

February 4, 2013



An interview with:

**JEFF BZDELIK
WAKE FOREST**

Q. I just wanted to ask you about the importance of having the two veterans. You've got a mostly freshman dominated team, but you've got the two veterans in McKie and Harris. How important is it to have a couple of guys with that ACC experience?

JEFF BZDELIK: Oh, it's -- I don't think you can even define how important it is. The upper classman leadership is essential, both on and off the court, and as we all know, it's such a big adjustment for young players, particularly coming out of high school, to adapt to a long college season, especially in the ACC. You combine that with the academics and the social adjustment, as well, so to have some upper classmen who have been through it and who can help guide younger players through it and mentor them is absolutely imperative, especially on the court to settle them down, especially when they're playing on the road. It's critical.

Q. I'm just curious about in this one-and-done age of college basketball, how difficult or valuable are the older players? And I'm thinking about a Miami team that's probably the oldest team in the league this year. It's not coincidental, is it, that they're playing so well?

JEFF BZDELIK: No, you're absolutely right. I mean, that's -- I think they have a sixth-year senior, two fifth-year seniors and three or four other seniors. The maturity, the mental maturity, the physical maturity, the experience factor, the desperation to know that this is their last hurrah, that element adds another key component to it.

I know I go back to when I was the head coach at the Air Force Academy, we had fifth-year seniors because they were prep school young men and other seniors, and we got up to 11th in the nation. You could just see the experience just play out and how important that is. That's why Miami is so strong.

Q. I wanted to ask you, obviously you do have a very young team except for your two vets. Is it difficult for that kind of team to kind of put games behind them? I'm thinking of the fact that you guys played a very, very tough game at home against Duke last week and then came back, and there may have been other factors, but just were not as competitive as Maryland. Is any of that a fact that young guys sometimes don't compartmentalize as well as veterans? Is that something they have to learn?

JEFF BZDELIK: It's been an issue with us. It has, even from the opening of the season. We played a very emotional game against Connecticut down in the Virgin Islands and lost by six. The next night, less than 24 hours later, we just played a real clunker against Iona. And then you're right, then we play NC State and get a win, and then we go to Georgia Tech and play just a horrific first half against Georgia Tech. And then Duke and then Maryland. It's been an emotional roller coaster, and so that's something obviously we've addressed.

As the leader, I acknowledge I have yet to find a key to their emotions to have them be right for our next opponent. That's something that is a work in progress, I can tell you that.

Q. Is it any easier coming back against a team that's probably your biggest rival as far as getting them focused and pumped up for this game?

JEFF BZDELIK: Well, I think that we're slowly learning the hard way through the experiences I just mentioned. Yes, I think that obviously the name across their chest will resonate. That's just natural, especially with -- we have so many players on our roster from this state. But at the same time, you have to play well, and we know that they're going to play well, and we're going to have to play well to have a chance to put ourselves to be competitive.

An interview with:

JAMES JOHNSON VIRGINIA TECH

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, coming off a very, very difficult week where we played a talented team in Miami and then went on the road down to a talented North Carolina team that's always tough at home, and then going into this week we've got a Maryland team that had a good win with Wake Forest, put up a lot of points this last week, and a Georgia Tech team who beat a very good Virginia team. This young group that we have, we've got our work cut out for us this week, also.

Q. I wanted to ask you, you obviously have already played Maryland. How much better or do you feel like your team has improved and made progress since that ACC opener?

JAMES JOHNSON: Yeah, yeah, I think the team is playing better right now. I think defensively we've improved, I think rebounding we've improved. I just don't know how-- consistency is still an issue with individual players and with the team. I think that part comes with some of our youth and then some foul trouble and certain things with a depleted short bench.

Q. You mentioned after the game at Carolina that you thought the guys ran out of gas a little bit. How will you manage that this week? Will you take more days off, have a light practice? How do you plan to combat that?

JAMES JOHNSON: I don't know if there's much we can do to try to combat that now because we've got to do certain things in practice and preparation to prepare for the teams we're playing and to try to practice and get better in certain situations, in certain areas that we need to get better in. But I think it's part of the grind. It's February 4th, and we've played a lot of games, we've played a lot of guys a lot of minutes. I mean, certain guys have played a lot of minutes, and I think that's just wearing on them.

I don't know if there's much we can do about practice that's going to help that. Certain guys just played a lot of minutes. You look at a guy like Erick Green, he's playing a lot of minutes but he's also getting double- and triple-teamed at

times; and Jarell Eddie is playing a lot of minutes, and he's not the leanest guy out there; Robert Brown, the fact that he's struggling a little bit, he's still playing a lot of minutes; Cadarian Raines, playing a lot of minutes, also. We've just got guys that are playing a lot of minutes, and they've been doing that all year long, and I think that's just taking its toll now.

Q. These are two rematches for you this week. What changes, if anything, in your approach? How is it different when you play a team a second time?

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, I don't know if anything changes in our approach. There may be a little change in maybe the game plan and how we play those guys, how we do certain things, and I think with how much better or with the changes that our team has made since we've played those guys because there have been changes, so we'll look at the opponent and then we'll look at ourselves and see what we need to change or what we need to do different from that.

Q. Do you sense at all any psychological downness, if that's a word, but are the guys down right now? You mentioned the grind and people playing a lot of minutes. When you see them, when you travel, when you see them in practice or in the film room, how do they seem to you?

JAMES JOHNSON: No, that's one thing that I've been very surprised about to be honest with you. The confidence level is still up, and after the game on Saturday you've got guys were in the locker room talking about the guys were right there. We've just got to finish, we're right there, we're going to be all right, we've just got to finish, we've got to keep working hard, and that's coming from the players. I'm trying to preach that, but that's also coming from guys in the locker room, and I thought that was very good to hear.

The fact that we're coming out and we're playing hard, we're getting off to good starts, we're competing and fighting, it also shows me that the guys still have confidence. I just think now it's a matter of being able to finish, and whether that's because we're getting tired down the stretch or because the other team is just making plays, whatever it is, I do think we still have some confidence, and we're going to continue to try to fight and compete down the stretch here.

Q. And Erick had one of his rare poor shooting games at Chapel Hill on Saturday. Do you sense any fatigue in him, or are you confident that, like you did say after the BYU game, that he'll immediately bounce back and be scoring 25, 30 points again before you know it?

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, I sense a little bit of fatigue, some wear-down in him. It's one or two guys that you -- he's seeing a lot of different defenses, and he's seeing a lot of big strong bodies now as we go through the course of this ACC season. You're looking at guys that are 6'5", 205 pounds that are guarding him now, and they're sending 6'9", 240 at him, trapping him in ball screens and bumping him. In the whole game played on Saturday, he played 43 minutes of that. That's a lot.

You're looking at the games we're playing, and this week we've got the turnaround game in Maryland, big, strong, physical, deep, and they come back at 1:00 on Saturday and play a Georgia Tech team that's big, strong and physical, also, and they play a bunch of guys.

So I think it's carrying over to him a little bit. I think he's -- mentally I think he's handling it and being positive about it, but at times sometimes your legs just don't have it, and I think that he wore down a little bit on Saturday.

Q. With Alex Len coming to town this week, what was your impressions of him from seeing him in person the first time you played him and what kind of challenges will he pose for your defense?

JAMES JOHNSON: Well, I thought our big guys, that's the game that we played the big lineup for the first time with Joey and Cadarian, and I thought both our big guys did a very good job in that game. Looking back at tape, we left some offensive rebounds, let them get some offensive rebounds in the game, but once we kind of settled in a little bit, I thought our big guys did a very good job versus all their big guys, not just Alex, who he's a handful for anybody. But I think they did a very good job with all those guys, their big guys up front. Layman got off a little bit and hit some threes, Seth Allen got off a little bit and hit some threes, but we held Alex to 16, and I thought we did a good job with him.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the game Saturday in terms of -- Erick has been carrying you guys so much. Is it at all gratifying that in

game where he was not at his best, you hung in the game and had a chance to win it, took it to overtime, you might have had contributions from other people that impressed you?

