

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 9, 2023

## Duke Blue Devils

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

## Coach Jon Scheyer

## Tyrese Proctor

## Mark Mitchell

Postgame Press Conference



Duke 96, Pitt 69

JON SCHEYER: Well, really proud of our team, with the effort. Pitt is a really good team, and they're going to be an NCAA Tournament team. And for us, the start we got off to was incredibly important for us. Having the double bye was great, but also you don't get to get a feel for the arena and the feel of the tournament. For the job that these guys did, to come out just ready to go right from the start was incredibly important.

The way we shared the ball was beautiful. I was told it's an ACC Tournament record. It's a reflection on these guys for how they've grown together as a team and just making the right play. Really some beautiful plays. We know we have to move on quickly. Doesn't matter what you win by. But really happy to beat a really good Pitt team.

I don't think they're respected nationally like they should be. They're a dangerous team, man. They can really score, and that's why the job we did on defense was really special.

**Q. Jon, you've been winning with defense. This has not been an offensive juggernaut team, you're ninth in scoring, ninth in field goal percentage, 12th in three-point percentage. I think you'd only broken 80 four or five times. This was your season high. Is this a new Duke, or was this a one-time thing where just circumstances of the game led to a high score?**

JON SCHEYER: Well, we talked about something halfway through the year of just analytics and numbers, it can tell you what you've done, it can't tell you what you can do. I think for our group, I think you have to look at this season

in stages. I don't think it's a coincidence how we're putting it together on both ends where we've had the continuity with lineup, we've had the continuity with our health.

Each one of our guys, the perseverance, the toughness, just to block out any noise, block out anything else and just stick together as a team, I think that's what you see on the floor on both ends, defense and offense. I'm just proud of that.

The offense has probably been a step behind our defense, but our defense has been elite. It's been as good as anybody's in the country, especially down the stretch here, and for us, we just need to know what the winning recipe is. We've learned it, and we need to continue to do that.

**Q. Just wondering what you saw on the play where Kyle went down and injured his ankle early on and what it says about him that he's able to come back and any update you have about his status.**

JON SCHEYER: To be honest with you, I didn't get a great look at it, so I don't have an update at this point. We'll get him back to the hotel, get him seen, and then move forward.

But he looked pretty good to me when he got back out there, so... how about you guys? Yeah, great.

**Q. What do you think your team had learned the most from the regular season that's got them so prepared now to play for the postseason?**

JON SCHEYER: Well, it would be great for these guys to tell you because they're the ones going through it. And to have this young of a group -- at one point -- I didn't even realize. I don't you know if you guys realized. But I looked out there and we've got five freshmen on the court today. We started four of them, and five of our eight freshmen are main rotation. I don't know if anybody else has that in the country.

So the development that you need, the time to understand what it takes, the opportunity to learn on the fly -- I've thrown these guys in the fire. They've just battled every



step of the way.

To me, it makes you tougher going through those things. If you don't go through them, you don't know otherwise. We've gone through some hardships, gone through some adversity, and I feel that's made us just really tough.

**Q. But 27 assists, eight turnovers, Tyrese, you had 10 assists and one turnover as a freshman playing your first ACC Tournament game. That has been to me the greatest single improvement this team has had over the last month, six weeks is protecting the ball and generating offense. Talk about how a team has 27 assists and eight turnovers against, as Jon said, an NCAA caliber team?**

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah, Coach emphasizes before every game if we need to win a game, rebounding and limit our turnovers, and I thought we did that today. Like you said, guys just getting in the right spots and just knocking down open looks. I think we play our best basketball when we have open looks and guys are just cutting and making the right decisions, and I'm able to find them at the right time, and the rest is on them just making the play.

**Q. Coach, from your seat this season, to be able to shift over and be the head coach and leader of this program, what it's been like for you? Obviously there's more life to this Duke team as we step forward.**

And to the student-athletes, what it's been like to see Jon lead this program.

MARK MITCHELL: Yeah, it's been good. I think we have a pretty young team, and obviously Coach has been around a lot longer than us. But in his first year, just to see him grow since the beginning of the year, I think it's been just a pleasure. I think we've gotten better, he's also got better with us, learning new things each and every day so it's really good to see.

TYRESE PROCTOR: Coach has been okay.

No, Coach has been good, just leading us on the floor and staying with us through our journey. We've had such a hell of a journey. We've had so many ups and downs through the season, and him just staying poised just helps us as a group stay poised.

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, I just would add for me, one, I'm incredibly fortunate the experience I got before I was a head coach just with Coach K, how he would just be so open in the way he would share, just whether it be game plan, strategy, motivation, whatever it may be. But for me, I feel I've gotten a lot better. I've gotten a lot better with

these guys. I'm just so thankful for them.

