

VIRGINIA TECH

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Virginia Tech Head Coach Mike Young Q&A Highlights Postgame Media Conference vs. No. 5/6 Florida State Feb. 1, 2020

On how the team overcomes those tough starts:

"You go back and look at it, we've had better starts defensively. It's just so new and this style is new to so many of those young kids. I don't know when they locked into it that they did as good a job as anybody that I've seen Florida State play in the last six weeks, in terms of movement and putting the ball in the right spots. We couldn't get a timely shot in the second half. Nahiem [Alleyne] had the dunk to cut it back to seven, and you need to put a stop together, two stops. We had other opportunities to cut into it and we couldn't get that one big shot to go down and really get some wind under our sails. The start, I've looked at it as certainly my intention and we're working at it."

On what Florida State did defensively to make the Hokies shoot 7 of 30 from 3-point land:

"Their length, there are gaps and opportunities. I'll go back to it now and I see four that I scratch my head and say that, 'I'm not sure about that one,' there's an extra pass down there and turning down a good shot for a great shot. Their length is disruptive. I thought we did a nice job of driving the ball. I thought we did a nice job of spraying the thing out back to the perimeter. I've said it before and I'll say it again, and it's not a knock on my team, it's not but we are who we are. I would love to throw the ball to a 6-foot-9 or 7-foot kid and have him turn and score. I can't, I want to live my life shooting that thing 30 times for 3, I don't. That's what we're kind of locked into that right now and we do have a number of kids who can shoot the basketball. We have won a number of games because of our ability to shoot. That is part of where we are as a program, we don't have that facet and that hurts. One that we can sling the thing into and see how they are going to play it and throw it back out and drive along the post, and that is helpful. My team continues to do everything and give us everything in an attempt to win each time out and I admire them for that."

On if the three-game losing streak is because of a young team hitting a wall:

"I'm not one to make excuses. That's a ready-made excuse with [Nahiem] Alleyne, [Hunter] Cattoor, [John] Ojiako and [Jalen] Cone being true freshmen and then Landers [Nolley] and Boots [Tyrece Radford] redshirt freshmen. You have to find ways to win, we are in a bit of a hole here. As I told them after the game, we control everything. I think NC State lost today, I think it's too early to look at that stuff. Play better basketball, find ways to win and come back tomorrow and fight again. Get to Georgia Tech and play a little bit better."

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton Q&A Highlights

Opening statement:

“In our preparation for this game and watching film, we recognize that Coach [Mike] Young has done an outstanding job putting together a team in a short period of time. They seemed to have surprised a lot of people, but this time of year, there are no really surprises; they’re a good basketball team. You can say you’re surprised back in October or November, but these guys are really good. He has them playing at a very, very high level and I thought that as a result of the respect we have for them and what we say they were doing. I thought our focus moved up a notch because we realized that if you rely on them getting the 3s that they have been accustomed to getting, then we’re going to knock them down. They do such a good job in the half court of executing the offense and creating opportunities for each other. I thought our players did a pretty good job of staying solid and not giving them the easy looks they’ve been accustomed to getting. I thought it made a really big difference in the game. They’re no longer a surprise and I thought the fact that our guys played as well as they did, but as a result of the respect we have for them. You’ve got to congratulate them. The first half could have gone either way. We came out the second half, got a little separation. I thought our guys kept making plays, got some defensive stops, and we were able to hold on.”

On Devin Vassell’s performance:

“Devin is pretty consistent. This game was a sense of urgency for us because we lost last weekend. We felt that Virginia just outplayed us in certain spots. I thought we played well for about 25 minutes, but I thought that Virginia played better than we did for forty minutes. And we felt that this had to be a 40-minute game for us, and I thought Devin’s body language, his verbal communication with his teammates, he was just locked in and I thought our players recognized that and they were trying to get him the ball and he stepped up and was extremely productive. I think his energy was infectious and I think it motivated the rest of our players as well. He’s a good shooter, but I think he got the ball in a rhythm, he was focused, and Virginia Tech did a very good job of taking away [Anthony] Polite. I think Polite might be shooting 50 percent from 3 in the conference. So, they did a very good job of taking other guys away. We only had one guy in double figures, and that was Devin. What I like is that we had a lot of guys contribute a little bit, and that’s kind of who we are; we win games by committing and I thought that really made a difference. We had everybody that went in the game contributing in some kind of way. Devin just happened to be our lead dog of the night and it’s been that way all year. It always seems to be someone stepping up and that’s who we are as a team.”

On defending Landers Nolley:

“We don’t really change our philosophy on how we defend him because we switch one through five. So, it’s kind of difficult to have one guy defending him. We had to defend their system and we tried to not give them those easy baskets that they usually get with [Wabissa] Bede penetrating and finding an open man. We did a decent job containing the dribble, which I thought led to the fact that they didn’t get as many kick-off jumpers and he’s deadly when he gets a rhythm jump shot, no doubt about that. But again, because of what we saw in our

evaluation, I thought our guys had a focus of executing our defense because we knew that if they were able to run their system the way they've been running it, we'd have a difficult time containing those 3-pointers."

Virginia Tech Players Q&A Highlights

TYRECE RADFORD

On what was most difficult about scoring against Florida State:

"I think their length. They've always got one person coming from behind to block the shot. It's very hard."

On importance of upcoming games against teams with losing records:

"Every game is important. When you're coming off a loss, the next game's players play with a little chip on their shoulder. We just can't sleep on them because they're losing. We're losing too. We're both trying to get over that, so we just have to keep our heads strong and leave with a win."

On pressure to win now:

"We've been three games down before. It starts in practice, so we have to go hard. The season isn't over, we still have a good bit of season to go, so we have to keep pushing each other."

On the performance of the Seminoles' Devin Vassell:

"He was a big difference in the game, not missing a shot. That's very hard. He's a good player and knocked down shots to win at the time they needed it. We have to cut off the head of the snake and today we couldn't do anything with him."

HUNTER CATOOR

On difficulties against Florida State's defense:

"Just their length. They switch everything up top and guard the arc. Once you drive in, you have seven-footers coming down to block your shot."

On 3-point shooting:

"I think we got good looks. It's just shots you make in practice and not in games. Tonight wasn't the night."

On providing a spark in the first half:

"It was awesome. Coming off the bench, I take pride in providing a spark, getting the team going if we come out flat and getting the crowd into it. It was good going out there and hitting a couple shots, getting some steals on defense."