

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Virginia Tech Hokies

Coach Mike Young

Hunter Cattoor

Justyn Mutts

Press Conference



team has put a lot of work in through the summer months and through the fall, and I'm just excited about this team's potential and prospects as I've ever been.

It's a team with great camaraderie and a nice core with Hunter and Justyn, Pedulla, Maddox, and others, and an infusion of some new pieces that we think can help us win games, so I'm looking forward to it.

Q. I've heard rumors that your backcourt is going to be a lot of fun this year. What do you think about that, how much fun you guys are going to have in the backcourt?

HUNTER CATTOOR: Yeah, we should have an exciting backcourt this year. I'm excited for Sean and Darius to kind of take a bigger role this year than last year. They've got a lot to prove, and I'm excited for them. They've been doing good in workouts and practices leading up, so it should be a fun year.

Q. Justyn, how do you feel about filling some pretty big shoes? Are you going to be able to surpass those shoes?

JUSTYN MUTTS: I don't feel as though I have any other shoes to fill. I've just got to go out there and be me, be Justyn Mutts. That's what Coach Young tells me every day, so I don't try to live up to any expectations. I just try to play my game and win the game at the end of the day.

Q. How much does last year's ACC championship come up? How much do you want it to come up?

MIKE YOUNG: It comes up a lot, and I want it to come up more. But there comes a time when those wonderful experiences with a group of people that I admired so much, with some luck and good health, we'll get back together 10 years from now, 20 years from now, and it'll be a lot of fun.

We're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the '73 NIT Championship team next Friday. You think those guys are excited? 50 years from now, I'm not around, but those will be fun experiences. But it's time to move on.

This team has a lot that they want to accomplish. This

Q. I know you don't talk about last season, but coming into the season without Keve, kind of how does that -- obviously changes rotation a lot, but what style will be different or things change at all without Keve?

MIKE YOUNG: Yeah, I've had the incredible chance to coach a lot of really good ones, and this team is not last year's team. This team is different. The personality is different. Aluma was a really talented player. Bailed us out, was that shot clock, gets low on a number of occasions.

Great faith in this guy and Hunter and others, that I am convinced that we'll figure it out. It will be different a little bit. I don't think dramatically. We're not going to change how we play.

He was talented, but there should be -- you hope there are always other talented people coming through the ranks, and I think that's where we are with this team and this current Virginia Tech team.

Q. Justyn, what's different about Justyn Mutts this year as opposed to last year, and what's your mindset heading into this season? How are you embracing your role?

JUSTYN MUTTS: I think really just forming my routine, being able to know exactly what I need to do, and then also working on the mental part side of it, as well, just establishing confidence and then trying to maintain that.

Coach Young as well as all of my teammates have been doing a great job of boosting me and helping me feel more confident, and I've been trying to put that back into the team, as well.



I feel as though my approach this season will continue to be the same gritty, like tough person I've always been, but just continue to add on to the offensive side, as well.

Q. Coach, how nice is it to have a program that you can now sell as a champion brand as opposed to when you came in and started, it was just a challenger brand?

MIKE YOUNG: That part of it's great and a real tribute, again, to our players, Justyn, Hunter, that team, and what a magic carpet ride that was. It was not blue skies and smooth waters through a lot of that time, but when it mattered most, they stayed the course. They hung in there. They trusted the process.

We get to Brooklyn playing good basketball and win it. It's been a real shot in the arm for our basketball program, for Southwest Virginia, and I've said many times was a pleasure to be a small part of it.

Q. You mentioned the personality of this year's team is different. What is the personality of this year's team, and what's the identity of this year's team?

MIKE YOUNG: Just how this team is comprised. There are a number of new faces. It's such a luxury, and it's still new to me. Justyn wasn't with us first session of summer school, but 10 of them were.

We had our entire team together, the '22-'23 team together in the second semester of summer school.

We can do a lot with them on the floor. We don't overdo it because it's such a long year, but you get a real pulse for that team, for that next team, during the summer months and then into September as you look ahead to the upcoming season.

You're just starting way ahead of where we used to. There was a couple years there couldn't be any basketball-related activity, no conditioning, until I think November 1st. That didn't last very long. But it's just a different time and different era for how you interact with these guys and how much time you can spend with them on the floor.

It's been -- I've thoroughly enjoyed that.

Q. Mike, this is for you. What has Grant Basile brought to your group, and what was the process -- how did he come upon your radar? What was your pitch to him to come to Virginia Tech?

MIKE YOUNG: I mean, I know he loves playing with

Justyn, and Justyn has been great for him. He's coming up a level. We've had a couple others that have done that and have done well.

Storm Murphy had some growing pains early on, but in Storm Murphy fashion, he figured it out as the season went along. He's been coached. He is a very skilled player. He's got some strides to make here defensively, as most first-year people do.

Now, he's played college basketball three or four years, but he still has some strides to make defensively and on the glass. He's got to do a job for us on the glass. We can't have that burden on him and our guards night in, night out.

Grant averaged eight rebounds a game, again going up to the Atlantic Coast Conference. The transfer portal has opened up a new world, and we've got people constantly monitoring that part of it in the spring, and then you're just gathering film and what fits. They don't all fit.

But we thought Basile did, size, he'd been coached, he's skilled, he can really shoot the basketball and been very pleased with his progress in the early going.

Q. Talk about the camaraderie that all of you guys have between the men's basketball team and the women's basketball team at Virginia Tech.

HUNTER CATTOOR: I'd say it's like a whole big family there. We play and practice in the same facility, so we see them every day, whether that's working out on our own time or lifting or practicing.

So we see them all around. We're saying hey to them. I know Coach Brooks is doing a great job over there with that team. But I look at them as family. Seeing Liz and Georgia walking around, we're talking and messing around in the training room before practices.

So I think it's great for both programs to be together and support each other and want each other to do well.

JUSTYN MUTTS: Yeah, all those women are really incredible and also incredibly intelligent, as well, so just to know them and spend time around them in the environment that we do, it's unbelievable.

I think some of their success might have rubbed off on us a little bit last year, so I've got nothing against it.

MIKE YOUNG: I admire them. They're serious basketball players. They're nice young people. Really, really a really good coaching staff. Coach Brooks and his staff, I watch them practice from time to time. I am in awe of Elizabeth

Kitley and her workouts and her footwork. Just very unique and a very talented young person.

They've got a really good team, and I look forward to seeing our women's team compete this coming year. They've got a good thing going. Great folks.

Q. Referencing the championship earlier, you are 6-0 in conference tournament game championships, including five at Wofford. Do you go somewhere different mentally for a championship game? 6-0 is not a coincidence.

MIKE YOUNG: Don't give me a whole lot of credit. We don't change the messaging. We all know these guys know what a moment that is.

But we're playing basketball. Let's not get outside of ourselves. Let's do the same things we did last night against North Carolina or Notre Dame or Clemson. We've got to rebound. We've got to defend and get a quality shot every time now.

I've had a lot of coaches ask me about our tournament preparation, what goes -- we don't change. It's like, oh, my gosh, we've got the ACC Tournament coming up. Again, we all know what's at stake. Let's go have a good time and lay our ears back and let it rip, and let's see what happens. It's worked out pretty well. I've had some great fortune. I've had some great luck and great players, needless to say.

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