

**January 21, 2013**



An interview with:

## **WAKE FOREST COACH JEFF BZDELIK**

**Q. There are losses and then there are really tough ones like you had at Virginia Tech. How does a team as young as yours get over that? Does playing a game on Tuesday, maybe you don't have that much time to think about it? Psychologically how does that work with them?**

**COACH BZDELIK:** I tell you what, we had a good practice yesterday and the guys responded well. No pity parties. That's part of maturing. Every time you wake up in the morning and look at the scores in college basketball there are teams that suffer one or two point losses. Its how those teams respond that ultimately determines their destiny. So these are things we talk about. We know we have a big game tomorrow against a great basketball team. We are looking forward to that challenge. I think sometimes being young helps because they are so resilient. So I have no doubt they'll respond in a positive way.

**Q. You have one of the emerging young rebounders in the league in Devin Thomas. What about a guy established, like Richard Howell, a rebounding machine, practically. How do you match-up against him? Is there anything can you do to keep him away from the boards.**

**COACH BZDELIK:** Well, yeah, you're right. Devin Thomas is a terrific young player. He's probably a young, Richard Howell to be honest with you. So, it's a great experience for Devin to learn from one of the best rebounders in the ACC, if not thee best rebounder in the ACC.

But Devin's just going to have to -- it's part of the maturing process. Devin's strong and uses his body well. Obviously, it's a great challenge for him against Richard. He's just going to have to

battle and fight, and that's one thing I'm really proud of this team is that they battle and they compete and Devin will do that against Richard.

**Q. I just want to ask you, with a young team, everything that happens has to be a teaching moment. I was thinking about the last play of the game with Tyler Cavanaugh. He made a great play to rebound the miss, and then, again, just to me looked like he rushed it in his follow shot and had more time than he thought. Is that something you can use as a teaching moment? What do you tell him after a play like that?**

**COACH BZDELIK:** I tell what you we do after every game. We debrief every game the next day with perhaps maybe 20 teaching clips that we obviously need to do a better job at, And 20 clips where they see it where they're doing it well. So it's a compare-contrast kind of teaching.

Well, this is what happens when you do it well. This is what happens when we have break downs. I really thought that Travis McKie made two game-winning shots down the stretch there. But what we didn't do is we didn't get stops down at the other end, and that's where my focus was.

Late in the game, at the very end, with eight seconds left to go, we got the ball into C.J.'s hands and he took it strong to the rim. You don't expect fouls to be called then. So there is no concern with that with us. He took it in there strong like a man, and we hit the offensive boards. It just didn't go down.

But the defensive possessions prior to that were where our main focus was. We allowed middle penetration a couple of times and we didn't switch with aggressiveness. So we allowed Brown to go down the lane. We allowed Raines -- excuse me, Eddie to get an open three or just enough air space. Those were the kind of things to me, also a couple of break downs in defensive transition when we had a chance to really get some separation when we were up nine, eight points, something like that, and we've got to buckle down and extend that lead. That's where our focus was.

**Q. You mentioned defense. Erick Green's leading the nation in scoring in the ACC. Haven't had a national scoring leader in more than 50 years. Can you talk about defending him? You all did a good job in the first half, at least by the numbers. He did a little better in the second. What is it about him that makes him so tough? Do you think these guys did do a good job in the first half against him?**

COACH BZDELIK: Well, we did. We worked on blitz and ball screens, and we trapped him and stayed on the trap. We did a good job of bouncing back to half court and not leaving the trap until he gave it up. We did a really good job of rotating to the right people.

In other words, only once did we make a mistake, and we left Eddie to rotate to Raines or Barksdale, I can't remember which one it was, and there was no sense to do that when they're 15, 16, 17 feet away from the basket.

But we did a really good job of blitzing them on ball screens, making them take tough twos. The thing that hurt us in the second half was our defensive transition. You know, Erick Green is a one-man fast break. I mean, he just goes coast to coast, and his head was down.

A couple times when we took shots, unlike the first half when we did a good job in defensive transition, the second half, we had some of our young guards that just stood to watch to see if the shot would go in instead of get back. We always wanted to have two guys back to look him in the eye as he was approaching, because he puts that head down and he goes.

He got loose in the defensive transition in the second half too many times. He got to the foul line because of it.

**Q. Through the first 17 games, you've started in (Travis) McKie, C.J. Harris, (Codi) Miller-McIntyre and (Devin) Thomas in each of the 17 games. That fifth spot, what are you looking for right now? You started (Tyler) Cavanaugh five times, Adala Moto eight times, Chase Fischer three, and Madison Jones even as has a start. What are you looking for out of that fifth spot?**

COACH BZDELIK: Well, just consistency. Defensive effort, and just helping us get off to better starts. It's been a questionable spot for us in terms of consistency, and that's something that we're searching for. But they all have to play.

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When you look at it, Tyler Cavanaugh and Arnaud played the majority of the minutes at the four spot.

I think they're averaging about nine points and almost seven rebounds a game, which isn't bad. But we just need more consistency. But it's typical of young players to be inconsistent. They're working hard at it. We're playing a lot of guys, and that's just the way it's going to be by nature of our basketball team.

**Q. Coach, obviously, you're prepping to play an N.C. State team that's one of the ACC's two ranked teams. When you look at them and compare them to last year when they were erratic with the same core, Leslie, Brown, and Howell and these guys, do you see a difference this year? Have the two freshmen made that much difference or is it the maturity of their core that makes them a little better team?**

COACH BZDELIK: I think it's a combination of those two things. Maturity, obviously, the seniors are wood and Howell, it's their last go around. They're desperate. The maturity of Brown and Leslie, you know, they've got a couple of really talented young players that give them an offensive boost in Purvis and in Warren.

So I just think it's all those things. It's the maturity, it's the incoming Frosh. It's Coach Gottfried has done a great job with them. You know, they're a team that can go a long ways because they're certainly talented enough.

## VIRGINIA TECH COACH JAMES JOHNSON

COACH JOHNSON: I think our guys are coming off another good win. All wins are good. But we found a way, didn't play great basketball for both halves, but we found a way to pull a victory out, which we've done the last couple of games. I think we're improving in spots and still have room to get better.

**Q. I don't know how much, if any, tape you've looked at on Virginia at this stage. It's hardly big news that they play good defense, but 36 points on Saturday against Florida State is historically low in the shot clock. What do**

**you see from them defensively right now?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, they're going to keep the basketball in front of them. First of all, their transition defense is very good. So getting back, getting the easy baskets on them is going to be very difficult. They protect the paint, keep the basketball in front of them, so penetrating the defense, whether it be dribble on dribble or the pass is going to be very difficult. They keep the basketball in front of them, and then force you to make contested jump shots.

**Q. (Jontel) Evans is the one most of us focus on with their defense. But it's got to be some other guys who are pretty effective on that end too.**

COACH JOHNSON: I think all of that starts with he have ins and his ability to put some pressure on the basketball. He's strong, he's quick, he's athletic. All those guys are big guards. They're strong and physical, and they keep the ball in front of you.

Then they've got a lot of hands action -- what we call hands. They don't let you get a direct look to the basket on direct passes. They've got their hands up. They play with a lot of hands and a lot of size there. They've got the very good help-side defense also where they're low to the ball. They're not going to give up too much space on drives. Then if you post, they do trap, they take the basketball out of the post guys hands there.

**Q. Do you anticipate them doing much like Wake did another day in trying to trap Erick off ball screens?**

COACH JOHNSON: I do. I've seen that in some of the films that we've watched, so I do anticipate them trapping Erick Green and trying to get the basketball out of his hands, yeah.

**Q. When you decided to go to the up-tempo style when you first took over the program, did you do that with -- do you think about it at all the contrast in styles now that these two in-state programs have? You sort of emphasizing pushing the ball, and they don't, I guess, emphasize slowing it down, but they play a more methodical style. You've been around the rivalry for a while now. Do you think that adds to it, the fact that you guys now have kind of adopted and basically completing contrasting styles?**

COACH JOHNSON: No, no. I don't think either guy -- that's something that Tony (Bennett)

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has played basically all his coaching career, that's the way he's played, and that's the way I envision playing when I became a head coach. So it didn't have no thoughts with how they played up the road there. We're just trying to play the way that I would like to play, and try to play to the strengths of what we have here on this team.

