

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spectrum Center

Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets Damon Stoudamire Lance Terry Duncan Powell

Postgame Press Conference



thinking, we have a better chance, or is it like, he's down, let's go get it?

DAMON STOUDAMIRE: That's not a fair question for them. I'll answer that.

I think that him getting hurt was unfortunate. But at the same time, too, Duke is a good team, and they've got to figure out what's -- they probably will figure it out. They have a lot of talented guys.

But you never want to see anybody get hurt, and as we've navigated through a lot of things, yes, we might not be in the hunt to win a National Championship, but we had several injuries all season long, and that's a part of it.

You have to take a next-man approach. I don't think that us feeling like we can win because Cooper was or wasn't in the game, to me, that's kind of an indictment on my group. You know what I mean? We didn't win the game, and had we won the game, it's still unfortunate that he got injured, but at the same time, too, Duke has a roster full of really good players, and we've played them two times, and Knueppel has hurt us, probably more than Flagg.

I just think that that's something that happens, and it's part of the game. We don't want him to be injured because there's nothing good in anybody getting injured, and I can be the first to speak on that.

But I don't think these guys, because of who I am, it didn't matter, and had we won the game, they probably would have said they wanted to beat them with him on the floor.

I won't answer no more questions for them, but I'll take that one.

Q. Duncan, let's talk about your journey just a little bit. You dealt with a lot of injuries, went to A & T for a couple years and just to know your where your journey has taken you to have the performance that you had this year as well as tonight. How does that make you feel just to know about your perseverance?

DUNCAN POWELL: All glory to God, Jesus, King. But a

Duke 78, Georgia Tech 70

DAMON STOUDAMIRE: Proud of my guys. I thought we played hard. We fought through a lot of things all season long. We've had a lot of injuries and different things. It's part of it. It happens.

But they never made excuses, and I'm happy and proud to have coached them based on that. They fought, they fought, they fought, they fought, and just proud of them.

Today's game, I thought the last four minutes from probably the first four minutes of the second half, the game got away from us a little bit, and when I say that, Duke is a team of runs. I thought they did a good job overall collectively in the game withstanding those runs, but those two runs hurt us. We just couldn't weather the storm.

With us not scoring, being able to stop the bleeding during that drought, quite frankly, I'm going to date -- these guys wouldn't even know, and if you're old enough to remember, it reminded me when I played for the Portland Trail Blazers and the Lakers beat us in Game 7 in 2000. And all we had to do was score one bucket maybe early and break that run, but it ended up being 18-0 and Kobe throws a lob to Shaq, and all of rest of it and the rest is history. We was fighting uphill from that, to be honest with you.

But these guys right here, and the rest of the guys in the locker room, they did a hell of a job of fighting. We don't quit. I'm proud of them for that.

Q. Inasmuch as you're trying to play your own game, when you see Cooper Flagg going down, are you

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lot of people, they didn't believe in me, leaving A & T, my coach got fired, leaving Sac State last year. So man, to my right, is just big. Nobody really wanted me in the portal. A lot of people were talking down on me, this, that, this, that. I'm just thankful to have an opportunity to be coached by him, guys like Lance and the rest of my guys.

It's just a lot. Trust in God, put the work in, and it'll pay off. You can't really worry about anything else.

Q. Lance, this was your last game at Georgia Tech. Is the gravity of that hitting you, and do you take a little satisfaction that you guys took Duke to the wire?

LANCE TERRY: You know, I don't really take any satisfaction when it comes to losing, regardless if it was the last game or not, regardless if Duke was the No. 1 team or not. There's no real satisfaction there with going out with a loss.

But I'm happy that we did fight, and we brought a lot of effort tonight.

Q. Lance, can you talk on what Coach was speaking about, a lot of guys could have thrown in the towel this year, but the pride you have for your teammates to continue to fight and persevere this season?

LANCE TERRY: Coach also brought a lot. We have had a lot of injuries this year, a lot of setbacks. But a lot of us fought this year, regardless of what was going on, whether it was physical or mental. Just proud of our team, just how we fought and everything, and that's a lot of credit to Coach, as well. He pulled that energy and pulled that grit out of us.

Q. Both of y'all started at smaller programs here in North Carolina. A lot of college basketball players are making decisions over the next few weeks. What can you say about what's better, what's different, given your time at Georgia Tech and playing in a prominent league like the ACC?

DUNCAN POWELL: You know, it's really not even necessarily the conference or anything like that. It's really the program you go to and the culture you have there. Like I said, we've got Coach Damon, a really pro-oriented staff. So just waking up every day, working hard and being pushed by people who have done what you want to do is a really big difference.

