

QUOTES | GAME 14



NO. 1 VIRGINIA 72, NO. 3 DUKE 63

Duke Coach Mike Krzyzewski
Jabari Parker
Rodney Hood

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I want to congratulate Virginia. It was an amazingly physical game. Both teams wanted it so hard, so much. They were poised. They finished better than we did. Obviously, they got to the foul line a helluva lot better than we did. And they're just a good team.

And we have a good team. Our kids fought like crazy. It's their third game in 40 hours. We had a hard time finishing and getting to the foul line when we didn't.

The heart of our team was great. Our kids played with great heart. So going forward into the NCAA Tournament, I think these three games have really helped us get on to another level. I'm excited about our group and proud of them. Any questions?

Q. Mike, when you watched Jabari in the second half, it seemed like he was demanding the ball more and kind of trying to take that role of taking over. Do you feel like that's a point in his development?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: No, he's done that. He took 24 shots and only three free throws. Part of his development is, when he makes those moves, is to finish, get fouled, not get fouled, you know what I mean. I mean, his should be a combination. Jabari played his butt off. He was relentless in trying to get things in.

We were almost there. We were right there, in spite of not being able to finish. So it's disappointing. But Jabari, I mean, that's what we want him to do.

Q. For Jabari and Rodney, can you talk about what it was like to face that Virginia defense?

MODERATOR: Jabari?

JABARI PARKER: I think we kind of just rushed. We were just so anxious to get on the offensive end once we tried to get down and get their momentum on my side. But I could have did a better job myself, gathering myself and getting to the free throw line, but it didn't help me out.

RODNEY HOOD: I think they're a really good defensive team. But at the same time, I think we got a lot of looks. Some is going to haunt me tonight, but I think we got the ball in the paint. We played, we shared the ball. They're a great defensive team, but I think we got enough looks to change the game and we just didn't finish.

Q. Mike, I was curious, in both halves, it was a very long time before you even attempted a three. Was that a function of defense or a game plan thing?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: They take it away a lot. We felt driving the ball and trying to get to the foul line was the way to go. If you drove and kicked, then you would get a better three point shot because they're a heck of a defensive team. So actually, it was the best that we've driven the ball for a long time today, because you have to drive through a strong defense. And our guys were doing that.

Q. Jabari, what is it about Akil Mitchell that makes him such a good one on one defender and what are the challenges of going up against him today?

JABARI PARKER: He's athletic and he anticipates a lot on the defensive end. I kind of read him in the second half and kind of shied away and put him off the hook and I didn't listen to Coach like he was telling me to not settle. I started settling, but I could have just kept on going. He's a good defensive player and he should be one of the greatest defensive players in Virginia history.

Q. Coach, can you explain that technical in the first half?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I have no clue. None.

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Q. The video showed you throwing a pen?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Yeah, but you can throw a clipboard too. I didn't do it in reaction to anything. I can hit my head on the floor. I can do a handstand. I can tumble, as long as it's not a reaction to anybody.

There's no way that there should be a technical foul on that. I mean, that was ridiculous. Absolutely ridiculous. Shameful. Shameful.

Q. Coach, this particular opponent, it seems to symbolize a lot of the same things you've been kind of preaching at Duke for a long, long time. The teamwork, the unselfishness, the conditioning, the defense. Can you just elaborate on what you see in UVA along those lines?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: I see all the things that you just said. I mean, they did it. You answered your question well. I mean, I admire them. I think they're a helluva basketball team. They've had a great season, great kids, unselfish. They're one of the best teams in the country. They've done that in a consistent manner.

They've been healthy too. So they haven't had bumps in the road and so they keep getting a little bit better all the time.

Q. Jabari, with all the state titles you won in high school, just dealing with a postseason loss, how does it feel and how will that kind of change your approach of going forward, knowing what this feeling is like?

JABARI PARKER: Now, zero and zero, you got to move on. I don't get a second chance anymore. The point of emphasis has to come on me and Rodney. We have to lead our team. That's what it's going to take to win.