**Q. In your -- I guess it was five years, I guess, as an assistant coach, what are your impressions of Virginia-Virginia Tech game?**

COACH JOHNSON: Oh, no matter what the records are for either team, it's going to be a game. It's going to be a grind-it-out, tough, physical, hard-fought, competitive game so you may as well strap it on and get ready to play, regardless of the records.

They're going in last year to the game up there where they haven't won a league game. And that was our first league win up there on the road, and they came back and beat us here at our place. Throw the records out. Home or away, and you're going to get the best effort from both teams, I think.

**Q. I guess Marshall (Wood)'s going to be cleared this week for the UVA game?**

COACH JOHNSON: I haven't heard. He is doing more things in practice, but I haven't heard if he's going to be ready to go or not. I would say it's a long shot, but don't know anything yet.

**Q. Concerning UVA's defense and just their overall style, what do we think Thursday, the first team to 60 points wins the game, I guess? 50 points wins? Is this going to be kind of a tough game for the fans to watch in terms of not as entertaining, I guess?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think both teams are going to try. They're going to play their style of game where they want the possessions low. They're going to play great defense. They're going to be very methodical and very smart on offense.

Don't get me wrong. They'll push the ball in spots and they'll get out and get easy baskets also. But they want -- in the half court, they're going to get it to their particular guy. They'll get the ball where they want to get it, when they want to get it, and they'll take the shot that they want. And we'll try to rebound the basketball and get out and run and try to get some easy baskets like we've been trying to do all season.

So I think both kids are going to try to play the way that they play.

**Q. As someone who has been around the league for a couple of years, in your mind, is there anything to account for what's been kind of a drop in overall scoring in league play this year? Couple halftime scores below 20 and stuff like that this year. Then the second part is are you seeing more widespread parity in the league, top to bottom, kind of any team can beat any team on a given basis? Or is that something that's always been there in your mind?**

COACH JOHNSON: I think we're college basketball in general. You have to come ready to play every single night. That's just how it is. You've got very good coaches in this league, and teams are game planning, and the defenses are good.

I think with the low scores, I think that's coming from the game planning and the scouting report, and guys taking certain guys away and trying to make other guys beat them or make other guys force to do things that they haven't done.

Then your parity is in the league, and I think it's early in the conference season. I think guys are still feeling guys out. It's a young league. We've got a lot of young teams in the league, a lot of young guys. So I think that has a little bit to do with it too. I think you'll see the support come up a little bit as the season goes on.

**Q. Just a follow-up, if you don't mind. Have you seen teams become more defensive minded in the past year?**

COACH JOHNSON: I think the league has been a very good defense and defensive league anyway. Like I said, I think the league is young. I think the league is young. You put a lot of young players out there on the floor, and the inconsistency with certain guys that you can't see that.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Erick Green. Leading the nation in scoring, which is something nobody in the ACC has done for 50-some years. Can you talk about the defenses he's facing or is he starting? He carries so much of your offensive load. Is he starting to get a lot of special or odd defensive attention?**

COACH JOHNSON: I don't know if it's a lot of special or odd defensive attention, but he's

getting a lot of defensive attention. It's coming from different ways every game. The teams are scheming on him, and just like in football when a quarterback is showing him different blitzes, as they would say in football.

But he's seen a lot of different defenses, and sometimes like it took him a while to recognize and see what was going on. How to handle it. So I don't think it's anything he hasn't seen. He's just got to adjust every game to the way teams are playing him. He's doing a good job of that. He's doing a good job. He's doing a good job of picking his spots when he can score. Picking his spots to get his other teammates involved, too.

**Q. You've seen him mature since his freshman year when you're on the staff there. What's changed with him to make him such a dynamic scorer?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think his decision making. I mean, he knows when to use the three ball. He know when's to get in and use the middle game. He knows when to go all the way to the basket. He's attacking a little bit more in transition. He's become a smarter player with reading defenses and that comes from watching tape and studying game film and studying opponents and studying himself.

I think he's trusting his teammates around him a little more too, as evidenced by his almost four assists a game. So I think he's -- all of that is going into him being a much better player over the years.

## VIRGINIA COACH TONY BENNETT

COACH BENNETT: Got to prepare to go on the road and play our in-state rival Virginia Tech. They had a nice road win at Georgia Tech, and have finished games well, made plays down the stretch of both games and been successful. So we'll have to prepare well and play well, to go in there.

**Q. You guys have held -- I mean, you're coming off a game in which you held Florida State to 36 points. That is the fourth team this year that you've held in the 30s. In a shot clock era, what the heck are you guys doing back there?**

COACH BENNETT: Well, we haven't

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been scoring too well ourselves, so we better play good defense. You know, Florida State had some good looks. They missed some. We tried to make their shots contested, and, as always, limit them to one shot. But that's with our team we know we have to be good in that area, real good, to be in games. We were on the same page.

Again, I think they probably missed some open looks, ask we happened to take advantage of that. But it's a team, that obviously is very talented. So we felt good that we at least made it hard for them for the majority of the game.

**Q. What is it that's working so well for you defensively right now?**

COACH BENNETT: We've certainly had our break downs. It's just when we've played well, the games we've defended well, I think we've been able to sustain our commitment to the defense and the battle that you have each possession, defensively, who within your own mind as a player and collectively as a group, you know, trying to get the ball stopped, trying to beat the screens.

There are so many little things that happen on each possession when you've got to play ball screen defense. You've got to play off ball defense, on ball defense. You've got to be sliding. You've got to work on blockouts. You've got to have vision. It's just something that you have to be committed to if you want to be good.

And every program, every team works hard at that. Everybody has different systems how they do it, but it comes down to the same stuff. Can you sustain your commitment to it? You know, do it over the course of the game? You won't be perfect, but when you're committed to it, and locked in, you've got to have some good fortune too. Sometimes guys are just not on that day on the offensive end. And, boy, if you can capitalize on some turnovers or things like that, that helps too.

**Q. Over your four years, you've seen Erick Green evolve from a secondary to a primary scorer to one who is now leading the country. Can you just talk about how you've seen his game progress and the challenges he'll present to you defensively?**

COACH BENNETT: Sure. Well he learned from a good one in Malcolm Delaney how to score and get to the free-throw line. He's just complete. I'm sure it's rewarding for him and James (Johnson) and their staff to see a guy improve who has just sort of stayed with it and

gotten better each year. He's just very complete. You look at him statistically particularly and it's impressive. When you look at his conference stats, shooting Threet-point ball well. He's got a mid-range game gets to the rim, scores in transition, plays off ball screens.

Yeah, he's complete. You can't say well, if we take this thing away from him, then he's in trouble. He's got a lot of different weapons. His maturity in his mind and all those things makes him a great threat. He's doing some things for other players, so, like I said, he's just every year a little stronger, more athletic, and then fine tuned his skills.

**Q. We were asking a little about Justin Anderson the other day. I'm curious where you guys assessed his scoring and shooting ability when you saw him in high school. I know a lot of you have used him as a defensive replacement a little bit this year. Is he the kind of guy that even if the shot doesn't come around, you'd still want to see him in the game, maybe like Jontel?**

COACH BENNETT: We talked to all of our players about completeness. Just mentioned that about Erick Green. Obviously, he's a scorer. But how you can impact the game, regardless of your shot. Even if you're a shooter. Yeah, that's a great weapon, but you better have other areas to impact the game, and that's what, you know, for someone like Justin with his physicality and athleticism, we want him to impact the game and become better defensively, sustaining loose ball plays, offensive rebounds, driving.

So, absolutely, if guys are struggling with their shots or not a lights-out shooter, they've got to make sure they're taking good shots. And the one that's present themselves and knowing which ones aren't theirs. And then evolve that way, and keep working and working to get your perimeter game more consistent and better. And I think that comes over time.

But, yeah, specifically you want him to impact the game in as many areas as you can, and being young, learn how to be real sound and not have the break downs on either end of the floor. And we talk to our team a lot about the stats that are unnoticed that you want to be good at. The pass that leads to the assist, or being in the right position and just taking care of the things that you need to.