JAMES JOHNSON: I don't know, I mean, it's not gratifying when -- we're going in and our objective is to win the game, and we prepare and we game plan to win the game. So however we can do that, we'd like to come out of there with a win. We did have some guys step up and contribute a little bit; Raines contributed, Eddie contributed, Brown still struggled a little bit, and then Green struggled.

For us to have a couple guys struggling when we're not that deep anyway, we had a couple guys struggle, our best player, leading scorer struggled a little bit, and then one of our scoring guys who can take it and put the ball in the hole for us is still struggling, and those things happen and we're still able to be right there in the game and have a chance and opportunity to win the game, we're getting better, and we're taking some steps forward, but we've got to take the next step, and that's learning how to finish the game and win.

An interview with:

TONY BENNETT VIRGINIA

TONY BENNETT: Just getting ready to play a tough Clemson team, a physical Clemson team. Both of us are coming off some tough losses, and we have today off because of the way the schedule falls, so we'll have two days to prepare, and hopefully we'll make some improvements in a game that we played well enough to come away with a win at Georgia Tech but the last six or seven minutes had too many empty possessions because of whether it be missed shots, a turnover or breakdown that really cost us in that game.

Q. There was some discussion after the game about some of your defensive possessions and the fact that you would stop the first shot, either give up an offensive rebound or a ball would be tipped outside or

you'd turn it over immediately. You said you've been watching film. Have you watched the film yet?

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, there was a crucial -- there was like seven -- around the eight-minute mark, somewhere in there, we were up nine and played a pretty good defensive stand, and then they missed a shot and got the offensive rebound and got a three out of it. That one I looked at, I thought, boy, that could have been a big swing. That was just kind of one of those shots where it was a tough bounce to get to and they made the play.

But there were a couple that were close that I thought either we should have had or that were in our hands. But that was part of it, but I don't know if you could point to -- it was a few of the empty possessions in the last six, seven minutes that a couple of breakdowns defensively like maybe they spun baseline, we fouled, or we came down and missed a lay-up or we turned it over, that just sort of -- we missed, again, some good looks that cost us.

But as far as those hustle plays, yeah, there are a few I think we should have gotten, and then there were a couple good efforts by them or bounces that they just got to. So it wasn't just that. But I do think there's got to be an incredible sense of urgency for those balls, though. You mentioned the 50/50 balls, that they were a little quicker to than we were the majority of the game on those.

Q. In a few of the games this year you've had stretches where you go five, six, seven minutes without hitting a shot. As you review those, is there anything that you guys are doing or not doing during those stretches?

TONY BENNETT: You know, I think I looked -- in the second half we had 15 shots that were either, when you look at the shot chart, in the paint or kind of recorded as lay-ups. So we got some inside looks, got some pretty clean, uncontested looks, and there's times maybe you get later in the game and either if you have a lead or it's big possessions, sometimes you can get a little stagnant so you always watch for that, and that's whether you call a set or make sure you're getting the right guys looks. And then we had some costly turnovers in this last stretch, one was an offensive pull on a hook, and then one was just a turnover. Again, just those empty possessions, whether it's a forced shot, we had a couple forced shots in there, but besides those, the quality of the

shots as I watched that, I can't complain about it. I thought there were some good looks, again, some offensive rebounds, some point-blank ones that they either made a heck of a block or we just missed.

As far as a pattern, I just think you keep looking at quality of shots and try not to have empty possessions, and empty possessions are, again, a forced shot, a silly turnover, or the wrong kind of guy shooting it at the wrong place. Those are the ones that you try to eliminate, and then you live with the quality shots and you've just got to stick them and make some plays.

Q. To follow up briefly if you don't mind, when you've got a young team can those things snowball a little quicker than with a veteran team?

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, I think so. It wasn't just, A, that those freshmen out there didn't do -- we had some freshmen who made some nice plays against Georgia Tech. Robert Carter made some really big plays and Bolden did for them, and a lot of times the game comes down to making some plays, when it's a tight game down the stretch and you just hopefully have the good spacing.

But certainly the inconsistencies or dealing with those things I think can sometimes affect younger players more. But there's a lot of young players out on the floor on both teams, so you just try to, again, work through that, and it's not always young guys. It kind of affects everybody in different ways.

But there are times we had four freshmen on the floor with Joe or one of our guys, and I think they had two or three, and you'll see with younger players, you'll see some things that make you scratch your head maybe more often than you do with veterans, but that's part of building it. There's a lot of good young players in this league when you look around. I don't mean to talk so much, but the league is in a healthy spot with the teams coming in and the youth in the league that are quality players.

Q. I wanted to ask you about a guy that's not a young player. You played Virginia Tech a couple weeks ago and had the match-up with Erick Green. He's having an unbelievable year statistically for a team that's struggling. We've only had one guy that was not a first

division player be the ACC Player of the Year. Could he be that kind of player, even in a bad year?

TONY BENNETT: Well, I mean, when you say a bad year, there's still a lot of games left in the ACC. He certainly is -- the numbers he's putting up, the impact he's having on his team, they played very close. They lost in overtime and were in some games. So absolutely, very talented player, because he's complete. I know you've got to wait until the ACC season is complete and see how teams fare, his continued impact on it, but his ability and his impact on the game is certainly worthy of that consideration. But of course it'll depend on the end of the year and where things stand and obviously where his team finishes.

Q. When you go up against them, he carries so much of the load. How much special attention or focus does he get in your pregame preparations?

TONY BENNETT: Well, just look at our box score. I think he had 35. He torched up and we tried -- I thought we did an okay job and made him earn most of his shots, and he still had that many, and we just tried to do a good job on the others. But of course you're aware of him, and that's -- I'm sure he gets a lot of attention. Not that it's the same, but Joe Harris picks up a lot of attention for our team, too, and you just have to try to adjust, and that's where other guys have to step up at certain times.

Q. Most teams play better at home than on the road. This year I think you've got the big home winning streak, but some of your poorer performances were on the road. Do you just chalk that up to that's the way basketball is, or is your team's road performance disturbing to you?

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, again, we missed a couple of big free throws in our game down the stretch. You know, good question, because there were some -- we talked about those loose balls, and just the -- I wouldn't say it wasn't that we weren't giving the effort, but you could see their effort, their play, maybe a great blocked shot or chasing down a loose ball with a reckless abandon, Georgia Tech, and we didn't quite have -- didn't match maybe that kind of intensity or that kind of ruggedness defensively when you needed a stop that you feel the crowd give you that lift, at least I've seen that in some of our recent

close wins at home, and we weren't able to come up big in that game down the stretch.

I think you feed off your crowd and the energy it can give you, but the good teams, when you go on the road you can't rely on those kind of momentum swings, those kind of energy swings from the crowd. You've got to be able to have that in yourself, manufacture that and be so sound, and that's what hasn't happened for us on the road, and it is certainly hard enough at home, but it's challenging -- it's tougher on the road because of those instances, and I think that's showed in us, and we've got to be -- try to finish our games or be stronger. But yeah, the road is tough in conference play for sure.

Q. The box score number that really pops out from the first Clemson game was them shooting almost 77 percent in the second half. When you look at that, that's extraordinary against anyone, especially against your defense. Were there some fluky shots there? I know Jennings hit a couple that maybe left you scratching your head, but how would you evaluate your second half defense against them?

