

Virginia Postgame Quotes vs. Georgia Tech

Virginia Head Coach Tony Bennett

What did you see happening defensively that gave you guys a chance to be in the position to win this thing?

“Georgia Tech is a good team. They're really good at playing with great confidence, they play fast and they're quick. What I saw down the stretch is, I thought our on-ball defense really stepped up. Whether it was Reece (Beekman), Kihei (Clark) or Casey (Morsell) and then I thought Jay (Huff) did a heck of a job. You know, his blocks were a little different than (Moses) Wright's but there was a lot of paddleball going on up there the way Wright was blocking our shots. Jay used his length, he came up with some big shots, stay disciplined and he stayed down. I thought our individual slides really good. They ran some stuff and then they said, we're spread and attack you. It was that kind of buckling down and saying we're going to be hard to get by and score against, and I thought that took place and those guys in particular and Sam (Hauser) played good position defense too because you could see when they got either a little bit of momentum and transition or just a crease, boom, it was up. There was one-time Jay (Huff) got the switch and (Jose) Alvarado hit the tough three. Then (also) the three on the out of bounds play. That's the one thing we've been pushing for, there shouldn't be a one on the shot clock. I digress but it shouldn't be just one, it should be .5 or .8. That's what they do in the NBA. I don't know why we have just a plain second. I think that's not good for the game. I'll say that in victory instead of complaint in a defeat. I think it's something that should be change and the officials all agree with that.”

Sam Hauser for the second-straight game was four of five from three-point range, I know he's done a lot of things for you outside of that three-point shot but now that that thing started to fall. How does that change things?

“I thought our two seniors really carried us. Those guys, our two fourth years. Sam (Hauser) and Jay (Huff) down the stretch really kind of took over the game. Kihei (Clark) struggled at times but boy did he make a tough, tough shot. A tough layup and I thought, the one he missed that would have stretched it out to maybe five but Kihei's shot was tough. Sam (Hauser) and Jay (Huff), offensively, made some really nice plays and the guys that played did a real good job out there but Sam's ability, that he got hot kind of brought us back. Jay made a real big shot out of that underneath out of bounds play with three seconds left but some nice alley-oop plays and some good high-level play going on both teams.

Were you confident that (Sam Hauser) was going to get to this point and start shooting the way you knew he could?

“Yeah, for sure. Shooters shoot and you know it can ebb and flow a little bit but just seeing his body of work, in practices, over the summers, last year and then obviously this season, no question. They were big ones and you know he's getting guarded pretty tightly and that was just great to see among some of his post moves and just a complete heady player. We needed it all tonight for sure.”

After some comfortable ACC wins, what's the benefit of playing a game like this that goes right down the wire?

“We had to step up and make plays on both ends. Every possession mattered and that's why we were a little foolish at times with some self-inflicted wounds, so to speak, with some of our careless turnovers. They have very quick hands. I mean they score 25 percent of their points off of their steals and you can see how quick. Alvarado has got some quickest hands. He had six steals and they had eight steals (as a team). Whether it was our post guys are slapping the ball away or they're just anything loose. You had to make you had to become we like to use the word ball-strong and I thought Kihei (Clark) took better care of the ball in the second half. I challenged him in at halftime and pretty much during the game. We were sure and sounder and then both teams were playing hard and just who is going to flinch first or wear down. It was a game that you had to win because they weren't going to lose.”

Redshirt Senior Sam Hauser

On playing from behind then pulling out the win:

“I think a big part of that was turning up our defenses the second half. The first half they kind of got whatever they wanted it seemed like and the second half we tried to make them earn it more. And obviously more shots fell I felt like for us, but overall I think we brought more energy in the second half and that fed into our play. We kind of got a couple bounces go away and that always helps, but definitely a great win and we're going to take that and learn from it, but also take the good parts of it and build off it.”

On the fifth-year seniors taking over (Hauser and Huff) flipping the switch down the stretch:

“Well I mean you can't just wait around in a game like that, especially when you're down. You've got to flip the switch and turn it on, and I felt like me and Jay (Huff) got more aggressive. Whether we were making the shot or someone else, our aggressiveness opened up a lot of things I felt like. So we definitely just stuck with it and ended up on top.”

On playing a tight game in conference:

“Yeah, well I mean a tight game you know every possession matters a lot more. Early in the game we shot ourselves in the foot with a lot of turnovers and defensive breakdowns. Down the stretch we tightened up, took care of the ball well and obviously made really big shots. Definitely learn from this and can't take a win like this for granted because it's a great win against a great team.”

On Kihei Clark's only basket being the game-winner and his confidence:

“Kihei's a competitor and you can see that in him. Staying aggressive and taking a big shot like that shows his character and that he's just he just wants to win and he's going to do whatever it takes and we trust him in that situation. He obviously had to shake off a lot of things, and I thought he did well, and he just stuck to the game plan and stuck with it and obviously made a huge shot down the stretch. You know we love Kihei. He's our little energy bug and he showed it tonight.”

Redshirt Senior Jay Huff

On his final shot – a mid-range jumper:

“It wasn't exactly drawn up like that, but I'm kind of the last option if we need to get the ball in. We ran that for Sam to get it in the corner and I think it got deflected the first time so we had to basically just try different play. It ended up where I had to just kind of get it. I shoot that shot in practice, but it's definitely not my specialty. I have either about as short a range that you can get or three pointers is kind of my thing.”

On the final 10 minutes of the game and what got them going:

“It always typically goes back to our defense. We knew we had to get stops. We were getting what we wanted on the offensive end for the most part. They played really good defense, but I think we could get some of what we wanted. Sometimes shots weren't falling, especially the first half, but once they started falling it was a lot easier to figure that out. And then, as usual it just comes down to getting stops.”

On playing in a tight ACC contest:

“I think it gets these guys ready. I've been in probably a million two-point games with one minute left in my five years here. It's pretty freaking ridiculous, actually. But for some of the first years, that's something that they got to get used to. So I think we just, you know, we learn from it. There were definitely mistakes that were made, but it also just helps to grow you as a player being involved in those type of late-situation games.”