**Q. Could you talk about Jontel (Evans)? It seems that he's very eager to do a lot out there. Is he sometimes trying too hard? The five turnovers in the last two games are kind of uncharacteristic.**

COACH BENNETT: I look at Jontel and think this is his third week of playing. You look at him, and he played against Carolina then we had no prep time. It was just game, game with a day or two of practice in between. Then we had a week to prepare.

And I thought he played better in this game and had more control. But he still had some travels and tried to press the issue on a couple of the drives, but I thought he was better. I think if you look and say he's had three weeks of basketball because he's been out so much, but I think it's just part of timing, part of getting better, and him having some patience at times.

But you don't want to take away -- it's a delicate balance, Doug, with a good player, and a player that's really can attack and has that kind of speed and quickness.

I've mentioned it before, but every coach talks about this too. It's that fine, delicate balance. We want you to be patient and sound but not passive. We want you to be aggressive and assertive, but not out of control. And that's what we want him to get to.

And he'll be the first to tell you he gets frustrated with those. And I'll keep challenging him and hold him accountable. And my hope is he gets better and better. But, boy, if you watch the Florida State game, he got us out in transition sometimes and made some nice plays for us. Then a few times he may be forced it. But my hope is that's just being three weeks into getting consistent reps and playing.

**Q. Unrelated, have you seen any progress in Darion (Atkins) yet?**

COACH BENNETT: His is now based on his symptoms. It's kind of how he feels and what he can do. And you test it. So it's really how he'll respond. So that's where it's at. It's not like we took another X-ray or got him another MRI. He's got a stress reaction. We quieted it down, tried to. Said let's test it. Is it ready yet? How are you feeling? How much can you handle? How does it respond? That's what it will be from here on out or until we can get rid of it completely, which is probably not something until after the season, is my understanding.



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**Q. With Erick Green this week, do you as a defensive coach kind of relish the idea of let's see how many points we can hold our nation's leading scorer to and double team him and get him down low, do a low number? Or do you look at him and say let us get 20, shut everybody else down, and we'll win the game that way?**

COACH BENNETT: You've got to try to with all their players, but Jarell's doing some nice things. And they have some other guys that can score, he's special. He gets to the free-throw line at will, or if he gets a lot of easy shots, you just try to make him shots contested. Pretty much the way most people have been playing him.

I don't know if you can, again, limit them completely, but you've got to make it hard for them. But they have to be sound too, because they have some guys that are capable.

## NORTH CAROLINA STATE COACH MARK GOTTFRIED

COACH GOTTFRIED: I think for us it's important to have a good quick turnaround. We have to play well in a short amount of time from a Sunday night game to a Tuesday night game. So I think that's going to be important for us is how we respond. We've got to get our legs back underneath us.

Get ready to go on the road and play a very good Wake Forest team who is a lot better than I think they were a year ago. They've got a lot of good, young freshmen. We have to play Harris and McKie, two great players in the ACC.

**Q. What are the ingredients that go into making Richard Howell such a rebounding machine, in essence?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: I think he has great desire to get a rebound. That is half of the battle. He tries to get every single one. Then I think he understands how to rebound, how to get good position. He's got great hands. But I think more than anything it's his determination to do that.

**Q. Does the fact that he's concentrating so much on getting rebounds, does that detract from his offense at all?**

**Because he's been real up and down offensively through much of his career. Does that impact other parts of the game, I guess, is what I'm asking?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: I don't think so. I don't think in any kind of negative way. I think there are some games he's gotten a good offensive flow, and some he hasn't. But he's a good offensive player. He's one of those guys that will score a lot of baskets offensive rebounds. So I don't think it detracts away from anything.

**Q. You mentioned the turnaround there. Do you guys do anything different in terms of practice? Do you give them more time off? Go up lighter? How do you handle that situation?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Yeah, we've got to go a bit lighter. I think most teams when they're in that situation and you've got a two-day turn around, there is not a lot you can do the day in between. We'll prepare as much as we can for Wake Forest, make sure our guys know all the things that we want to emphasize.

But at the same time, I think you have to be careful that you don't hurt your guys from doing too much today. So we'll go a little bit lighter.

**Q. Wanted to ask you, your cousins (Jim and John Harbaugh) are the talk of the sports world right now. Does it make you shake your head this morning, or did you see this coming sooner or later that these guys were going to be going at each other on football's biggest stage? How exactly on the family tree are you related to them?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, the exact, I don't know if the definition of second cousins or whatever. But our grandmothers are sisters. My dad and Jim and John's dad, Jack, are first cousins. Their moms are sisters.

So when you're younger growing up, you don't really get into the second and third cousins. We're all just cousins. Everybody's just related one way or another. So I'm really proud of them. I know Jack and Jackie have got to be tremendously proud and excited. It's unbelievable, really.

**Q. Did you see much of them growing up? Do you keep in touch with them now, I guess? I don't know how much contact you've had with them over the years and today or not?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, my oldest son is a football player at Stanford. So, obviously,

he went out there with Jim. Then John, I had just taken my four boys, my sons up to the Ravens and Giants game here adjust a couple weeks ago. So we went up and watched them play for a day.

We do some, not a lot, because obviously they're swamped in their years. I mean, they're obviously as busy as I am. So not as much as maybe we'd like.

**Q. Any insight into how is it these two guys first time ever two brothers are coaching against each other in the Super Bowl. What insight do you have on how these guys have pulled this off?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, they're both obviously very good. Being the sons of a coach, they grew up around the game. They grew up around coaching and watched their dad. My uncle Mike was the head football coach at Kansas and Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati. I know John was with my uncle at one time as was Jack, his dad.

They've just grown up around it. They've watched it, and they're both very good, obviously. They're both very competitive. They've always been that way.

**Q. Your two freshmen are making big contributions as offensive players. Can you talk about the rest of the game? Are they doing what you're hoping on the defense, as play makers, ball handlers? The numbers say offense, but I'm sure there are other aspects to the game.**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, they have made good contributions in a lot of other areas than just scoring the basketball. We've asked Rodney to defend our opponent's best perimeter offensive player a number of times. T.J. has done that as well.

So, I think from a rebounding standpoint, last night T.J. had six rebounds. So lot of times, young players see their value with their offense. In reality, it's not always with their offense. It's a lot of other parts of the game. And I think those two guys have done very well.

**Q. I wanted to ask you something different, if I could. I wanted to ask you about the State program in terms of the basics of the program. You've been at everything from UCLA to mid-majors in your career. When you get to N.C. State and see N.C. State in terms of**

**everything about the history, the passion of the fans, the facilities, where does N.C. State rank as a program?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: As far as what?

**Q. Is it good? Is there something they need to improve to be at the very top level? The record hasn't been good for 20 years, but there is still a lot of passion, support. You guys have obviously been successful in the last year or two. I'm just saying, when you look at the program, is there one area or any area where you think State needs to make some strides to be at the very top level of college basketball?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, I think there are a lot of great things about N.C. State to sell to young people. From our passionate fans to this institution, to our facilities. I mean, a lot of schools don't have what we have to sell.

I wasn't here for a lot of the years when N.C. State wasn't really good. I don't know all that was going on. We feel that we can become a very good team. We're trying to improve the program as we speak, since we've been here.

But I don't see a lot of negatives within this program. I see a lot more positives than negatives.

**Q. It's an interesting situation, the ACC, that North Carolina and Duke have been so successful, to compete for the top of this league, you have to compete for the top of the nation, right?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, you do, and I've said many times that some of the programs, the traditional college basketball powers, like UCLA and Indiana and Kentucky and Kansas, and over a 20, 25-year period, they've taken some dips. Where at North Carolina and Duke, they really have not. They have been consistently very good.

So you're constantly fighting that. They're good. It's also a motivator to make you do better. You're competing with the very best, and two programs, two coaches, being Hall of Famers, I mean, it's right here beside you, so I think it makes everybody compete harder.

## **NORTH CAROLINA COACH ROY WILLIAMS**

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COACH WILLIAMS: I apologize. I'm in the car on the road recruiting, so I hope I don't get a bad area where I lose everything. Maybe you hope that I do, but that will be all right too.

