

## Prep football: Western edges Albemarle in thriller B3

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

# GAMEDAY

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TIMOTHY D. EASLEY PHOTOS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Virginia cornerback Darrius Bratton, left, tackles Louisville running back Hassan Hall during the second half of Saturday's game. The tackle prevented a touchdown.

# STILL KICKING

## Virginia storms back from 17 down to stun Louisville

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Bronco Mendenhall told the media this week he often hears, "This is the first time since ..." immediately following Virginia victories.

Last week, the Cavaliers won at Miami for the first time since 2011.

He heard the phrase again Saturday after Virginia's dramatic 34-33 win over Louisville.

The Cavaliers (4-2, 2-2 ACC) won at Louisville for the first time ever Saturday, and they picked up consecutive ACC road wins for the first time since 2011. Mendenhall's team erased a 17-point deficit, recording the team's first double-digit, fourth-quarter comeback victory since a 44-38 win over Syracuse in 2015.

Please see **CAVALIERS**, Page B2



Louisville defensive back Chandler Jones, right, attempt to tackle Virginia wide receiver Ra'Shaun Henry during the first half of Saturday's game in Louisville, Ky.

## No quit in Armstrong or Hoos in comeback win over Cardinals



MIKE BARBER

In lopsided losses to North Carolina and Wake Forest, Virginia football coach Bronco Mendenhall left starting quarterback Brennan Armstrong in the game until the clock struck all zeroes, risk of injury be damned.

After both games, Mendenhall defended

Please see **BARBER**, Page B2

See photos and read more Virginia football coverage at [DAILYPROGRESS.COM/SPORTS/CAVALIERINSIDER](https://www.dailyprogress.com/sports/cavalierinsider)

## Villanova upsets JMU

**WAYNE EPPS JR.**  
Richmond Times-Dispatch

HARRISONBURG — Mark Ferrante could see it in his players' eyes.

With a chance to seal a 28-27 victory at third-ranked James Madison on Saturday, 11th-ranked Villanova faced a fourth down and 1 from its own 29-yard line. There was 1:56 to play.

A failed try on that play would put the Dukes in prime position to slip back ahead, and snatch a win. Success for the Wildcats would break a JMU streak that ran almost three years, and avenge a 2019 Villanova loss in Harrisonburg.

Ferrante saw that his players were calling on the coaching staff to let them go for it.



**Villanova 28, James Madison 27**  
CAA matchup

**Key stat:** It was the Dukes' first loss against a CAA opponent since 2018.

"To win the game, we needed a yard," said Ferrante, who's in his fifth season as Villanova's head coach. "And I had belief in our team that they could go and get that yard."

So Ferrante sent quarterback Daniel Smith, running back Justin Covington and Co. back out on the field out of a timeout. And Covington mustered 2 yards to move the chains and write the

result in stone. The Wildcats took two knees, and the 28-27 result was official.

For JMU, it was a first loss against a CAA opponent in its last 17 tries.

"They made one more play than we did. ... But told our guys at the end of the game, nobody died here. We lost a football game," JMU coach Curt Cignetti said. "And learn from it, get better from it, handle it with maturity and class."

Before Saturday, the Dukes' last loss against a CAA opponent was on Nov. 3, 2018, 35-24 at New Hampshire. Their last loss at home was against an Elon team then coached by Cignetti,

Please see **DUKES**, Page B9

## Liberty rolls past Middle Tennessee

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LYNCHBURG — Malik Willis was not at his sharpest Saturday.

The Liberty quarterback, who had made the right decisions through five weeks, was picked off three times by Middle Tennessee.

But he, and the defense, more than made up for those miscues.

Willis accounted for three touchdowns, the defense held MTSU to 35 rushing yards, and Liberty overcame a brief scare to roll to a 41-13 homecoming victory before an announced crowd of 19,935 at Williams Stadium.



**Liberty 41, Middle Tennessee 13**  
Nonconference matchup

**Key stat:** Liberty finished with 227 rushing yards, led by Joshua Mack's season-best 91 yards.

The Flames (5-1) were able to overcome Willis' third multi-interception game in his time with the program by methodically wearing down MTSU (2-4, 1-2 Conference USA).

