

**February 25, 2013**



An interview with:

**WAKE FOREST  
COACH JEFF BZDELIK**

**Q. You talked in the press conference Saturday a little bit about your team's preparation and the way they came out with so much energy at the start of the Miami game. Could you sense that building during the week during practice since you had -- I don't know whether you call it a bye or not, but you didn't have to play midweek -- could you sense that energy building and it really exploded at the start of the game?**

COACH BZDELIK: Yes, I could. I really could. I thought we had great attitudes. We took Sunday off after our game on Saturday with Georgia Tech, and we then had individual workouts on Monday, and practiced together as a team on Tuesday and really got after it. There was great energy all week.

We took Wednesday off, and it just seemed like Thursday the guys were anxious for recess or something. They were energetic. Jumping all over the place. I had to calm them down, so I sensed a great feeling.

We had talked about the fact that our guys did not have a pity party, having lost at Boston College in the last couple of seconds and against Georgia Tech in the last .5 of the game. That we are just a couple of possessions really away from having a three-game winning streak. Instead of being one of lacking confidence or having great confidence. They responded well.

**Q. Now I guess the question is how can you take that confidence that you've gained from such a big win for your program and carry that over on to the road this week?**

COACH BZDELIK: Well, hopefully we can draw from experience. With seven freshmen, one sophomore, one junior, one senior, it's been a learning curve every day, a work in progress in

terms of understanding that half of this is from the neck up.

When we had a win against North Carolina State at home and we didn't respond very well the first 20 minutes on the road in Atlanta, and that's something that our players remember. Hopefully, we've got that behind us, and we'll do a better job of responding to a big win by handling it the right way.

**Q. Coach, in the process of trying to build a program, obviously bringing in talent that can be sustainable is key, but having a big win over Miami or N.C. State, does that in the big picture have much significance in trying to build a program?**

COACH BZDELIK: No question. How do you gain confidence? Well, you have to have success and experience it and see it and feel it and enjoy it and handle it. Yes, it's a big step in the right direction.

I think that we have some really big wins that throughout the course of the season here with Xavier, for example, and N.C. State, Virginia, Boston College, Florida State, Miami. We've lost two games by one point, one game by two points, one game by three points, one game by four points, one game by five points and one game by six points. So we're knocking on the door. We just need to continue to get stronger, wiser, grittier, tougher, more together, and that's all going to come.

There are so many times this year I've had three -- well, I start three freshmen. It seems like 99% of the time I've always had at least three freshmen on the floor, a good percentage of the time four freshmen, and many times I've had five freshmen out on the court.

It's a group that is of great character. A group that has great resilience. It's a group that wants to get better. They enjoy playing with one another, and to me, it's just continues to be a matter of time or we just take it one day at a time.

So they're going to be a special group, but having success along the way against great teams



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is really, really fuelling them even more with the energy needed for them to continue to work hard knowing that we're right there knocking on the door.

**Q. Over your career with the NBA and college what is your approach when you played a team that you previously beat pretty soundly? Do you emphasize the confidence gained from that victory or are you worried about what you'd expect from motivation from another side?**

COACH BZDELIK: I think there has to be a balance. Number one, yes, you should have great confidence in knowing that when you play and follow the game plan and play with great passion and togetherness, look what happens. Then combine that with the fact that, okay, now, put yourself in their shoes and understand what they're thinking after they took a hit, and how you would respond and how you think they're going to respond.

So we have to be even better and even tougher and even grittier knowing that we're going to get their best shots, and we've got to take it and then give it back to them. That's just competitiveness. That competitive spirit. That unexplainable, intangible that separates good from great or average from good.

What really pleased me about the Miami game was that at halftime, we talked about that. We knew that Coach Larranaga was challenging his team. We talked about that. We said coming out of the gate here, guys, we're going to get Miami's best punch. They are going to rear back and hit you guys so hard coming out of the gate in this second half that you stand there and you understand it's coming, and then you punch back. Then Miami pulled within 45 to 40, within five points.

What I was really proud of more so than anything in that game is we responded with a 12-0 run. And that to me gives testimony to the fact that we're beginning to grow up here.

**Q. Coach, everybody has a home-road disparity. But you guys this year, as you look at your home games, you guys are ACC contenders, and I know you've played a couple close games, but you haven't been successful on the road. For a young team, what's been the biggest problem to making the transition to playing on the road?**

COACH BZDELIK: I was joking with my staff today. I mean, we go out and eat at real nice places like everybody else does and all of that. But I said, look, why don't we rent a school bus, drive down to Tallahassee. Leave now and we'll get there at midnight, stop at Mickey D's along the way. I don't know. Let's just change this up totally. I'll be honest with you. But we've had a couple of tough road losses Virginia Tech, we've had two shots at the rim to win there. Boston College, we've had a perfect storm with the clock stops and all this other stuff. But again, we've put ourselves in position to close that out, but we didn't.

But you're right. We've had some real clunkers on the road. But we've just had to fight through that. We really do. Again, I've thought about a lot of different things, literally, about changing up travel and everything else. We just need to grow up and know that our fans aren't going to be there to supply great energy for us. We need to do that internally, and we need to show some grit, some toughness, and a great focus and be very, very strong from the neck up.

At times we have, and a lot of times we haven't. We've been hit and haven't gotten back up. So I'm looking forward to this tomorrow, because I know we're going to get Florida State's best shot, and I want to see how my team responds, because we're doing everything we can to make them understand the mental aspect of this game, especially on the road.

## VIRGINIA TECH COACH JAMES JOHNSON

COACH JOHNSON: I think we're coming off a good win here at home last night against Florida State where we had multiple guys contribute and help the team out in different ways. We got to have a short-term memory and turn around and go down here and play a very good Miami team, very talented and well-coached by Jim Larranaga.

**Q. I have a question about Shane Larkin. I know you faced him once earlier this year. What did you see out of him in terms of him leading that offense?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, he's the head that makes the offense go. I think the head that

makes the team go. He's very good with the basketball. Quick, fast, and he's very good off ball screens. He can get into the lane. When he gets into the lane, he's good enough to finish with either hand around the basket. He's strong enough and physical enough to get in there and finish it against some bigger guys and he's making plays.

He's hitting the role guys and the post guys, and kicking out to McKinney Jones, Rion Brown, Durand Scott, those guys so he's very good off the ball screens.

**Q. CJ, the last two games both sets career highs in points. Both times I think he's had 32 points in his previous ten games combined. He's had 31 in the last two. What has been the difference for him?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think a couple of things can contribute to that. One, I think the struggles and going through that situation in the Maryland game, he's continued to work even harder through that. It hadn't paid off until these last few games, but his work ethic from that I also think Marshall Wood being back, competition at that spot helps a little bit.

I also think the fact that Marshall Wood is back and able to get threes during the game, he's a fresher body out there. His legs seem to be a little springier out there. He's playing with more effort and playing harder for longer periods of time. I think that has to do with a little bit that he's able to come out and get a breather, and Marshall Wood is going in. When Marshall Wood is going in, he's producing also.

**Q. One quick question about Miami. You had the early lead against them at home, and obviously weren't able to hold on. What things do you guys need to do better this time around down there?**

COACH JOHNSON: I think we need to do a better job off Shane Larkin off the ball screen. And then we've got to do a better job of executing our offense when we've got to leave. We've got to get good shots. We can't turn the basketball over. We've got to lead to their offense.

**Q. Rankin, is he going to be available? Was that a one-night issue for him or might you be without him?**

COACH JOHNSON: It's funny you say that. Just talked to my trainer. He was actually sitting in the office here when I got on the line. He's throwing up and has diarrhea this morning, so

I don't know. We don't know what it is. Maybe a little food poisoning or a stomach virus. Not sure what it is right now. But probably not going to be available for practice today. Not sure how long this thing will last.