You build up the trust in the relationship, and that's what I'm most proud of. We've been through a lot together, and people -- I don't know what people say, to be honest with you, but I know for us, we believe in each other, and that's what I'm most proud of throughout this year.

**Q. To the players, Coach talked about how many freshmen y'all have, but do you still feel like freshmen at this point now? And in what ways have you grown during the season both individually and collectively as a team?**

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah, I definitely don't think we feel like freshmen anymore. We don't get treated like freshmen anymore. I think just us playing our best basketball, just staying together. And like you said, I certainly don't feel -- I don't know about Mark, but I certainly don't feel like a freshman anymore.

MARK MITCHELL: This late in the season I don't really think you can say we're freshmen anymore. We've been through a lot, we've been in a lot big games, lot of close games, and I think it's shown as the season has gone on. When we get in tight moments and things like that, we've learned. We've progressed mightily, I think.

And I think just little things on the court that we might not have been doing at the beginning of the year, we're doing now. I think that's a testament of having more experience going through certain things and being in different experiences.

**Q. We've heard so much about this players-only meeting after the last Miami game. Just having the opportunity to go and play Miami again tomorrow, what do you sort of make of that matchup and maybe being able to right some things that didn't go right the last time?**

MARK MITCHELL: Yeah. Obviously last time we didn't put our best foot forward, didn't fight, didn't compete. I'm glad that we have this opportunity to play them again. I think we're going to be a lot better tomorrow. Obviously we had a meeting after that game, and since then we've been a lot better, and I think tomorrow will be a lot better.

TYRESE PROCTOR: Just to add to that, I think it's great we get to play them again. I think we've been wanting this for the past few weeks. Just to know how poorly we thought we played at Miami and we know we're such a better team than that now.

**Q. Coach, when you take into account that they just**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**talked about they don't feel like freshmen anymore and you've got a guy like Jeremy Roach, got a guy like Grandison who brings that Big Ten Tournament experience, what have you been noticing from the players of their tendencies, the way they're acting and practicing in terms of that maturity?**

JON SCHEYER: You know, to these guys' point, what they're saying about not feeling like freshmen, I just love their approach. There's a confidence that they have, but there's also a sense of urgency. I think that's the biggest thing you feel when you're an upper classman is a sense of urgency because you know there's a limit on how many games you can play.

And for us to treat this -- who knows what the future holds, but they've played with that sense of urgency but also that confidence to understand or the preparation, and they probably get tired of me saying certain stuff before games, but it is important.

You guys are supposed to say I don't ever get tired of you saying those things. We'll work on that. But I think that's the biggest thing, just the confidence that they have, and I want them to continue to feel that.

**Q. Coach Scheyer, I imagine you had full confidence that they would carry the momentum from the regular season into today's performance, but what area of the game tonight did they exceed whatever expectations you had?**

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, I don't know if it's exceeding. I just love the way we're sharing the ball. It's beautiful. Our defense, the collective effort, we talk about five guys playing together, we did that really throughout the whole game.

So you have your defense doing it, you have your offense doing it, guys on the bench are cheering for each other. It's just the connectivity that our group has is what I'm most proud of. I don't know if it's exceeding expectations. I expected that, but it's a credit to these guys and the unselfishness that they have.

**Q. Duke had seven steals today, a little above its average. You guys had three of those steals. There seemed to be a real effort to push the ball down the floor and score off it. You had 17 points off turnovers. Talk about that mindset and the effect it had on the game that in your half court offense you're banging in shot after shot and then you get steals and lay-ups.**

TYRESE PROCTOR: Yeah, I think our best offense comes from our defense, just getting deflections. Coach

talked about before the game, we need a big emphasis on deflections this game, and I thought we did that. And like I said, our best offense comes from our defense, so just pushing the pace. If we get deflections and get the ball in the guards' hands quickly, Mark's hands, Flip's hands, anyone can push, we're so versatile, and yeah.

MARK MITCHELL: Yeah, I think we always talk about turning defense into offense. I think just being as big and as athletic as we are, even when D-Live blocks a shot and kind of gets us on a run-out, that's something we can always take advantage of. And I think tonight obviously with the steals and D-Live blocking a couple shots there in the first half helped us get out in transition, too. I think when we're doing that, that's when we're at our best.

JON SCHEYER: I want to say one thing real quick about that. They're really smart, too. Both these guys are really good on-the-ball defenders. They're really smart without the ball, positional defense, knowing rotations. That's why I think we got some of these steals. But youth aside, it's a really smart team that we have, and I think it's part of the reason we've been so good on defense.

I just want to mention that about these guys.

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