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An Interview With:

JEFF BZDELIK WAKE FOREST

Q. I just want to ask you about playing Duke again, the idea of playing them without Ryan Kelly this time. Does that change the way you approach the game?

JEFF BZDELIK: Not really. Obviously Ryan Kelly's presence allows them to space the court better, but they're going to do what they do. They're going to defend and they're going to move the ball, and they're going to be aggressive with their mentality. The first time out we turned the ball over, I think we had 13 turnovers in the first half, and they hit a barrage of threes on us. I think they got their first two-point field goal with 8:20 to go in the first half, and we coupled that with us only making three out of 13 shots within three feet of the rim in the first half. We've got to do a better job of finishing, we've got to do a better job of handling the basketball and getting out on their three-point shooters.

Q. Since you played them the first time, you guys have made some progress. Certainly I know there are ups and downs, but the win last week against NC State, does it provide a confidence level for a young team that you can play that well?

JEFF BZDELIK: Well, obviously you can talk about all the confidence you want to, but you have to validate it by having success. We're 3-4 in the league, and that's -- they're starting to understand, number one, that they can have success, and number two, what allows success: Playing well. And we've played well at times and we've played poorly at times.

We practice very hard to make sure that we're playing better all the time, and then we watch film and we see things that we aren't doing well,

and it's a constant learning process with this basketball team.

Q. I was wondering if you could shed a little bit of light on who you feel may be your top glue guy is, a guy who kind of does maybe the dirty work or isn't one of the more appreciated guys outside your program. I was wondering if you could share your top glue guy is and kind of what it is that that particular guy does for your squad.

JEFF BZDELIK: Well, I think, number one, we have a very talented freshman in Devin Thomas, who is averaging double digits and rebounding here in the ACC, the young ACC season already, and he's someone who defends very well and rebounds the ball very well and starts our break with some quick outlet passing. He's someone who continues to -- obviously needs to improve his offense, finishing around the rim, and he's gotten to the free-throw line a lot. Not shooting a very good percentage right now, but the fact that he isn't scoring as much as maybe some of these other highly regarded freshmen has put him under the radar, but from a defensive rebounding and offensive rebounding standpoint, I think you're going to be hard-pressed to find a better younger player. In fact, he's very good for no matter what age he is.

But he's someone obviously with defense and rebounding that is a glue guy. So I would say probably Devin Thomas in terms of what he brings to our team that's not from the scoring aspect.

Q. And if you could maybe also share your perspective on the fact that any successful team has to have a guy like this, a guy who doesn't necessarily in some cases jump out or maybe isn't your top scorer, whatever it may be - you mentioned the defense and the rebounding - that every team has to have a guy like that year to year to kind of build the program and win games.

JEFF BZDELIK: Exactly. I think the mentality that those kinds of players have, it's just

about winning. It's not about what their stat line is in terms of scoring, it's about just helping the team win, doing the things that necessarily don't show up in the box score but making -- he's a willing passer, for example, he's a defender, he's a hustle guy, he's an energy guy, because all those things are contagious is how I would characterize that kind of player, just interested in one thing, and that's winning.

Q. Your Deacons freshman class leads the ACC in combined points scored, averaging almost 33 points a game as a class. Have you ever had to rely on this many freshmen in your 10 years as a head coach?

JEFF BZDELIK: No. No, not at all. Yeah, we don't like to use the word freshmen because that airs excuses. No, it was one of my New Year's resolutions never to use that word. It's a dirty word. We're youthful I guess is the right way to say it, but this is really going to accelerate their learning process, the experience, because there's no substitute for experience, and they're gaining valuable experience the hard way.

We've had some great moments and we've had some clunkers, but they're battling through it, they're working hard, they're willing learners. It's a group that's very cohesive, and so that really excites all of us about our future.

JAMES JOHNSON VIRGINIA TECH

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, we're coming in off two tough losses, one here at home to our rival Virginia, and then went on the road and played a pretty good game, got behind early in the game and fought back to take the lead and just couldn't pull it out in the end. Got a tough Miami team coming in here playing what I think is some of the best basketball in the country, any team, any league right now, and it's going to be a tough task, tall task for my team here.

Q. I'm curious if you had a chance to review and what you saw from the three-point defense. I know you felt after the game that some of the shots were contested and some were late rotations. What did you see when you looked at that again?

JAMES JOHNSON: Yeah, most of them -- more than I thought were contested. They hit some tough shots. They hit some tough, tough shots. I think maybe a couple, KJ at the top of the key, where we just got lost, Marquis Rankin was a little too deep in the lane and didn't get it back out to him. I think that was an open shot. And then got screened in, Brown got screened in at the top. I thought maybe Jarell Eddie should have got out on the wing and maybe played that, and I think that was an open shot. But for the most part, the rest of those were tough, contested shots. The shots that I thought that we had -- Eddie had better looks than what some of their shots are; they made them and we missed them.

Q. And going up against Coach Larranaga, I was wondering if you could talk about your relationship with him.

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, of course I've got a great relationship with him and worked for him two years and was a part of the staff that made that run to the Final Four, that special, special moment in my career, and definitely I'm sure it's a special moment in his career. But at the end of the day, he's coaching his team and I'm coaching my team, and we're both competitive and we're going to try to get our teams to play the best we can to try to come out with a win on Wednesday night.

Q. Robert Brown, do you anticipate -- what did you see from him Sunday, and do you anticipate putting him back in the lineup?

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, not sure where we're going to go with that yet. Coming off the bench, I thought he did a good job. I thought he started out still a little slow and kind of forcing a couple things, trying to force the action to get going, but I thought the dunk in transition, gave him a great pass and the dunk in transition got him going, and he was able to get some stuff around the basket on some post-ups and some drives to the basket. He's still got to get better, but I thought he took a step forward, and hopefully we can keep getting him better the rest of the season.

Q. You mentioned earlier just kind of in general about Miami playing some of the best basketball in the country. Watching them on TV, inside and out, experience, they just appear pretty darned complete right now, especially with Reggie kind of getting his legs underneath

him. Could you talk a little bit more in specifics about their personnel?

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, I think they've got -- it starts with the little general they have there in Shane Larkin. I mean, I think he's one of the better guards in the league. I think we've got the best guard here, but he is definitely one of the best point guards in the league, and it starts with him, and he's running the show. He's distributing the basketball, he's rebounding the basketball and almost had a triple-double last night, and then the game before he had a double-double. And then you talk about their size up front and Kenny Kadji, inside-outside threat; Gamble, defense is strong, physical, sixth-year guy who's playing some really good basketball since Johnson has been out. And then you've got Johnson coming off the bench, who's definitely an all-league caliber player, and McKinney Jones and Durand Scott who's definitely an all-league type of player. Very talented at every position, and then Brown coming off the bench and Jekiri coming off the bench, and then of course you've got a very good coach in Coach Larranaga coaching them up.

Every position, they're deep, they've got veterans, they've got talent at every position, very, very good basketball team, and they're playing with a lot of confidence, as they should be, right now.

Q. You mentioned veterans. How much of an advantage is it in this era of college basketball where youth seems to be predominant, especially with early interest in the NBA, how much of an advantage is that experience that Miami has?

JAMES JOHNSON: Oh, it's tremendous. I mean, you talk about six-year guys, Gamble is a sixth-year guy, Kadji is a fifth-year guy, McKinney Jones, a fifth-year guy. Those guys have been through a lot, they're stronger, physical, they've seen just about everything you have to see in college basketball, whether it's a road game, whether it's playing No. 1 Duke. They've seen it all, or having Florida State come into their building right after a big win. They've seen all of that. They've seen all of that, they've seen all the teams. Practice, the daily grind of practice every day, at this point in the season, the end of January, they've been through it. They've been through it all, and then you've got the other teams over here, guys leaving early for the NBA, and then you've got teams with an early coaching change like myself and we lose a guy like I Montrezl Harrell and Dorian Finney Smith, guys that should be in

our program that we don't have, or a program like Wake Forest that got dealt all the freshmen that they have. Some guys transferred.

So to have those veteran guys is a big key.

