

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

## North Carolina Tar Heels

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

## Coach Hubert Davis

## Caleb Love

## Pete Nance

Postgame Press Conference



North Carolina 85, Boston College 61

**Q. I was just wondering if you had an update on Armando's ankle or what Doug told you or as much as you knew?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Yeah, they were able to loosen it up at halftime, and that's why he felt like he could go out there and play.

He was hobbling a little bit in the second half, and then I asked him, I said, are you okay, and he said, no, I feel really good. Once I took him out, then it was done. I didn't want it to stiffen up or get cold, and so once we took him out, I tried to keep him there as long as possible, and then took him out so he could be done for the night.

**Q. After the shots didn't fall on Saturday from three, Caleb, how satisfying was it to see it go down tonight? And how confident do you feel you're going to be able to sustain it as the week goes on, for both of you?**

CALEB LOVE: I just feel like if we take the right shots and we make the right plays as far as creating shots for all of us, I think you do have the confidence or you do have an open shot to make the shot at. We just created a lot of shots for our guys, and getting in the paint, kicking it out for our shooters, and Coach instills in us confidence to make the shot.

HUBERT DAVIS: Yeah, the thing that I'm focusing on was the 16 assists. When we're sharing the basketball and it's good to great, it doesn't surprise me that the ball goes in.

Yeah, we were able to shoot the ball well, especially for the

entire game but also from three-point range. But I really felt like the passing was really good tonight. We were just going good to great the entire night, and that led us to shooting high-percentage shots.

**Q. How satisfying was it for you to see guys like Dontrez, D'Marco, Jalen, Justin McKoy get really great plays, highlight plays out there tonight?**

HUBERT DAVIS: I do. It was great to -- I felt like everybody that played in the game made an impact play to put us in the position to be able to win. Got great minutes out of the bench. I thought D'Marco played really well, Puff, Trez, Tyler Nickel, Jalen, Seth, Justin towards the end.

When you're in a situation where you're playing four games -- possibly four games in four days, you need depth, and the guys off the bench were ready to go, and they did a really good job tonight.

**Q. During the ACC Tournament you're in Greensboro. How do expectations meet reality of being a part of this tournament? And for you, Coach, first time as the head coach coaching here when it feels real. What does it mean to you, if anything at all, to be coaching here in Greensboro?**

HUBERT DAVIS: It means a lot to me. This is what I remember in terms of ACC basketball, just remembering my uncle Walter Davis play here in Greensboro. I just remember -- they don't understand this, but when I was growing up, for the ACC Tournament, you could have an excused absence to stay at home to watch the 12:00 game, or the teacher would put the game on in the classroom. That's how big the ACC Tournament was.

To be a part of it as a player, to be a part of it as an assistant coach, and to be a part of it as a head coach is very special to me.

PETE NANCE: Yeah, I mean, I think it's awesome to be a part of this tournament. Obviously growing up and watching a lot of great players play in this same tournament is a surreal thing for me, and just happy I get to



do it with this team and these guys. It's an awesome feeling.

**Q. Caleb, you've seen Armando go down before in different games, and he seems to exude a certain amount of toughness. When he went down the first half, did you fully expect, he's all right, he's going to be back in the second half?**

CALEB LOVE: Yeah, he's tough as nails. He wanted to be out there for this team. I don't have no doubt that he'll be ready to play tomorrow.

That just goes to show how much Armando cares about this team, this program, and then just shows how much he'll be willing to put his body on the line for this team.

**Q. Boston College likes games in the 60s. You put up 85 tonight. Talk about some of the things that you did to force the tempo, creating turnovers, getting up and down the floor, passing. You had a great assist-to-basket ratio tonight.**

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, Boston College is a tremendous defensive team, and they're extremely physical. They've got really good individual one-on-one defenders, and when you have Quinten Post in the paint, now they have length and shot-blocking ability. We talked about from an offensive standpoint, for us to have success, one, it started on the defensive end, so we can get the rebound and we can get out in transition.

Two, we had to have great spacing and balance, ball movement and player movement to give us an opportunity to attack the paint and drive so that we could get to the free-throw line. And I just felt like we did that really well tonight.

CALEB LOVE: Yeah, Coach always tells us to push the pace and run our offense with pace. I feel like we did that well tonight as far as pitching ahead and getting a lot of draft screens.

Our defense is our best offense, so when we do good defensive stops, get steals, we can get out there in transition and we can run, and that just makes our offense so much easier.

**Q. Caleb, throughout the year you've been one of the flashier guys, whether it's throwing up the three goggles after a three-pointer or talking junk. Tonight after a lot of your threes, pretty serious calm move pointing to the passer kind of thing. Do you feel like tonight with it being win-or-go home basketball for you guys, just a different level of focus and intensity from**

**yourself throughout the night?**

CALEB LOVE: Yeah, for sure. I was just trying to win the game. And all the other stuff, it wasn't needed.

