

# QUOTES | GAME 1



## NO. 12 WAKE FOREST 81, NO. 13 NOTRE DAME 69

COACH MIKE BREY  
PAT CONNAUGHTON

COACH BREY: You know, I give credit to Wake Forest. They made really big plays. We couldn't defend enough to get out of there tonight. You know, Atkins' foul trouble in the first half probably wasn't the best of things for our rhythm, but I think the answer has been really what's plagued us most of the year, just haven't been able to get stops enough.

Thomas is a bear; Williams hit some big shots to get them going. We went zone a little bit, he banged down some shots. We tried to change defenses, and it seems like every time we change defense, they go zone, they hit a three. They made timely baskets, and we weren't efficient enough offensively to, kind of, score enough, and I think you have to give Wake's defense credit for that.

Q. What makes Devin Thomas such a tough match up for you?

COACH BREY: Yeah, he's scorched us twice. He's got great strength around the bucket. He's able to drive it from 15, 18 feet. We've had no answers for him twice. You know, we tried a lot of different guys on him, three of our big bodies on him. We came down a couple times and doubled, and they'd kick and hit a three.

But he's really been he's the guy that's really haunted us, and I think, when I think about their season, when they've had success, he's played great. He's really played well.

Q. The impact of the early foul trouble on Atkins?

COACH BREY: Yeah, I think it did affect our rhythm a little bit. He's been such a key guy for us, scoring, jump starting us offensively, getting us in stuff, and he was probably back on his heels, I felt. I was worried that if I took him out, the thing may get away from us in the first half, and then he gets his third. I thought he did a good job in the second half trying his motor was better.

But I think in a tournament setting, and, for us, given this is our first experience down here in this thing, we needed to get off to a better start to believe that we could win a game here.

Q. Mike, you mentioned this obviously being your first time in Greensboro with Notre Dame. Can you kind of encapsulate what the season was like in the ACC?

COACH BREY: You know, I've said all week, for our program, big picture here, forget the game today. We're very honored to play in the ACC Tournament, for Notre Dame basketball to be part of the most historic one of the most historic things in college basketball, rich tradition. I've tried to educate our guys over the weekend leading before we came down here about just what that means. We certainly would have loved to stay around a little bit longer, but we're going to have other cracks at the ACC Tournament.

You know, I think at times it was a year of adjustment for us on a lot of fronts, some personnel losses and kind of new preparation, new scouting, new venues, all of those things. I would hope we'll be better at it next year in year two.

Q. This is for Pat: You guys cut it down to five early in the second half and Miles Overton hit the two threes from the left corner. The impact on the game, what did you see there, Pat?

PAT CONNAUGHTON: Well, like coach said, they hit a bunch of timely shots. At the end of the day it comes down to our defense stepping up a little bit more and making them miss shots and making them take tough shots.

Q. Mike, I apologize if you answered this, but I know you emphasized rebounding and defense during the week

COACH BREY: Very disappointed on that front. You know, we couldn't we didn't carry much over from what we talked about over the weekend. You know, that cost us the game.

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COACH JEFF BZDELIK  
CORON WILLIAMS  
TRAVIS MCKIE

Q. What kind of got you rolling tonight, and was it hitting early?

CORON WILLIAMS: Yeah, I would credit my teammates finding me. I was able to get some space in the first half. They lost me because I was moving, and guys were able to find me, and I was able to knock down a few shots to kind of get a flow going.

Q. Coach, rebounding was significant for y'all. Could you talk about that?

COACH BZDELIK: It's been our Achilles' heel all year long. We would get stops, but we would never culminate those stops with defensive rebounds. Actually, in pregame warm up we did a defensive rebound drill. I told my staff to do it. Should have been doing it all year long.

But yeah, I mean, we finally rebounded the basketball, and "no rebounds, no rings" was the expression we had with the Miami Heat. We all know how important rebounding is.

We rebounded well and culminated stops. We shot the ball extremely well with the exception of turnovers. I think we finished the first half. Our last five possessions we turned the ball over three times. With the exception of turnovers we played very well.

Q. Jeff, would you talk about the performance from Devin Thomas, and are you inclined to give him a day off a little bit more often now?

COACH BZDELIK: Well, I can't tomorrow.

No, Devin, as we all know, when he gets double digit rebounds, our record is very, very good, and he anchors our defense inside. He was very aggressive going to the rim. He felt very confident. He had a really good game against Notre Dame the first time we played them. His quickness and explosiveness was to our advantage around the paint area.

We utilized that, coupled that with really good perimeter shooting started by core on here. Miles followed, then Aaron followed.

Just a good overall, well rounded game by our team.

Q. Travis, I believe this is your first ACC Tournament win of your career. What does it mean?

TRAVIS MCKIE: It means a lot. You know, it's not only my first tournament win, it's Wake's first win in about seven or eight years. We talked about that coming into the game. We knew what we had to do. We had a great opportunity, obviously, facing Notre Dame before and beating them. We just wanted to break the streak not only for this team but for Wake Forest. We haven't done it in a long time, and we wanted to continue rolling.

