

**Virginia Tech Men's Basketball**  
**Mike Young Q&A Highlights**  
**VMI Postgame Conference**  
**Dec. 21, 2019**

***On the slow start to the game:***

“We've practiced really well, but the matchups are hard to simulate. Like a single wing in football or something that you don't see a lot, it's very hard to practice against. I've played them any number of times, and I've never had those difficulties, but I shoulder all of the blame. My team wanted to do the right things and we found some things in the second half, but it was a little bit of a struggle, and I've never been a part of a bad win. I'll take that and move on down the line.”

***On the starters being held below their season averages and the increased bench production:***

“Isaiah Wilkins was terrific, and Hunter Cattoor had his best game. Both of those kids have played well for us, but with Jalen Cone in that lineup and Brandon Johnson, who was in there for a little bit, helped us as the ball moved a little bit better and we found some things that we hadn't before. I think we went to the first media timeout without a basket, boy, that was a rock fight. It was 3-1, and there certainly wasn't a scoring outburst from that point forward, but those guys helped us immensely, and that's what good teams do. We had a couple that didn't have their best outing. Wabissa [Bede] didn't play his best tonight defensively or offensively, although Jalen Cone helped him in that regard, and certainly Landers [Nolley] didn't have his best night, but Isaiah Wilkins was really good. Good teams have other people that help win, and we certainly saw that tonight.”

***On Isaiah Wilkins and his happiness with his bench role:***

“I don't know that I really care. Isaiah has got a great role here, a meaningful role here, and that's where we are. Still, we are 12 games into it and we are mixing and matching a little. He's a three, but the matchup is so different for opposing teams with him at the four because of his ability to shoot. He's a good passer, and he's a good rebounder, so where he is right now in his current role is what gives our team the best opportunity to win, and the last time I checked, that's the only thing that I really care about.”

***On improving on the defensive end:***

“I still think across the board, offensively, and in all areas, we have room to improve. But I thought we were pretty good defensively. I was surprised that they shot 41%, but we had 10 more shots than they did. Its [defense] got to be a constant. If you look at our numbers in games that we've lost (BYU, Dayton, Duke), compared to the numbers in games that we've won, I thought that we were very responsible tonight. We're bigger and stronger, obviously, and that's not always going to be the case in league play. But in all facets, certainly the defensive end. Yes, to answer your question, yes, we've got to get better there, be more responsible and rebound the ball a little bit better.”

## **JALEN CONE**

### ***On continuing to get Landers Nolley and Nahiem Alleyne involved in the game when their shots aren't falling:***

"Definitely, Nahiem [Alleyne] and Landers [Nolley] are magnificent players and they have shown the world what they can do. When they're not hitting, we just encourage them. We tell them 'Hey, we need you to win this game, we need you playing defense or getting offensive rebounds to get extra possessions.'"

### ***On stepping up and being one of the guys to carry the team to victory:***

"Of course, it feels pretty good. But at the end of the day, the most important thing is that we win. Whether it's me scoring a lot, getting a lot of steals or when anybody else steps up to the plate when our leaders are down, that's all that matters – is that we leave with a win."

### ***On what made it difficult to score offensively in the opening half:***

"It was a new defense that we saw. We normally are used to seeing man-to-man defense. But today, they brought in a 2-3 zone basically the whole game. We just had to adjust to it."

## **ISAIAH WILKINS**

### ***On playing against a zone defense for the first time:***

"It was definitely more challenging because haven't seen that type of zone this year yet. I know Syracuse runs something like that. I think it's great preparation heading into conference."

### ***On having one more game before conference play:***

"We're ready for the challenge. That's what we came here for, to play those top guys and have a chip on our shoulder. We're ready to play."

### ***On having the three leading scorers all come off the bench:***

"It just shows that whenever your name is called, you have to be ready. There's not much more to it. I learned that last year. Whenever he calls you, you need to be ready to play."

## **HUNTER CATTOOR**

### ***On stepping up as a team when Landers Nolley is having a bad shooting day:***

"That's going to happen. There are going to be some games where people aren't hitting shots and that's where it's a team effort and a team game. Everyone needs to step up and do their part."

### ***On getting two steals:***

"Just being solid on defense and not trying to gamble too much. Just playing my game and playing hard."

***On what led the team to forcing 23 turnovers:***

“I think it was good defense. We were locked in throughout the week in practice watching film and going through scout. I think it was us just knowing what they were going to run and being in the right position.”