**Q. I wonder if you would talk about the idea of how you handle morale and energy and everything after a nine-game losing streak with some really frustrating losses in there where you played really well and couldn't quite pull it out? How do you deal with that? Obviously the team responds with a really great effort this weekend. What is the approach to that when things are going badly?**

COACH JOHNSON: Using that psychology degree from Ferrum College. You know what? It's been just talking and communicating with the guys. They watch me and kind of feed off me. I've got to stay positive. And I've been staying positive, and stayed upbeat, and trying to approach this thing having short-term memory. We've learned. We've viewed tape. We've worked hard in practice. We learn from our mistakes and what we need to do better. Things we thought we did well, and then we move on to the next game. That's kind of been our approach all year long. Early on when we had that win streak, that was our approach. Through the struggling and the losing streak, that's kind of been our approach also, and that's a tribute to the guys, too.

I've got a great group of guys that want to work hard. They want to get better. They want to win. They play together. They like each other. So that makes it easy to come in practice, and everybody's on the same page with a positive attitude. But it's just continuous talk and encouragement and keeping them upbeat. Also, the way I am, they look at me and kind of feed off of me.

**Q. Is there ever a moment when you've been through this where you're really worried about losing them or even temporarily?**

COACH JOHNSON: No, not really. Because, again, I've got a good group of guys. I've got senior leadership with Erick Green and the way he's played, and the way he's stayed positive throughout the whole time. He's tried to talk with guys and keep them upbeat. So I wasn't really worried about losing them at any point during this.

**Q. I was wondering if you could share your opinion on Joe Harris from Virginia? I know he was scoring and shooting relatively well all season. I was wondering if you wouldn't mind sharing your thoughts on the impact he's had on the conference this year and what it is he gets done every night.**

COACH JOHNSON: First of all, people talk about Joe's scoring and shooting, but what people tend to not talk about is Joe's competitiveness. He is a tough, hard-nosed competitor. He plays with great speed, great pace, changes direction. He's very smart, and he reads screens very well. He's shooting the ball, scoring in a lot of different ways, posting up, getting to the offensive glass, shooting the three, putting the ball on the floor. He's a complete player.

I don't think he's getting enough -- getting talked about enough what he's doing for that team and the type of year he's having.

**Q. Why do you think a guy like that can get kind of maybe pigeon holed maybe is the word to use when you talk about the scoring and the shooting? Those seem to be the type of things that guys like us usually notice. But coaches, you guys, notice more of those other things.**

COACH JOHNSON: I just think when it comes down to the productivity and those are the things you look at. The scoring, the shot attempts, shooting percentages and shooting in that type of thing. But sometimes the other small things get overlooked, and that's just how it is.

But he's a leader for that team. He's a competitor. He keeps that team together. You watch tape on them during timeouts, and he's grabbing guys, pulling guys in the huddle. He's helping guys off the floor. He's doing all those little things.

When you have your best player doing those things it helps the rest of the team out, and that is showing in the way Virginia is playing right now.

## VIRGINIA COACH TONY BENNETT

COACH BENNETT: Obviously, getting ready to play against Duke, and I think now is the time of year where you're just trying to find ways to

make little improvements and make your team as sound as possible we keep seeing little things we're trying to improve on and get better.

Yesterday we played a stretch of solid basketball. But know that every game out, you've got to be ready, and hopefully we'll are some good preparation for preparing for Duke.

**Q. As if there weren't enough problems to worry about with Duke. A guy that's really come on strong lately is Rasheed Sulaimon. I wonder what your impressions of him not only offensively, but his overall game?**

COACH BENNETT: I think he's a terrific defender. His lateral quickness and length. Coach K's got some of those young guys playing very well. And that is adding, without Ryan. I don't know when he's expected back, but they've done a very nice job of getting the young guys experience, and I know those guys are at that point where they've played well. That's helped us when our young guys have stepped up.

But I was just on the very end of the call and heard James talking about Joe Harris' completeness. I think Rasheed's very complete. But defensively, long, quick, shoots the three well and uses a lot of dimensions of his game and seems to play very, very efficient for a freshman.

**Q. Looking back to Carolina, them going kind of four smalls around McAdoo and reinventing themselves that way, what kind of a challenge does that lineup present a team?**

COACH BENNETT: Well, they have great spacing with that. There's always four, and at times it's almost five out at times, because McAdoo, not that he'll shoot threes, but he gets out on the floor, and he'll quick ball screen, set some screens, step, hit it, and drive it real quick. Then they have the other guys with good spacing.

Again, there are usually four threats out there from three, and most of them can drive it hard and that creates long rebounds as well. They seem to have an extra ball handler out there and another scorer. It's certainly been productive for them. You can see that, and they certainly did that to us. Just a lot of things from the side standpoint because they have pretty rugged forwards or whatever you want to call them, Hairston, they can rebound and are interchangeable. So that seemed to work out very well for them. And they've done a good job incorporating it.

**Q. Sort of technically out of position as McAdoo is as a five. Is there something about what you alluded to where it's not that difficult for him to fit that role given how they're playing?**

COACH BENNETT: Yeah, it it's funny. We moved Akil Mitchell to a four, Justin Anderson is guarding the fours. So we have the four around one. So there are certainly some mobility and quickness with that, so he's adapted well. Because he finds ways on the glass, post-ups, or he'll beat you quick because he has five guarding him, and it just kind of plays into everything with the four wing or perimeters around him. I think it's almost an advantage in a way.

**Q. I was hoping you could go further back to the Delaware and Old Dominion game. I know we talk about that a lot. Did you sense the importance of those games at the time? Looking back was that almost an entirely different season than the one you have now?**

COACH BENNETT: Every time you play, you try to play as good a basketball game as you can't. But we wanted to win them all. The Delaware game would have given us a chance to play at Madison Square Garden, and I guess we would have played Kansas State had we won.

That was a goal of ours as a team to get to Madison Square Garden. Obviously, more than just get there, but we knew Delaware was good. We knew they had very good guards, and we didn't have Teven or Jontel in that game. So we were a different team. And our young guys didn't have the experience they have now. So that was a challenge.

Old Dominion played a very good game against us. We weren't particularly sharp. That is the fine line we talk about. And Jontel was not in that game. Joe had the flu, we weren't at the top of our game, and that's what happens when you're not ready at this level.

You don't sit there and play those games, and say what does this mean long range? You're just thankful we're playing better basketball now, and trying to stay as healthy as possible?

**Q. How many days did you have Mike Tobey in practice? What is Darion Atkins status right now?**

COACH BENNETT: Well, I think I said yesterday in the conference, we played Miami on Wednesday. We were off Wednesday, so

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Thursday he practiced about, I would a say, a quarter of the practice on Thursday. Talking about Mike. He had two practices leading up to this. There was a quarter of a practice two days before the game, and then he went about half the practice the day before. You know, he did a little cardio after the first day on the bike. We had one of those heart rate monitors on him just to see where he was at post, seeing how he feels. Because you don't want him to relapse. That is the big thing with mono. And he responded well.

Haven't talked to him today. He played 15 minutes. And he seemed like he got a little better in the second half, obviously, a little rusty still. But it's just all about monitoring his time and those were about a quarter and a half of a practice leading up to the game on Sunday.

**Q. What about Darion?**

COACH BENNETT: Darion, to me, we're just using it's going to be either Darion or Mike for those minutes. Just, Darion is willing to give us what he can and when we need it. And Mike was more of a sickness thing. It wasn't an injury thing. And Darion just doesn't have the pop or the push off that leg.

He's moving, and I think he's a little better. But with Mike coming back, hopefully we can gradually increase the whatever Darion needs so he can push off and all of that and get him to a better spot. If we can keep resting him but doing gradual rehab on him and maybe get him more confidence in that leg, and if it feels better, we'll go that route.

I think for Darion to play, it's almost not fair to him if he can only play at whatever percentage he is. 60%. Kind of dragging that leg around, and I think Mike is a little more lively and stronger right now.

But that's not to say Darion can't. Sorry for the long answer, but we'll gradually progress, and now that we have a body in Tobey, we'll gradually progress Darion without throwing him as much into the live competition if we can avoid that. Unless there is foul trouble or something. He's just kind of willing to do whatever and build that thing up so he can go harder.