TONY BENNETT: No, they played well. We did not do a great job. I think they had a lot of point-blank shots. Booker, he's hard to handle, and Jennings was stretching you from three, so they had you both ways. And again, they were more physical than us and got the ball to the spots they needed. I think they blocked a bunch of shots in that game if I'm not mistaken.

Q. Six.

TONY BENNETT: Yeah, they've got terrific shot blockers with the two guys, a couple few guys. Yeah, they got what they wanted in the second half, and they did hit some fairly tough shots, but they really did in terms of in the lane, hard post-ups, getting some rhythm shots, and that's -- I think Brad does a very good job, and I think those guys, when they get going with Booker and Jennings and they've got other pieces, they're a physical, tough team to play against.

An interview with:

MARK GOTTFRIED NC STATE

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, I think that Thursday is going to be a good opportunity for our team. Obviously we were disappointed in our last game, in the finish, and not being able to come out of there with a win. I think our group has a great opportunity to get back on track here in a very tough environment there at Duke.

Q. Some of the things you did well in the last two games allowed you to develop a longer bench and you fought there until the end. How do you reinforce those things after losses because I know your team was down after the Virginia game and Miami game, but after both of those games were there some positives?

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, I think there's been a lot of positives. The difficult thing is there's four losses to show for those games. So I think our team right now understands that -- Tyler Lewis stepped up and not only played well, but I think there's confidence that our team gained in him, which is good, and I think that'll help us. I think Jordan is giving us some quality minutes. Although they're not a lot, they've been quality for us as an interior player.

There are a lot of positive things happening, we just have to make sure that we turn those things into winning games, which we've obviously been very close. But we've got to do a few more things a little bit better and turn that around.

Q. You talked about struggling to finish. Obviously the Duke game last year in Cameron was an example of that. Can you use that experience last year as motivation for your team on Thursday?

MARK GOTTFRIED: I don't think so. I think the guys that played last year obviously understand what that experience did for our team. But this is a different group, different team. Our young guys have not been into Cameron to play. I think that our team has to develop a mentality where we want to go on the road, we cherish going on the road. That's a challenge for us that we need to grab a hold of. I think it starts this week,

because we've played well enough at times to win on the road, but we've come up short a number of times. We've got to be mentally ready.

Q. When you look at this season as a whole, I think perhaps the criticism of your team is that you play to the level of the competition; you get up for the big games, Duke, Miami, but then you play down to lesser competition, like Wake Forest. What do you say to that?

MARK GOTTFRIED: I would disagree.

Q. How do you explain the inconsistency of your team this year?

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, I think that there's a lot of things. I don't think that our team is any more ready to play or less ready to play depending upon who our opponent has been. And I think that we've played hard and sometimes not as well. And sometimes we've not made shots, we've given up a rebound here or there at the end of the game which has cost us, but I don't think you can just blanket our season and make that kind of a -- I guess you can, but I would just disagree with it.

Q. When you played Duke the first time it was the first game they played without Ryan Kelly. When you look at them now they've had a few weeks to adjust to that. Can you see any difference, or do they present any different problems?

MARK GOTTFRIED: Well, they've certainly gotten more comfortable playing without him. When you lose a player like him, and we've obviously played without Lorenzo, you get some growing pains because you're learning how to adjust, and they may have appeared to be that way initially with Ryan Kelly. It seems now they seem a lot more comfortable with Amile Jefferson and what his role will be with Hairston, how they're going to score the ball without Kelly stretching the defense with his three and how they're going to defend without Kelly. They certainly to me appear to be a lot more comfortable here now that they're, whatever that is, four or five games into it.

Q. I know it was almost a game-time decision on Lorenzo Saturday. With another four or five days, are you pretty confident that he'll be back?

MARK GOTTFRIED: I hope so, but I have no way of knowing. I don't think he was anywhere near being capable to play the other day. He wanted to and he dressed and went out there, but I still thought he was a few days away.

Now, obviously he's getting treatment around the clock, so we'll see. But I don't anticipate him practicing today, and then I think in the next couple days we'll learn a little bit more.

An interview with:

ROY WILLIAMS NORTH CAROLINA

ROY WILLIAMS: It was a nice five-minute overtime for us on Saturday is the best thing to say. Virginia Tech really made us look bad for a huge portion of the game, and yet I was very pleased that we were able to win without PJ and with Reggie and Leslie going 1 of 13 from the three-point line. It was a good experience for Marcus Paige to step up, and it was a good follow-up for us to a nice win at Boston College earlier in the week.

Right now I think it's doubtful that PJ will play, PJ Hairston. I think it's doubtful that he'll play tomorrow night. Yesterday when I left practice I thought that he would practice, but last night he got a little flu bug and he's been throwing up last night and this morning. They've got him over at the hospital right now with some IVs, so I think that'll postpone some of the things that he could do today in practice that could have got him ready. I'm not saying he's not going to play, but I think it's highly unlikely.

Q. Because Dexter Stricklen hurt his knee late in the season last year, or fairly late, past the midway point, what were you expecting he would be able to do this year, because he's made what looks like a pretty remarkable recovery.

ROY WILLIAMS: You know, he's really come a long way. If everybody had seen him in September, you would have been questioning whether he would be able to play this whole season because he ran with a limp when we were trying to do the conditioning and he was just way out of whack. So I think that he's really done a

great job of coming a long way in a short period of time. And Saturday against Virginia Tech, all those guys on the perimeter, and Dexter probably had it more than anybody else, but all those guys on the perimeter had a major challenge with Erick Green. He looked a little bit like that -- well, put it this way: It's the first time this year I've said, man, he may be back to 100 percent defensively. So we need him to do that, and I hope that he can do it on a consistent basis for us now.

Q. How do you sum up all the different things you count on him to do in your lineup?

ROY WILLIAMS: Well, you know, he does give us some leadership, there's no question about that. It's good to have him on the court when I make the change and give Marcus a breather. To have him already be in the game and to be able to slide over there to that point guard spot, I think that's helpful to us. His assist error ratio has been really good. Defensively, like I say, Saturday he was really good for us, and I think at Boston College he was really good for us. I think the perimeter guys have done a really nice job defensively the last two games.

His shot was not gone in very often or as much as we would like in a game, but more it hasn't gone in as much as he would like in a game, but yet he's really shot the ball well in practice, and there's going to be a game where he's going to make some big jump shots for us. And I'll give you one example is after PJ went down at Boston College, I said to the staff at halftime, I said, we need Dexter to make a couple of jump shots for us, and he made two early in the second half when they were trying to make a run, and it just helped us sort of keep them at arm's length.

But he does add that dimension with the speed that he can get out and run on the break. The experience, as I said, his ability defensively, his ability to slide over and play some backup at the point guard and also knowing what's going on in the game I think is good for us, too.

Q. You guys did do a good job against Erick Green. He had one of his two worst games of the season. What did you do defensively against him, and do you think y'all caused that, or did he just have a bad game?

ROY WILLIAMS: I think every time somebody as good as Erick, if he plays and doesn't have as good a game, part of it is both. I

think the defense has to do a good job on him, but Erick missed some shots that he makes a lot of times, too. We tried -- number one, the big thing for us was not fouling. We didn't want to put him on the free-throw line because not only does that get you to the bonus quicker but it also -- he makes 80 percent of those. So we didn't want to foul him. We wanted to be there on the catch so we could at least have it there in front of his face, and we wanted the whole team to be aware of him. So we got a little help from the guys, whether it's perimeter players or a big guy, being aware of him, but then Marcus and Dexter and Leslie and Reggie had to do a great job of chasing him around those screens because he goes so hard, and for us we decided to try to put several guys on him because it's hard to think about one guy guarding him for 35 minutes.

Q. We've only had one guy in the ACC history become ACC Player of the Year with a losing conference record, and I know it's a long way to go and we're only halfway in the conference race, but he's got to be in the discussion with the numbers -- not just his scoring but his shooting percentage and his assists. Could you see a guy from a second division team being Player of the Year?

ROY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I could. When I was at Kansas we had Rex Walters that I thought was the best player in the conference, and we won the regular season, but Sean Vandiver was Player of the Year. He led the conference in scoring and rebounding for Colorado, and they were in the second division. They were in the second half of the league. Not only do I know it can happen, I've seen it happen. Most of the time I think the Player of the Year in the league should come from one of those guys that's first or second in the league. But in saying that, Eric's statistics are up there so high, you have to -- to use your words, he has to be in the mix. I mean, when you're a guard leading the nation in scoring and shooting right at 50 percent, I think he was one shot below 50 percent coming into our game. I mean, that's a phenomenal year that he's having. I think he definitely has to be in the mix, and I will say most of the time that I think that guy should come from the team that finishes first or second in the league because I think winning is the most important. But boy, he's having such a phenomenal year you can't leave him out.

Q. I also wanted to ask you if you don't mind, looking at this Wake team, they've got two veterans, and other than that it's a very young team. Is the focus on controlling the two veterans? Is that the idea playing them?

ROY WILLIAMS: Well, you know, I think it depends on who's coaching. They're similar to us, we've got a junior and a sophomore in Reggie and James Michael, and the rest of our guys are really freshmen or sophomores, and yet I think people do emphasize trying to do a great job on Reggie and James Michael. They have CJ and Travis who are seniors and juniors, and one of them is averaging right at 15 and the other is averaging barely below 15. You have to emphasize the guys who do most of the scoring.

I don't think you can ignore everybody else by any means because that's going to get you beat. Devin Thomas in ACC play, his stats are really, really impressive. Codi Miller-McIntyre I thought in the Maryland game made a bunch of shots down the stretch. I don't think you can focus your defense just on them.

It's a little bit different with Erick Green because he's averaging 25 a game, and everybody is going to say, well, I can say there's a big difference between 15 and 25 and it's only 10 points. But it is because Erick was such a huge part of their offense. But I think that Jeff has done a nice job of emphasizing Travis and CJ, but those other guys are expected to score, too. It is a team offense. I don't think we can just aim our defenses to stop those two, and I don't think you can say, well, let them have theirs and we'll guard everybody else.

I think when you're playing Wake, I mean, they're playing seven, eight, nine guys, and you've got to be aware of everybody out there.

Q. I was just curious, you were talking earlier and I think last week, too, about just how far away Dexter was back in October coming off his injury. Was there ever any discussion about red-shirting him this year or holding him out? Was that a possibility?

ROY WILLIAMS: No, and I don't think I said October, I know I said September. I know I came back -- I had my surgery on September 19th, and two days later I watched him do the conditioning stuff, and I thought, oh, my gosh, he's not ready to go, and so we took the month there, almost a month before practice started, took him

out of all the pick-up games and the regular conditioning program and just had Chris and Jonas and everybody really try to do most of the work just trying to get his knee back where he could do most of the things. At that point we thought we probably still had time, so no, we did not consider that.

Q. Is there any connection to the concussion thing, or do you know if it's completely separate, and have you checked out some of the mental stuff?

ROY WILLIAMS: Yesterday he came in and did some shooting and moved around, and I was really enthused. The only thing I wasn't enthused about is that Desmond is laying over there against the goal support because he was sick and throwing up yesterday, and James Michael didn't practice because he hurt his back at the end of the game. And one of our other players was going to the bathroom - more information than you guys need to know - about every 10 minutes. I think it's just going through our team right now.

I was very enthused when I left practice at 6:00 yesterday, and then I got in this morning and found out what kind of night PJ had and talked to him over at the hospital, so I'm not enthused at all right now.

An interview with:

JIM LARRANAGA MIAMI

JIM LARRANAGA: We played two very tough road games this past week but were very fortunate to play well and to come out on top. I think our game at Virginia Tech where we fell behind, our players really responded and were able to gut it out at the end, and then played a tremendous game in front of a fantastic crowd at North Carolina State, and it came down to basically one second, we tipped one in and they missed a three-quarter court shot that almost went in, and we were fortunate enough to come away with the victory.

Q. I'm just curious, being in the position you guys are in now at 8-0 and with a lead here in the ACC, do you have to talk to the

team about expectations, or how do you handle being in the position that you're in now?

JIM LARRANAGA: Well, first of all, the only thing we're doing is talking about Boston College and getting ready for tomorrow night's game. This is a great league. The ACC from top to bottom has so many good teams, so many good players, and you've got to be ready to play every single night. Getting ready for Boston College, our focus is to try to keep improving, try to get better, because the teams in the league, a lot of them are young and improving themselves. You cannot get complacent.

Q. One thing about the league this year, there's only been 15 road wins in conference play. Your team has five of them. Any reason why you guys have been able to be successful on the road in year when a lot of teams have not?

JIM LARRANAGA: Well, first of all, it's very difficult to win on the road in any conference. But I think the reason that we've enjoyed this early-season success is because we have an older group. We do have four seniors in our starting lineup, and they've been through the ACC battles for the last several years, and they know how challenging it is, and they've done a very good job of preparing themselves to play well.

Q. I know people are going to look at the standings and see Boston College coming in with two conference wins, you guys rolling along. When you played them the first time up in Boston, though, it came down to the wire. What did they do well, and what problems do they present?

JIM LARRANAGA: Well, I think what they did well against us is what they do very well as a team and have done very well throughout the season: They really share the ball. They have a lot of very good three-point shooters. They're really good at getting to the foul line and making the free throws; they play a different kind of lineup. They basically play like with four guards and a forward, and they're able to share the ball well, spread you out, make threes, get driving lay-ups and get to the foul line. That's a team that's hard to match up with.

The ACC is normally a very big league, and the big guys are the ones that you have a hard

time guarding, but in this particular case Boston College has so many guys who can shoot the three, it makes it hard to guard them.

Q. You're coming back home after this week for two games at home after two road games in a row. We talked in the past about how you've had to change the culture down there to generate a lot of interest in basketball, and you talked about that growing. Obviously we saw it when Duke came in with the students camping out and the big crowd and everything. Was it just a one-time thing, or has that continued? Do you see the enthusiasm grow as this team continues to be successful?

JIM LARRANAGA: Yeah. We were sold out against Duke; the next game we were sold out against Florida State; I think we'll have a great crowd tomorrow night; we're already sold out for the Carolina game. I think the students have been tremendously supportive of us. We had students greet us as we arrived back from our North Carolina State game, so as the bus pulled into the Bank United Center, there were a lot of students chanting for the team.

So there's a lot of enthusiasm on campus and in the community.

Q. I actually talked to Shane the other day, and he said a couple of things: First was that you guys had such a good relationship going back to when he was in high school, and even when it didn't necessarily work out with George Mason, obviously you guys were still on each other's radar. I was wondering about that relationship and what made that come to fruition, and how fortunate is it that things able to pan out sort of serendipitously.

JIM LARRANAGA: I think just sometimes you connect with a young man or a family. They feel like they know you. They listen to your approach to coaching, and they listen to how you develop your players and your program, and I think in Shane's case, probably the biggest thing was he is very, very close to his mom and dad, and when he went to DePaul, he was very far away from home. And I think he was just uncomfortable with that.

Coming back then, trying to decide, okay, where should I go, coming back to Florida, he had familiarity with us. He might have looked at a couple of other schools in the state, but I think we were probably the one he was most interested in. South Florida was another school in state that I'm

sure he took a look at, but they had already signed a point guard, and we were somewhat in need of a point guard. It kind of just worked out for both of us, I think. It's great fit for him and definitely a great fit for us.

Q. He said you were in dorm rooms giving speeches and making sure the kids knew -- how much does that do when you're face to face with kids and sort of building that credibility?

JIM LARRANAGA: Yeah, I've always believed in stories, story telling. I think it's easy for people to understand, and so with my coaching, it probably comes from my high school coach, who I used to listen to all his stories when I was in high school, always enjoyed them and always learned a lot from them. I kind of do the same thing in the recruiting process and with my team, and kids can relate to that.

Q. Are you allowing the guys to enjoy this process, or are you trying to keep them more focused on what's coming up next?

JIM LARRANAGA: We want to enjoy the journey, but we also want to stay focused on our next opponent. And that's what the guys have been able to do. If you win a game, enjoy that, celebrate that for a short while, but the very next day, you're back to the office doing your job.

An interview with:

MARK TURGEON MARYLAND

MIKE FINN: We're now joined by Maryland head coach Mike Turgeon. We'll bring on coach, ask for a brief opening statement, then go to questions.

COACH TURGEON: We were happy to get a win Saturday. We needed it. It was a big lift for us. Looking forward to Virginia Tech. But more importantly just having an extra day. Feel like we've been playing a lot of games. Haven't had the bye yet. Having the extra day is really good for us, get refreshed a little bit heading into Blacksburg on Thursday.

MIKE FINN: Questions for coach.

Q. Coach, can you talk about the improved offense, flow and scoring balance you saw Saturday, what kind of factors went into that.

COACH TURGEON: Well, I thought we flowed pretty well in the first half against Duke. I thought we flowed pretty well the whole game against Florida State. The other day we made shots, we made a lot of shots. That always makes the offense look better.

But more importantly we are executing better. We're screening better. We know what's a good shot. We're shooting a lot less bad shots.

I thought the second half of the Duke game, our shot selection was better at Florida State, better against Wake Forest. We've added some things, continuing to add some things.

With so many new guys, it's taking a while. The inconsistency, it's taking a while to figure out how to play.

We have a rotation that we're sticking with as far as trying to keep shooters on the floor for spacing. We'll see if that helps us.

Q. Coach, going back to the first matchup with Tech, what did you think of the way their big men played against Alex (Len) and your guys?

COACH TURGEON: Well, I haven't looked at that film since the day after the game.

(C.J.) Barksdale didn't play against us that game. I think they sat him out. But (Cadarian) Raines is having a good year. A big, strong kid. I thought he played well. They had a couple kids come off the bench and play well for them.

The thing I see about Virginia Tech when I watch them play, they're a team that has a ton of fight in them, competing like crazy, got a first-year coach that's coaching every game like it's his last game. He's coaching his tail off, doing everything they can.

What I've seen on film, Virginia Tech is playing a little bit more zone than they were playing when they came here. That would be the biggest thing.

But I can't really remember how Alex played in that game and the job they did. I'm sorry, we play so many games, I can't remember. I haven't started working on Virginia Tech. I'll do that tomorrow.

Q. How about in general of playing a team a second time. They were successful, but they've gone more to the 2-3. Do you have to

really dramatically change what you're doing or do you try to get the same game at the end because you were so successful?

COACH TURGEON: We made shots against them. We've been up and down with that. If they're going to play 2-3, we're going to have to make some shots. That's something we'll work on this week. We'll continue to work on our execution.

There were some defensive mistakes we made. We'll have to do a better job guarding them. That will be the biggest change. But offensively if they're in man, we'll run our six tough. If they're in zone, we'll do what we do against the zone.

Defensively we have to do a much better job than what we did here to give ourselves a chance to win on Thursday.

Q. I want to ask you about Alex's season overall. How have you seen him develop this year compared to last year and what do you attribute that development to?

COACH TURGEON: I think it's pretty obvious. He's a whole different player. I think he's got to be in the running for most improved player from one year to the next if he continues to play like he's playing. He bounced back Saturday. Six for seven. But more importantly he rebounded and protected the rim. Just things we've been talking to him about.

He just added strength. He's added confidence. He understands the language better. He's been through it, so he knows what he's getting into. I think he's just been so much better on the defensive end.

Offensively he gives us a lot. He demands double-teams which opens up things for everybody else. Did a great job on Saturday versus the double-team. Just really improved in all areas.

He's just 19. He's been fun to coach. You keep working with him. You know there's just so much more there. That's what's exciting. We still have a lot of basketball left this season that we can hopefully have a lot more improvement with Alex as we move forward.

Q. You saw this coming, I assume. He was going to make leaps and bounds improvements this year.

COACH TURGEON: I knew he would be better. I didn't think he would jump this much. I'll be honest with you, we were two weeks into practice, I was like, Holy smokes, this kid is not

going to get it, he's not tough enough. Then something came on.

My thing with players, I tell them to be consistent. There's a certain way I want Alex to play for him to be successful. Last year was one day out of four or five. This year it's been four days out of five. He's been consistent playing that way. He's much better than I thought he would be at this point.

He's really, really improved. He's understanding. He's got a pretty good feel for the game in certain areas, but we have to increase his feel for the game in others, keep teaching him. But much further along.

Q. It was on Friday you said that Seth (Allen) was letting his offense affect his defense. Did you see a reversal of that on Saturday?

COACH TURGEON: Seth responded. He did not play well at Florida State, didn't act right, and he responded the right way. He showed a maturity he hadn't shown this year.

He made a mistake on offense one time and ran back and stopped the ball, got a rebound and blocked a shot or something. I can't remember what it was exactly. Just a maturity. He would have hung his head and gave up a layup normally.

With young kids, you just keep working with them in all aspects and hopefully the light bulb came on Saturday for him, what he has to do, the way he needs to act to be a great player at this level.

Of course, he made shots. That helped. I do think his defense was better, his team defense was better, his rebounding was better for us, even if you take away the jump shot. That was a step in the right direction.

Q. Is this the best you've seen (James) Padgett finish in a while and do you think he'll remain in the first five?

COACH TURGEON: We're going to stick with that lineup. James played well at Florida State. They started a small lineup, went first play to James, made a tough shot, got him confident.

More so than his finishing, he was great defensively. He had tough matchups. He knew when he wasn't guarding him that he could be a help defender. He was a great help defender. I thought all our of our post guys played well, protected the rim well, our interior defense was great.

I was happy for James. It's been an up-and-down year. That was the James of last year. For us to have any chance to do what we really want to do down the stretch, we need Padgett to play that way. It was great. I was really happy for him.

MIKE FINN: Coach, thanks for being with us today. Good luck this week. We'll talk to you next Monday.

COACH TURGEON: Thank you.

An interview with:

BRIAN GREGORY GEORGIA TECH

MIKE FINN: We're now joined by Georgia Tech head coach Brian Gregory. We'll bring on coach, ask for a brief opening statement, then go to questions.

COACH GREGORY: I thought last week we took some steps forward, which is good. Guys were rewarded with that with a great win yesterday against a very, very good Virginia team, a team that is so well-coached, really knows how to play the game on both ends of the court.

We needed to have a super performance in the second half to erase what was a great performance by them in the first half. We were able to make some plays down the stretch and get some stops when we needed to get stops, make some baskets, then knock down some free throws.

I'm pleased for our guys. They've been sticking to it and working extremely hard, staying positive. This league creates tough stretches for teams trying to rebuild. We took a step yesterday. Now you have an opportunity against another team that is so deep, so big, so athletic, like so many teams in this league, has enough youth that there's inconsistency, but they are the reigning ACC champ. We're going to have to have a good day of preparation today and get ready to play extremely hard tomorrow.