**Q. Hubert, up until tonight, the crowds have been pretty quiet and kind of just spectating, not really cheering a team on, and they've been small. Until tonight when you took the floor, then it seemed like all of a sudden the tournament was real. Do you have a feeling that they can almost will you to a championship or an NCAA bid just because of their emotion?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, I never looked at it from that standpoint, but I just love the support of all of our fans, whether we're here at the ACC Tournament, on the road, and specifically in the Smith Center. The fan support has been off the chart. They've always been there to help, to encourage, to lift us up, and they make a difference.

When you run out of that tunnel and you see a lot of people in Carolina blue shirts and they're cheering and encouraging our players, it helps them out there on the floor, and we love to see it out there.

**Q. For Coach and Caleb, you guys had 16 assists today. How much did the ball movement and the way that you guys were able to work those passes inside out help you with setting up some of those open shots on the outside?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, I thought everybody did a really good job of sharing the basketball. One of the things that we always talk about is have a .5 mentality, so as soon as you catch the ball, either you're shooting it, you're passing it or driving it. And I really think all the guys did a really good job of doing that tonight. The ball didn't stick very much at all. We were really aggressive and definitive in our moves, and I think that contributed to us having 16 assists.

CALEB LOVE: Yeah, just what Coach said. We just wanted to play inside out. We have a load as far as Armando in the paint and he draws a lot of attention, so he creates opportunities for us to get easy buckets, as far as cutting and open threes.

We just play inside out, drive, kick and dump-offs, and then obviously playing through Armando.

**Q. Obviously with Armando playing at less than 100 percent, is there like one or two guys that'll maybe step in in his place in the rotation, or are you going to switch your game plan altogether to try and get more outside looks?**

HUBERT DAVIS: I don't know. I haven't thought about it yet. I've got to get back to the hotel and have some dinner first, and then I can think about it.

Armando just now leaving the locker room said he felt really good and that he's already -- probably already back at the hotel getting treatment. I've never seen anybody sustain ankle sprains and be able to come back like he can. He didn't think it was as bad as the one obviously in the Final Four and also the one that -- when he hurt it at Virginia.

When Armando is out there, whether it's 100 percent or 75 percent, that's good news for us.

**Q. Pete, how nice was it to see the lead growing there and being able to get other people in off the bench from the standpoint of wanting to make this a long tournament stay? How nice was it to build a lead and how much are you going to need everybody to try to do this whole thing this week?**

PETE NANCE: Yeah, I thought it was great. The guys coming off the bench did a really great job. Not even -- the scoring was great, but I thought they played with great energy and great intensity. But yeah, I think Coach Davis talked about how we need to just make a little bit of a change within ourselves. And I think all year long, we've let teams kind of climb back into games a little bit, and I think it was good for our confidence to kind of maintain that lead throughout the second half and keep them at distance.

I think it kind of shows the growth and change in this group at the right time.

**Q. Pete, the last four games now, this is the second time you've had four blocks in a game. Is that something you've been concentrating on doing more, or is that just circumstance, you had opportunities?**

PETE NANCE: Yeah, I think it's just definitely trying to do my job and just protect the basket, protect the rim. But a lot of it's just circumstances, too.

I think I was able to -- I think we played good individual defense all night, but being able to come over on help side and get some blocks, I think definitely helped us out. Really just trying to do my job.

**Q. Coach Davis, in the past you all were relying more on the three, shooting from the outside. But tonight you looked more relaxed and you were working the ball more so inside. What brought that on, to change**

like that?

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, I mean, I thought we were -- one of the things that we talked about from an offensive standpoint is we wanted to attack the basket through post and penetration and also offensive rebounding. When we do that first, when we go inside and out, just from an offensive standpoint, I just think it flows much better as opposed to outside in.

Sometimes defenses dictate some of the shots that we take. At times teams have put a couple extra defenders in the paint, so it's been difficult for us to be able to get those consistent points near the basket. And at the end of the day, you're going to have to knock down some perimeter jump shots whomever you're playing in order to have success out there on the floor. But I felt like the balance in the approach going inside and out was really good tonight, and hope to continue that tomorrow night.

**Q. Pete, you face Virginia in less than 24 hours. Now you had this experience back in November of playing consecutive nights, but it's been a long time since you've done that. What are your thoughts about playing the Cavaliers again, and how do you prepare yourself as a team to go against a team that you've just played and need to beat?**

PETE NANCE: Yeah, I think tonight and tomorrow we'll do a lot of rehab, a lot of stretching, things like that, to stay loose. But Virginia is a really good team, which I think this team is just excited for any opportunity and any challenge, so I think definitely looking forward to tomorrow night, and I think we'll just be ready to go.

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