

Virginia Postgame Quotes at Louisville

Head Coach Tony Bennet

On if this regular-season title feels any different:

“It feels great. I told them before the game, I took this job at Virginia to hopefully have chances at title fights, and we talked about that. I can go back to the regular-season game against Syracuse that first year at John Paul Jones Arena where it was one of the most special atmospheres and games. Conference this year, yeah there's different things, but we played the majority of our games on the road, all those things. To get it how we did it, I'm so grateful. It's not lost on me. I'm sitting right now in the locker room where we had one of the biggest celebrations when we beat Purdue to go to the Final Four. Right across the hallway was our other one, we were throwing water and just so excited I said, “Congratulations to the 2021 ACC Regular-Season Champs.’ We talked about what a title fight meant and being able to live with the results win or lose, but lay it on the line and don't yield, and to have those opportunities and special moments in this building and to see what some of the guys did and to get the contributions from the bench. Sam (Hauser), what he did was special. Trey (Murphy III) and just a bunch of guys I think made it taste sweeter. I'm so grateful, I really am because it's been a unique year to say the least and we will remember it always. We'll put a mask on the ACC trophy for sure.”

On stretch with Sam and Jay (Huff) on the bench:

“A pivotal moment is when Tomas (Woldetensae) got fouled shooting that three ball in the corner and made all three free throws. They were coming back, so I thought that was significant. They went small ball. I thought Jay was really good, first half and parts of the started second half but then they went small, we said we got to match up. Sam got in a little foul trouble and, then you saw Justin (McKoy) make a big rebound, Tomas got another, just everybody, Casey (Morsell), different guys. Trey (Murphy III) played a real good game. I liked how Reece (Beekman) and Kihei (Clark) touched the paint but made good decisions. That kind of contribution, and again, that was an MVP type performance in my opinion, what Sam did in this league. I think he and Jay are probably in the running for that. I hope they can both get it and share it. I thought that was special to win an ACC, and we needed that, and he just put us for stretches on his back and was terrific.”

On what defense did on Carlik Jones:

“I think Kihei, and then when Reese was on him, I thought they were really good. The guys helped, but I thought they took that challenge. That's the sign of the team and yes, individual accolades, to say we won a title in this year, that will matter. Looking at the stats sheet, he's a heck of a player and obviously he missed some shots, he was 2-of-15, but as always it is, can we make a really good player and their team take tough shots and earn their buckets. We caught a couple breaks. They missed a layup, they had us a few times and they could have cut it. But we'll take it, and like I said, I thought we played tough sound basketball when we needed it most.”

Redshirt Senior Forward Sam Hauser

On if knew the result of Florida State/Notre Dame game:

“We had our eye on the game, knowing that if they lost and we won we would win it. When they ended up actually losing, we couldn't have a blind eye to it and we knew what was at stake. I think that gave us even more motivation for this game. At the start of the year, this was one of our goals and check the box off, but we got a lot more to do for sure. It's definitely great to get this championship and be a part of this program.”

On run with him and Jay (Huff) on the bench:

“Man, those guys played their butts off. On the defensive end they were phenomenal, and they were making really good plays on offense. I think that's what really sealed us the game is that stretch when those guys were in and hats off to them, they played awesome tonight. We really needed everyone tonight because it was a hard-fought battle against a really good team.”

On winning the regular-season championship in a pandemic:

“It's definitely different. I had never been a part of a conference championship team until now, so for me this is a first in college. I'm just excited that we got it, and we got it done and it didn't matter if it was during the pandemic or not. I'm just happy that we were able to come out on top of this conference this year, so I'm really excited.”

Junior Guard Trey Murphy III

On being a part of an ACC Championship team:

“Super excited. This is exactly what I came here for, and I wanted to play against the best competition and win championships at the highest level. I'm super excited, super proud of my guys, super proud of the coaching stuff. We really put together a great game. There were stretches where they were making runs, and we just withstood those, and I was really happy about it.”

On regaining form:

“Not much different just, I would say more a mentality and mindset, also changed. I was just thinking I need to be more aggressive because if I'm not aggressive, it's going to be a lot harder for us to win. I know I got a lot of confidence from my teammates. They were all telling me ‘we need you to score.’ Coach Bennett, he's telling me he wants me to be aggressive and make plays and really, I just thank them for it, and also my mom. She was talking about trash to me too, so that helped motivate me to get back to what I was doing.”

On lineup with Jay and Sam out:

“Really it was just is guys staying ready, and Justin gave us really valuable minutes. He came in and rebounded the ball really well offensively and defensively. And really, we were just very connected the entire time. It was the next man up mentality when people were in foul trouble. Super proud of everybody.”