**Q. I was wondering if you could share a little bit about Joe Harris. Maybe first kind of make himself valuable for you guys this season? Everybody kind of talks about it, but I**

**know it's a lot more than that.**

COACH BENNETT: Again, I heard James at the very end. I just got on to the teleconference, and I thought he gave a very good answer. He talked about his completeness. And of course he's a threat when he's moving and shooting the ball and all that. But he's just, he is, he's rugged. He's a competitor, and he's willing to do whatever.

If you say, Joe, don't shoot, he'll do whatever. He just wants to win. He is a coach's son. He's really invested in trying to get Virginia basketball to the highest point it can get to and has a southwest mindset.

But has some surprising -- I don't want to say athleticism, but he's really rugged and improved defensively. Every year he's gotten better. He's made that big jump from his sophomore to his junior year.

As a mentioned, a couple teleconferences ago, he's a great encourager. He's not going to say things. He's not going to grab them by the shirt collar and tell them like some guys lead. But he's an encourager has a firm hand when he needs to, and I've seen him grow. And when one of your best players is doing that, it helps the cause.

## NC STATE COACH MARK GOTTFRIED

COACH GOTTFRIED: I think starting off, we've got a very challenging game with Boston College. I know they didn't play well yesterday, but prior to that game, they've gotten a lot better. So we understand that we've got a tough challenge on Wednesday with them, and we've got to finish strong.

So we know it, and I think our guys will be ready to play Wednesday night.

**Q. Can you indulge me a quick look back at the Carolina game. Them going four smallish guys around McAdoo and reinventing that way, what challenges did they present and how do they materialize in that game for you guys?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Here's the thing. I think a little too much is being made out of the four guard deal with North Carolina. He put his best five scorers on the floor regardless of how tall they are.

Bullock and Hairston are both good sized wing players. In college basketball today, that's not uncommon at all to see that. So they're a more confident team. With Hairston on the floor as opposed to Hubert who they were starting inside, they've got somebody who has the potential to get 20 on a given night. So I think he's just playing his best players and doing a good job with it.

**Q. McAdoo at the 5 is technically out of position. But are there ways that that becomes an advantage for them or just a tradeoff deal when you put a guy in that slot?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Yeah, I don't think in college basketball the numbers of a four or a five are nearly as significant as they are at the next level. Obviously, McAdoo is their best post player, period. Just like so many other teams in America, we play our best post player inside, and that's what they're doing now, period.

Again, I just think when they have five guys on the floor that can score as opposed to playing with four which they've done this year, they're obviously a lot better.

**Q. I wanted to ask about moving Tony Warren into the starting lineup, and how well that's worked out? Just looking at the numbers, it looks like he's gone from being a fairly mediocre rebounder to a very good rebounder in the last week or so. Can you address that?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, it's T.J., by the way. You said Tony.

**Q. I'm sorry. I'm an old guy. I remember his father.**

COACH GOTTFRIED: I just think with T.J., it's something that we've talked to him about. He got the opportunity to be in the starting lineup, and one thing he can bring is giving us an additional rebounder. I don't want him to be in the lineup just so he can score more points. He's got to defend well and rebound well, And we've talked to him about that.

So I think he's responded. He's getting to the glass, finding ways to rebound the ball, and I think that's important.

**Q. Can you address his defense? Have you been happy with that?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, like with most

freshmen, coaches, we nitpick everybody to death. I think he can get better there. But I do think he's paying attention and trying to figure out exactly how to guard, and he makes mistakes like everybody else. But I think he's been pretty solid defensively.

**Q. As T.J.'s minutes have gone up and he's playing more, and Rodney's have gone down, and his production has declined quite a bit, any concerns about his game and how he's responded to coming off the bench now?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: I thought he did really well at North Carolina. You know, it's not easy, I understand that. As it wasn't easy when T.J. didn't start for T.J.

But it's a different role for Rodney than he had most of the season. And I did like the fact that over in Chapel Hill he came in, gave us a great lift. I thought he did pretty good. So I've told those three freshmen they all need to be ready. They all need to contribute, and it could be different on each specific night.

Right now, that's the way we're going to go, and they need to do well in the roles that they're in.

**Q. You mentioned finishing strong in these last four regular season games. How important is it for your crusty old veterans, so to speak, Scott Wood and Howell in particular, to be consistent and really step up and lead the way down the stretch?**

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, those two guys have, there's no question. I just think we have four, what I call veteran players and you want those four guys to be at their best this time of the year and be consistent, and do everything within their power to help their team win. We need that from those guys.

## NORTH CAROLINA COACH ROY WILLIAMS

COACH WILLIAMS: Needless to say Saturday's game was a big game for us. We felt like we played pretty well, and we hit North Carolina State in a game where they missed some shots around the basket that they've been making a lot. It was a good day for us because of the final outcome, but also because we felt we did

some things. So we realize, we have two weeks left and we've got to keep playing.

**Q. Hope you can indulge another question about your lineup configuration. What do you like about the group you've gone with after the past few games, and what is it doing for you to kind of reenergize the guys?**

COACH WILLIAMS: Well, it's gotten a lot of attention. But when we had Desmond Hubert in there, we thought we were stronger defensively and stronger rebounding, but we were not getting any scoring out of that spot.

If we struggled at any other position on the courts scoring-wise, that meant that we only had three scorers. So if two of those guys have a bad night, then you're really down. So we decided to go with five guys who could score more and with P.J. in there, and hope he could fight like crazy and front the guy in the post, and that we could emphasize the rebounding part with our other perimeter guys more, we wouldn't be killed on the boards.

Bottom line, we thought it was a much more effective offensive lineup for us, and hopefully wouldn't kill us on the defensive end.

**Q. McAdoo at the 5 is technically by the book out of position. Has it mattered the way you guys were playing? Does it matter? Can you put a number on it? Is it pretty easy for him to be effective in that spot?**

COACH WILLIAMS: Well, it's not easy. But there are not five guys on every other team who is a low-post scorer. They'll generally have one or two. So if you can front the low post a little bit and get some help from your perimeter people. If you do get caught behind, you don't get killed.

James Michael is a very good defender. He's not 6'11 or 7 feet as you'd like to have in your five man on the defensive four, and he's not going to block shots like Tyler Zeller or Henson did. He does a nice job defensively. If we get in one of those games where the post player is killing us because we can't stop them, we'll have to put in one of those other guys.

**Q. I was wondering if you could share your thoughts on Joe Harris. I know he's had a good game the last few times out against you guys this year. But what's been the one thing of maybe the few things that stand out to you**

**about him and what he does for you?**

COACH WILLIAMS: Well, I think Joe is one of the more efficient players in college basketball. He scores, but he does it in taking very few shots. That's why I call him very efficient. He doesn't have to take 20 shots to get 20 points. And I think that efficiency fits very well with the way Tony likes his teams to play.

He takes good shots, doesn't take bad shots, and he makes most of them at the same time. I think he's better defensively than people give him credit for. But the bottom line, he can score and do it efficiently.

**Q. Coach, there are a lot of teams this year that are terrific. Wake Forest and Virginia have been great teams at home, and have struggled a lot on the road. Clemson is one of those teams that have been very, very tough at home. What do you see with some of these teams that they're almost -- they're very difficult to beat at home but don't put up a lot of fight sometimes on the road?**

COACH WILLIAMS: It is hard to explain. But most of the things you think about Virginia, Wake Forest, Clemson, and they're very young teams. Young teams feel more comfortable at home than they do getting out of their environment.

They may not be as confident going on the road. But believing you can win on the road is a very important thing for your team to have. I think with young kids, it's hard to get them to handle that adversity. The other team scores two straight baskets and the crowd is going crazy. Young kids have a more difficult time focusing on what you're trying to do and doing what you're doing correctly.

So it's very difficult. You look at every league in college basketball, the record is always better at home. But the younger your team is, that is the teams that probably struggle more on the road. If they have some success on the road and believe that they can do it, I think it helps them out.

