



Duke University

Player Quotes

December 3, 2018 - Hartford/Yale Preview

FRESHMAN FORWARD ZION WILLIAMSON

On lessons from the Stetson game:

"We learned that we can be a very special defensive team when we actually pick it up. Coach is always stressing us about defensive habits, and we've played sloppy with it a lot but I feel like that game we were very consistent with it. I would say that's what we learned from that game."

On the team's mindset in practice:

"Coach K loves to win, so practice is just as intense. We've won the game, but it's time to move on. It's a long season, we just can't keep thinking about that one win or loss. Everyday coach is like 'move on', and he wants us to bring the intensity."

On handling the national attention:

"I thank my parents for that. During my junior year, they helped me a lot with it. It was different when everywhere you go, everyone knows who you are. People are saying how good you are and stuff. As a teenager, you can't say you don't like that, but my parents always told me that it can be a negative side to it also. You can have a lot of people who don't want you to succeed. As soon as you make one mistake, those people that say they love you will turn against you. For me, I don't think it's I'm doing it for the people outside, I'm doing it for myself and my family. The social media, I like it but I'm not really worried about all that."

On the importance of the role players:

"They bring a lot to the table, and all of them have very important roles. Jack (White) is our glue guy. Jack will come in the game and demand that he wants to guard the best player, whether it's a wing player or it's a block player. He wants to always guard the best player and he always comes in ready to knock down shots. He always brings energy, so he's our glue guy. Alex (O'Connell) just brings energy. He's very active on defense, and on offense he'll move around to get the open shot. Javin (DeLaurier) brings that captain presence, so does Jack. Javin brings the energy and he's always telling us to lock in and get serious. Marques (Bolden) is very special. I don't think people understand how good Marques is. When Marques puts his mind to it, and says 'alright, I'm about to dominate this game', he can do it at any moment."

On learning from the upperclassmen:

"For the freshmen, when we came to campus, we didn't come in with the mentality that we wanted to take the team away from the upperclassmen. We never looked at it like that because the teams that win national championships, they're one. They're not a group of freshmen or role players, they're one. Jack, Javin and Marques got our respect because whether it's on-court or off-court stuff, they'll always guide us. They've kind of guided us through it, so that's how they've gotten our respect."

On Tre Jones:

"For people who don't know basketball, Tre probably has the most important role for our team. Tre not only guards the point guard, who for most teams is the best player. Tre will guard that player full-court the whole time he's in the game, and he usually plays 30-plus minutes every game. On offense, as the main ball handler, he has to come down and make the smart play and orchestrate the offense to find the players. For people that don't know basketball, Tre has the most important role, and he does it almost flawlessly."

JUNIOR FORWARD JAVIN DeLAURIER

On the team's defensive intensity:

"It's something that we've been stressing since the beginning of the season. Really since we've loss and came out in the first half and especially didn't guard against Gonzaga, it's been something that we've really emphasized, playing hard for 40 minutes. At times this season, we've done it really well. Obviously against Gonzaga when we didn't, we lost. The guys in the locker room don't want to feel that again, so they've really bought into playing defense and it's been a lot of fun."

On Zion Williamson:

"He's really such a complete basketball player. That gets lost in his aerial acrobatics. You see him windmilling on ESPN, and they're not going to show him diving for loose balls and crashing offensive boards every time, but the rest of us do and we appreciate it. We see all of the attention and love that he gets, and he deserves all of that because he's a phenomenal kid and phenomenal player."

On leading this team:

"This team has been great. These freshmen have come in and they've been so open and willing to learn, which makes everything flow very smoothly. We've got guys who've already been here for a couple years, so we already had continuity there. Really I just think we have a special group, and we just got lucky enough where we mesh really well."

On maintaining energy against every opponent:

"Sometimes we may not be playing a top 25 team per se, but we still have to come out. Our coaches expect the same effort no matter who we're playing and who our opponent is. We should treat every game the same way. That really means we have to bring all of the energy ourselves and just fun playing with each other, as opposed to getting excited just because we're playing a big ACC game against North Carolina or against Gonzaga. It can hard to do, especially as a freshmen and you're coming in and you run out in Cameron and it's not all the way full, packed and jumping, but I think our guys have done a pretty good job of it."

On establishing a defensive identity:

"I think our defense will become our identity. It fits our personality and the personality of our team. We're at our best when we're playing defense, because then we get to get and run and get in transition and score a lot of points, which is fun for us and fun for everyone. I really think that guys have bought in and it'll be something that continues to improve as the season goes on."

On Tre Jones:

"Tre has a great basketball IQ, so when Tre says something to you, everyone listens. That goes up to coach. Tre has the respect of everyone in our locker room, and he's a guy who's selfless. He doesn't look to necessarily score his, but he's looking to get everyone involved and just make the right basketball play. We all love playing with him, and he's a great guy to play with. That's what really makes him a great leader."