

QUOTES | GAME 6



NO. 7 NC STATE 67, NO. 10 MIAMI 58

NC State Coach Mark Gottfried
T.J. Warren

COACH GOTTFRIED: All right, first of all, let me say I'm really really proud of my team. These young guys, most of our guys have never been involved in the ACC tournament. They came over here and played with great courage. It was a gutsy tough win.

Miami I thought in the second half offensively played really good. We had some trouble stopping them, but we stepped up and made some big plays late. TJ, as he always does, put us right on his back. Ralston stepped up and made a couple of huge shots for us. Key defensive rebounds late in the game I thought. We're excited for these young guys to do what they've done this year. I'm really proud of them.

Q. Coach, the role of freshman, Ralston, he did a tremendous job tonight. How could he handle that pressure as just a freshman scoring so many points?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Ralston is a junior. Ralston has set out transfer. All of our guys, our point guards, Tyler and Cat combined, freshman and a sophomore, they get 11 assists with no turnovers between the two of them. Cat had seven, Tyler had four, but they didn't turn the ball over. Young players.

We forget sometimes TJ is just a sophomore. He's just a young player too. Step in this environment, in a tournament setting, Lennard played big for us. Kyle made a couple of nice ones, all of those guys. So great to see the young guys step up.

Q. TJ, how much pressure does it take off of you especially when they're playing box and one a lot for Ralston or somebody else to provide what they did tonight offensively?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Ralston stepped up and made a lot of big shots. My teammates, they do a great job finding me. I just keep working and keep moving with the basketball.

Q. Coach and TJ, can you talk about a second chance now with Syracuse for tomorrow and obviously that was such a close game up there, I know you're probably looking forward to a rematch?

COACH GOTTFRIED: First of all, I think they're really a great team. They spent more weeks I think at number one than anybody else in the country. We played well up there. But we let one get away. We were in a position to win and we didn't close it out.

I think with Jerami Grant back now, he missed some time, I think they're playing with great confidence and they're really good. And the only time they really haven't been good is when he was out. So it's a great opportunity for our players to play against a great team. So I think our guys are going to be excited about it.

Q. Coach, could you speak about your team's defensive effort tonight, mainly with the disparity in turnovers that you created and also the number of points you created from those?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, I thought defensively we were good at times. There was a stretch in the second half we had a hard time stopping them. The good news was we were scoring. That was okay. We were trading baskets, but we had a difficult time.

But I thought late in the game, in the last three minutes, our defense was better. Probably the best it had been all night. Maybe the first couple minutes of the game. Miami is a tough team to defend. They take the ball to the basket really well off the dribble. They get you spread out sometimes. And they're hard to guard. But I thought late in the game our guys stepped up defensively and really did a nice job.

Q. TJ, I think the previous question they wanted your feedback and thoughts about Syracuse?

T.J. WARREN: It's going to be a great opportunity to play them again. We're going to be up to play them,

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we're going to come out aggressive, with a lot of energy and be ready to play.

Q. What did you learn from the last time you played those guys back at home and how much motivation was the way that game ended for you guys tonight?

T.J. WARREN: It was a tough one to take down. We just kept our heads up and kept moving on. Looking forward to playing them again and it's going to be a good one. Can't wait.

Q. What did you learn from the first time you played Miami a couple of weeks ago in Raleigh and how much motivation was the way that game ended to get another shot at those guys tonight?

T.J. WARREN: They still won at home. We didn't come out aggressive there. We let them dribble drives and easy layups and we adjusted that on the defensive end tonight.

Q. TJ, the last three minutes you guys went on a run after you fell behind, I think right around the three minute mark. Did something kind of click there when they took the lead that told you guys it was time to step it up a little bit?

T.J. WARREN: We adjusted that on the defensive end tonight and pretty good to come out with the win.

COACH GOTTFRIED: I don't know if there was any one thing. I thought defensively we were a little better and, like I said, we stepped up and made big shots. TJ had a couple, Ralston Turner I thought had a big three during that stretch. Gave us some momentum, kind of got us lifted up a little bit. But we buckled down late in the game. That helped us.

Q. Mark, Miami obviously pretty aware of Ralston after some of the shots he hit against them this year. They really seemed to chase him around. He still was able to find some openings and some step backs, things like that. Was that something that you had talked to him about coming in to the game in terms of these guys are going to be on you? Is that something that he can take into Syracuse or is that a completely different scenario with the zone?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Miami zoned us a lot both times we played them. And with TJ and Ralston, those guys have seen the triangle in two, they've seen box and ones. You know, we've seen that a lot this year.

We keep emphasizing they got to keep moving without the ball. You can't allow those things to slow you down. I think that's kind of how they got open because they had great movement without the ball. Even if the ball went to the post, just keep moving, keep cutting.

TJ got a nice layup there from Jordan. With both Ralston and TJ, teams have done that to us a lot. Syracuse is not going to do that. They're going to play our normal zone. We've seen enough of that too this year we'll be prepared and ready.

Q. TJ, just like Coach was saying, you were moving a lot on the baseline and working off those screens. When you think back to that Syracuse game, did they make it difficult for you to get those same looks off the screens from one side of the court to the other?

T.J. WARREN: They adjusted some shots, but you just got to stay with it.

Q. You called a timeout with 2:33 left in the game, the score is tied and then you go to TJ and then you go to Turner over on the lane right in front of you. Were both of those called plays that you were looking in both of those situations?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, we were able with some timeouts left to call some specific things. I wanted TJ to have the ball in the block. We were in the bonus. I felt if he got it on the block he could score or get fouled, one of those two things.

Then we came down to the next one and called one for Ralston where we knocked down the shot and hit the three. That's terrific execution. We've been in close games. We know late in the game you got to really execute well and get the right shots. I thought our guys did a nice job of that.



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Q. TJ, on the very first possession of the game, you had three different Miami players guarding you man to man because of some switches, and then later it seemed like the freshman Davon Reed was on you much of the time at least. Do you even notice a lot and change your approach depending on who's on you or are you so kind of zoned in to your game that you're not paying attention to that?

T.J. WARREN: Just find out little ways to score on the basketball.

Q. Mark, I apologize if somebody else asked this, were TJ and Ralston playing off each other in some ways where the defense had to make a choice or was there more balance on the floor?

COACH GOTTFRIED: I just think they both did a really good job of moving without the ball. We emphasize that more than anything. We knew they might play box and one or triangle or two. They've done it before. Make sure those guys are still involved. I don't want those two guys to just stand and not be involved.

Ralston did a great job of that. I thought TJ did. Even when the ball went to the post to Jordan, TJ kept moving, cut to the basket, got a layup I thought at a key time. But the movement without the ball I thought was critical for us. They did a nice job with that.

Q. After the Syracuse game up there, I guess you guys fly back that night. What is that night like for you? Are you up until 3:00 in the morning watching film? Were you able to put it out of your head? What was that like once you fly back and go to bed? What were you thinking about?

T.J. WARREN: It was a tough one to think. You got to move on. There's a lot of games to be played. So you can't be caught up on one game. You got to keep moving forward. Stay positive.

Q. The ACC started this season with a lot of hype, but it's been kind of a top heavy league in terms of the top four being ranked. How much do you feel like the ACC's reputation could help or hurt you with the NCAA Tournament chances? And how much do you think this ACC run could help you?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Here's what I have found interesting. I think as of yesterday, there was nine ACC teams in the top 80 in the RPI. I look around the country and I see some other leagues and I see teams that are 599 or even below 500. I'm not sure our league has gotten the respect it deserves.

For example, Boston College who was near the bottom can go to Syracuse and win, as did Georgia Tech. Our league doesn't get the credit for the depth of quality teams. We added Syracuse and Pittsburgh to a league that was already good. We had 15 teams in our league.

And the depth in our league, you know, go to Clemson and try to win at Clemson, find out how hard that is. At Pittsburgh, or even go to Wake Forest and try to win there, which they beat Duke, Carolina and NC State. Yet it doesn't seem like our league gets credit for as you said, it seems like it's a top heavy league. And I don't think it is.

We have good teams at the top. Syracuse spent most of the year number one in the country. I don't care who you are. Go try to beat Duke. At Duke you got your hands full.

This is a great league. We got good teams all the way down through and, you know, hopefully we'll get rewarded for that. I don't know. We'll see.

Q. Coach, I apologize if you already talked about Syracuse, but obviously a chance to see them for the second time. I'm sure you didn't even talk about it because you had to pay back Miami first.

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, it's not about payback. It's about opportunity. And we've got an opportunity tomorrow that is golden. Couldn't ask for a better one.

I don't think anybody spent more time at number one this year than Syracuse. We played them very tough up there. And we felt pretty bad walking out of that locker room that night. So we get another opportunity and it's a golden opportunity. So it's up to us and we got to come ready to play against a really good team tomorrow. With Grant back, they're a Final Four team. They've shown it all year long.

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Q. You had Ralston Turner get 22 points. What does that say about the perception that states a one man team, you guys have depth and such?

COACH GOTTFRIED: Well, TJ is a great player. We all know it. Our players know TJ is a great player. But he needs other people to help him score. Ralston tonight stepped up.

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COACH JIM LARRANAGA

RION BROWN

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COACH LARRANAGA: Well, I think the game came down to one statistical category. We did a lot of good things, but we just turned the ball over way too much. They got 26 points off of our 15 turnovers. That basically means they went 13 for 15. Considering they made two point shots, we had a chance. We took the lead. They went right to TJ Warren.

Our intentions were to try to keep their best two players from hurting us. We played a triangle and two the whole second half, and they still ended up with 24 and 22, so their offense was better than our defense, and our offense gave them a lot of opportunities to score in transition. That basically was what the game came down to.

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