MIKE FINN: Questions for Coach Gregory.

Q. Before the remodeling, your home court was nicknamed the Thunder Dome. In view of the fact ACC home courts have been so

dominant this year at 70%, have you recaptured that magic in the place?

COACH GREGORY: Well, Thriller Dome. Thunder Dome, you're thinking of Mad Max. We'll take a couple of those.

I'm not sure, it was named that during Coach Cremins' time with all those great teams. We haven't recaptured that yet. But that's an objective, a goal, to make the pavilion one of the most difficult places in our conference to play, out of conference as well.

It's a unique arena with the fans right on top of you. It's a perfect size with the theater lighting, the student section. It's been great. It's been a great home court for us.

Obviously we've played well at home. We need to continue that. As you said, in this league, road wins are hard to come by, especially with a younger team in terms of the phase where we're at right now as a program.

Yesterday, even with Super Bowl Sunday, I think some of the students were gearing up for the Super Bowl, but for the most part our home crowds have been fantastic.

For a guy like Mfon (Udofia), a senior that has gone through some of the years we've gone through prior, without maybe a lot of fan support, especially the students, our guys love going up into the student section after the game, and it's something that we need to continue to build.

Q. You mention the fact you need to protect the home court because it's so tough on a younger team. Could that be a factor in the fact the ACC home teams have been so dominant this year? The one team that's been successful on the road is Miami. They're the oldest team in the league. That can't be a coincidence.

COACH GREGORY: There's no coincidence there at all. Our league has some exceptional young players. I would bet that the other teams that have been successful on the road are some of those teams that are young but also have some upperclassmen that carry them in those tough stretches.

When you go on the road, your margin of error becomes even smaller. Sometimes with younger guys that urgency and that sense of possession-by-possession importance hasn't really sunk in yet. That's happened to our team a few times. I think you see it around the league.

Q. Earlier, Tony Bennett was talking about the home/road thing. He had an impression that your team got some energy from the crowd, won some 50/50 balls that he thought was coming from the home court kind of enthusiasm. Did you see it that way, too?

COACH GREGORY: I thought so. I thought our crowd was tremendous. Again, as you rebuild, that electricity that you can generate through your home court, you know, everybody is human, it's an emotional game. When the emotions are funneled in the right way and you get that from the crowd, I think you're able to make some plays.

I thought our energy level in the second half was tremendous. I don't think it's a coincidence that so much the energy level of the crowd.

Q. You have Florida State coming in. It's the one time you play them this year. They're coming off a really tough game for them. Does that scare you when a good team just has a bad game? Do you expect them to bounce back? Is that a concern?

COACH GREGORY: I think anytime you play Florida State, they get after you. They're big. They're athletic. As I said, they won the championship last year. They know what it takes to win these games. They have one of the premiere guards not in our league but in the country in Michael Snaer.

They just didn't play as well as they had been. They've won some big games, some close games. You do that because of great toughness. You do that because of guys understanding their roles. That starts from the top.

Leonard (Hamilton) has done an unbelievable job in building that program in a tremendous conference where game in and game out you know you're going to have to have a tremendous effort, you're going to have to match their intensity, and at the same time you're going to have to do a lot of things right other than playing hard in order to be successful against them.

MIKE FINN: Coach, thanks for being with us. Good luck this week. We'll talk to you next Monday.

COACH GREGORY: Perfect. Thanks, guys.

An interview with:

LEONARD HAMILTON FLORIDA STATE

MIKE FINN: We welcome Florida State head coach Leonard Hamilton. We'll bring on coach, ask for a brief opening statement, then go to questions.

COACH HAMILTON: We played two games last week. Very fortunate to beat a very good Clemson team at the buzzer. Then we ran into a red hot Duke team that played very, very well, shot the ball extremely well, better than any team we played against in the last five or six years.

We were not very successful, and we're preparing very well for Georgia Tech. Keep our post-season tournament hopes alive.

MIKE FINN: Questions for coach.

Q. I thought I heard something in postgame where you suggested that Terrance Shannon might be out for a while, maybe the rest of the season. What is his prognosis?

COACH HAMILTON: Terrance's situation is one where we feel very confident that he will be able to fully recover from his injury. He is doing very, very well. However, they are proceeding with caution.

I think he can lift weights. He can maybe shoot free throws. He can ride the bicycle. But they're not letting him do any physical activity to where he's having any up-and-down running and jumping.

They're going to give him a battery of tests over a period of time to see where he is. They sent some of his records to one of the specialists in Los Angeles that's evaluating him to make sure everybody agrees with the diagnosis and the therapy we're giving him.

He has to completely satisfy a battery of tests, I don't quite understand what they are, before they are able to determine exactly what his prognosis is.

So right now it's undetermined. We're not real sure. The good news is it won't be anything he can't recover from. It's a moving target as to if and when we'll know he'll be at the point where he can regain any type of physical activity. That's the information I have from the doctor.

Q. When I look at other teams in the ACC that lost key players, there's an immediate struggle. Miami lost two games after losing Reggie (Johmson), then figured out how to play without him. Duke lost two of their first three (after losing Ryan Kelly). Obviously figured out how to play without them. Is there a period of adjustment without Terrance and what are you trying to do as long as he's out?

COACH HAMILTON: Well, those teams have some semblance of consistency with their veterans that are returning. We haven't had that. Michael (Snaer) is the only senior on the team. (Ian) Miller has been hurt in and out of practice. Okaro (White) is having a solid year. That's kind of who we are.

We have a lot of other issues that doesn't necessarily pertain to us having Shannon unavailable. We are challenged by a lot more different things than the absence of Shannon. We can't replace his energy, his toughness, his energy, his rebounding. He gives us something that it's hard to replace.

But I'm not real sure. Our inconsistencies have a lot to do with us having to adjust to the absence of not having Terrance.

Q. You have three young seven-footers without a lot of experience but with a lot of size. Can you evaluate how they're coming along, what they can give you down the stretch.

COACH HAMILTON: I'm really pleased our three big guys and the progress they're making.

Boris Bojanovsky is extremely skilled. He just needs to gain probably 35 or 40 pounds. I think his future is very bright.

Michael Ojo is the least experienced player we have. He's only played 10 or 12 high school games in his life. It's a process he's going through. He defends very well. He's very knowledgeable. He understands the system. He sets great screens. He's probably our best rebounder on the team. The game is slowing down a little bit for him. He's not quite as anxious as he was earlier. He's challenged by having a difficult time transferring how well he's done in practice to games. But I see signs that he's coming around.

(Kiel) Turpin has begun to be more aggressive, learn a little bit more how to play at this level.

I don't think by any means have they come close to reaching their potential. But I think they will be a nice battery of guys to use back in there as they gain experience, probably like the rest of our team.

I like the potential they have. I think they'll be good players in the ACC as they go through their career.

Q. It's got to be particularly tough going to Georgia Tech. The width of some of the players, Robert Carter, Daniel Miller. Can you talk about some of the problems they present.

COACH HAMILTON: Those types of big, strong, physical, wide-bodied teams have been a little more challenging for us. Okaro is a tall, slender kid. Turpin needs 15 more pounds. Boris a tall, slender youngster. Those teams that are physical like that have given us more of a challenge than some of the more athletic, slender teams. But that's life at this level.

We'll adjust. It's going to be a challenge. They're playing very well. They're a little more in sync than we are. That's been something that's been a little disappointing with this team. I don't think we've been close to executing like we've done in the past.

I thought in the past we've executed very well, played extremely unselfish, made the extra pass and allowed our system to create offense for us.

