

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spectrum Center

**North Carolina Tar Heels**

**Hubert Davis**

**Ven-Allen Lubin**

Postgame Press Conference



North Carolina 68, Wake Forest 59

**Q. Hubert, as your team was facing so much physicality and playing with foul trouble, what was your message to them?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, just that we're built for that. In the locker room, just telling them, so proud of how they've stayed connected, stayed the course through ups and downs, perseverance.

There's a level of toughness here that has been developed over the last seven or eight months that we've been together, and we were in these type of situations earlier in the year and weren't able to get stronger. We were able to do it today.

As a coach, to be able to see these guys perform under pressure and do it together is one of the most amazing things that you can see as a coach.

**Q. Obviously, tied with three and a half minutes to go. How much do you attribute those last three and a half minutes to the growth of the team and how much do you contribute to the banked experiences that you guys had in those late-game situations through the first couple of months?**

HUBERT DAVIS: I think both. I think being in that situation so many times, you can draw upon those experiences where it worked out and where it didn't. So being in that type of situation, these guys now step towards it, as opposed to standing still or maybe taking a step back.

Sometimes, still, the outcome doesn't go your way, but down in the stretch, it's the discipline and details to be able

to execute on both ends of the floor. We didn't turn the ball over, we executed, we scored, and on the defensive end, we defended, didn't foul and didn't give them second-chance opportunities. That's the game. That's a game earlier in the year that we lost, and I think it shows tremendous growth in where we are right now.

**Q. Ven-Allen, you had those two huge dunks in under two minutes at the end of the game. What were the emotions like for you as you practical put the dagger in?**

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: It was just electric, and making plays like that, just knowing that coach always emphasizes going to the offensive boards, getting us second-chance opportunities. Just the way I wanted to attack the rim and give our team a chance to give us a win, it was very important that I just had to make those two dunks.

**Q. Ven-Allen, you had 10 points, 13 rebounds, three, four blocks, and a lot of what you did came after you got your fourth foul. Was there any increased emotion? What was your mindset after you got the fourth foul, and Wake Forest went with three bigs at the end. How did you get by them for those two rebound slams?**

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: Yeah, it was obviously frustrating getting those four fouls and just know that you had to play smart and just not try to play too physical to get your fifth one and to sit out the game. We just know it was really important for me to play smart and just stay in it. So I just made sure I stayed present and just tried to do whatever I can.

**Q. When you see your head coach get a technical foul late in the second half --**

HUBERT DAVIS: I didn't get it. That wasn't me.

**Q. Sorry, the bench.**

HUBERT DAVIS: I got one against Michigan State.

**Q. My bad, Hubert. When you see the bench get a**



**technical foul, what kind of effect did that have on the team? Did that catalyze you to make that big late game run to put the game away?**

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: That's just part of the game. Those type of situations happen. The five guys on the court just kind of had to stay together, just know no matter what happens, let's just finish out the game the right way, and make the right plays and offensive in side, and get some stops and defense, and then that would really determine the game.

**Q. Ven-Allen, obviously, there's a lot of talk, bubble watch, and how much do you talk about that as players, and did you talk about it coming into this tournament that you might have to get to the semifinals, and do you think you're in?**

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: No, there's not really much talk, at least from me and from the guys. It's really just taking it one game at a time, just facing our opponent, know who's right in front of us and just kind of keeping our head forward, staying grounded and just knowing that we've got another opportunity tomorrow, and so that's our main focus right now.

**Q. Ven-Allen, as a big guy playing inside, do you like a physical game like that, or is it hard to do your job when it's that physical?**

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: I mean, as long as it's physical and fair, I can rock with it. But sometimes that doesn't go our way, sometimes it does. It's just playing through the physicality and the toughness, and really just showing how tough we really are, and I believe we showed that.

**Q. Ven-Allen, you mentioned, of course, being focused on the team that's right in front of you and the path championship will go through Duke. What are your thoughts on having to face them again?**

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: Just knowing that we want that. We want that competition. We want our revenge. And so just give us another opportunity to get a win against them, and just to play a really great team, just to give us a chance to play in the championship.

**Q. Ven-Allen, when RJ rolls his ankle and he insists on staying in the game and then, ultimately, makes a couple plays down the stretch, what does that mean to you as a teammate?**

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: That just shows the type of player he is and the type of person he is, the toughness that he goes through, through adversity, and just to play through it. It's

not easy playing on a hurt ankle or just being injured, but just the toughness that he showed on the court just to be able to stay in and play through it, it really just shows the type of player that he is, and that's something that we really need, a player like that.

**Q. Ven-Allen, you had those 13 rebounds during the game. What was kind of the strategy to keep a keen eye on the ball?**

VEN-ALLEN LUBIN: Just going. Really just trying to get inside position and really just tracking the ball in the air. Just really important for me to get those second-chance opportunities on the offensive side and on the defensive end, just limit them to one shot. It was really important for me to insert myself in the paint and just grab those balls.

