

January 14, 2013



An interview with:

WAKE FOREST COACH BZDELIK

Q. I wonder if it's possible to describe what CJ Harris means to your team? Not only the way he's playing, but also in the things he does from a leadership standpoint?

COACH BZDELIK: Well, that's a loaded question. We can spend a lot of time talking about all the things he does. Yes, first of all, first and foremost, leadership. He has really guided these young players on our basketball team to show them what a work ethic is at this level, to show them what a commitment is at this level.

He's constantly in the gym. He's a gym rat. Players follow him: His energy, his leadership, his work ethic, his coachability. All of those things are very contagious. It's really just brought these young players further along in their development.

From a basketball standpoint, obviously, he's having a terrific year. Shooting the basketball, making timely shots. The other day against Boston College -- so many times we've gotten off to slow starts. I think our young players are like deer in head lights, and trying to adjust to whether it be a style or an environment or whatever, and CJ has just carried us and given our young players confidence early on in the game. That was very evident against Boston College the other day. So he's doing a terrific job.

Q. He's a low-key person by nature, but being a senior and having been a point guard for much of his career, he can be vocal when needed. How has that manifest both in practice and during games?

COACH BZDELIK: Well, leadership comes in many ways. Obviously there is the kind of leadership you want and the kind of leadership you don't want. CJ is who he is. His personality

by nature, he's a quiet young man, but very driven when he's on the basketball court, very driven in his studies, very driven in the way he conducts himself the proper way. He takes pride in that.

When he does speak, because it's not often, our players all of a sudden their ears perk up and they listen and focus in on him.

There was a point in practice yesterday when CJ came up to me and we talked about something that was a very valid point that he brought up. And I said you know something? I want you to teach these young guys that. Here, you tell them. You teach them.

I stopped -- literally stopped practice and had him go through something that needed an adjustment. That's when you start having success is when it becomes not just coach directed all the time, but player directed. CJ's done a great job of that.

Q. Almost the same topic with Travis. What's Travis's role, and how has his development gone for you?

COACH BZDELIK: Well, Travis' development is a work in progress. He's learning. Early on in his career, by default, he was given a lot of playing time. He gained a lot of experience. His leadership development now coupled with the maturity of his game, we're seeing the fruits of all of this experience and the fruits of his labor as well.

He's learning how to be a leader. You talk about leadership, but how do you learn to be a leader and what is leadership about? That's a work in progress as well. Not just your development as a basketball player, but also your development as a leader and understanding just exactly how to lead in the proper way.

It's not just saying things. It's how to say things, when to say things and what to say. But Travis is learning. He's improving daily. He's coming off a really good start here to the ACC season. He needs to continue to work and develop as everyone does.

We're really proud of him. We're asking him to play a couple of positions. Sometimes we

go big. Sometimes we go small. We use him throughout the game that way, moving him back and forth between the small forward and power forward spots. And he's adjusting to that as well. So really proud of him, and he, like CJ, is a terrific young man doing all the right things to help this young basketball team.

Q. Are you guys doing anything better or differently than you had at the beginning of the season?

COACH BZDELIK: We're one of the youngest teams in the country. We start three freshmen. We play a challenging non-conference schedule with two Big East teams in UCONN and Seton Hall and Richmond on the road. I just think that our young players are gaining confidence and understanding and adjusting to the speed of the game, the physicality of the game, the quickness of the game, the intensity needed to win and strive to win every possession.

Our older players, CJ and Travis, our only two upperclassmen, are adjusting to the freshmen. Our defense has improved. Our offense has improved because it takes all five guys on defense and on offense to make a play work. There's got to be a trust, and there's got to be everybody doing their job. We're just so young. People might perceive that as an excuse. I get that. I understand that, but it's a reality. It's that simple.

Both our point guards are freshmen, both our big guys are freshmen so you talk about the head and tail being extremely young. So it's a work in progress, and it's some of those games that we lost early on in non-conference schedule where we lost by six and by four, and by two, I think if we rewound that and played it again, there might be and probably would be different outcomes.

But we've got a stretch ahead of us that's very challenging. We've got a string of road games coupled with the fact that our only two home games are N.C. State and Duke.

We need to just focus in on continuing to get better and that's our only focus.

Q. I wanted to ask something along those lines. Both games last week essentially came down to the wire, and you guys made the plays at the end which I know you had a chance to do a couple of times earlier and weren't able to do. Was there anything specific in the game that you guys did better in those two games than you had done earlier this year?

COACH BZDELIK: Yes. First of all, just the experience of it all. We lost versus Seton Hall. We had I think a 13, 14-point lead with about 11 minutes to go, and we just -- I think we kind of kept looking at the clock, being non-aggressive. Saying let's just let the clock expire, the other team's desperate. We broke down defensively.

I just think that all those kinds of experiences and going through the film and working more on time and score enabled us to have a better understanding of what to do in clutch situations. So you just grow as a basketball team.

Of course, young players that just needed a good, close win to gain confidence as well. I really think starting off at Cameron in our first ACC game set up a benchmark for our players to understand how intense this level is in this conference, and they understood that right out of the gate. I think that helped as well.

So I think it's just a young team that's continuing to get better, stronger, maturing, gaining experience and confidence. I think all of those things are just coming together.

Of course the understanding, too, as young players that college basketball games are decided, usually, by one or two possessions. And that gives credence to how important every possession is and they're understanding that.

VIRGINIA TECH COACH JOHNSON

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I just think that our Hokies, the young group that we have, we have an opportunity to go down and get our first ACC win on the road was a tremendous confidence booster for this team, and a definite reward for how hard these guys have been working after the previous struggles that we've had.

We're happy that we got the road win, but we've got a lot of work to do to continue to get better.

Q. I'm curious, with a full week to get ready considering Robert coming off the flu and how thin you are, how much does it help to have a little extra time right here?

COACH JOHNSON: Oh, I mean, it helps tremendously. We started practice or had film this morning at 10:00 and go down to practice. And we've got nicks and bruises again. A foot was

stepped on in the game. Got a guy throwing up down there. So I'm down two in practice today already.

But we have a week to get prepared here and try to get healthy. But this sickness and flu that's running around hit us again.

Q. Who didn't practice today?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, everybody's dressed out, but everybody's not full tilt. Everybody's dressed out, but everybody's not full tilt.

Q. Is there any update on Marshall? I know he had hoped to be back by this coming weekend. You seemed like you thought that was a long shot. Is there an update?

COACH JOHNSON: No, he's not. I still take it that it's a long shot. He won't be with us this week. Again, it's week to week.

They've looked at his X-rays. Everything looked good and the healing process is going good, but he's not ready to play.

Q. Do you have a new timetable for Marshall? If not this week, could it be next week?

COACH JOHNSON: They're just saying it's still indefinite. Again, they took a look at the X-rays and everything looks like it's healing like it's supposed to. But they still haven't given me any timetable.

Q. In terms of your zone defense, how encouraging was that coming off that game on Saturday? Is that going to be the new defensive model the rest of the way?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think my defense overall, I think, was impressive to me on the road. We were able to get stops and able to limit them to a number of offensive rebounds. Our man and our zone, but the zone definitely gives us an opportunity to mix it up a little bit, a change of pace, change of tempo gives us a different look out there on the floor with certain lineups that we play.

So it's certainly something that we're going to continue to work on, and we've got to get better at it. We'll definitely see that at some point throughout the season.

Q. Referenced Robert Brown a little earlier and his health issues. Just how big was it to see him? He had been struggling so much with his shot to hit those two in overtime in

such critical spots? What does that do for him moving forward?

COACH JOHNSON: Those were huge plays for our team. You know, the fact that he was able to play after being sent home one day with over a hundred degree temperature and then not practice for two days. I didn't know how much we were going to get out of him anyway. And then 30 seconds into the game, I've got to go to him because of an injury to Marquis Rankin.

For him to gut it out and play the way he did, it says a lot for the young man. Having him on the floor gives us another ball handler and a guy that can attack the basket. He's a threat scorer. Even though his shot is not going down for him. As you saw in overtime, he is a threat to score the basketball. Those are big plays he made, even the assists.

When he's on the floor, he's getting three and four assists and making guys around him better, even when his shot is not going down. So to have him out on the floor and have him back is big for this team.

Q. He started off the season so well from a shooting standpoint, and then hit that slump. How do you, as a coach, deal with a player during a slump like that? Is it just keep shooting? Do you look at mechanics? What was your process with Robert?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think one thing I've done with Robert and all of these guys is just have them keep shooting. Come in and continue to get shots in the gym and work on the game outside of practice. But in the game, if the shot is there, it's a shot that you work on and you practice, and that I think you can hit. Go ahead and take the shot.

I think that instead of just settling for the three I think in the Georgia Tech game, he was able to attack the rim a little more. I'd like to see him do that more as opposed to settle for Threet-point shot. Because his game is too diverse to be a three-point shooter.

Q. A follow-up to the zone defense. Was that -- I know you used it in the past under Coach Greenberg a couple years ago. But was that a hard decision to make? I know you came into the season and just came into the job wanting to play defense a certain way. I've seen for a few games it didn't work out. What

went into the decision-making process to move toward the zone for that game?

COACH JOHNSON: We've been practicing and working on our zone and we played a few possessions, as you know, during the regular season already. It's just the defense that we have. We've got to continue to work on. Depending on personnel of us, depending on personnel of the opponent and how much we're going to play it.

You get into ACC play, and this is such tremendous players and diverse players and well-rounded players, that you've got guys that can shoot at every position and handle the ball.

So I think it's just going to depend on our opponent and the lineup that I have on the floor. Again, with the short bench, I've got to play the way we truly want to play as far as pressing and that type of deal. But we've got to try to get some different looks out there on the floor.

Q. How important was it for you guys confidence-wise to have so many players other than Eric that stepped up in that overtime and contributed to that win?

COACH JOHNSON: I've been saying that all along. For us to be a good team, we have to have other guys step up. I mean, we have to have more guys playing well consistently. For CJ Barksdale to come out and get his first career double-double, and to get the production that we're getting out of Raines and van Zegeren holding down the center spot there for Jarell Eddie to rebound the ball like did he and hit the big three, Robert Brown, and make a couple of shots in overtime that he did, those are the necessities that we've got to have.

Again, we've got to have those guys playing more consistently night-in and night-out for us to be a good team in this league.

Q. Was there a real sense of relief among the team for getting that win and getting over the hump and going through such a tough stretch there?

COACH JOHNSON: To be honest with you, I didn't really see a sense of relief. I know the guys were extremely happy about the win, but I didn't see and sense any type of relief. Just happy that the hard work has paid off.

In this league you can't get too up and you can't get too down. That's something we talked about heading into league play. You've got to try to move on to the next game. It's fortunate that we do have a week, but we can't rest on that victory.

We've got a very good Wake Forest team that's playing really well right now coming in here on Saturday. So we've got to try to turn the pages and move on.

**VIRGINIA
COACH BENNETT**

COACH BENNETT: Got a week to prepare for a very good Florida State team. We just have to use this week to try to improve in the areas that have been hurting us in the last couple of games that we've dropped on the road. So we'll try to use it well, and get the guys fresh and healthy as possible.

Q. He said you were going to have Darion checked out when you got back to Charlottesville. Is there any update on that?

COACH BENNETT: No, not right now. That was this morning. He had his appointment, and I'm sure we'll get some feedback by, I would hope by the end of the day or tomorrow if he has to get a test or X-ray or MRI or whatever they do.

Q. Him not being a hundred percent these last couple of games, how much has that impacted your defensive performance?

COACH BENNETT: Yeah, when you watch it on tape and just seeing him, he's kind of certainly favoring his leg, and he's not the same as he was earlier. I think sometimes you can play if you're not quite a hundred percent, but you've got to be close, especially the way Darion plays and has been effective for us.

I feel it's unfortunate for him. But whether it's the time of this week to rest or whatever, obviously, the course of treatment is we can get it so he can go and play all out and fly around. Because that is kind of his mentality with his versatility and activity on defense, and when he's not able to get out and show on screens as much or be as active, it affects him and probably does affect our defense when he's on the floor more than most guys, probably.

Q. You haven't gotten a whole lot of production out of Paul Jespersion in recent games. What are you looking for from him on a game-by-game basis?

COACH BENNETT: Right, Paul had a nice second half against Carolina. Not as much

the last couple of games. Paul's greatest strength as a player is his mind, his smarts out on the floor. You want him to be opportunistic in his scoring, but take what's there and be sound.

In saying that, it's quality looks in shooting the three and making the play. He's getting some pretty good looks. Some of them just haven't gone down in the last game. He took six shots, and, again, got some pretty clean looks. Last game it was pretty much Joe. We need him to give us some offensive help and certainly be as sound as he can on the defensive end. But want him to keep looking for shots and stay within his game.

But certainly we need some other scorers to be a threat out there and to ask Paul to just make plays off the dribble and do things that maybe aren't in his strength would be probably not right. But we need to certainly need him to take what the game gives him, but be assertive in that.

Q. Following up on that, regarding your offensive problems in the last couple of games, Mike Tobey gives you some scoring. What does he have to do to get on the floor more?

COACH BENNETT: Yeah, he's been playing a little more the last couple games. You know, with Mike, I look at offensively, and I ask, are we getting quality shots for the most part? In the last game we did. Some of our turnovers have hurt us and resulted in points for the other team. Some of the turnovers that were a little unforced.

Then in Mike's case, he's got to keep coming. Defensively he had a match-up against Booker, and certainly we play a team defense. But that provided some challenges for him that were hard. They had Milton Jennings shooting the ball well, and I thought Booker could establish his position a little easier on Mike being new to a player of that caliber.

He had a little trouble, but I think that's what's, you know, promising for him is he's shown the ability to adjust and improve, and he does have that offensive prowess. Depending on Darion's status, I think there are certainly going to be opportunities out there for Mike.

Q. I also want to ask you about Mike Tobey. Limited viewing of him down here, he seems to be an extraordinary shooter for a 6'11" guy. But doesn't seem to be as productive on the boards as you might expect from a 6'11" guy. Is that a fair reading from a limited viewing?

COACH BENNETT: Yeah, I think as Mike gets more physical, he just gets stronger and improved his explosiveness. Those things will come. We've talked about it among our reporters. Mike's young for his grade. He is very young. Just turned 18 in late October.

So you can see there is some youth or he's not as mature as even a guy his grade should be. Probably could be back a year. But he does have a nice skillset.

I think what will get him on the floor more, as Doug just asked as he continues to improve defensively, which he has, and he gets more physical on the glass. All of those areas he's taken steps in, but right now probably a little more on the skilled side of things. And he has some things in the post, specifically mentioned the rebounding, and for us looking at the defensive side of things, those kind of have a lot to do with certainly the physical strength, but also your nose for the ball and desire to get it.

That's something you learn as a young player. The more experience he's in as the Bookers and the players we'll play against, I think he'll get a grasp for that more and more.

Q. Again, your guys in Virginia probably know this. But can you fill us in a little bit on Jontel Evans as he's coming off the injury? Is it better, is it the same?

COACH BENNETT: I think he played more minutes in the Clemson game and felt fine or felt better, I think. Physically felt good. He's got to work on taking care of the ball, making good decisions, but it's been good for him and good to see him out there and not have any setbacks, which he's had the last couple of times he came off this injury.

So from that standpoint, my hope is he'll get better and better as he gets more game reps and more practice reps hopefully he'll be sounder and just get more of his timing and feel back.

Q. I guess I overlooked this the other day, but Clemson's shooting percentage in that game, what did you make of that?

COACH BENNETT: Yeah, it was a very impressive second half. You know, Jennings, for them when Jennings is shooting the three ball well, it provides some challenges because a lot of times they'll feed the post with him and he'll stretch you, because they haven't shot it particularly well from

three besides him.

So when he gets going like that, and then you have the floor spread, whether they use ball screens to set with Booker and roll them into the post, they've got the hits and threes from Jennings. Made some tough shots, a couple off the glass as I mentioned you saw in the game. Then Booker got some deep post positions whether it was on Mike or anybody. When he gets that deep, it's pretty hard for us to handle that.

So whether it was Jennings hitting the threes, Booker getting deep post position and a few break downs, they certainly were effective and we didn't do a good enough job, obviously, to stop them.

Then the buckets that they needed, either we missed on the other end an easy one and they came down and hit some quick threes and that made the difference.

NC STATE COACH GOTTFRIED

COACH GOTTFRIED: I think first of all, we've got a tough road game at Maryland, and I think they're much improved from a year ago. Watching film on those guys, I think with Wells and Len's improvement inside, you've got two elite level players.

Q. Coach, do you feel any type of letdown there for Saturday and then going into a team that's lost a couple of games in a row?

COACH GOTTFRIED: No, we've got four returning starters that have been through this league. I think they're very well aware of the fact that each game counts as one game. Saturday was fun, but it's one win, and that's it. Now you've got to go do it again 15 more times. We have an 18-game schedule and we have 18 opportunities. I think the fact that we've got some veteran players that have played, that should not be a factor for us.

Q. Just to follow up on that, does your team play based on where it started in the rankings? Did they have a little bit of a chip on their shoulder or is that not part of their make-up?

COACH GOTTFRIED: We don't ever talk about that. Where we were picked or projected is

irrelevant. It comes down to how you play. Last year we weren't picked very high. It still came down to how you play so we're just not a team that's caught up in all of that. Those things are things that people are weighing in on.

So we just need to concentrate on us, and it's not something that we talk about ever.

Q. Will we ever see an undefeated team again?

COACH GOTTFRIED: I think it would be awfully hard. I think the difference, obviously, is with television nowadays. Everybody has an opportunity to recruit good players.

I think years ago the difference was that some people had more to offer, opportunities to be on national television, better facilities.

Nowadays it seems everybody's caught up. Good players go everywhere. There is a lot more parity than I think there was through the '70s, '80s and even the 90s. So I think it would be really hard.

Q. When you look at the Duke team you saw, how much difference does it make that they didn't have Ryan Kelly Saturday?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, there is definitely a difference because Ryan is different from both Hairston and Amile. I thought that they did very well. Amile played great, and so did Hairston. They scored well, and defended well. But Ryan is just different.

So I do think they're a different team. But we're all different when you lose a good player, when you lose a starter. Nobody is exempt from that. There is always an adjustment period when you have a starter out. Your team has gotten used to playing one way with a person's style and what they bring to the table. Now you've got to change just a little bit. They're not exempt from that. That's a difficult thing to do at this point here.

Q. Do you feel you're doing things better than you were in December and January?

COACH GOTTFRIED: I hope we're doing things better. You hope your team each year improves throughout the year. There is always a period at the beginning of the season where I believe your team is still learning how to play and how to play effectively. Who needs to do what? What is the best way if your team to defend good

teams? What do you need to run at certain times in the game? Who needs to shoot? That takes a little while sometimes for that to come together.

So I do think that we're better than we were early, but we still have to play, obviously.

Q. Is the improvement in one certain area or two key areas?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Not necessarily. I just think in our biggest challenge this year was integrating some very talented young players into a veteran group that were used to playing together. We needed to blend that. So I think we're better in that regard, for sure.

Q. How much does familiarity that some of your guys have with Dez because they've actually played with him as opposed to seeing him on tape?

COACH GOTTFRIED: I think it probably helps. When players know each other, they usually know their games sometimes better than we do. So, yeah, I think that probably works the other way too with Dez. He knows our guys pretty good too. So I do think that becomes a factor a little bit at times.

Q. Just a follow-up. Was there a time when you thought that he might end up in Raleigh after what happened at Xavier?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, we certainly looked into it. I think he's a great player. I think he made a good decision and it's been working out well for him. But we certainly got involved in that, so, turned out good for him.

Q. No. 1 in the nation in field goal percentage, do you think that's something that's sustainable over the course of conference play? What will it take to stay at or near that level?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, it's interesting. It's another one of those things that I'm not too caught up in where we're actually ranked. What I'm interested in is are we executing our offense well, and are we taking high percentage shots for each individual player, which I think we can still improve in those areas. We can execute better and we can find better shots sometimes for guys.

So I think we'll see at the end of the year where we finish in our ranking. But I'm interested in winning games more than where we're ranked in a category. We've just got to make sure we keep

executing, improving our execution and getting the right guys the right shots. I think that's what's important.

NORTH CAROLINA COACH WILLIAMS

COACH WILLIAMS: It's an unusual week for us having a bye this week. In fact it's the first time in three or four years that it was not on a weekend. It's probably coming at a good time with a couple of our guys banged up. We probably need a little break.

Having to wait a week to try to get out and do something again. Having another opportunity would have been tough. But it was a mixed week to say the least. We lose, I guess at Virginia we talked about that last week, and then lose a home game to Miami.

We go down to Florida State to play a very good Florida State team, and yet we played perhaps our most complete game of the year. We made some shots, we made some stops, and rebounded the ball and got lucky. That's always involved. Florida State is really a good team, and it's strange because we had a really gifted team ourselves last year, and we lose by 33. Then this year we're able to sneak in and get a couple more points than they did.

But we'll try to take a couple days off to let some of our guys rest a little bit and some of our injuries get better. Hopefully we'll have Leslie back by then, and then try to get ready for a very good Maryland team who had a tough game last night against Miami.

Q. What do you think the biggest difference was on Saturday? Was it the way you guys attacked the floor and got second chances? Is that something that had been lacking this year?

COACH WILLIAMS: Well, we've been rebounding it pretty well, but I thought we needed to emphasize that even more so down there. We did try to emphasize it for one day in practice and one meeting and talked about it quite a bit.

But we were wounded. There is no question about it. We were on the edge of the cliff, not the fiscal cliff that everybody worried about a couple weeks ago, but we were on the edge.

I think our guys had a much greater sense

of urgency against Florida State than we've had recently. Then P.J. gave us a big lift scoring off the bench. Jackson Simmons gave us a big lift. We had some guys when we got in foul trouble made substitutions and some guys that came in the game improved us, and I think that was something that we've had a lot of teams in the past that have been able to do that.

And some games this is year we've had that. For the majority of the games, we haven't had that big lift off the bench.

Q. As much experience as these kids have coming into college with games they've played in high school and AAU tournaments, how tough is it to play in any league when the core of the team is young players?

COACH WILLIAMS: Nobody's ever experienced for what you face in college. I don't care how good your high school team is or how much travel you do. Just the quality of the competition is so much better. The fact of the matter is, all the summer league play, winning doesn't make a lot of difference. You play in four games a day. You play one game, it's over with.

