

Duke @ Louisville
Feb. 12, 2019 | KFC Yum! Center
Postgame Quotes
Duke Head Coach Mike Krzyzewski

(Opening Statement) "Well, we were very fortunate. That was a great win for us, that their team played us for 30 minutes, not just outplayed, they outcompeted us. I commend them. They probably were more deserving of winning. But, in the last 10 minutes, we were spectacular, and in order to overcome that difference in competitive spirit, needed to be spectacular because it was that pronounced. We were down 23, and they played so well. We went to our 2-2-1, and we felt that that might help us before the game, but (sophomore guard) Jordan Goldwire really helped us. We had two guards out there that put a lot of pressure, and then, (freshman forward) Zion (Williamson) played the last part of the game with four fouls and played it great, and (freshman forward) Cam (Reddish) hit dagger shots. We did enough to overcome, really not just a point deficit, but an effort and competitive deficit. Again, there's not a value there, but you could see it obviously—I saw it, and we won. The last 10 minutes, we were spectacular. Crazy, it's a crazy game. Human beings are great. They can go from one thing to another. They're really good. He's (Louisville head coach Chris Mack) done such a good job here. This crowd, it's one of the really great venues for college basketball, and so appreciative of the game. And what they've done is incorporate and brought back the past: what Denny (Crum) and Rick (Pitino) and people before them, and what they've made Louisville, one of the great programs in the history of college basketball. So, to get a chance and win a game like that here, I feel very proud that we were able to do that. I also understand the whole thing and I feel bad for them because they were so damn good, and I feel a little bit better for us. But, that doesn't mean I don't feel bad for them."

(On believing the team would win with 10 minutes left to play) "It's interesting. At the shootaround today, I was talking to Rece Davis, they were talking about leadership, and I said one of the things—I had Roger Federer on my show last week and I talked about his strong face. I said, 'In order to be really good, you have to have a strong face and strong mannerisms, even if you don't feel strong.' And at West Point, that was one of things I learned as a cadet: even when you don't feel like it's going to go, your men better not see that in you, and as a result, you can speak into action sometimes. I did think that we could play better. I was hoping we wouldn't lose by 35—I'm not kidding, we could have. So, you're talking positive, but I don't believe it. Once that press was going, I said, 'We've got a chance here. We can get it.' But, at that point, I think I may have been telling them a lie. As a cadet, it would be social honor, it wasn't really something I needed to do. This is a crazy night, really as a coach, because I've been doing it so long. I really feel bad for them. I literally feel bad for them. They were so damn prepared for us, so well prepared, and my level of respect was already high, but it's even higher after this game."

(On the press and Goldwire's performance) "Well, we've found something maybe in the press to have (freshman guard) Tre (Jones)...Jordan's a really good athlete. He had the best look of anyone on the bench. Sometimes when you look down and he was sitting at the edge of his seat wanting to get in. So, let's get him in, and then you didn't want to take him out. And then, Tre is such a good defender. He was everywhere. He's just everywhere. They were looking where our guys were and not attacking them. That's because of the effort of all these guys."

(On the impact of the win) "I told my team, I said 'You're not losers, but you're playing like losers.' February is a crazy month, because it's a long haul before March, and everybody is hungry. They're trying to make their marks. These kids can already feel like they've made a mark. And so, you're playing against somebody that can be hungrier than you, and our thing going into the game was 'Play harder than them,' and we weren't able to do that. So, that's a lesson for our guys. However, the other lesson is maybe Goldwire can play more, the 2-2-1 may be added to what we're doing. What've we played? 24 games? They've played 24 games in their career. So, we can still learn a lot. We learned a lot tonight, and they didn't give up, and they made really pressure free throws, pressure free throws. Then, Cam hit... his teammates you could even see right there, 'Where is he?', and just shoot it. So, confidence-wise, I think it adds a lot, and it gets Goldwire in the rotation there."

(On the team's defensive performance earlier in the game) "Yeah, a little bit. Like, we missed a lot of shots. Like (freshman forward) RJ (Barrett), some of RJ's shots around the bucket. Nothing. And then, we missed almost every free throw. We were in the 30s, and we're a really good offensive team. It's not about just jump shooting...and they were playing hard, it wasn't just us missing. The defense, we didn't talk right away. They have a really good offensive set because their centers can hit threes. I think they probably hit three tonight, and we didn't defend that, and (junior center) Marques (Bolden) looked tired. And again, it's been a long haul. We've been playing like crazy, and he's a big guy. But, he wasn't who he has been. The change in defense helped because we were still able to attack, and I think, then when we stayed in zone, we attacked more in the zone, instead of more just coming back in the zone. I don't know, I think that that's what happened. Who the hell knows?"

(On recalling a similar type of game): "I'm not a big guy, I hope it's not just because I'm getting older and my memory is not as good, I try not to think about the past. When people say do you remember the score? No. I do not. Sometimes a guy will come up to me and say, 'I played against your team in '84, do you remember me?' No. No."

(On what Chris Mack tells his team after this loss): "Look, he's a hell of a coach. They were worthy of winning. I mean, they were worthy of winning. The crowd was great. It was close to being like an amazing celebration of how well they played and how well Louisville supports their team. Look, we were spectacular for nine-and-a-half minutes. And it was just good enough to make do."

(On Louisville defense in the first half compared to the second): "They were playing great defense and they are really good. They didn't let you get into the lane. Very similar to what Virginia did Saturday except we hit 13 out of 21 threes. On Saturday, we didn't hit anything. Panic isn't the right word, but we lost confidence. And we just looked bad. We just looked bad. In the second half, because we got runs, their defense wasn't set up, we got it off of turnovers, rebounds. And we got shots before their defense was set up and attacked the basket. One of the biggest plays of the game was Tre's steal when it was 69-64. I think if he doesn't do that then we're not going to win. I thought they was a huge play."

(On if he is surprised by Mack's success in year one): "I'm not surprised because he was terrific at Xavier. And you know, look, if you coach here, you're going to be good. You're going to be good. This one of the great programs. Kids want to come here. Fans want to go in those stands and they want to go nuts and they want to support their team. He's good. Other than that, I don't know what else you need."

(On extending the defense): "Going into the game, we felt that the 2-2-1, we don't do it very much, but we actually practiced it for this game. So, we felt we could do it. We did it one time in the first half and everything we did in the first half was not good. And maybe the sense of urgency... sometimes something you do doesn't work because of the attitude you have when you do it. So, the sense of urgency made the defense work. My guys want to win. They're good guys. They're really good guys."