

VIRGINIA TECH

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Virginia Tech Head Coach Mike Young Q&A Highlights Postgame Media Conference vs. Virginia Feb. 26, 2020

On the game as an overall spectacle:

“Hats off to Virginia and Coach [Tony] Bennett's team. I absolutely take nothing away from their efforts, they played awfully hard as they always do. They played awfully well and sound. We shot 20% in the first half and we were miserable going down by 15 [points]. We had great shots in the first half and had the same shots in the second that we had in the first. We just happened to get the second half shots to go down. P.J. [Horne] made three 3-pointers. Jalen Cone had an awfully good half. Hunter Cattoor was really good. I thought we fought and competed our tails off defensively in the first half to limit them to 26 points. I was surprised that they shot 45% from the field, and [in the second half we had] just a better level of movement and ball movement, but at some point, you just have to get the ball in the basket. It puts too much pressure on your defense if you don't. It's a much easier game, it's a better officiated game when the ball is going in the basket. There's no consolation in getting your ears pinned back, but Virginia fought. The Hokies fought. That was a really good college basketball game, and I wish we could have gotten a better shake there at the end, wish we could have made a couple more plays.”

On Virginia Tech's second half outburst compared to their lackluster first half performance:

“We were doing the exact same things in the second half that we were doing in the first half, but we thought that there were a couple actions that we could pick on and get some things freed up. I thought that we screened better in the second half, and that certainly helped our play. Jalen [Cone] got behind a couple screens and banged some shots. [Mamadi] Diakite is such a terrific defender and he did exactly what they wanted him to do, but P.J. [Horne] found the range and looked like P.J. again, so that was a welcome sight. There was nothing that we saw towards the later stages of the first half that we turned our attention to. We did exactly the same things in the second that we did in the first. We simply made shots.”

On how the young team is handling a losing streak:

“I don't know. We've got Louisville next. There's no point in getting into all of that. We've got to find ways to win. We don't get into feelings around here. We just played a really good, hard basketball game against a really good opponent, and lost. We'll take tomorrow off, out of necessity, and reload. We'll get ready to go to Louisville and find a way to play a really good ball game and give ourselves a chance to win.”

On Cattoor and Alleyne's ability to stifle Woldetensae:

"I thought they were exceptional. He is playing very good basketball for them. I watched them play Louisville and he banged six 3s through the course of the game, and he was exceptional. He plays with great gamesmanship and reads screens very well; we wanted to chase him off that. We had Hunter [Cattoor] and Nahiem [Alleyne], two puppies, guarding him and I thought they did a great job. I thought our team throughout the course of the game did a very nice job."

On new starting lineup:

"John Ojiako had been playing well. I'm trying to get him to 21 or 22 minutes because I feel that good about his direction as a player, and I thought Isaiah Wilkins helped our team. He stuck it up in there and played a good basketball game against Duke. Nothing more than that. I've always been a lot more concerned with who finishes than who starts. Typically, who finishes is who helps us win. I thought the lineup we went with there in the late second half did just."

Virginia Head Coach Tony Bennett Q&A Highlights

On responding to Virginia Tech's momentum:

"We didn't play very good second-half defense, and I want to credit Virginia Tech; they had a terrific second half. They hit tough shots and they really battled. That was part of it, but we weren't as sharp as we needed to be. They took the lead and then Casey Morsell hit the 3 to put us up, then Kihei Clark making that play at the end, obviously. Braxton Key had some big rebounds, Mamadi Diakite made his free throws. Some guys made plays and I have said that repeatedly you have to make plays offensively, defensively well have you. I give credit to their second half, but I didn't think we were as sharp as we needed to be. In the first half we had a good stretch of defense, but they were a little cold and didn't make those shots, so we've got to keep working on that."

On Kihei Clark's game-winning 3-pointer:

"Sometimes we call timeouts, sometimes I decide not to, and thank goodness I didn't. They [Virginia Tech] could've set it up, the score was tied, and sometimes it's just better to let a guy get momentum and attack. Kihei backed the guy up and what a beautiful, beautiful 3. He's a winner, and I've said that often. I kind of challenged him - I didn't think he had the greatest second half with some of his defensive things, but he responded the right way with the way he played, and we needed every ounce of it."

On Virginia Tech's second-half comeback:

"You knew they were going to make a run here, and they started attacking and made some long 3s. A few of them were contested and on a few of them we had some breakdowns because they were running good actions. So, give credit to how they attacked and what they did, and we weren't sharp. It was so long ago when we played them the first time, and we played one of our best games at our place. The 3-point shot is such a momentum swing, so they just started going. We could feel the crowd, and they sure wanted the bacon you could tell that, and when they got the lead this place got very loud. So, our guys responded well."

Virginia Tech Players Q&A Highlights

JALEN CONE

On Virginia Tech's run in the second half:

"We started knocking down the shots. We played pretty good defense, holding them to 22 points at the half. Our shots weren't falling in the first half. We had 11 at halftime, which is unlike us. But they're a great defensive team and shots weren't falling. In the second half, once the shots got going, our team started to get going."

On Tech's offense in this game and moving forward:

"Scoring a lot. Like I said, we're knocking down shots. Hunter [Cattoor] knocked down some big-time shots. P.J. [Horne] knocked down three 3s in the second half. I knocked down a few shots. But when no shots are falling, it changes the trajectory of the game."

On Virginia Tech's adjustments in the second half:

"Keep fighting. No matter what, we have to keep fighting. [Mike Young] told us that the defense was pretty good, we just have to get shots to start falling and that's exactly what happened."

HUNTER CATTOOR

On the 3-pointer to put Tech in the lead:

"I hit the 3, came back and we had a lot of momentum. The atmosphere in Cassell was great and I thought we could pull it out."