We felt very fortunate to play great in the first half against Maryland and survive the second half (Indiscernible).

We're a lot better now than two weeks ago when we were in the two game losing streak, but you're only as good as the next game, so we've got to be ready to play Wednesday night.

**Q. A few weeks ago when you were really struggling, there was a lot of talk about your players having to learn to step up and take some -- develop some leaders. Can you talk about what Reggie (Bullock)'s done in the last few weeks? Has he been the guy that's done what you were hoping would happen?**

COACH WILLIAMS: He's played really well. Even at Virginia, he was the guy that played (Indiscernible), we still lost. But he's been the most consistent player by far, and I think probably the most consistent player with what he's said on the court and in the locker room.

So I think that he's done that, but it's not just been in the last two games or anything. I think it's developed over time. They still look to Dexter (Strickland) for leadership because of being a senior. They still look to James Michael (McAdoo) because of what he's accomplished.

And as I said many times, Marcus Paige even as a freshman at the point guard spot, it's the leadership. But I think it's been a collective thing for everybody on our club. Recently we've played with great urgency (Indiscernible).

The other thing is we are so young, that some of the younger guys are learning a little bit more about what ACC basketball is all about. They've had to raise their game to a different level than what it was.

**Q. Is Georgia Tech dangerous? I mean, they're a winless team in the ACC, but I just saw them last week go to Duke and lead at the half. They're a close team. Is that hard to sell to a team to convince them that, boy, this might be somebody that is dangerous?**

COACH WILLIAMS: It better not be. It will be more than dangerous, it will be a loss. I think just one thing you said, Al, is they were ahead of Duke at Duke at halftime, and Duke is one of the

best teams in the country. At times they've played better than anybody in the nation.

So I think we can emphasize that to our guys, and hopefully Reggie and James Michael and Dexter and those guys will be able to lead the young pups along a little bit.

But if my Carolina team takes somebody for granted, we're going to have a track meet for several days after that game.

**Q. Taking you back off what you were talking about with Georgia Tech and Duke, do you see more top to bottom balance in this league and more parity than there's been in years past?**

COACH WILLIAMS: I think so there's going to be some disparity, because a team like Duke and North Carolina State that's highly ranked nationally and doing so well, they're going to win most of their games and somebody has to lose those. But I do think that top to bottom, the league is probably the best in the ten years that I've been back.

I don't think Al's comment or question about taking somebody lightly. If you take somebody lightly in this league right now, you're going to lose. I don't care where you are or who you're playing. So I would have to say that I do believe what you're saying is correct.

**Q. Where is that coming from and what is the origin of all of this parity? Is it something that was years in the making, kind of progressing towards that as programs get better and better?**

COACH WILLIAMS: We went through a stretch there where we were changing coaches so often. I think this year we only changed one coach, unless I'm going brain dead or something. Then once you get a coach that's been there two or three years, he's getting his style of play, his prospects, his recruits in.

I think the stability in the league has been better the last couple of years. I mean, one year we changed four or five coaches. I think over a two-year period we changed like seven out of 12 coaches, so I think that continuity is something to it. I think the ACC has never been bad, but the new guys coming in have really done a great job.

**Q. To go back to Reggie for a moment. What are the factors that have led him to be more consistent this year, as opposed to the first couple of seasons?**

COACH WILLIAMS: Well, I think experience is the biggest thing. He's been through it, more of it than anybody else. I'm sitting here talking about consistency, and he scores 21 points in the first half, and scores 3 in the second half, and he's 0 for 3 on lay-ups. So I don't know how consistent he's been myself. And I told him that yesterday at practice.

But I do think that he has been day-in and day-out, done the best job for us, whether it's games or practice, either one. And I want him to get even better at that. But to me, the biggest factor is he's just been through it more often than the other guys. He's been there and played big-time games. To win a Sweet 16 game, to go to an Elite 8, he's played in a conference championship game. So most of those other guys haven't been in those roles as very important players, or even been in that game at all.

**Q. Do you see parts of his game or any certain aspects of his game that are just a whole lot better than they were as a freshman and sophomore?**

COACH WILLIAMS: Well, his sophomore year -- excuse me, his freshman year, he missed the second half of the season with the knee injury. You know, again, Dexter's our only senior, he missed half the year. Leslie's a junior, he missed a full year. Reggie's a junior, and he missed half a year. Even last year, Reggie was a sophomore, but he missed the end of the year for his freshman year.

But that consistency, and going through that experience, he has been getting better in every phase of the game. But the one thing that I think has helped him more than anything is he's just a much more confident player for going through those kind of games and being successful and helping our team.

**Q. Can you give us an update on Leslie McDonald's situation?**

COACH WILLIAMS: Well, we've got to watch him. We gave the guys the day off today, and we'll have to watch him in practice tomorrow, and we'll try to make an announcement before Wednesday. We don't want to wait until Wednesday and say something about it. So hopefully we'll know something after practice tomorrow. We're giving the guys the day off today since it's a university holiday too.

## MIAMI COACH JIM LARRANAGA

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, it was nice last week. We only had one game and we won it, and we won it in an unusual way. But it was still a nice road victory, and we're excited with where we are, and excited to be playing Duke on Wednesday.

**Q. I think when you lost Reggie (Johnson), people were not sure how this team would fare without him. You've done well in conference play without him. Can you kind of explain how this team was able to click without one of your better players?**

COACH LARRANAGA: I'd say, first of all, Julian Gamble has done a fantastic job of moving into a starting role and playing a ton of minutes and defending, rebounding, scoring a little bit. But just being a great team player and doing whatever the coaches asked him to do.

I also think it's opened up an opportunity for some guys who weren't playing that much, Raphael Akpejori and Tonye Jekiri to take the role that Julian had, give giving some depth off our bench. And those guys have done a good job. They don't score a lot of points, but every minute they're out there is very valuable to us, because it gives Kenny Kadji and Julian Gamble much needed rest.

But I think the chemistry of this team is very good. The experience that we have, the size and physicality of our team. I just think we're in a good position right now. We'd love to have Reggie back. He's working his tail off to be ready to go as soon as the doctors give him clearance.

**Q. When you look at some of Duke without Kelly, do you look and say, okay, I think they're a much more beatable team this week, and I think I know how to stop them, I guess? Or do they still look good to you?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Duke is Duke. Every player they have on their team is an outstanding athlete. Jefferson is a heck of a player. Murphy is really, really good. Hairston is good. I mean, they've got a lot of talent. I think Sulaimon is having a terrific freshman year.

I just like their team. They're terrific defensively. They're terrific at the offensive end. One of the top two or three teams in the country in all the national polls and they've earned their way there. I don't think anything has changed, other than Ryan Kelly is a great player that really stretches your defense, making threes. But they just have a different weapon there. It's a different player playing a different style because his strengths are a little bit different. But still a very, very good player.

**Q. Duke has the very high national ranking, of course. But in conference play, you're in first place and not them. What kind of a build-up do you sense around campus for this game? This is maybe the biggest game at Miami that I can remember in a number of years. Though they've won some big games there. But do you sense a real buzz around campus for this?**

COACH LARRANAGA: I don't think there is any question there's been a huge buzz and there's been for a while. I really like the way it's growing, the progress it's making. Last year when my staffer and I arrived, it was thought we don't draw unless you play Carolina or Duke.

But right now we've had a great crowd against Michigan State. We've had a great crowd against Maryland. We're going to have a sellout crowd. I don't think there is a ticket that's going to be available. I've had to turn down friends who normally I'd be begging them to come and give us some support. But now I don't have tickets myself.

We have a lot of people talking about our basketball program right now and we're headed in the right direction.

Of course, the excitement surrounds that we've won four games and we're 4-0 in conference play, but it's only four games. We play 18 of them. If there were only four games left, that would be a different story. But there is a lot of excitement, and it should be a great atmosphere here at the Bank United Center.

**Q. How are your players responding to this sort of atmosphere which has cropped up now and then for Miami in the past, but as you say, seems to be building? That puts kind of a different light on things for them.**

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, I think players love the excitement. There is talk that we'll

have students camping out tomorrow night so that they can get the best seats in the house come Wednesday.