Q. Could you shed some light on who you really feel your top glue guy is, a guy who kind of does some of the unheralded work? I know Eric gets a lot of attention for what he does, same with Jarell, but could you shed some light on someone who doesn't necessarily get the kind of attention for things that don't necessarily show up in the box score?

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, I've got to be honest with you, that's what we're looking for. Marquis Rankin right now I think is the closest guy that I have to that, but that's what I'm looking for. The successful teams, they've all got a guy like that, and at this point I would say the closest thing is Marquis Rankin, but we really don't have a guy like that. I need a guy that's going to get in there and stick his nose in there and get some 50/50 balls and dive on the floor and get some loose balls and guard the other team's best player, just do all those little things. I'm searching for that right now.

Q. Could you shed a little bit of light on what Rankin does do for you guys, just some of the things that you feel that he does do?

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, he's an energy guy for us, and he's our defensive stop. I feel like when we're in our man defense I can put him on the other team's best player and knowing the perimeter and he can make it difficult on them all night. But he's a smaller guy, 5'10", 5'11", and a lot of the guys that we're playing are 6'4", 6'5" guards. But he plays with a big heart, he plays hard, so I feel like he can do that for us right now.

TONY BENNETT VIRGINIA

TONY BENNETT: Getting ready to play, played on Saturday, and got a few games here in a short amount of time, so hopefully we can prepare for a very good team coming in Tuesday, and obviously watching them, and Mark has done a

real good job with NC State. They have some talent, and he's allowing, putting them in spots to play in. You see their effectiveness, how they can get it going as they did on Saturday night. So I'm looking forward to hopefully a well-played game.

Q. Who do you feel is your kind of glue guy, the guy who kind of does stuff that maybe doesn't necessarily end up in the box score?

TONY BENNETT: Well, for us this year it's been different every year, almost every game because we've had some guys who have been injured and have played and a lot of young guys, for a while it was Darion Atkins, he was kind of doing a lot of little things, and he's been out. I thought Evan Nolte did that for us in the Florida State game, and then he hit some big shots for us against Virginia Tech. It's really been different guys. For a while it was Teven Jones, who isn't playing as much right now, and it's fluctuated a lot.

In a way that's a good thing, and then maybe it's not such a good thing. I can't pinpoint one guy but different guys have stepped up at different times and given us nice lifts.

Q. Do you feel as if maybe that is the difference as far as kind of getting into the second half of the conference season to kind of continue things going in the right direction? Do you need one guy to kind of step forward or is it okay having kind of a different guy every night doing that?

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, as I was answering that question, I didn't mention a guy that maybe if I had to pick one, if you said who would it be for you, I might say Paul Jespersen, the more I think about that, because he's probably played the most. He's very steady in terms of his decision making, his position on defense, his offensive -- it's his unselfishness and his ability to make shots. I would probably lean towards Paul. He's only a sophomore, but I tell our guys, he's a smart player, usually is doing the right things and in the right spots. I would say that, and again, it's been other guys, but Paul probably has the most -- statistically he doesn't blow you away, but he does a lot of those little things. You can strike that other stuff, I'll go with Paul; how's that?

Q. When you have a younger guy that does that kind of stuff, that bodes well moving ahead. You sometimes associate that kind of stuff with an experienced guy, but when you can get somebody who's a little bit younger

doing that, you hope he develops in time, but that has to be encouraging when you have a younger guy who's willing to step in and play a role.

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, well, I think so. We have three upper classmen that are playing, and as Jontel Evans is getting himself back into the swing of things and healthier, he'll provide a lot of that, and certainly Akil Mitchell and Joe Harris, those are our three upper classmen. But I think when our team has played well, it's had that -- we call it a servants' mentality where they've really tried to serve each other on both ends of the floor. And again, when either you're younger or you go against some teams and you say, boy, they man-for-man maybe have a little bit more in whatever areas, we've got to do it collectively and have that selfless mentality, and it's a cliché that's given, but in basketball I think it's significant, and it can maybe have an impact on the game, perhaps more than a lot of other sports that I see. So that's something that every coach is trying to get his team to grasp and play with that kind of mentality.

Q. Not related to tomorrow's game, but your team because of your style of defense has kind of become a poster boy, I guess, for the advance stats crowd Ken Pomeroy. I don't know if you follow stuff like that. I was wondering to what extent you used those stats, the tempo stats and effective field goal percentage and stuff like that and if you integrate them into your prep work?

TONY BENNETT: Well, Coach McKay, our associate head coach, he's a big Ken Pomeroy guy, he looks at those stats and he makes me aware of the ones -- certainly there are stats used, but it's about quality, it really is, and as a coach you know when you see what's happening, whether it's offensively or defensively, are we making it hard for our opponent to get good looks, are they contested shots, are we getting quality looks, and sometimes you can dig into stats but you've got to kind of see is there quality there, are we getting the things we want.

Yeah, it can be more complicated than that, but there's also a simplicity in that that that's the end goal and you try to keep that in mind and make your execution good that way. But I know Coach McKay uses that, and I think there's value in that without a doubt.

Q. There were some comments made before last year's game in the ACC tournament between you and NC State, I guess questioning Virginia's qualifications for the NCAA. Is that anything your players remember or that you remember, or is there anything to be said about it?

TONY BENNETT: Oh, I remember -- since you bring it up, that's the first time I've thought about it. I think Mark was just trying to make a case for his team that they have a -- they had a strong chance to get in, and obviously they want to the Sweet 16.

No, look, I respect the job NC State is doing, and that's -- this is a new year, and obviously we're just trying to get as good as we can. Look, we got in there, we limped in a little bit at the end, but we got a chance to get in there and got that experience, didn't do particularly well, but no, I just -- I remember that, and that probably -- I don't know the extent of it. I'm sure it was blown out of proportion, but nothing on this end.

Q. Far be it from any of us to blow it out of proportion, but let me ask you another question. Malcolm Brogdon, what is he doing now?

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, Malcolm is starting to -- you can see he's starting to go -- he doesn't practice the whole practice, but he'll do small parts of practice, and then sometimes he'll have to take a day off, but he's building it up slowly, slowly but surely, so that's good. We're seeing progress. It's been a slow progress, but he's doing definitely more, and we just are being -- again, since the plan is obviously he's not going to be coming back, it's all right, can he go first and how does it respond and he's not obviously able to give us a full two-hour, hour and a half, whatever your practice is and go every day, but he's starting to go more and go at a harder pace. So that's been encouraging to see, and obviously he's a big part of our future, so we'll keep an eye on that, but everything has looked good up to this point on his progression.

Q. You guys mentioned the past few games you guys have shot the ball increasingly well. What do you think you guys are doing better on offense? Is it simply just making shots or doing things more efficiently?

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, obviously, as I said to the gentleman before, just trying to get good looks. You try to get the good looks, and we

always say offense can kind of come and go. Hopefully the quality of looks and a lot of it has to do with the opponent you're playing, how they defend you, but hopefully the quality of looks are there.

But that's why you try to make your defense constant and then keep getting quality looks on offense, and whether it's been Evan Nolte one game or Joe Harris and other guys at different times have stepped up and hit some big shots, different games sometimes we've gotten -- we haven't gotten to the free-throw line particularly well, but we've gotten some transition buckets, whether it's some points in the paint. You look at supplemental ways as opposed to just making outside shots to help your offense, and there's been at times a good balance, and again, just like different guys at different times have either gotten hot or been the guys we've tried to go to.

Q. And I'm sure you're not really -- the NCAA Tournament is probably the furthest thing from your mind right now, but a lot of people have made light of the fact that you guys are 4-0 against top-100 teams this year but have a pretty high RPI because of some of your missteps in non-conference play. Do you think about that at all, kind of how those missteps have kind of left you guys a little behind the 8-ball in terms of --

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, no, just we were a different team. If we could have played well enough to get to the NIT preseason at Madison Square Garden, certainly all those things help if you could have played, and Michigan and Kansas State were there with Pitt, Delaware came in and played well and beat us. We had different guys, we had some guys out and weren't playing particularly well, and that's the risk when you're playing some of those -- a game that you don't guarantee that you're going to go to Madison Square Garden. We didn't play well, some other teams played well that beat us, and you just try to evolve as a team.

