

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spectrum Center

**Florida State Seminoles**  
**Coach Luke Loucks**  
**Robert McCray V**

**Chauncey Wiggins**

Postgame Press Conference



Earlier we struggled. I think we lost 10 out of 12 at one point, and our defense was atrocious. It looked like it did in the second half of this game, giving up 57 points.

But when we guard and we rebound and we play together, I would take these guys over anyone in the country. And I know that's a bold statement, but we're standing by it.

We've played tournament team after tournament team, and to me, if we're not winning these games, it goes down to the last possession. I told these guys before the game, I would sign up to coach this crew for the rest of my career because at the lowest point, when the team could have and probably should have splintered, these guys, starting with the two next to me, but so many guys in the locker room, came together when human nature would tell you that this isn't working.

You can start blaming each other, having excuses. They had no excuses. They showed up every day. They allowed us to coach them hard, probably harder than some of them have ever been coached in their life, and it turned around our season.

I told them right before the game, if you're going to be selfish about one thing, you should be selfish about winning games because I want to be greedy, I don't want the season to end. I just want to keep winning games, and if we play the way we've been playing, I think that's a really good possibility.

**Q. Robert, 30 points today. What was working for you from the field today?**

ROBERT McCRAY V: Just taking what the defense was giving me. My teammates finding me and Coach trusting me.

**Q. Robert, you guys are one of the hottest teams in the conference, along with Duke, and you guys are going to play Duke next. What are you looking forward to in that matchup?**

ROBERT McCRAY V: Just another opportunity for us.

Florida State 95, California 89

LUKE LOUCKS: Before we talk about the game, I want to bring up something. My wife is on this trip. All three of our kids are at home hopefully in bed with her parents. She invited all the other wives of the coaching staff and convinced them to keep their kids at home, too.

Not all of them could do it with the quick turnaround, but four of them showed up. And it happened to be one of their birthdays -- Kristin O'Donnell, our strength coach's wife, it was her birthday two nights ago. And I'm telling you guys this, I'm pretty motivated to continue to win games and I know these guys are next to me.

The wives are more motivated than anyone because every game we win, it extends their vacation with no kids. So I saw them a couple times during the game just cheering their tails off behind our bench.

A double win. I give bonus points for the wives being here and enjoying Charlotte, and obviously now we get to celebrate this win for a few minutes before we move on to Duke.

Chuck Walsh, our SID, told me walking up here that this was the most points we've ever scored in the ACC Tournament. That's pretty impressive to do when the lights are the brightest. Our offense has been up and down all year. To me our season turned around with our defense. I think we've won 12 out of our last 15. I might be off by a game or two, but our defense has been top 10 in the country over that stretch.

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We've been waiting for this one. As you know, we played them at home, lost by four. But yeah, we've been waiting for this, and we're ready.

**Q. Robert, you outscored them 20-9 off turnovers. How important is it to win those battles, and what's it going to take to do it again tomorrow against the No. 1 team in the country?**

ROBERT McCRAY V: Like Coach said, our season has turned around because of our defense. We've been real focused on defense.

**Q. On this team you probably have some of the most ACC Tournament experience, especially Chauncey. Has that been something you guys have given out to your teammates who haven't really been here?**

CHAUNCEY WIGGINS: I would say yeah. I just tried to tell them my experiences and stories of the ups and downs of how I got there and all that. I'm just trying to tell them every day just stay connected and let's go win this thing.

**Q. I know it's been a while since y'all played Duke, but what do you recall about that game? Because there's only two teams in this whole league who played Duke down to the wire and y'all were one of those two.**

CHAUNCEY WIGGINS: I would say I remember them hitting a good amount of three-pointers. It's always going to be a battle on the glass. Really just our defense just has to be connected.

ROBERT McCRAY V: Like he said, we've just got to be disciplined. We've got to know the scout. They hit a lot of threes.

**Q. Your team went almost, I believe, over 27 minutes without committing a single turnover. What was working for you guys in terms of being able to maintain ball control?**

ROBERT McCRAY V: Just keeping it simple, knowing the game plan, knowing what they're going to do on defense, and that limited our turnovers.