Liberty finished with 227

Please see **FLAMES**, Page B9



# COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## BREAKING DOWN THE CAVALIERS

### Game Balls

BY BENNETT COMLIN

#### OFFENSE

**KEYTAON THOMPSON, WR:** Thompson finished the game with 132 yards on nine catches, including two fourth-down conversions on the team's game-winning drive. He came up huge when UVa needed him. Ra'Shaun Henry is an honorable mention with nine catches for 179 yards.



Thompson

#### DEFENSE

**DARRIUS BRATTON, DB:** Bratton's stats don't flash. He had just two tackles on the night, but he broke the rock. With UVa trailing 30-27 late in the fourth quarter, Bratton ran down speedster Hassan Hall on a 53-yard rush. The tackle saved a touchdown, and kept UVa within a possession. Virginia ended up winning 34-33, in no small part due to Bratton's tackle.



Bratton

#### SPECIAL TEAMS

**BRENDAN FARRELL, K:** It was another solid day for Farrell, who went 2-3 on field goals with his only miss being a 55-yard kick he left short. Farrell also made all of his extra points, which proved valuable in the team's one-point win.



Farrell

#### SATURDAY'S GAME

Virginia 34, Louisville 33						
Virginia	10	3	0	21	-	34
Louisville	10	0	20	3	-	33
<b>First Quarter</b>						
UVa	Kemp 14 pass from Armstrong (Farrell kick), 12:33.					
LOU	Harrell 92 pass from Cunningham (Jam.Turner kick), 12:14.					
UVa	FG Farrell 25, 4:02.					
LOU	FG Jam.Turner 28, :34.					
<b>Second Quarter</b>						
UVa	FG Farrell 21, 11:37.					
<b>Third Quarter</b>						
LOU	H.Hall 52 run (Jam.Turner kick), 12:48.					
LOU	FG Jam.Turner 28, 7:54.					
LOU	J.Mitchell 3 run (Jam.Turner kick), 4:02.					
LOU	FG Jam.Turner 38, 1:29.					
<b>Fourth Quarter</b>						
UVa	Thompson 5 run (Farrell kick), 12:40.					
UVa	Woods 3 pass from Armstrong (Farrell kick), 7:49.					
UVa	FG Jam.Turner 40, 2:22.					
UVa	Misch 1 pass from Armstrong (Farrell kick), :22.					
UVa	26	LOU	19			
Total Net Yards	522	513				
Rushes-yards	25-34	34-233				
Passing	488	280				
Punt Returns	2-19	0-0				
Kickoff Returns	2-8	1-20				
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	2-35				
Comp-Att-Int	40-61-2	17-27-0				
Sacked-Yards Lost	5-31	0-0				
Punts	4-38.75	4-45.75				
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	1-1				
Penalties-Yards	7-56	7-61				
Time of Possession	33:45	26:15				

#### INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

**RUSHING**—Virginia, Taulapapa 10-42, Hollins 3-9, Darrington 1-3, Thompson 3-2, Rodriguez 1-1, Kemp 1-0, Armstrong 6-(minus 23), Louisville, H.Hall 14-162, Cunningham 6-38, Mitchell 3 run (Jam.Turner kick), 4:02.

**PASSING**—Virginia, Armstrong 40-60-2-488, (Team) 0-1-0-0, Louisville, Cunningham 17-24-0-280, (Team) 0-3-0-0.

**RECEIVING**—Virginia, Thompson 10-149, R.Henry 9-171, Kemp 8-48, Fields 3-68, Rodriguez 2-13, Woods 2-10, Misch 2-8, Hollins 2-(minus 2), Wicks 1-19, Taulapapa 1-4, Louisville, Huggins-Bruce 4-70, Watkins 4-49, Ford 4-24, Harrell 2-100, Marshall 2-26, Johnson 1-11.