Our players are students. They go to classes with these other students. They hear about the excitement that's going on campus. They know that we've drawn good crowds already this season. It's a sign of progress for our program. It's only one step, but it's a step in the right direction.

**Q. I want to extend on what you were talking about the excitement for this game and the step in the right direction. Historically, Miami has not been one of the great basketball programs in the ACC. I know your first job is to build a great team and have success. But when you're playing the foundation for a program, what has to happen to generate the excitement, the infrastructure that separates the North Carolinas, the Dukes, even the N.C. States from the Miamis and Clemsons that have never been historically very good?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, I think there is a difference in tradition. If you look at the Miami basketball program, you've got to remember that the program was dropped for a number of years and didn't come back until 1985. Back then, you're starting from the basement level, even below the basement. Just trying to lay some form of foundation.

But now, basically 27 years later, we've got a beautiful facility on campus called the Bank United Center. A very nice home court, a beautiful practice facility, we have a beautiful campus to attract people to. My staff and I have reached out to the local community to try to get young kids to follow our program.

Got a very successful camp. Those campers come to games. They come down to the locker room afterwards to visit with our players, because those are the guys that coached them.

We had our first high school basketball game in the Bank United Center for the first time this past weekend. Friday was the first high school basketball game ever played here, so the fans who came to that game, high school fans, had never even been in the Bank United Center to see a basketball game.

So they enjoyed it, and those are the kind of people that become season ticket holders and fans of the Miami Hurricanes program. And that is the direction we want to go in. And the community

of Coral Gables and City of Miami has been very supportive.

**Q. How tough is it to get a program off the ground? To get that kind of momentum started?**

COACH LARRANAGA: It's very, very challenging. We had the same situation at George Mason. We were in a large, metropolitan area where the competition for the entertainment dollar was keen. Everybody said we couldn't draw and we couldn't build a great basketball program because, basically, Maryland and Georgetown dominated the DC area. And the fans that were sports fans or pro fans followed the wizards and the Caps. But we didn't listen to the naysayers.

We just did what we planned on doing here in Miami, and that is build a grass roots network of people who support our program. Build a foundation and a winning attitude, and getting kids who make a commitment and want to play at the highest level of college basketball. There is no question the ACC is the best basketball league in the country now, especially when you add Pittsburgh and Notre Dame to the mix.

I think we're headed in the right direction, and we're going to continue to head in that direction.

**Q. You must have seen that potential when you go from a strong George Mason program to a Miami program that didn't have that support. Was it the ACC? Was there something else you saw that made you anxious to make that jump?**

COACH LARRANAGA: I was excited to make the jump for a number of reasons. Number one, I had coached in the ACC for several years at the University of Virginia and loved every minute of it. It was the highest level of competition. And we had two opportunities to win the National Championship. We got to the Final Four in '81 and '84. And always in the back of my mind was wanting the opportunity to coach in the ACC as a head coach, and lead a team to the Final Four, and hopefully win a National Championship.

The second, I've always had a love affair with the state of Florida. My father was born and raised in Florida in Key West, and we always vacationed here. My wife and I owned a home here for the last ten years. And this is an area, the state of Florida, has a lot of great high school

basketball talent, and we felt like we could recruit well while building a program around local talent.

With those three things in mind, we made the decision to come here, and we're excited to know that we're making strides to take us where we want to be.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**

January 21, 2013



An Interview With:

## COACH MARK TURGEON MARYLAND

MARK TURGEON: We continue to try to get better. We've been a little up and down obviously our last couple games. Looking forward to Boston College. Boston College really challenges you. Defensively they spread the floor and run a lot of good stuff. Well coached. So a lot of prep work goes into preparing for them, obviously, but we're looking forward to being back home and hopefully playing well on Tuesday night.

**Q. In terms of when you look at the tape from Saturday, do you come away looking -- trying to get past the first half, or do you keep going back to the first half because of how poorly the team played?**

MARK TURGEON: No, I think we all know we played poorly. We all know not really anybody played well the first half. Weren't locked into our defensive assignments, turned the ball over, weren't very tough. You learn from it, you talk about it, but in the second half you can't take too much from that, either, because maybe North Carolina wasn't concentrating as much as they would have been if the score had been tied and things like that.

But we did compete. We competed until the end. We guarded better in the second half. Our assignments were better in the second half defensively. So you just move on.

My thought for the day yesterday was next play, so tip-off Tuesday night, or next play and practice, whatever it is, just move on, let's try to better, don't make too much of it. It's one loss, just like North Carolina State was one win. We've got to get better. We're obviously not playing at the level we need to be playing at to be successful in

this league, so hopefully we can get better here as we move forward.

**Q. And just to follow up, given the way you thought the team was playing I guess through the first half of the Florida State game, are you surprised or did you expect, because it's a young team, to have this kind of one step forward, two steps back?**

MARK TURGEON: Yes, and -- you never know what lies ahead when you're coaching. I do think our schedule has been pretty difficult, which doesn't help for us. We've played some good teams in the league, games that we've struggled in. But no, it is what it is. You know, we made huge strides defensively, and I thought the Miami game and the North Carolina State game our team defense was so much better, and then I think we took a step back. We stood around and watched on Saturday, especially in the first half. So that was disappointing.

You know, it's hard out there. It's hard to win. It's hard -- college basketball is competitive, but hopefully you just -- you've got to remember where we are, where we were last year, and you just keep trying to get better. You just keep trying to get better. That's all I can say.

I come to practice every day and try to make us better. Hopefully the players come to practice and try to get better, and you go from there. We've got some guys experiencing things for the first time. We had six guys, this is the first time they played at North Carolina the other day who played significant minutes. That was all new to them, and they didn't -- a lot of them didn't handle it very well.

**Q. From the best that you could tell, was there a different approach for North Carolina in the second half the other day, or as you alluded to earlier was that maybe a different level of concentration since they had a big lead?**

MARK TURGEON: Yeah, you know, I don't know how they played. We played harder,

and we were -- like I said, with our assignments we were -- they had two players that can really score, and we didn't guard either one of them the first half the right way, and we did a better job on those two, and then (P.J.) Hairston never really got going in that game Saturday. They didn't really need him. Maybe we were a little bit better defensively, we still had a lot of shots, some open looks we didn't make. Execution was a little better. Second half obviously we handled the ball better. We still had six turnovers, but we were better. We were better.

But it wasn't hard to be much better after as bad as we were in the first half. I don't have an answer. I mean, we were better. We practiced well last night. Hopefully we'll practice well today and play well Tuesday.

**Q. Alex (Len) has taken only 15 shots the last two games. Is that a product of him moving into a position that he's not quite comfortable playing or is it not getting the ball where he's comfortable?**

MARK TURGEON: Oh, I don't know. You know, I think he led us in shots one game. I can't remember. I haven't studied it enough.

You know, give North Carolina credit. At the start of the game the other day they doubled him. They weren't going to let him shoot it. So a lot of it is the defense. And until guys start making some shots, we're going to continue to see that. It's a product of the whole team, not just necessarily Alex or us getting the ball. He's got two guys guarding him most of the time he catches it. Really to get 15 shots is pretty good, especially the way their teams are guarding us right now.

Alex has got to play better. He didn't play with great toughness on Saturday. He's got to play better than he did. I think it's a product of our whole situation and what we're going through right now as a team.

**Q. And just to follow up, will you continue with the alignment you have with Shaq --**

MARK TURGEON: No, Shaq (Shaquille Cleare) didn't play well, but I'm not going to not start him Tuesday because of Saturday's game, but it's more about who we're playing. Boston College most likely will start four little guys, so we'll probably have a different line-up on Tuesday. That's the way we're preparing. We'll see. But Shaq will hopefully play significant minutes. And then I don't know what we'll do the next game after that. We'll have to see.

**Q. Kind of a big-picture question for you. I know you tend not to watch a ton of basketball and watch a bunch of games, but looking at the ACC this year I'm curious if you see a little more balance than there's been in years past top to bottom? Coach Williams was on here a couple minutes ago saying it's the most balanced year he's ever seen in his 10 years in the ACC and I was wondering if you had any thoughts.**

MARK TURGEON: Well, I do think -- we don't have a North Carolina like last year. Maybe Duke is that team if they can get Kelly healthy. But they were pretty dominant in our league talent-wise last year. I think the league had a lot of new coaches, wasn't as deep at the bottom. But I do see a lot better teams. I watch teams on tape, and I'm like, man, they're pretty good.