You say what time do you play again? And I don't think they learned any significance and the importance of winning. Now they're playing against a much higher quality athlete, the parity that we have. Lot of these guys haven't heard of it, but they can kick their rear end.

With a young team, I think it shocks them. The speed, and strength, and quickness of the game, I think it shocks them. The intensity of the game. It takes them a while to get used to that. We've played 15, 16 games right now. You would hope that you'd be used to it, but the kids never are. I think it takes a full year before they realize, man, this is what this is all about. I better do a better job of getting ready for it for next year.

Q. Out of the weekend we lost the last four unbeaten teams. You've been a part of national champs with great records, but none close to unbeaten seasons. Do you think that will happen anymore?

COACH WILLIAMS: If I'm not mistaken, the Saint Joseph's team, several years back when we had Jameer Nelson, it may have gone as long as anybody has. But it's awfully hard. There are just too many good players. In today's times also, with all the games on TV, you know so much more about the team that's you're getting ready to play.

There are no surprises. When the other team calls a set play, we know a little bit about it, we call a set play. They know a little bit about it. So you just have more at your disposal to get your team ready. And people don't like to use the word, but there is so much more parity out there.

Q. Specifically, just for my own piece of mind, do you ever look back at the '84 team, that if Kenny Smith doesn't break his wrist, that team might have run the table?

COACH WILLIAMS: There are two of those. Yes, I think that one definitely, and I think last year, I can't help it, but what would have happened if John hadn't gotten hurt in the ACC tournament and never came back full strength, and if Kendall hadn't gotten hurt, then he'd come back and play the last two games.

But the '84 team, people were not even staying close to us. So, yeah, I've had those thoughts. Only thing it does, it makes you wonder, makes you a little sad, so you've got to move on and think about something that can really have an effect on what you're doing.

Q. You talked about your team being a little wounded going into that game and the sense of urgency. Maryland's gone through a tough stretch and they play N.C. State at home tomorrow night. If they come in on that losing streak, do you sense that you would be in store for a similar type of team?

COACH WILLIAMS: You were cutting out a little bit there at the end. But I think what you're saying is if Maryland were to lose. Well, first of all, you have to wait to see what happens against N.C. State because Maryland's wounded right now.

But in this league, you lose any game, you're wounded. You lose two in a row and you're really wounded. So you have a great deal of desire, but so does that other team.

I think for us, one of our biggest problems is we haven't played with enough sense of urgency. I think those two losses in a row made us play with a greater sense of urgency. If that's not a problem with your team, maybe you don't respond like that. Maybe if you've been shooting free throws poorly or turning the ball over too many times, you may not respond.

But ours was more of a sense of urgency and effort of how hard we were going to play, and we have been backed up against the edge of the

cliff, so we needed to play.

Q. Just to follow up in terms of your point guard situation, are you settled or are you still trying to figure out the best combination when you get out there?

COACH WILLIAMS: At our point guard?

Q. Yeah.

COACH WILLIAMS: He started every game. My guess is he'll continue to. That position is not very unsettled. Marcus has played every game that he's been eligible to play. Not eligible, but that he's been healthy enough to play. He started at the point for us and done a good job. And Dexter's done a good job swinging over to get some time. We lost Luke Davis. Didn't play the last game and won't play this week.

So that part, who is the next guy, has been a little unsettled, but the first part was not unsettled at all.

Q. You mentioned Leslie McDonald and Luke Davis. What is their health going forward?

COACH WILLIAMS: Luke is not able to practice. They are putting him in a boot this afternoon and keeping him in it all week, so he will not be able to practice. And Leslie's seeing a doctor this afternoon before practice and hopefully finding out some. So hopefully we'll have Leslie, but I don't believe we'll have Luke.

MIAMI COACH LARRANAGA

COACH LARRANAGA: I thought we had a good week. Our win at Carolina was substantial because we had lost to them ten consecutive times. I think our players felt good after that game that we were able to come away with a hard-fought victory.

We needed some big plays by Kenny Kadji at the end, a couple of blocked shots to really seal the win.

Then last night in one of the most physical games I've been involved in. Two teams that battled like crazy, Maryland and our guys. Went at each other and wasn't very pretty. But we were pleased with the victory.

Q. Congratulations on last night's win.



visit our archives at asapsports.com

COACH LARRANAGA: Thanks, Jerry.

Q. Coach, can you talk about Trey McKinney Jones? Sometimes his play gets lost in the shuffle when a lot of the other star players on the team. But he seemed to be everywhere last night. Can you talk about his importance to the team?

COACH LARRANAGA: Yeah, Trey McKinney Jones is one of those players that flies under the radar screen. He is a fantastic three-point shooter, free-throw shooter, he's very versatile when he handles the ball. He rebounds. He defends. He is a vital cog in our offense and our defense, and we're very, very happy to have him at Miami.

Q. When you're in a game like last night in attack time and both teams are struggle to go score like that, how do approach it? Is it difficult because both teams are going and there's not much of a rhythm to the game?

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, as I said, the game is very physical. The guys are trying so hard, and a lot of the game is played near the basket. So when you have someone like Alex Len who is 7'1", Kenny Goy who is 6'11", and Gamble who is 6'9", and Shaquille Cleare who is 6'9", 260 or 280, all of these very big bodies make it very difficult to score easy baskets. And Maryland's size, they've got great size at every position, and they challenge everything you do. That's why their defensive field goal percentage going into the game was like number two or three in the country.

We're pretty good defensively too. But it's also a matter of you don't shoot the ball well every night. We had some nice open looks and we missed some of them, so did Maryland. But that happens. It's like a very good golfer who has a bad day putting. Sometimes you don't make the shots you normally make. So the whole key is being the team that comes out on top, and we were fortunate to be that team.

Q. There have been other halftime scores and some final game scores that have been surprisingly low. Do you think scoring seems down on the whole or there are just a couple of these kind of head-scratching results?

COACH LARRANAGA: I think, actually,

Maryland is one of the leading scoring teams in the country. They average like 77 points a game in our league. Carolina is an outstanding running, shooting team and N.C. State is one of the leading scoring teams in the country.

Duke is a tremendous offensive team that scores a bunch of points. I think in the ACC there are a lot of talented offensive players. But as I said, they're not going to shoot great every night.

Q. I wondered if Shane is even a better player than what you expected? And also, his dad is very supportive and you see him at the games a lot. How involved is he? Is he someone you talk to a lot?

COACH LARRANAGA: Barry and Lisa Larkin are the perfect parents. They come to every game and cheer like crazy and don't coach. They are tremendously supportive, they're a great family.

I had the highest of expectations for Shayne when I recruited him. I can see him getting better and better. He hasn't exceeded my expectations, because my expectations for him is I think he's going to be a great college basketball player.

Q. Is it time to be in the top 25 or at least start getting votes?

COACH LARRANAGA: I really don't look at that. I'm much more focused on preparing for our next opponent and how we're playing at the time.

My staff does a great job of preparing our players, and that's where we devote our energy to helping the guys. Helping them play well, helping them feel good about themselves.

Q. It sounds like the experience that you guys have, I know Mark after the game had a team with a lot of seniors and his group has mostly freshmen and sophomores. With all the playing time these guys get, high school, AAU tournaments, is that still a major factor in or as big a factor as it's always been in college basketball?

COACH LARRANAGA: Are you saying or asking me if experience is a major factor?

Q. College basketball compared to how it was 15 years ago, ten or 15 years ago.

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, college basketball has changed, I think, dramatically. Just more good teams, more good players. The players

at the highest level of being courted by the NBA and leave early. That often makes some of the BCS teams younger than normal or the way they would have been 20 or 30 years ago.