**MISSED FIELD GOALS**—Virginia, Farrell 55, Louisville, Jam.Turner 49, Jam.Turner 44.

#### THE CAVS PREPARE

### Up Next

**vs. Duke**  
The Cavaliers will look to make it three wins in a row on Saturday when they host Duke at Scott Stadium. Kickoff is set for 12:30 p.m. at air on regional sports networks.

## NOTEBOOK

# UVa savors consecutive conference road victories

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Winning on the road was an emphasis for the Virginia football team entering the fall.

After beating Louisville 34-33 on the road in dramatic fashion Saturday, it seems like the Cavaliers are making headway on that goal.

"It's huge," head coach Bronco Mendenhall said. "We have targeted for it. We have trained for it. We have worked. It's not glamorous, but it is road wins, and they're hard, as we've seen."

The win over Louisville gives the Cavaliers consecutive ACC road wins for the first time since 2011. Only two road games remain on Virginia's schedule.

Virginia faces BYU on Oct. 30 and Pittsburgh on Nov. 13. Three of the team's final four ACC games come at home.

"Now we're just learning we can win anywhere," linebacker Nick Jackson said. "Anywhere can be Scott Stadium. We've proven over the years that we're dominant at Scott, and I think now that we're proving to ourselves that we can win anywhere. That's how you take over a league, and that's how you take over the Coastal."

### Defense makes key stops

It's somewhat odd to praise UVa's defense after allowing 503 yards and 33 points, but there were some positive moments from the unit. The group forced a couple critical three-and-out stops in the fourth quarter to spark the team's comeback.

"I thought they were outstanding in the critical moments," Mendenhall said. "The difference in this game, and let's say the Wake Forest game, was the critical-moment stops.

The rest of it? About the same."

UVa also forced a couple field goals in the third quarter when backed up in its own field position due to offensive miscues. The group made plenty of errors Saturday, but it also made a handful of winning plays.

"Every point matters," Jackson said.

Clearly the defense still needs to improve — allowing 500 yards on the road is not an ideal result, but the group made important plays down the stretch. The group also had a few strong sequences against Miami, holding the Hurricanes to seven fourth-quarter points.

"They're getting better," Mendenhall said.

### Receivers step up with Wicks hurt

Dontayvion Wicks took a hit to the head in the first quarter and missed the

rest of the game. With the team's go-to receiver unavailable, other options stepped up.

Ra'Shaun Henry was a huge contributor, catching nine passes for 179 yards. He filled in admirably for Wicks, making big plays down the field.

"It just so happened that he got the opportunity to be targeted more with an injury, and he just showed he's capable," Mendenhall said. "That's great for us going forward."

Keytaon Thompson and Billy Kemp IV both also hauled in nine passes. That duo combined for 196 receiving yards and a touchdown. Thompson continues to shine despite a broken hand.

"I hate using the word never, but there's no one that I see that makes so many plays in so many different ways in critical times, and he's got a broken hand," Mendenhall said. "It's hard to catch with a broken hand."

Thompson makes it look easy.

### Duke on deck

The two road recent victories completely shift the outlook for UVa's season. Once 0-2 in the ACC the Cavaliers (4-2) are now 2-2 in the conference with opportunities to beat Duke and Georgia Tech at home in coming weeks. If UVa wins those contests, the team sets itself up well to contend for the Coastal Division title.

Matchups with BYU and Notre Dame are important games, but they don't count in the ACC standings. After playing Georgia Tech on Oct. 23, UVa won't play its next ACC game until Nov. 20 at Pittsburgh.

Thanks to two gritty road wins with a combined margin of victory of three points, the Cavaliers are in the Coastal mix.

"The Coastal is up for grabs," Jackson said. "Everybody's seen the scores, so keep fighting."

## Cavaliers

From B1

"We did prepare starting on Monday for this game to be the equivalent of a 15-round fight with the referee holding both hands and right at the end someone's hand is going up," Mendenhall said. "Sure enough, that's exactly how it came out."

Saturday's game was a battle between two closely matched ACC sides, with Louisville (3-3, 1-2 ACC) taking the upper hand in the third quarter and the Cavaliers firing back in the final 15 minutes.