So you go on down the line, I think we're a better team than we were last year. Are we playing really well right now? No, but I think we're a better basketball team and I think that's a pretty argument to win.

So yeah, I do think it's balanced. I think North Carolina is pretty good. Were they good earlier in the year, no, but they were good on Saturday, and they have some pretty good players. Florida State is pretty darned good. They struggled early. They're athletic, they gave us some problems. I think Virginia is potentially going to be better than they were last year even though the big fella is gone. Yeah, you can go through all the teams and you can see a lot more consistency. Wake Forest is probably a little bit better, Georgia Tech we know is better. Even though they haven't won a game yet in the league, they're a much better basketball team. Yeah, I do think it's a much deeper league and a better league than it was last year.

**Q. Is there a common cause that you see for that? Is it a matter of teams adjusting to the coaching changes that came in over the past couple years, or is it just programs on the rise all at the same time?**

MARK TURGEON: Well, yeah, it's a number of things, new coaches, building programs, the consistent programs that have been there for years, and then timing. Guys got upper classmen, makes them a little bit better. If they've been down, they've kind of grown up type deal. You

look across the board, I don't see an easy game out there, especially for us and where we are. Boston College is arguably much better than they were last year, and they're still a very young basketball team. They've played everybody tough and I think they've lost by three, three and six, something like that, in their games. So they're a good team, too.

It's just timing. Just timing. And I think the ACC made a lot of changes in coaches in the last three or four years, and I think you're starting to see that all come together.

**Q. In terms of the way your team -- the outside shooting, there's been a lot of talk about not being able to hit outside shots. In terms of finishing at the rim, did you feel the team did a little better job second half against Carolina, and is that also -- you talk about toughness and being tough with the ball; is that part of that whole equation?**

MARK TURGEON: Yeah, I think Dez (Wells) finished around the rim, obviously Charles (Mitchell) I thought did a good job with it, he got one shot blocked in the second half. But yeah, I think we finished around the rim better than we had the last couple games, so that was big for us.

You know, the thing that we're not doing and the thing that we've done in the past is we get to the foul line and we're struggling. And we're not getting there. Dez can get there, Nick has got to figure out a way to get there, Alex has got to figure out a way to get there. All our post -- we've got to shoot more free throws. If we're not going to make jump shots, then we've got to shoot more free throws, got to get more second-chance points, got to score on the break, which we haven't been able to do. We haven't been able to get the easy ones. We missed some lay-ups against North Carolina State.

Yeah, it's just a number of things. It's all gone bad at once. It's just real -- it's all gone bad at once. It's that simple. Some of it was execution in the Miami game. Our execution wasn't very good. Our execution wasn't very good in the guts of the game against Florida State. I do think our execution is getting better, I think our plan is getting better as we're getting used to playing good teams. It just all went bad at once. Hopefully it all snaps out at once.

But it's a long season. You go through these things, and a lot of it is our competition. We're playing really good basketball teams. They're a little bit more experienced than we are, a

little bit better than we are right now, and it's showing in the scoreboard.

## COACH BRIAN GREGORY GEORGIA TECH

BRIAN GREGORY: Yeah, you know, I thought on Thursday night we did some good things. Had a tough environment at Duke. I thought our young guys played with some aggressiveness and some competitiveness, and I thought, again, very similar to maybe the North Carolina State game on the road that Duke had to play well in order to stretch the lead, and they did, and give them credit. Give (Seth) Curry credit; give (Mason) Plumlee credit; those seniors really led them. We'll just get back to work and we've got to keep improving obviously. I believe we're a much better team, but in this league you have to play extremely well for 40 minutes to be successful.

**Q. You've got -- you were in it for almost all the way against Duke, you were in it almost all the way against State, you lose in overtime to Virginia Tech. Are your players getting frustrated at all, can you sense, because of a lack of something to show for the effort that they're putting in?**

BRIAN GREGORY: I think, I mean, obviously there's a frustration, and as well there should be, but I think our guys understand where we're at and what we need to do. I think they understand that four or five possessions a game is the difference in wins and losses in this league, and we've just got to -- we have to mature a little bit and understand that that's how close games are going to be, so that's, what, one or two possessions a half. And young guys got to learn that.

They're so accustomed to a possession here and there, who cares, we'll get the ball back. With maturity, players' games change and grow, and obviously maybe you don't get the tangible evidence that what you're doing is paying off, but that's part of the process that we're under right now. You don't just do the work hard and everything works out perfect. You've got to keep fighting.

I think our guys have done a pretty good job of that. I thought our resiliency showed on Thursday, and I think it will again this Wednesday night.

**Q. Tell me about Chris and what do you see for him going forward?**

BRIAN GREGORY: With Chris Bolden?

**Q. Right.**

BRIAN GREGORY: Yeah, I'm obviously pleased with his first start, but again, part of the maturity process is I (inaudible) you're playing against this team or that team. It has to be an everyday thing. That aggressive (inaudible). His minutes showed that because he wasn't doing that every day in practice, and I think we're (inaudible).

So I was pleased with how he performed, and we need him to continue to do that.

**Q. Do you see the rotation thing similar to how you had it against Duke?**

BRIAN GREGORY: If you play with a lot of guys (inaudible) guys perform, we went with a little shorter bench in that game. I don't always see that (inaudible) situation that I thought was best for the team in terms of giving us our best chance to win. But is Chris going to start on Wednesday night? Yes, he is going to start on Wednesday night.

**Q. I know Jason (Morris) has been injured. Can you update us on his status, and was there any physical thing with Brandon Reed, or was it just a coaching decision?**

BRIAN GREGORY: It was just a coaching -- with Brandon it was just a coaching decision. Jason today, we're practicing right now as a matter of fact (inaudible) he's probably still two weeks away from being able to play.

**Q. Is there anything you can say about the suspensions for your assistants?**

BRIAN GREGORY: No.

## **ASST. COACH STAN JONES FLORIDA STATE**

STAN JONES: Well, we're still in that process of trying to identify the identity of this

team. Some days we come out, we're extremely energetic and like our old defense, and some nights we're really moving the ball and playing with great continuity on offense, and then other nights we're not. And the nights that we really bring it with some consistency, we're pretty good, and the nights that we struggle to find that consistency, we're not very good. We've got to find our mark here pretty soon and get into some kind of rhythm or the season is going to get away from us.

**Q. Can you give us an update on Terrance Shannon's situation? Obviously it looked bad Saturday.**

STAN JONES: Terrance suffered from a sprained neck, and they're still doing some tests to see if there was any bruising to the spinal cord. He's back in Tallahassee, came back yesterday. He's very sore. In regards to his playing status at any point, that still remains to be seen. But he was able to come back yesterday. Coach Williams stayed up there with him and brought him back yesterday after they cleared him from the hospital in Charlottesville.

**Q. But nothing long-term physically, though, which is the good news, I guess?**

STAN JONES: Yes. He was mobile enough to take a commercial flight back, and obviously they have him in a neck brace, and he has a lot of pain, but he has his mobility, and he's not suffering from any tingling or any of that kind of stuff. Right now they want to continue to do some work with the spine specialist here in Tallahassee and see the extent of what the complete damage could be there or if it's just going to be a bruise situation that will heal over time.

**Q. The inconsistencies that your team has shown, I know there are a lot of new players on this roster, but there are -- there's a good mix of veterans, too. Are they having trouble meshing together or are the veterans maybe not showing as much leadership as you would like, or where do the struggles seem to be taking place that lead to such inconsistency?**

STAN JONES: Well, you know, we don't have as many veterans as you would hope. Michael Snaer and Okaro White are the only two that really have significant playing time in big ACC games. Terrance Shannon has suffered from a lot

of injuries and missed basically the whole season last year. Ian Miller missed 11 games of his freshmen year and a semester last year and then suffered from an injury. So those are -- and then Terry Whisnant was a returning sophomore who didn't play significant minutes as a freshman, only on spot duty. So none of those guys have really had that opportunity to be leaders, and you would want Michael and Okaro to be those guys, but Michael is a guy that plays on energy and competitiveness and kind of needs a point guard out there to kind of help set him up and get him the ball on time and in certain situations coming off certain plays, and Okaro White is an athletic guy that's just emerging. So it's hard for them probably to be in the kind of leadership roles that Tony Douglas was for us for years when we had the same kind of situation because he was a point guard and he could kind of really establish the flow of his team early in the game by getting guys involved and getting the Chris Singletons and the Solomon Alabis on the team involved early and then kind of take over as a scorer when he felt the time was right in the game.