In the past, I lost city championships, but I changed my mentality to get a state championship. I know it's going to be twice as hard.

Q. Jabari, there were a couple of different points in the second half where it seemed like you were about to take the game over and they always had an answer, mostly in the person of Joe Harris. What did you think of his performance and how did he respond to some of the things you did out there?

JABARI PARKER: As a whole, UVA did a real good job in executing their offense. They're a good team, a great team. They should be really good coming into the tournament and I applaud them. There are some things I could have done better out there.

Q. Mike, you've spoken out about Harris in the past. What do you see in Brogdon? How much difference has he made for the team?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Brogdon's first team all league player. He's steady, kind of unflappable, and so strong. Strong mentally and obviously strong physically. He and Harris are two kids that they're two men. They don't make many mistakes and you can count on them on every possession.

Those two and Mitchell give you three of the better players in the country on one team.

Q. Mike, you've been pretty outspoken over the years about the respect that the ACC gets. This is now three years in a row you've had three different teams, Florida State, Miami, and now Virginia have won this championship. What do you think that will do, different teams other than Carolina and Duke winning this, maybe to broaden people's perspective and awareness of the league?

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Hasn't done anything yet. Should I tell Roy the two of us should keep losing? I don't think it comes from us. I think it comes from all of you who cover our league to make sure that the league is given the respect that it deserves.

It's not up to the coaches.

MODERATOR: Any other questions? Thank you.

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Thanks.

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Virginia Coach Tony Bennett
Malcolm Brogdon
Joe Harris
Akil Mitchell

COACH BENNETT: We need to get on the road because the weather's getting bad so this has got to be short and sweet because we've got to get back.

But obviously, it was a heck of a game. I told these guys in the locker room just now, to me, the true joy is in how they played when the ball was tipped between the lines, how hard they played. How well they played. Not perfect. How they defended, how they moved the ball and tried to outlast through the game. And that's it.

We'll celebrate all this stuff later on, but that's what I liked, and you want to play good ball now heading into the NCAA Tournament. So it's great. For these guys, who have been through a lot, it's a nice feeling for sure.

Q. Akil, down here to your left, I guess, can you just discuss the challenges of playing Jabari Parker man to man? What did you try to do and how do you feel you played against him today?

AKIL MITCHELL: He's going to be a good player. He's special, strong, quick, athletic. He can shoot the ball, put it on the floor. I made sure I stayed down, kept my balance, tried to stay in front.

COACH BENNETT: He had 15 rebounds. I didn't know he had that many. Wow.

Q. It was a one possession game for a lot of the second half and your team slowly but surely built that lead. How proud were you of the composure of your team?

COACH BENNETT: We kept talking about don't get sped up. Make them guard you and make them earn on the other end. That's what they did. That's what I meant when I said to see that unfold is what it would take. And again, they missed some bunnies. They did some things. But we had to earn this against that kind of team and that kind of program.

Yep, that made it very gratifying.

Q. Joe, you played in front of a lot of great crowds at JPJ this year, but did you expect this outpouring of support today? What was it like on the court hearing that?

JOE HARRIS: That was unbelievable, to have the support that we had. We were kind of joking around when we came in, where are the Duke fans. All we could see was orange when we drove over here. It's special to share it with the fans. They deserve it. The city of Charlottesville deserves an ACC tournament title. They've been extremely loyal and very supportive ever since I've gotten to the school here.

Q. Tony, talk about the history angle of this first time in 37 years.

COACH BENNETT: So long. I think I told you that in the last press conference, that Wally Walker said we want some company with that team in '76. Just like what Joe said. Faithful fans. I think they appreciate how these guys have gone about doing it. The way they play, the kind of character they are off the court, and they've watched these two grow up.

To get that I've not been to many finals. I went to the one in '95. I don't know if it's always this charged in here or this electric with the crowd noise and the atmosphere, but it sure felt special and that's a big shout out to the Cavalier fans. Because that was when I heard UVA when I walked out on the floor, the chant, I said are we in John Paul Jones Arena or in Greensboro? It felt like a home crowd at times. Duke got it going, but that was a special crowd.

Q. For the seniors, Akil and Joe, what are your emotions and what were they as the final seconds were ticking down and the fans were going crazy? How good did it feel?

AKIL MITCHELL: It felt amazing. It's what you dream of. It's what we wanted to do. Now we've still got work

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to do. That's all I'm really focused on now. But for the last couple minutes of the game, you just, you just want to close it down and start to celebrate.

JOE HARRIS: Yeah, I would say we've experienced a lot in our time here and this is very rewarding for the program to get to this level. This is what we wanted to do when we first came here, and this is a special feeling. But at the same time, we only had a short glimpse to celebrate this.

We always talk about how we'll celebrate our season, our careers and all that later on at some point because we still have a lot of unfinished business.

Q. Malcolm, you're about to play one of the biggest games of your career. Last night, how do you even go to sleep? How do you compose yourself to come out here and play so well and score 23 points and match Parker? The biggest game in at least the last decade or two for UVA.

MALCOLM BROGDON: I try not to let our opponents I try not to let my mindset depend on our opponents. I try to keep my mindset steady no matter who we play. I know I'm playing on a really good team. I'm playing for a really good coach. I just have faith that things will work out as they may and not try to get too up or too down for certain games.

Q. Coach in the second half, there were a couple points where Jabari almost took over the game and you always had an answer specifically from Joe. What did you think about those stretches and how important some of the buckets Joe had were?

COACH BENNETT: Big time players making big time plays. When Akil was off, out, and that's not a slap in the face to anybody else, but you could see he could get going. They started running a little four to five ball screen or five to four and they took advantage of that.

You have to answer in a game like this. I'd love to say we had this stuff diagrammed that we got the shots we needed. The players made the plays. Joe, Malcolm, Akil, the rebounds, the plays were significant. Just watching how hard Joe was moving off the ball, I saw it in the Florida State game yesterday. That was good to see.

He's got to feel, I said that to you guys before, when to step up, when to be assertive and when to let it come. I think that's a strength of his.

Q. Coach, when you think of the things that you value in basketball, whether it was player, coach, has there ever been a group you've been associated with that reflects those things any better than this?

COACH BENNETT: They're as good as it gets. We've still got work to do. I've been a part of a lot of good teams. I don't want to slight those. I saw that the year I was a volunteer manager for my dad's Final Four team. That's how they came together.

Here's what's unique about these guys that's different. And we still have work to do. How they've sustained it from start to finish. Conference play to now. That's different. And so that, I take my hat off to knowing there's still stuff in front of us. That's what I appreciate.

Q. Tony, you talked about there's more work to do. Have you been able to reflect at all during these last 15 minutes about this accomplishment or are you just trying not to do that at all?

COACH BENNETT: Definitely enjoyed it. I told you I loved the game, but we'll relive all this stuff later. We need rest. We need to get rested up and ready to go for what's next.

Yeah, that moment when you're on the floor, you see your wife, you see your parents, you see the joy in these guys' eyes and hearts. That's gratifying as anything. I soak that up without a doubt. I gave thanks certainly for all that's happened, as I said, through the tough times, through the good times.

Q. Coach, you touched on this a little bit, I think, but when you look at the team that had the two technicals and the team that was able to hold on in the end, do you feel like your team was more poised and, if so, why?

COACH BENNETT: I don't know more. Our guys played with great composure. We needed that. I don't know

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what happened with the technicals. I didn't see it. But the mark of a team to win a championship and a conference tournament, you have to play with that kind of poise, composure down the stretch.

We even shrugged off missing some free throws. But yeah, they certainly did that, and I like that because you need that in tournament play. It's so important.

They haven't gotten flustered. That's been a trademark of them all year.

Q. Tony, Anthony Gill put tremendous pressure on Duke around the basket. How large was he in the game plan coming in? Did you think he would need to play well?

COACH BENNETT: He got to the line 17 times. Yeah, he was really on the glass. He was getting it, attacking, and he has that ability. We saw that in practices last year. We knew he'd be important because he could get going that way, and he draws fouls. I said that all year. He just knows how to get contact and draw fouls.

Q. Tony, first of all, did your dad stick around for today?

COACH BENNETT: He did. He told my wife he wasn't coming in the morning and told her about 30 minutes later, "I am going to come." I didn't know if he was going to be there or not. We left him a ticket. To start the game, I saw him a couple times put his hands in his head when we missed a free throw or something.

I'm glad he was there. I know he loves these guys for what they stand for and he's going to appreciate how hard nosed and tough they were.

Q. You were talking about history a little while ago, but I'm not sure if you're aware of it or not. This is the first time in the history of this conference, 61 years, that you've gone three straight years with a non North Carolina team winning the tournament championship. With Florida State winning, Miami and now you guys, if that helps the perception of the league outside of the geographic footprint that it's more than just Carolina and Duke?

COACH BENNETT: I mean, I hope so because there's great teams besides those storied programs. With Louisville coming in next year, and the teams that have are in this year, it's a monster. It really is. So that's why to get it and, yeah, I didn't know that for the last three years. Thinking about it, it is. That's special but, it shows you the stranglehold those schools have had on it. Our job is to pry it away.

Q. Joe, I know you want to celebrate later, but what does winning the MVP of this tournament mean? Nobody from Virginia's done that since Wally Walker.

COACH BENNETT: Northwest guy too.

JOE HARRIS: Yeah. He was in Seattle. I didn't put much thought in it. I didn't expect it or anything like that at all. I was more concerned about trying to get the tournament championship. That was my main concern. All the individual stuff, that's just I mean, I don't put much thought into it.

Q. Akil, talk about the last time you went back in on Jabari and I think Coach Bennett referred to it that said that he'd been going off there for a while. Did you tell yourself you had to shut him down?

AKIL MITCHELL: I mean, there was no pressure on me to shut him down. My teammates, they knew that I was capable of the job and they kept telling me to just do my best and then lock him up and the kind of stuff my team is supposed to do. I just went out there and gave my best.

You know, he missed a couple of contested shots and from there, I think I was able to frustrate him.

Q. I'll piggyback off that. Did you have a specific defensive game plan, you personally, for Jabari or do you play the same kind of defense no matter who you're facing?

AKIL MITCHELL: It's got to be the same defense against everybody. With a guy like that, so aggressive and so skilled, you have to be more on your toes. You've got to be a little bit more ready for the jump shot and the drive. So I just try to be in two different places at one time, and I don't know. I felt like my teammates had my back and I just gave it my all.

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Q. What's this team's mindset going into the NCAA Tournament? Do you feel like you've maybe proven you can be a one seed in a couple hours and how will you guys handle the next week in getting ready for the NCAA tournament?

MALCOLM BROGDON: I think we would, of course, like to be a one seed like anybody. I don't think our focus is really on that. The fact that we're going in the NCAA regardless, it means a lot to us, and we're going to focus on going there and competing against whoever we play. That's really the mindset we have going on now. We're going to try to enjoy this tonight but move on tomorrow and get back to work.

Q. Malcolm, what was the team's mindset in the last two or three minutes? You had the lead, but it seemed like you were still looking to score. I'm thinking of your layup that made it 66-60 with a minute left. What were you thinking out there? What was the game plan at that point?

MALCOLM BROGDON: The game plan was to take care of the ball. In that situation, you still want to remain aggressive. But we had to get stops. Every close game we play in, it comes down to getting stops in our defense and I feel like that's what we thrive on doing and that's what we did tonight.

MODERATOR: Any other questions? Thank you.

COACH BENNETT: Thank you.

JOE HARRIS: Thank you.

AKIL MITCHELL: Thank you.

MALCOLM BROGDON: Thank you.

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