

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 11, 2025  
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA  
Spectrum Center

**Pittsburgh Panthers**  
**Coach Jeff Capel**  
**Jaland Lowe**

**Zack Austin**

Postgame Press Conference



Notre Dame 55, Pittsburgh 54

JEFF CAPEL: First, congrats to Notre Dame. Hard-fought game for both teams. Really hated the way it ended. I've been coaching for 25 years. It's the way I've ever seen to end a ballgame in my 25 years of doing this.

I still can't believe it. Shocked at how it ended for us. My guys played hard. We fought, put ourselves in a position to win. Unfortunately we came up short.

**Q. Jaland and Zack, how would you describe the emotions right now after that game?**

ZACK AUSTIN: I'm just hurt, man. I'm just hurt.

JALAND LOWE: I'm in disbelief. I'm hurt. Nobody should have to go out like this.

**Q. In this game, obviously the first time you played Notre Dame, Burton and Davis had 41 points. You guys held them to 21 this time. What did you do better defensively?**

ZACK AUSTIN: We just tightened up, just tried to do what we didn't do last time.

JALAND LOWE: Just two key guys that we got to focus on, and I thought we did a pretty good job, but it wasn't enough.

**Q. Zack, just how would you reflect on this season as a whole, your last one in college, and just the way it started and the way it finished?**

ZACK AUSTIN: I don't know if I can really put it into words. I'm just happy I got to play for a coach like him and my guy right here and all my teammates. I'm just happy I met them guys, man.

**Q. Jaland, how would you describe your time here at Pitt, as well, as well as your relationship with Coach Capel?**

JALAND LOWE: I mean, it's been a great two years so far. My relationship with Coach is amazing. I love this coach, man. He gives it his all. He puts his all into us and we just try and give that back. But it's been an amazing two years so far. I love it.

**Q. Jaland and Zack, how would you describe how tight-knit this team was, this group was this year through all the ups and downs?**

ZACK AUSTIN: We was real close, man. We really is a family here. That's thanks to my guys right there, instilling that into us every day. It really is family.

JALAND LOWE: It's a brotherhood, man. It's a brotherhood. I love these guys with everything in my heart, man. I love these guys.

**Q. Jeff, just overall with this season, I know it's a lot in the moment, but where do you think things exactly went wrong with this team?**

JEFF CAPEL: You know, that's hard to give me right now. I'm hurt, frustrated, angry, so it's hard for me to think about the past two months. I try to be in our players' moment, and this was a moment, and it's really hard to see them hurting like this.

It'll take me some time to figure that out.

**Q. Jeff, what started working for you guys a little bit in the second half offensively, especially on that end?**

JEFF CAPEL: Well, we made shots. We got good looks in the first half. And we didn't turn it over. We had seven



turnovers in the first half. But we made shots.

I think they were similar shots that we got in the first half. Second half we made shots. We were better defensively. I thought that helped our offense.

**Q. Jeff, you saw the emotion on those two guys after this loss. How would you describe your feelings and walking into that locker room after the game?**

JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, hurt, angry, frustrated. Really feel for them, because regardless of what was going on, they continued to show up with really good attitudes, and we continued to fight, even in the face of adversity.

They don't realize it now because it's fresh and it really hurts, the finality of it for some of these guys. That's tough. But these are life lessons that will help them. Because as they enter into the real world, three guys after this season -- six if you count our managers -- hopefully they'll be able to reflect back on tough times -- and good times -- but tough times, and use it as an example of how you have to continue to show up, you have to continue to have a positive attitude, and you have to continue to be a good teammate.

That's one of the things I'm grateful for in our program that we've been able to do in the midst of adversity and the last two months.

But that's what I felt when I entered the locker room.

**Q. Coach, one thing I've noticed on the court is just the spirit that Ish has when he steps on the court. Even when he's not scoring a lot, he's making plays, rebounding. He's everywhere on the court. Can you describe him not just as a player but as a person himself?**

JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, he's an unbelievable kid, unbelievable. It's been my honor to get to know him and to be a part of his journey. He's had an amazing journey so far. He's overcome a lot of things. I admire him so much, how he's learned how to be positive in the midst of really difficult things.

I mean, this is difficult, but it's still just a game. It's something we love, we have a passion for.

But he's dealt with some real, real stuff. To see the spirit that he still has, the positive attitude, the love, all of those things, it's been an honor for me to get to know him and to be a part of his life and to have him a part of mine.

I've gotten better from being around him, and I'm going to

really miss him. I'm going to really miss coaching him. But I know we'll be a part of each other's lives forever.

**Q. I don't think the sport of college basketball does you guys any favors with this, but do you have time to decompress or do you just have to go into building the roster for next year?**

JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, you have to build a roster. That's the nature of what we do now. There is no break time really. It's free agency after each season, and so we'll take some time to try to decompress. But we'll immediately get into trying to figure out what's next for us as far as roster management.

**Q. Coach, Brandin Cummings had that big three with a little over a minute left in the game. What did you think of his performance in the second half?**

JEFF CAPEL: I thought he did some really good things. He's a competitor. Prior to that, he made two big free throws. He's not afraid of the moment. We knew that when we recruited him. He's gotten better throughout the season. Like most freshmen, he hit a little bit of a wall, but he was able to fight through it. Unbelievable teammate, unbelievable worker.

I've known him for a little bit because his brother played for us, so he's been around our program. But it's been great to get to coach him and get to know him on a deeper level, and excited about what I think he can become.

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