With freshman point guards and Ian Miller being hurt and not being able to evolve into a point guard because of his foot injury I think has really hampered our ability to find that consistency, in particular offensively. I think it's hard for a guy like Michael who's a scorer to be that guy when he kind of has to lean on other guys to set him up off of screens and off of penetration and create some opportunities for him.

And I think he's tried really hard to be a leader for this team and probably almost to a fault. He's tried too hard at times to be a leader and put a little too much pressure on himself.

**Q. You were talking about Ian's development as a point guard being held up a little bit by the foot. You've been trying to play two freshmen at point. That's a tough thing for a freshman. Can you talk about how (Devon) Bookert and (Montay) Brandon have done in that role?**

STAN JONES: Well, they've both had moments of being what we needed and they both had times where they've suffered terribly. Devon missed the whole preseason practices. He suffered from a knee injury from a fall he took and had to have a little procedure done on it, and that's actually still -- the skin situation still is in a recovery mode, and now I think it's kind of because he's favored that over the time and missed that

conditioning has developed a little bit of a -- I don't know if it's tendonitis or what in the knee that's bothering him a little bit. So that's affected his mobility over the course of the season and not allowed him to play at his maximum quickness. When your wheels are bothering you as a point guard, it's hard to be the player you're capable of being.

Montay is a guy that's played the point guard position off and on during his high school career and has developed into it, and it's been a -- as the games have grown with more intensity and more details, that's been a growing process and a learning curve for him, as you add to the playbook and as you add to the defensive assignments that are going to go on. It's just a situation that all young kids say they want when they come out of high school, but sometimes they don't realize the magnitude of it. We don't have any doubt in our confidence that they're going to be significant players in our program right now, but we need them to really escalate their comprehension of what we're trying to do and add some consistency within our team so they become more verbal, they can call a lot of things and make adjustments on automatic situations when teams take certain things away from us because everybody has got each other scouted so well now you have to be able to make adjustments on the fly, and they have to start doing those with confidence.

**Q. I was also going to ask, your young big men have had some issues lately. With Terrance being questionable, where do you turn -- in terms of big men, you guys have had some struggles on the boards lately.**

STAN JONES: Yeah, we're not rebounding the ball well, and that's not as much -- totally on our big guys as our perimeter players have not given us a big effort in terms of a blocking out and helping schematically when they've got to come help double-team, block out on bigs and stuff like that, depending on the offensive things going on with our opponents.

There was a big issue in the Carolina game. In the Carolina game our guards got out-rebounded 23-6. Our perimeter players as a group only got six rebounds and Carolina has got 23, so the big guys battled on the boards evenly with their big guys. But we do need Boris Bojanovsky with Terrance going to be out here for what looks like an extended period of time. He

played extremely well up at Maryland, was a big difference, caused Alex Len some problems being able to match up with him and his length, but he's been inconsistent with his effort level playing at the speed of the game that our league requires you to play at, and we need him to go back and look at himself in that Maryland game and try to start being able to recreate that energy.

And Michael Ojo is a guy that's really new to the game of basketball, he's made great strides in practice, and even though he got three fouls quickly, he was very physical and aggressive up at Clemson when we won at Clemson. We're going to need him to come in there and gift us some minutes now in terms of fronting the post and rebounding and using his wingspan and stuff to defend the paint a little bit better for us and help us be a little more physical.

## COACH MIKE KRZYZEWSKI DUKE

**Q. Last year Reggie Johnson really hurt you guys inside. You get them without Johnson but you don't have (Ryan) Kelly. Who has the advantage?**

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, they've played great basketball with (Julian) Gamble. Gamble is a sixth-year senior and is averaging close to a double-double in the last five or six games. I mean, he's really been a key for them. The thing they do so well with their big guys is they protect their basket so well, and that's why they've been a really good defensive team.

They're an old, very good team. They're accustomed to playing together, and they've adjusted really well with a key guy out, although he's been out at different times over the last couple years, so they're a little bit more familiar with it. I'm sure they'd like to have him back, but they're playing pretty well without him.

**Q. You guys, this will be your third straight game without Kelly. I know you don't get comfortable without him, but is it getting a little easier to -- guys getting a little more comfortable playing with the current rotation?**

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, I think as you go along, you're going to be more familiar with one another, and when that guy is out, you get

accustomed to that better the longer he's out, and we don't want him out for as long as he may be out.

But I think the thing that happens is roles change and points of emphasis and opponents' attacks on you change and how they're trying to stop you. They can look at more ways of stopping Mason (Plumlee) and Seth (Curry) with Ryan being out, and that makes it more difficult for us to score.

So we're going to have to really do a good job of screening and getting each other open and really work -- we're trying to work at being much better in our execution on the offensive end.

**Q. When you've gone down to Miami in recent years, it's one of the times during the season when their building is usually full, and it's not that way for all games. Do you sense that there's more of a buzz about their program? Do you have any feel for that at all and what kind of atmosphere you might expect Wednesday?**

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: You know what, we always have a good atmosphere wherever we play. I mean, the people down there should be excited about their team. They're 4-0 and in the top 10 RPI. Every game that we play in, there's a good atmosphere. Wednesday will be no different than any other game we play except that we're playing an outstanding team.

**Q. Amile (Jefferson) obviously gave you guys a good lift the other night. Can you describe the process of a player that has different strengths obviously than Ryan? How do you figure out what he does to complement that group?**

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, Amile is a good player. He doesn't have the playing time or the experience that Ryan does, and he has a different skill set. The main thing that Ryan gives us besides his experience is he can score. He's one of the best scorers. Whoever we put in in that spot is never going to be able to duplicate that. But Amile can be a good defender, screener, offensive rebounder, and he can give us a lot of energy.

But one guy is not going to take Ryan's place. Amile, Josh (Hairston), Marshall (Plumlee), all three of those guys have got to give us what they can give us. It's different, but if they're playing hard and they're going to their strengths, then

obviously they can all be of assistance to us.

**Q. I wanted to follow up on Amile a little bit. I know one of the things, he's brought a lot of energy like you said, and he's doing good things. One of the things he's having trouble with seems to be his fouls. Is that something just a young player getting used to this level of play? Is there anything that can be done to maybe to try to adjust that mid-season?**

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, I think that comes with experience. I think what happens is that, especially for big guys, they've never played -- they've never had to play defense like they have to play in college in high school. High school, it's the most dramatic difference for a big guy, much more than a point guard or a wing player, is how you adjust and what's allowed, when can you put a forearm on, when does the forearm have to be off, verticality, making sure your hands are straight up. And then sometimes it comes where people who are officiating the game have to get accustomed to you.

I thought when we played State, he had a couple calls where his hands were straight up, but he's so long, he's got a great wing span, that you're not accustomed to that, and then it can appear, well, maybe he fouled when he didn't. That's just a period of adjustment that a young player has to go through.

**Q. You must have been a little relieved to see Rasheed (Sulaimon) kind of got out of his offensive doldrums last time-out. Has that relaxed him do you think? Do you think that's something he needed?**

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, again, he's a young player, so the intensity of the games that we play in every game and the schedule that we've played, by the time we got to Christmas, those are more tough games than he's ever faced in a season, and we're only at Christmas. A high school player never goes through that.

So freshmen are more apt to have up and downs in their performance. I think he had three great days of practice before our Georgia Tech game, and that helped him, and then he played real well. Hopefully that's the way he will play.

But freshmen are more apt to changes in performance than upper classmen.