It's a long year. Actually I heard Mark say that about -- they asked him about, because they had lost a tough one on the road, and he said, look, this is about how you finish, and when you're in a league as good as the ACC, in my opinion that's what determines how well you do, and I know when you talk about postseason you look at everything, and it is the whole body of work, but as

a younger team trying to find yourself, you just keep trying to get better and better, and there's so much basketball left in the conference, and that's going to make your main statement, and hopefully we can just play good basketball knowing we've got an excellent team coming into our place tomorrow night.

MARK GOTTFRIED NC STATE

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, we've got a pretty big challenge, obviously, Tuesday night. I think Tony has a team playing pretty well, and he does such a great job in how they play and their style and how they defend teams. We see it as a big challenge. We also think we're at a point where we have to take the next step and be able to win difficult, tough road games in tough atmospheres, which we're going to have I'm sure on Tuesday. We understand the challenge that lies ahead of us.

Q. Could you share your thoughts on who your top glue guy in this year and just what exactly it is that that guy does for you on the court and maybe doesn't necessarily end up in the box score?

MARK GOTTFRIED: Oh, that's an interesting question. I think that -- I don't know that we have one glue guy. That's a term, I think, that gets thrown around a lot. You know, so I don't know how to answer that. I think we have a lot of guys that do a lot of different things for our team, and if you want to have a good team, you'd better have a lot of glue guys to do the things that go unnoticed a lot. I don't know that we have one guy like that.

Q. Could you maybe -- maybe two guys, just a couple guys that maybe do something in particular that doesn't stand out to kind of the average fan or the average observer?

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, like I said, I'm not going to make one up. I think all of our players have to take a charge defensively, get a defensive block out. I just don't know that there's one guy.

Usually when people throw that term around, it's a guy that's not that talented that

figures out a way to help his team play. I just think that all your guys have to be like that, so I don't know if we have one or two guys. I'd like to think all of our guys are glue guys.

Q. I just wanted to ask you, when you guys -- there's a lot of talk about when you beat Duke and North Carolina, the follow-up. Did you think you handled the Duke win well or badly, and if so, how does that relate to following up another big emotional win over North Carolina?

MARK GOTTFRIED: I think when we beat Duke, there was so much attention around our game, it was hard for us to get past it. As the days followed, whether it was the wheelchair incident, whether it was people calling or texting from all over the country, it's hard to mentally move past it because you're getting a lot of attention. I just think and hope that our players understand better that in this league you have to mentally move on quickly and get yourself prepared for your next opponent. And not that we weren't; I thought we were prepared, but it was an emotional toll. So hopefully we're better prepared.

Q. Are you guys doing anything differently this time to make sure they're --

MARK GOTTFRIED: I don't know that there's any one thing you can do different. I was a good example myself. For three days after the Duke game I had 150 text messages and they kept coming from all over the country. Even personally you're ready to move on, and I think now that you've done that, you're a little bit more used to handling that. But I think -- this is new territory for our team. This is uncharted waters. We've got a lot of guys that have not been in these type situations, and we're learning. You'd better learn quick in this league, because just like Tuesday, we've got a monster type game against a really good opponent on the road, and so there's not much time to bask in the glory for any of us in this league.

Q. Without giving a game plan or anything away, what are some ways to attack Virginia's defense, because they just seem to be strangling everybody.

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, they're very, very good, and I think offensively you have to be very good, as well. As they execute their defense,

you'd better execute your offense. I just think they're very good, and they execute defensively very well. I think offensively then you have to execute at a high level. I think if you don't, if you don't make sharp cuts and good screens and you're taking quick shots and bad shots, then I think they win out. So what we've got to do is make sure we do the things we do well, but also understanding that's the type of game it's probably going to be.

Q. What makes Richard Howell such a great rebounder?

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, I think there's a lot of things. I think he has a great desire to go get the ball. I think he understands and anticipates a lot of times where the ball is going to be. I think he has great hands, and he's got a great feel for how to rebound, but I think more than anything, it comes down to having the tools but also having the desire. I think he's got both.

Q. I'd like your comment on what you see is the impact of freshmen on this particular game tomorrow.

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, we've got a couple that we rely on heavily. I think Tony does, as well. I think for most teams in the league it's pretty similar, some more than others. But I think we live in an age, in an era where our freshmen need to play and play well earlier for everyone in college basketball. That's just this world we live in somewhat. Hopefully ours will play well.

Q. How about consistency? When you're playing younger players like that, does it kind of go back and forth, ebb and flow?

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, most of the time young people, they're learning, and some young players, freshmen, learn quicker than others and become more consistent quicker. But part of being a freshman is this is your first time through all this, first time to go on the road and go to a place like Virginia, first time to go through a long college season, first time to have the demands put on you of practice and class and all your responsibilities, first time everything is magnified at this level. It's difficult sometimes for young people to be consistent with all that going on.

ROY WILLIAMS NORTH CAROLINA

ROY WILLIAMS: I know we're running a little built behind, so I'll be quick. We were not pleased at all, not satisfied, not happy about the way we played Saturday night, and yet you have to congratulate North Carolina State. They kicked our tails every which way it can be kicked. They were better in every phase of the game, more attentive, greater sense of urgency, and everything, and we've got a short turnaround now and go back on the road and see if we can play better than we have this year so far in arenas outside our home place.

Q. I was wondering if you could maybe look in a little bit of a different direction --

ROY WILLIAMS: I'd like to look in a different direction (laughing).

Q. As far as a guy who maybe does some things that you can in some cases consider them a glue guy, but a guy that does some of the unheralded things that doesn't necessarily show up in the box score, who would be one of the guys you have this year and what he does for you on the court?

ROY WILLIAMS: Well, I'd have to start thinking about that. You know, the way we play, we're a freelance motion offense more than not, and so we do try to make sure that the better players get more shots, there's no question about that. But Desmond Hubert does a lot of little things for us defensively, and yet he's not much of a threat on the offensive end. We have guys like Jackson Simmons and Luke Davis in practice that just do great things for us to help our team. But the best teams that we've always had is when we were very gifted and very experienced, and those guys also did the typical things that people won't notice like setting screens and getting on the floor for the loose balls and trying to help box out when it wasn't even their guy to box out.

The great teams that we've had, and we've had a few of those, has been where even the better players, the more gifted guys, do that. But right now I'd say Desmond doesn't get very much credit because people look at the offensive end of

the floor, and yet he's our most sound fundamentally defensive player, a big guy, but yet he's got to do a lot of work offensively, and then at practice I'd say Jackson Simmons and Luke Davis.

Q. PJ has played well offensively the past couple games but has only gotten 17 minutes in each of those. What do you think is holding him back from seeing more time?

ROY WILLIAMS: Foul trouble, I think, in the game before. I think he and James Michael both had two fouls early in the first half was part of it. And then the other thing, if you go back the last two games, J.P. Tokoto has played probably his best two games. So it's not just PJ's right to be out there on the floor. Saturday I got so mad at him when he's going after a loose ball, and a North Carolina State player runs from behind him and dives for the loose ball when PJ is trying to pick it up, and I just can't stomach those kind of things. I keep giving guys chances even when they do something like that, but there is no question that that's the reason he sat out for a long time Saturday.

Q. You mentioned needing to play better on the road. I think heading into the season you may have had the best road winning percentage in ACC history. I'm just wondering other than having good players, what's the key to doing well on the road, and what does this team need to do to be successful?

ROY WILLIAMS: I think the key -- you said the key, there's no question it's very good players. But I think it's a mindset that you can beat people on the road. I think having confidence that you can block out the crowd cheering like crazy for the other team, you can block out the runs that they make knowing that you're going to respond and make runs of your own. I think it's a toughness factor, handling the adversity and sticking to what you're supposed to do as opposed to trying to go on your own.

I think it's handling the adversity that you have and making sure of whatever your job is that you do that job to the best of your ability. So to me it's poise, it's focus and it's confidence, and it's hard to get that, but I've preached it for 25 years, and we've got a great record on the road in the Big 8 and the Big 12. So far I haven't done a very good job of getting this year's club to handle that, and yet we are probably the youngest club I've

ever coached, or the least experienced that I've ever coached.

But we're trying to do the same things with this group that we've done in the past and hopefully it'll take hold pretty soon.

