

VIRGINIA TECH

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Virginia Tech Head Coach Mike Young Q&A Highlights

Postgame Media Conference vs. Notre Dame

Jan. 10, 2021

On defensive adjustments in the second half:

"We didn't adjust a darn thing. We guarded in the second half the way we wanted to guard in the first half. We communicated much better [and] we were able to keep a body on a body. We had a couple of textbook possessions. Notre Dame, who is really good offensively, had a tough time getting a shot. Laszewski is just a really good basketball player, as are Hubb and Goodwin. I really, really like the young man transfer from Stanford, Ryan. We had a goal. We wanted to limit Notre Dame to less than eight [field goals made]. When our assistant coach that had the scout said that, I kind of took a step backwards like, 'Holy cow! Good luck with that one.' They had five [3PM] in the first half, we had five in the first half. Extraordinary. To rebound as we did, 16 offensive rebounds. We outrebounded them [with] 17. That will win a lot of ball games for you."

On importance of Hunter Cattoor's big shots in the second half:

"He [Cattoor] got two big shots down, but that boy played a really good ball game. I think he did a nice job on his match. He had Wertz on several possessions. I think with what we're doing with switching and trying to keep bodies on those guys that can shoot it so well, I thought he was active and engaged. Really moved his feet well. Those were two big shots, yes, granted— I thought his overall play in 26 minutes was pretty special. It went a long way in helping us win."

On finding success in rebounding this season:

"I think we can [rebound as good as anyone]. Mutts is an even better rebounder than I thought he was. I thought that Louisville game was a real tipping point for him. He had been a bit too outside of who he is as a ball player. He is a big, long, strong young man. The second half of the Louisville game he was really good [and] he was really good tonight. Man, what a shot in the arm that is. Now couple that with Keve Aluma and Tyrece Radford, who is as good of a 6-foot-1 small forward as you're going to find. David N'Guessan, a young man that is a freshman, gave us a real boost in the second half with his activity in keeping balls alive. I just hated how we [were getting] mauled on the glass night in and night out last year. I knew we would be better with this team, but it's got to be every time out. It's going to be enormous on Tuesday against Duke. [I'm] pleased with it, but there's work still to do."

On team's standing so far in ACC play:

"I feel good about it. We're not organizing any parades down South Main anytime soon. We are four games in. [There's] a long way to go. With everything that we're dealing with, we feel so thankful to

have an opportunity to play tonight. We have a test we gotta get through tomorrow morning, and hopefully that goes well and we have another opportunity to play on Tuesday against Duke. I don't want to say I was discouraged, [but] I just didn't like how we played on Wednesday, I take absolutely nothing away from Louisville, but I don't think we were Virginia Tech on Wednesday. I didn't think we were very good in the first half here, but we got some things together and that was as good as a half as we have had in quite some time.

On thoughts of the freshman classes performance so far:

"I'm pleased with it. I want to find more minutes for Maddux [and] N'Guessan. Those two kids are practicing well. Here's the explanation, when you're sitting your tail over there and you're trying to win a ball game, you're doing everything you can to help your team and not disrupt a flow [or] a person's minutes who needs to be out there. They're great teammates. They're ready to go when their numbers are called, and they will be on Tuesday against the Blue Devils. Really, really pleased with what they bring every day. They're practicing really well. N'Guessan got another crack at it in the second half, I think he was out there for four or five minutes and helped us. HE got a big stick back and I think he got an offensive rebound. Those guys are going to be really good players for us."

Virginia Tech Player Q&A Highlights

JALEN CONE

What kind of defensive adjustments did you guys make going into the second half:

"Closing to their body and being there on the catch. Notre Dame is a great shooting team and in the first half they were catching it and shooting it. We didn't force them to put it on the floor or force them to take tough shots. That second half we were there on the catch and forced them to take tough shots which allowed us to get stops."

What was helping you click offensively:

"Playing my game and having that confidence from Coach Young to give me the green light to play and be who I am. I think that confidence from him and my teammates allows me to come in every night to play the game I want to."

What did you make of the work of your frontcourt teammates on rebounding and how much of a focus was it going into this game:

"It was a big focus, I don't think we walk out of this game with a win without the frontcourt playing the way they played and getting all the rebounds they did. We watched the Louisville game and we saw that it hurt us and when the game came down to the last shot, we saw those extra possessions and extra rebounds they got to get second-chance shots which they converted. That was a big emphasis on today's game and I think Justyn Mutts, Keve Aluma, and Tyrece Radford did a very good job giving us extra possessions."

When do you start thinking about Duke:

“The moment we step in the locker room after the game, all of our attention turns toward our upcoming game with Duke. We talked about them a little bit, and we’re starting to prepare for them now.”

KEVE ALUMA

What helped you guys do well on the boards tonight:

“They’ve just been telling us to pick that up. The past two games, we haven’t given our best effort, so we just tried to do that.”

What got the defense so effective in the second half:

“Just trying to stay locked in and be as tenacious as possible. We knew that we wanted them to put it on the floor, because they can all shoot so that’s what we tried to do.”

What did you guys do better in the second half to guard them:

“Like I said, just trying to stay locked in. Sometimes we tend to get lackadaisical so we just tried to be locked in at all times.”

How much of an emphasis was rebounding going into tonight:

“I had four rebounds last game and I didn’t play too well. I just tried to block lanes and get us the win.”

How much of a strength can [rebounding] be for this year’s team:

“We’re definitely a bigger team than last year and trying to win the glass and that’s what we try to do every night.”