We're a little more athletic and probably a little more able to create off the dribble, but we have not been able to establish a consistent system and then play out of the system. We've been challenged a lot more than some of the teams we've had in the past.

Q. Leonard, it seems like maybe (Devon) Bookert and Aaron Thomas with the minutes they had gained a bit in their experience. How do you see the development of the young kids?

COACH HAMILTON: Obviously Bookert has been slowed by the infamous moped accident that he had that kept him from doing any type of practice, the way he lost the top skin on his knee, the pieces of gravel. He's had scar tissue in there that's very painful.

When he's loose, he's showing signs of being fairly productive. He might be shooting close to 50% from three. He makes good decisions with the ball.

Aaron has adjusted. We think he's more confident in his ability offensively and defensively. I really feel good that those two guys are coming along very well.

I think the makeup of our team sometimes have been somewhat challenging with us not all being on the same page at the same time. The future, like I feel about with our big guys, I like what they bring from a talent standpoint. Their attitudes are great. They're giving us tremendous effort. As they move through their careers, I expect great things from them.

Q. Do you anticipate, based on the showings, some of these youngsters playing more minutes?

COACH HAMILTON: Basically they're all playing the same number of minutes. They're all playing about 19, 20 minutes per game. We play them in relation to how the game is going at that particular time. But I do expect them to continue to keep playing well and getting more minutes.

Basically Bookert and Brandon have been splitting time at the point guard. That could change. But I don't know whether it will change drastically. We have to continue to see how they continue to play.

Normally you continue to go with the guys that are playing the best. They're showing signs of contributing more so their minutes might continue more.

MIKE FINN: Thank you, coach. We'll talk to you next Monday.

An interview with:

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI DUKE

MIKE FINN: We're now joined by Duke head coach Mike Krzyzewski. We'll bring on coach, we'll go straight to questions.

Q. Coach, I know how important your team's fight is always to you. In the last few games, talk about how impressed you've been with that and how much you feel like the message was sent after the Miami game.

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, I don't know what message. I think we've played hard all year. We had one really bad game, and that was against Miami. I think Miami had a lot to do with that.

We're going through a period of adjustment without Ryan (Kelly). Those two things: a great team, Miami is playing great basketball, us not being ready to play at that level.

I think we responded well from that. We've had 19 wins. We've been playing really hard the whole time with our schedule. So knowing how to play hard together, that's the key thing. I think we're learning to do that better now with this group without Ryan.

We played really well on Saturday (vs. Florida State). Wake (Forest) played really well against us (last Tuesday), but down the stretch we executed well. That was a good thing to see. Hopefully we can keep improving.

Q. Do you anticipate getting Ryan back? Just your thoughts on State.

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: We're hopeful about Ryan. There's no timetable. There's no timetable. But we're hopeful that we will have him back before the end of the season.

State, they're a fabulous team, outstanding in all ways, but especially on offense because they're so balanced. They can really move the ball down the court.

(Lorenzo) Brown I think is just terrific. As good in transition as any point guard in the country. (C.J.) Leslie, with his talent. And (Richard) Howell is just a very unique, terrific player. (Rodney) Purvis is playing even better. (Scott) Wood is dangerous. It's tough to defend them. (T.J.) Warren, Tyler Lewis played well on Saturday. They probably felt they should have won against Miami. They played a great game against Miami.

So they're very talented and good. So hopefully we'll do our best to try to win that game. It will be a very difficult game for us.

Q. How tough is it to replace the guy that runs your offense?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, I think it's difficult to replace any key player that you've had. Like in their case, certainly their coach can speak better about that than I can. He knows their team the best.

No one gets the ball down the court faster in transition than Brown in college basketball. Right away, as good as your transition is, it's going

to be a little bit slower and not as creative. Against us, he had 13 assists, was like magical with the ball.

I do think when they get into the halfcourt, the system they run, that can be replaced better than the transition. But just the presence that a guy like Brown has you can't replace.

Their kids stepped up and put themselves in a position to win, and that says a lot about the character that they have on their team.

Q. Coach, every year your team seems to take on an identity, especially when you hit conference season. What thus far is this Duke team's identity?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, we're trying to find ours because we had an identity before we got into conference and when we started with those three seniors. I thought it was balanced, poised, we are a very difficult team to defend. We played good defense not forcing turnovers. We were hard to score against. That's a good identity.

Now we're trying to find a new one without Ryan. I mean, I don't have a name for it or anything. We played really well on Saturday against Florida State, so... I don't have some magical name for it.

Q. In terms of the last time you faced NC State, what do you have to do this game to help neutralize those three?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, we just have to play well together. There's not one thing that you can do. They're all really good players. They'll put up good numbers. Hopefully they won't put up the numbers they put up against us the first time.

Q. Last week you played two games on the road. Against Wake you had a really tough three-point shooting game, but still pulled it out. Against Florida State I think Leonard said it was raining threes. Was that in any way a function of what you did on offense? Is three-point shooting just something that you can't project?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I think it's a little bit of both. I think, one, shooting from the outside is less predictable than scoring inside. Even when you get good rhythm shots, there will be days where you don't hit a good percentage.

However, the key thing is taking your shots

in rhythm and having them coordinated with what you're doing in the offense.

On Saturday, 30 of our buckets, 20 of them were assisted. We got it in the flow of the offense. Against Wake, I thought later in the game we did. The threes we hit were big ones down the stretch.

I mean, our guys, we tell them, Each shot is a new shot, don't worry about misses, worry about taking good rhythm shots, be prepared to shoot. A lot of shooting, good shooting, is preparation. If you can get it in rhythm with one of your teammates, rhythm passes, rhythm shots, the percentages go up.

Q. When you played State the first time, it was your first game without Ryan. Since then you've won three straight and seem to be playing a lot better. Can you talk about how much more comfortable you are with the new maybe temporary non-Kelly team than you were the first time you played them?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Actually we played them pretty well. I thought we played hard. We couldn't stop them defensively. A lot of people haven't. But we've played really well since the Miami game or else we wouldn't have won three games.

It's not a matter of looking back and, How did we do this against them? It's like, Who are we right now? Who are they right now? Let's get ready to see what happens with the groups that we are now, not who we were.

Thing about conference play, as you go on in the season, each week is different. You're a little bit different every week. Hopefully you're in the process of becoming better than in the process of becoming worse.

We got better last week. So we want to continue that no matter who we're playing. The emphasis really is on us, like, Who are we? Not that we're not going to have a scouting report and all that for NC State, but we just have to keep getting more comfortable with playing one another.

MIKE FINN: Coach, thanks for being with us.

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Thank you.

An interview with:

BRAD BROWNELL CLEMSON

MIKE FINN: We're now joined by Clemson head coach Brad Brownell. We'll bring on coach, ask for a brief opening statement, then go to questions.

COACH BROWNELL: Well, just coming off a disappointing loss at Boston College, thought they played very well, were very sharp. Defensively we were reasonably good for about 17 minutes, battled back, had a chance to win, couldn't get it done. Certainly have our hands full with a Virginia team that has played well this year, especially at home.

MIKE FINN: Questions for coach.

Q. Coach, Virginia statistically has been the best defensive team in the league. Is that stat something you believe is or is that a tempo-based number that they're giving up less points than anybody?

COACH BROWNELL: I think they're terrific defensively. Who is the best? I don't know about all those kinds of things. They're certainly as sound as anybody in our league defensively in terms of teams that don't make very many mistakes.

They don't spread out very far, so they're close to each other. They help and recover well. I think they're attentive and alert. I just think Tony does a terrific job of coaching those guys, teaching them to play together, especially on the defensive end.

Q. You had some success against them the first time you played. You won fairly handily. What did you do well that game? Can you transfer that into this one?