**Q. But you have a fairly young team. You've had some success on the road, right?**

COACH WILLIAMS: I didn't feel like I had a lot of success at Raleigh and Miami and Duke, but some of those other places out there, at Virginia, but we've won a couple of games on the road. I think our teams have always been good on the road.

But we still have Reggie and James Michael, and the rest of our team is pretty young. We have to make sure our kids believe they can

win, which is part of it. But the kids have to step up and do it themselves.

**Q. Hey, Roy. What is it about Clemson's arena in particular that makes it a difficult venue?**

COACH WILLIAMS: Well, I've never lost a game in the building. We've played some really good teams in ugly buildings, and really good teams in fantastic, modern buildings. But Clemson is a place where fans come in there, they're very enthusiastic and supportive of them.

We've been down there. And haven't seen anybody else, so fans are very enthusiastic when North Carolina comes to town. The fans are comfortable at home. They're good players. We haven't lost down there to bad teams. When we've won down there, we've had to be really, really good. But I think the building is made by the enthusiasm of your fans and the passion that they have, and I think Clemson fans do a great job of that.

**MIAMI**

**COACH JIM LARRANAGA**

COACH LARRANAGA: We had a very interesting week. A very, very tough game against Virginia, and then a Wake Forest team that was really, really sharp from start to finish. I didn't think we played as well as we've been playing and ended up losing by double figures.

**Q. Second time around with Virginia Tech. I want to get your thoughts again on Erick Green, what does he do well? What did you like that he did the first time? What do you need to do more of?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, the first time he had 30 and he just played great. He's a high octane scorer, and he can score in so many different ways. He's distributing the ball, and getting his teammates involved. So he's just a handful for everybody. In open court, he can take you to the basket. He can pull up and shoot a 15-footer or pull up and shoot a three, if he wants.

They do a lot of things to get him open. They keep the ball in his hands an awful lot, and he's just having a sensational year.

**Q. When you look at him in your mind,**

**is he an ACC Player of the Year candidate despite their record, or are the wins too important?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Oh, I think he certainly has to get consideration because of the kind of year he's having. So whoever wins ACC Player of the Year will deserve it. There are a lot of guys playing very, very well. I think it just depends on your criteria and everybody has their own. Some people vote because a guy scores a lot of points, some people vote because his team wins a lot, some people vote because they just like the way the kid plays.

**Q. This is slightly off topic a bit, but with the CAA Tournament being in Richmond coming up for the last time and as somebody who has cut down a few nets and had quite a bit of success at that tournament, I'm just curious about your thoughts on the administration of the event and what kind of tournament it was? Maybe a couple of your fondest or most vivid recollections of the tournament in Richmond?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, I thought, first of all, when I first got into the league, it was a venue that people could get to easily. The league was really based in Virginia with George Mason, James Madison, Richmond, VCU, William & Mary, Old Dominion, so it was great. It was very accessible to all the Virginia fans.

Then as the league expanded, it was still kind of in the geographical center of the league with Georgia State being in Atlanta to the south, and Northeastern and Boston to the North. So it still provided a great geographical location.

But I think what made the CAA event so good is the fans really turned out. The place was packed. I know especially in my last five, six, or seven years, the semifinals and finals were just packed to the rafters and just great games.

**Q. If I could sneak one more in. I don't know if maybe getting a chance to win a championship with your son or any of the ones you won with George Evans and that group, see if they hold any special place in your mind?**

COACH LARRANAGA: I would probably say the one in 2001 where we beat Wilmington 35-33 in the championship game is the one I remember most vividly because of how close it was. Although the first one in '99 was too when Jason (Indiscernible) hit a shot with a minute to go in the game to seal the victory. So they're all

important. They're all great memories. The thing I remember most is how hard those kids played from both teams.

**Q. Jim, by all indications, Duke's Ryan Kelly is pretty close to returning. Will that factor in to how you prepare for that game next Saturday?**

COACH LARRANAGA: I didn't hear the question.

**Q. It looks like Ryan Kelly is pretty close to coming back. Will that change your preparation for that game at all?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, the first thing is we've got to get ready for Virginia Tech. That's our focus right now. Duke is playing great. They're playing great with Ryan Kelly. They're playing great without Ryan Kelly. If he comes back, I mean, that's just another weapon in their arsenal.

But they're playing great basketball. They've been in the Top 5 all season long. They've been number one in the country for a good portion of this year. Ryan's a terrific player, and I'd be very, very happy for the young man if he's able to get back and play. It's his senior year, and he deserves every opportunity to play at this time of the year.

**Q. I wanted to ask about Shane Larkin, and just if there are qualities you see in him or intangibles that kind of indicate to you that he grew up in the environment he did around professional sports?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Yeah, I think that's the one advantage that Shane has over a lot of guys is he grew up in an environment where he saw how competitive people were. His dad, his dad's teammates with the Cincinnati Reds. He also saw how professional athletes conducted themselves.

Shane comes from a great family. They're first-class all the way. And I think he is very humble. He's very hungry, and he's got an incredible set of skills that he uses not just athletic skills, but mental skills. He has the ability to anticipate things far better than most players.

**Q. Coming off a loss that was only your first loss in 2013, so I was curious why you took the step of cancelling player interviews**

**this week?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, it didn't really have to do with the loss. It had to do with we haven't had a chance to spend enough time with our team with all the interviews they've been doing. We rescheduled some stuff because we were able to find some time.

But at this time of year, teams are starting to really gang up on some of our players and do certain things defensively to us. And it takes some time to prepare our team to practice correctly, and then play in the game. These kids have classes, study hall, tutors, weightlifting. They've got to be in the training room to get treatments. They have to get tape.

It's just so much. There is only so much time in the day for a guy. Today they've got pictures. I mean, they're being pulled at so many different ends, and we need time to prepare. The most important thing is for our team to stay focused and get ready for the next game. My staff needed to spend some time watching some video.

**Q. As you prepare for the Hokies, do you need to extend Erick Green differently in the rematch, or do you feel you made him earn his points in the first game?**

COACH LARRANAGA: He got 30, so I don't think we defended him at all in the first game. We need to do a much better job defensively. That is one of the reasons why our coaches need to spend some time breaking down video with the players. Because the players need to see that.

We've really not had time to do that. So hopefully we'll be much better prepared this time around.

**Q. I wanted to ask you. A little earlier in your interview, you were asked about Erick Green as an ACC Player of the Year candidate. A lot of us sometimes think the best player on the best team is the best candidate. Can you make the case for Shane as an ACC Player of the Year candidate?**

COACH LARRANAGA: As I said, there are so many good players. It is really hard for me to separate one of my players from the other. Shane is a huge part of our team. He's having a sensational year and if someone votes for him as Player of the Year, I think it's well-deserving.

But I can see people voting for Durand Scott or Kenny Kadji, because without them, we're not where we are. It's very hard. You look at

Mason Plumlee and Seth Curry, one without the other is still not going to be nearly as effective.

Erick is in a different situation where he is the primary scorer. He actually produces enough points for two players. When he has 25, I think someone getting 14 and 11, that's normally the leading scorer and second leading scorer on the good team. I'm sure he's going to get a lot of consideration that's well-deserved.

But in Shane's case, he's done a fantastic job of leading us. He's a great point guard. He's a tremendous defender, passer, shooter, and we're in first place right now, so I think he deserves consideration. That said, there are a lot of good guys in this league.

**Q. I guess the point is Erick is defined by his numbers. He's putting up fantastic numbers. Going to become the first ACC guy to lead in scoring since 1957. Shane is a guy that his value is not necessarily defined by his numbers, especially not his scoring numbers, right?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, I think that's -- the way I look at it is how does a guy impact the game? If you're looking for a Most Valuable Player, well, a guy who wins value in a lot of different ways - scoring is one, rebounding is another, assists, steals, sometimes just plain leadership.

You can look at Mateen Cleaves from Michigan State when they won the national championship. I don't think he was their second or leading scorer, but he was the MVP, because without him and his leadership, they didn't win.