**Q. You mentioned a week ago, though, that his offensive struggles were impacting**

**other parts of his game because obviously early in the year he had been a great defender. Did you see the other things come back as his offense did?**

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: Well, I thought the other things came back and then his offense did. I think we're just looking at it a little bit different way. If a player has to depend on hitting a shot to determine what performance he's going to have, then that player is not going to be a good player. A player needs to play well, and then the offense will take care of itself. If I'm going to see how I'm going to play based on if I hit a first couple shots, then we're not going to win very many championships or many games here at Duke, or anyplace. A player has to concentrate on playing the game, and then his offense will flow into it, otherwise he becomes a very shallow player.

**Q. Obviously with the crowd that Mason Plumlee draws around him, especially within the ACC games, in the four games that you've played so far, he's your second leader behind Quinn (Cook) in assists. Is that something he's developed, or has he always had that part of the game? How has that come along, his ability to pass and find the open man?**

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI: No, he's always been a good passer. I think the fact that he gets the ball now and is able to make more plays, you're going to see more passing, but he's a very good passer and is okay about passing. He'll hit an open man. He's not a selfish player.

That should be a part of our game, if he's doubled or his shot is taken away from him, that we need to move when he gets the ball to make sure that we're in open spots to respond to a pass that he might make.

## COACH BRAD BROWNELL CLEMSON

BRAD BROWNELL: I certainly thought our guys played very well the last -- at least the middle 30 minutes of the game, maybe not the last three minutes and certainly not the first five minutes, but played well against a talented NC State team yesterday, and disappointed we

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couldn't find a way to win at the end.

Proud of the way our guys responded after having been down 10-0 and thought we showed some growth in the game.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Devin Booker in terms of obviously he's a veteran guy, a guy you were counting on, but he really seems to have elevated his game in ACC play. He's gone up against some of the guys, Mason Plumlee and Richard Howell Saturday, either played them to a standstill or outplayed them. Can you talk about what he's doing and what he's giving you?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Well, he's played great in the league without question. I wish we could have gotten a few more of these games out of him in the non-conference. I don't know if some of it is probably a combination of factors. I think it's us doing a better job of getting him the ball in good places, and I think a lot of it is really just his confidence. I think Devin is a guy who's maybe not been 100 percent comfortable all the time down in the low post, and he's really had to work at it these last couple of years as he's gotten to play down there. Really his sophomore year when we had Jerai Grant he didn't get to play down there very much. He played out on the perimeter some and a little bit down there, and then last year and this year he's been down there, and he's just -- this year I just sense a more willingness to actually be a true low post player. He's always kind of wanted to fringe out some and certainly showed last night - he made two jump shots - that he can make a high post shot. But he needs to continue to work down in the low post. That's where he does his best work, and I think a lot of it really is his just confidence of having played well in a couple of games this year, and kind of looking around our team and realizing that we're playing with mostly young players and that he's the guy. He and Milton (Jennings) had to be the guys to make plays for us, and we've done a better job of helping him, and he's done a tremendous job in ACC play of scoring.

And like last night he found a bunch of different ways to do it, which was exciting for me to see, and that's why he had 27 instead of 16. He got offensive rebounds, he got transition baskets, made a couple jump shots, he made some low post moves off of sets, he made some low post moves off of motion, ball screen stuff. So he scored in a variety of ways, and that's what you have to be able to do to produce 20-point nights.

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**Q. In terms of you talk about with a young team you only have the two veterans, can you talk about his role as a leader and what he does? Is it just by example?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, he's not a very vocal guy. It's one of the things I would complain about with him in regards to I wish he would do a better job of holding his teammates accountable. He's not an overly fiery guy. He's very laid back, and it's hard to turn his personality that way. We've talked to him about it at times, but he just is more comfortable just kind of going about his business.

But he's really had a professional approach to the way he's doing things this year, I think, and it's been fun for me as a coach to watch him as he improves and as he gains confidence. He's getting a little bit of a swagger out on the court of a guy who's a good player, and he's earned that.

**Q. This is I believe the first rematch of the ACC season since you've already played Florida State one time down at their place less than three weeks ago. That's kind of an unusual circumstance. What do you recall from that first game that will be beneficial this time around playing on the road?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Well, we got down a good bit and didn't play well early, and Florida State made a bunch of threes. They got some in transition on us, and then we had some young guys make some really poor decisions defensively that resulted in some open shots.

To Florida State's credit, they made them. They have a very good perimeter shooting team. They came in here really ready to play and really just outplayed us in that game.

So we've got to regroup and try to go down on the road and find a way to win.

**Q. They've had some struggles recently. Obviously they sort of got -- their offense got strangled at Virginia, which has happened to other teams up there, too. Are they kind of a -- do you look at them as a team that you don't want to poke too hard for fear they might really awake?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Well, I don't think that I'm going to be the one poking them. I think Leonard is going to be the one poking them in

practice to be honest with you. I wouldn't worry about that. I'm pretty sure that they're going to have difficult practices here, and Leonard is going to have them ready to play. They don't have the kind of success that he's had down there doing that -- I mean, Leonard (Hamilton) and I are in similar situations, young teams. He's playing a bunch of young players, too, and this is what happens sometimes with young teams. It's difficult for these guys to play as well as you would like them to play consistently at this level when they're facing competition every night that is very challenging, and the intensity of the games is certainly ratcheted up a notch when you come into league play and the arenas are full and every possession is meaningful. And I think you're going to have some times when your young players aren't going to play as well as you'd like.

**Q. Particularly in the Wake Forest game you had a knack for blocking shots, KJ McDaniels in particular. Is that just something that this team does well, that you emphasize? How does that manifest during games?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Well, I can assure you as a 6'4" white guy from Indiana who probably had four blocked shots in his career that I have nothing to do with it. The guys who block shots on our team, KJ and Devin Booker, it's not something we go around and do a lot of practicing. We don't talk a lot about it. It's something those guys just have, and it's innate ability to get off the floor quickly, and certainly KJ is the one that's even more surprising because he's 6'5" and not some 6'9" center that you would normally see doing those kinds of things. It's just a knack that those guys have, and there are times we encourage them to block the shots obviously because they have the ability, and then there are times we'd rather them wall up and be more physical and just use their chest to bother players. But certainly it's not anything that I help them with.

**Q. Just watching the game against NC State, the guy that really struck me that looked different was Rod Hall. His ability to get to the basket down the stretch was a thing that kept you in it a lot. Can you talk about him? He's a sophomore playing the point, and just how he's developed and come along at that position?**

BRAD BROWNELL: You know, he's a tough kid. He's a guy who didn't play point guard in high school but has a lot of the characteristics that you would want in a point guard. He's a guy

that embraces passing the ball and sharing the ball. He really just wants to win games. He's not a guy that would ever even look at a stat sheet to care what he did in a game. He's a guy that I think can do some good things, make winning plays because he's strong enough that when he gets into the paint he can shoot through people with size. He's a good passer. He's really a good defender. He's a guy that can guard point guards and bother the ball handler, but he can also fight guys off screens and guard shooters off screens. We've had him guard Joe Harris from Virginia at times in games against them.

He's a versatile guy that has a great sense of how to play. He's a guy who's gaining confidence certainly as he's in his sophomore season, is starting to play a little bit better. He's a guy who I'm trying to get to shoot a little more. He really is a better shooter than people realize. He doesn't have one of those pretty shots, but he's a guy that can make shots. He really makes 17-foot shots at an unbelievably high percentage even in practice. He just doesn't shoot a lot of threes. He's a guy who can make some, and he's kind of a big-game shooter type guy. So we feel comfortable with him on the floor.

**Q. Could you give us an update on (Jaron) Blossomgame's condition?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, Jaron is probably I would say 80, 85 percent healthy. He just doesn't have full strength in the leg. He is practicing and working out with us every day and going through competitive drills and can do all that, but there's certainly a little bit of a lack of explosiveness that they're hoping and thinking will come back as he gets full strength in the leg.

But he obviously broke both bones in his leg and had the surgery I think it was in April, and it's been a little frustrating for all of us to not have him helping us this year, but it's been a good learning experience for him, and he and Devin Coleman, we have two guys sitting out this year, but both guys now have finally returned to practice here this week, and not 100 percent either one of them, but on the mend, so that's good.

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