Q. Just to follow up on that question, it seems to be across college basketball that it's become tougher to win on the road. Is that, do you think, the environments, or do you think it's just the parity in college basketball?

ROY WILLIAMS: I think it's more the parity. I've never lost to a building. I've never lost to that guy in the 13th row screaming at me, cussing at me or anything like that. I think parity has a lot to do with it. In our case, last year we lose by 33 at Florida State, and we won every other conference road game. So I think that having good players, and as I answered the last question, too, having confidence and feeling that you can do it and having the poise to handle the tough moments.

Again, after our Florida State game, I had some writers saying do you actually believe a team that loses by 33 on the road can bounce back and have a chance to win the whole blessed thing, and I said yes, and we did have. If we don't lose John Henson or Kendall Marshall, we could have won the whole thing, but that day we weren't very good, but we bounced back after that. But I think more parity than anything.

Q. You mentioned a couple of times, is it more of a challenge this season as far as having younger players and getting them to understand the little things like getting a loose ball or the things that go into winning road games or some of the intangible things that go into winning? Has that been more of a challenge this year?

ROY WILLIAMS: Well, it is more of a challenge when you have young guys. There were times our last two games I've looked out there on the court, and we've had four freshmen out there on the court at the same time. We only have one senior, and he missed over half the year last year with an ACL. We have two juniors and one of those missed the entire year last year with an ACL. It's really not only young but inexperienced as far as the older guys kind of thing.

But it's more difficult with those guys, but we've played, gosh, I think 19 games right now.

We should be better now than we were when we played in Maui, and that's where we've got to keep progressing and being able to handle the difficult situations.

Q. I know you've sort of taken a no-excuse mentality, especially since NC State, but is it personally frustrating or is there a point where you're trying to figure out what do I need to do to get this out of these guys?

ROY WILLIAMS: Well, it's both. It's extremely frustrating. There's not a word that you can use that explains it because extremely is not powerful enough, but it's extremely frustrating. But the fact of the matter is it's there and we've got to do everything we can every day to try to get better and try to be able to handle those tough situations.

I thought we were terrible at most of the game at Indiana, terrible most of the game at Texas, and yet we go to Florida State and bounce back some after losing at Virginia, as well. But those are pretty good teams, and playing them on the road in their home court is a tough task for anyone. North Carolina State is another example. They're really, really good, but we just need to play better ourselves.

So we've got another challenge right now because going into BC is not easy. BC, they shoot the ball well, they shoot more threes than anybody in our league, present some match-up problems for us. Everybody will be fired up when North Carolina comes. That's the way it is, and that's the way I like it because if nobody is fired up when you come in there, that means they've been beating your rear end a lot, so I don't like that scenario for sure.

Q. What would you say about the University of Miami? When you're talking about inexperience, Miami is the opposite end, and a lot of people are saying that's one of the big reasons that they're having so much success that they have six seniors and sixth-year guys, plenty of three-year guys and they're playing with a certain maturity. Can you talk about what you see from them and if you think that veteran savvy is helping them?

ROY WILLIAMS: Well, there's no question I think it's helping them. I think it's a tremendous asset, but also I think that some people just talk about that and say that's the only reason. They're pretty doggone good. Larkin and Scott in the backcourt, Kadji presents such match-up problems for you, you can go down the line. They've got all the parts. They've got guards, they've got -- I

mean, Gamble makes fewer mistakes, and I'm just looking at it from a distance, then almost any of those, quote, role players that makes him become a very good player, whether it's a role player or not. He dunks the ball every time he has a chance, he plays good defense. We were guarding him with one of our freshman, and our freshman was 188, and Gamble was like 240, and he's 23 or 24 and our freshman is 18. But the bottom line is he's pretty doggone good.

I think everybody would like to have talent and everybody would really love to have experienced talent. If you can't have both, you'll take either one, and I think that they have both. They have experience but they have talented players, too, and I think in today's times in college basketball, I have a lot of freshmen, I say, have you ever heard of this guy, and they'll say no, and I'll say, well, he's getting ready to kick your rear end tomorrow night, and he may not have been a McDonald's All-American but he's really good, and freshmen, it's hard for them to understand how good the other guys are until they play.

JIM LARRANAGA MIAMI

JIM LARRANAGA: We had a very good week last week with two home games, a great crowd for both nights. Both games were sell-outs, students camped out for the Duke game, so it was great to be able to win those two games. Now we've got to get ready to go on the road. We've got two road games and we've got to bring the same energy and enthusiasm that we had here at home in front of the hometown crowd. We've got to take our show on the road and play with a certain amount of conviction.

Q. Erick Green and that match-up, what makes Erick so hard to defend, and what do you think works against him?

JIM LARRANAGA: Nothing yet. The guy is a scoring machine, and he scores in so many different ways. He's tremendous in the open court, he's terrific at getting fouled and cashing in at the foul line. He can shoot the three. They set a lot of ball screens, which he's very good at utilizing the screen to free himself. He's had over 20 points in

every game but one this year, and he's a handful for anybody.

Q. What stands out from your time together with Coach Johnson and what's your impression of the job he's done so far?

JIM LARRANAGA: J.J. was just an instrumental part of our George Mason program for the two years. He was great at every aspect. He was a terrific recruiter, terrific coach on the floor, but most importantly he was a great friend and continues to be. I think he's done a very, very good job with his team. A lot of things when I watch them on tape remind me of us. They're a little bit younger than us, but they do a lot of the things that we like to do.

Q. Shane Larkin has been playing great for you lately. I want to get your impression, what has impressed you about Shane not just recently but since you've gotten to Miami?

JIM LARRANAGA: Well, we saw Shane play when he was at the end of his freshman year of high school. We immediately started recruiting him. I loved him then, I love him now. He's terrific at everything. He's a heck of a defender, he works so hard defensively, comes up with steals. He had ten rebounds and nine rebounds in our last two games, and he's not even six feet tall. He runs the team, he shoots the three, he handles the press, just having an all-conference caliber year.

Q. We talked after the Duke game about the let-down factor and will there be a let-down. Obviously there wasn't be because the team was on again yesterday with FSU, but FSU is a natural rival, state rival, you were home and big crowd and all that stuff. Can you talk about going on the road and how are you going to keep the team at the same level of intensity like you said you wanted them to play with conviction? How do you do that and not get them to start thinking that it's going to be this easy every night?

JIM LARRANAGA: Well, you're absolutely right about that, and getting them ready for Florida State, our arch-rival in-state with a sellout crowd here, certainly the players can feel that energy from the crowd. Trying to get our players to understand that when you go on the road, all those elements are against you and that you've got to find the mental toughness to generate it as a team, 14 guys and a handful of coaches pulling together

and playing like a veteran group, and hopefully we'll be able to do that.

Q. Can you talk about the greatest strides you guys have made from the early season, the exhibition loss on the Florida Gulf Coast to where you guys are now?

JIM LARRANAGA: Well, I would say our focus is a lot better at the defensive end of the floor and we've been rebounding the ball a lot better, and that helps us offensively because we've been able to get more open court opportunities, fast breaks, but that's a direct result of our defense.

When you improve defensively, you get more stops. When you improve rebounding, you prevent second-chance points, and that creates opportunities for your offense that you didn't have before. So I think we've just got to continue to work on those areas. Yesterday we had 19 assists. I like that. If we have 16 assists or more, I feel like we're sharing the ball very well. We just need to keep our focus and play with a lot of energy.

Q. Regarding Shane, what are the things about him that reflect the fact that he's the son of a world-class athlete?

JIM LARRANAGA: You know, first of all, Barry and Lisa Larkin, Shane's parents, are at almost all of our games, all our home games, and he comes from such a unique family of great athletes. Barry's brothers were also football players, basketball players, and I think it's in their genes, it's in their blood, to just know how to compete at the highest level. They love competition. In fact, in Shane's case, if we just do a boring drill, he loses focus. The moment we put a score up on the board, he tunes in and does a fantastic job.

I think it's just the competitive nature of the family and the natural physical gifts of speed, quickness, jumping ability, and the hard work they've put into their skill level.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about McKinney Jones. I know you mentioned him before doing a lot of different things for you. I was wondering if you could talk about some of the things that he does do for you guys out there on the court.

