and we compete in the second half, we always come out on top. But we fell short this game, and like I said, we've got -- it's a new season now. We've got to lock in for the NCAA Tournament.

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