But college basketball is really great because of the enthusiasm of the fans. You go to a place like North Carolina. Georgia Tech was packed when we played there last night. The excitement around college basketball and the parity we see today, every game is a close game.

Q. Do you feel your experience was a factor last night?

COACH LARRANAGA: I think experience is always one of the factors. First, it's your athletic ability, your skill level, your strength and conditioning? We're an older, stronger team than we were last year and the year before because these guys have worked very hard during the season. And that's where experience comes in.

They've played in 50, 80, 100 games leading up to their senior year, and they understand what it takes to be successful. They know that even young teams can be very successful if they play very hard. There are a lot of very good, young players in this league that play with a great deal of intensity and contribute.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Kenny Kadji's role. Last year when you started the season and Reggie was out, he had to play basically as an inside guy. It took away from an inside-outside steals that you talked about. This year with Reggie being out, it looks like Julian Gamble and you're starting against some stuff with Raphael Akpejori. But it seems that they're allowing Kenny to play the inside outside role that they're so good about. Is that a fair assessment or am I reading it wrong?

COACH LARRANAGA: The thing about Kenny Kadji, he's 6'11". He's got long arms, jumps high, and he's comfortable facing the basket and shooting the three-point shots.

Because of his size in and around the basket, he can get some work done. We really need them to be effective both inside and outside. The area of his game that he's improved and worked at really, really hard right now is his defensive rebounding.

As long as we continue to do those three things, defend, rebound, and give us the

inside-outside scoring, he's going to be a load for anybody to guard.

Q. Has it helped him that you have Gamble this year to take the key role that Reggie would give him?

COACH LARRANAGA: Oh, yeah. Yeah, Reggie Johnson is really our go-to guy on the inside. And Gamble has contributed mightily. He's someone that can offensive rebound very well and block some shots. It allows Kenny to roam the perimeter. And that combination of bringing in Raphael, allowed him to play at the four and not at the five very often.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

January 14, 2013



An Interview With:

MARK TURGEON MARYLAND

MARK TURGEON: Just got in late last night, about 3:00 in the morning, and got to get ready for obviously a really good team, North Carolina State on Wednesday and then another tough one Saturday at North Carolina. Played hard last night, just didn't play well all the time. Give Miami credit, their defense was good, and looking forward to this week.

Q. In terms of where the team is from a confidence standpoint right now compared to where it was, with it being so young, is there concern on your part that they have to sort of muster some confidence or play with confidence, or do you think that hasn't been as shaken as much as it looks?

MARK TURGEON: Well, we're not quite -- obviously not as confident as we were within the league or even after the Virginia Tech game or at halftime of the Florida State game. I don't think it's as bad as it may look by the way we're shooting the basketball. You know, I think we're a team that's still trying hard and trying to do the right things. There are a few guys that aren't shooting the ball well or playing with the confidence they need to play with, but even though we lost last night, the guys tried hard, tried to execute.

We've got to get it figured out. We missed a lot of opportunities, but some of it is shot selection and some of it is execution and decision making. That comes into play. But we'll be fine. Kids bounce back. Kids can lose confidence between timeouts and can get it back between timeouts. We've got a young team; hopefully we'll bounce back and be ready to play this week.

Q. Just wanted to ask you briefly about Miami and how good you think they are and what makes them dangerous in your mind.

MARK TURGEON: Well, the thing that -- they're good, and they're playing with confidence right now. The team fits together. The little point guard is really good, (Shane) Larkin. He makes everybody go. (Durand) Scott didn't play particularly well against us, but we know how good he is. And then they've got the shooters around to make shots, and they've got some inside presence, and defensively they're good. They're playing well.

The thing that makes them dangerous is they're old. They've got a sixth-year senior and a fifth-year senior and a flood of seniors and a big kid that's hopefully going to be back in a couple weeks for them that's older, too, so that makes them dangerous.

And then I just think Larkin is really good. I think he's good defensively, smart, great feel, doesn't turn the ball over, and he really kind of makes them go.

Q. How consigned have you been the past two games maybe with the point guard? I know if you look at the past two seems Pe'Shon (Howard) and Seth (Allen) have combined for I think three assists and ten turnovers. Is that something that you guys are concerned with since the Virginia Tech game?

MARK TURGEON: Well, I think there's two things. There's two areas we're not playing very well, the point guard position and at the 4 spot. It's not going to change overnight. It did change overnight from good to not so good, but we're addressing it. We addressed it after the last game. We're trying to figure it out. I do think that Pe'Shon is capable of playing better than he's playing. Seth is the same way. Seth has to score for us, too. Puts a lot of pressure on him to have to score.

But no, our point guard play hasn't been good enough. It's pretty obvious in our last couple games. But there's a lot of areas that haven't been

good enough the last couple games, and that's why you're 0-2 in those games.

Keep addressing it and trying to get better with it.

Q. Last night in the postgame press conference you really did a lot of praise of Shane Larkin. Can you talk about, one, what makes him such a special player; and two, specifically what you think your point guards need to do to improve their play?

MARK TURGEON: First part, he's a big-time athlete. He's got great feet; he's fast; he covers a lot of ground; he knows how to play, makes guys around him better; he's great in ball screens; he's great on the break; he can shoot it. So I mean, there's a lot of reasons. Last night he wasn't scoring as well, so he just -- had six or seven assists and no turnovers and made guys around him better.

I think your second part of the question was how am I going to make my point guards better. Just continue to watch film with them and talk to them and try and give them confidence, and hopefully -- it's a long season. 18 league games, we're three in, and we've got a lot of time to improve and get better.

Q. Given the point guard situation, I know a month ago you talked about how Nick was just going to concentrate on the 2. Have you thought about sort of giving him some time at the point to see how he does to see if he can settle things down and maybe score from that position as well as handle the ball?

MARK TURGEON: Yeah, we've talked about it. We actually practiced Nick at point last week. It's just really hard right now, not a lot of practice time, a lot of games piling up on us. But I know he knows the position, he wants to play it, and it's something we're looking at most definitely because he's not scoring the ball. Able to get some more scorers on the floor, move him -- he rebounded well for us and he can defend and just keep him on the floor maybe at that position is something that we've talked about last week, and we didn't do it last night but maybe one or two possessions, I think, but we practiced it and it might be an option we go to on Wednesday.

Q. Just to follow up on -- you talked last night about how young this team is. Obviously you expected some growing pains from this team as well as it started the year. Is

it tough with the way you like to get things done in practice when you don't have as much practice time as you had last month to try to get this thing turned around?

MARK TURGEON: We'll see. You know, I think it's more our guys know how to play. I wish -- like Shaq (Shaquille Cleare) last night wasn't himself. He hasn't practiced because of his back. And it was his time, he was coming, and so this hurts him. I think I need more practice time with some of our young guys, some of my veterans, meaning my sophomore class. I don't know if they need as much.

But I don't make excuses. We should know how to play. We've had plenty of practices. Nick (Faust) has got experience, so if I move him to the point, he played there last year, he'll be able to do it pretty quickly. It's just a tough part of our schedule. We let one get away at home and now we're in a tough part of our schedule.

We'll see. You just go one at a time and do the best you can and hopefully we'll improve. I thought we played really hard last night, really hard. We never quit, and we rebounded pretty well and we competed on the road against a good team and just came up short, just couldn't put the ball in the basket and missed a lot of free throws. But I think it was a step in the right direction.

BRIAN GREGORY GEORGIA TECH

BRIAN GREGORY: Obviously a little disappointed in our second half performance on Saturday afternoon, but you've got to give -- in this league you've got to -- sometimes it's not always what you didn't do, it's what the opponent did. Give Virginia Tech credit; they played extremely well in the second half, have a dynamic scorer in Green that kind of held them together there when we were making a run and kept them within striking distance.

