

## **Head Coach Tony Bennett**

### ***On importance of first few minutes of the second half:***

“We gave up some easy baskets at the end of the first half and I don't think we've played 40 minutes of real good defense, or a complete two halves majority of good defense. And you're right, I was interested. We're up 16 and yeah that's obviously a big lead but certainly not insurmountable in today's game. Then they get an easy backdoor, we had a breakdown. I think we came down and hit a three. But then I thought our defense tightened up and we did answer the bell in terms of that because they're a good defensive team and they're physical. Now, they were off for, I don't know if it's four days, five days and they looked rusty you could see that when they did get some open shots but for the most part, we kept them in front of us and used our length. When you combine the defense, with that kind of shooting and then it came together nicely. We didn't take our foot off the gas and we were, for the most part sound and made Clemson firms their baskets.

### ***On if Clemson was off from the break of if you just moved the ball really well:***

“Well, I mean, probably both. Maybe offensively. I just thought, we did, we talked about being ball strong, you know, take care of the ball, because they're gonna try to climb into it. They're really trying to pressure, Kihei [Clark] and then you saw us get some backdoors, pressure releases which really loosened things up and then we started hitting shots. When teams have hurt us, it's been their fives and their fours stretching the defense, and those are hard matchups. So we're kind of, we're doing that and then Trey's [Murphy III] hitting them. Kihei, they're really taking him away, he's so quick. He gets some backdoors, he's in the paint, the penetration. Reece [Beekman] did a good job. Tom [Woldetensae] came in and gave us a lift with his shooting, which was great to see. So it came together nicely, so probably both, but that's not to take anything away from our guys because we defended well and moved the ball, took care of it and then made the shots.”

### ***On playing first ranked team since Gonzaga:***

“Well, we responded in the right way. We're learning about our team, we're growing, we're becoming steadier. I know we have guys that are older in age, but we've got three guys that have not played in a Virginia basketball uniform for a game, so there's a newness there that I think, an identity has to be formed. How hard we have to defend, how we have to play to beat good teams and that's just gotten better from after the Gonzaga game. True humble pie, right? I think we responded well, when it was Notre Dame next and then, just kept taking the right steps and thought it was a good effort obviously all the way around. And some really good individual performances.”

## **Redshirt Senior Guard Sam Hauser**

### ***On the run in the second half:***

“Being a part of any type of run like that, it's very fun to play. When things are going your way like that, it's very contagious, like you said. I think guys coming off the bench and even guys on the floor at the time, once they saw other people making shots, I think it gave them more confidence to shoot and take good shots. So, I think overall it was just a great offensive performance by us.”

***On it being his best 3-point shooting performance:***

“I've been in a little bit of a slump from behind the arc, but I trust my mechanics, trust my technique, I just keep working every day and I know eventually you're gonna start falling. Hopefully this is a trend now that they start falling a little more, but just stick to the grind and just keep shooting.”

***On first game back for Clemson:***

“To be honest, we never talked about that. We were preparing for a really good team and coach challenged us in practice the last couple days because Clemson, is a very good basketball team. We took that challenge very seriously and we came out on top tonight.”

***On first ranked opponent since Gonzaga:***

“We learned from that loss. I think when you lose a game you learn, you don't really take it as a loss, necessarily, you learn from it and grow from it. I think we've grown. We've taken some really good strides since that game and it's been showing. We are undefeated in the conference right now. We just got to keep sticking with it in practice and stick to the grind and hopefully we can keep winning.”

**Senior Guard Tomas Woldetensae**

***On talking to coach Bennett about staying ready:***

“I did not have that conversation face to face, but of course every time after a game where somebody did not play as much, he would mention it, just to be ready, and stay with the team united. It's of course something that you like to hear, especially coming from not playing a game or so. You just stick to, to improving and trust the process.”

***On lessons from Gonzaga team applied to this game***

“We went into the Gonzaga game with that not the same, anger, we had today. We weren't hungry to beat them and to prove that we are as good as we are. Also, I believe that sometimes you got to lose to understand who you are and to win other games. So, it's not a loss, it's more of an understanding and improvement, personally.”

***On being on the floor when everything is going well:***

“It's unbelievable. It's fun, it's engaging, everybody's cheering from the bench. Energy just flows out of your body like it's just a happy moment, especially now with COVID, it's enjoyable.”

***On his play tonight:***

“I hope it's a breakthrough, let's put it that way. I played well of course. The energy came from the defensive end, everybody was engaged. So, you know, you have your teammates that have your back and at that point, you just show up to play. Last year, I struggled the first half of the season and I hope now that we passed that struggling moment, we can move forward with a better angle, especially maybe playing in March Madness.”