

Virginia Head Coach Tony Bennett

On the loss:

“When you're in these tight games, any lapse you have - a missed block out, not forcing the guy the wrong way to screen - those just get magnified. The small things matter kind of got us a little bit at Duke, although I thought we played a more solid game start to finish (at Duke), this one hurt because they (more physical) at times and I thought we had some mental toughness that was in stretches good but in times we lost our way a little bit. Sam (Hauser) got hot late and Jay (Huff) statistically, didn't hit the threes but scored some. After that it was hard. They has to keep improving when they climb into him. He's very good in the space but how does this team play when the shots are not going in. We haven't become gritty enough or tough enough to lean on our defense to hold us in there. We did it a couple times this year, but not consistently enough. They started going at us, you look at the points in the paint and those things, that was discouraging but we still had some chances. Then they hit the three of the board at the end of the shot clock and I think was a three-point game, that hurt to maybe have a chance. NC State is playing good ball and they're a talented team and if you don't play sound good basketball you'll get beat in this league and we're certainly not finding that to be the truth.”

Message to the team...

“The message was don't hang your head. You can't do that. The pillars in our program matter and you stay unified. One thing you must do is look in the mirror and say, am I being as physically tough and mentally sound and tough as I absolutely can be to give ourselves the best chance to be as good as we can be. Whatever that is. I did it earlier (in the year), I drew a line and I said this is what you think your maximum effort is, and you're trying to get to but there's a line above it and you got to somehow get to that because you're leaving too much on the floor. It's hard to be good down the stretch, teams are starting to play better and we've kind of hit a little lull here obviously. We have to regroup and as I said, you don't hang your heads. You stay unified and keep finding ways. We got some lifts. I thought the physicality that Justin McCoy brought and Francisco (Caffaro) brought us were good. I thought they battled hard and that was a physical game and (we) kind of climbed back in (it). Sam (Hauser) played his heart out but we need more (from everyone).”

On NC State's smothering defense, similar to how Florida State & Duke played UVA:

“We got guys different shots and I thought we got really quality looks early and we missed some. Our defense sort of let us down but I thought offensively we did miss some shots that were quality looks and sometimes you just got to make shots. I thought it was better than the Florida State game. I need to look at it, I may take this back, but I didn't think the offense was a major problem. I mean it wasn't great but, I think when they wanted to get a bucket inside or take advantage of a breakdown, that's what hurt us for a second shot in this kind of game. There's only so much you can do offensively when teams are switching, you've got to make some plays and we tried to exploit it in ways that are best for us but guys get a little cold from the outside, that's kind of been one of the things that we struggled with.”

On Availability of Tomas Woldetensae on Monday:

“Hope so. It’s obviously his last home game as a senior. We’re hopeful. He obviously has to test negative and be out of quarantine, so we’re hopeful.”

Virginia Redshirt Senior Forward Sam Hauser

On digging early hole and coming back to get lead in second half:

“We had some breakdowns like in the way we started the game. I think those [breakdowns] started to come back and creep back into the game in the second half. I think that's what led to North Carolina State regaining the lead. Obviously you can't get the whole idea from the start, though, regardless of shots are going in or not. We got to be better on defense.”

On NC State banking in a three-point shot late:

“We played good defense on that possession. They made a tough shot. Hats off to them because there's not much you can do about that one. It is just one of those things.”

On the team getting better physically and mentally down the stretch:

“Not only physically, but I think mentally we got we have to sharpen up and get more tough. I think we've had some of the same type of lapses happen throughout the year in our losses, and they seem to keep coming up and repeating themselves. I think we do have to get physically tougher, but I think a lot of it starts with the mental side, and we just got to keep working at it. The good thing about a loss is you get to come back get another game. Hopefully we can get better practices the next few days and come back on Monday ready to go.”

Virginia Redshirt Senior Forward Jay Huff

On keys to pull out of the current losing streak:

“Just staying together. I told the team after the game that my redshirt year we lost four in a row early on in the season and we ended up winning the ACC Tournament. No nothing has changed in terms of our goals. Can't win them all and we're going to have to figure some things out, but it's not the end of the world.”

On the mood in the locker room:

“It was by no means a happy locker room, but we've been in bad situations before. We will be alright and, obviously, we're frustrated, but we're just we're all trying to figure out what we can do better and what things that we need to fix.”

On the need for increased toughness:

“The physical kind of follows the mental with that. Toughness isn't just typical lifting something really big or something like that. It is all mental and it's just it's just getting stops down the stretch. I think that we can get there and we need to have a little bit more of that as we go this season.”