

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 15, 2024

Washington, D.C., USA

Capital One Arena

North Carolina Tar Heels

Coach Hubert Davis

Armando Bacot

RJ Davis

Harrison Ingram

Postgame Press Conference



North Carolina 72, Pitt 65

Q. It's been since 2016 since y'all won the ACC Tournament title. Can you describe your level of hunger to bring that trophy back to Chapel Hill with you?

RJ DAVIS: It would mean a lot to this program just because we haven't won it in a couple of years. It just shows how much of a team we are and how resilient we are. We set goals at the beginning of this year, and for us to be one more game away means a lot, but the job is not finished. Just got to take it one game at a time.

Super proud of this group and the way we battled tonight, because Pittsburgh is a really good team, they play tough on both ends of the floor.

For us to come out with a win, that's Carolina basketball right there.

Q. RJ and Armando, I noticed you guys made a beeline for each other when the buzzer sounded. What was that conversation when you left the court?

ARMANDO BACOT: Just one of those things being excited getting to the championship. Like RJ said, the job isn't finished, but to go out there and win that game in that fashion, I was super excited.

RJ has been our closer all year and he hit some huge shots, so I was really just embracing him and telling him

thank you.

Q. Pitt had the lead going into the half. The second half was a different story and you guys just looked like a completely different team. What changed in that locker room?

RJ DAVIS: Our defense. Coach Davis said someone is going to have to take the challenge, and I think Harrison did a terrific job tonight guarding Hinson.

We know how dangerous he is from three, and holding him to two field goals. I think Harrison has been phenomenal all year, but for him to go out there and make it difficult for Hinson, that was terrific.

And then Seth, his impact on the on-ball against Carrington super aggressive was huge for us. Coach's main message was to take the challenge on the defensive end. Offense was always going to be fine, but it's the defense that is going to win these games, and when it got down to it, we got stops and we executed on the offensive end.

Q. There's a chance that Pittsburgh doesn't make the tournament. They're pretty much right on the edge of the bubble right now. How do you feel about that and kind of the overall state of the ACC on the bubble?

HUBERT DAVIS: Just personally, that just doesn't make sense at all. I don't care what metric, whatever you look at. There's no way that you can look at this game and look at Pitt and not say it's definitively an NCAA Tournament team, and not just an NCAA Tournament team, a team that could go far in the tournament.

Extremely well-coached. Coach Capel does a fantastic job. The players that they have on there, not only are they big-time college players, they've got future NBA players over there, and they play together as a team.

They gave us everything tonight, and for us to come away with the win, we're very fortunate.

Q. RJ and Armando, given what you guys went through last year and obviously the experience you



had in '22, what would it mean tomorrow night if you get the opportunity to cut down the nets again?

ARMANDO BACOT: It would be huge because we've been through so much and we just worked so hard this year, coaches, players. We've all been locked in and we've been a family, and it's just been a fun ride.

To go out with a championship would be huge, and that's been one of our biggest goals this year.

Q. Harrison and Coach Harrison, Jamir Watkins had 30 plus against FSU, you guys put him in a bad shooting night. Blake Hinson is one of the leading scorers in the league. This is twice this year you guys really shut him down. Give us your mindset going into a game like this where your offensive numbers are smaller than usual but you helped the team win. And coach, could you tell me what you saw from Harrison in those situations against those players?

HARRISON INGRAM: For us it's team defense. We're the No. 1 defense in the ACC. We have a lot of good players. We play kind of smaller so our guards get into the ball pretty well.

For me it was easier to stay on Blake Hinson knowing that our guards are doing their job on the ball, Armando is doing his job in the ball screens, making it difficult for everybody else.

At the end of the day, Coach, he challenges us every single day to play defense and take our matchups one-on-one, and today I feel like I did.

HUBERT DAVIS: Yeah, Harrison did just a job defensively that he did on Hinson, but it's not just specifically to tonight. Harrison has been that guy for us on the defensive end all season. His size, his athleticism gives us versatility on the defensive end to be able to put him in a number of different situations, along with Armando, the two best rebounders in the ACC.

We always talk about making impact plays, and there's a number of ways that you can make impact plays to give our team an opportunity and a chance to win. I can go down the line with everybody that played, what they did impactfully for us to be able to pull out a win tonight.

Q. Armando and Coach Davis, Pitt comes back to tie it at 62-62 with about four minutes left. Immediately next possession the ball gets to RJ and he knocks down a three. What does that say about RJ stepping up to that moment and what's that say about his toughness and leadership?

ARMANDO BACOT: Yeah, like I said, all year RJ has been our closer, and in moments like that it's a huge luxury to know you can put the ball in our guards' hands and he'll either make the shot or make the right play.

I think it just it shows all the hard work he's put in to be able to make a huge shot like that when we need him most on the biggest stage.

HUBERT DAVIS: Yeah, RJ made a great move, but it was a traffic screen by Armando that got RJ open. Specifically in the second half we put the ball in the hands of RJ and Armando, and if they didn't score, just their passing and decision making was just fantastic.

Then after RJ hit that three, he looked over -- I don't know if you were looking over at me or --

RJ DAVIS: Yeah, I was.

HUBERT DAVIS: I don't know if he was looking over at me for approval. I was like, yeah, I like that, that's nice. Do it again. So it was great. But it's not just tonight. RJ and Armando and Harrison, they've shown up the entire season.

Q. Armando, your 16th double-double tonight. How much pride do you take in that physical nature in the post, especially going up against Pittsburgh that brings a lot of energy because a lot of times that doesn't show up on the stat sheet.

ARMANDO BACOT: Pitt has always been a physical team, and going into this game we knew we had to set the tone in the trenches. That's one of the main things me and Harry talked about going into this game, we wanted to rebound the ball specifically on the offensive end and try to create second-chance opportunities, but also get their big men in foul trouble because we knew if we could get Federiko in foul trouble and also Diaz that we would have an advantage.

I think we did a great job of that, and I think that allowed us to have a lot of success.

Q. Harrison, you're a guy who had played a lot of basketball, and now you've joined a team that has played a ton of basketball, especially the two guys next to you. How specifically do you feel that experience, especially in those late moments, especially alongside these two guys?

HARRISON INGRAM: You know, it makes the game so much easier knowing I've got two veterans right here you

can just give the ball to and they make a play, whether it's a play for themselves or RJ hitting his little three or Armando flexing and hitting the dunk.

Just having two players like that on my team, it makes it a lot more easier for me to just trust them to do their job, and I do my job.

Q. Pretty sure it was the last 18 points were scored by Armando and RJ. Mando, it looked like as the time was ticking down at the end you went over to RJ in the corner and you guys were sharing a moment. What were you saying there? You were pretty fired up.

ARMANDO BACOT: Just super excited to get a chance to play in the championship. It was a tough game, and it got close down in the stretch, and I think me and RJ really wanted to make plays so we could win the game, and we were just excited defensively, too, because we shut them down in the end.

We always practice those situations with three minutes left or a minute and a half left or what to do, and I think we really just applied what we practice into the game.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports