

**Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Tournament
Wednesday March 7, 2018
Coaches Quotes
Florida State 74, Louisville 82**

Louisville Head Coach David Padgett

Opening Statement

"We knew they were going to make a run. I get 100 times more nervous about games like that when you have a big lead, especially at halftime, than actually if you're down. If we're tied or down at the half I'm actually more calm, but those are tough. Because you know the other team is going to make a run. They made some very good adjustments in the second half, especially against our zone, and hit some big shots at some crucial times. You've got to give them credit for clawing back into the game. But I thought our guys did a great job of executing our late-game situations, our full-court pressure situations and taking care of the ball. They only had nine turnovers against a team that athletic and that presses that much is a big reason why we won the game and also the backboard. Very proud of our guys, very happy with the win, and got to get ready for the No. 1 team in the country yet again tomorrow."

What has your approach has been this season; the big picture?

"Keeping my focus on them and them only. I haven't focused on anything since that day in September when I was named coach, and their concern is my concern. I haven't deviated from that one bit whatsoever. Like I've said numerous times, and these guys know it, and I believe it, they don't get a chance to do this season over again. I'm going to put everything I have into making sure that it's successful, especially for this guy sitting next to me (Quentin Snyder and Deng Adel) and his other senior teammate Anas (Mahmoud) because it's their last go-around, and they deserve nothing but the absolutely best opportunity to make it a magical season."

You've talked about sometimes having a deficit can be easier than holding onto a lead. What are the keys to holding onto a lead?

"We did a good job of taking care of the ball. I don't know how many turnovers we had in the first half, but we only had nine for the games, and they picked us up full court the entire second half. We did a very good job of running our press break offense of getting the ball into the right person's hands, and we just made good decisions. We stayed confident. We didn't panic when it got close. And fortunately we've been in this situation a lot before, it just hasn't always turned out in our favor, but tonight it did, so we're very happy with that."

There's a lot of talk by the bracketology guys that you needed to win this game to solidify your chance of getting into the NCAA Tournament. Do you feel confident that you're in now or do you feel you've made the case that you guys belong in?

"This win certainly helped. It's a team that's been ranked in and out of the top 25 all year. We've beat them twice now, so yeah, we feel it helped getting that 20th win. I don't know if any of us know if there's a definitive answer to what's required to get into the tournament. We've tried to approach it one game at a time and we just said we have to try to win this game so we can advance in the ACC Tournament. You know, I'm sure this significantly helps our resume, but our focus now is just going to turn to Virginia, a team that we've lost to twice and who we've played well against, so I know if we're able to come out and get a win tomorrow against the No. 1 team in the country that I would surely think they're in."

Are you guys glad to get Virginia again, given what happened last Thursday?

"We haven't talked about it to be honest. The reason we're happy to get them is because it's a chance to beat the No. 1 team in the country and a team that has played well all year long. Look, last Thursday was tough, there's no denying that, but we haven't said, well, we've got to beat Florida State so we can get to Virginia. No, we just said we've got to beat Florida State so we can move on. Virginia is going to be ready for us, as they have been all year, and we just have to come out and just leave it all out on the court. We've played well against them both times, but that doesn't change the outcome. We came up short both times. We've got to be ready to compete for 40 minutes tomorrow against the best team in the country."

When Florida State made that run late today, did you attack that late-game situation with the lead differently because of the ending against Virginia last week?

“Not really. I just tried to put the right pieces in at the right times, wanted to make sure we had good ball handlers and good free-throw shooters on the court. That game last week was just a perfect storm of stuff that had to go right for them and wrong for us, and it did. But hey, that's sports. Will any of us ever see a game like that ever again? Probably not. But we didn't panic today. Our guys did a great job. They didn't panic when they made a run, when they cut it to six or eight or whatever it was, and we just kept executing. I'm just really proud of the way they handled it late game, and look, I can only do so many things, but when these guys are out on the court making the right plays to help us win, they're the ones that get all the credit.

DENG ADEL:

“Personally, I haven't really looked at it at all this year just from hearing media and from fans and stuff. But our biggest focus is just getting wins and getting our 20th win was big today. If we just continue to win and do what we can control, I think the rest will happen itself.”

As you look back at the two regular season meetings with Virginia, what did you feel adjustment-wise you did better going from the first meeting to the second meeting, and what do you need to do even better in order to get the W tomorrow?

“I thought the biggest difference between the first and the second game was the way we defended. I thought we played much better defense. We just tried to be aggressive on both ends of the floor, and we did a good job of defending the three-point line, which I think against them is big because obviously they've got guys that can really shoot the ball. I think they're a very underappreciated offensive team this year. I think that's gone unnoticed because of how good their defense is. We just tried to defend well. I thought we did a good job the second game, and you know, they made some good adjustments against us the last couple minutes of that game, kind of put us in some isolation situations. But we've just got to go back, look at the film, see what we did well, see where they hurt us, and it's a quick turnaround, we've got less than 24 hours now. But with that being said, they kind of do, as well, because they obviously didn't know who was going to win this game. It's going to be a quick turnaround, but that's the beauty of postseason play is you've just got to get back to the hotel, get off your feet and get ready for the next one.”

If we went back to the preseason, we could have envisioned a lot of wins like the one we just saw. Instead you're kind of on the bubble wondering why that script didn't happen more frequently this season. What do you attribute that to?

“Playing good teams. I mean, lose at Purdue; Seton Hall at home, tournament team; Virginia twice, No. 1 team in the country; at Duke; North Carolina; at Kentucky. So it's not like we've had any, quote-unquote, bad losses this year. I think the only team, if you had to pick one, I guess, our worst loss, which to me is not a bad loss, would be Syracuse. They're right on the verge of making the tournament, too. You've got to give the other teams a lot of credit in situations like that, too. Conversely, there's been a lot of situations where our guys have made big plays tonight. For one, we've had other games, Indiana was one, where it could have gone the other way, but our guys made big plays. Look, I'm going to put the ball in these guys' hands at the end of the game and they're going to make the right decisions, and I have the utmost confidence in them.”

For the players, to follow up on that, are you guys looking forward to getting another crack at Virginia because it was so close last time?

QUENTIN SNIDER

“I thought that game we did a great job of really attacking the basket. This is our chance. We're just going to focus on Virginia and try to get this win tomorrow.”

DENG ADEL

“Yeah, just losing to them twice both at their place and then at our place, we're definitely excited to face them because they're the No. 1 team in the country and everybody wants to beat them. So we're definitely excited for

that. And to answer your second question, I think we did a good job of defending them, stopping their actions, and then we did a good job being patient offensively.”

For the players, how, if at all, have you had to adjust your expectations for this season as the year went along?

QUENTIN SNIDER

The main thing is just staying together as a team, our sanctuary on the basketball court. We don't need to worry about nothing else that happens. Right now we're just trying to focus on getting on to the next game.”

DENG ADEL

“Like Q said, our biggest thing is to stand together in the locker room because no matter what happens outside the court, we're always a family. And Coach DP does a great job of just making sure we just focus on ourselves and not worry about anything that's happening in the media or in the outside world. So we just do a good job of just staying together. Our number one goal is to win a championship starting in say October or so, so that never changed. We're still playing basketball and we're still doing what we love.”

How much do you guys follow all that bracketology, and given that, what did this game mean for you guys today?

QUENTIN SNIDER:

“You know, I follow it. But this game really means a lot, but right now we're just going to move on, get ready for Virginia. That's just the main thing.”

Deng, because of what happened late in the game last Thursday, how much are you personally kind of relishing the chance to get another crack at knocking Virginia off, and do you think your team is going to have some confidence tomorrow knowing that we know how to beat these guys because we almost did beat them?

DENG ADEL

“Like I said earlier, I'm looking forward to playing Virginia because we know we can compete with anybody in the country. But our biggest thing is getting another win. Like everybody said, we're on the bubble of the tournament, so our biggest thing is getting a win, and no matter who's standing in our way, we're going to find a way.”