

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Wake Forest Demon Deacons

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Coach Steve Forbes

Daivien Williamson

Bobi Klintman

Tyree Appleby

Postgame Press Conference



I thought Cameron Hildreth played phenomenal defense, and Bobi had a double-double -- had a double-double in the first half and kept us in it. Ty had a double-double.

I guess we're really -- my three first-round games have been a loss on a 40-footer here, an overtime loss against Boston College in Brooklyn, and now a win on a last-second shot. I don't know how my heart rate is still at 120.

It's a heck of a win, and really proud of our team.

Q. Daivien, as simple as possible, what did you see on the final play, and how did you find Ty and how did he find you as you guys were coming up the court?

DAIVIEN WILLIAMSON: First of all, defensively I was isolated with Joe Girard, so mainly focused on getting a stop on him. He's a great offensive player and he definitely could have gamed it. So once I got a stop on him and he missed and I got the rebound, I instantly looked for Ty. Because I know I'm going to get the ball right back. So once I passed it him, I heard him telling me to run. So I just kept running and running. And I got to the right spot. I knew he was going to give it to me, I just had to be ready and knock the shot down and I did.

STEVE FORBES: I think Andrew Carr, though, made a good play. He set the drag ball screen after Ty got it. That got him behind the play a little bit, then Ty had the presence to come off of it and throw it to Daivien for a big shot.

Q. Steve, just really curious, Daivien touched on this already. You switched off and had Daivien take Girard when Cam had been on him the entire game. What was the reason for the change on that last possession and what did you get out of it?

STEVE FORBES: Well, we just felt -- I felt like Mintz was hurting us getting downhill. We had gone under, gone under, then the last two minutes we decided to go over. And Ty was guarding him, he kind of got caught up in the screen a little bit and the big wasn't doing a great job of getting his head on the ball, so decided to go back under.

Wake Forest 77, Syracuse 74

STEVE FORBES: What a great game. What a great play by Peanut Butter and Jelly here. Peanut Butter passed it to Jelly and Jelly made -- what an unbelievable finish. The adjustments we made from Saturday -- and I really feel like playing them Saturday really is going to help us. We really hadn't seen them all year. It's really the first time in my career I've ever played a conference team for the first time on the last game of the year. It was really kind of a weird deal. But it paid off.

We made some adjustments. We monstered Edwards the entire game or doubled him with the 4, which we don't normally do. We usually double with the guard. I thought it was very effective. We went under the ball screen versus Mintz. We went over the first time, he made one three behind it late, but he was 7 for 21. And then we monstered Girard, doubled him. If he came in on a Barkley, he only did that one time.

The offensive adjustments, we just needed to get out in transition more. I think you saw when we got going, we were really good in transition. Bobi had a three go in and out to put it up 15 and made three threes in a row. The roof was about to come off and it didn't go down. We was missed a bunch of easy shots.

Got the ball to the middle of the zone, got it out quick, then made a second attack off the dribble and we got inside the zone a lot more this time and we ball screened the top of the zone.



Cam is a lot more physical with that. He's really good at chasing off staggers, and then we run Girard off a lot of those. We were really mixing it up the best we could, trying to keep them off balance, but all the credit goes to those guys for doing it.

Q. Coach, there was a point where midway through the second half, Wake Forest went 0 of 8 from behind the three-point line. And then did you feel at a certain point that the team was getting a little too three-point happy trying to get the kill, but also Daivien taking the shot going and drilling it at the end?

STEVE FORBES: Yeah, we made two threes in a row. We went on a run. I had it written down, and then -- we stopped them like 11 out of 12 times from the 17-minute mark to the 11-minute mark the second half. We got going in transition, banked a couple threes. Bobi missed one that put us up 15. There's a fine line with that stuff. I like my guys to play with freedom on offense. They know that.

We started to take -- we missed some shots, but -- I have to go back and look, but I think we were pretty open. Maybe not on a couple. But then we slowed them back down and got inside their defense, which we were able to do.

Credit to these guys. They don't see that a lot, that kind of defense, and they really worked hard over the last 48 hours and kept coming back from Syracuse to get better at it.

Yeah, we did, but I think a lot of them were probably pretty good shots. If you make them, you blow them out. That's kind of how you've got to roll with it.

Q. Steve and Daivien, you had on Senior Day all of these comments about how Daivien has had a lot of situations he's gone through to get to where he's at today. For him to hit that shot, what does that mean to you? And for you Daivien, being a Triad kid to hit the shot in the Coliseum, what's it mean to you personally?

DAIVIEN WILLIAMSON: It's kind of crazy how things come full circle, because two years ago I was on opposite end of this. So last two years I just kind of put my head down and continued to trust myself and put the work in so I'd be prepared for moments like this. Because I mean we all know I didn't make the right play against Notre Dame, so I knew that I would be prepared the next time that I was in a situation like this and I was confident in myself and I knocked the shot down.

STEVE FORBES: That was a pretty impressive thing to say because he got a shot blocked. I forgot that against Notre Dame when they got the rebound and went down and made a three won the game.

Look, it's well documented what I think of him. It's unbelievable to think that I signed him at Winston-Salem Prep and now at East Tennessee State, played a bunch of games in here with the curtains down against Greensboro, and now here we are. I don't think you could write a better story than that for him. To do it at the level that he did it at in the SoCon. He would have been MVP of the 30-4 year in my last year of the tournament. Had my point guard not went ballistic in the game and had 30 in the championship game, he would have been the MVP. He got on the all-tournament team.