JIM LARRANAGA: Well, I think, first of all,

we have a number of guys that get a lot of attention from the media, Shane Larkin, Durand Scott, Reggie Johnson, Kenny Kadji, but we have two guys, Trey McKinney Jones and Julian Gamble, who are such valuable contributors because they're kind of flying under the radar screen, yet do exactly what the team needs them to do. Trey is someone who keeps us in offense, makes the simple pass, plays very smart, plays a very conservative brand of basketball, yet can shoot the heck out of the ball, and every time you leave him open, he can hurt you from three-point range.

Julian Gamble is one of those guys that he plays defense, he rebounds, he hustles, he's strong, he's tough, so the combination of those two guys, guys that don't get maybe a lot of media attention that are instrumental in helping us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

January 28, 2013



An interview with:

MARYLAND COACH MARK TURGEON

COACH TURGEON: I think we played a little bit harder on the road against Duke. Ran into a buzz saw. Duke played a great game. Though there were some things that we did better and some things that we didn't do as well. We didn't defend as well as we've been defending, so it was a little disappointing. But some positives moving forward with another road game on Wednesday.

Q. Can you talk about the way Charles (Mitchell) handled that environment there, and is that as impressive a game as you've seen from him this year?

COACH TURGEON: Well, Charles was really good offensively. I think I said this after the game. He took it right to him. He offensive rebounded. He had a bounce in his step offensively. He was really good. But he was equally not as good on the defensive end. That's why his minutes were shortened.

He's got to help us more defensively than he did in that game. But, offensively, I thought he handled it. He was ready to play. He wanted to play more. He picked up a couple fouls early when he was playing well and had to sit him. But, hopefully, can continue to play with that aggressiveness on offense and get better on the defensive end for us.

Q. Wondering if you could share your thoughts on maybe a guy who doesn't get a whole lot of -- I know everybody knows about Alex (Len) and what he's been able to do for you this year. But maybe you could talk about a guy on the team that maybe doesn't get as much attention. Maybe does some of the little things?

COACH TURGEON: Well, probably Dez Wells would be a guy that's probably done the most for us defensively of guarding guys and putting them on the best player perimeter guy most nights. He's probably done more for us than anybody else. A guy like Shaq Cleare has been inconsistent, but defensively we've put him on some pretty good players.

He did a good job against (NC State's Richard) Howell. He did a nice job against (Duke's Mason) Plumlee before getting in foul trouble. Plumlee got a lot of his points late in the game against us in the second half. So I thought Shaq did a pretty good job on him. So I think those guys defensively.

Pe'Shon (Howard) is doing a lot of things, assists, defending good players. His assist-turnover was good. He was doing a lot of good things for us early too.

Q. I think after the past two road games at North Carolina and Duke, Charles has said that he felt like you guys were, I guess in his words, trying to match the tempo of the home team and not really playing Maryland basketball by rushing shots early in the shot clock and not really running through the sets and running through the possessions. I'm curious if you felt the same way? Do you agree with him? Or I guess that may be just a reflection of the larger struggles you guys are having executing the offense.

COACH TURGEON: No, that's a misquote. We threw the ball to North Carolina more than we threw it to us in the first half. We didn't get a lot of shots in the first half against them. So maybe we were rushing. That seems like an eternity ago when that happened. I thought we executed better. I thought we handled Duke's pressure a lot better.

When we cut it to 34-30, Nick took a quick shot. Didn't defend the right way. Gave up a weak-side three to (Seth) Curry and a break down. Then we threw the ball to Alex, threw it in to Shaq the next two possessions and guys just didn't

finish. Plumlee had two fouls and we went right at him. We just didn't finish.

So I disagree with him on that. That was more our defense than anything on Saturday than it was our offense. But in that environment under those conditions I thought we handled it. For where we are as a team right now, I thought we handled it pretty well. I thought we executed pretty well.

Second half, got a little sped up, a few quick shots. They were hot, got things going. You can't do that. It was a little bit of everybody, but mostly Dez and Nick (Faust) getting a little too sped up.

Q. I know Alex only got six shots. After watching the film, do you think that was more a product of Duke's defense or something else?

COACH TURGEON: It was a number of things. One, Duke did a nice job on him. Two, no, we just got a little bit behind and panicked a little bit offensively then he was just being too finesse, you know, fadeaway jumpers. Plumlee had two in the first half and trying to air ball lay-up against him. Just things like that. A little bit of frustration on my part with him.

So should he have touched the ball a little bit more? Probably so. Would it have made a difference in the outcome? No, absolutely not. So we've done a good job of throwing Alex the ball this year. Just got to continue to get better and get a little tougher.

Q. I know you talked about getting to the free-throw line this year. Do you think you did a better job of that against Duke, getting to the line?

COACH TURGEON: Yeah, I think we've tried to drive it more. That is the nature of their defense. They get out and pressure and make you drive it. We were much more aggressive. The second half, we didn't get there when we needed to as much. So it's something we'll continue to work on. We continue to work on executing better.

Our offense wasn't atrocious against Duke. It really wasn't. We did some nice things. We scored 64 points on the court. We just didn't guard them. They made a lot of shots. So it was more the nature of our defense on Saturday than it was our offense.

Q. When you go with a team like Duke where it looked like watching it that defensively you wanted to shut down Plumlee and maybe

Curry, and a guy like (Rasheed) Sulaimon does a lot. How difficult is that for a team from both the standpoint of what their assignments are going in as well as how it's being played on the court to just trying to pull down a guy like that?

COACH TURGEON: Yeah, we weren't expecting Sulaimon to come out and do that, obviously. But we were supposed to guard Sulaimon the same way we guarded Curry. So one in transition, one on a defensive mistake, and then they got a four-point play just on good offense and found the shooter. So it really got him going.

I thought we did a nice job on Curry. I thought (Quinn) Cook controlled the game, did a nice job.

But for the most part in the first half we did a good job on Plumlee too. We just made mistakes defensively. The ball went to the post and we made mistakes. One, they ran a nice play. Set a good screen on Logan (Aronhalt). Logan shouldn't have been screened if he was in the right spot. So we made some defensive mistakes that helped them. It's something that we really drilled on for two days, so that was the disappointing part.

One thing we usually do is we usually dial into our defensive game plan and guard. We just give them credit because they were very, very good, but they also made some mistakes that got some guys going.

GEORGIA TECH COACH BRIAN GREGORY

COACH GREGORY: Pleased with our performance on Saturday afternoon. Playing a very good and young Wake team that's just come off a big win and played really well against North Carolina State.

I've said sometimes the results didn't always show. I thought we were playing better. I thought we were getting more aggressive on offense, and our defense was coming around. And we were doing a good job of rebounding the ball, outrebounding both Duke and Carolina on the road, which was obviously a key point for us to improve in.

So things kind of came together. We had maybe as good as 16 minutes of basketball to start the game as we've played. Then we went into a little stretch to start the second half. We didn't score for the first five minutes. But, after that, we

actually played pretty well the remaining 15 minutes of the second half. So I was pleased with the way our guys bounced back. They've been resilient. They've stayed positive.

And we started off with a very, very difficult schedule. So now we need to move on and go on the road and play against a Clemson team that has two seniors that have really had great careers. Those guys have done a great job with other teams in this league that have some younger guys. Those two seniors have done a really good job of anchoring that team and maybe playing their best basketball of the year with two very difficult close losses on the road to Florida State and North Carolina State, then to come back and play extremely well against Virginia Tech.

Q. You've had, among many outstanding performances, Robert Carter, I believe, is 9 for 10. How has he progressed to this point? Is he just beginning to scratch the surface of his ability?

COACH GREGORY: I believe so. As good of a freshman year as he's had for us, starting every game. Now in league plays, averaging just under 12 and over 7 rebounds a game. Shooting the ball 45% from the field, 45 from the three. Picked up the free throws a little bit. He's too good of a shooter not to shoot over 70%.

But he's been great. He works hard every day. Understands that there are a lot of areas that he can improve on. The physicalness of this game, as big and strong as he is, he can get a lot stronger which is only going to help him. He's showing that shooting touch that he had. He's a guy with good size and good feet and can score inside and outside.

