

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Washington, D.C., USA

Capital One Arena

Wake Forest Demon Deacons

Steve Forbes Coach

Andrew Carr

Kevin Miller

Postgame Press Conference



Wake Forest 72, Notre Dame 59

STEVE FORBES: I want to congratulate Micah Shrewsberry on a really good first year, outstanding first year. I knew he was going to be a problem when I saw him coach at Penn State. Really good coach, really good person, got really good players. Burton is going to be one of the more fabulous players in our league, along with his son.

Real quick, about five days after my wife had a stroke, Micah Shrewsberry was the first college coach to reach out to me. Sent my wife flowers into Pensacola, Florida.

I'll never forget that. You never forget things like that in your life. Not a lot of people hadn't reached out later, but they did, but he was first and I'll never forget it.

I thought we go off to a great start on both offense and defense. This game we wanted to make Burton a passer, not let him get downhill in the ball screen and the zoom action. I thought we did most part a really good job of that. We weren't in the drop this time. We were up to touch, not letting him turn the corner.

We switched our matchups. We let Cameron guard Shrewsberry. Boopie did an unbelievable job on Burton. I thought that was a big thing for us. They went small. I thought we hurt them at the rim. We made an emphasis on getting the ball inside when they doubled us.

We wanted to finish at the rim because they had a small guy at the rim. Our goal was seven turnovers, we only had seven, 10 offensive rebounds, we only had 13, and I

thought our bench was really good defensively.

Parker got a bunch of deflections; Matt was really good on the ball screen; and Zach played physical at the rim.

I think they were 8 for 20 at the rim, and they went from the 4:39 mark to the 13:54 mark of the second half without a field goal. That was probably a big part of the game.

Questions?

Q. Do you think how you were going to defend Burton, did that impact the number of quality looks that Shrewsberry got because it was very limited quality of looks that he received.

STEVE FORBES: I think it was more the personnel change. Yeah, we spent a lot more time, but we knew we could do that because we'd have two on the ball with him. Cameron is elite at getting through screens and guarding people. He's done it all year long. He did it to Joe Gerard. He's done it to everybody in our league that can really move without the ball and score.

So it was a combination of both, us doing a really good job of two on the ball on him, and then Cameron just being elite in physical condition getting through those screens and being there to contest his shots. He got loose a couple times but not like normal, and then the offensive rebounds.

They kill you in offensive rebound kick-out threes, and we did a good job of that today.

Q. Boopie, Coach has already mentioned the start that you guys got off to, but was it almost as important to get off to that kind of start in the second half, as well, considering how some of your games have gone lately, and what kind of emphasis was there coming out of halftime?

KEVIN MILLER: You know, the second half of the other games, the away games, we started off slow, but I feel like this half, the coaches told us about the emphasis they wanted to put on defending, finishing out strong, coming



out with rebounds, scoring the ball. I feel like we did that perfectly the second half.

STEVE FORBES: Yeah, we talked about it. I think it was about the same score on the road at Notre Dame. It was 40-36, something like that close.

Yeah, it's time to change, time to grow up, time to whatever you want to use. It's go time. I thought we came out and did a really good job establishing on both ends of the court in the second half and not relying on just our offense or our defense to win the game.

Q. Just talk about your second half defense, the second half defense with the field goal percentage. You guys gave up 20 percent and the Irish were 0 for 8 from the floor.

STEVE FORBES: Yeah, we're big. We have a good-sized team. I thought it was really important to be body between and force them to shoot tough twos over us, and we fouled a lot, more than I would like to.

But I just thought we were there all the time to make it hard for them to get -- to make shots. They're good at faking and shot faking and double faking, and I thought we stayed on the ground for the most part and made them go over a body between.

And I thought that was probably the most important thing with the two guys, Burton on the ball screens zoom hand-offs, and doing a really good job of chasing Shrewsberry.

Q. Mr. Carr, tell us a little bit about timing tonight. Tonight it felt like you were acutely aware of rebounds and moves and setting picks and everything. You were sharper than usual. What happened?

ANDREW CARR: Yeah, I think it's a credit to the game plan coming in, especially offensively. Coach Shay and Coach AK who's working with us. Big especially on making sure we make contact on the screens. They like to weak and ice -- weak in the middle and ice on the sides.

For Boopie and some of the guards to get the pocket pass to us kind of in the middle of the paint to be able to read there, we've got to get some contact on their guards to it makes it easier for them to pass it to us, and from there in the middle it's either making a read or they have the low man in help and be a smaller guy try to take it to the basket.

Q. Are you going to coach?

STEVE FORBES: Pretty good, Andrew.