LANCE TERRY: Piggybacking off what Duncan said, going to a program that you trust, a coaching staff that you trust really, and just being connected with people that you know are going to demand the most out of you. We're

fortunate enough to have that here.

Q. Duncan and Lance, you were both on the floor for Duke's 12-0 run at the beginning of the second half, 14-0 if you include the final minute of the first half. What were you seeing from them?

DUNCAN POWELL: I mean, they were just hitting shots. It's basketball. We started off -- I don't even remember what the run was, but it's basketball. It's a game of runs, so sometimes they're going to get a high. We may miss assignments, this or that may happen, but that's really all it was, just basketball at the end of the day.

Q. Coach, there was a time not too long ago in college basketball where you'd be able to say today, hey, my second year was better than my first year. We beat Louisville, we beat Clemson, we just pushed Duke to the wire, and you have X number of guys who are underclassmen. Is all that out the window because of the unpredictability in the portal and the NIL, and can you still sit here somewhat like the old days and say, hey, I feel good about year three because of what just happened in year two?

DAMON STODAMIRE: It just depends on how you look at it. I choose to look at it as more positives. My approach probably is -- I'm not going to say it's different than everybody's, but everybody has a formula, a system, and what they have intact. I think that regardless of the portal, it's free agency, so that's how I look at it.

You've got to try to retain the players you want in your locker room. A lot of that process started months ago. You've got to make sure that that's intact because it's like being in New York City; you've got that black market, so there's a lot of tampering going on, so you have to be careful, and you've got to make sure that you're taking care of home.

From there then, you put on your bulletin board of what your needs are, and then you just go from there.

You have to build -- in a perfect world, you don't want to start from scratch every year. That's hard. But if you've got a base, you keep those guys, and I'd say the biggest thing is you can't never get too high and too low on the players that you have, and you've got to make sure that you're not making a hasty decision if you're getting somebody, because a lot of times in this speed-dating process of the transfer portal, you can land on the wrong guy, and the wrong guy can hurt your program and set your program back, and that's just as much detrimental as anything else.



Q. Damon, has the last six weeks kind of been your vision of what Georgia Tech basketball can be instead of what we've seen for the first year and whatever, like the way they play, the way your team attacks it? Is that what the vision for Georgia Tech is?

DAMON STOU DAMIRE: Yeah, there's a lot of times in coaching you change and you do different things. You adapt to what you have. I think that's a part of coaching. Stubborn coaching is not adapting to what you have.

Over the course of the last two, three months, I think this is more what I'm used to. It won't be any looking back for me. I think where I came from and how I was taught, the game was way different than how the game is taught in 2025.

But I think there's a lot of parallels, and you've got to teach. You've got to be a teacher, and then you've got to show players that you care about them, because if you don't show them you care about them, they're not going to let you coach them. So that's what you see a lot of right now.

Those are the two most important things. We did a lot of that. In a crazy type of way, the injuries that we had allowed us to kind of do a lot more of the teaching part, because as you go and you start doing different things, you start to skip steps, but it's a process regardless.

That's been big for me as a head coach. This probably has been one of the funner years that I've had based on all the injuries that we had because you're trying to find a different way to win a game each and every game.

And this added theory, I never really let the trainer tell me about guys unless they were going to play because it just messes you up as a coach when you're asking every day and you just don't know. It kind of puts you in a mindset of -- quite frankly, you get mad at the player at times and it's not their fault.

You roll with your punches and you allow them to do the things they need to do to get back on the floor.

This was a great year from that standpoint. I learned patience. I learned perseverance, and I learned a lot more about each individual on my team and learned a lot more about each coach and how I want to move forward going into year three of being at Tech.

Q. You guys held Duke to just 26 points in the first half, and most of that was with Cooper Flagg. What worked defensively in terms of your game plan in that half?

DAMON STOU DAMIRE: Being physical. We wanted to be really physical. We watched a lot of -- Clemson, as a staff, we watched the Clemson game, and Clemson did a good job of being really physical with them, trying to make it hard on catches, entry passes and all the things of that nature.

Those are the things that we want to do, and we were able to do that for that first half. We held up for the first 17 and a half minutes or so, and that was pretty much it.

The one thing about it is, Duke is not trying to trick you. It's been like that since the beginning of time. They're not trying to trick you. They're not doing any gimmicks. It's pretty straightforward. I thought our guys did a good job of handling that for the first 17 and a half minutes.

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