



NCAA SECOND ROUND POSTGAME QUOTES – EAST REGION

No. 2 VIRGINIA (30-3) VS. No. 15 BELMONT (22-11)

VIRGINIA QUOTES

HEAD COACH TONY BENNETT

Virginia Head Coach Tony Bennett Quotes

Opening Statement

First of all, congratulations to Belmont on an outstanding season and run at the end of the year. Coach Byrd is a tremendous man and a tremendous coach. He is kind of near and dear to my heart because he wears a sweater vest and my father used to wear a sweater vest when he coached. What he has done with that program is remarkable. We knew it was going to be a very difficult, challenging game. You just don't see a lot of teams that can spread the floor like that and have the kind of guys that keep coming at you. It was good for us to be in a game like that. Our young men have been in a lot of games like that, when we had to outlast and make some plays, and even overcome some of our mistakes. They had to do that and I hope it serves us well heading into Sunday's game against a very good Michigan State team.

On nerves down the stretch

They made some tough shots. Nervous might not be the word. I knew we were going to have to make some plays, some stops, some free throws. You are never safe when you play a team like that that can score in spurts and hit unlimited range shots. They had a stretch when we had to make some adjustments at the guard, in some unconventional ways. I knew that game was in the balance. We knew we had to finish it out.

On having only seven turnovers

It was better. I think there are a couple offensive fouls in there, too. You can't have your offense cost you. Perhaps a couple of times we settled for some outside shots. The ability for us offensively to not hurt our defensive is significant. They were hard to guard. Ball security is so important and it was good to see our number come down. You have got to take care of the ball. They were feisty with how they would swipe. They weren't going to quit.

On rematch against Michigan State

We are going from a master coach in Coach Byrd to one of the greatest coaches in Coach Izzo. I have great respect for that program. I grew up respecting it. I know we will have to be at our best. It's a real good team that seems to be playing really good basketball. When you get to this stage, you are going to have to play at a higher level. I am sure it will be a physical game and a hard fought game. I expect that.



Redshirt junior Anthony Gill

On getting inside

I think that Coach Bennett told us before the game we are gonna call a couple of plays to get the ball inside and I think that we wanted to take advantage of that. We had some opportunities where we could rebound on the offensive end too. I see we had six offensive rebounds and that was big for us. When everybody is rebounding like that on the offensive end, I think we have a good chance.

On the rematch against Michigan State.

I think it's going to be good for us. Last year, they beat us in the Sweet 16. I remember in the locker room last year, everyone just saying to remember how this feels. I think this is not going to be more of a revenge game but for us just doing what we do. I think everybody is hungry to go to the next round and to keep moving on. We are ready for the challenge.

Redshirt junior Malcolm Brogden

On opponent speeding up the game

I think we are not a team that can't play a faster tempo. I think we can adjust, and I think we can play well in a faster tempo. I thought they were able to get us a little out of sorts. But at the same time, I think it was more on us.

On trying to stop their run late

At that point, we thought we just gotta get stops. We can't let them get comfortable. If they get comfortable, they can dictate their shots. Myself, I tried to just pressure him, get the ball out of his hands, and swipe at the ball as much as I can.

On free throws in the game

I think that's pretty astonishing that we shot like that. It's a huge improvement and very good, especially with a team like that. You gotta make free throws if you want to win in NCAA tournament. Tonight we were able to make free throws and hold them off.



Senior Darion Atkins

On game

I think we pulled away towards the end. It was a tough matchup for us and we adjusted very well. It was a hard fought game and it was really tough, especially (Craig) Bradshaw.

On ability to pull away

It was our preparation. Our poise, our athletic poise and experience towards the end.

On Craig Bradshaw

He was very tough. He was persistent. He didn't care about anything other than helping his team win. Getting some inside buckets and he hit some tough shots. It was tough to guard him at times; he had a couple of back doors towards the end. He can move and jump very well and he put up good numbers for them tonight.

Junior Mike Tobey

On the win

It was great to start the tournament off right with a win. I think Belmont did a great job and they are very well coached and a really good team. It was great win for us.

On Belmont's hot start

We knew they were going to come out strong. I mean it's the tournament and they shot the ball well, especially there in the beginning. I know Taylor Barnette hit the first three and he was really excited about. We knew they were going to be a good team and that was a good win for us.



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BELMONT QUOTES

HEAD COACH RICK BYRD

Opening statement

We played a great basketball team. Virginia made the winning plays in the last three minutes that we didn't make. They deserved to win. They were the better team. With that being said, I'm certainly proud of our team's performance. I'm proud of their fight, grit, determination and the plays that they made. We had a real chance in those last three minutes to win the game but we just didn't get it done. They did and they get to play on Sunday. This team right here has come a long way and I'm lucky to coach them.

On stopping Virginia on the perimeter in the second half

I don't know that we did a whole lot to stop it. We talked about defense every timeout and all throughout halftime. Malcolm Brogdon just had a really good first half and a not-so-good second half. Their shots from the three just didn't go down. I think they focused more on getting the ball in the inside. I think that's a big answer to the foul-shot discrepancy. They had an inside game that we knew we would struggle with.

Senior Reece Chamberlain

On countering UVA's toughness

Virginia is a great team and we knew that coming in. We knew that the shots we would normally get were going to come tough. I thought we did a great job. There was only one stretch in the first half where we got carried away and didn't run our offense. Overall we did a pretty good job of moving the ball and working until we got some good shots.

Junior Craig Bradshaw

On his shooting performance against Virginia

Honestly we just had a great game plan. We ran a lot of stuff for down screens. We got a lot of open shots. My shot felt good.

On cutting UVA's lead to 62-60 with a 3-pointer and if he thought Belmont would win at that point

I don't think you ever think that you're going to win a game against those guys. Their defense is incredible. They can string together some stops. I felt good about how I was shooting and we were running a good offense. They just made some great stops. At the end they just made more winning plays.



Sophomore Evan Bradds

On free throws and dealing with UVA's height advantage

They shot a lot more free throws than us. I think it was just because at the end we fouled a lot more than they did. Their big guys are strong, tall guys and were hard to deal with. Anthony Gill is a monster and he got to the line a lot tonight.

Sophomore Taylor Barnette

On effort

I'm so proud of our team, we left it all out there and that's all we could do. We made a great run and have them a heck of a game. They are a great team. We fought so hard today.

On Virginia's size

We knew coming in we were going to be undersized. I mean our guys scraped and fought for everything we got today. Size is just part of it.

On what was going through his mind when Belmont cut it to two

I was thinking we were going to win. That's the mindset we have. I wish it would have turned out differently but I have a lot of respect for them and I wish them the best the rest of the way. The last three minutes didn't go our way. We didn't hit shots. I didn't hit shots but that's the way it goes sometimes.

On next season

Our senior class did an outstanding job of leading this team but we're a young team. No one thought we would be here. No one thought we would be ECU in the OVC tournament semi-finals. It speaks volumes of those guys leadership. They did a phenomenal job.