

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Washington, D.C., USA

Capital One Arena

Clemson Tigers

Coach Brad Brownell

Joseph Girard, III

PJ Hall

Postgame Press Conference



Boston College 76, Clemson 55

BRAD BROWNELL: Just congratulations to Boston College. Thoroughly outplayed us. I'm disappointed in our performance. We haven't done that very much this year at all.

I don't really understand. Defensively I thought we were okay, but we didn't get any defensive rebounds. Held them to 38 percent shooting, giving up nine offensive rebounds and then 40 points out of that, something wasn't -- we just weren't quite ready.

Ultimately that's on me. I don't really understand it. I thought we were. But we looked a half step slow and lacked urgency, and then I thought when we got behind, that's probably not great for us. We haven't been behind a lot this year, and we probably panicked a little bit, and we had a hard time.

Again, give Boston College a lot of credit. I thought they played with great confidence, and Jaeden Zackery was terrific.

Post is obviously an outstanding player, so they can spread you out.

Claudell Harris made some threes.

I just thought they played with a lot of confidence and swagger and very free and loose. For whatever reason, we did not.

Q. PJ and Joe, Coach just mentioned a lack of juice,

lack of energy. Did you feel that coming into this game? What do you ascribe that to?

PJ HALL: No, in warmups we thought we looked and felt great. Had a good energy to us and i don't know if was just got popped in the mouth and didn't recover or it was not there in the first place, but I'll tell you what, for 40 minutes they controlled it. It's a shame.

JOSEPH GIRARD: Yeah I would kind of agree. The coaches did a great job of getting us ready for this game. Coach gave us a great speech last night about being ready for things like that and coming into tournaments like this, and just trying to go out there, and we just didn't have it for whatever reason. It's not on the coaches, it's on the players.

Fortunately for us, we've had a great season so far, so hopefully we'll get another chance, but as a group, as players, we've got to move forward and be better.

Q. You guys got out-rebounded by 16 boards tonight and Joe led the team in rebounds. What was the struggles that you guys had down low grabbing those boards?

JOSEPH GIRARD: I mean, Boston College, they play hard, a bunch of tough kids. That's how they've always been. In my five years in this league it seems like every single time you play Boston College they're going to just be tough. No matter what the score is no matter where you're playing them, when you're playing them, it's a bunch of tough kids.

And again, goes back to us being out-toughed, and as players we've just got to be better.

Q. Coach, obviously Chase Hunter had a rough night. Anything that Boston College did? Was it just a bad shooting night or anything strategically that could change with Hunter?

BRAD BROWNELL: No, I don't think it was anything strategically. I think it's just one of those tough outings. I think sometimes you get behind and you're trying to make



plays. Sometimes you can be a little overly aggressive, and that may have happened on a handful of occasions tonight for Chase.

But certainly that's hard when one of your good players like that has a tough night. It affects our team offensively. Again, I think being behind and consistently all night felt like double figures most of the game that we probably played a little too quick at times. I thought we hurried at times and got away from what we do well.

Some of that's on me. We've got to do better as coaches for sure to help these guys.

Q. Obviously the focus on tonight, but knowing what you know about the NET rankings and everything, do you have an expectation about your seeding? Any thoughts on that?

BRAD BROWNELL: No, not really. I do think -- I'm really proud of our guys, and I talked to them last night and today before the game about how they should play loose and free. Guys, because of the work you've done for 31 games, you've played your way into the NCAA Tournament.

Now, there's a lot of teams, Boston College being one, that they're going to play desperate, and they're going to play really hard. This is their chance.

For whatever reason, our guys just didn't -- we didn't respond as well as we normally do. Again, I think some of the credit to that is Boston College. It's not just -- we didn't get off to a great start. A lot of that was the way they played.

Post made a couple buckets early. They guarded us well early. We couldn't get into a really good rhythm.

From then on out, it was a little bit of a struggle.

Having said that, to come into this tournament and there's only three teams in the ACC that are locks in the NCAA, I give my players a lot of credit for what they were able to accomplish the last four months.

Tonight was an oddity. I think we've played better basketball than this most other nights.

Q. For Brad, just the rebounding discrepancy, how frustrating was that to see, given how good of a thing that's been for y'all all season?

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, the rebounding has been really good. Obviously Ian has been terrific in that regard. I think

there are times or we've had games like this, especially when there is long rebounds, like I think there were rebounds in the first half, and I'm disappointed in our guards.

We talk about it a lot, that our guards have to get more involved on the defensive boards when there's long rebounds like that.

In the first half we were very -- we were slow to the ball, and that part was disappointing. They were getting second and third shots on a lot of opportunities.

Again, it's rare that a team shoots 38 percent. They only shot eight free throws and they scored 40 points. Certainly the rebounding was a big part of it.

Q. You had almost 50 minutes off the bench. Was that a focus tonight or were you just trying to find a spark as you got down in the game?

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, more trying to find a spark. I thought Joe got us going, and I thought he was certainly making shots early. PJ made shots late.

But beyond that, we couldn't find anybody else to score. That was a problem.

Obviously when Chase has 0 for 10, that's hard. Jack and Ian didn't really get going. So we were trying a bunch of guys off the bench to see if they could give us a little bit of a lift. We tried a lot of different things tonight. We tried three guards some, we tried Jack and Chauncey together for a chime. I thought RJ was very productive for us. Proud of him.

But tonight we didn't have an answer.

Q. Brad, you mentioned some of this is on you. What do you feel like you and the staff need to do to position this team going forward for the tournament?

BRAD BROWNELL: Get their urgency back. Obviously we've got to work on our rebounding. We've improved defensively tremendously over the last couple of months. I don't know that it showed today. But we have gotten better. The guys have done a good job of working on that end.

We've got to fine tune some things heading into NCAA Tournament play. We've got to help our guys offensively be a little bit better, as well.

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