Mendenhall saw his team win in an unusual yet familiar way, providing him with another first as a head coach. The final play of this week's win was a missed Louisville 49-yard field goal as time expired. Miami missed a 33-yard field goal to win as time expired last week. Both kicks missed left.

"First time in my career," Mendenhall said. "Just grateful. I know what it's like to be on the other side, and I know the margin for error. Just grateful that we played well enough and that we had one more play go our way than the opponent."

It was a resilient performance from the Cavaliers, who played well for 45 min-

utes. The third quarter was the team's only blemish, although it was a major problem.

The game looked like it would be a shootout in the opening minutes.

UVa drove 85 yards for a touchdown on its opening drive, using a 30-yard pass from Brennan Armstrong to Ra'Shaun Henry on third-and-16 from inside its 10-yard line to jump-start the possession. The drive ended on a 14-yard touchdown pass from Armstrong to Billy Kemp IV. The slot receiver ended the night with nine catches for 64 yards and a score.

Louisville countered with a 91-yard touchdown strike on its first offensive play of the game. Quarterback Malik Cunningham hit Tyler Harrell over the middle of the field, and he outran UVa's defenders to the end zone.

Neither team scored a touchdown the rest of the half.

Virginia settled for a pair of short field goals from Brendan Farrell, who continues to start in place of injured kicker Justin Duenkel. Louisville added a 25-yard field goal from James Turner. Each side also missed a first-half field goal, as kickers were focal points in the first 30 minutes.

UVa led 13-10 at half-time thanks to inefficient

red-zone possessions. Armstrong starred at quarterback for the Cavaliers, throwing for 274 yards in the first half. He finished with 488 passing yards and three touchdowns.

Henry caught seven balls for 139 yards in the half, taking on a bigger role after a first-quarter injury to Dontayvion Wicks. Henry caught nine passes for 179 yards and a touchdown in the contest.

Louisville jumped all over UVa in the third quarter.

The Cardinals used a 52-yard touchdown run from Hassan Hall on its first possession of the second half to take a 17-13 lead. Hall rushed for over 100 yards in the game despite only having one carry for two yards in the first half.

Armstrong fired an interception to Trey Franklin on the next drive, and Louisville turned that mistake into a 28-yard field goal from Turner.

UVa's next possession quickly sputtered. A holding penalty brought back a third-down conversion and was followed by a sack. A 29-yard punt from Jacob Finn only made matters worse. Four plays later, the Cardinals found the end zone to take a 27-13 lead.

Armstrong's first pass of the next drive was tipped into the air and intercepted by Kenderick Duncan. Lou-

isville turned the mistake into a 38-yard Turner field goal to take a 30-13 lead after three quarters of play.

Louisville fans spent much of the quarter cheering as Scott Satterfield's team outscored the Cavaliers 20-0 in the stanza.

The fourth quarter was all Virginia, however.

"We came out and we played fast," tight end Grant Misch said. "We played UVa football, and that's all we needed to do."

A 10-play, 75-yard drive that stretched into the start of fourth quarter helped Virginia pull within 10 points. The Cavaliers trailed 30-20 after a five-yard rushing touchdown from Keytaon Thompson.

After forcing a three-and-out, UVa marched 73 yards in eight plays. A three-yard touchdown pass from Armstrong to Jelani Woods pulled UVa to within 30-27 with 7:49 left on the clock.

Despite recent defensive struggles, the Cavaliers forced another three-and-out.

Unfortunately for Virginia, the offense went three-and-out, and Louisville turned its next possession into three points to take a 33-27 lead. There was one positive during the sequence, however.

Hall broke loose for a 53-yard run, but defensive back Darrius Bratton flew

into the play and caught Hall to save a touchdown. The diving tackle helped UVa force a 40-yard field goal from Turner, keeping the team within one possession.

UVa took advantage of Bratton's hustle.

The Cavaliers drove 65 yards for the game-winning score, using two fourth-down completions to Thompson to keep the drive alive. The game-winning touchdown fell into the arms of Misch, who recorded a one-yard touchdown catch.