So I like the progress that he's making. Sometimes being thrown into the mix, sink or swim, you've got to tread water sometimes. I think during the long season there are stretches when he's done that. Now he's playing pretty well for us.

Q. What are his best attributes?

COACH GREGORY: His best attributes, he's got a high basketball IQ. He understands the game. He picks up things quickly. Obviously, he's got good size. He's got good hands, and he's got good feet. The one thing I always talk about, he's got a great hand on the shot. He's got a great follow through. So even guys like that, all they've got to do is spend time now to become a really,

really efficient shooter, and I think he will be able to do that.

I think his best attribute though is he's coachable. He wants to get coached. He's always getting extra film in, always in the gym extra. He's one of those kids that you know is going to continue to improve and improve and improve, and those are the guys that you'd like to have around.

Q. I was wondering your thoughts on a guy for your squad who maybe does some of the things that doesn't always show up in the box score, but in some cases people consider him a glue guy. But an unheralded guy on your team and what exactly that guy does for you out on the floor?

COACH GREGORY: Well, you obviously have Mfon (Udofia), who has been a great senior for us. But probably the guy whose stats don't jump out yet but has done a tremendous job for us is Daniel Miller. He's averaging 32 minutes a game. If we can get that to 28, 29, those one or two-minute extra time to rest in each half is always beneficial.

He was a guy that when we got here wasn't asked to do a lot. Now we need him to do a lot. It's not always scoring, it's not always rebounding. He was always up in all of those areas, but he anchors our defense. He really does. He understands what we need to do defensively. He's always in the right spot.

He's averaging just under 8 rebounds a game in the league, but the thing he does is his man very rarely gets the rebound. So sometimes he's given up four or five rebounds a game because there are times that we have him with no rebound responsibility just because there is some tremendous offensive rebounders in this league.

Howell from North Carolina State is a great example where his single job is to make sure he doesn't get any. So, I mean, he's definitely a glue guy for us because of his position. For us, those glue guys a lot of times are your point guards and your back line defenders.

So it would be Daniel and Mfon who I think has had a tremendous senior year as well.

Q. You made the decision earlier this year basically to go pretty heavy with three freshmen. Getting into the time of year where a lot of times the first year freshmen kind of run out of gas. These guys are showing no sign of

that. What has kind of kept these guys going? Do you see them stretching this all the way through to March?

COACH GREGORY: Well, if you just jinxed them, I'm going to be upset with you. With you, yeah, those guys, they've been good. I think one of the things that's been beneficial for those guys is just the fact that they've been around us so long, and they were able to use our facilities in the spring and come in on their own. Those three guys did a great job of doing that.

So they were actually, all three of them, working out all April, May and June before they even came up here. So they had three months of working out together and coming in at night, our veteran players meeting them in there either to play or just workout and our guys showing them stuff and different things like that.

Obviously, they were up there all summer long. So they had a good head start. I think it's paying dividends right now. One thing is I think they're all cognizant of the fact that they're very, very important parts of the team, you know what I mean? Obviously, all three now starting. So they've handled that well.

They've handled the challenges and disappointments that come from the process that we're undertaking right now. At times not happy about it, but that's why they came here as well.

So I think their mental approach has been every bit as good as the physical stuff they've done. We understand that they're freshmen, so I think we're also smarter in terms of not having -- sometimes you grind guys out when you're in the rebuilding process. We need to keep our guys fresh and energized because that's our best chance right now of being successful.

Q. Along the same lines, it seems like in the second half you're hitting a wall or a drought. Is that something that maybe the freshmen put you through those droughts or does a veteran have to pick up, or is it a collective effort? How do you deal with that?

COACH GREGORY: I think a couple of things. I think you always have to rely on your upper class. If you take a look around, and we have a young league. A lot of teams are young. But those younger teams have some veterans that have carried them at times.

Virginia Tech has had (Erick) Green. I talked to Clemson with (Devin) Booker and (Milton) Jennings. Those guys have been able to carry them. Tough, close game yesterday.

Jennings gets 20-plus points in double digits and rebounds and so forth. So you always have to, during those difficult times in a game -- which you're going to have some ebbs and flows in games. You're going to have sometimes where, for us, it's always going to be probably struggling to make some baskets. And some of that does come to the fact that three of our top scorers are freshmen. So that's where Mfon needs to do a good job.

That's where we need to settle down, get the ball into Daniel and Kam (Kammeon Holsey), and as upperclassmen, they need to be able to make some big plays for us.

Q. I wanted to ask you about an aspect of your coaching philosophy. You're at the bottom of the ACC in three-point field goal percentages. Is that a function of the personnel you've inherited or would you like to coach teams that don't rely very much on the three-point shot?

COACH GREGORY: I haven't even seen the stats. Are you talking about in league play? We've taken more threes than our opponents in league play.

Q. Yeah, you have upped it a little bit. But overall, you're right at the bottom of the ACC in terms of attempts and percentage. I'm still learning about you as a coach, but I'm still trying to figure it out is that a philosophical thing or a personnel thing?

COACH GREGORY: No, no. I wouldn't say that my philosophy is that we shoot a lot of threes. I think it's a little more of a personnel thing for us right now. I think with Daniel and Kam and Robert, we do have some guy that's can get us baskets inside. We do want to play inside out in a lot of areas.

Our freshmen, I think -- I think Chris Bolden is an excellent shooter. I think Marcus (Georges-Hunt), before it's all said and done, is going to be able to be a very good three-point shooter as well. But some of the upperclassmen have not shot the ball well. Not only this year, but even last year.

I don't mind taking threes. There have been games where we've taken a good number of threes. But as long as they come within the offense, and a lot of times we shoot fast from the three once the ball goes inside first.

FLORIDA STATE COACH LEONARD HAMILTON

COACH HAMILTON: We played two games last week and came from behind at home to beat Clemson at home at the buzzer. We played on the road against a Miami team that's playing very well. I thought they played very well, and I didn't think we played very well. Executed like a very mature team that's on a mission, and I think we had too many points where we played like an immature team that didn't have the right direction. We got our hat handed to us.

We have another home game against Maryland. We're 3-3. We're still trying to claw and scratch and see if we can get back into the upper echelon of the ACC.

Q. I know most people who follow college basketball know about Michael (Snaer). But I was wondering if you could share a little of your feelings of a guy on your team who maybe doesn't get as much attention, maybe does some of the little things, but doesn't always necessarily show up in points and rebounds? Your thoughts on maybe a guy who is a little unheralded and maybe does a little of the dirty work for you guys?

COACH HAMILTON: I think that's part of our problem. We don't have enough guys on our team that are doing a lot of the dirty work. Terrance Shannon was our dirty-work guy until he got injured. He was giving us a lot of energy, a lot of hustle plays, blocked shots, rebounds, becoming a great defender. He was our most unheralded player. Now that he is recuperating from a neck injury, we don't have anybody replacing that type of energy.

We have three veterans. Michael and (Ian) Miller, who has been hampered by a foot injury, and Okaro White are the three veterans we have returning. All the other guys are basically new players. I wouldn't identify us right now as having a guy that replaced what Terrance Shannon gave us.

Q. I wanted to ask you, Michael did it again against Clemson. Can you just talk about his ability to hit that second clutch shot? I don't know anybody in the ACC that's done it that often as he has in the last two years?

COACH HAMILTON: Well, Michael's having to make a tremendous adjustment, because we have facilitators on the team that we lost last year. Michael is more of a catch and shoot guy who finished a lot of plays and made shots because the ball was rotated to him. And this year he's been caught in a situation where he's had to become more of a distributor. That's not what he does best. So he hasn't had as many opportunities.

But because Michael's such a gym rat, and he's in the gym working all the time, he has the ability to work just as hard in the gym by himself as he does when he's on the floor just playing in the game.

So I think that gives him a certain level of confidence that when those stressful moments arrive in the game, he's done it enough in practice, by himself, in addition to practice, that he has a tremendous amount of confidence and he's more relaxed and focused in those situations. That's allowed him to shoot with a lot more confidence.