I just listened to Mark, a lot of the same things could be said for our team. Our margin of error is small as we continue to try to rebuild a little bit, and in this league you have a home game that you have an opportunity to win, you've got to take advantage of it because we're in a very difficult phase of our schedule, as well.



visit our archives at asapsports.com

ACC basketball coaches - 2nd
hour - 1 14 13.doc

You know, great challenge on Thursday, play against not only one of the best teams in our conference but one of the best teams in the country, and they have some guys playing at a very high level. I thought we played well on Wednesday on the road in a tough environment at North Carolina State. They weren't looking past Georgia Tech. I thought they played extremely well in that game. Mark had those guys ready to go, and I thought we competed extremely well in there.

Not pleased with our performance, especially the second half on Saturday, but we've got to keep moving forward and have the opportunity to play two games now in the next 13 days and have a chance to get on the practice court and continue to improve.

Q. Can you talk about the difficulty of playing Duke in Durham at this point coming off a loss, and also, does it make it any easier that Ryan Kelly is not playing?

BRIAN GREGORY: Well, I think one thing, it doesn't matter if you've come off 20 wins or 10 losses, it's hard to play in Durham. Obviously exceptionally coached, disciplined team with great talent, as well, and that's a tough combination to overcome. But you've got to embrace it. You've got to embrace the challenge, you've got to be excited about the opportunity, and you can't worry about the mistakes. You've got to compete on every single play.

Obviously where we're at as a program, that's what we preach, that's what we emphasize, and hopefully we'll be able to go out there and perform that way. You're going to have -- they're going to have some runs, you've got to take care of the ball, you've got to play extremely good defense on the dribble, and with (Mason) Plumlee inside, I think he's one of the most aggressive post players in the country. You just love guys that that motor is running every single possession.

Now, you know, one thing is they are a different team without Ryan Kelly. There's no question about that. I'm sure you caught the comment that Mark Gottfried said during halftime; they replaced him with another all-American. But it's different, and not only what he brings, but he brings great experience to the team, and in this league, as good as the freshmen are, you have to rely on your upper classmen.

Sometimes initially it affects the team a little more, and as you get through it, then the next game or two guys start understanding kind of a

ASAPsports

...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

new role or new objectives and what they have to get done, and they start tightening things up again.

Q. Do you feel like -- it's kind of funny, you guys opened against Duke last year in Atlanta, and you haven't played them since. Does it feel like almost a new experience for your guys? Your guys have never been to Cameron.

BRIAN GREGORY: Yeah, well, obviously our freshmen haven't, and I think our upper class played there probably the year before. But yeah, everything this year with this year's team and the progress that we're making feels a lot different. You know what I mean? We still have some of the same Achilles heels in terms of problems that we have to overcome and so forth, some of it due to use, some of it due to just inability to make some plays that need to be made. But that's part of the process, that's part of the growing pains and so forth.

In this league you'd better respect everybody you play because everybody has got great players. But we also want to get to a point where that respect is a healthy respect but we go out there and try to play Georgia Tech basketball, and that's defend better, that's rebound better, which is a key for us, and that's when the opportunity comes, and we'd like it to come more often, is to really push the ball and share the ball.

Q. You talked last year a lot about the improvement of Mfon Udofia and how he had improved probably as much as a player you've seen in a long time. I wonder now seven, eight months later, him being a senior, what has he improved on and what are you seeing out of him this year that's really helping the team?

BRIAN GREGORY: Well, I think he's still playing his best basketball of his career right now, and a lot is thrown on his plate. He's our only senior with graduate student in Pierre Jordan. He got banged up in the Illinois game on our way back from our trip in California. I still don't think he's 100 percent. I think the ankle is still -- there's no problems with it and he can play, but he just is lacking a little bit of maybe the explosiveness that he had early.

But we're just not the same team without him playing well. You know, he's done a good job of taking care of the ball. He's shooting his best percentages from the field, taking quality shots.

**ACC basketball coaches - 2nd
hour - 1 14 13.doc**

We need him to shoot better from the free-throw line, and then we ask him, now he's got to guard Green at Virginia Tech, you know what I mean, and he's got to guard Larkin. He don't get to rest on the other end, either.

He's having as good a senior year as we had hoped, and to be honest with you, we need him to do more, and that's not always fair, but that's the reality of it.

Q. When you have a veteran like that, that basically with a new coach kind of leads the way, what he's doing, does that set an example for everybody else, and how has that translated?

BRIAN GREGORY: Yeah, he definitely -- he's a guy that values the work ethic that you have to put in every day. He comes hard and practices hard every single day. Games aren't -- and practices are important to him. He's got an emotional tie to what we're doing. All those things are important.

You know, I think at times it's frustrating for him to realize that some of the work that he's doing in terms of leadership, he may not be able to reap the benefits from. You know what I mean? You look at some guys, as much improved as we are, you know, he may not be able to enjoy all the fruits of his labor. But in great programs, what you do is you put in the work and you understand that other things down the road are going to be super positive. And sometimes that's hard for younger guys to grasp or to really buy into, but Mfon has done that.

LEONARD HAMILTON FLORIDA STATE

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, we had a very disappointing loss against a very determined University of North Carolina basketball team on Saturday. I thought they just played with a little bit more intensity. They executed a little better than we did. The game was in doubt right down to the last four or five minutes, and they had -- they got a lot of 50/50 hustle plays that we just didn't come away with, and our execution wasn't nearly in the first half what we hoped it would be, and we got dominated on the boards, which was something that we had worked on all week.

North Carolina played so much better than we did on Saturday, and hopefully we'll learn from it and be a little bit better prepared as we move on through the remainder of the ACC race.

Q. Is it disappointing to open the ACC with two road wins and then come home and not be able to extend it?

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, you have to give Carolina -- Carolina is a very good basketball team. They played exceptionally well. They deserved the victory because they played better than us. You want to win all your home games, but in reality that's probably not going to happen, and they deserved the victory. So it's not as much about how poorly we played as much as how well they played. You've got to give them credit for that.

But I think that we -- with our team, we just have not grasped the fact that every ACC game is basically in doubt with five or six minutes to go, and what happens is that every possession the entire game is very, very important. So you have to be executing on offense, executing on defense, because when you have bad possessions, they come back to haunt you in closely fought games, and that's what happened in this game.

I was disappointed we lost; yes, I am. But we are a team that's learning and growing. We've been a little inconsistent all year. But I think we'll learn from this game, and I think we'll be better prepared as we move into the other games. We'll have a good film session and we'll look at our shortcomings and look at the positive things that Carolina did and maybe learn some things that Carolina did that made it difficult for us and maybe improve in some of the areas where we need to improve.

Q. I might be wrong, but can you talk about Okaro White? It seems like he's picked up his game lately.

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, I think Okaro, along with Michael (Snaer), is trying to give us good leadership. Sometimes it's hard to lead when you're trying to lead seven first-year players. We've had a difficult time everybody always being on the same page. It seems to build each possession. One guy is sometimes a little out of sorts.

But Okaro is giving us some more hustle baskets, he's improved his perimeter game, so

he's becoming more and more of a stretch 4 type player, and he seems to be becoming up big for us when we really need him. I think he is stepping his game up, but we need that. We don't have very many veterans on our team or guys who are healthy from that standpoint. We need him to lead by example, as well, off the court.

Q. One of your veterans is Ian Miller. I know he was hobbled a little while. I'm sure your Florida guys know this, but for those of us up here, what's his physical condition? Is he all the way back?

