

Virginia Tech Women's Basketball
Student-Athlete Q&A Highlights
Pitt Game Press Conference
Jan. 9, 2020

Guard Taja Cole

On her explosive start to the game:

"Every night I just try to do whatever my team needs me to do and tonight, in the beginning we weren't hitting shots that we normally do. I just try to be aggressive and get the game going with my intensity on offense and defense."

On how she is adjusting playing with her new team this season:

"I think it's been going well. I think it's only going to get better. I'm learning about my teammates even more. Where they like the ball and knowing their sweet spots on the court. I think our chemistry is already there. I spend a great amount of time with them off the court, so I think it's only going to get better."

On what worked for the team defensively vs. the Panthers:

"I think we had a good night defensively. Seventeen turnovers, I didn't know we had that. We just try to be aggressive. We've been working on defense. Coach knows we can score. He's just been saying we have to be able to stop people as well. We've really been taking pride in playing hard and being aggressive."

On what got guard Aisha Sheppard going offensively in the second quarter:

"I just told her every night you're not going to hit 3s, but she's a great shooter. I just told her to pay attention to how you're missing. Just stay in your shot, make sure you stay there, follow through and they're going to fall."

Guard, Aisha Sheppard

On what's it like having Taja Cole as the point guard of the team:

"It's been awesome. She knows how create for us, get us in comfortable positions to get our shots off and put us in the right position all of the time. It's very fun to play with her."

On what was clicking for the team in the game:

"We kind of new Pitt was going to be aggressive. It's just their style of play. We knew that if we moved the ball and stayed intensely calm that we would be able to get open shots. That's what our goal was coming into this game, just being able to handle their pressure and I think we did that well."

On both teams trying to dictate the tempo of the game:

“I would agree. I think both teams were trying to feel each other out. We’re both fast, but we ended up being able to get the win.”

On what has been clicking behind the arc for her over the past three games:

“I owe it to Taja. She makes sure that I can get to my spots. She really draws a defense so that they have to play her and then she kicks it out at the right time so I can get my shot off. Taja does a really good job of setting Dara and I up to hit comfortable 3s and not uncomfortable ones.”

On what coach Brooks said to her during a timeout:

“He just told me to stay focused, get it on the defensive end and the offense will come. Like Taja said earlier, coach knows that everyone can score at will. He just really wants us to focus on the defensive end because that is what is going to carry us from now into March.”

On what the team did defensively to make it a tough shooting night for Pitt:

“Coach [Shawn] Poppie worked on the scouting. There were certain shooters that we knew we had to run off the three-point line. They also really wanted to get downhill, so we had to make sure that we were there to stop them from doing that.”

Lydia Rivers

On grabbing 13 rebounds:

“I’m just going after it. Just doing whatever my team needs me to do and that’s one of the things I was brought here to do.”

On what it has been like with her new team:

“It’s been great. The coaches make it great and my teammates make it great. To God be the glory, it’s a great opportunity. I’m just making the most out of it.”

On finding her role with the Hokies:

“I’m just trying to be the best I can be. Rebounding, making the little plays and hustling.”

On what was it like inside the paint during the game:

“It was just very competitive and fun. I don’t think we got as many touches in the paint that we would have liked, but it worked. We got the win and that’s all that matters.”