I just think there are a lot of ways to value a player, and I think Shane has so many things that he contributes to our program.

**Q. Wake scored more points and shot the ball better than any team has against you this year. Looking back on it, were there specific things, break downs in your defense that you saw, aside from the other team having just a really good shooting day. But defensively, how do you look back on that game?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Yeah, we didn't defend very hard. We played standing up. We were not in the stance. We were a step slow. Give credit to Wake Forest, they were well-rested, well-prepared. The players were focused and they

played with a great deal of energy and they executed their game plan very well. To stop them, we would have had to have been much, much better, much quicker, much stronger, and much tougher mentally.

C.J. Harris was terrific. And I think he his teammates an awful lot of confidence with the way he played in the first half, and they were able to keep it going.

**Q. I don't know if you've been, aside from the coming back after the games, have you been around your guys to sort of gauge what their reaction to this first ACC loss of the year has been? If you can judge their mood at all?**

COACH LARRANAGA: Well, we gave them yesterday off. But this is a very resilient group. I expect they may know they didn't play as hard or as well as they needed to Saturday, and they'll come back and prepare very hard for Wednesday's game against Virginia Tech.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**

**February 25, 2013**



An interview with:

**COACH MARK TURGEON  
MARYLAND**

THE MODERATOR: We have with us now Maryland head basketball Coach Mark Turgeon. Coach, a few comments about your team, then we'll open it up for questions.

COACH TURGEON: We're pleased with the way we played this weekend. We played well, shared the ball, took care of the ball. Defended pretty well, not great, but pretty well. We rebounded better.

So we were happy with the win. Looking forward to going on the road. Two games on the road this week, so it's a big week for us. We need to play well this week.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. You mentioned two road games this week. A lot of teams in this league have been very tough at home and have struggled a little bit more on the road. I know that's normal in college basketball, but it seems to be pronounced in the ACC this year. Can you address this issue?**

COACH TURGEON: We haven't played well on the road. We played with great energy at Duke. I thought we played well at Florida State. I thought we played pretty well at Virginia Tech. I thought we played well early in the year at Miami. We had a lot of confidence, played pretty well there. Didn't shoot the ball well, but their defense had a lot to do with it. So we'll see.

I think a lot of it's young teams. First of all, our league is better top to bottom. It's not even close. My team wasn't great last year, but we're a much better team. The league is so much better. Then you got young players. Young players are usually better at home than they are on the road.

So you see that happening with a lot of our teams in our league. The veteran teams, whether

it's Duke, Miami, they figured out how to win on the road. Carolina is starting to get there now, playing well down the stretch. I think the league is better and youth has a lot to do with it.

**Q. Georgia Tech is another team that does that. Does that present a particularly difficult problem, the fact they are so much better at home than on the road?**

COACH TURGEON: Well, I think everybody's that way almost. So we got to go prepare ourselves just like Brian will do with his team. We'll prepare for Georgia Tech. Hopefully we play well at 8:00 on Wednesday. That's really what it comes down to. Our biggest challenge is trying to play well on the road and hopefully we can do that.

**Q. You guys with your record, you're one of four ACC teams 19-8 overall. How do you see your NCAA chances? Do you ever address the idea you guys are a 'bubble team'?**

COACH TURGEON: Yeah, you know, I think our kids are aware of it. We talked a little bit about it before we went to Boston College. We laid an egg. We don't talk about it anymore. We're just preparing for Georgia Tech. We're a young team, fighting, doing pretty well as young as we are. To get this program where we want to get it, we got to become a good road team.

Whether it starts next week, Saturday, next season, at some point we have to become a much better road team. I do think we're going to get there, hopefully sooner than later.

But we don't talk about the NCAA tournament. I know our guys are looking at it, but we got a lot of work to do to be a part of it.

**Q. Mark, just looking at the stats a little bit, Dez (Wells') numbers are off slightly, not a precipitous drop-off, but down a little bit. Is there any kind of a possible fatigue issue or are other teams adjusting to his game?**

COACH TURGEON: I think he's just missing shots that he was making. Seven assists

and one turnover the other day. He did some really nice things in the game for us.

Has he shot it as well as he'd like? No. But I think it's been more about Dez, how they've been guarding him. He continues to compete hard and is helping us play well.

**Q. He's had seven assists in a couple of your recent games. Coming into this season, was that a part of his game that stood out to you or something he's really developed?**

COACH TURGEON: Well, I think with us, not really having a true point guard, we've just kind of tried to manufacture ball handlers, guys that can get us into things, guys that can make plays. He can make plays.

Within our offense, it's kind of equal opportunity the way we do things. We need all our guards to be good with the ball. He's gotten better. He's starting to make better decisions, not trying to force as many things.

At Xavier he didn't have to do that. They had two little ball handlers that took care of the ball all the time. Here he's had to do a little bit more of it.

**Q. Mark, you mentioned the youth in the league. Georgia Tech had guys like Kammeon Holsey, Daniel Miller. Are you surprised to see two freshmen leading that team in scoring right now?**

COACH TURGEON: I don't know enough about Georgia Tech, to be honest with you. I think Miller is good. I think (Kammeon) Holsey is really good. (Mfon) Udofia played well against us last year. I think the (Brandon) Reed kid had some injuries. Foot fasciitis. Nothing surprises me in college basketball, to be quite honest with you.

I do think Georgia Tech has some really good freshmen. They're going through a lot of what we're going through, just doing the best you can. It's overwhelming at times to young kids, but those freshmen are good. Doesn't surprise me. Those other kids are really good players, too. Gives them a nice blend as they move forward.

**Q. Could you share some of the wisdom that Lefty (Driesell) imparted to players, what their reaction was to having him around?**

COACH TURGEON: I think our players having him around. Lefty is engaging, has a great personality. I think it was good for both sides. I think it was good for Lefty to be in front of a young

group of guys, talk to them. He talked about playing hard, listening to your coach, making the most of your opportunity. He talked about academics, how important a degree is, a lot of things like that.

He hit a lot of subjects. I made the joke, if I didn't cut him off, he'd still be talking right now. He loved it. It was a great hour he spent with the guys. Our guys really enjoyed it. I know he enjoyed it, too. It helped.

Our thing for Saturday was we wanted to play well for Coach Lefty. He doesn't live in the area anymore, doesn't make it to a lot of games. I think our kids enjoyed that because they were able to spend time with him.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for taking time being with us today.

An interview with:

## **COACH BRIAN GREGORY GEORGIA TECH**

THE MODERATOR: We have with us now Georgia Tech head basketball coach Brian Gregory. Coach, if you could, a few comments about your team, then we'll open it up for questions.

COACH GREGORY: Sure. I thought last week we played two teams in North Carolina and Virginia that are playing at a really high level right now, maybe playing as well, maybe the best basketball of the season. Then unfortunately we weren't able to match over a 40-minute span either one of those two teams' intensity or execution level. When you do that in this league, things aren't going to work out. That's unfortunately what happened in both those games.

Got to get back to the drawing board starting today and prepare for a team in Maryland, other than one hiccup, has played extremely well also over the last few weeks, is really starting to build its identity in terms of their offensive efficiency, being able to go inside to Alex (Len), who is their premiere big guy, maybe in the country, starting to come into his own. They got a lot of weapons, great depth, which allows them to kind of ride the guys who are playing best during those games.

We're going to have a tall task on Wednesday night.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. You just mentioned Len, the problems he presents. Daniel Miller doesn't get a lot of attentions, but he's about to reach a major milestone in blocked shots. Can you talk about his development and the matchup with Len?**

COACH GREGORY: I'm really proud of Daniel. You look at his growth over the last two years. Proud of the work he's put in. It's been every bit as much of his just understanding and acceptance of the fact that he's a key component to our success.

His daily work and energy level has been good. I think that's why he's improving. He's been tremendous on the defensive end, anchoring our defense. He's never been a high-rebound guy, but he's becoming that, and he's becoming that on both backboards, which is good. I think he had seven offensive rebounds yesterday. Again, you don't do that unless you're playing really hard with really good focus.