Q. Coach, y'all were up 13, and Notre Dame got it all the way down to five in the second half. What changed for you guys to be able to get some momentum going for you guys?

COACH BZDELIK: You know, we have an extremely young team with the exception of these two young men to my left here. We have nine players that are scholarship players that are freshmen and sophomores. And it's something that we've focused in on all year long, dealing with adversity throughout the course of the game, knowing that it's a heavyweight fight and you're going to get hit throughout the course of that fight, and how you respond ultimately determines your destiny.

I'm really proud of our basketball team. You go back to when we beat Duke a couple weeks ago well, ten days ago, we were down, and we just came back. So we're fighting through that. The maturity is starting to surface, now, to be able to deal with adversity. Not all the time, but today we did a very good job of it.



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Q. Jeff, kind of the same question that Travis got: What significance do you see in a postseason break through for this program?

COACH BZDELIK: Well, it's another step in the right direction, no question. We talked about that. I'll just elaborate on it.

It's about Wake Forest. It's not about any one of us. It's about Wake Forest, tradition, history, how much it means to so many people, this tournament, and it's something that is greater than ourselves, so we need to honor that and just leave it all out there and play as well as we possibly can.

Q. Coach, first of all, congratulations on the win. With the quick turnaround, what is the focus going to be for the Pitt game tomorrow? When does celebrating the victory stop, you turn to Pitt, and what will you be focused on for tomorrow?

COACH BZDELIK: I'll tell you exactly what our schedule is right now. We're going to head back to campus. Our players stayed in the dorms. We weren't in a hotel. They're going to have ice bath schedules, and they're going to each take an ice bath. They don't know it yet, but they will.

And while our coaching staff is going to go over our film from when we played Pitt earlier in the year and then go over several of Pitt's recent games. I've had a staff member that has been doing his work on Pitt, and I'm going to listen to him. He's got the film work done, the scouting report done. We'll bring the players back about 8:00 tonight at our practice facility, and we'll walk through Pitt, watch film, come up with a game plan, and feed them and put them down for the night. That's our schedule.

Q. You talked about maturity and development. Can you talk about Codi's development and his effort this afternoon?

COACH BZDELIK: Well, you know, I go back we were 14-6 at one time, and I remember a play late in the first half against Georgia Tech, and Codi went for a loose ball and rolled his ankle pretty good. He really hasn't been 100 percent for a long time, and he's close to it, but he still isn't. He still favors it.

It really has slowed him down, and, of course, when you lose your point guard, any team, it can affect you, and that coupled with a very difficult schedule during that stretch put us on our heels. But we're starting to right the ship, and everybody is starting to get back to being 100 percent.

Q. Jeff, you talked about rebounding. How important will it be tomorrow against Pitt, and what do you remember the first time you played Pitt?

COACH BZDELIK: What I remember is getting beat very badly on the boards. I can't remember specifically the numbers, but they pretty much manhandled us around the rim. Obviously we're going to have to really do a great job tomorrow of finding bodies, hitting them first, carving out space. Most definitely, that's the biggest thing that I remember about that game.

Q. Coron, did the basket look big to you today, and if so, why?

CORON WILLIAMS: I wouldn't say it looked big, but I'll say this: I wasn't shooting the ball well in warm ups today, so I was a little nervous going into it.

But after I made those first two shots, it began to look a little bigger.

Q. Coron, expounding on that a bit, in 2012 you set an NEC tournament record for most threes in one game. Is there something about the tournament setting that brings out the best in you?

CORON WILLIAMS: Desperation, one and done. If you don't come out here and play your hardest, you can be done for the year. For me it's going to be my career, so I want to keep on playing. There's a focus. There's a focus about it for me.



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Q. Coach, you talk about an ACC Tournament win as a step in the right direction. How about the season as a whole, 17 15, your first winning record, and how many important ways do you see that as a larger step in the right direction?

COACH BZDELIK: Well, again, it's not about me, it's about the Wake Forest basketball program. I have two responsibilities: I have a responsibility to win; I get that. And I have a responsibility to protect the integrity of the University, and I get that, and there can't be a trade off between one or the other. We have terrific young men on this basketball team, and well we're making steps in the right direction in terms of winning.

So once again, with nine players on scholarship that are freshmen and sophomores, an excellent recruiting class coming in, a couple of players sitting out with ACL injuries, the future is very bright.

But you know what, it's not about the future for next year, it's about the future now, and these two young men sitting to my left have been just tremendous. I can't say enough about these two guys sitting next to me in terms of the impact that they've had. Travis, all four years I told him in front of the team, a lot of people run from adversity. We see it in college basketball, what is it, maybe 40 percent of people transfer? Well, Travis faced it head on, and he didn't run from anything. He went through some very difficult challenges and adverse conditions, and I'm so happy for him the way this is turning out right now, and he can look back and say, hey, I've been a big part of the foundation.

And then you take a young man like Coron who really hasn't even been on campus a year, and the impact. I told him yesterday in a very emotional way that he's had tremendous impact on the growth of these young players. Both these young men have. So very, very proud of them. They stand for what Wake Forest is all about.