

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Virginia Tech Hokies

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Coach Mike Young

Grant Basile

Postgame Press Conference



NC State 97, Virginia Tech 77

MIKE YOUNG: Had a game last year in Charlotte against a really, really good A-10 team, St. Bonaventure, and everything we threw in the air went in the basket, and they had a heck of a team. It was reminiscent of that. I take nothing away from Coach Keatts and the Wolfpack. They wore my tail out, and I applaud them.

You guys go ahead. It's awful late in the evening to be doing what we're doing right now.

Q. I'm curious, what has not come together defensively for your group? You had a couple good stretches defensively --

MIKE YOUNG: Had some great stretches. They're a real handful to defend because of Burns and the pressure that he can put on you, and you feel like you've got to send two. The only people in the last third of the season, Virginia had to send people at him. You pick your poison. You've got Joiner and Smith out there, Casey Morsell has had a very good year for them, so they make it challenging.

Q. What did you hope to do defensively against State overall and Smith in general that didn't work out today?

MIKE YOUNG: Well, we knew our rotations would have to be on point. They were going to be superb. He is a really, really good passer.

But as you saw, when we got to him, we knocked a couple down, maybe three down. To cool him off, you try to play him one on one, and we did that, and you were there. If you try to play him one-on-one -- I think what won the game for them at their place, he had two fouls in the first

half, and he had 10 I think in the second half, and we couldn't do anything. We couldn't do anything with him.

I've seen him score on Lively, I've seen him score on Bacot. We wanted to hold on to our hedge longer with Joiner and Smith. They're so dynamic off of ball screens and in the open floor. Smith, I think their first basket was a pull-up three in transition that he buries with regularity. We couldn't get to either of them. I think they had 31 of their first-half points, which -- not good enough. Not good enough.

Q. Although it might have taken place when the game was somewhat out of reach, Rodney Rice played really well tonight.

MIKE YOUNG: Yeah, he did. When you're trying to win, that got to a point -- and he's played well. He's had such a frustrating year for anyone, certainly a freshman that had such high hopes, we had such high hopes for, and battled through a number of really difficult injuries. And to get back here and play a cluster of games and play well and be part of the rotation, I think he played 17 minutes last night, his first night in the ACC Tournament. I thought he played well. I thought he looked comfortable, and that is a great sign for us moving ahead.

Q. Given some of your younger players such as Rodney, do you think your program would benefit from an NIT?

MIKE YOUNG: I do. I do. And I hope like crazy that that comes to fruition. 19 wins? I think that's worthy. We'll see. We'll see how all that falls out on Sunday. But I hope that that happens.

Q. In your first year as a Hokie, it's obviously been a long way from the beginning of the season until now. How do you think you have developed and is there anything that you're hoping to improve if you return next year?

GRANT BASILE: Yeah, I think obviously it was a long year for us, especially that stretch in January, but the course of the basketball season, I think we got a lot better as a team,



started playing more connected. I think the next step for me personally is defensively to continue to pick it up.

Q. You had the rough stretch last year, then turned things around, got on such a good roll. What was different or what didn't click this year to get to that same point?

MIKE YOUNG: We never could find a right rhythm, the right rotation. We didn't have the same personnel. Rodney is down, Hunter is down. A failing on my part, to be frank. Got to be better.

Q. Not knowing whether this is the end or not, how will you think of this season?

MIKE YOUNG: Good. 19 wins. Expected a lot better. Expected a lot better.

You know, I hope we have an opportunity to play again. I've really enjoyed coaching this team, and we'll assess as we go along.

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