

December 26, 2020
Virginia vs. Gonzaga
Postgame Quotes

Head Coach Tony Bennett

On importance of getting off to a solid start again opponent of this caliber:

“Of course. You won't have a chance against a team, really any good teams. They're the best we've played by far and appear to be well deserving of that ranking. But if you don't take care of the ball, it's hard enough to stop them when your defense is back and set, they've got too many actions and skilled guys and we were fractured in that way, but when you give them points off turnovers, I think it was 19 in the first half, if I'm right, that puts you in a big hole. They really exposed some things that we have to go to work on and just try to, to sure up. That was discouraging for sure, but it's those areas, you start with ball security on the offensive end and then you play from there. They hurt us in the areas we've tried to work hard on transition defense, making them shoot contested shots and taking care of the ball just start with that. And we couldn't even get to that spot and execute at a high level.”

On if it was defensive miscues or good offensive power:

“Both for sure. They're very dangerous offensively, the way they can, when (Corey) Kispert gets going like that. (Drew) Timme's a handful in the post, he can score. If you go and trap them, they got guys out there that boom they're set, ready to shoot it. They score so well and transition, 25 percent of their scoring is in transition and we help that even more with the turnovers. A lot of breakdowns, we had a lot of trouble on ball screen defense. We're so worried about our guys, we were stretching and there was layups at the rim. And then when we stayed too long, we left guys wide open. So they had us every time and that was hard. Anytime we got a little momentum, it was either a turnover or they just got an easy bucket. We haven't guarded well this year yet. And that's something we got to just keep trying to do. We lost a lot in the defensive side of things and that's some place we got to sure up and keep getting better.”

On run going into halftime:

“It was a pretty intense halftime. It was about fighting. It was about soundness and toughness. Gonzaga, you just could feel it. I thought for some guys it was a bit overwhelming, for some it was new experiences and some it was like we just we got to fight everything you got to do those things we talked about. Then we start second half, turnover boom, they're down there and it just, we couldn't get a handle on things. So they had us pretty much most possessions. I was hoping we would get off to a better start to be in it, but I don't think we were. We didn't have a place in that game today. We didn't. We couldn't stop them for consecutive times and make them earn, and then offensively we touched the paint and did some things. I know the guys, it's hard, but now we go to work.”

Junior Guard Kihei Clark

On defensive play:

“I think we were kind of playing selfishly on the defensive end, not helping each other. They just, I don't know. The actions that they ran, it just put us in tough spots and we just didn't do what we practiced, pretty much.”

On getting overwhelmed by Gonzaga and vibe of team falling behind early:

“No, I think we, had the right mindset in trying to come back. But yeah, I definitely think that a couple of us were scared. I don't know if it was because we were playing Gonzaga or the moment, but you could kind of feel it a little bit.”

On his play today:

Oh, yeah, six turnovers, you're not going to win if you're point guard and your leader has that. I don't think I played that well. I had 19 points but the six turnovers is no good. I think that cancels out my offensive game. I think I'm just trying to find myself in the role of the team this year. I got a lot of pieces around me, so just trying to get them going. I think we're all just trying to get to know each other and playing on the court.