Q. Steve, you got solid production out of Parker, Matthew Marsh, and Zach Keller. How important was getting the production out of those three guys, especially when you had cam in foul trouble, Carr got in a little bit of foul trouble, as well?

STEVE FORBES: Yeah, it was maybe one of the most important things of the game, and especially when you're in a tournament situation you've obviously got to have some bench production.

A lot of times I think we think bench production is just scoring points. It's not. Parker made -- he had several deflections. Matt was head on the ball, on the zoom or the ball screen consistently, and I thought Zach played extremely physical.

I wasn't a big fan of that three in the corner that almost went in, and I told him that at the last time-out.

I thought those guys were huge the entire game, and we're going to need them as we move forward.

Q. Coach, coming out of the second half talking about the runs, a lot of those were coming off of point momentum swings with defensive play, the guards cutting and taking it the other way. Cam did it once; Parker did it twice. How big are those things defensively?

STEVE FORBES: Right. I mean, those are huge when you're turning your defense into offense. It gives you a lot of confidence and then it doesn't put as much pressure on you to come down and score in your half-court offense.

You get a chance to get a couple easy baskets. I thought it was important for Hunter. He got off to a great start and then he kind of struggled a little bit there for a while. Sometimes you've got to get an easy basket to get yourself going again, and I thought he did that on one of those plays. I'm not sure if it was Boop or Parker that threw it to him, but Cameron, too.

I thought Cameron passed up on a couple threes where he drove it and laid it up when he could have shot them. Smart plays.

All that stuff is -- yeah, it's really important to us to try to generate easy baskets.

Q. Steve, looking ahead to tomorrow, you play Pittsburgh, and according to a lot of the bracket experts, it's practically an elimination game because of

where you both are on the bubble. How important is it, and what's the message to the players?

STEVE FORBES: Well, the most important thing is, first, we're playing Pitt, who we split with, and they're really, really good, and Blake Hinson is one of the best shooters in the country.

I voted for Carrington Love for all-freshman. I voted for Leggett for Sixth Man of the Year, on and on and on and on.

We have a lot of respect for them.

What I'm worried about is getting to Friday. I'm not worried about all that other stuff, and neither are they because we don't know what those people are thinking in the room. We don't know where we're at right now. They're the only people that know.

What I know is in front of us is that we have a great opportunity to play the Pitt Panthers, who we respect as much as anybody in this league, and Jeff Capel and I have been good friends for a long time, and he's really a good person, somebody I respect.

I'm just looking forward to the game, playing on Thursday. We came here to play on Friday and Saturday, and the only way to do that is so win on Wednesday and play on Thursday, and that's what we're looking at right now.

Q. To the players, obviously when you're playing you don't think about it, and like Coach said -- how much do you pay attention to it when you go back to the hotel? Do you watch other games? How conscious are you of the situation?

ANDREW CARR: I'll take it. Coach Forbes talks about it all the time, about trying to block out the noise, and that's part of it. We've been in and out, whatever it is, a million different times throughout the season, and that's just kind of how it is.

None of that really matters until Selection Sunday, and for us to be able to put ourselves in the best position, it's going to be winning the next game in front of us.

I think that as much as it can be loud noise kind of from the outside, like you said, when you get back to the hotel room or whatever it is, I think it's really important for us to continue to try to block out that stuff and just kind of try and focus on the next game.

Q. Coach, I'm curious, are you worried about minutes per player at this point, thinking about the games

down the road that you just alluded to? You just had a pretty rugged game.

STEVE FORBES: Not really. These guys are young. These guys have been playing heavy minutes all year long. Yeah, it would be great to have a little more depth, but we are who we are now. So you just play. They'll go back to the room, I'm sure they'll lay down. They'll be ready to go. If it was me, I'd be dead, yeah. But I'm not playing.

Last thing. I really appreciate my family. The honor that we received today is a spirit award. I couldn't look at my wife while we were doing it because I was crying. We've been through a lot, and we were very appreciative of everybody that's really helped us because you can't get through these things without help. You can't.

Those kind of things mean a lot to her. She's a very private person. She hates it when I go on social media. But it was the only way I could connect with everybody that was asking, and it was really the only way for her to see how much people clearly cared about her. You probably didn't even know my wife's name until this happened, and this is why she's an awesome wife and an awesome coach's wife because she's not one of those people that needs attention. She loves the players, she loves the program, and she feels bad right now because she doesn't feel like she's part of it because she's not around as much, and that's not true, and I appreciate today. That meant a lot to me and my family to be honored like that.

It's not something you probably want to win, to be honest with you, but we'll gladly take it. Thank you.

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