

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 64, Virginia 63
Saturday, February 26, 2022
John Paul Jones Arena
Charlottesville, Va.

Virginia Head Coach Tony Bennett

On defending Florida State in the final minutes of the game:

"I thought we were on the edge all night with our defense and then they started scoring quickly. They kept just driving it right by us. We didn't keep a guy in front, gave up a couple key offensive rebounds. And then they're always with their length. I thought we were playing a little unsound and we talked about it at one turnover. We had the ball with Reece [Beekman] and I don't know who it was. So some unsound play, a couple careless turnovers, not careless because they're always scratching the passing lane with their length and athleticism, and then us not being able to get stops. Now they've made some nice plays driving down the stretch and again kid [Matthew Cleveland] hit an unbelievable shot with a second left. Armaan [Franklin] hit a tough shot, hit a three and so put it in that spot but that that's a tough way for on your senior night for you Kihei [Clark] and Cody [Stattmann] to go out but they certainly made some plays as we just talked about down the stretch. I felt with the turnovers and the ability to not just get a stop cost us dearly. We've been close on the edge in a lot of games. We won some close ones. And you can't play with fire like that."

On the difficulty guarding Matthew Cleveland:

"What we've done in the past before is put a big on the ball to make the pass hard. Kadin jumped up. They found him I mean, I think he kind of went and broke back and there's a little space and then Armaan [Franklin] had, [what it] looked like in real time, obviously didn't want to foul but just tried to get his hands up and he [Cleveland] made what, I mean probably about a 30-footer at the buzzer. I don't know what more we could have done, possibly there's some other things. But yes that we lost on that shot, but when you drop a tough game like that you look at the opening play of the game, we didn't even know who we had, that's a bucket. Some of those things should just not happen and some of the careless plays, those sting because of that stuff. We have to be sharp in those areas. Most of the time, if not all the time."

On the emotions surrounding senior day:

"It starts with the managers who are unbelievable in terms of their commitment to our program to just really not be about themselves at all and they give, they serve. I've said, 'If I'm hiring someone I'd look at guys like that first for what they do.' Jayden Nixon who has been part of this, I'm so thankful for the couple of years he's been here we've been able to award him a scholarship, a great student. You talk about seeing how hard he works in practice. His game has really improved. You wouldn't really know that because you don't see him but he's really improved his game and he's just a wonderful teammate and I'm so thankful for his time here. Kody [Stattmann]'s had kind of an up and down run but he has stayed faithful and just kept working and as a great teammate and a fine young man. I told his parents that they should be proud that they raised a really good young man. Kihei [Clark]'s story is really special for him. You think of where he came from and all he's accomplished, and again, this one will sting for him on a senior night but it's just a part of this game, there's nothing guaranteed and it'll hopefully be a lesson and hopefully we'll grow from it, there's not a whole lot of season left. So we apply what we learned and get as ready as we can for the next one."

Virginia Guard Kody Stattmann

On the defensive breakdowns in the last few minutes:

"[Matthew] Cleveland got going a little bit and I think we probably just relaxed. That's something that we shouldn't do in the last few minutes of the game. It's the time where we need to lock in more and shut him down, but he got going a bit and that hurt us."

On his final game at JPI:

"Yeah, it was great. I had my family here for the first time since I've been here so having them here was good. Having them come to watch a big game like that is always good. Like Armaan [Franklin] said, it's tough to go out like that with the shot at the end. But the experience in the end was great."

Virginia Guard Armaan Franklin

On the final minutes of the game:

"Yeah I missed the free throw, I could have hit that one. But they came down making sure to make a shot. We score after that and then they run a curl action when he comes off the top and shoots a deep one. It looked good when it left his hands but that was just a tough way to go out."

On what caused the defensive problems at the end of the game:

"I think that we kind of broke down on the defensive end the last three or so minutes of the game, they hit I think their last eight shots. Like Kody [Stattmann] said, that's the time we need to lock in even more and fill in our gaps. At the same time they hit some tough shots."