CHAUNCEY WIGGINS: Yeah, I would say the coaches set us up well in practice. We knew they were doing a type of ball coverage and we knew that we had to make plays at the end of the day.

**Q. I'm sure you know this, but today is the 14th anniversary of the 2012 ACC Tournament championship game where you guys won your first conference tournament title in program history. How**

**surreal is it that it's been 14 years already? And also, how surreal is it that you're coaching for your alma mater, you played in it, now you're the head coach for your alma mater in the ACC Tournament?**

LUKE LOUCKS: Yeah, it is surreal. Time certainly flies. I feel like I'm young, but 14 years is a long time ago.

Bringing my wife back into it -- I'm not going to give her any more shout-outs after this -- but we try to have coffee not quite every morning, but almost every morning. Otherwise you're just two ships passing in the night. It was about seven or eight days ago, leading into one of our last two games -- we try not to talk about basketball, we try not to talk about the team -- we're talking about schedules, what we're doing, what the plans are. But she brought up how are the guys doing down the stretch. She asked me if we think we're ready for the tournament.

I said, well, yeah, we're in a pretty good stretch. I certainly feel like if we're playing the way we're playing right now, we can -- just what I just said, we can stick with anyone.

She said, do you think they understand the significance of this tournament and how life-changing it can be. It caught me off guard a little bit because I try not to put too much pressure on our guys. Every game is the same, it doesn't matter.

But I brought this story to our team, and I told them, guys, you can change your life in about a five-day span. If you don't believe me, I'm living proof of it. I think I'm a pretty good coach. I've liked what I have done so far, I learned from some of the greatest coaches in the NBA. I was on a good path. But I'm not the head coach at Florida State had we not won an ACC title. It's as simple as that.

Maybe eventually I'd get there to be a head coach, but at 35, I think I'm the youngest head coach in Power Four. That only happens when you perform when the lights are absolutely the brightest.

So I think they understood the message of you can get dividends for the next 10, 20, 30 years off of one week of work. That's not pressure, that's just such a huge privilege that you get to go perform on the highest stage with the stakes being the highest.

**Q. You made a lot of positive comments about Seminole Sound on Saturday. How big was it to have that level of energy and support from them today, especially away from home?**

LUKE LOUCKS: Yeah, they're incredible. David Plack, he's one of the best guys. He's done such an incredible



job. I remember after winning the title, getting on the drums like an idiot. But they do such a good job helping us.

We normally don't get them in away arenas at neutral sites, but even leaving the hotel, they lined up and gave an exit to the buses. It was awesome.

They do such a good job, rain or shine, they're out there with a ton of energy making sure that we're ready to play.

**Q. At the game in Blacksburg, seemed like there was a second half surge that kind of carried your team past Virginia Tech. How do you feel like that game set you up to be able to carry this moment now forward?**

LUKE LOUCKS: Yeah, we've won and lost games in every fashion you could. And in our losses, we've had terrible losses, we've lost by 44 and we've lost by double digits. We've lost close, we've won close, we've won big. So all of these games are a little bit differently.

That half I felt like our offense really clicked. Obviously Martin Somerville had a huge game that night. But our shots were falling. When we're guarding and our shots are falling, it's a pretty simple formula. If you can stop the other team and score the ball, good things are going to happen.

But certainly we've had our struggles where we couldn't make shots, and we've had our embarrassments where we couldn't make shots and we couldn't guard. Those are those disastrous moments that hopefully we've learned from. And now I feel like we're playing the level of defense that we need to to, at minimum, be in every game. Now when the shots fall, you have a first half like tonight where we get those double-digit leads.

**Q. When you have success as a player -- not every player translates to being a head coach, but you're in the top eight in the ACC, you're moving forward to the quarters and more work to be done. What can you say about that elevation from player to coach and what you've learned in this season so far?**

LUKE LOUCKS: That's a good question. When you play -- and I didn't play at the highest level, but I played at an okay level -- to get into coaching, you have to have a ton of humility. Because it's a wake-up call, to all of a sudden go from -- you're working four, maybe five, six hours a day on your craft and on your body and lifting weights to now you're putting in 10, 12, 14, 16-hour days and you have to start at the absolute bottom.

