

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Virginia Tech vs Texas

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

Fiserv Forum

Virginia Tech Hokies Coach Mike Young Hunter Cattoor Keve Aluma

Media Conference

Texas - 81, Virginia Tech - 73

MODERATOR: Welcome the Virginia Tech Hokies. We'll open it up to Coach Young for an opening statement.

COACH MIKE YOUNG: Longhorns outplayed us, needless to say. I tip my cap to Coach Beard, his staff and his players. They were better than we were this afternoon and go back and look at it, but, you know, that's a lot more that needs to be said.

Q. Obviously you guys had the great run last week. What was helping you click last week that you weren't able to duplicate or do as well tonight?

HUNTER CATTOOR: I would just say connectivity on the defensive end. I think we were super connected down in Brooklyn. Today I thought we got off to a good start. Scoreless to the first media and then during the game they were just getting their shots down. Credit to them, they made shots tonight.

KEVE ALUMA: I agree with Hunter.

Q. Hunter, you guys usually are so good taking care of the ball. You had nine turnovers in the second half. What do you tribute that to?

HUNTER CATTOOR: Yeah, I felt we weren't strong with the ball today, including myself. I had three turnovers. Can't be happening in a tournament game like that. They just played pressure. Like I said before, they weren't going to make anything easy and we were going to have to take care of the ball.



Q. Hunter, they mentioned just a couple minutes ago that one of their big keys was running you guys off the 3-point line. What did they do so well blowing up screens and how did that kind of alter the way you played offensively?

HUNTER CATTOOR: Yeah, they did a good job of that. They were taking away easy catches on the top of the key. Whenever we came down the screen they were topping it, not letting us come off easily and so it kind of forced us to get to the basket and get two. And so they were just going to live with that. As long as we shot more twos than threes, that was their game plan and it worked out pretty well for them.

Q. Texas was 250th in the country in 3-point percentage coming into the game and yet today over 50 percent. Did you guys feel like you defended them well beyond the arc?

KEVE ALUMA: I don't think so necessarily. I mean, Jones, he was five for six in the first half and then they banked in that one. I don't think so. You can always be better, but no, I don't think we defended them as good as we should have.

Q. Can you guys just take us through that last sequence in the first half? I think they scored six points in the last 25 seconds or so and then three-quarter court shot at the end. Did you feel fortunate at the half to only be down two, because you guys had to sit most of that first half?

HUNTER CATTOOR: Yeah, obviously it's unfortunate whenever they throw a heave like that contested and make it in. But we felt like we were in a good position. We had me and Keve out for the last six minutes, so we knew we were going to be all right going into the second half. There's some things we had to fix in the second half.

Q. For either of you, just you talk about the second half. What made the difference there the first five, ten minutes of the second half when Texas started to stretch it out to the double-digit lead there?

HUNTER CATTOOR: I think they were just hitting shots. There were some things we could have been a little bit better at, but at the end of the day they had good players and those players stepped up and hit shots. So that, and that's about it, yeah.

Q. For Keve and Hunter, I know the loss is still fresh, but how do you sum up this season, filled with highs and lows and ACC tournament championship and great teammates?

HUNTER CATTOOR: Obviously this loss sucks, you want to keep winning, but at the end of the day when you look at the big picture, when you look back, we're the first team at Virginia Tech to ever be ACC champs, so no one will ever be able to take that away from us.

The relationships we build with each other and the coaching staff, it's more about life, it's not all about basketball. The relationships we take away from this, growing as humans, I'll be forever grateful for it.

MODERATOR: Thank you for your time. Questions for Coach Young?

Q. Coach, did Texas do anything differently in the second half to kind of disrupt you guys? Nine second-half turnovers and it seemed like it was hard to get into a really offensive rhythm in that second 20 minutes.

COACH MIKE YOUNG: I will see him, I will see Coach Beard soon and we'll talk about it. I think you're going to pick your poison, okay? You're either going to take care of Mutts and crowd them or you're going to take care of the arc, all right, and he chose the latter.

He would double Mutts and Aluma. The first early second half they had a good one. We got it out of there, but it was violent and they came out of it in pretty good shape. I think it's pretty telling, we only shot 12 and that is -- that's well below our average, and we only made four, that also is well below our average. And then I thought it was a bad call. The officials said it was a bad call, Aluma's second foul. Now the dynamics of the darn thing changed, you've got to sit him for the last six minutes, but that certainly didn't beat us.

Q. What was the impact of that 3-pointer they make --

COACH MIKE YOUNG: It's a momentum thing.

Got a water anybody?

It's a momentum thing, all right? We're in great shape.

Storm gets those two foul shots down. You know, we don't want him to roll it and scoop it up at midcourt and get that shot. Kid made a three-quarter court shot, give me a break. But that is a momentum play. They had the ball to start the second half, I think they got something down -- thank you very much -- I think they got something down there. So those are -- those can swing some things, all right? Did it beat us? No, but it was a momentum for the Longhorns going into the half.

Q. As a follow-up to that, obviously the loss is still fresh and raw, but when you look at the totality of the season, what you've been able to accomplish, how would you characterize the season overall for you guys?

COACH MIKE YOUNG: I just told them, I need time to process it. Gene, I forget what it was, I know we were 10-10, 2-7 in the league and I carried a great burden because we were a lot more talented than we were playing and last time I checked that's on me. But great character, and those guys hung in there and continued to come to practice and they didn't separate. They hung in there as a unit, started playing good basketball, started rattling some games off and won nine out of our last 11 or something like that. Didn't play very well at Clemson. Clemson was good, physical and got beat by a couple. Had to go to Brooklyn, New York, and play Clemson again. We get a basket in at the buzzer to advance and then rattle off consecutive wins, Notre Dame, North Carolina and Duke to win the ACC championship. Not taking that away ever.

So going to continue to come here, need to win here, what we need to do. But you know, a great tournament. Texas was a little bit better. I'm not sure I answered your question, Gene. I think it's a pretty special season.

Q. To follow up on that, I know you didn't want to lose in the first round again, but do you feel like the ACC championship and back to back NCAA appearances is something to build on with the program going forward? Obviously you don't know who's coming back or not. But do you feel like the pieces are in place and these back-to-back seasons are something to build on here?

COACH MIKE YOUNG: I think it's a pretty good step in a positive direction. Pretty good.

Q. That's the best Texas has shot beyond the arc since Houston Baptist in the opener. How would you assess your defense? Did you think you were --

COACH MIKE YOUNG: We really wanted -- no, it wasn't very good, it wasn't very good. 36 first half points, 34 first

half points, I didn't think we had gotten our feet under us offensively. I thought we were going to be a lot -- but I told them 34 points to Texas in a half is not good enough. We spent so much time, shrink the floor, shrink the floor, take care of Allen. We wanted to play 32 and Disu, No. 4. We wanted to play those one on one, we thought we could guard them one on one, but we thought we had to put Allen in a cocoon, if you will, and swipe at the ball. Pretty soft defensively on two of Jones' made threes. Just we got the right tag and he gets behind it and makes a shot. David, I think I watched 10 Texas games, maybe more. You know, the basketball gods. It's not a very good shooting team. They're very, very, good, all right? You know, Big 12 and so on. But combination of good day for the Longhorns and not as good a defensive effort as we've come to expect.

MODERATOR: Mike, thanks for your time.

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