LEONARD HAMILTON: No, he is not. Ian didn't practice at all this week, maybe 10 to 15 minutes each practice. We set him down for about two or three weeks to let the inflammation get out of the -- the little bruise that he had on his foot, and then he went out and practiced and somebody stepped back on -- he got stepped on by one of his teammates in a practice, so it inflamed it again. It's not a fracture, not a stress reaction, but he's irritated as he was getting healthy and free from pain. He got stepped on, so he hasn't been able to practice. He's only been able to warm up here and there, get some shots up here and there, and then he's been a little out of rhythm when he's going into some of the games. Hopefully we just can manage it and it'll be a little better. Hopefully the time, we're going to try to rest him as much as we can this week and hopefully he'll be a little more prepared and more active toward the end of the week as we prepare for Virginia.

Q. How important is Joe Harris to what they try to do offensively? He seems to be their big firepower guy.

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, Joe is a tremendous factor because their inside guys, (Darion) Atkins, they seem to be improving and playing better. Now, if Joe will stress the defense on his side of the floor, you can't ever leave him, which gives them opportunities to drive and attack the basket inside because you cannot leave him, because if you do, he's like money. He knocks it down every time you leave him open.

We've had a very difficult time with him the last couple years. We've played him well for sometimes 30 minutes of the game and then the last 10 minutes if you just give him two or three looks, he's ready to make you pay. He's one of the more accurate shooters. He's a smart, heady player. He never seems to stop. He moves well

without the basketball, and if you give him a good look, more than likely he's going to knock it down.

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI DUKE

Q. I heard your radio comment earlier about Ryan Kelly's presence and lineup gives the team a confidence that obviously isn't there when he's not in there. Short of him waking up healthy tomorrow with a good foot, what's the best way for the team to sort of recapture that over the next few games?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, I'm not sure you ever recapture that completely. Ryan is one of the best players, and so you can't ask somebody to just try to do what he does. I think your team has to develop a little bit different personality. And when you've had a personality that's developed based really around our three seniors, you have to -- it's new. It's new.

But trying to chase what he had, you're not -- we won't be able to do that. Hopefully he'll be able to come back at some time and that will help us recapture it.

Q. I'm writing a story on Chris Street, the basketball player who was killed 20 years ago this week. His last game that he played for Iowa was against your Duke team back in 1993, and I was just wondering, one, what, if anything, you recall from that afternoon when you guys played Iowa, and two, when you think of him, what comes to mind?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, he was one of my favorite players. He pointed their press. He just was all over the place. He played with the type of attitude that you would want to inject in every player that has ever played for you. He just was a warrior and a terrific player and really a terrific kid.

I remember shaking his hand after the game just because coming into the game I admired him so much watching him on tape, just to tell him, it was an honor to play against you. He was a very special basketball player.

Q. Obviously Rasheed (Sulaimon) is still doing a lot of good things for you, but he's been in a little shooting slump. I just wonder

what you see. Is he still taking good shots? Is something happening, and is it just a cycle players go through?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, I think it can happen more with freshmen. I mean, he has played really well at times this year. Really since coming back from Christmas, he really hasn't played that well in all aspects of the game. He's been okay, but he hasn't come close to playing the way he was, and sometimes, especially a younger player, if the ball is not going in, it can have an adverse effect on other aspects of your game, and that might be what's happening with him.

A lot of the shots he's missing are right by the basket. He's not finishing. And when you finish or you get fouled, he has to be stronger so you can go to the line, then you see the ball go in, and that helps when you're shooting a jump shot.

But a big thing for him is finishing and then not letting -- I mean, he -- I am thinking the last five games, he's something like 9-for-40 and only three assists. So he's not nearly playing at the level that he can play at. So we've got to keep working with him.

Q. As a coach what can you do?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: You work with him. I mean, there's no injection or app. I mean, I'm looking for those apps. I went online and tried to find that app to change a 9 for 40 shooter and freshman to playing how he was, but I couldn't find it. I think we'll just continue to work, drill, and then be positive about what we're doing.

Q. As a coach do you have to -- I'm sure you go over his shots and his tapes. Do you reinforce these are good shots and these are not good shots and encourage him to keep taking the good shots?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, over the years I think you would see that my guys take shots. We're not conservative about going after it. And so with the team or individual, not just Rasheed, you always evaluate whether you have good shots or not good shots. I mean, that's one of the keys to winning is taking good shots.

Overall his shots have not been bad shots. It's hitting them and finishing. But we always -- it's not just Rasheed. We evaluate our shots all the time. I mean, that's an integral part of the game.

Q. I apologize if you mentioned this in your opening statement. Is there an update on Seth's health status or Ryan's at this point?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, Ryan's is more -- a little bit more long-term because we're -- you saw him on crutches on Saturday. Well, he was on crutches on Saturday and has been on crutches to reduce the load on his foot, and we'll see week to week what that does. We're hopeful that he'll be back at some time. We don't want to put a time out there where he's trying to compete against a time rather than just take care of -- make sure we're taking care of the injury.

And with Seth, Seth's injury was a slight sprain to his left ankle, and there wasn't a lot of swelling after the game, and yesterday it looked pretty good. He won't practice today, but unless something else happens, he'll be available for Thursday.

Q. I was going to ask about Seth, too. I just wanted to get your feelings on his -- the mental toughness he's shown. He's always dealing with the right leg. Can you just address what he's going through and how he's handling this so far?

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: No, he's been remarkable, because you guys don't get -- you're not here every day and you're not -- you don't know what he has to go through or really the limited amount of practice that he has, you know, where you're missing days every week of practice and how our medical staff has managed the injury. They've all done a remarkable job, Seth being the main one, and for him to have played in all of our games except one and really be a significant factor on this team is remarkable.

But it also causes you to adjust and make adjustments in how you practice, and it does have its negative impact on your continuity, your sharpness on offense, because he's not there. You don't practice with him except for limited time on certain days. And so it -- our guys have done a great job because really managing that injury leads to a bunch of different things that we have to adjust to. But overall it's worked great for us to be in the position we're in and that Seth is playing. We're very pleased. But it's a very unusual situation.

And then with Ryan getting hurt, pretty -- that puts another thing with practice and continuity and all those things. That's two of our top three players. So again, Seth has been terrific, though, and I'm very proud of him.

BRAD BROWNELL CLEMSON

BRAD BROWNELL: Proud of our guys. We had a really nice win and a very physical game against Virginia on Saturday. Played well. It was good to see our two seniors, Devin Booker and Milt Jennings, play well together. Devin has played well throughout most of the ACC season, first couple games anyway, and it was just nice to have Milt back in a good rhythm and thought that was a big part of the game was their leadership and their excellent play.

Q. I'm working on a story on scoring in college basketball, and it seems to be down a bit over recent years. I know you guys struggled last week against Duke. I was wondering, from a coaching standpoint, what do you say to your guys in timeouts or during the half when you guys are in a drought or how do you approach it with them as it continues to linger on?

BRAD BROWNELL: Well, I think you have to look at the kind of shots you're getting. Are you getting quality shots? And if so, then I think you're encouraging. You're encouraging them to continue to run good offense and try to get the ball to the places on the floor that you feel like guys can make some shots and do positive things. You know, when you play certain teams, especially like a Duke, they're going to be difficulties of getting it to go places sometimes, so you kind of know that you're going to have to do some other things or they're going to force you into some things.

But if you're getting decent shots, if you feel like you're getting it to good places on the court where you want it, I think you encourage that. If you're taking shots that are too quick or sometimes young players try to go a little bit too one-on-one when you feel pressure, and when you want to make a good play, you revert back to old habits, and most of the time young players, their habits are to put their head down and go try to make a play for themselves as opposed to either being patient and staying within the offense or having the ability to drive the ball and then make the second and third reads on penetration because you're going to get stopped at the rim, number one, the dump-down pass is probably not there if you

play a good team, and so now you've got to make your -- not unlike a quarterback, under pressure you've got to make a third read.