Misch was relatively uncovered on a slow-developing pass play. He was Armstrong's fourth option on the play. Farrell's extra point was good, giving the Cavaliers the lead with 22 seconds left.

Louisville did well to drive into field goal range, setting up Turner for a 49-yard kick on the game's final play. Armstrong and the offense stood on the sideline with one thought going through their heads as Turner lined up for the attempt.

"Miss it," Armstrong said. "I'm just like, 'Dang this would hurt if he makes it,' but there it is. Another one missed it."

Turner pulled a 49-yard kick left.

Virginia survived an ACC road clash — for the first time since last week.

## Barber

From B1

his decision, insisting that there was a value in the entire program knowing Armstrong would always finish what he started.

Saturday in Louisville, the tough-as-nails lefty sure did.

Armstrong shook off a ragged start, one that saw him throw two interceptions and just one touchdown pass through the first three quarters, to lead UVa to a trio of final-frame scores and a thrilling 34-33 comeback win over the Cardinals.

"Why would you quit?" Armstrong replied when asked how he rallied himself and his team after falling behind 30-13 in a disastrous third quarter. "It just doesn't add up in

my head. That's just kind of how I think."

It's that mentality that Mendenhall believes fuels his Cavaliers (4-2, 2-2 ACC), and it's why he thinks sitting Armstrong — even in the final minutes of decided games — undermines the culture he's worked hard to build at UVa. It's why he had Armstrong address the squad before Saturday's game, an opportunity Armstrong used to explore his teammates to believe putting together an ACC road winning streak was possible.

"He's just the guy, if it's a neighborhood game, whatever side he's on, you want to be on that team," said Mendenhall. "Because you think you're going to win just because he thinks he's going to win, no matter what the circumstances."

Armstrong's heroics — he finished with 487 passing yards and three touchdown passes — made Virginia a winner in back-to-back road ACC games for the first time since 2011. Even rarer, for the second straight week, the Cavaliers won after their opponent missed a last-second field goal try.

Of course, he wasn't alone.

Senior Ra'Shaun Henry stepped up after top receiver Dontayvion Wicks was injured, and caught nine passes for 179 yards. Senior Keytaon Thompson, playing with a broken hand, caught nine passes and ran the ball three times, totaling 134 yards combined.

Senior cornerback Darrius Bratton made a likely game-saving tackle on Louisville's next-to-last possession, catching run-

ning back Hassan Hall at the 27-yard line, a drive that ended with the Cardinals kicking a field goal.

On UVa's next drive, Armstrong — playing in front of a large contingent of family and friends who might the trip from his home state of Ohio — led it to what would prove to be the game-winning touchdown, a 12-play, 75-yard drive that took two minutes and ended with Armstrong finding freedom-targeted tight end Grant Misch for a 1-yard score with 22 seconds left.

"I think that's the great thing about Brennan," said Misch, the fourth-option on the pivotal play. "He's always attacking. It's really hard to get him down."

Harder, still, to keep him there.

After all, Louisville had

Armstrong down in the third quarter, when both of his interceptions led to field goals and helped fuel a 20 unanswered point for the Cardinals (3-3, 1-2).

"To come back from the third quarter he had, that's hard to do in a game," said Mendenhall. "When you throw a couple interceptions and things don't go your way, it sure didn't seem to bother him. Or, maybe it bothered him so much. But he just is a fierce competitor, and he's so capable."

There was no question why Armstrong was still in the game late on this Saturday. The team's unquestioned leader was there to finish what he started.

Mike Barber reports for the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

## Dukes

From B1

27-24, on Oct. 6, 2018. Cignetti was hired as JMU's coach that offseason, after Mike Houston was hired by East Carolina.

JMU's streak, including the regular season and a 2018 playoff game against Delaware, was 16 straight wins against CAA opponents.

The Dukes (4-1, 2-1 CAA) struggled early Saturday then took momentum back in the second quarter to lead 27-16 at the break. But they were shutout in the second half.