COACH BROWNELL: Well, obviously that remains to be seen. We haven't been very good at times on the road. Like most teams, we've struggled in situations.

But I don't know. We play better on offense at home. We have more rhythm, play with more confidence, make shots. I don't know that we're doing anything that's tremendously different.

Having said that, I do think we did play very well in that game and moved the ball and had

different guys playing confidently, something that really hasn't happened for us on the road on the offensive end. We need that to happen Thursday to have a chance to win.

Q. Changing topics a little bit. Three games ago you played and beat Virginia Tech. I've been talking to people about Erick Green, the year he's been having. Can you tell me about the problems he presents, what you try to do defensively.

COACH BROWNELL: I think he scored 25 against us. He did get some late, several baskets late, when they were coming back. But I remember looking at the stats. He had five assists, zero or one turnovers. I remember speaking to the media after the game emphasizing how effective I thought he was. When you do try to corral him with two players, do whatever you try to do with two players, he's good enough, he's tall enough, smart enough, that he can find open people, and he's unselfish enough to do so. He's terrific in transition. He's in an aggressive mode to go score and usually does or gets fouled. He's a guy who can make guarded shots. You can guard him as well as you can and he can still shoot over the top of you and score. He's a guy who has continued to improve his three-point shooting. He's now making a good percentage of his threes. They run a lot of things for him. He's just a tough, tough matchup, great player.

Q. In the history of ACC we've only picked one player from a second-division team, with a losing ACC record, as Player of the Year. It's a long way to go this one, but could you see him in the discussion even if Virginia Tech continues to struggle as a team?

COACH BROWNELL: That's a hard question. I generally lean on the side of rewarding guys on teams that have had more success. I don't think you have to win the league, but I do think your team has to be generally in the top.

I think he certainly is in the discussion, all those kinds of things. That's more for you guys to figure out than for me.

MIKE FINN: Coach, thanks for being with us today. We'll talk to you next Monday.

COACH BROWNELL: Thank you.

An interview with:

STEVE DONAHUE BOSTON COLLEGE

MIKE FINN: We're now joined by Boston College head coach Steve Donahue. We'll bring on coach, ask for a brief opening statement, then go to questions.

COACH DONAHUE: Played well on Saturday, probably our most complete game in a long time. I thought we defended really well in the first half. I have great respect for Clemson's defense. We shared it very well, but we made shots that we typically haven't been making, made us look a little better than we were at the time.

Really pleased with the effort. I think we're playing better defense, which has been our Achilles' heel. We've been consistent in terms of ball movement and offense. Haven't been making shots like we wished, but for the most part pleased with the offense.

We'll continue to try to develop and get better here each and every game.

MIKE FINN: Questions for Coach Donahue.

Q. So the reward for breaking the losing streak is to go on the road and play an undefeated ACC team. When you played them earlier in Boston, it came down to the wire. What did you do well in that game and is that something you can take on the road and do?

COACH DONAHUE: Yeah, I don't know. I've been through these so many times when you play a team for a second time. I did it in my years in the Iveys. You played everybody a second time as a round robin. You'd be amazed. There's no correlation.

I think we played with some poise and toughness and guarded very well against obviously a very talented offensive team. They didn't have Reggie Johnson, which I think he is a huge plus for them. Just gives them another weapon inside.

We really did a very good job managing the game in terms of shot selection, when to push it, when not to. Obviously you got to do a lot of things well against Miami. If you have a lot of empty possessions on either side of the ball, they really make you pay and can get on a roll. Obviously playing super basketball right now.

Q. I know you have two wins in the conference, one at home, one on the road. Overall in the league this year, home teams have been winning 70% of the time, been very dominant. Is that a function of the youth in the league or is there something else going on?

COACH DONAHUE: Well, I don't even know, although I think some of the teams are young. There's a lot of veteran teams in this league with upperclassmen.

The thing I've been impressed with since I got in the league is the venues which you play at, the advantage the crowds give you at these places. Pretty remarkable. I think that's a credit to these campuses, the athletic departments, the marketing. The excitement when you walk in these buildings, it's difficult. There's no tangible thing you can put your finger on, but there's a sense of discomfort that they put you at. I think it's really difficult to win in these kind of environments.

We're trying to develop ours here at Boston College. We're not there yet. But almost every other place you go to has an incredible home-court advantage.

Q. Coach, Shane Larkin was considering coming to BC for a while. How much communication was there and what was that process like?

COACH DONAHUE: We recruited Shane very hard. We got him on an official visit. Spent time with his parents, which were great. It didn't work out. It's obviously worked out well for Shane. He's got a great situation where he's at. I just told our guys, I think he's the key to that team.

I don't think they necessarily had a point guard last year that really got everybody involved, and Shane wasn't ready for that. But right now you make any mistake on him, everybody else is so dangerous, that's what happens. He drives it and kicks it. You go under a ball screen, he hits it. What other things he does, he creates so much on the defensive end getting steals and easy baskets. Just real impressed with his development and confidence.

As I think I said, I think he's the ideal guy for that team. It's worked out well for him. In recruiting, you go through a ton of these guys, meet a lot of different people. I try to keep in mind I hope the kid finds the right spot for him. I think Shane making his way to Miami found the right place.

Q. You mentioned about Dennis Clifford trying something last week. What did he try? How did it go?

COACH DONAHUE: Well, make no mistake about it, I'm not a doctor. He had a cortisone shot in the knee. It was about a week ago. It usually takes a while to take its course.

I think it helped him. I was watching him today. He was moving better. Pain isn't as bad. What you hope is you keep with the therapy, keep working on that condition, it gets better over time. This is something that would hopefully progress and help him with the pain, the flexibility, continue to be doing more aggressive rehab.

I think it's worked a little bit, but I don't know if we'll really know for a couple more weeks.

Q. Your two freshmen guards are playing 34, 35 minutes a game. Is this a concern for young guys, to put that many minutes in? How have they handled it?

COACH DONAHUE: I think it is a concern. I wish I could say and do it any other way. We're going to try to address that with recruiting, developing other guys.

I think at times, like Joe Rahon for the last couple games before the last one, I think he was fatigued mentally. It would probably be nice to be that backup freshman point guard to come in and play 15 or 20 minutes at a time. The mental strain.

We talked a lot with those guys. I tell them, There's so much on your plate, and you guys both have to play well for us to win. It's asking a lot of you. I really think they've handled it well, but I also do feel it's been a strain. I think where you see some inconsistencies sometimes, it's basically those minutes and the wear and tear.

To be honest with you, losing games, not being really successful for your team on top of that is something that really weighs on these kids as well. It's obviously been an up-and-down season for us.

Their play, though, for the most part far exceeded my expectations. I thought they were both ready. I never would have guessed I'd be able to play them this far, this many minutes, and be this successful their first season.

Q. You mentioned the fatigue of losing. Does winning a game, does that provide a shot of adrenaline?

COACH DONAHUE: It really does. I think

coaches understand. Coaches probably take the losses much harder. But you're able to do, you're sending messages every day as you build a program. The kids don't see the results. You try to tell them, Here is what you're improving, you're doing well. Until they feel good about a win, it's really hard.

Now you can go back and show them, This is why we won. There's a little more hop in their step, there's positivity flowing, they feel good about the work they're putting in. It's a huge step.

I was so happy we got one of those wins, and now we can continue to learn and develop and try to win the next one.

MIKE FINN: Coach, thanks for being with us today. Good luck this week and we'll talk to you next Monday.

COACH DONAHUE: Thank you.

MIKE FINN: This concludes today's ACC men's basketball coaches teleconference. Please join us next week, next Monday, for another edition beginning at 10:30.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports