

# Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

## Virginia Tech Hokies

### Mike Young

Postgame Press Conference



North Carolina 81, Virginia Tech 73

**Q. Mike, they had two offensive rebounds in the first half and 13 in the second half. What changed?**

MIKE YOUNG: I think they got bigger, if that's possible, at the half. You can say what you want about a pause. A pause is not the reason we lost. Your conditioning is affected by the pause. It was against Georgia Tech. It's hard to simulate in practice. You don't want to get somebody banged up in practice. I saw the same look in the Georgia Tech game. Again, Georgia Tech outplayed us and won the game. North Carolina outplayed us and won the game.

You combine some conditioning issues and then you're banging with -- it's like they've got seven big people. That's hard. My guys did everything they could. We just didn't have quite enough to win it.

**Q. Keve has been a surprise in the ACC this year --**

MIKE YOUNG: What gave that away?

**Q. His numbers.**

MIKE YOUNG: Yep, they're pretty good.

**Q. Probably could have been first-team all-ACC. He's been really good but was kind of a non-factor tonight. How do you expect him to respond?**

MIKE YOUNG: Looked a little spooked, and he's played against so many really good front-line defenders in our league. He had some looks at it that he's had all year, and he looked a little hesitant. I'm not sure what to attribute that to. He had good looks from three. I really don't know how to answer, but I agree with you, he was a little hesitant.

**Q. Along similar lines, you guys worked so hard to get bigger and more experienced in the front court this year. Was this the first game that you really felt overmatched again in the front court, the way it was last season?**

MIKE YOUNG: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Q. Is there an answer when you have a match-up like that?**

MIKE YOUNG: You have to hope that you get favorable caroms. Boy, we were physical on the glass in the first half, but gosh sakes, they gobbled up -- essentially gobbled up what appeared to be every carom in the second half. We'll be fine with whomever we draw out there. You know, I think we got one out of our system. We look forward to getting to Indianapolis.

**Q. Justyn and Tyrece especially seemed very effective playing the angles and the post defensively and denying entry passes. Was that the only way you could go about it given their preponderance to feeding the post?**

MIKE YOUNG: Yeah, gosh, we got so much on our plate. We're helping off of him, we're guarding Walton. We want to short close on him. We tinkered pressuring the ball on the perimeter when they play hollow with Garrison and whomever else might be in the high post. Garrison can make a three. Just kind of different looks. We got hurt with some ball screen action about the 12-minute mark of the second half.

You know, they're playing pretty well right now. Played a good ball game tonight, and needless to say, we all know that they have good players, and they outplayed us a little bit.

**Q. As difficult as their size is to deal with, just what about their pace? They had 20 fast break points tonight, which is very unusual for your team to give up that many.**

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MIKE YOUNG: Yeah, yeah, it is. I thought everything was spot-on. Really good at the half. They had a made three opposite our bench. They did have a couple of fast break baskets, but the score was where we wanted it -- what was it, 35-32, which is good. I thought -- I told you guys early in the week that I thought we had to keep it in the 50s, low 60s. And needless to say, they got after us in the second half.

**Q. You said on Monday and Tuesday that you felt better coming out this time because you guys had been able to practice during this time and had most of your guys available to practice. Had you privately been worrying about the conditioning, though? How did the conditioning become a factor during the layoff?**

MIKE YOUNG: I didn't say -- North Carolina won the game. Let's make that very clear. I've never wavered in that assessment, okay. But again, as I said earlier, we can do everything possible to maintain -- this is a hard game, man. This is fast. And it's big and physical. Lose a bit of sharpness when you go that kind of period. But cannot ask another thing from our Hokie team. These guys gave me everything in their tank. We came up against a North Carolina team that's playing pretty well at the right time.

**Q. When you mentioned conditioning here, is that something you were privately worried about?**

MIKE YOUNG: Yes. Yeah, I was.

**Q. Did you see it most on display in the second half with rebounding or defense or both?**

MIKE YOUNG: I think kind of across the board. A couple of miscues. I thought we still got to our stuff and still got great shots. We hung in there. It wasn't due to a lack of offense. We simply -- we didn't have enough left to get that defensive stop, three defensive stops in a row, three defensive rebounds in a row.

We did cut it back to four or five at about the three-minute mark. I called time-out. I think we cut it back to five and I called time-out, which I never do. But I just thought we're never going to win this thing, we're not going to get out of here playing the way we're playing, and I couldn't turn the light switch back on. I tried. They really tried to reverse course. But you know, not tonight.

**Q. Had you seen in practice that the guys didn't have their legs or had you seen --**

MIKE YOUNG: No, it's just so hard. Again -- it's just so hard to replicate playing a game in this league. It's so hard

to replicate playing a game in the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament against the North Carolina Tar Heels. It's difficult. I did spend an inordinate amount of time with our staff, and what more could we do. But we're way into this thing, and I'm not one to pound on them ever for three hours a day and run them and conditioning. They're big, strong, athletic, well-conditioned people.

It's just that game pace and that game physicality that you miss.

**Q. Keve hit a little jump hook with 11 minutes left, it got 49-all at that point and that's when Carolina went on an 11-2 run after that and got a little cushion there. Just before Keve hit that jump hook, you had a media time-out, 11:43 left. As you kind of gathered the guys over there at that point, is that when you kind of sensed the air was coming out of the balloon a little bit?**

MIKE YOUNG: It wasn't. It wasn't. The best group -- I've said it a bunch. The best group -- they've got the want-to and they want to do exactly what you ask. Just a bit of a faraway look, not that same level of engagement that I see so often throughout the course of the year. Nothing intentional. They want to lay it on the line. They want to play the right way.

The other thing, goodness gracious, the guys are enormous. We hadn't seen them in the regular season. I don't know what more to add.

**Q. We've talked a lot about how you were concerned about conditioning coming into this. You've seen it now. What do you do over the course of about a week to eight days here to get it back again? Or do you feel like there's kind of a cumulative effect of just continuing to practice?**

MIKE YOUNG: I thought -- we're going to play -- you guys know how I feel about Steve Forbes and the Demon Deacons. We're going to play somebody a little bit better than Wake Forest in round 1. But I looked at the Georgia Tech game, I looked at this game as kind of our restart and an opportunity to sharpen our teeth. I think we can use this experience and carry it into the NCAA Tournament, and we'll be just fine.

I'm all over the place. We didn't play bad tonight, now. We did not play a poor basketball game. Just not quite good enough against a North Carolina team that's playing well.

**Q. How much of this game film are you planning to watch going into the NCAA Tournament, given you're probably not going to see a team that's as physical**

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**and long as Carolina in the first round?**

MIKE YOUNG: I'll watch it tonight. I'll watch it tonight. I'm curious, more of just -- I love my team and I love watching them play. There will be some frustration in the second half, but I'm going to feel really good about some things throughout the course of the game, too. We'll watch some of it on Saturday. We'll take tomorrow off. We'll watch some of it on Saturday. I'm not one to beat them over the head with a bunch of film. We'll watch 15 minutes of it, some good, some bad, and then Sunday we'll find out when, where and all that sort of thing as it pertains to Indianapolis. I told them in there, our sadness will be replaced with sheer joy here real soon when I find out what we're doing on Sunday.

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## Virginia Tech Hokies Justyn Mutts

Postgame Press Conference



North Carolina 81, Virginia Tech 73

**Q. I'm curious, sitting court side, that looked like an incredibly physical game. What was it like to play in the paint during this one?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: Pretty sure I'd say it was one of our more physical games of the year. But coming into the game, we knew what it was going to be, especially after seeing what happened yesterday. They're crashing every time. They've got a couple five-star big men down there, and they're able to just bring those guys in at any point in time, so you've got to stay ready. It was a different kind of game, but I think we had the pieces to handle it, we just weren't able to get it done today.

**Q. When you say you weren't able to get it done, do you think you matched their aggressiveness, their physicality, and television? Just a question of them being bigger or what was it that didn't work on that end?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: I thought for about 30 minutes of the game we were able to -- 30 to 35 minutes of the game, we were able to match their aggressiveness. But towards the end, I think fatigue might have set in a little bit at some point. But I'd love to see them again at some point. That was a good game.

**Q. What do you do to get your body back after kind of a beating like that? Are you an ice bath -- what are you going to do next?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: Well, I'm definitely going to go get a couple ice bags on my body. See, the ice bath is just a little bit too cold for me. I don't like sitting in there. But yeah, that would probably be what's best.

**Q. What can you say about y'all's play underneath the**

**basket tonight? It felt like the rebounds, especially offensively, just weren't coming the way you guys wanted them to. Speak to that and the adjustments you need to make heading into the tournament?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: I thought we did a pretty good job for a good portion of the game, cracking down. The guards were able to come down and grab some boards, as well. I think just moving forward, we've got to be able to do that for a full 40 minutes. We can't do it for just 30 minutes, 35 minutes. We've got to get a box-out and sustain those box-outs for an entire game.

I'm mainly speaking for myself. I know down the stretch I gave up a few really big offensive rebounds and those are really costly. So just being able to get in and watch film, you'll be able to see those mistakes and be able to correct them especially going into March Madness.

**Q. What is the emotional toll of -- you talked a little bit about the physical fatigue, but when you work so hard to get a miss from them and they get the rebound, is there some sort of snowball effect there emotionally, just damn, we did what we were supposed to do and we still didn't get it?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: Yeah, it's a little bit draining. You play defense for 20, 25 seconds and they get an offensive rebound and back to a full -- back to another 20 seconds back on the shot clock. But you can't be too upset for too long. You've got to be able to move on quickly because they're coming right back at you.

A lot of times those bigs once they get to that board, they're not really looking to pass it up, they're looking to go right back up. So you can't really drag yourself too much back. You've got to be right back into the play.

**Q. The two biggest teams in this league are Florida State and UNC and you didn't get a chance to play either of them. Now that you've played one of them, do you think that could help you going forward just having seen something like that?**

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JUSTYN MUTTS: Absolutely because we don't really know who we're going to be playing once we get to the big tournament. We have no idea. Just being able to have the experience of playing against a really good team like that that's really well-coached, as well, with great players, that gives us a lot of experience heading into this tournament. So we're all excited, but as of right now, we're all pretty upset about the loss. But we'll bounce back.

**Q. Keve did not have a great game tonight. How nice is that to think that if he didn't have a great game tonight that he might have a great game the next night?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: Keve is a really good player, and just because the ball wasn't going in the basket doesn't mean he wasn't having a great game. He was doing a lot of things on the defensive end, controlling his guy, boxing out, getting rebounds. Just because the ball wasn't going in, I wouldn't say that's anything like having a bad game at all. Going into the tournament, we're able to connect on all cylinders. I think we're pretty unstoppable, so I'm excited.

**Q. How much does what he's done all year kind of bolster your hopes for what you guys can do going forward?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: I mean, I see these guys in practice every day. I know what everybody on this team is capable of and I know what this team is capable of when we really are clicking. And I feel like we've been able to show people what we're able to do. Moving forward, I'm just excited to see how we can really continue to gel together and really get some wins.

**Q. You mentioned fatigue. How do you see that fatigue taking its toll in the second half? Was it on the boards or playing defense or both?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: Honestly, I would say it was a little bit of both. You know, you're just trying to play team defense, which can get kind of tiring because you're jumping from spot to spot, trying to jump from help spot to guarding your man. And at the same time, they've got some really huge bigs so you're trying to front those guys but then also not give up a lob over. So there's a lot of different stuff that goes into it, and over time they're able to sub in so many guys, it just kind of wears you down.

**Q. Obviously you guys have gone 11 straight days without playing a game. How much did that affect you being tired? Was conditioning -- Coach Young mentioned conditioning was a problem that he was worried about. Were you guys kind of thinking in practice, geez, we lost our legs here, and we're not in**

**good condition and it's going to be a problem in the second half? Did you see that pause and the layoff there taking its toll on the second half with conditioning?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: Not at all. I think we were able to stay in good shape throughout the break. We were practicing every day and doing conditioning every day in the weight room, as well. I feel like everybody had their legs out there. I don't know, just -- I don't really know what happened.