Then to come here and do the things he's done and be the type of person that he is, all three of them, that's what college sports is about. It's torture. The kid has played for me for five years. I'm sure he'll be mentally broke down after that, but he'll survive, and I'll miss him, whenever that day comes.

Q. Bobi, with Damari out and against that zone, how much did you feel like today you were going to have to step up, and Steve, his improvement over the course of the season, could you go over that?

STEVE FORBES: You know, Bobi wasn't with us in the summer. He was playing at a high level competition over there in FIBA to BC Georgia and he made the all-tournament team, at least the under 20s, but he missed the summer, and that hurt him a little. He was behind.

His development has been -- I mean, I see it every day, just him getting better and better and better. But he had to learn to put the work in. A lot of things come natural to Bobi, and he had to make some changes in his game and had to play more off balance, more off two feet. He really worked on his three. He's gotten in the gym. You get what you deserve in basketball, and he has done that. He's become what I would call an acceptable defender. He's getting better. Is that right, Bobi?

BOBI KLINTMAN: That's right.

STEVE FORBES: The one thing that I will say and I'll let him -- very few guys when over your career have a nose to chase your ball on the glass rebounding. He goes outside of his area every play, and that's not something I don't think is really something I coached him. I think that's more natural instinct than anything.

BOBI KLINTMAN: Yeah, as he said, I definitely feel like I

got a bigger role now with Damari out. Yeah, that's it. Yeah.

Q. Was this the start of a breakout game?

BOBI KLINTMAN: For sure. I feel like every game has been a game where I feel more comfortable every game, and my teammates trust me. In practice they be telling me to shoot the ball more and stuff like that, so just play with confidence and just do what I can do. It's helped me a lot. Today the ball was going in, so yeah.

Q. For the players, from an emotional high of this win, how do you shift focus to get ready for tomorrow?

TYREE APPLEBY: We won. On to the next. We're probably just going to go back to the hotel, eat. We enjoyed the win after the game, but we've got to get on to the next one. We can't just keep celebrating on the win today. We've got a tough team, very tough team tomorrow, so we've got to -- our coach is going to get us prepared, and we're going to come in here and fight and play tomorrow.

BOBI KLINTMAN: What he said, we've got to get back to the hotel, we've got to hydrate, we've got to get ready. As he said, Miami is a really good team. It was a dogfight last time we played them, so we've just got to stay ready because it's going to be a dogfight tomorrow.

DAIVIEN WILLIAMSON: Yeah, like they said, it was a big-time win, but it's time to be locked in on our next opponent. We just prepare, watch our film tonight and be ready to play a big-time game tomorrow.

Q. Steve, that little sequence before Daivien hits the game-winning three where Ty has a three that basically does everything but go down, and then you have Cam hitting an absolute circuit shot that caught Kevin Durant's eye -- I don't know if you saw that yet.

STEVE FORBES: Unfortunately I've heard that.

Q. What's going through your mind in that sequence where you're like, is this happening to us again sort of thing?

STEVE FORBES: Unfortunately I used one of my time-outs -- I had two left. I used one, I thought we were tired. We scored, we needed to organize defensively, and then what happened, we were right down there and there was a loose ball, and we called time-out to get possession, which we needed, but now we have no time-outs.

So yeah, sometimes that's good, sometimes that's bad.

When we took -- when we were able to come down the floor and score, I don't know, I mean, I thought Ty's shot, we got late in the shot clock again, and we're not good at that. I thought we got a little tentative with time and score. Cam, you know, that's a shot we work on every day, right? Wrong. But that's some English s--- that he does. I don't know.

I don't know, man. I have to go watch that one. He shot it, and it went in. I'm like, hey, man, great shot. Good for him.

Q. Coach, I wanted to ask, Mike Brey retiring yesterday, Coach Boeheim making it unclear whether or not he will return next season. He just was a little confusing. What's it been like coaching against both of those guys?

STEVE FORBES: I mean, let's think about this. When we went up there to -- what an unbelievable environment it was Saturday, even though we were on the losing side of it, to see the passion of their fan base is incredible. 25,000 people in there. When they announced that Jim Boeheim had coached in his 47th year, I was 10 years old, okay. 10.

So I started wrapping my head around that one going, wow.

I think he's an icon. He's one of the greatest coaches in the history of the game. He's an innovator because he did it different. When they were retiring those two numbers, I looked up at the rafters, I said Coach, you've coached 99 percent of the guys that are in these rafters. I mean, he's had unbelievable players, and I like him. I like him.

It's an honor. The first time I ever knew anything about Jim Boeheim, I was a freshman in high school in Lone Tree, Iowa, and Iowa beats the Louis and Bouie show in the Sweet Sixteen in 1980 on the run to the Final Four, and that was really the first time I had really even heard of Syracuse.

I think that Mike Brey is somebody that all young coaches should try to be like. He's a really great coach. He's a very competitive guy, but he's also a really good person. He sells relationships. He has fun doing it. I try to have fun doing it. When I don't have fun anymore, I'm not going to do it.

I think that he is the prime example of that. He's not afraid to make fun of himself. It's easy for me to do that to myself. It's not hard.

I have a lot of respect for both of them. I'm going to miss

them. Coach Boeheim, I'm not saying -- it's going to get me in trouble here, if you're saying that he's -- I think Coach Brey, if he wants to coach again, he can, and he will if he wants to. I don't know what Coach will decide to do, but whatever he does, he deserves it. He's put the time in for sure.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports