

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spectrum Center

Notre Dame Fighting Irish Coach Micah Shrewsberry Tae Davis

Nikita Konstantynovskyi

Postgame Press Conference



focused on the shot, trying to finish at the end of the game, like I said, competing and whatnot.

But the call is the call, so...

Q. To get a win in a hard-fought game like that when it comes down to the finish the way this one did, how much more satisfying is it, now you go into a game with Carolina in Charlotte tomorrow?

NIKITA KONSTANTYNOVSKYI: I think we just take one game at a time, we prepare the best. We have the best coaches. We'll be ready for North Carolina.

TAE DAVIS: Most definitely. We're ready to compete, like Nikita said, one bite at a time. That's a lesson we take from Coach every day, one bite at a time. So ready to compete.

Q. When Markus is having a tough time scoring, especially in that first half, how do you guys try and pick up the scoring weight when he might not be having his best game, especially in the first half?

NIKITA KONSTANTYNOVSKYI: When he doesn't have his best night, I'm always ready to rebound the ball, be in the paint and just involve all my teammates.

TAE DAVIS: Everybody has to be ready at all times and all hands have to be on deck. I think it takes all of us to compete at a high level and to be able to win games.

Q. How satisfying is it to get a win like this, and now facing North Carolina here tomorrow in Charlotte, how do you put it into words?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Yeah, for us, you get a chance to experience the first game of the conference tournament, the excitement of playing in the conference tournament, playing in a new venue for us, everything else.

I was really proud of our guys for how we defended. We didn't shoot our best. I didn't think we played tremendously well offensively, but I thought we guarded at a high level.

Notre Dame 55, Pittsburgh 54

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Just hats off to Pitt for just a hard-fought game. Jeff Capel, I said it after we played them a couple weeks ago, he's a good coach, but he's a great person, too. He's been unbelievable with me this year, and really, we're competitors, but there's a brotherhood amongst coaches, as well.

It's a tough way to lose there at the end in a hard-fought game. And we've played, I guess, three straight that have come down to the wire and have really been hard-fought. And it's hard to say -- like, for either team to accept defeat in those moments. So I completely understand what he's going through.

But credit to them for playing really hard. Sometimes you need a little luck of the Irish.

Q. Tae, take us back to that moment with the game-winning free throw. What was going on in your mind? What was the environment like in your head?

TAE DAVIS: Honestly, I was just trying to keep a clear mind and not even think about anything, really. Just compete, at the end of the day.

Q. Tae, did you feel the contact from Austin right away on that rebound? Did you know he fouled you right away? I'm curious on that put-back attempt at the end of the game?

TAE DAVIS: Honestly, I was focused on the shot more than anything. Whatever happened outside of that, I was



That's what we talk about. At times this year, it hasn't always been that way for us. We've really played through our offense. But I thought in order for us to come here and get a win, we really had to just be tough and gritty defensively. And I thought -- despite giving up 110 in our last game, I thought the last few weeks we've been pretty tough and gritty defensively.

Q. During March, we know that it comes down to the plays, like making winning plays. We saw that today. I'm going through the box score. Even on offensive rebounds but the nine second-chance opportunities, a second opportunity that gave you a free throw at the end. Can you talk about your team's grit in those moments to create extra opportunities?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Yeah. We got some guys that -- we have some freshmen that I think are going to be really good players for us. They each played throughout the game. But as the game gets closer and as the game gets tighter, there are some guys on our team that, like, when the horn hits zero, there's a chance I could take my jersey off for the last time.

So I was going to roll with Nikita, I was going to roll with Julian Roper, and they both had some offensive rebounds down the stretch.

Tae has been doing that all year and going to the glass, but knowing that moment -- we've played so many close games. We've had so many teachable moments. We watch film after every one of hey, this is -- whether we win or lose -- I remember showing one, we won a game, and -- actually, no, we lost at Wake -- but we got three shots at the end. And it was because those guys were going to the glass. Like, Sir flew in and tipped it to Tae who kicked it out and got another rebound.

They've seen those last-second moments, and I think everything we've gone through this year has prepared us for close games at the end.

Q. Jeff Capel when he was here, he said that was kind of the toughest way he's ended a game in 25 years as a coach. I wanted to get your thoughts on the last sequence. And obviously from my perspective, I thought there was a little bit of contact, but what did you see? Was there a moment you were ready to go to overtime and then you saw the refs call the foul?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Yeah, I was worried about getting our guys in position. I didn't want to use a time-out in order for them to kind of get their defense set. So I wanted to kind of play on the fly a little bit.

