

Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Virginia Cavaliers

Coach Tony Elliott

Beau Pribula

Kam Robinson

McKale Boley

Press Conference



TONY ELLIOTT: Year five, wow. Time's flying. On behalf of Dr. Williams, our athletic director and President Beardsley and the board of the University of Virginia. Have to say it's an extreme honor to be up here representing our university and our program.

Excited about the three young men that I have with me, which you'll have a chance to hear from them, they'll be able to give you more details about how this upcoming season's team is coming together.

As I look at the sign that says 'built in the ACC', one thing I can say is Tony Elliott was built in the ACC. If you want to see how or what this conference is about, there's a living, breathing example of what the ACC is all about.

I know there's always a storyline out there, but I think the numbers speak for themselves. I'm ACC through and through. Went to school at Clemson, coached at Clemson, spent the bulk of my career in the ACC, now at the University of Virginia.

What I can say is there's not a better conference in the country in developing the holistic student-athlete. At the end of the day I think that's what the main objective of my job and the position that we're in as the practitioners in this business.

But man, I'm so proud to be a part of the ACC. I think if you look at the strength of our conference from top to bottom, the numbers will tell you with the amount of eight-win and nine-win and ten-win teams that we had last season, the record in the post-season, the willingness to play one of the toughest non-conference schedules in the country.

That's not just this coming year, that's been the last several years in a row.

If you need any living, breathing examples of what the ACC is all about, I raise my hand and I volunteer for that job.

About this coming year, man, extremely excited. After you hear these young men articulate about our program, I think you'll see why. But it's been a really, really fun off-season.

This off-season has been fun because of things that have taken place years in advance. I want to thank all of our supporters, fans and donors for all that they've done investing in this program.

I think that everybody knows the road that we been on at the University of Virginia since taking over as the head coach with our new staff.

Grateful for all of the adversity that we went through in the early stages of building the program. But more thankful for just the commitment, the commitment of the staff, commitment of the players, to the vision. What we were able to experience last year was just that vision coming to life.

But it's not possible without the sacrifice and commitment of the fan base, the donor base, the administration, our players, our staff two, three years ago leading up to where we are today.

Now, the biggest challenge for us going forward is sustaining that excellence, right? From day one I talked about, and McKale can tell you, Kam can tell you, I talked a lot earlier on in their career about handling success, even when you couldn't see the success, own when there was only 11 wins in three seasons.

I was talking about managing success because I wholeheartedly believed that one day we would be in a position where we're coming off an historic season like we did last year.

Excited about this new group. We added 46 new guys to



our roster, 31 through the transfer portal and 15 through the high school ranks. These last couple months has really been about the team coming together, taking the coaches out of the equation and letting the players naturally bond together to create the chemistry needed to become a successful team.

My desire for this upcoming season is that what you see is who we are, what way say our identity is, a fit football team, fast, intelligent, tough. I'm excited for the opportunity for you to hear about these outstanding scholar-athletes, because at the University of Virginia we're very particular about the words that we use. We refer to our young men at scholar-athletes.

Again, what I believe makes the ACC the best conference in the country is that we have a holistic approach, we're doing it the right way, we're competing for championships on the field, but more importantly we're competing for championships off the field.

With that, I'll take questions.

Q. You've been quoted as saying that your vision for this UVA program was to become the model program in college football. You got up here and said five years, wow. Time is flying. Where do you envision this program?

TONY ELLIOTT: Yeah, so that vision from day one was to become the model. I remember that was four years ago. So the landscape was starting to change, but now it's completely different.

I still think the vision holds true. What I mean by being a model is that, man, we pursue excellence in all that we do. We want to be first and foremost the best human being we can be, then we want to be the best student that we can be, then we want to be the best family member, friend, football player, person in our community. Everything we do, we want to pursue excellence. That doesn't mean perfection.

We talk a lot about building champion men, right? All of us have opportunities to win championships daily. It's just about all perspective. So that's what my vision was, to create a program that on the outside looking in you could say, You know what, those folks over there at Virginia, man, they got the right compass, they're doing it the right way, they're having success on and off the field.

To answer your question about where do I see us going, that means sustaining that excellence. Does that mean every season is 11-3? I can't predict that. What I hope is every season we're maximizing the potential of what that

team has and we're also maximizing the potential of what each individual scholar athlete has within our program.

Q. You just mentioned maximizing potential. You are coming off a great year with great momentum. How are you going to keep your players hungry?

TONY ELLIOTT: Great, great question. That's the key, right? So as I mentioned earlier, it's about handling success.

I think the way that we have to do that is we have to acknowledge what we were able to accomplish last year, but we have to have a very clear understanding that what happened last year doesn't automatically carry over to this year, and you're not entitled to having that same level of success on the field.

It's all about the input and can we carry over the commitment to the process, not focusing on the results of last year, but the commitment to the process, can we carry that over and keep the blinders on and stay focused on the things that make you successful.

What is that? That's just really your commitment to doing the little things. Then finding a way to improve upon the things that you're already good at. Then acknowledging your weaknesses and attacking and improving those.

That's really the approach. I know that's maybe a cliché answer, but that's really the approach that we're taking.

Q. Can you talk to the amount of progress this program has made since the tragedy many years ago, how far this program has come, how far you have come as a coach since that day?

TONY ELLIOTT: I like just examples. When I look over to my left, I see Kam Robinson and McKale Boley; I also see Beau. Beau has kind of come after the fact and said, We'll carry that burden with you.

Kam Robinson came right after that happened. He's still here today, right? McKale Boley came right around that time. I think you were there when it happened. He was a part of that, and they're still here today at Virginia. I think that just speaks to the environment that that tragedy has helped us to foster to where young men want to stay and be a part of it. They believe in what we're doing.

There was a time where progress in football wasn't the focus, right? Immediately after the tragedy, the progress was just making sure that these young men were mentally healthy enough not to just play football but to cope with the daily rigors of being on grounds.



Now we're talking about kind of where we are as a program and the opportunity to sustain success. I think you got living, breathing examples here today of just how far the program has come.

Then when you come on grounds, you see the new facility, all the investment that's been made in Scott Stadium, it's just a testament to the commitment of, like I said, our administration, our donor base, the fans, everybody to just keep instead of letting that tragedy define us, it developed us. Now we're continuing to progress.

Q. You began your career as a walk-on, so you understand better than most the opportunity that presents for players. With roster construction changing in today's landscape, how do you see the future of the traditional walk-on and what our game lose if that were to go away?

TONY ELLIOTT: Yeah, that's a great question.

I think first and foremost just the stability. We need the stability to know what our rosters are going to be, what our roster numbers are going to be. Once we get that set, we'll be able to figure out how to incorporate that.

I think the demographic of the walk-on is still a part of your program. You may just use a different choice of verbiage to identify those individuals. You still have those types of persons on your roster that kind of have that chip on their shoulder, right? I think that's what you got to make sure you maintain.

It kind of creates the balance, right? You got the guys that are recruited that are part of that process, where sometimes that can lead to entitlement. Then you have that group that had to get it the hard way, that had to earn it.

Those individuals interacting with each other on a daily basis helps both sides, right? They learn about each other's experiences, then they grow together, and ultimately it produces effective leaders in the future.

I think once we know exactly what the model's going to be, I think we'll get back to kind of maybe having a little bit more of what we were used to. It may just have a different verbiage associated with it.

Q. When we spoke to you before the day before the conference championship game, you were able to be very introspective about the journey and the path. You were so close. How long did it take you to get over the pain of that night and be able to reflect on how great of

a season you had and how far you had come?

TONY ELLIOTT: Right. I think I go back to an experience that I had in 2015. I remember coming off the field in Phoenix, just lost the National Championship. I saw my mentor and my boss just, like, distraught, defeated. I just remember saying to him like, Coach, the guys in the locker room need you. They need you.

And they did. I remember that. I don't know if Kam and McKale remember it, but I was pretty upbeat and positive in the locker room after the game, right, because I knew that this was going to lead to something better in the future.

I kind of flipped a switch pretty quickly.

I also got the question earlier today about the what-ifs. I have not even thought about the what ifs. I knew that had an opportunity to develop us as a program that night in Charlotte. I think the guys were able to quickly flush it, and that resulted in us being able to go out and win the last game of the season, which is one of our team goals.

I'm focusing on the future. I've learned not to do the what if, wish I would have, 'cause that agony and that regret, it will eat you up inside.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, you and McKale can switch spots. We'll spend some time with our scholar-athletes.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for McKale.

Q. How important is it retaining most of the offensive line from the last season?

McKALE BOLEY: I think it's important for a team because a team is led from the trenches, at least good teams are led from the trenches. Retaining a group that has as much experience as we do can help in many different aspects.

When recruiting, it's easy to tell a transfer that your whole line are coming back, not only are they all coming back, they all have experience, played in game. Then that can get us receivers. The receiver is like, I'm going to have five more seconds to get a route open if I have a better offensive line. I think that's the way to think about it, when the experienced offensive line, other positions can also excel.

Q. The theme and what people have asked about this team is, is it a flash in the pan, is this sustainable? Offensive line is a cornerstone positions you think about when building. What is the attitude, the mantra, of the offensive line group in that determination to be



sustainable?

McKALE BOLEY: For us is that we kind of just had to bear the weight on our shoulders. If anything's hard, if the team is going through anything, the O-line has to be the guys to step up and lead the team and carry us through any hardship or any type of burden.

I think that's important because at least for the O-line it's a group that has to be connected to be good. If you have no connection, then the O-line, you can't really succeed as a non-connected group.

Just having that trust, like going back to what they said over there, with the amount of experience and veterans that we're bringing back, you don't have to go through the process of building that trust again and building that connection.

We don't have to start from zero; we can start right from where we left off.

Q. How have you grown since your freshman year not only as a player but a leader on the offensive line?

McKALE BOLEY: I think the biggest way that I've grown is honestly being more vocal. I came in as a freshman. I can probably say maybe 50 words in a whole semester, six months, I maybe said 50 words. I came from a pretty small town and I had a close little group of friends. Coming to Charlottesville was different for me being introduced to new people, having to get out of my shell. It took me a little while to get out of my shell with just being here, having Coach E as my head coach, him inspiring me to be better and do more and coming out of my shell has really not only improved me as a football player but also off the field I'm able to connect better with my teammates, which allows them to believe in me more and trust me more on the field.

I'm able to go to different things and meet new people outside of football to create connections to help me when football is over because football doesn't last forever. Now that I am more comfortable to express myself and talk to different people, I'm able to create more opportunities because life is all about opportunities. If you don't go out there and talk to anybody, opportunities are not going to come to you. You have to go out there and seek them.

I think that's my biggest jump I've made from my freshman year to now.

Q. Your father played for the New York Giants. What's the best advice he's given you on the field as well as maybe off the field in life?

McKALE BOLEY: Really on the field it's just stay focused on myself. Also having him in my life, knowing he played in the league, he has different perspectives of things that I don't because he's been through it all. He's been through the league. He's been through college.

Him being a defensive player, me being an offensive player, there's things he can help me with. He rushed the passer a lot in the league. So things that may have worked for him versus offensive linemen, and offensive linemen did versus him as well. I'm able to incorporate that into my game.

In terms of off the field, it's always stay true to myself. Never let anyone change who you are no matter the situation, no matter the circumstance, because you can't abandon who you are and how you were raised, how you came up.

I take pride in being who I am. Like, I'm McKale Boley. I'm not just a football player. I'm known as more than that. That's kind of how I want to be known.

Q. I got to know, you have seven siblings, what was a Saturday morning like at your house?

McKALE BOLEY: So for me, it was not like that. I'm a mom's only child. I live with my mom in Mississippi. It was just me and my mom.

When I was with my dad, it's a different story. When all my siblings are at the house, I would say most of the time you got to make your breakfast on your own. I mean, seven of us. If you're trying to make biscuits and sausage and bacon, it was kind of a lot.

It was always good to have all my siblings in the same place. Even if we didn't eat the same meal, we were always at the breakfast table together. I think that's a good thing to do as a family.

Q. Beau, I know the world of college football has changed a lot in the last few years. What would be the odds of a guy who was on one sideline in a bowl game now as the quarterback for the team he faced across the field? Did any of that play in your decision to go to Virginia?

BEAU PRIBULA: I don't know what the odds are of that. No, at the time that I was in the portal, I had zero idea I would be headed to Virginia at the time they played Missouri.

I think it had a little bit to do with it, more so not just beating my previous institution, but I think that's a huge bowl win

for a program like Virginia. That's their 11th win of the year. I think just the general direction of the program and where it was going and where it's headed under Coach E, I think that was something that definitely caught my eye.

Q. How have you adapted so far through spring camp, getting to fall camp, adapting to Coach Kitchings' offense and Coach Elliott?

BEAU PRIBULA: It's been great. Since the day I arrived at Virginia, Coach Kitching, offensive coordinator, has been super collaborative, probably the most collaborative I've been around as far as a coordinator.

He's always kind of picking my brain and vice versa. Just the other day we were in the QB room drawing up different plays that I ran in the past that I've been comfortable with. He's great from that aspect and always trying to find the ways to make me more comfortable.

Q. York, PA, what can you say about putting Pennsylvania on the map, and what people should know about northeast talent that doesn't always get the credit it deserves?

BEAU PRIBULA: Pennsylvania, man, blue-collar. I say this a lot, but I'm a quarterback, but I'm also a football player. I like to put my head down and put my face into things and be a fiery competitor. I believe that comes from growing up playing football in Pennsylvania. You got to be tough.

Q. Your older brother is a quarterback as well. Talk about that relationship.

BEAU PRIBULA: That relationship is huge. My brother played quarterback in Delaware, Sacred Heart. Having a good Division I quarterback as my older brother was one of the biggest things knew my development throughout high school and the younger age. He's just taught me so much. He's a really smart dude. I just soaked up and every piece of advice he had to give me.

Q. The momentum is riding high. What do you tell the fans ahead of the season?

BEAU PRIBULA: Expectations are high. That's just the way we want it. That's the way the standard should be. Every time we take the field, the expectation should be to win. We need Wahoo Nation. We need Scott Stadium rocking this fall.

I can't wait to see what home atmosphere is like, especially week one, NC State, a big game for us. I can't wait to see the fan base pop out.

THE MODERATOR: Beau, you and Kam can switch spots. We'll spend some time with Kam. First question...

Q. You came into last season dominating, then the injury happens. Talk about the journey, not being able to be on the field, maybe coaching your teammates as a player.

KAM ROBINSON: I say even though I ain't in, I'm still going to find a way to connect with the guys, do what I can do. Coach E always tell us we still need to communicate, get on the guys, get them right.

So doing whatever I can to help the team even if I'm not playing. That's just what I'm willing to do.

Q. Kam, how was the first spring practice like with Matthew Fobbs-White? How have you integrated him into Virginia's defense?

KAM ROBINSON: Matthew, he's a great player. We try to stay on him. He young. The older guys, we try to stay on him, make sure he good. But I say he's a great player, for sure.

Q. What is unique to this year's defense?

KAM ROBINSON: What's unique to this year's defense (smiling)?

I mean, I'm going to be back, so... That's unique (laughter).

Q. I believe the only FBS player in the last 20 years to have an interception return for a touchdown, fumble recovery, and a blocked punt all in the same season. What is the encore this year?

KAM ROBINSON: I don't know. I don't know. I just go as the game go. I just go out there and play my hardest every game. I don't really do it for the stats. I just do it because I want to do it for real.

Q. You had 17 DI offers in high school. Why did you choose UVA?

KAM ROBINSON: Coach Elliott here. He be with me the whole way. He hooked my mom and he hooked me. Just being a part of Coach Elliott, he helped me get to where I'm at today.

Q. You are objectively an amazing linebacker with all the things you do on special teams and on defense. You seem to have a much different personality and



demeanor than what people expect out of a linebacker of your caliber. Why is that? Tell the fans who you are a little bit.

KAM ROBINSON: Yeah, I mean, as you can tell, I'm goofy for real. I just always been like that. I just love ball. When I put that helmet on, all that goofy go away. I got one goal, and that's to do my job.

Q. If you didn't choose football, which sport would you choose between basketball and baseball?

KAM ROBINSON: I would have played baseball. My brother played at shortstop, and then I just -- that was his sport. I mean, I always had football, so I tried to let him have baseball because he was good at it. Yeah (smiling).

Q. Give us one more big smile for the photographers, please.

KAM ROBINSON: You bet. I got y'all (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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