

**VIRGINIA VS. NORTH CAROLINA  
CHARLOTTEVILLE, VA. (SCOTT STADIUM)  
VIRGINIA PLAYER QUOTES**

**Fifth Year Running Back Ronnie Walker Jr.**

***On the close game:***

“We know we can do it. We just have to take each step along the way. In practice we need to be very intentional. I'm very proud of the representatives in this group that stepped up today. The young guys stepped up too, and I'm proud of the running back group that played really physical with every snap.

***On Wicks and Thompson being out:***

“Yeah, we had that mentality to do this as a team. And you can see in the first half we connected with one another in the running game and in the passing game. It was a reciprocal relationship.”

***On success in the red zone:***

“The running game, you know, we had it, we practice it. We know that we have a low percentage in the red zone. Today we persevered and we'll do it again.”

**Graduate Student Defensive End Paul Akere**

***On UNC's high scoring offense:***

“Obviously, they scored more than we wanted them to score. But, that's how it goes in the game. We didn't play well enough, and have a few plays to clean up. Overall, we fought hard when it was time to fight, and we got some good timed stops and a lot of momentum to build on.”

***On the close game***

“I think it can definitely be discouraging, but like it's all about perspective at the end of the day. So, knowing that we're building something here is important. Everyone has bought into what Coach Elliot is building here. He says keep on chopping at the chopping block when it doesn't go your way. I think that's what we've been doing when it doesn't go our way. If it's today, tomorrow, or the next practice, we're going to keep building.”

***On Drake Maye***

“He's a great quarterback. So, obviously, we wanted to keep him in the pocket. As a defensive lineman, a lot of the stuff I'm doing is focused on rushing and trying to keep the quarterback in the pocket. Whenever he was able to get out of the pocket and extend those plays, it was because we couldn't get there. We saw this in some of the bigger, more explosive plays. It started off with us not being able to get our rush going fast enough.”

**Junior TE Sackett Wood Jr.**

***On the offense stepping up without key weapons***

“When we're missing our three biggest playmakers, we know we've got to come together as a group and really work to score. We haven't been doing that well in the past. So, it was good to see that today by this group. Once we get those guys back, we'll be able to get better.”

***On Wood's skillset helping him perform today***

“For the most part, I'm just trying to get up field as quickly as possible. If there's opportunity to break a tackle, depending on what I'm seeing, I'll maybe make a move. But for the most part, when I catch the ball, I'm just trying to get as far up field as possible.”

## **Sophomore LB James Jackson**

### ***On the defense's ability to finish the game***

"We have a lot of pride as a defense. We talk a lot about playing for each other. So, whenever we're in a tough situation like that, we just think about playing for each other. That's the message for the whole defense."

### ***On the defense's performance overall today***

"We just needed a couple more stops. I think, in the first half, we played them pretty well. And then in that third quarter, we came out and couldn't get off the field. We needed that; we needed to get off the field in that third quarter and we didn't."

### ***On what Jackson has learned about his teammates through the past couple of games***

"A lot of people are really leading the defense. Nick Jackson, AJ [Anthony Johnson]; Those guys are true leaders. On the defensive line, Aaron Faumui. That guy is coming through, making plays. We can depend on each other. We do our jobs, and we can expect somebody to make a play. So, I'm trusting them a lot. I've learned to trust them a lot and that they're great leaders. They'll lead us and I know we're going to play to the end."