That sometimes is difficult, especially for young players. We have a lot of young players, and those guys really aren't ready to do all that all the time yet. They're not used to doing that.

So you just get back to the film room, show them some tape, clips, and try to work on it in practice.

Q. Do you think the fact that college basketball has maybe become a younger game, does that play a part --

BRAD BROWNELL: I think that's a part of it, no doubt. I think the lack of experience is certainly part of the -- it's going to lead to some poor decision making. I also think the defenses are much more sophisticated now than they were 15 years ago. I think people understand what people are trying to do offensively and make much more of a conscious effort to take you out of your normal rhythm of offense and force guys to do other things. Especially with young players, when that does happen in difficult environments, it's not easy.

Q. Just to follow up on that topic a little bit, do you think it warps your numbers just a little bit that you opened the ACC against three of the teams that have consistently played the best defense in recent years, Florida State, Duke and Virginia?

BRAD BROWNELL: Well, certainly it does. You're not going to have your best statistics against those kinds of teams. But unfortunately there's a lot of teams that defend pretty well in this league, and to be successful and to get where you want to be, you've got to be able to execute in those kinds of environments.

Now, I think as a realist, as a coach, there are going to be some things that other teams are going to be able to take you out of, either because of their style or personnel, and you're going to have to make some adjustments.

Again, when you're dealing with younger players, I don't think it's as easy to do that. Things come quickly, games come quickly, and those guys just aren't used to that kind of environment, number one. I mean, we only had two players that had ever been in Cameron before, and it's a little intimidating at times.

I think it just -- the pressure and what you're playing against, it can mount a little bit, and you just revert back to hold habits, which are to put your head down and go try to make individual plays.

Q. Usually older teams play better defense; would you agree with that? And if so, you've got only two really older players.

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, it's all relative now. If you have some really good, young players, it's like they say, good young player, I'd rather have a good young player than an average older player. You want talent over experience if the talent is better.

But there is something to be said for experience and just being in environments and handling certain situations, and I think it's -- the one thing is as a coach, it's much more difficult to make adjustments. Things you could make on the fly, maybe in games or at halftime, you're hesitant. Or even in preparation for a game, if you only have a day or two to get ready, sometimes you'd like to change something or make an adjustment, and it's not as easy to do that if your team is younger and hasn't been used to those kinds of things. So I think that can all play into it, no doubt.

Q. You know, I was just thinking, though, the game I saw you guys play against Duke, everybody talks about you only had 10 points in the first half, but you limited them, and they're one of the best offensive teams in the country, to 25 in the first half. You must have been pretty happy with your defensive performance.

BRAD BROWNELL: You know what, I was. We played a lot better than it looked when you go back and look at it because you play 10 -- you only score 10 points, and I think we were 3 for 25 maybe, something along those lines. I mean, you're in transition defense a lot against a team as explosive as Duke, and for our guys to only give up 25, we really did defend well, because defending in transition is much more difficult than just handing somebody the ball and guarding them, and certainly Duke is as explosive as anybody.

Our guys played very competitively in the half. We just -- you just have to be able to make some shots. We missed a few shots around the rim, and certainly they sped us up a little bit. But I thought we played pretty well for 20 minutes.

STEVE DONAHUE BOSTON COLLEGE

STEVE DONAHUE: We had a two-game road trip this week. I thought we played well for most of the two games and beat a very talented Virginia Tech team, and then I thought we played not nearly as well but I thought we played very hard and stayed in it, which I thought Wake played very well on Saturday. Unfortunately we lost, but I'm just very pleased with our progress.

Q. I see you've been going with a four-guard starting lineup recently. Can you talk about that, and how much of that is a function of Dennis Clifford coming off injury and maybe trying to protect him a little bit?

STEVE DONAHUE: Yeah, I think there's a couple things here. One, Dennis is not healthy even with the injury. The ankle was the issue, now it's been the knee since September. He really hasn't practiced since late September, more than five, ten minutes at a pop. So even before he hurt his ankle, just fortunately he hasn't been himself. And I think that's hurt us. We really miss his presence.

We took a trip to Spain, Dennis was our leading scorer. He's our best player, and it's just unfortunate for him and us, he's nowhere near that due to the pain that he has in his knee. It's something that he's going to have to work through. I don't think it's going to get much better this year, and hopefully it's something that we can control better in the future.

The guard thing is something that we've always done. I've done it at Cornell. The guy who is our 4 man is typically a 6'6" type of guy who's a hybrid, tough enough to guard bigger guys, spread you out on offense, and then we usually come in and we go big at times, and we need to get physical, and that's kind of what we're trying to develop here with Patrick at the 4, Eddie Odio at the 4 at times.

Q. The other thing at that seems to be going on is Lonnie Jackson seems in the last week or two has really seemed to step up his game. Is that right, and if so, what's happened there?

STEVE DONAHUE: It has. I think -- Lonnie I thought has done a good job all year, just wasn't making shots. But he's our -- in a lot of way, he's our most competitive kid, he really competes on both sides, and he plays with great confidence right now. So I think you're seeing someone who's getting shots and playing with confidence now and now has the ability to go out there, and he does a great job of knowing when to shoot the basketball, when not to, and then he's been much better this year in terms of making plays when people are flying at him. He's finding guys, he's taking care of the ball. His assist-to-turnover is good. Just really having a good, solid year for us.

Q. You have Miami coming up. They're playing very, very well. What do you have to do to counter?

STEVE DONAHUE: Well, I think the thing about Miami is, first of all, they have great size across the board, and they play so physical on the defensive end. There's a couple things. You're going to have to understand that the pace of the game at times is going to be slower and they're going to try to wear you down with their physicality. And then we've got to make sure that we're spreading the floor and we're doing the things that we do well, try to get it in transition. If you don't, then they've got to guard you.

I think they do such a good job of being in positions on defense, and with their size, that's a real asset. They don't get out of position very often, so teams end up taking really hard shots, especially in the lane. I think you've just got to be real intelligent about it.

Q. You say you're playing that 6'6" 4 that's matched up against Kenny Kadji, a 6'11" guy that can actually go inside-outside. That's got to be as tough a No. 4 match-up as you're going to have, isn't it?

STEVE DONAHUE: Yeah, no doubt, and I think you've got to do it as a team. We do some things different to try to mask that. We've done a good job, and as I said, on the other end, you've got to really take advantage of it. You've got to make sure that Patrick is being a guard and Kenny has got to guard him on the other side and how well do you have an advantage there when you do that. That's really the story of the game. We've got to be great with the basketball every game out, but this game in particular just because they're so stingy on defense and so big and efficient on

offense. It's critical that we get the ball moving and get them chasing us.

Q. For the folks that don't get to see Ryan Anderson play that much, he's a tremendous player and in my opinion underrated. Can you give us a little bit about his game and what he brings to the table?

STEVE DONAHUE: Certainly. I think the thing that's really probably underrated about Ryan, because he's not someone that jumps out at you with his size or his athleticism at the forward spot, what he does is he really knows how to get open. He knows where to play in terms of ball screens and dribble hand-offs that we do. He just has a great knack of finishing around the rim against bigger guys. He's using both hands. So there's a lot of understated things that I think you've got to watch and appreciate.

The other thing he does really well, he just has a great understanding of how to rebound. He's got long arms. He's a first jumper, not necessarily a high jumper, but he's got incredible ability to go get balls in traffic that would surprise you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

ASAP sports
...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

**ACC basketball coaches - 2nd
hour - 1 14 13.doc**