Q. Was the bank three really what he was aiming for?

COACH HAMILTON: Absolutely not. I think that probably has a lot to do with just being focused. In our game we always get some lucky bounces. If you go back and watch the game, a lot of times you'll be scrambling for rebounds and the ball bounces off someone's hand.

We were playing against someone the other day and we lost four or five of those where we were hustling and getting deflections and getting our fingers on balls. It always seems to fall back into the guy's hands that put it in the basket. That's one of those things that happen. If you have enough bad things happen, you get lucky every once in a while. I think those are lucky banks for us.

Q. When you win a game like you did at Maryland last month or early this month, is there sort of a concern when their team is coming back that you guys have to be maybe more focused?

COACH HAMILTON: That's a tremendous observation. I feel that way every time we play. Just the quality of the teams in the ACC are such a level and all the games on TV where everybody has the machines, and all of our things are charted, your strengths and weaknesses. So there

won't be any surprises. No one's going to surprise anyone of any new play or anything of that nature.

We have a tremendous amount of respect for Maryland. They'll make the adjustments they need to make. They made some game-time adjustments that we had problems handling. They're a good basketball team. They're well-coached like all the teams in the ACC. Any time you play a team the second time around, you expect them to be a little better than they were the time before you played them.

You just don't want the fact that you won the game to relax your players and them not remember it was a hard-fought game that we had to come from 12 or 13 down, and we still were able to blow the game open by three points.

Q. Just for follow-up, what is the progress with Shannon and obviously his loss has made a tremendous impact?

COACH HAMILTON: No doubt about that. It might have been in the Maryland game. We had eight rebounds in 14 minutes. He had a big impact on that game, sending them big, strong, physical guys inside. We all know that Maryland's got some heavy duty bodies in there who take up a lot of space, and he neutralized in the last game.

We lost that so someone else will have to step up. But with Shannon out for a while, I'm not encouraged one way or the other. If we're going to err on the side of being extremely cautious. I don't anticipate him coming back any time soon. Who knows? Unless he has a speedy recovery.

He's still in a neck brace. I don't expect that to come off for a while. The good news is that the injury was not nearly as bad as -- it was not nearly as bad. It's an injury that can completely heal, but it takes time. And everybody's different in terms of the healing process.

We're going to let nature take its course. It doesn't weigh heavily into our plans right now. We'll be happy and grateful if something happened where the healing process was speeding along. But right now we're moving on with the idea that it's a strong possibility he might not return this year.

DUKE COACH MIKE KRZYZEWSKI

Q. Have you ever had a week where you've had a 47-point swing between two games?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I don't keep track of that. You'd have to look. I'm sure in my early years. We lost to Virginia by 43 late in the week. We might have beaten somebody early in the week. Though we didn't beat many teams at that time.

Q. Do you remember many swings? Do the scores reflect how poorly things went in Miami and how well things went in Miami, or maybe the scores didn't reflect the differences?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: No, I thought we played well against Maryland. We had to. I thought Maryland played well. Maryland's good. But we hit shots. The first ten minutes against Miami I thought we played well. We didn't hit any shots. They prevented some, but we missed some lay-ups and they didn't miss any. They were playing at a really high level.

It got out of hand, and they're real good. We're just trying to keep getting better with the group we have right now. So we got better on Saturday, and hopefully we can continue moving in that direction when we go to Wake Forest on Wednesday.

Q. The other thing I wanted to ask you is last year you guys were 8-0 on the road in the ACC. Over your career, you've had a really good road record. A lot of talk of this year's team is 0-2 on the road. Is that a function of the schedule or is it something this team has to learn to do on the road to be as successful as some of your other teams?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, it's not passed down. Winning on the road is not passed down. You have to be able to be tough enough to win on the road. With us, we usually play in a very upbeat atmosphere. Teams are even more ready to play us. As good as the team we would normally face would be, they are better when we face them on their home court. That just goes with the territory.

Q. I know a lot of people know about what Mason (Plumlee) and Seth (Curry) are able to do and even what Ryan (Kelly) was able to do before he got hurt. But I wondered if you could share your thoughts on a guy that doesn't necessarily lead you in scoring, rebounding, assists whatever it may be, but

has vital contributions. I didn't know if there was a guy or two that stood out to you that maybe gets a little overlooked or unheralded inside the program?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Oh, I don't know. All of our guys are important, you know? I'm not going to single out one of them. Every one of them is important. I mean, Tyler Thornton doesn't have to take a shot, and he's important because of his defense, leadership, his presence on the court. I'm not going to single out one guy.

Q. You mentioned Tyler because --

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: You're going to single him out? Yeah, you can single him out. Look, all of our guys on our team are important. So we're not worried about being overlooked. We're definitely not overlooked. But I think that would be a great observation on your part to single out one of our guys, but I'm not going to do it.

Q. The other day after the game you talked about how the team got better by setting better screens, taking better, what you called Duke shots. I'm curious after looking at the film if you can expand on that a little bit more? Were there any other specifics of the game that you guys played so much better?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: No, I thought there was greater attention to detail when we were winning so much and had Ryan in there. There could be some slippage that you wouldn't know about and we could still probably produce points, especially, because the court is so spread and you have two of the better three-point shooters on the court in Seth and Ryan, and Rasheed can score, and Quinn (Cook) can hit open shots.

So you had five guys with spacing, and very little double teaming or plugging. You just had more space. Now we have to have more attention to detail on setting your man up, setting screens, working together to get shots. That was the best we've done thus far in doing that, even when we had Ryan, because we have to do it better. Hopefully we'll continue to build on that.

Q. On defense, what areas are you seeing there?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: They're getting more comfortable with one another. I mean, it's a huge difference with Josh (Hairston) and Amile (Jefferson) playing at the four. Everyone has to adapt. You can put more emphasis on guarding Mason and Seth when Ryan's not in the ballgame.

How they get open and what shots they get are different.

It's a period of adjustment. You'd rather not go through it, but we're going through it. We saw some progress on Saturday.

Q. Just mentioning the road question again. How much of it is due to the parity in college basketball, or how much is sort of the selective immaturity of college basketball where you have so many young teams going on the road playing in tough environments?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I think both. I think there aren't -- there aren't the great teams. There are some teams that can be somewhat better, but not necessarily ridiculously better than others in our conference. Age has something to do with it. The oldest team in our league, by far, is Miami. (Kenny) Kadji's going to be 25 in May. (Reggie) Johnson's 23. (Julian) Gamble's 23. You've got guys who are men. Then they're well-coached and they've played together.

They're going to handle road better than younger groups. That's just the way it is. I don't know if it's immaturity as much as inexperience. Sometimes when you say immaturity, people look at that as insulting somebody.

But inexperience, I think, is a keyword. Age has something to do with it. The older the team you have, the better chance you have for consistency both home and away because they're older. They get it. In some respects, some of them become men. They're men by that time. The other guys are young men or boys.

Q. I was wondering at this point with 19 games into the season. How is (Seth Curry's) shin holding up compared to where it was at the beginning of the year?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, thank God. I think he's done a great job. I think our medical staff Jose and Nick have done a great job of treatment and doing other things that are necessary to keep them in shape, in good enough shape to be able to play at a high level. We feel it's not any worse than it was in the fall. Hopefully that can -- we it continue to do it. We can continue to hang on with that.

CLEMSON COACH BRAD BROWNELL

COACH BROWNELL: Really proud of the way our guys played yesterday coming off a good win against Virginia Tech. Certainly Damarcus Harrison played much better than he's played all year, which was good to see. He made some shots for us. K.J. McDaniels shot the ball well from three, and Milton had a great game both scoring and making clutch free throws and rebounding the ball.

So it was a good win for us. Obviously, a very quick turn around here in preparation for Georgia Tech.

Q. With the kind of game that Milton (Jennings) had, not that it necessarily has to be 28-14 every time out, but since he is in his senior season, can he maintain a high level like that the rest of the season and really help carry you guys?

COACH BROWNELL: Well, I don't know. That's been the big question with Milt, really, since he's come to Clemson. There have certainly been some very good signs against Virginia. He played very well. We had a nice win. Other nights he's either gotten into some foul trouble, maybe hasn't hit off to a good start and hasn't been able to bounce back and play the way that we all know he can at times.