So my focus was on making sure we were in the right spot, making sure we had what we wanted to do, making sure we waited until the end and we didn't shoot it too early, so they didn't get an opportunity at the end. And then I was watching Markus, and I thought he had a pretty good chance of making it. He ended up kind of almost banking it in, but it ended up being a really good miss. So I saw Tae catch it and lay it in.

But yeah, I was prepared for overtime. We just played four of them. I was like, why not play another overtime game? So I was prepared for overtime until they said there was a foul.

Tae had been making free throws. Unfortunately I told him to miss that last one, or we'd have went perfect for the game.

Q. We got to see a lot of Sir Mohammed down the road at Myers Park. What have you noticed about collegiate player, Sir Mohammed?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Yeah, he's going to be a really good player for us. He got hurt early in the season. And the times when you can grow as a player is a lot in those non-conference games as a freshman, and he missed those opportunities. So he didn't come back until conference play. So he's learning on the fly versus grown men at times in our league.

His ability to pass the ball, his ability to make plays off the dribble, he's an unbelievable teammate. I look down and see -- I thought he had another offensive rebound, but just some timely buckets. Just like, all right, this is -- I think he's going to be a really good player for us in pick-and-rolls, being a passer. But right now he's kind of doing other things with Markus and with (indiscernible). So he's cutting and getting lay-ups. He's finding his way to help us in a lot of different ways.

You need that unselfishness, and I'm looking forward to him getting more games under his belt when he can get back here the next time and be really, really good for us.

Q. It's been a while since you've seen North Carolina, since the beginning of January, with the new structure of this league. Go figure, it was a one-point game. I know it's two different teams at this point of the season, but what are some things that you're going to focus on in priority during the game tomorrow?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Try not to foul a three-point shooter at the end of the game. I mean, yeah, it's been so long. Like early January is when we played them. Maybe like January 4th, if I'm not mistaken.

Without watching them -- because they've also been in a sequence where we haven't played teams that have just played them, so I don't see them in my five out when I'm getting ready preparing for other people. So I haven't had a chance to watch them a lot.

But, you know, obviously, everything with Carolina is their transition. They're so good at that, have traditionally been so good at that. Obviously RJ Davis is an unbelievable player, has been an unbelievable player in this league for a long time, so we've got to do a great job on him, as well as the other guys. They have a bunch of guys with he, with Cadeau, with Ian Jackson. You can go on and on with the guys on their team.

We've got to get back. We've got to watch film. We've got to get our bodies right and be prepared for another 40-minute battle.

Q. Coach, Markus maybe didn't have his best day scoring, but what does he do for your team outside of scoring? Throughout this whole season and especially today.

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: You know what, we really feed off his energy, and for him, he's still young. He's still a young basketball player, and he's still growing into who he is as a leader. He's an unbelievable scorer, a play maker, everything else. But who he is as a leader, he's still figuring it out.

So we try and constantly talk to him, like we feed off of his juice, and when he's not having his best day, doing other things so guys feed off of that. He had a great steal there late in the game when we forced him a different direction and Lowe was driving it. And he got in there and got help and got the ball out. Those are huge plays. He had some huge rebounds.

He just kept his head down, kept plugging, kept encouraging guys in the huddle. He helped us win this game, despite not playing -- he made some huge plays down the stretch, but despite not playing his best game, he was a huge factor in our win.

Q. You talked about how you guys play very aggressive. You guys came out in the game very aggressive and you got off to a lead. At a certain point right before half, it seemed as if you were a little rattled. You also focused on how you've had a few close games. Talk to me about what the language was like entering that last time-out before half, going into halftime, and going forward knowing that your best scorer might have another game or get hot or

whatever. What was the language like going into half and going forward?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Yeah, we just really talk about trying to stay together in tough moments. We've played games where we've gotten huge leads and people have come back, and we haven't always handled that well as a group.

I thought today when we got into those huddles, when we got into those time-outs, it was player-led. I don't really have to say much when they're the ones that are talking about it.

Roper saying, hey, keep driving in there, keep kicking it. Like, until you can find it, Markus, we'll keep carrying, we'll keep shouldering the load. We know we're going to get going at some point in time. But everybody keep fighting and keep staying together.

I think this whole season has been a learning experience for us, and now you're seeing that come out with who we are as a team in different moments throughout games.

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