

NFL: Redskins linebacker Ryan Kerrigan to miss Sunday's game against Panthers **B2**

SPORTS

B1

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2019

CAVALIERINSIDER.COM | CVILLEVARSPORTS.COM

To report scores, contact sports editor John Shifflett at sports@dailyprogress.com or (434) 978-7250.

INSIDE: SCOREBOARD: B2 | COLLEGE BASKETBALL: B3 | COLLEGE FOOTBALL: B4 | COMICS: B6 | CLASSIFIEDS: B7

SOAK IT IN

UVa ends losing streak to Virginia Tech, wins Commonwealth Cup



PHOTOS BY ANDREW SHURTLEFF/THE DAILY PROGRESS

Virginia head coach Bronco Mendenhall is doused with water after defeating Virginia Tech 39-30 to win the Commonwealth Cup on Friday at Scott Stadium.

Cavaliers reach ACC title game for the first time

BY BENNETT CONLIN

bconlin@dailyprogress.com | (434) 978-7451

The streak is over. It's finally over.

Bryce Perkins made plays with his arms and his legs. Noah Taylor played like a senior in a sophomore's body. The Cavaliers hung tough. And for the first time since 2003, Virginia beat Virginia Tech.

The Cavaliers outlasted the Hokies and won 39-30, on Friday at Scott Stadium.

The win also gives the Cavaliers (9-3, 6-2 ACC) their first ACC Coastal Division title. It's a historic victory that came in dramatic fashion.

"The stage was not too big for them," head coach Bronco Mendenhall said. "The moment was not too big for them. What was at stake was not too big for them. They believed that they were capable and prepared to perform in this setting, and they did."

After jumping out to an early lead, Virginia struggled offensively and allowed Virginia Tech to take second-half leads multiple times. The Cavaliers kept fighting, however, and they eventually made enough plays to win the biggest game of Mendenhall's Virginia tenure.

"It just seemed like yesterday where fans were rushing the field when we won six games to go to our first bowl game," Mendenhall said. "That was just three years ago. Seems like that's a long time ago now."

The game started as perfectly as Virginia could've hoped. Perkins converted a pair

See **CUP**, Page B3



Virginia quarterback Bryce Perkins easily runs in for a first quarter touchdown during the game against Virginia Tech on Friday in Charlottesville.

Virginia defense delivers with two late takeaways

BY JOHN SHIFFLETT

jshifflett2@dailyprogress.com | (434) 978-7250

The final minutes of Friday's Commonwealth Cup between Virginia and Virginia Tech presented a dilemma that keeps plenty of defensive coordinators up at night.

What is the best way to defend an opposing offense late in the game when you have a narrow lead?

Following Brian Delaney's 48-yard field goal, Virginia led Virginia Tech 33-30 with 1:23 to go. In that situation, some defensive coordinators would play it safe. They would lighten the pass rush and drop more players into coverage in hopes of limiting chunk plays and keeping the opponent out of the end zone.

Not Nick Howell.

The Virginia defensive coordinator dialed up the pressure on the Virginia Tech quarterback Hendon Hooker late, hoping to take the Virginia Tech quarterback out of his rhythm and thwart the Hokies' comeback hopes.

The plan worked to perfection.

The Cavaliers sacked Hooker on consecutive plays to bring up 3rd and 21 from the Virginia Tech 7-yard line. Then on third down, Virginia defensive lineman Mandy Alonso tackled Hooker in the end zone and forced a fumble, which was recovered by fellow lineman Eli Hanback, who dived on the loose ball for a touchdown and a 39-30 Virginia lead.

Game. Set. Match.

See **DEFENSE**, Page B4

"The stage was not too big for them. The moment was not too big for them. What was at stake was not too big for them. They believed that they were capable and prepared to perform in this setting and they did."

— Bronco Mendenhall, Virginia football coach

BREAKING DOWN THE CAVS

Game Balls

BY BENNETT CONLIN



OFFENSE

» **Bryce Perkins, QB**

Early in the game, Perkins made plays with his legs, rushing for a pair of long touchdowns. He accumulated 137 rushing yards on his first five carries. As the game progressed, Perkins used his arm to move the ball down the field, finishing with 311 passing yards and a touchdown.



DEFENSE

» **Noah Taylor, LB**

The linebacker made a few disruptive plays in the backfield, and he intercepted Virginia Tech QB Hendon Hooker on a Hail Mary at the end of the first half. Taylor made the defensive play of the game when he intercepted Hooker with just under five minutes left in the game. The sophomore finished the game with six tackles, a sack and two interceptions.



SPECIAL TEAMS

» **Brian Delaney, K**

Delaney missed an extra point early in the game, but delivered a 48-yard field goal in the final two minutes to give UVa a 33-30 lead. It was an incredibly clutch kick from Delaney.

VIRGINIA 39, NO. 23 VIRGINIA TECH 30

Virginia Tech	3	3	21	3	-	30
Virginia	13	0	7	19	-	39

First Quarter

UVA—Perkins 39 run (kick failed), 12:14
 VT—FG B.Johnson 21, 3:26
 UVA—Perkins 67 run (Delaney kick), 2:32

Second Quarter

VT—FG B.Johnson 26, 2:06

Third Quarter

VT—Hooker 34 run (B.Johnson kick), 12:52
 VT—McCleave 1 run (B.Johnson kick), 4:42
 UVA—Kemp 25 pass from Perkins (Delaney kick), 2:24
 VT—Turner 61 pass from Hooker (B.Johnson kick), -48

Fourth Quarter

UVA—Taulapapa 2 run (Delaney kick), 13:30
 VT—FG B.Johnson 47, 10:58
 UVA—FG Delaney 25, 7:35
 UVA—FG Delaney 48, 1:23
 UVA—Hanback 0 fumble return, 1:01
 A—52,619.

	VT	UVA
First downs	25	14
Rushes-yards	45-172	25-181
Passing	311	311
Comp-Att-Int	18-30-2	20-33-1
Return Yards	126	40
Punts-Avg.	4-41.0	6-29.66
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	0-0
Penalties-Yards	8-141	7-62
Time of Possession	33:39	26:21

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Virginia Tech, McCleave 16-86, Hooker 21-44, Turner 3-25, K.King 3-11, Keene 2-6. Virginia, Perkins 19-164, Taulapapa 6-17.
PASSING—Virginia Tech, Hooker 18-30-2-311. Virginia, Perkins 20-33-1-311.
RECEIVING—Virginia Tech, Turner 7-134, Hazelton 7-118, T.Robinson 3-45, Keene 1-14. Virginia, J.Reed 5-66, Dubois 4-139, Jana 4-56, Kemp 3-32, Cowley 3-9, Kelly 1-9.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

THE CAVS PREPARE

Up next

» **vs. Clemson**

With Friday's victory, Virginia advanced to the ACC Championship Game for the first time in program history. The Cavaliers will face defending national champion Clemson in the title game in Charlotte next Saturday. The Tigers are 11-0 heading into today's matchup with rival South Carolina. Clemson has won the past four ACC championships. The game will kick off next Saturday at 7:30 p.m. on ABC at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte.

NOTEBOOK



ANDREW SHURTLEFF/THE DAILY PROGRESS

Virginia place kicker Brian Delaney (center) kicks a field goal during the game Friday at Scott Stadium. Virginia defeated Virginia Tech 39-30 to win the Commonwealth Cup.

Delaney delivers crucial kick

BY BENNETT CONLIN

bconlin@dailyprogress.com | (434) 978-7451

Brian Delaney spent his Thanksgiving night watching highlights of New Orleans Saints kicker Wil Lutz hitting a 58-yard game-winning field goal on Monday Night Football to beat the Houston Texans, 30-28. Lutz celebrated as soon as the ball left his foot.

Delaney said he watched the kick probably 20-30 times. He visualized making a game-winner ahead of his team's crucial game against Virginia Tech.

Early in the game against the Hokies, Delaney made an error. The kicker tugged an extra point wide left after Virginia's opening touchdown. As the game remained tight throughout, there was a chance the missed kick could come back to hurt the Cavaliers.

Luckily for Delaney, he received a chance at redemption.

With the score knotted at 30 and the game down to its final 90 seconds, Delaney stepped up to kick with video of Lutz dancing through his subconscious.

Delaney delivered in the biggest moment of his career, nailing the 48-yard field goal to give UVa a 33-30 lead. The Cavaliers (9-3, 6-2 ACC) ultimately won, 39-30.

"As soon as it came off, I just had that feeling," Delaney said. "It was good to see."

Second-half surge

Hendon Hooker and Virginia Tech's offense struggled in the first half, only scoring six points and failing to convert in the red zone. There were no such

woes in the second half, as Virginia Tech's offense started the third quarter on fire.

The Hokies scored touchdowns on three of their first four second-half possessions, accumulating an impressive 224 yards on 20 plays. All three of the touchdown drives went at least 70 yards and took fewer than five minutes.

Virginia Tech scored 21 third-quarter points, but the Hokies only added three in the final 15 minutes.

The two teams combined to score 50 points in the second half after scoring just 19 points in the first 30 minutes. It was an electric second half at Scott Stadium as Virginia made enough plays to secure the victory.

"The second half was just a game of adjustments," Virginia head coach Bronco Mendenhall said. "Tech made some really nice adjustments, and we adjusted as well and that just went back and forth all the way to the very end as an in-state rivalry, division championship game should."

VT shutout streak

After shutting out its previous two opponents, Virginia Tech allowed UVa to pile up 75 rushing yards on its first drive. The drive, which was led by 70 rushing yards from Bryce Perkins, ended with a Perkins touchdown run from 39 yards out.

The Hokies didn't allow a single point against Georgia Tech or Pittsburgh, but it took the Cavaliers just two minutes and 46 seconds to find the end zone against Bud Foster's defense.

Foster's unit rallied, however, forcing six consecutive punts, including five consecutive three-and-outs, before

Virginia answered with a touchdown drive of its own to tie the game at 20 late in the third quarter.

After an adjustment by Foster and company, Virginia answered back. The Cavaliers caught fire late, scoring 26 second-half points. Seven came from the defense, but the offense delivered consistently late.

Moving the ball

Virginia Tech held its previous three opponents to an average of 58.7 rushing yards per game. Perkins' second touchdown run of the first quarter went for 67 yards.

Perkins and the Cavaliers moved the ball effectively on scrambles and designed quarterback runs early in the game. He amassed 137 yards and two touchdowns on his first five carries, but the redshirt senior quarterback finished the game with 164 yards and two TDs on 19 carries. His rushing production slowed, but his passing production soared in the final 20 minutes.

Virginia struggled to move the football in the middle of the game, but the Cavaliers rallied in their final few drives. Perkins connected with Hasise Dubois on multiple occasions, and the Cavaliers outlasted the Hokies.

Perkins starred for Virginia, throwing for 311 yards and a touchdown in addition to his crucial runs. He did all of this after dealing with tonsillitis earlier in the week. He was hospitalized overnight following the Liberty game and forced to miss Monday's practice. Despite the illness, Perkins said there was no chance he would've missed the game.

"As long as I could walk, I was gonna play," Perkins said.

Defense

From Page B1

"The situation of the game really changed. We just could not dial in when they were going to run and when they were going to throw, so we were guessing the entire second half," Virginia head coach Bronco Mendenhall said of the decision to ramp up the pressure on the Hokies' late drive. "The situation Tech was placed in at the end, we knew they were going to throw, and that allowed us to actually make the right calls vs. what they were going to do."

Hanback's touchdown capped a strong fourth quarter for Virginia's defense, which limited the Hokies to three points and forced two turnovers in the game's final 15 minutes.

Linebacker Noah Taylor snagged the first of those two turnovers when he intercepted a Hooker pass on 3rd and 20 with 4:47 to go in the game. The Cavaliers converted Taylor's turnover into Delaney's go-ahead field goal.



ANDREW SHURTLEFF/THE DAILY PROGRESS

Virginia linebacker Noah Taylor celebrates after intercepting the ball during the game Friday in Charlottesville.

"I was a flat defender and they ran a low flat and a sail route over the top," Taylor said of the play. "I saw the quarterback look me off

and try to throw to the flat and I knew he was about to go over top."

Hooker did go over the top and

Taylor was there to grab his second interception of the game and kill the Hokies' momentum. Prior to Taylor's pick, Virginia Tech had scored on three consecutive drives (two touchdowns and a field goal). Virginia Tech did not score again after Taylor's interception.

"They did a good job of mixing up looks," Virginia Tech coach Justin Fuente said. "They can create pressure. They did a good job taking the ball away."

The Hokies found plenty of success offensively on Friday, finishing with 483 yards of total offense and 30 points. But in the game's crucial moments, the Cavaliers' aggressive approach created crucial turnovers that led to way to the team's first victory in the Commonwealth Cup since 2003.

"Coach Howell is an awesome coach and he just turned this defense around," Hanback said. "We kind of faltered a little bit there at the end, but then we made critical stops. Coach Howell is not passive, he's going to go for it and we love that."

"We attacked, we hunted and it paid off."

The streak is finished

The Virginia football team defeated Virginia Tech on Friday, beating the Hokies for the first time since 2003.



ABOVE
Virginia players take the field before the game against Virginia Tech Friday in Charlottesville. Virginia defeated Virginia Tech 39-30 to win the Commonwealth Cup.

TOP RIGHT
Virginia wide receiver Hasise Dubois (left) hauls in a catch next to Virginia Tech defensive back Armani Chatman during the game Friday.

TOP LEFT
Virginia fans take selfies on the field after the game.

LEFT
Virginia linebackers Jordan Mack (left) and Reed Kellam (center) and Virginia defensive back Tenyeh Dixon (right) celebrate a stop.

Photos by Andrew Shurtleff
The Daily Progress