

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 13, 2021

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets

Jose Alvarado

Postgame Press Conference



Georgia Tech 80, Florida State 75

Q. Thinking back to that Clemson game at Clemson and missing the free throws and then you have the opportunity to redeem yourself on the biggest stage you've played on in your college career tonight, can you kind of talk about what was going through your mind in those final minutes and you shoot the free throws and you get the last steal?

JOSE ALVARADO: The feeling that I felt when I missed those free throws, I didn't want to feel like that ever again. You can ask Coach Pastner, I was in the gym after that game. I was in a deep place, deep, deep hole. I literally stood in the gym probably until 2:30, 3:00 in the morning and he did not leave my side. I literally sat there and shot free throws and just doubted myself.

And he was there saying the opposite and he stood there the whole time until he said, Jose, you need to get rest. Hey, it's okay, this is basketball, life happens and life moves on. And he said at any point, I still want the ball in your hands after that day. And me just stepping up making him -- knowing how much he trusts me, I want that confidence. And I missed, I think, the first one, but that didn't faze me. I wanted to get on the line again and make them, and what a feeling, man.

Those two free throws that I missed at Clemson put me in a deep, deep, deep, deep place, and look at that. It all paid off at the end. I'm just happy.

Q. Coach always talks about using this lineup, he goes by feel, and the last part of the game he had you and Michael and Kyle out there together. How did the communication work with you guys, and did that take the pressure off of you somewhat to have someone else involved?

JOSE ALVARADO: Yeah, Florida State is good at just denying the guards. They looked like they was denying me for a little bit. I had trust with Kyle and Mike doing, and Mike had an awesome game, he deserved the MVP and put his name next to those great names on Georgia Tech's list. Kyle stepped up and did a great job, and I couldn't be more happy for them.

Q. A lot has been made of the fact that you guys haven't been in a game like this before, but did that sort of thinking underrate the reality that you guys have played a lot of games together before, that you're one of the most seasoned teams in college basketball. And when you go win out there tonight against Florida State, you looked like you knew what you were doing from the very first possession.

JOSE ALVARADO: Yeah, they're a very good team. We knew that. We knew that coming in. We knew it was going to be a fight, but we also knew that we could beat them. It wasn't just by accident we beat them at home. We watched the film. We studied what we needed to do, and it was going to come down to a match of energy and taking care of the ball, and that's what we did.

You know, guys made tough shots when we needed them, and we just played good defense. It was just a team effort, and I'm glad because my team deserved it.

Q. There were a couple possessions I noticed maybe midway through the second half after you guys had gone to man and you basically kind of forced a shot-clock violation by yourself. And then a couple possessions later, you got the ball out of Walker's hands. Can you describe what you were feeling defensively, kind of how sharp I imagine you felt on that end?

JOSE ALVARADO: Hey, who's the defensive Player of the Year in the ACC?

Q. I believe it's you.

JOSE ALVARADO: That's exactly why. That's exactly my



answer, man. Those are great guys. I knew I was coming in with Scottie Barnes, and they're great guards. But like I said, I want to be the best defender on the court every time, and Coach knows that and I'm going to take the challenge. Whoever is scoring, whoever is going on the other team, I've got to step up and try to get a stop for my team.

Q. Following that up, it seemed poetic that the game pretty much was clinched on your steal. Can you just talk about the emotions you felt at that moment? I think you jumped up in the air and kind of did a fist in the air. What was going through your mind and the emotions you felt at the time?

JOSE ALVARADO: I knew it. It's not like I'm just naturally good on defense. I study. I do my little film work. The first play he came down, he did a pick-and-roll -- they basically ran this play like twice. And I seen where he had the ball the first time, and I could have done it the first time but I didn't.

Second time it happened and I seen it, so I just reacted up behind and I seen the ball was in reaching distance and once I hit it, I knew I got it. And my teammates always know I'm pretty good at that, and they know they're going to be right there. So I hit it, and then I knew that was like the dagger, and I knew it was just something that I was just so happy about.

Q. Right after the game I think you sort of did a swan dive onto the court, on the floor --

JOSE ALVARADO: I was just so happy and my emotions were just so crazy. Because a lot of people don't know this, but everyone like -- when I committed to Georgia Tech, no one thought I was good for the ACC. No one thought I was -- back home at least, back in New York. A lot of guys told Coach Pastner, you're crazy, he's a decent player but not an ACC guard.

And for him to take a chance on me, I'm just so happy how the roller coaster -- the season roller coaster and how it is right now, it's going how it's going. I mean, I'm just so happy to be in that conversation of being a champion.

Q. It's been a while since Georgia Tech was in this position, and there's some tradition there. What does it mean to you to revive that and get Georgia Tech back in this position for the first time in almost 30 years?

JOSE ALVARADO: It means everything, man. I've got a daughter and when she grows up I can tell her, hey, your dad did this, your dad did that. You know, I'm just so

happy for that. Just for the four years I've been here, it was a struggle. I broke my arm freshman year, didn't win the ACC Tournament, and we played Tuesday.

Sophomore year, didn't have a -- we played Tuesday. Junior year, we had a little whatever ban and we had a good season. We could probably have did some noise then. Come back senior year, lose the first two beginning games. And if someone had told me you're going to be in the ACC championship in a few months, I never would have believed it, I would have looked at them like they're crazy.

And for us to just keep our minds straight and keep moving forward and these guys to have our backs when times is not going good -- Coach, the staff and everybody, it's just amazing, man. It's an amazing feeling, and we deserve this.

Q. How many pieces of the net did you end up with?

JOSE ALVARADO: All of it. I'm going to take this home and I'm going to put it in my collection, and no one can touch this. My dad -- man, I love my dad. I love my parents. My parents, they did the best things for me. They took care of me. They didn't live the best life but they made sure I was in the best situation, and I'm just grateful to be -- to call them my mom and dad. My grandma, I know she's happy, smiling down on me, and this is one for her. I miss her, and I'm just glad that she gets to call her grandson a champ.

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