**Q. Hubert, I know you addressed this a little on Saturday, but could you address the urgency that RJ seems to be playing with right now and how that kind of carries over to everybody else?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, yeah, there is urgency because he has no more eligibility left. But there's also a sense of calmness and steadiness that this team has needed all year long, especially in situations like late game. Having a guy like RJ that's been there, done that before and being able to draw on his experience and how calm he is and be able to execute under pressure, just helps out our team so much.

You have to have people, you have to have leaders like that on the team, and I can't think of anyone better than that, than RJ.

**Q. What can you say about the performances of J-Wit and Ven? They both had their shooting struggles early on in the game, but they both made critical plays throughout the game without scoring, and also late in the game in that run. What can you say about their performance in the front court?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Yeah, that's one of the things that we talk about is there's so many ways that you can be impactful out there on the floor to help your team win. Winning plays is not just scoring. There's rebounding, talking on defense, diving on loose balls, getting steals, deflections, making a free throw. All those different types of things, being able to execute.

So again, when you have -- you know, Ven is a junior, J-Wit is a fifth-year senior, that type of experience, they've been in tight situations before and feel comfortable about stepping up and making plays in those situations.

**Q. Coach, Duke and UNC facing once again this year. Three times now, they've faced you guys, have faced each other a lot in the ACC Tournament in the past. Do you want to touch up on the history of that, or is it just another game for y'all?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, I mean, gosh, I don't think -- we haven't played them since I've been head coach in the ACC. I don't think so.

But playing Duke is an opportunity to play against the No. 1 team in the country. Obviously, they're playing extremely well. We just played them last week on senior night on our home floor, and we're excited about the opportunity to be able to compete against them tomorrow night at 7:00.

**Q. This league obviously in the past has gotten so many teams in the NCAA Tournament. Going above this .500 in this league would put you in automatically. What has changed and what can this league do to make sure it gets five, six, seven, maybe eight or nine teams in the tournament?**

HUBERT DAVIS: Well, I grew up right outside of Washington, D.C. I was born in Winston-Salem, and I grew up with the ACC Tournament and the ACC conference. I know that I'm biased, but I think it's the best conference in college basketball.

You compete against Wake Forest and Syracuse and Louisville and Boston College every night, come firsthand and see the competition and how, not only does this conference produce unbelievable teams, but unbelievable teams that do great in the tournament that have incredible players that go to the next level and have outstanding NBA careers, as well.

**Q. With that said, do you feel like this team has earned a spot in the NCAA Tournament, especially after this win?**

HUBERT DAVIS: You know, the thing that I always focus on is what is real, and so you asked a similar question to Ven, and my communication with them in regards to the NCAA Tournament has been zero. What is real for us is our improvement as a team. What is real for us has been the opponent right in front of us.

Right now, it's playing Duke tomorrow at 7:00. Those are the things that we're focused on. I've always believed this from Coach Smith and Coach Guthridge, if you just focus on the preparation, the process and your play, everything else will take care of itself. That's where our focus is on, and I feel like we're getting better, and I feel like we're improving.

**Q. You held Wake Forest to 34 percent shooting, 2 of 22 from three. There were a lot of long possessions, including a number of shot-clock violations. How satisfying was it for you as their coach to see those long possessions and see wake really struggle to get a shot?**

HUBERT DAVIS: I liked the long possessions, I don't know if they liked the long possessions. One of the things that we always say to each other for everything, but specifically from a defensive standpoint is "whatever it takes."

I can't tell you, just the communication in the huddle, now we've got multiple players in the huddle saying, "whatever it takes, whatever it takes, just to get a stop, whatever it takes to finish the possession with a box-out rebound, whatever it takes to defend without fouling." Now it's going from player to player, and they have really bought into it, whether it's playing defense for five seconds or 30 seconds. Whatever it takes. Let's see if we can get a stop because if we can get a stop and a rebound, then we get it going in transition where we've been consistently good all season.

**Q. The first four minutes of each half are two of the segments that are probably most important in your game. You got off to a slow start but came out of the locker room after halftime and it seemed to set the tone for the rest of the game for you.**

HUBERT DAVIS: Yeah, we did. I talked to the team throughout the whole game and kind of chopped up the game in four-minute parts. At the beginning of the game, hey, let's make this the best four minutes. Let's get multiple stops to start the game, and at the 12:00, 8:00-minute mark, let's make this the best four minutes we've played all game. Coming out of half, let's set the tone for the first four minutes. It starts with defense, rebounding, taking care of the basketball.

Then the last four or three minutes, hey, here we are, let's tighten the screws on the discipline and details and let's execute on both ends of the floor.

That's communication that each of us as a team has consistently throughout the game, not just at the beginning of the game or the beginning of the second half.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