**Q. What was the fatigue due to then?**

JUSTYN MUTTS: Really just shifting, moving spots. That could be due to different things, but I can't speak for everybody else.

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## Virginia Tech Hokies

## Wabissa Bede

Postgame Press Conference

North Carolina 81, Virginia Tech 73

**Q. I'm curious, a year ago you guys obviously had that size disadvantage that you dealt with all year long. Was this the first time this season that it really showed up, and are there things you guys can do to counter that?**

WABISSA BEDE: Yeah, I can't really say that. In the first half, we were really rebounding bad. Clearly our size didn't really matter. It just like we just have to do one shot. I think when they went on that run, we got a little bit tired and that's why they kept going to those offensive rebounds. But other than that, I don't think our size is that big of a deal. I think we're capable of rebounding at a high level versus any team, so I don't believe in all that height stuff.

We just had to box out and limit them to one shot. We were doing that at first, but we got a little bit tired, but we're going to bounce back the next game.

**Q. How much of a factor do you think coming off the pause was in terms of wearing down in that second half?**

WABISSA BEDE: None. That was just us. We're not going to blame the loss on the pause or anything. That was just us. We were very capable of winning that game regardless. Next time we will.

**Q. Considering where you guys were last season, how much are you looking forward to Selection Sunday and seeing your name?**

WABISSA BEDE: Pretty cool. Happy. Just to say we're on a three-year streak because last year didn't count, COVID happened. Let's just say we're on a three-year streak of going to the tournament.



**Q. When you guys work so hard to get them to miss a shot and then you see them get the rebound, what kind of effect does that have on morale?**

WABISSA BEDE: A little bit because we know their size is -- they're one of the tallest teams in the ACC, so we just have to be able to box them out. Us guards, we have to crack down a lot better. I think that's the biggest thing. We were doing that in the first half, cracking down. But as time wound down, we didn't and that's why kept going on offensive rebounds. But next time us guards will crack down a lot better and not let them get the rebounds.

**Q. You guys went 12 minutes before you gave up your first offensive rebound. Is there sort of a domino effect once they start getting some, though?**

WABISSA BEDE: It was just us -- like us guards, we have to stop doing that. We have to keep cracking down, helping out J Mutts, Cordell, Keve, David. We just got to keep helping them out. I think the second half we fell away from that, but after that -- I think next time we're going to know what to do when we watch the film.

**Q. Coach Young was saying that he was worried about the conditioning, he thought the pause and the conditioning took its toll in the second half. You said you guys were tired in the second half. How did you see that pause and the conditioning that maybe you guys were missing out on in the last week or so? How did you see that taking its toll in the second half?**

WABISSA BEDE: I don't want to say too much, I don't want to blame the loss on the pause. Like I said before, I think we were very capable of winning the game. We had it in the bag, we just did little things here and there that led us the wrong way, and that's why UNC got the win, and all credit towards them.

**Q. You said you got tired. You went 11 straight days without playing a game. Give credit to UNC, but could you tell in practice you guys were losing your legs or -- Coach was privately worried about the conditioning. Were you privately concerned going into it just like**

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**you were probably going into the Georgia Tech game?**

WABISSA BEDE: Like I said, I think we were capable of winning. I'm not trying to blame it on the pause or anything, but I just think we're very capable of winning those games, and we will next time. You can say because we haven't played in a game for so long, it's just the atmosphere, but other than that, I think our conditioning, we were all right, but we're just going to bounce back next time.

**Q. Do you feel like you guys having played a game more prepared for whatever comes next than you were today?**

WABISSA BEDE: Yeah, it's very hard to do that because it's kind of hard to do scout defense because it's not really their personnel. And we can't mimic UNC's offensive rebounding, we can't mimic UNC's size. This is the biggest thing. It's hard to mimic everybody, but we were doing our best. Like I said, all credit towards UNC today. They were great.

**Q. How nice is it to feel like win or lose today, you know that you're going to get a call on Sunday?**

WABISSA BEDE: It's pretty cool, but I wish we won today still. But it's still nice that we're going to hear our name on Sunday, and we're just going to go out there and compete our next game.

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