That to me, learning how to be an intern with the Golden

State Warriors of, like, if coffee needs to be made, if you need to show up at 7:00 or if you need to come back at 2:00 a.m. to rebound for someone, if you need to cut film for your opponent's scouts until 3:00 a.m., whatever needs to be done, someone has to do it. Usually when you're on the bottom, you're the one that has to do it.

I think that was really good for me, and I think it's really good for all players who want to get into coaching to understand that you don't just show up and play the games. There's a lot of thought, there's a lot of preparation, there's a lot of film, there's a lot of analytics. There's so much that goes into playing a game before the game.

Again, a huge shout out to obviously Steve Kerr but especially Mike Brown who took me under his wing those early years in Golden State. Because he started in the exact same spot as an intern in the film room, and he really showed me how to teach and how to coach and how to work and how to communicate.

In my nine years in the NBA, we worked eight of them together. I would not be sitting here without Mike Brown. Player or not, doesn't matter. I would not be the coach I am today, and I still have a long way to go. I'm learning every single day from my mistakes.

But those guys and a slew of other coaches that helped me along the way really taught me how to coach. You think you know the game as a player, you really don't until you get in those film rooms and really start studying the game. There's a whole 'nother side of basketball and coaching. I hope that answers your question.

**Q. It is extremely rare to go from 7-11, your record at one point, to 11 out of 14 victories. Take us behind the curtain as much as you can. How did the leadership you described lead to the improved defense that you described, and what weight do you put on choosing to play Florida, choosing to play Houston, choosing to play A&M and that difficult pre-conference schedule?**

LUKE LOUCKS: Yeah, I enjoy playing against the best. Obviously we lost all those games you mentioned, but at minimum, it made us tougher and made us understand how far we had to go. There was some design to the schedule we scheduled. Playing Houston in Houston is very difficult. Obviously we play Florida every year. But playing some of those games, Texas A&M, another top-tier team in the SEC, those are tough matchups.

To me it did two things for us. It made us realize how far we have to go, and, number two, it allowed our coaching staff to coach the mess out of these kids. There's a reason

we're pushing you guys so hard every day. To go from 7-11 to -- I don't know what our record is right now. I think you mentioned it. But to win that many games out of our last 14 games to me is a credit to our coaching staff for, number one -- and guys, we have three former head coaches on our staff.

I think all three of those guys deserve to get jobs immediately because they're unbelievable coaches. We've probably got four or five other younger guys that will eventually be head coaches. I truly think we're going to look back on this staff, like holy smokes, there is six head coaches on that staff. That's why we're successful. It has nothing to do with me.

That and the players, the character they have, again, to not splinter in the toughest moments. To me your character always comes out in the hardest of times, and when you're 7-11 and you've lost five in a row, most teams let go of the rope. And these guys did not let go of the rope. Not one day I can't remember where they didn't show up and at least try to give everything they have.

**Q. You talked about how your team would be one that you would choose every single time, and I'm sure that a guy like Robert has to be a big piece of that. Speak to the leadership that he's built in this group, how it's spilled over to the other guys, and like you mentioned, how to get through those toughest moments and lead doing so.**

LUKE LOUCKS: Yeah, you could tell from the press conference, Rob is a man of few words, but he leads by example. He shows up every day and works his tail off. I've said this over the past few weeks, I would take Rob McCray over every point guard in this league. That's no disrespect; there's a lot of good lead guards in this league right now, a lot of pros.

But Rob consistently has shown up, even in his worst moments, with a tenacity to him. When you're the, quote-unquote, best player of a team, if you're not also one of the hardest workers, that's problematic. To me, Rob shows up every day with a hardhat on.

Listen, guys, however this plays out, obviously I'm hopeful that we can keep this run going and beat Duke and then we'll see between Wake and Clemson and Carolina. Can't get too far ahead, but I'm hoping we can win an ACC title.

I don't get into all the metrics and the bubble. I don't know if there's 25 better teams playing than Florida State right now. I'm not trying to sell you guys that we need an at-large bid because we shot ourselves in the foot too much earlier in the season. But the way we scrap and the

way we line up and guard, doesn't matter who we're playing. And the way we can put the ball in the basket, I certainly hope we get a crack at the NCAA Tournament, and I know we still have work to do to get there.

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