I still believe that his best offensive basketball is in front of him. I know he understands that. But his matchup with Len is a challenging one. A lot of teams in this league, some teams in this league, are playing a little smaller at that second post spot, and Maryland will do the same, but not many guys have as physical a post player with great size like Len.

So it will be a great challenge. You can't allow him to get the ball in deep, and he's highly skilled when he gets the ball. He can finish with either hand and has a variety of moves.

For Daniel, it will be a great challenge. But it's hard to guard him one-on-one. You got to do some different things in order to throw him off balance.

**Q. I was also interested in the matchup of power forwards. You have a big freshman from Georgia. He doesn't start, but plays a lot of minutes. (Charles) Mitchell, another big forward. Those guys must have gone against each other in high school or AAU.**

COACH GREGORY: In the heavyweight wrestling championship, too, I think (laughter).

Both those guys, I love Charles, I always have. I love the attitude he plays with. He's an energy guy. Mark (Turgeon) has done a great job

with those two freshmen because, similar to Robert (Carter Jr.), most freshmen either need to gain weight and strength or lose weight. I think all three were in that second category. I think their performances will continually get better as they get into college shape with the strength that you need and so forth.

But they have a very good rotation in the post. Saturday against Clemson, it was clear who played really well for them. Padgett is a guy that I always really liked, played well against us in both games against us last year. They have those four posts, and as I said at times they go small as well.

I do know that Charles and Robert have gone head-to-head. I think they both respect each other very much. In terms of the big men coming out of the state of Georgia last year, they were two of the top ones.

It will be kind of a renewal of the battles they did. They played a high school game against each other last year, as well.

**Q. I remember as you previewed the season you talked about expecting to lean on your experienced post guys returning with Kammeon Holsey and Daniel Miller. Do you have any idea that here in late February you would have two freshmen leading your team in scoring right now?**

COACH GREGORY: In the ACC, our three freshmen are leading us in scoring, in ACC games.

That's a little bit of the challenge that we face. As young as this league is on a lot of teams, I think there's maybe us and Boston College in terms of the freshmen having to lead us in scoring, in the rebounding as well, because Robert is second in rebounding, but behind Daniel right now in ACC play.

That's the challenge. I think there's been a lot of teams that have played younger guys, and this league is a little bit younger. Some of those teams have some upperclassmen they can rely on to get them through some of those times. Wake Forest beats Miami and Harris has a tremendous game. (Travis) McKie has been good for them. You kind of go through the league, you look at that.

One of the teams that doesn't necessarily have that is Maryland. (James) Padgett has done a good job, but they rely on freshmen and sophomores to do their scoring for them, too.

It has been a little bit of a challenge

because one thing that all freshmen do, is there's some inconsistency. You're not only asking them to play 32 minutes a game, but you're asking them to be consistent and be able to sustain over 32 minutes a game a very high level of performance. Sometimes that's a challenge for younger guys.

**Q. You've been coaching for 10 years at Georgia Tech. The previous eight years as a head coach, have you had a team that you had a field on the floor this young?**

COACH GREGORY: My first year at Dayton, we were very old. I think we started four seniors on that team, maybe three seniors, and our sixth man was a senior. The second year we brought in five freshmen. I started two or three a good part of the year.

Again, they weren't necessarily the go-to guys on that. The difference is not just playing the freshmen, but having to rely on them so much. Everybody talks about freshmen hitting the wall, things like that, our guys have done a pretty good job of being able to fight through that.

But, again, we don't have the luxury of those guys not playing well. Those guys have to play well every single night for us, for us to be competitive, have a fighting chance in some of these games.

That's been the biggest change in 24 years or 22 years, whatever it is, in terms of coaching, an assistant at Michigan and Northwestern, not only have we had to rely on those freshmen not only to play but to be in some cases go-to guys. We went to Marcus at the end of the Wake Forest game, and he played extremely well.

All that is going to do, those guys are going to grow up a little faster. Down the road, it's going to play dividends.

**Q. You play 14 ACC games. Now you're facing Maryland, a team you haven't seen before. You also finish the year at Boston College, who you haven't seen yet either. Is that a problem at this time of the year or is there so much information and tape available on ACC teams that it really doesn't matter?**

COACH GREGORY: Well, one, it is a little difficult just due to the fact there's almost too much information. You can watch all 17 league team games prior to playing Boston College. The only good thing is both teams are in the same situation.

But you do have to streamline it a little bit in terms of looking at maybe the last four or five

games as opposed to their whole body of work. It's just too many games.

The biggest challenge is they're a much different team than they were last year. We played Maryland and BC twice last year. Both are remarkably different teams. So it's the way all conference schedules are now. When you play 18 conference games, when these conferences continue to enlarge, you're going to get situations like that, the last game. Conference season you're playing a team for the very first time. It's just the way it's going to be in college basketball now.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for taking time being with us today.

COACH GREGORY: Thank you.

An interview with:

## COACH LEONARD HAMILTON FLORIDA STATE

THE MODERATOR: We have with us now Florida State head basketball coach Leonard Hamilton. Coach, a few comments about your team, then we'll open it up for questions.

COACH HAMILTON: We have a quick turnaround after playing in Blacksburg yesterday. We have a team that's probably playing as well as they played all year, Wake Forest. We didn't play well against Wake Forest the last time we played them. So obviously we need to have very good practice, very focused practice.

Wake Forest is playing with a lot of confidence. Even though they play extremely well at home, they played a lot of close games with a lot of good basketball teams. We know we need to be at our best if we're going to be successful against a team that's upset Miami, which was playing probably as well as anybody in the country.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. Coach, talking about Wake playing so well at home, they beat Miami, beat State, took Duke to the wire. Do you see a difference in how they perform home and away?**

COACH HAMILTON: I think it's a combination. They have a couple of veterans and then they have some young players that adjust mentally and emotionally. I think that has as much

to do with it as anything else. As they mature, learn a little bit more, as they grow through the season, I think they'll understand the focus, the intensity, the togetherness and the communication that has to go on with young teams having to go on the road and be successful.

This is a tough league. It's kind of unforgiving. There's no doubt when you go on the road for the first time with new players, they're adjusting. We've experienced some of that ourselves this year.

They are now coming together. In the latter stages of the season, we all should be about as mature as we're going to be. Hopefully we'll catch them still recovering, still improving. We haven't played as well at home this year as we have the last six or seven years. We know it's still going to be a challenge for us.

**Q. I've asked a lot of coaches. A lot of teams are playing much better at home, even more than normal. You are not the norm. You've had some of your best games on the road. Is there any rhyme or reason to that?**

COACH HAMILTON: We're an altogether different team this year with seven first-year players that are adjusting on the road and at home. We've been hitting and missing with Terrance being out, Ian not being able to practice. The only two veterans we have are Michael (Snaer) and Okaro. We haven't had a lot of ability in our leadership only because we have two guys that have been there and done that, so to speak, that are actually active. So I think it's a learning process with us.

I think we're getting better, playing better at home and on the road. We're just not playing well enough for 40 minutes. We started three freshmen in Blacksburg. I was really pleased with all the progress my young kids are making.

We have those periods in the game where we're not quite together. You have four or five possessions like we did, all of a sudden they make you play. It's a learning process.

I think as you'll see, Wake Forest has some talented young kids, you're going to see them continue to improve like other young kids in the league, be more consistent on the road, then get back to playing well at home.

**Q. How do you gauge where your team is right now overall? What can you take away from this season? What goals are there still to accomplish this year?**



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COACH HAMILTON: When I look at our basketball team, I'm seeing the progress (Boris) Bojanovsky is making, the progress that (Michael) Ojo is making, two international players who are not only adjusting to American ball, they're adjusting to what we're asking them to do. I feel comfortable.

I look at (Devon) Bookert, (Aaron) Thomas, all our four of our freshmen are playing well. Montay Brandon was trying to learn to become a point guard on the job. We moved him off the ball a little bit. All five of those kids are making tremendous progress.

