

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday March 15, 2019



## Jim Boeheim Frank Howard Elijah Hughes Syracuse

Duke - 84, Syracuse - 72

JIM BOEHEIM: I thought we really got off to a slow start. Their defense just suffocated us, they were really aggressive. And then at the end, the last part of the first half we stabilized a little bit and got back in it. Foul trouble obviously was a problem with our big guys, but I thought we fought as hard as we could. Williamson is a difficult guy, you really can't handle him in the paint area, he's, I thought the second half we did a better job with him. But overall we played pretty well, we got to the shooters, Jones hurt us with one open three in the second half. But overall I thought we battled about as hard as we could and very proud of the way we played. Duke is a tremendous team, but I thought we did some things that were really good. And we think Tyus will be back at practice probably Saturday, he's close, but he just couldn't go today. It's swelling in his back and it's just not something he could go with. But as far as what people were commentating on at halftime, I talked to Frank, I looked at the video, there was no trip involved out there. I don't know who was talking about that, but it was a bump and both guys fell and that's it. It was nothing there. Trying to manufacture something out of nothing.

### **Q. What are some things that you want to see improve going forward after this season?**

JIM BOEHEIM: Pardon?

### **Q. What are some of the things you want to see improve with your team going forward after this season?**

JIM BOEHEIM: It's been a long year. I think we have done a lot of good things. I think that it's, obviously it hurts not having Tyus here. He's a major part of what we do. But I think that we're capable of playing with anybody, we proved that tonight without Tyus. And I think that this league, you're playing the 1 and 2 and 4, 5 teams in the country, and I think that helps you get ready. I think we're ready for post-season. We have

experience from last year, we have gotten some of our young guys some really good experience, it's really important -- this is the first game Paschal's got in this kind of foul trouble early and some were just so silly fouls and one he wasn't involved in, but that's just the way it goes sometimes. But he's important for us, to be in the game. But I like the way we played this year and I think we're certainly capable of being a very good tournament team. We're better than we were last year.

### **Q. With Tyus being out, are you pleased with the way that Buddy has stepped in and played? And is your wife going to be demanding more playing time now?**

JIM BOEHEIM: We don't talk about that anymore in our house. That's off limits. We talk about my other son and my daughter. We talk about their games, we yell at their coaches. But, no, Buddy's played well, I mean all he did was extrapolate what he's been doing. He's been playing 14 minutes in the league and averaging eight points a game. And in these two games he played 34 minutes and he got, he averaged 16 or 17, which is exactly what he should do, given you're doubling, a little bit more than doubling his minutes and he's averaging seven, almost eight points a game in the league. So I don't think there's any surprise there. I think he's getting better, I think he's getting better with the ball. I told him he better, he needs to stop banking shots unless he calls them, but he stepped up big here. He was really big yesterday and he was, he was again exceeding expectations for what I thought coming in to the year, his game has been really solid. Again, I think this will help him and this will help our team, this tournament, tough games we played. We're just not quite good enough against the 1, 2 and 4 teams. We played with them for 20 minutes, 30 minutes, but we're not quite good enough against those four teams and we aren't going to have to play those four teams for awhile, I hope.

### **Q. Frank, you had 28 points tonight. You talked about after last night's win being more aggressive. With Tyus's absence and with all the pressure that Duke puts on how does that change hadn't how do you approach that defense?**

FRANK HOWARD: Tyus being out I knew I had to be a little bit more aggressive. Around this time of the year I finally got my body right to feel comfortable to attack and that's just what I've been trying to do, get in the

lane and make some plays and my teammates have helped me with that.

JIM BOEHEIM: I think Frank's really picked up his shooting over the last two, three weeks and tonight obviously we needed him to take a lot more shots and I think he's very capable or that. Last night he did that. I think he's more of a scorer now than he has been in a long time and this is what I thought he would do early in the year until he got hurt. This is the way he was shooting the ball. Again, going into the tournament, getting Tyus back, that gives us a little bit more offense back there.

**Q. For the players, I know you played against a lot of great players but when you watch Zion out on the court do you ever get like amazed at what some of the stuff he does?**

ELIJAH HUGHES: He's a good player, I mean physical and yeah, he's just a good player.

FRANK HOWARD: As a competitor you don't want to say amazed because we still have to compete but he's definitely a terrific talent, terrific athlete and he's showing that.

JIM BOEHEIM: Well he's a different player. There's not many, there hasn't been anybody I've been coaching a long -- I've been in this game over 50 years and I haven't seen -- I've seen a lot of great players, I'm not saying he's better than those guys, but he's a different play. He can do things that nobody has done in this game. I mean Charles, like I said, is, was close, but this guy's bigger, stronger. And I mean he's crazy different type of player, there's not guys like him. You have to have size with him and we don't have that physical, physicality type of team for a guy like him. We played Duke as good as we could play them without him. If he hadn't -- we played much better than we played in Syracuse or different. We were really, we really played very good basketball, but's different kind of guy. And I give my team credit, I don't know how many we were down in the first half, but it was significant and to come back the way we came back in that first half was a tribute to the toughness of these guys. And our defense got better. As the half went on we shut them down a little bit too. But again, this was good for our team. Obviously we would like to have had Tyus for these games, but we know that he'll be back full scale at practice, probably, I think Saturday, Sunday at the latest. So he'll have plenty of time to get back. And he's played so many minutes this year the rest is probably good for him.

**Q. For Frank or Elijah, what are some of the good things that you guys want to take into post-season?**

FRANK HOWARD: Just this fight. Like coach said, this fight, that's what it comes down to. We had some bad turnovers down the stretch, the one with me down four. But just aggression and assertiveness, that's what we really want to take.

ELIJAH HUGHES: Yeah, pretty much piggyback off Frank. Complete every play, and to be aware of some shooters, stuff like that. Just little things on defense and then just mostly just fighting and competing every play.

**Q. Frank, not to belabor the point but I'm curious what your version or how you saw that play unfold that obviously became a talking point at halftime. And did you hear any of those comments and what you might have thought of them?**

FRANK HOWARD: No, I mean I was just shown the video on the way out here. But I mean if you said I'm trying to trip him, I don't get it. I saw the play, I realized I tripped him, and I tried to give him a little hand at the same time. I mean it's the heat of the game with a very tough defender on me, I was trying to get open, get the ball and get the ball out fast and that's all I really remember of the play. I just saw the video really quick, but he's a hell of an athlete, hell of a player, I have a lot of respect for him, I'm not going to wait four years to get to this stage to start tripping people.