

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Pittsburgh Panthers

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Coach Jeff Capel

Jamarius Burton

Guillermo Diaz Graham

Postgame Press Conference

Duke 96, Pitt 69

JEFF CAPEL: First of all, congrats to Duke. They were outstanding. They are the hottest team in the league. They came in playing really, really good basketball.

The thing that they hadn't done in the last four or five games is shoot the ball well from three, and so our game plan was to try to crowd it, crowd the lane. Because when we played them last time, they had 24 offensive rebounds, so we really wanted to do that, and they made us pay for it, especially early. Filipowski was 2 for 11 in the last four games, and he hit his first three, and that knocked us back right away.

We could never really get into a rhythm offensively. We missed some shots early, and I just thought for the first time in a really, really long time we got knocked back and did not respond.

Disappointed in that, but we played against an outstanding team that really, really played at a high level today.

Q. Jeff, I think one of the things that has defined your team is how resilient they've been. What got in the way of being resilient in this moment time in this time?

JEFF CAPEL: I wish I could tell you. I don't know. I'm surprised. If you've watched us, like I know you have, that's who we've been.

We didn't today. I thought we put our heads down, and we just didn't collectively as a group. Individually some guys did, but collectively as a group, and that's been hallmark of our team all season since after the fourth game of the year.



For whatever reason we did not do that today, and they made us pay for it because they're really talented and they're good.

Q. At the game in Durham you led most of the way. You had a double-digit lead in the first half and still had control at about eight or nine minutes when the building got involved. Your words were "this building is never out of it." Duke is clearly a different team now. In what ways have they improved?

JEFF CAPEL: Well, their freshmen have grown up. They're not freshmen anymore. When we played them the last time, Roach didn't play. He was injured during that time.

But I think the main thing is just their freshmen have grown up. They're better. They understand college basketball now. They've been through some tough times. They've had their noses rubbed in crap, and they've stayed together and they've responded.

They had a game like this at Miami, and it could have easily -- they could have easily put their head down, but they came back, and they fought, and they got better.

We had this happen to us earlier in the year, and we fought, and we got better.

My hope is that as we enter the final part of our season, we'll use this and we'll get better, and fortunately we do have another part of our season. That's something that we'll be excited about.

But today was not good.

Q. Coach, you mentioned you had trouble finding open looks. What do you think was going on offensively?

JEFF CAPEL: Well, I think, number one, they have gotten a lot better defensively from when we played them the first time, so I think their defense forced us out of some things that we've normally been able to get. Their ball screen



coverage, they're really tall, and they have great length at every position.

We had some kicks. We had some shots. We missed some early, and then they made everything early, and I think that just knocked us completely back.

Q. For Jeff or Jamarius, talk about Tyrese Proctor, freshman, going up playing his first ACC Tournament game, had 10 assists and one turnover. Talk about what he brings to the table and how hard he was to defend.

JAMARIUS BURTON: Yeah, he played a tremendous game. He took what the defense gave us, and he really picked us apart. We tip our hats to him. He played a tremendous game in his first ACC game, and nothing but respect.

JEFF CAPEL: He's a really good player. I've been a fan of his from watching him from afar all year. He's gotten better and better. The main thing I think from when we played them earlier, and that was early January, he's more confident. He knows who he is. He understands what they want from him, what they need from him.

I do think it's helped them having Roach back, so he doesn't have to have it all the time, to have the ball all the time. But he's a really good player. He's got great poise, really good feel, and he was outstanding this afternoon.

Q. J.B., you've been known to call players-only meetings after tough losses in the past. What's your message to your teammates after this loss here? What's the message?

JAMARIUS BURTON: I would just say we've got to flip the switch. We've got more basketball to play, and we've still got an opportunity to continue to write our story. And that's the biggest thing moving forward is just taking what we can learn from this experience and move forward in the right direction.

Q. Jeff, I noticed Feddy only played 12 minutes today. Was that injury related or match-ups?

JEFF CAPEL: He had two fouls in the first half so we sat him. He did tweak his knee in yesterday's game, and once we started them in the second half, I didn't like the way he was moving, and we just decided to sit him.

Q. You've been on the other side of this enough times to know what a contender looks like. Is this Duke team a Final Four quality team despite their ranking and whatever?

JEFF CAPEL: Well, I think they're really talented, and I haven't really watched all of college basketball, so I can't speak on that. I do think they can make a run. They really can. They have size. They have athleticism. They've really gotten better defensively.

If they can shoot the basketball like they shot it today, especially from three, that makes them even more difficult to guard. They have an unbelievable defensive presence with Lively, and a guy that puts a lot of pressure on the rim with Lively. They have a lot of weapons. They're really talented, and they've gotten a lot better.

Q. Jeff, now that the games are said and done for you guys, we wait to see what happens on Sunday. Do you feel your team has put together an NCAA Tournament resume to get to that dance?

JEFF CAPEL: Yes.

Q. For the players, you guys have size, but Duke starts 7'1" and 7'0" and brings 6'11" rugged Ryan Young off the bench. How do you contend with size like that?

JAMARIUS BURTON: Yeah, like you say, you can't really teach size, but one thing you can do is compete. For us in those type of battles, it's trying to give it all we've got despite the size difference and live with the outcome.

GUILLERMO DIAZ GRAHAM: Yeah, it's really hard when they've got so many players that are so large and so talented. It's really hard because you've got to keep fighting one seven-footer and then they still have another seven-footer, so it's always hard, and also because they're big, too, that's really hard.

Q. Guillermo, I know it's tough still dealing with this loss, but what's your biggest takeaway from your first experience of an ACC Tournament environment from the win yesterday and today?

GUILLERMO DIAZ GRAHAM: I'm really happy to have the possibility to be here, like, to play this really big tournament, this ACC Tournament. One year ago I never would have imagined myself playing an ACC Tournament and playing. So really happy overall. Of course it's tough after a loss like this, but just keep learning, put my head down and keep working.

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