The thing that has concerned me the most is Ian Miller has been so consistent with us over the last number of years, now he can't practice at all, and he needs to be in rhythm. I never really know going into a game how he's going to respond when the only thing he's been able to do is warm up the day of the game and play, which kind of keeps us out of what we have been expecting.

I'm gauging by how well we're executing, the fewer mistakes we're making now than we made earlier in the year, the ability to stay focused and play with an intensity for longer periods of time. We've been here before. I've never had this many first-year players all at one time in our rotation since I've been at Miami.

I'm still holding out that we'll finish the season strong going into the ACC tournament and perform well. Regardless where we are in the end, I'm sure we'll be playing in somebody's tournament. I'm anxious to see how we do in the post-season.

I still think we have a lot to play for. I still think we can continue staying focused. We've been in this situation as a staff before. To be honest with you, our freshmen now are playing much better at the same stage of the game than the freshman group that we lost. We lost six seniors that weren't even close to where these guys were in their initial year.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for taking time being with us today.

COACH HAMILTON: Thank you.

An interview with:

**COACH MIKE KRZYZEWSKI  
DUKE**

THE MODERATOR: We have with us now Duke head basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski. We'll go right to questions for Coach Krzyzewski.

**Q. Coach, talk a little bit about the progress of Rasheed Sulaimon has made. He's been a defensive factor for you all season.**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: He's been a starter all season. He made a lot of progress to be a starter right at the start of the season. He was a key factor to us getting off to a good start when Ryan was healthy and since then has had to do more.

I think he's had a great week at Virginia Tech and against Boston College. He's a key guy for us because he's got to be a really good defender. He's our tallest perimeter guy of our first four guys on the perimeter, when you have Quinn (Cook), Seth (Curry), Tyler (Thornton) and Rasheed. He gets matchups that are tough matchups and has done well.

So we're really pleased with Rasheed. I think he's had a great year and he happens to be a freshman. He's had a great year for any player, but as a freshman, it's been terrific.

**Q. What are the skills that go into making him such an effective defender on the perimeter, which is not an easy place to guard people?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, he's an outstanding athlete to begin with. He has long arms. He has a body that can get into a defensive stance better than most people. He's made that way.

But he has exceptional quickness. A huge thing for a freshman is to figure out how tough it is to do it game in and game out.

For a freshman to do that in our program, every game we play is a huge game. We're 24-3. For them to play that way on a 24-3 team, having a major injury in the last 12 games, it's exceptional. It's exceptional. He's not on a team that's .500, you're in games where you can pad your stats, things like that. His stuff, the game's on the line.

So I'm really proud of him. I knew he'd be good, but he's turned out from necessity. Part of it is Seth's injury, not allowing him to practice very

much has allowed Rasheed in a practice to take a more dominant role. That was one of the benefits of Seth not practicing. I'd rather have him practice, but Rasheed has taken advantage of that.

**Q. A question about Miami. Is there anything alarming that you read into their loss over the weekend at Wake? What do you need to do differently to change the outcome of that game?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: You know what, I'm not looking at Miami right now, I'm looking at Virginia, so...

I didn't watch their game against Wake Forest. I don't really know who they are currently. We haven't played them for a while. I'm not a good guy to comment on Miami.

I'm not surprised when anyone loses. I mean, people lose because people are playing good teams and we have a good league. Again, to me the story about them is how much they've won, not that they've lost a game. They've had a terrific year, just a sensational year.

**Q. You are sick of answering this, but any timeline on Ryan Kelly yet?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: No, but he's moving along really well. We're very optimistic. We know he's going to return. We've taken a good amount of time to make sure that he's in a position, a really good position. You don't want to rush things.

But he is going to be back hopefully before the end of the regular season. We feel like he will be, but he's got to keep progressing. Thanks for asking about him.

**Q. Mike, you're taking on a Virginia team who has won 15 games in a row at home. Seems like a lot of teams around the league play significantly better at home than on the road. Is that just kind of the nature of basketball or do you sense it's become any greater than it has been?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, statistically it's greater this year, especially with like the top half of our league, top half being record-wise right now. Teams have really played even better at home.

Again, you'd rather play at home than away, so there's a certain comfort zone there.

I haven't watched them as much as I will

watch them. Last night after our game and this morning in watching tape of them, they're just a really good basketball team. It's a team that fans would like. Your fans would really love a team the way that Tony (Bennett's) put his team together. So they're going to have even a little bit more confidence.

They're just a good basketball team. (Joe) Harris is really one of the better players in the country. He's a warrior. He reminds me of Singler as far as their toughness. They're a little bit different players, but their toughness. They play every play. He's terrific. He's one of the favorite players that I've watched, not just in our conference but around the country. I think he's that good.

**Q. Regarding the home versus road angle, they're playing freshmen. Do you think that has something to do with it, particularly for freshmen, they're much more comfortable at home?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I think a freshman probably is that. We play freshmen at times. We started two freshmen. I think early on it really helps you. Look, we all would rather play at home. So I guess the younger you are, it helps you a little bit more.

But for their team, having Harris, Mitchell and Evans as upperclassmen, you have a point, a great player in Harris, and Mitchell, who is having a terrific year, you have stability, high performance at three key areas. When you are a freshman, in a home environment, you're playing with some good players, guys who are winners.

I mean, I really like Virginia's team. I think they're real good.

**Q. When you look at Virginia through January, they were playing one of the slowest tempos in the country, in the bottom 20. In the last month they've really picked it up. They've been averaging close to 80 points a game. What do you see that's changed with their offense in the last month or so? Are they playing faster or just more efficiently?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I think they play a little bit faster. With the newness of certain guys on the team, with their freshmen, you get acclimated.

I don't think they're a slow-down team, I think they're a smart basketball team that will take opportunistic shots. When they get a good shot,

they'll take it. They're more so an efficient team, they're a very efficient offensive team.

**Q. How do you manage this week? You got three days to get ready for Virginia, then you have to come back 48 hours later with a big game. Do you take it a little easier during these three days? Today is a day off. But do you take it easier knowing not only you have a game Thursday night, you have another one less than 48 hours later?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: It's an unusual week. Scheduling-wise it's been a very weird month for our basketball team regarding preparation and other team's preparation for you. This week is a difficult one. We won't get a good preparation day on Friday, then we play on Saturday.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for taking time being with us today.

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Thank you.

An interview with:

## **COACH BRAD BROWNELL CLEMSON**

THE MODERATOR: We have Clemson head basketball coach Brad Brownell. Coach, if you could, a few comments about your team, then we'll open it up for questions.

COACH BROWNELL: Coming off a tough loss physically against Maryland. Played very well. Beat us up a little bit on the boards. Certainly have our hands full with a North Carolina team that is playing really well, shoots the ball extremely well from the perimeter. Just seems to be in a very good rhythm right now, playing with a lot of confidence, especially the last couple of weeks.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. North Carolina three games ago switched to a smaller lineup with four perimeter guys, moved their power forward in at center. What kind of problems does that present? Does it provide any opportunities that a bigger team can exploit?**

COACH BROWNELL: Well, I think it certainly spaces the floor a little bit better for them

and gets an extra shooter on the court, which stretches your defense certainly. It probably helps a little bit of ball handling for them, as well. Maybe it allows them to play a little faster, but I don't know how that's overly possible because they're pretty fast with post players in there, as well.

I don't know about taking advantage of things. They maybe don't offensive rebound quite as well without another big guy in the lineup. But to be honest, I think defensively they've been good. They've found ways to scratch down in the post when they've needed the help on a smaller guy or when (P.J.) Harrison is guarding a bigger guy.

It doesn't seem to have affected them too much I think just in watching the films. I'm not going to tell you everything we're going to do to play them.

**Q. It's been a tough month for you guys. I wonder, how is the emotion, morale of this team, at this point?**

COACH BROWNELL: It's been pretty good, considering what we've been through. We've played well in some games and haven't won, notably Miami and NC State, Florida State on the road. Three games we probably, if you look at the game, controlled the game, controlled the game in a way. We were leading late in the last minute, last two minutes, and weren't able to hold those games off. That's even tougher.

I think that's probably the toughest way to lose, is to play well and follow a plan and execute it pretty doggone good, then just down the stretch, miss free throws or the other team makes a great shot, for whatever reason you don't finish out a game. That really takes a lot out of you.

Considering our guys have had that happen to them three times here, we're hanging in there pretty good. We were down a little bit against Maryland. Physically, they're big and strong. That size was hard for us to deal with for 40 minutes.

But I thought we played some stretches of very good basketball. I think that's kind of been what we've done this year, is I think we've played very good in stretches, then we've had some things happen to us and not respond very well, then play good again a lot of times in spurts in games.

We're just not consistently as good as we need to be to finish off some of these games. But we're hanging in there okay.

**Q. Brad, coaches are talking about four conference games left and finishing strong and heading into the tournament, that sort of thing. What's important for you guys as you look at the last four games as a whole and what you need to do to be playing, leading up to finishing strong?**

COACH BROWNELL: We need to try to win a couple of these. I know that sounds easy. We need one or two to fall our way here so we can have some positive feedback. You can play well, fight your tail off, lose at the end. When that happens a few times in a row, it becomes a little difficult for you, for your guys to keep their spirits where they need to be, because our margin for error is just not as great as some teams that we're playing.

We've got to have everything going in the right direction. I think I'm proud of the way our guys have competed. I think we've competed very well and played a lot of teams very hard. We don't have as much to show for it here in the last month, and that's the frustrating part of it.

I'd like to tell you there's one thing, we need to shoot better, score a few more points, make free throws. Certainly that's part of it for our team, but we've also had little things that creep in, whether it's rebound problems in some games, some transition defense in a certain game. It's been one or two things that we take care of, then it tends to rear its ugly head every once in a while.

As long as our spirits are good and we're playing the right way, we'll be a very tough team to play against.

**Q. A couple of coaches have talked about the youth of their teams. Clemson certainly fits into that category. What is the biggest improvement you've seen in your team in terms of how the young players are adapting?**

COACH BROWNELL: I think by and large, our guys have done a pretty good job of maintaining focus for game plans and we've improved in some of that area, just being disciplined, making a few less errors on some things that we talked about through scouting that earlier in the year we weren't quite as good at.

I don't know if we've gotten any more comfortable out there. I think some of our guys have. I think by this time, we've played 26 games, played a bunch of ACC games. Everybody's got

young players. But they've been hardened. They're fine. They should be ready to go and make plays, make winning plays.

Certainly you saw that with the Wake young players winning a big game against Miami. Guys really are freshmen, but I don't think they're freshmen out there anymore. They're guys that have gotten enough experience that they should be guys that you can count on.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for taking time being with us today.

COACH BROWNELL: Thank you.

An interview with:

### **COACH STEVE DONAHUE BOSTON COLLEGE**

THE MODERATOR: We have with us now Boston College head coach Steve Donahue. Coach, a few comments about your team, then we'll open it up for questions.

COACH DONAHUE: Thank you. We wrapped up Tuesday our fourth game in nine days. I thought we played really well over those four games, which was a one-point loss to Duke, a three-point win to Wake, a three-point loss to Florida State, and then we beat Maryland by 11. Just was real proud that we were able, with our young group, to go through that stretch.

Came out yesterday, did not play well the first 15 minutes versus Duke. I think they had a lot to do with it. They were ready for us. They really guarded us. I thought we were really careless with the ball that led to easy opportunities. We got to learn from it. I thought we played the last 20 minutes really well.

Looking forward to another challenge on the road against a very talented NC State team.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. You played NC State, a very competitive game, but that was a little while ago. How much has changed and what do you see that would make this game a different outcome?**

COACH DONAHUE: I haven't watched too much NC State. I'm sitting right now with my laptop watching some of their stuff.

They went through a little stretch with Lorenzo Brown being out, probably didn't help.

Teams were gunning for them. I think that's also something that happens in this league if you're not ready for it. Teams can really come after you.

They're very talented. It's not the best offensive team in the league, one of them. We have to do a good job. Transition defense is so key because they're just so good at getting the ball up and getting early offense, attacking the rim. Then I think all five guys that you put out on a court can put it in the basket. There's not a lot of weaknesses on the offensive end.

We got to do a great job on offense, control the game as we normally do if we're going to win. You can't turn it over, got to get good looks, and you got to make it on the road for sure.

**Q. There's a huge disparity in this league about how teams play at home and on the road. Most of the responses are that young teams are so much more comfortable at home. You have a young team. You've had a couple of good road performances. Is your team handling the road very well?**

COACH DONAHUE: Yeah, I think youth does having something to do with it. I've been pretty proud of our road games. Our two bad losses were Miami and Duke, No. 1 and No. 2 in the country. I don't think anyone is going in there and necessarily beating those two teams.

Went down to the wire at Wake, went down to the wire at Florida State. Felt we played a really good half of basketball at Virginia. Beat a good team in Virginia Tech at Virginia Tech.

I think we've been pretty consistent. We don't have a great home-court advantage maybe like other teams that really make you feel comfortable at home. So there's not a drastic difference right now in our atmospheres that we've been playing in.

I thought yesterday's Duke crowd was terrific. Duke was very much ready after we gave them a scare here. But I do think youth has a lot to do with it.

There's a lot of things working against you on the road when you're a young team. It's the mindset that the other team senses, as well, that you're young and you're not sure of yourselves. I think that's what you saw yesterday with us. But it probably exists with other teams as well.

You don't have a pedigree of success in adverse environments, and it shows itself in a lot of different ways.

**Q. Your impressions of Rasheed Sulaimon of Duke. What he brings defensively to them.**

COACH DONAHUE: I've been impressed with Rasheed for most of the year. He's a good all-around basketball player. I think that's the thing that sticks out at you. He seems a lot more mature than a freshman. He understands the game. There's not a lot of BS to him. He makes plays that he should. There's other plays that he doesn't try to make. I think that's the best thing about him. He's really confident and secure, yet he's not trying stuff he can't do.

He's a very good defender with good length. But I thought he was really ready yesterday for sure, as well.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about one of your guys. Eddie Odio has seemed to come along in the last eight or nine games or so. His contributions were spotty up until then. He's developed more consistently. I'm sure part of that is because he's getting more minutes because Dennis Clifford can't go. How about his development in the last month or so?**

COACH DONAHUE: When we recruited Eddie, I was hoping we could get a redshirt year out of him. I didn't necessarily know if he was a three, a four. He played a lot of guard in high school. He grew about two, two and a half inches since the time we recruited him till he got on campus. I thought he needed a year in the weight room.

He's done a great job. He was probably 205, now he's more like 220. I think you're going to see another really big growth in his game over the next six to eight months as well.

Has a great IQ. Has a really good athleticism to him. I think what you're seeing is a kid who is starting to get confident. He's a very good shooter. We do these five-minute shooting drills, and he matches any of our guards. He's going to be a good standstill, step-out four.

Then, obviously, with his rebounding and blocking shots, his passing ability, I think it's just a matter of time that he physically consistently can play against the bigs in this league, and the confidence that goes with knowing that you can do it.

**Q. You mentioned his blocked shots. He leads you in blocked shots in ACC games.**

**One of those guys that has a knack for doing that?**

COACH DONAHUE: Well, he was a volleyball player growing up. I think they're the best athletes you can have in terms of blocking shots. What he does, he doesn't have a gather. When he blocks shots, he has good length, he goes off of two feet. Even if you're guarding him, he's not a kid that's going to go for every pump fake. He's going to go when the ball is literally released. I think it surprises some of the bigs in this league as they back him into the basket.

He's a very good first jumper off of that, then he has a really good second jump in him. I believe they're the best kind of athletes around the rim. They're guys that have a second jump in them quickly. I credit his volleyball background more than anything else with that.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for taking time being with us today.

COACH DONAHUE: Thanks for having me.

THE MODERATOR: That concludes today's teleconference. Thank you for taking part.

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