

Virginia Postgame Quotes at Georgia Tech

Head coach Tony Bennett

On Georgia Tech's strategy to guard Jay (Huff) and Sam (Hauser)"

"Some other teams have had done that a little bit lately to a certain extent, but with them putting (Jose) Alvarado on Sam and almost, it wasn't like a triangle-and-two, but they were not going to leave those guys. With us, them going under ball screens and sort of staying in the lane on Kihei (Clark) and Reece (Beekman), which we just needed to make some outside shots to loosen it up. Then we made some adjustments, moved Sam a little more, tried to go inside to Jay. We did at the start of the second half but then they started fronting and I kind of just tried to wind our guys up at halftime saying, 'throw caution to the wind, but be sound, but be aggressive. You got to go make some plays, you got to go make some plays. You got to get into the paint, and Kihei shoot it. If they go onto the screen let it ride and shoot it'. And he did that. I thought he played terrific and our defense held us in there in the first half. We needed it because we were struggling, and it held us kept us attached. Then we started going and it was just one of those games that was you know really hard fought."

On Jay's block at the end of the first half:

"Sam drove hard, I thought maybe he got bumped and then Jay went so a huge play. I thought Jay saved, really was active blocking shots. I thought Jay's hustle play to get that offensive rebound-dunk late, I thought he did a good job. Moses Wright had some hard drives and Jay bothering made him, but I really thought he covered for us and was so active rim-protecting today. We needed all that, grabbed some rebounds, he and Sam did, and Kihei's job on Alvarado shouldn't go unnoticed either, defensively. All of the guys I think they realized they had a slide, and you can just feel both teams were tired at the end. But we just got enough shots go down and plays to be made and coupled it with sound defense."

On Sam's play without a ton of scoring:

"He had to, and that was required. Same with Jay. They did that, they screened, they moved, they got on the glass, they made the next pass. Then the second half, we moved Sam a little more, we adjusted. We tried a few, two or three things, in the first half and I could just see, I felt like this is going, be you're going have to make plays and we're going have to just attack a little more and be aggressive. That's the sign of a really good player, when they say 'okay, I might not get as many touches or shots from how they are guarding me but I'm going to keep moving, finding and things.' And even Tomas (Woldetensae) coming in, his movement, he had a nice layup, but him moving just created different looks and it was just enough plays made. Sam, again, and Jay, I thought they really did some things and Trey (Murphy III) took advantage of you know some good opportunities and he got us going to start the game."

On defensive effort tonight:

"It was better. It had to be. They are such a good three-point shooting team and they spread you out, you had to really slide and protect. We got backdoored a couple times and had some breakdowns. This one killed me early in the game. Tomas checks in the game and he's got his necklace on and I hear one of our guys on our bench say, 'hey Tomas, your necklace'. And it's

an inbounds play and he's sitting there trying to get his necklace off, they run the play, his guy goes to the corner and hits a three about it lost it. I said, forget about the necklace, go. So, I was thinking if we lose by three because we're trying to get our dang gold chain off then we have some issues. But I thought that defensively, it felt, I'll watch the film, it felt like there was more of a fight and more second, third, fourth efforts, which is required on the defensive end."

Junior Guard Kihei Clark

On turnovers:

"I think it just comes down to us being ball-strong at times. I think we had some travels, just self-inflicted mistakes. I don't think they did too much. I know they get in the passing lanes, they hold cutters, they're physical, but I think we just got to be ball strong. Just take care of the ball as best as possible. I think that's why we're down early. I think if we limit those mistakes, we don't put ourselves in too big of a hole."

On winning ugly if you have to:

"I think it's just a grinder of a game. We knew it was going to be like that. So, we just try not to yield and just like coach Bennet said, 'just don't back up and just meet the challenge.' And I thought our toughness showed tonight, especially down the stretch in the second half."

On importance of these wins:

"I think every game in the ACC is tough. I think our next upcoming games is pretty good competition. So, we just prepare as best as possible and just play the game we know we can. These uh these games are real crucial going down the stretch here."

On defensive adjustments since playing Georgia Tech in first game:

"Certain plays we kind of adjusted to, just with our rotations. But I think it just came down to one on one, I think they abandoned their offense a little bit and just try to drive us. I think we did a pretty good job sliding our feet today and just trying to keep guys in front. Yeah, I think that's what it came down to."

Sophomore Guard Trey Murphy III

On playing games with fans:

"I love the energy in there. I feel like road games are the best because you got people going against you, you got a little bit more adversity. It was a great atmosphere in there and I really appreciate it a lot. I miss that about college basketball, and hopefully we get some more games like that."

On seeing Georgia Tech paying attention to Jay and Sam:

"The mindset overall is always to be aggressive and they pointed out that on when we are playing sides, they're going to be really hugged up on Sam so I can get a lot of easy curls to the basket, and I can get a lot more scoring opportunities because there's no help on Sam's. So, yeah, in a sense, we see that, and we make adjustments."

On Kihei coming back with big second half:

“When we went in at halftime, everybody was talking, and I talked to Kihei as well and I told him ‘Look, they’re going go on and be like that, shoot the ball.’ We’ve been working all summer, offseason, as well as preseason on his jump shot and he was knocking it down very consistently. I had confidence in Kihei, and we had to make sure that he knew that. Coach Bennett, he came back after he spoke at halftime and told Kihei he likes those shots and he really wants to shoot the ball and it paid. “It was great for us in the second half.”

On today’s defensive effort:

“The biggest thing for us today was that we covered for each other. There were times where we had breakdowns, and Jay rotated over, Sam rotated over, I rotated over, and we all help for each other and that’s what it’s all about. That’s what we have to be as a team, just covering for each other’s mistakes because they happen.”