

Virginia Tech Women's Basketball
Head Coach Kenny Brooks Q&A Highlights
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On Virginia Tech's defensive plan against Miami guard Mykea Gray:

"We knew who she was, we knew what her capabilities were, but we didn't put a box-and-one on her. We didn't do anything other than say, 'Hey, when you're guarding her understand what she's capable of.' And I've seen her. We've played against her obviously with Miami in our pod in the first three years I was here. We played them twice. I've seen her get hot. We've seen her to the point where she didn't make a lot of shots either. Gray is the same way, they are both dynamic guards. We just needed to make sure we were aware of their whereabouts at all times, and I think our kids did a good job with that and with contesting their shots."

On the performance of redshirt freshman Chloe Brooks:

"People don't understand the full story with her. She's dealing with nerve damage in her foot. There's just no remedy for it. She's just taking baby steps every day. She's so strong-minded, like her mom. Along the way, she's developed something else into her game where she can shoot the ball. Coming out of high school, she wasn't as good of a shooter as Kendyl [Brooks], but she was a tougher player. And Chloe's probably one of the smartest players I've ever coached. Her body is just catching up with her mind. Taja [Cole] did a fantastic job of setting her up. When Chloe got her feet set and let it go, I knew it was good. A lot of the jubilation for me was not just watching Chloe knock down that shot, it was watching her teammates celebrate and experience it with her. I'm so excited and happy for her. She's continued to work hard, and we've been very careful. I've had a couple moments where I could've tried to put her in, but she wasn't ready. Her foot wasn't ready. Today, I looked at her, and before I could even ask, she was shaking her head, and I'm like, 'Okay'. Proud dad, proud coach."

On tying the school-record for ACC wins in a season:

"It's a situation where if you don't take care of business, it could go the other way. There's just so much parity in this league. It's all about matchups. Earlier in the year, I felt like this could be a good group. I knew what we lost, but I also knew what we had coming back, and I knew the pieces we were going to be able to put together. I'm excited. It just tells us that we're on the right path. When we alerted [the players] to that, they kind of gave me that face like, 'Our goals are bigger than that.' When we broke the huddle, we didn't talk about, 'Hey, we tied the school record.'" We have bigger goals than that. We just want to continue to win."

On how much of a challenge NC State will present?

“They’re a good team. They’re one of the best teams in the country. Wes [Moore] does a tremendous job. He has the pieces in place. Hopefully we can get Hokie Nation to come out and celebrate, or to just experience watching out. We go there, and the atmosphere is tremendous. Their fans are very boisterous. It helps them squeak out some close games. Hopefully, Hokie Nation will come and will get them in here. But to have them here, it is a resume game. It’s a resume game afterwards. But right now, we’re looking at it as a good foe that we can compete with and win.”

On the defense and speed controlling the temp vs. Miami:

“I thought we did a good job of taking them out of rhythm. We went to zone. I think they had some too, earlier on. Miami either scores in bunches, or they take long droughts where they don’t score, which is evident by the way their scores have been. I thought we did a good job of forcing them into tough situations and leading out and getting a couple easy baskets, which you always need. That was a goal of ours—make them pay for their mistakes. I thought we did a good job of that.”

On Miami’s physical play:

“I’m the protector of [my players]. I can’t be out on the court. My job is to explain the situation that they’re in. I have the utmost respect for Katie Meier and her group. I think what you saw tonight was things weren’t going well for them, so instead of trying to play finesse, they had to go and be physical and go all out. They had nothing to lose. If a shot went up, it didn’t matter if no one got back, they had to go up and get the rebound. They had a couple kids that were a little bit extra physical. Every time out, I just kept telling our kids, ‘This is a very physical situation. Protect yourself.’

“As we come through it unscathed, it’s a good experience for us. Because you learn how to play tough. You have to learn how to be physical. You have to learn how to be ready for certain situations. This was good practice for us. They are probably one of the most physical teams, if not the most physical team, that we played against. They were in desperation mode. I think that’s what hurt us a couple times. Like the Syracuse game, Syracuse went in desperation mode, and the game plan went out the window. It was unorthodox. Just run up and go grab the rebounds, and we missed a couple boxouts. So, a situation like this, you can always use it as a teaching method. But first and foremost, you have to tell them how to protect themselves. Stay away from elbows, don’t be standing around watching the ball go up. Protect yourself.”

On the defensive game plan:

“I went to sleep very late last night contemplating it. I woke up very early this morning contemplating it. Went to shoot around still contemplating it. And when the game tipped off, I was still contemplating what defense I wanted to run. We knew that they weren’t a great three-point shooting team, but we like to play man-to-man. I love accountability. We have been playing well defensively. The game plan was to go out, we had both in hand because they presented some match-up problems for us. They were bigger on the perimeter than we were, they had some explosive guards. We were going to start man but we had it in our back pocket that we were going to go zone against them a little bit. The thought was to mix it up as much as possible to not let them get comfortable. It was so effective, especially in the second half with the zone we just stuck with it. Other than not really rebounding well out of it at the end of the game I thought I was very effective and it was something that was probably a game changer for us.”