

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

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

**Cal Bears**

**Coach Mark Madsen**

**Rytis Petraitis**

**Andrej Stojakovic**

Postgame Press Conference

California 82, Virginia Tech 73 (2OT)

MARK MADSEN: First of all, hats off to Virginia Tech. That's a very good basketball team. Virginia Tech and Mike Young came into Haas about two months ago and absolutely just dominated us, especially in the first half. And so give them a lot of credit.

I'm proud of our guys. I'm proud of our team. We have a team full of winners like Rytis Petraitis right here. That's six overtimes in the last two games, and our guys, they just never stopped fighting. Rytis makes so many winning plays on both sides of the ball. Everyone on our team made so many winning plays. I'm so proud of them. We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. Rytis, when you guys found out you were going into overtime again, what kind of mental blocks does that present to you guys knowing that the last game you played also went into multiple overtimes? And same thing when it came around to the second overtime, as well?**

RYTIS PETRAITIS: Yeah, I wouldn't really say a mental block. It's kind of like, man, five more minutes of free basketball. But when you get to five and six overtimes in the last two games, you're kind of like, let's just win in regulation. Let's get one of those wins.

I mean, after the first overtime, we were down. We had to tie it up for another overtime.

Honestly, we're just trying to do what we can to win, and everyone is tired out there. The other team is tired. We're



tired. But we come together in our huddles and we're like, man, we're going to come together and we're going to out -- basically, strong them, out-hustle them. That's what we were looking for.

**Q. Rytis, you made some remarkable offensive rebounds. Talk to us a little bit about what's going on in your mind, because you were coming from way up the end of the court into the paint late and then winning those rebounds?**

RYTIS PETRAITIS: Yeah, I feel like that's one of my strengths, reading the ball off the rim. My mom taught me when I was young, and she was really good at it when she was at Oregon State.

I want to do whatever I can to win, and that's one of the things that -- I'm going to try to get second-chance opportunities for guys like Andrej and Jeremiah who can kick out for a three. I'm never going to stop running, and that's something I pride myself on, and that's what I do to be on the court.

**Q. Andrej, what was this week like for you, coming out to Charlotte to play in the ACC Tournament and then obviously today a great performance for you yourself, but what's this whirlwind of a week been like?**

ANDREJ STOJAKOVIC: Yeah, it's definitely been a heck of an experience. The biggest thing is trying to stay resilient. We keep each other company on the off days. But it's been great. We've been on the road for 10 days, and I wouldn't change it for anything else. We get to play basketball. It's a win-or-go-home scenario. Just got to be out there and stay aggressive and have fun with the guys.

**Q. It's not an easy task to be a 15 seed and win in the first round of the ACC Tournament. For you guys to be able to do that, what kind of statement does that make, knowing that you guys are going to be playing a very familiar opponent tomorrow?**

ANDREJ STOJAKOVIC: Yeah, we're doing it for Cal. First year as ACC, we want to make some noise, and we're bringing the West Coast rival to an ACC Tournament for



the first time. So we're very excited to play against those guys. So yeah, taking it one day at a time.

RYTIS PETRAITIS: Yeah, I think that we didn't deserve a 15 seed. I thought we were better than the 15 seed. So this is our opportunity to prove ourselves and prove to other people. This is just the first step of it. We have another game tomorrow, and it's going to be a big one with a great team. And it's going to be our third time playing them, so it's going to be a big one. Looking forward to it.

**Q. Coach, what was it like for you bringing this team here from the West Coast all the way to Charlotte for the ACC Tournament?**

MARK MADSEN: It's a fantastic experience. We love the ACC. The travel in the ACC is tough. I hear Mick Cronin and Eric Musselman talking about the travel that they have in their conference, and I chuckle because it's nothing compared to what we're doing.

But what a great basketball conference. What a great sports conference in general, the ACC. We love it.

We've been on the road now -- let's do the math. Going on eight days. Maybe going on nine days. I've lost track. Our director of operations, Shasha, told us that we'll have laundry services out here.

But I'm just so proud of the way our guys fought. Andrej was up here a second ago. You talk about someone that's a true professional, someone that cares only about winning, that's Andrej Stojakovic. He was absolutely masterful late in the game tonight, composure, poise, making free throws, knocking in threes, but then also going down to the mid and short range and knocking them in. So I was really proud of him.

**Q. I've seen 18 ACC tournaments now. That seemed like one of the more rugged games I've seen. Did that help your team stay focused, or is it something that they seem to lift their go-for-and-get-it attitude?**

MARK MADSEN: I think a game like that just helps us stay focused. It was extremely rugged out there, very physical. Virginia Tech, their big man Poteat is physical, tough, punishing. But we have guys that are physical, tough and punishing.

We've had so many overtimes in the last week. Our guys are in rhythm. They might be a little tired, but our guys are in basketball rhythm. So we're in a great place to continue to make every effort to have great momentum going forward.

**Q. Wanted to ask about Mady's performance at center, double-double, and from my understanding he's been fasting this entire time; is that correct?**

MARK MADSEN: Yeah, Mady lives his life in strict accordance with the Islamic faith. He's very faithful, and he's very detailed with his fast, and we are supporting him 100 percent. It's almost as if his game has continued -- as he dials in on the spiritual and emotional side, it's almost like his game continues to just take off and take off. I don't know how he does it.

But he just -- everyone else on the court gets tired, and his energy just increases, increases, and increases. It shows his discipline, his will, who he is as a person, and how great of a basketball player Mady Sissoko is.

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