That's the big question. He plays consistently well, and he's very impressive. He can be a very good player in this league, and he's shown it at times. He's had trouble at times also being able to do it night-in and night-out. You certainly want that from guys of his age. He's a senior now, and a guy that's been through some battles for a couple of years. He needs to play with that kind of consistency to give our team the best chance to win.

Q. It seems funny to ask about a senior. But is it a matter of confidence with him to any extent?

COACH BROWNELL: A little bit. I think Milt has come to Clemson with a lot of expectations and gotten some criticism sometimes that maybe isn't always deserved. Some people blame a lot of things on him. So I think he deals with more pressure than a lot of people.

He's an emotional kid. He's a guy that really cares about our team and doing well. He works really hard every day at it, but there are days he gets down on himself. And there are days that things bother him and it probably certainly affects his play.

He's just one of those guys that it's hard for him sometimes to just stay as even keel as you would like. So sometimes when that happens you can lose some things, perspective, and he struggles a little bit. Other times he's really good.

He's had some games, not only this year, but in years past, that have been high-level games. Double-doubles against very good competition. Some of the best teams in our league.

I do think confidence is a part of all of that and him dealing with the pressure and just feeling comfortable and confident with what he's doing.

Q. I wonder if you could share your thoughts on a guy that doesn't necessarily show numbers on the team, or a guy or two that does some stuff that doesn't always show up in the box score, but is a big part of the success that you guys have?

COACH BROWNELL: I think Rod Hall is probably one of those guys for us on this year's team. He's not a high-level scorer. But obviously that's what people generally look at in a lot of ways. He's a very good defender. Has done a very good job this year. He and Damarcus Harrison are both guarding the best players on the perimeter we've faced night-in and night-out, and those guys have done a good job of holding most of those guys to points below their average.

I think the other thing Rod does is he's a tremendous passer. He's a very unselfish player. He's a guy that consistently is looking to get other people shots. He has good assists numbers. He doesn't have great assist numbers. But a lot of times he's got a lot of hockey assists. He's got the pass that leads to a pass that leads to a basket. He plays a very good poise. Our guys have a great deal of confidence in him. He's very tough-minded, a very tough, physical player. So his personality is kind of what we want from Clemson basketball. I think he's probably an underrated player on our team.

Q. You guys have one of the best home ACC winning percentages in ACC history. You have a better ACC home winning percentage

than Mike Krzyzewski or Roy Williams. And yet you've really struggled on the road. What is it about, is Littlejohn that much of a Snake pit or is there something else that's going on here?

COACH BROWNELL: You know what, I don't know. I didn't know those stats and I find it hard to believe because we've lost some games here in the last couple of years at home. But it is a good place to play. There is no doubt about it. I do think our fans are certainly into the game. I think we have good student followings, so our students are behind both baskets and certainly provide our team with a good deal of energy. I don't know.

Obviously, I've only been here a couple of years, so I can't speak to -- I've had very little to do with all the history of it. Certainly Coach Krzyzewski has been in his place for 30-plus years or whatever. So that's certainly a different deal. But I do think it's a difficult place to play. It's a very positive home court, and I think our guys enjoy playing here.

Q. Is that an explanation why your guys have been so much more successful at home? You have struggled on the road.

COACH BROWNELL: You're trying to butter me up with some nice comments about us being good at home, but we (stink) on the road?

Q. Well, your biggest differential between home success and road success in the ACC?

COACH BROWNELL: I wish I knew the answer to that. It's ironic, because last week we played two games on the road and we played really well. With two minutes to go, we're tied with N.C. State, and N.C. State has a chance to win.

We controlled most of the game at Florida State and had a bad last possession, and they banked in a 30 footer to beat us. So we played well in both games. We don't have anything to show for it, but we played pretty well.

Having said that, we've had outings that we didn't play well. And some of it is getting a little younger team. I'm sure our guys will become a little unsettled, especially offensively on the road. Maybe don't play with quite as much confidence. I know we don't shoot the ball quite as well at times.

Milt hasn't played as well away from home this year, and that's been a problem. So I can't pinpoint one thing, but I would imagine that it's not that uncommon in college basketball for teams to

struggle on the road. But we're certainly one of those teams that is doing it.

BOSTON COLLEGE COACH STEVE DONAHUE

COACH DONAHUE: Thanks, we've been struggling to get wins here in the league. But I thought we played pretty good basketball for probably every half of the season with the exception of this last half at Virginia. They're playing four out of five on the road to start the league, essentially, that probably got to us.

I've been pleased with our development. Pleased with the results, foul shooting. We're a team that get there's, we just haven't been able to convert. So looking forward to playing two home games with Carolina and Clemson here this week.

Q. I was wondering if you could share your thoughts on maybe somebody from your team that does some of the things that doesn't necessarily show up in the box score. Whether it's being a strong perimeter defender, guarding the top player on the other team, or a guy who can shoot the ball really well for you but maybe not necessarily lead you guys in scoring or rebounds?

COACH DONAHUE: I think the guy Joe Rahon our freshman guard who plays a lot of minutes and doesn't fit exactly that because we're so young and still developing certain roles for guys. But Joe is our toughest kid in my opinion. He's our best on-ball defender.

He played Joe Harris, who I think is, if not one of the top three or four best players in this league, really well the other day. He just knows how to play. He leads us in assists. He does a great job taking the ball to the basket. Has a great understanding of what we're trying to do, and he's out there 35-plus minutes as a freshman. So Joe probably fits that as much as anybody.

Q. Obviously Denis Clifford is battling the physical thing. Can you update us on how he's handling that? How much that's limiting him right now?

COACH DONAHUE: You know, Al, it's been the biggest disappointment this year, for sure. I tell people this. When we went to Spain in

late August, he was hands down our best player. He got 30 a couple games out there. He was running the floor, blocking shots, rebounding. Just his development was really impressive because he did so much over the summer.

Since then, really, it's a Chondromalacia issue with his knee that started in late September. Since that point he's probably had practice full, never, and right now he probably practices 15, 20 minutes when we do get a chance.

Unfortunately, his development has digressed. I feel bad for him, first and foremost. Because it's been frustrating, because I know how much he cares. But it's hurt us. I think it's something that we thought as a plus for us in our interior defense, and it's hurt our defense overall in particular.

But even on offense, he was really developing and getting easy baskets for us. So it's been a tough situation for him, and obviously, I think it's hurt us greatly.

After reading a lot about this condition, I think it's something that we can get under control eventually and figure out how to get him back to work and getting his skills developed and things like that.

Q. Has his availability increased, changed, decreased in the last few weeks?

COACH DONAHUE: What it is is he's just not as effective out there because he hasn't been playing basketball. The pain is one thing.

So we went hard yesterday, Sunday. He's going to be hard to go up and down today. We wanted him to get some work in. The problem is he just hasn't played consistent basketball day-in and day-out for three months. It's just hard to put him out there and expect him to help you, pain or no pain. I think that's more the issue.

Q. When you look at the pace of game or what you prefer to be the pace of the game, are you of the mindset that you know what you want your team play at or you kind of cater that to the opponent that you're playing or that kind of dictates your preferred pace? Looks like you're going from Virginia to North Carolina, which it looks like there's quite a bit of difference from what the opponents would prefer?

COACH DONAHUE: I think we're not at the point yet with our depth and what I want to do. We're a team that wants to play fast. I want to play multiple possessions. I want to play ten guys. I

want to get the ideal point total, 75 to 80 points a game. But we're not good enough to go out and say that and expect to understand that we've got to be competitive every night.

The other thing, it's very difficult to speed somebody up in basketball. It really is. It's much easier to slow someone down.

So a team like Virginia that has -- Tony (Bennett) has his program in order, knows exactly what he's going to do. So they guard you so well, so it's foolish to think you're going to get quick shots and force them to do quick ones. They're not going to do it.

I think that's what people don't understand sometimes with matchups. It's not necessarily what you want to do. Your opponent has a lot to say about that. Ideally, we want to get really good shots as quick as we can. And on the defensive end, it's not necessarily something that we can force the tempo.

We're a team that's going to try to make sure the other team's taking very difficult shots and limit them to one shot. So depending on who we play, it's probably going to be catered to the team we're playing, especially now when we're not as deep as I'd like to be.

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