

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 16, 2024

Washington, D.C., USA

Capital One Arena

North Carolina Tar Heels

Coach Hubert Davis

Armando Bacot

RJ Davis

Postgame Press Conference

NC State 84, North Carolina 76

Q. Armando, assuming this is the last time you're going to see DJ Burns, how can you characterize the difficulty of facing him one-on-one?

ARMANDO BACOT: I mean, all season early on, I thought I did a good job, and I think just going into this game, I just allowed him to catch the ball where he really wanted to. When he gets it at that point, it's really tough to guard him.

Q. Hubert, it seemed at the end of the first half, you guys were able to find a rhythm, take the lead going into halftime, wasn't quite in that same rhythm to start the second. Was there anything that you observed from North Carolina State from what they were able to do to limit the offensive production?

HUBERT DAVIS: No. I mean, we just couldn't guard them tonight. They shot was it 54 percent, 55 percent from the field? That's just not going to get it done.

In regards to us, we've talked about all year that it starts with defense and rebounding and taking care of the basketball, and the first thing that I always mention is defense. For us and statistically throughout the ACC, we've been No. 1 in terms of all the metrics defensively. Allowing a team, any team to shoot 55 percent for a game, that's just not going to work.

It's a credit that we stayed in the game, but we just didn't -- from a defensive standpoint, we weren't able to guard them one-on-one, whether it was on the post, isolations out on the wing. Didn't play the type of defense that you have to



have in order to win games like this.

Q. RJ, this was a goal for you guys to come here and win the tournament. Could you just sort of assess your level of disappointment of not being able to get it done tonight in the championship?

RJ DAVIS: I mean, definitely disappointed. Got to the championship game and came up short. We didn't play our best basketball today. I know that was one of our goals going into the season, but we just came up short.

Coach Davis always talks about our response and how we're going to respond when we get knocked down, so going into March Madness, we're going to have to prepare, come together as a group and fix the mistakes that we made tonight.

Q. What do you think you can learn from this experience going into the NCAA Tournament next week?

ARMANDO BACOT: There's really nothing to learn. We know what we need to do, and as long as we get back to the game plans and what the coaches have told us to do, we'll be fine.

HUBERT DAVIS: I don't know if there's anything that we can learn. I've said it before, for us to be the best that we can be, especially in games like this, you're just going to have to defend, rebound and take care of the basketball.

We'll go back to work when we get back home and prepare and practice, and wherever they send us and whomever we play, we'll be prepared to be the best that we can be when we get out there on the floor next week.

Q. RJ and Armando, did you feel out of sync collectively offensively in the second half? And with that, RJ, did you feel like you had to do a lot more than usual to keep you guys going or keep you in the game?

RJ DAVIS: I felt like our pace wasn't up to par. We didn't play really with a quick pace and get down in transition and



get easy baskets for us. I kind of just felt like we played into the slow pace of their defense.

And that's the No. 1 thing that's been working for us all year, was just our quick pace, our transition, offense, and finding the rim. I think the first half we took a lot of threes rather than getting the ball down to Mando or penetrating from the guards themselves.

That's what I saw today from an offensive standpoint, but it was more so with the defensive game and the defensive mistakes that we made and just guarding your man one-on-one rather than offense.

Q. Coach, one of the big question marks heading into this game for NC State was the fatigue factor. For them to come out as hot as they did, for lack of better phrasing, do you feel like there was a bit of complacency on your team's end to sort of allow that?

HUBERT DAVIS: No, I don't agree with that. Those are your words. But I think too much is made out of five games in five days. You have a chance to play in this tournament, you have a chance to win a championship. Us growing up, we played three games in one day.

Getting an opportunity to play at this level in this tournament and for a championship, it doesn't matter how many overtimes, how many games you play in a row. We knew that they would play with great energy, and they did from the start and throughout the entire game.

Q. Hubert, in the first half it looked like your plan was to double Burns, especially when he caught the ball close to the lane. Did that change, or was it just a matter of where he was catching it?

HUBERT DAVIS: No, it changed throughout the entire game, not just the first half. There were times where we did double him. There were times that we didn't. We didn't want to give him a steady diet of not doubling or a steady diet of us doubling him down on the post.

Every time that you play him, there's always -- proposes a question because he's such a great passer. His ability to be able to score in the paint, he can do that, but he's also a gifted and elite passer which allows the other guys from the perimeter to be able to shoot the ball from the outside.

We try to mix things up to keep them off balance. We've had success against them in the past, and we didn't have success against them tonight.

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