

VIRGINIA TECH

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Virginia Tech Head Coach Mike Young Q&A Highlights Postgame Media Conference vs. USF Nov. 29, 2020

On lessons learned about team through three games:

"I'll get back to you. I'm not sure. We're better. Aluma certainly helped tremendously, and [we're] just a year older and a year stronger. Mutts has contributed a lot. I thought Cordell PemsI helped our team win tonight, and I was very impressed with his play. I was very nervous and concerned about just how big and strong those guys [South Florida] are. Caleb Murphy at the point is a big young man at 6'3, and Durr is a house, and Yetna, I think that's his name. That's a team that could chip you up for 14, 15, 16 offensive rebounds and they shoot 34 foul shots. They can get you. Coming off that thing last night and everything that went into it – the regulation and that botched play, getting to overtime and having to go again – [I was] certainly concerned about coming back and dialing it up again, and playing South Florida. We weren't great. Not by any stretch, but pretty darn good, and I'm proud of those guys, their quick turnaround, and coming over today, and executing our stuff pretty well.

On message to motivate team to play back-to-back nights:

"I don't have an elaborate answer for you other than [we have] guys that are serious and guys that understand what is on the line. [They have] a level of maturity that is fun to see. I think Wabissa Bede helps in that regard. All of them have an understanding of what it takes and the preparation that goes into it. I turned them loose last night, they ate, and tried to get them to bed as quick as we could. We had two fairly lengthy film sessions – one this morning and one this afternoon – in preparation for the Bulls. Again, I think they did a pretty good job at following through on that.

On what he attributes defensive strength improvements:

"I would attribute that to David Jackson, who I think is as good as there is in the business. I got a couple things on my mind last night watching South Florida and Rhode Island, but I was just taken aback watching South Florida play. Just how big and rugged they were around the basket, and they gave URI some real difficulties. I think the statistic was South Florida missed 34 shots and offensive rebounded 16 or 14 of those. They really moved well in transition [and] I thought we did a good job at getting our defense set. We competed on the glass. We fought like crazy on the glass, but you ask where most of our improvements come? PemsI has helped—bigger, stronger, been around Big Ten kid. All those guys that came back for another year [are] just big, strong people and competitive folks. That's a joy to see.

On if 10 or 11 man rotation is sustainable depth:

“You know, David [Teel], it gets tricky in those games like last night. It’s nice to have an opportunity to develop a little depth. I really like N’Guessan. [He] physically has a long way to go. He’s come a long way in a short time with us and he’s going to be a really good player. I had an opportunity to play him some tonight. Same with Bamisile and some others. I’d really like to play 10 or 11 guys. I’ve got Jalen Cone coming back, thank goodness, on Thursday, so that’s maybe the best shooter in our program. You know what kind of player he is. So he’s backing the mix [and] time will tell, but I love it. I like playing 10 guys. I really do. We’ve got them paired up with Cartier [Diarra} and Wabissa [Bede] at the point, and Hunter [Cattoor], Naheim [Alleyne], Tyrece Radford, and Bamisile. We’ll see in those tough ones, those white knucklers, time will tell.”

On what it would mean to be ranked so early in the season:

“I’d be happy about that, but goodness gracious, with everything going on and three games in – don’t get too fat and happy. You’ll get a baseball bat across the knee caps, you know that. Not in this business. Keep your head down and keep chopping wood. That’s what we intend to do.”

Virginia Tech Players Q&A Highlights

TYRECE RADFORD

What helped you click offensively:

“Going off of yesterday’s game, we had to keep the same intensity we had. My team kept me pumped up and we stuck together and fought it out.”

What did this weekend tell you about your team:

“Even with our backs against the wall, we are going to stick together and pull through. And that’s what we did, we fought the whole weekend.”

Do you feel like this year’s team is more set up to build on this and keep the winning thing going this year:

“We definitely have more pieces and our guys are willing to work together and uplift each other.”

CARTIER DIARRA

What did this weekend tell you about your team:

“It told me this was easy. We know what we are capable of and we know that we are a really good team. We just have to go out there and execute.”