

2019 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship

Saturday, May 25 2019

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

John Danowski

Cade Van Raaphorst

Brad Smith

Duke Blue Devils

Virginia - 13, Duke - 12

THE MODERATOR: Now joined by Duke head coach, John Danowski, Brad Smith and Cade Van Raaphorst. Start with a brief statement from coach, then questions for student athletes, and then give you time to talk to Coach. Coach?

JOHN DANOWSKI: We want to congratulate the University of Virginia, Coach Tiffany and his staff. Terrific performance. They've been doing this to people all year. They don't give up. They play with great skill and great confidence and poise to the end. They beat us.

You know, they clearly beat us, and it was a terrific -- very proud of our guys for hanging in there with them. Our guys gave great effort as well, but they were just clearly the more skilled team.

Q. Cade, what was different for them offensively in the second half and into overtime as well for you guys? Or was it just simply something else?

CADE VAN RAAPHORST: Yeah, I mean, we knew they were going to go harder in the second half. They went into the invert package pretty much ever possession, whether it was lack of communication or something, but we just couldn't make the stops we needed to and couldn't clear the ball when we had to, and they capitalized on it. Anytime you turn the ball over and give it right back in the clear, that hurts.

Q. Brad, just give me your take on the opportunities you guys had in the extra session and how close you felt like you were to finishing this thing off in the right way.

BRAD SMITH: We had a pretty good look at the cage, hit the pipe, or the goalie made a save, I'm not sure. I think offensively the story of the day was shooting. We didn't shoot the ball that well. When you get that number of shots and you only score outside of the face-off game, you only score nine goals, that's not a great shooting day, so I think that would be -- that came and reared its head in overtime as

well.

Q. What were the emotions walking off the field and realizing the finale of today's outcome?

CADE VAN RAAPHORST: It's really hard. This being the last time I get to wear a Duke jersey and what this program and these guys have meant to me over the past four years, and I think it's -- I just want to thank Coach Danowski and Coach Caputo for letting me come here, and I love this place with all my heart, and it hurts. It hurts I don't ever get to wear this jersey anymore, but that I don't get to be around these guys anymore, this coaching staff.

Everything they've done for us, they love us, and we love them, and you can tell. It's hard to be in that locker room right now. You worked so hard throughout the whole year, you worked so hard after last year losing in the championship, to get back, and to fall short, it hurts, but more than anything it's saying goodbye to this group of guys and this program.

BRAD SMITH: Yeah, it's like a tough realization, understanding it's the last time that you'll see -- you see these guys ever single day, like, 47 of your brothers. Then knowing that you're not going to be able to hangout in the hotel tonight or come back to the locker room ever again, it's tough. That goes for the coaches as well. Fathers, while we were away at college; take care of us all the time, teach us lessons, valuable lessons, life lessons, on the field, off the field.

They make us grow throughout four years. So definitely grateful to everyone that was a part of my Duke experience.

Q. Cade, you guys did great job of causing turnovers in that first half. Is there anything you saw them adapt to differently in the second half to get away from as many turnovers as they had early?

CADE VAN RAAPHORST: They just made plays when it came down to it. Like Coach Danowski said, their guys made plays and we didn't.

Q. Coach, going into the second quarter it seemed like the team was more aggressive, building the margin and letting you go into half with a big lead. What was the switch that happened there?

JOHN DANOWSKI: Virginia plays simple offensively. There is nothing magical about what they do. They have -- if you take a look, three of their players took 35 shots. So we call it -- you've got to defend the "knowns" and they're going to invert and play big-little behind the cage and what we call a rhombus on offense, then have the four-man front and dive and open up the step-down shooters.

They play very simply but in their simplicity they get very good at. They're highly skilled players, and you knew at halftime we weren't going to hold them to 4 goals. We weren't going to hold them to another two in the second half. The hope was that we would have scored a couple more goals, maybe could have cleared the ball a little smarter, toward the end there, but, again, it's not one play that wins or loses one of these games; it's a multitude of plays over the course of 65, 66 minutes today.

Q. John, given their history of rallies in the fourth quarter and whatnot. Did it feel like you guys were just kind of holding on for dear life there and fortunate in some ways to be able to have that extended possession? I think it was four minutes or so late in the fourth quarter.

JOHN DANOWSKI: In some ways the game was a microcosm of our season. Our kids at certain times they just get tight. They don't enjoy or they don't play with a freedom or -- you know, they just get tight, whether it's they just want to win so badly that they get tight, or they want somebody else to make a play, whatever it is. I don't know. We worked hard at trying to work on that aspect of the game.

But in the four of our losses, I can think of High Point and Carolina, goalies made 19, 21, Notre Dame, 18 saves, so this wasn't the first time that, you know, we hit the cage a bunch, but I don't know, again, how effective we were shooting, and I think we went off sides in the fourth quarter. We couldn't win a face-off in the fourth quarter. All the things we did for three quarters.

Now, sometimes you tip your cap to your opponent and say they made you do those things, and I get that, but when we look at it from our perspective, those are plays we hoped we would make at this time of year, but we just didn't make them today.

Q. Coach, what did you tell your team after the game? What did you say in the locker room?

JOHN DANOWSKI: We lost the game as a team. And the beauty of today's game was that everybody contributed at the end. You know, we didn't hit the point man on a break, we didn't make a simple pass in the clearing game, we didn't match-up one time with 10 seconds to go in a quarter.

Offensively we were somewhat disjointed in that first half. So it wasn't -- we came here as a team, and we're leaving as a team. And for that, the tears come from the realization that it's over for these guys who have invested so much over their careers, especially the seniors, but the game itself, you know, we weren't good enough to win today, and it was really that simple.

Let's not be -- no tears for losing, but, you know, we can certainly mourn the loss of this team and moving on to the next year already.

Q. Were you uneasy at all before the game about a Virginia team that was basically due to do something like this?

JOHN DANOWSKI: No. We don't really pay attention to other teams and that. That's nothing that we can control. We prepare for our opponent each week, whether it was Richmond in the tournament or Notre Dame or now Virginia and, you know, they're terrific. They've won a whole bunch of games this year and they're the ACC Champions for a reason.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

JOHN DANOWSKI: Thanks, everybody.