

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Boston College Eagles

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Coach Earl Grant

Jaeden Zackery

Prince Aligbe

Postgame Press Conference



Boston College 80, Louisville 62

EARL GRANT: Well, happy for our guys. Obviously we really wanted to be playing our best basketball in March. We talked about it being our best basketball in March with a chance to advance. Really happy for our players. They found a way to get the win, and we look forward to moving on and preparing for the next one.

Q. Coach, how were you guys able to play without Quinten, obviously a really important player for you guys and pull away in the second half?

EARL GRANT: I think this team, this has been a beautiful struggle as it pertains to the season. We had a lot of setbacks, up and downs, disappointments, guys in and out of the roster. If there was ever a team that had some sort of opportunity to be prepared to miss an important player, we would have to be one of those teams just because of what we experienced throughout the year.

I knew it would be more challenging without him because he's such a good player. He does a lot for our team. But again, our guys found a way. They were really connected. We had 17 assists and only four turnovers, so that's the one stat -- that's the only stat I need to see. Guys really working together, being unselfish, and they just found a way to get the win.

Q. Jaeden, Louisville had a chance to cut it to six there with a three on the break when it was 69-60. After that, you kind of took charge, found a lot of openings and got inside their defense. What were you seeing at that stretch that enabled you to beat them inside?

JAEDEN ZACKERY: Honestly I feel like being the leader on this team, Makai had four fouls, QP is out, so I know I had to step in because I'm one of those veteran players on the team, so if I kind of fold and sit down and kind of play slower, everybody else is going to play off of that. I realize I'm stronger than most of the guards that we're going to play, so if I get down low, get down to the paint, they're going to have collapse our drop offs like I did to Prince during the game. Get to the paint is kind of what helped us.

Q. Defensively how were you able to limit Ellis? You guys, strong second half, two 6-0 runs, never let them come back in the game.

JAEDEN ZACKERY: I feel like it was just a whole team effort. We knew starting off he was threat because we've seen his play all season, he's their best player, he's getting to the rim, scoring all the points. Just a great player.

And we knew me and Makai, Prince, every single person on the team had to play collectively and work together to stop him, and we did a pretty good job today.

Q. Coach, is there any update on Quinten Post's status for next game?

EARL GRANT: We'll talk about it tonight at the hotel. He had a pretty good practice yesterday but not to the point where we felt like he can move and defend and run the way we need him to run to play in these games. He didn't move around great yesterday. We'll take it day-to-day, and we'll see how he looks tonight.

Q. Earl, Mike James had a big game Saturday at Virginia, 21, and he was kind of a mismatch in their defense. Was he a focus for you, and what did you do so successfully to limit him?

EARL GRANT: We just did what we kind of did all year. We thought this was a principal game. You practice every day, so whatever you practice is who you are. So we wanted to be in the gaps, we wanted to make things tough. We wanted to limit his opportunities to post. We didn't



necessarily have the post doubled tonight. I thought we might have to, but he wasn't in the post as much. We did a good job of closing out and taking away the drives.

So the players just executed the game plan and just made things hard for him, so I'm just happy that we have guards that's physical enough to match up with guys like that.

Q. Louisville closed the first half 19-6 run. What adjustments did you make for the second half?

EARL GRANT: Not a lot. This team we got to take a deep breath, let us regroup, be a little bit more organized with our offense, guard them without fouling. I thought he got to the free-throw line a lot, so we gave them about 10 to 12 points that if we could be more sound and more disciplined, we could clean it up in the second half and we did.

Q. Prince, your first college postseason game. How did you feel?

PRINCE ALIGBE: First I'd have to give credit to my teammates, everyone from the coaching staff, trainers and all. We've always been preaching how many practices we have left, how many games we have left together, and especially for our seniors. However the regular season went, that's the past already. I just told myself, do my job, make the game easy for myself, and make sure we secure a win.

Also seeing the standpoint from everyone taking a step up with QP being out and us just trying to play for him and everyone else.

Q. Coach, in the first half and also throughout the game, I know you mentioned the play of the guards and the toughness on defense, but offensively when you line up five guys around the arc like that and different guys are slashing in, what did Louisville present that allowed the offense to get moving when you really needed it?

EARL GRANT: Our offense to get moving?

Q. Yes.

EARL GRANT: We just really simplified it a little bit. I thought they were going from man to zone, so I just wanted to put the game in the players' hands and say, hey, stop thinking, stop thinking, so we went motion. We just tried to keep it simple and move the ball. We thought we could post them some. We thought we could drive them with the floor being spread, so really we just simplified the game.

I thought we were trying to change and do too many things offensively in the first half and it kind of stymied us, so I thought it would be important to put the ball in our guards' hands and trust the players that let's go make the right plays.

Q. As a follow-up to that, I know we've asked before about Jaeden and Makai playing, but to get Prince involved you switched to the small forward position. How did that open him up in this game?

EARL GRANT: Obviously Makai and J.Z., we count on them to do a lot and we asked them to defend really good players. They both score the ball well for us, as well, but we need other guys. With the evolution of Devin McGlockton and T-Ray and CJ and some of those other guys, we felt like playing Prince at the small forward just gave us more length on the perimeter, gave us a bigger guy that we can post, and obviously he did a really good job of using his size advantage and finishing at the rim today.

Q. You guys are going to make a run game after game after game. What's the message to the team to keep you guys together, keep playing like this?

EARL GRANT: Just believe in each other, believe in what we do. We are what we repeatedly do, and we can't change. It's March. We've practiced all year. This is a tournament where the winner gets a big trophy.

We just want to stay together, play to our standards as best we can, trust each other and find some joy. We're in the ACC Tournament, so it's just find some joy in what we're doing and really try to support each other.

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