

Virginia Head Coach Tony Bennett

On Sam Hauser:

“He was really good, and he opened up the game for us just enough. We struggled; we really did when they turned up the heat. (We) made some poor decisions offensively some breakdowns defensively so that was frustrating but because we had stretched it enough, it was good. I thought Sam was really good. He actually guarded well and offensively when you look at his stat line I mean that's eight and nine (field goals) three or four (3 pointers) did the job. He was the difference maker for us. There were stretches of good ball but it I just didn't like how I thought unsound we were and yielded, that is kind of the word we've been using, to make that closer after we had built that lead. Also credit to Pittsburgh's scrap and their ability to put pressure on the rim but we hung in there and certainly grateful for the victory.”

On the luxury of veteran players:

Yeah, it was important. I didn't mention Thomas (Woldetensae), we needed his offense. I don't think we won it with our defense today or even our soundness with the ball with some of the turnovers or our rebounding defensively. Those areas, we weren't good enough but Thomas hitting some shots, some good decision making, Jay hitting some threes and then Sam just playing a heck of a game was the difference. You got to find different ways to win, but you have to sure up those areas that that cost us. I think the experience of Sam (Hauser) and Kihei (Clark) (who) made some plays, a little on characteristics some of the things he did but he'll grow from it and we needed his eight assists and some of those drives too.

On the points in the paint and interior defense:

“We didn't play very well defensively if I want to be real. That was a poor performance, good action by Pitt, but they were the aggressor. We looked unready at times, and not sharp and again our offense carried us but that's disappointing. We use our term, you fail better than next time. I thought we battled hard against NC State, but defensively, we did not have the right mindset nor the right execution and it showed defensively and offensively. There's that saying don't accept in victory what you wouldn't in defeat. You're grateful for the victory but you go to work on those areas. Again, thankful for the win, but a disappointing effort in many areas of the game and then some good effort and good execution and other areas and again, partly that this this team but it's got to be better in my opinion.”

On poor defensive effort and Hauser's defense down the stretch and on Justin Champagnie:

“Look, I'll be the first to say if I watched the film and it was better than I thought but I don't think I will say that. Sam, as I said it earlier, was the difference in this game with his offense and his defense. At times we'll go and trap and we did that in the first half on him (Champagnie) and they hit a three and then we got a turnover and we decided just to see how it goes. I can't remember which coach that made the suggestion, but it was to maybe hold and let's see how Sam guards him. I thought he (Hauser) was really good at being, on we call it, a “wall on wheels.” Yes, that part I was really pleased with. There were a couple stretches but that was the difference on the defense and one of the bright spots defensively.”

Defense on Xavier Johnson:

“Pretty good for the most part. I liked how in the second half Kihei (Clark) got after it. He picked up the ball I don't know where that was in the first half, but the ability against the guy that good, you got to meet the ball. I thought Kihei challenged him in the second half and that also was a highlight. He's (Johnson) one of the quickest guys in this league and explosive. Some teams decide to play him differently, some will go under screens, over screens, impact, all those things. We just tried to make it hard on him and you could see him in flashes how quickly he gets to the lane and puts pressure on you. I think maybe that caused a little more help, and that's where the offensive rebounds came in, but yeah he was terrific against Virginia Tech and we contained him a little bit more.”

Redshirt Senior Forward Sam Hauser

On defensive growth and making Champagnie work for his points:

“I think it's a good representation (of defensive development), and I've worked hard at it. Obviously, there's still some improvement to be had, but I think I played pretty solid in the end and made him work for his shots. He's a great player. Hats off to him- he still had a really good game with a double-double, so I just tried to make it as difficult as I could for him.”

On hot start to the second half:

“No, I think we kind of upped the ante in the energy category and played more together. Obviously, the ball was moving really well in that stretch of offense and our defense really, really stepped up, but we weren't able to maintain that. I think we let our foot off the gas a little bit and that's an area to improve.”

On the cold start from behind the arc:

“You know, sometimes it's just how the ball rolls, you can't really control that. Obviously, that's why we need to be versatile. We've got to find different ways to score. We can't live and die by the three, and I think we did a good job of that in the first half considering we didn't make many threes or outside shots to start. But they started falling throughout the game and that's why you stick with it. I think once you get a few good looks in the paint, it opens up the outside shots.”

Senior Guard Tomas Woldetensae

On maintaining confidence when minutes are limited:

“Yes, it's hard to stay confident and ready to go once your name is called, but I'm always happy when the guys produce and win game because at the end of the day, it's about the team and winning.”

On shooting confidence and consistency:

“At the beginning of the season, settling into my role was a little bit challenging, a bit unsettling. But now I'm seeing myself in that type of role for this team [as a shooter] and I'm getting myself ready for this type of action. So, most of it is about mindset and just understanding your role.”