

Virginia Postgame Quotes vs. Wake Forest

Head Coach Tony Bennett

On handling adversity:

“There's certainly things bigger than the game. We have a lot of things we had to deal with, myself and Ronnie Weidman and Johnny Carpenter as the coaches. Ronnie is our operations guy, Johnny's been our video coordinator and they did a great job of practice all week. Even Bach (Erich Bacher) our esteemed sports information director, was helping us out a little practice. So it was it was an interesting time but we just talked about banding together without Austin Katstra without Kody (Stattmann) without Casey (Morsell). We knew we were going to have to come together. I thought we had a spirited week of practice and obviously events that happened today you know there's a lot of stuff going on, but we just talked about let's try to take a step in the right direction. When the game started, I thought offensively Dave we were pretty good in the first half. We got the shots we needed, but defensively, we had a lot of trouble. Again they were hitting shots. We had some breakdowns. And then the second half I thought we adjusted well. I thought the ball pressure picked up. Kihei decided to really pick up the ball and everybody with, just some adjustments, I think that helped really just stepped up. Reese gave us a really good lift, I think you saw some of some of his potential. Obviously, we didn't have a lot of numbers in the rotation, but we played tough enough in the second half. We responded well to adversity and being shorthanded and, you know, a very good second half. from my standpoint.”

On coaching without any assistants on the bench:

“Well, you know I asked Ronnie something and he goes ‘The last two hours were a blur I don't know.’ I've got some experience and I just tried to keep, you know, ask them some questions and talk to the guys. Chase Coleman, I could hear his voice. He wants to be a coach. He was excellent, talking to the guys. He really has good insight on the game. I always rely on the players and I was asking them stuff during the time outs. I could hear Chase and some of the other guys saying some things, and I thought all of that was important. So, you know, we came together. We made the most of the situation and will hopefully get guys back soon. Go to the next direction.”

On Reece Beekman playing more assertive:

“I've been encouraging him. You know the last probably month and a half we need you to be aggressive. I said sometimes when you play with a Kihei, I think you feel like I'm with Kihei and I'm just supposed to, sort of, you know, occasionally do stuff. I said we can't afford that. I said, we're short handed. I said you have to - and I've been saying it all the last month – you've got to be assertive. And I told him, you can play poorly. That can happen. I think he's, he's quiet by nature but he does stuff. You know you watch him subtly, and I thought he was aggressive with the drive to create. Obviously he had the nice dunk, a couple big steals. It's uncanny how many times, he'll tip balls and do things. That was a really something I liked, his assertiveness. I think that's important for us moving forward and again you know he did some real nice stuff.”

On adjustments in the second half that led to improved play:

“We were having trouble with the ball screen. Number 25 (Ismael) Massoud, the way he was screening and separating, and it's tough. We've had trouble with that. So we just tried to do a few different things. Tried switching some screens. We got to kind of pick our poison. So we decided to stay a little more at home on him, and I thought it was, it helped us. Again, the ball pressure, the ability to like let's pick a point and everybody be more active on the ball. Kihei go down the floor, and those things kind of mixed together. Sam was on the glass which was good. So again, I thought the guys responded well to that challenge.”

On Hauser's rebounding abilities:

“He's a good defensive rebounder. He knows how to pursue the ball and he's sturdy and he just, he finds it he goes after it. I mean rebounding is about heart. It's about finding it pursuing and going and grabbing it and making it yours and Sam does that. I think we need that for more guys Sam is probably our leading rebounder this year I would assume. I like that he's not the most athletic but he knows how to time and, and he's not denied and he's not afraid to go and traffic and snatch it.”

On Kihei Clark's recent play:

“He's doing a good job, especially in the second half defensively. He's gonna battle and he's been through it, and I think he knows what this team needs. And I think he's got to keep pushing himself to be, you know, a vocal leader, a demander and not be afraid to offend guys and then encourage him to just push, push, push and get out of that comfort zone. I think he is becoming more like that. Then on the court, he's just got to be tough and sound and be assertive but not step over that line. Last year was such a valuable experience for him because he had so much on his plate and it was good for me. He had success and struggle at times. I think he's got a better feel and it's nice at times when Reese can play and you have another ball handler out there that can make some decisions, it's not just Kihei. So yeah he's had a good stretch. You're right. And we're gonna continue to need that from him. We didn't give much of a rest tonight but again we needed that because of being shorthand and without Casey.”

Freshman Guard Reece Beekman

On being more assertive offensively:

“I just came in trying to play my regular game [offensively]. [I was] looking for my shots and just be me, making the plays I know I can do.”

On the team being more aggressive on defense:

“These last few practices we have worked on our defense. Staying in front of your man and just make it hard on the other team. We definitely worked our defense over the last week in practice and I can tell it translated to the game.”

On what turned around the slow start:

“Our defense [attributed to the turnaround]. At first we weren't really pressuring the ball and then in the second half we really started pressuring the ball. We were trying to make them make mistakes and make it tough on them, because when you just sit back and let the team run

their offense, they going to get the shot that they want. We just wanted the second half to be harder on them.”

Redshirt Senior Forward Sam Hauser

On the coaching staff being depleted this week:

“It was definitely different. You know, those coaches’ voices every practice. You know Coach [Jason] Williford, Coach [Brad] Soderberg, Coach “O” [Orlando Vandross], Coach [Kyle] Getter and Coach [Larry] Mangino. It's just different not hearing their voices and Coach Bennett kind of has to try to fill that void, but I think us players had to step up a little bit and talk more in practice. I think we did a better job of that, but obviously there's some more improvement that we need to do on. We're going to be glad to happen back in a couple of days here.”

On what went well in the second half:

“Our defense stepped up. It's pretty simple. The defense in the first half we seemed like we were a step behind. And, obviously, there was an emphasis for the second half. In the first four minutes we really came out and inserted ourselves and cut into that lead and then eventually took the lead and our defense just kind of won us the game and the second half.

On being more aggressive with his game on offense:

“The three ball wasn't falling. It has been falling all year, but that's when I had to take advantage of is using the rest of my game. I'm not just a shooter. I can do a lot of things. Obviously find my spot in the mid-post and playing out of there - kind of creating and making the right play. It's not always to go score, but sometimes other guys get open by me being aggressive. I am just trying to find other ways to score than just the three ball. I think I've done a good job with that the last couple games.”