Kicker Ethan Ratke, who earlier this season set the FCS all-time records for field goals and scoring by kicker, missed two potential go-ahead field goals in the fourth quarter. A 27-yard attempt was wide right and a 36-yard attempt hit the left upright.

"You saw that movie, 'Angels in the Outfield,' maybe there's somebody out there just blowing it wide on either direction and our guardian angel traveled with us. I don't know," Ferrante said.

JMU was held to just 12 yards of offense in the third quarter, out-gained by 162 yards total in that



DANIEL LIN, DAILY NEWS-RECORD

James Madison running back Percy Agyei-Obese looks for a gap in the line during the first half of Saturday's loss to Villanova in Harrisonburg.

frame.

The quarter included three straight Dukes punts. Two of those were three and outs. JMU quarterback Cole Johnson saw that Villanova (4-1, 2-0) frequently dropped eight defenders in coverage, which blocked potential pass windows and helped to suffocate the Dukes' attack.

When the Dukes did reach the red zone, on their two fourth-quarter possessions, the drives ended in the missed field goals.

"I think all around this Villanova defense is really good, and their scheme and everything," Johnson said. "Obviously, there's no excuse for scoring zero points

in the second half."

Meanwhile, the Wildcats got a pair of field goals from kicker Cole Bunce, a 43 yarder and a 42 yarder, along with a 57-yard touchdown reception by Rayjoun Pringle, to slip ahead in the third quarter — for good.

The score to Pringle came on a pass from Smith. Smith said Villanova ran a double move on the play. He saw JMU cornerback Greg Ross stop, and Pringle skirted freely down the right sideline.

"I was just thinking, 'Hey, don't overthrow it, don't overthrow it,'" Smith said. "Thankfully I didn't, and Pringle went and made a great catch."

In the fourth quarter, following JMU's second field goal miss, Villanova took the ball back on its own 29. The Wildcats advanced 9 yards, before it faced the fourth and 1.

Smith said he had nothing but confidence running back out to try to convert and put the game away. Covington's number was called, and he saw Villanova get an initial push up front on the play.

"And then I had to make kind of like another second effort," Covington said. "And I stretched the ball out before I was down, and I knew I got the first down. And af-

ter that, I was just really excited."

Saturday was Villanova's first win against JMU since 2014.

The Wildcats took 7-0, 13-7 and 16-10 leads in the first half, but JMU scored back-to-back touchdowns in the second quarter. The second came after a Smith fumble, forced by Isaac Ukwu and recovered by Abi Nwabuoku-Onkonji, gave JMU prime field position. Ratke also connected on a 41-yard field goal in the first quarter, and the Dukes led by 11 at the half.

But Villanova went on to out-gain JMU 388 yards to 339 total, which broke a streak of 21 games in which the Dukes outgained their opponents.

JMU will have to hit the road next week, to face a Richmond (2-3, 0-2) team coming off a bye.

And safety Wayne Davis said the Dukes can't dwell on Saturday's loss. It was a feeling they haven't had to experience much. But their big postseason aspirations remain.

"We don't want anybody to sit here and act like the season's over," Johnson said. "So we're going to learn from this and clean up our mistakes, and come out and play at Richmond next week."

"We still have everything we want ahead of us."

## Flames

From B1

rushing yards, led by Joshua Mack's season-best 91 yards.

Willis added 80 yards on 14 attempts. The quarterback completed 17 of 30 passes for two touchdowns and three interceptions.

The three picks tied a career high he set last season in a one-point loss at North Carolina State.

Unlike that matchup with the Wolfpack, Liberty raced out to a 21-0 lead and recovered quickly

after MTSU cut the lead to 26-13 on Chase Cunningham's 31-yard touchdown pass to Jarrin Pierce with 8:07 left in the third quarter.

That touchdown pass, which came on fourth down, was only the second touchdown allowed by the Flames in the third quarter this season.

The Flames responded with a methodical drive that culminated in Mack's 2-yard touchdown run for a 34-13 lead, and Willis capped the scoring with a 1-yard plunge with 4:17 remaining in the fourth quarter.

Liberty held its fourth opponent this season to less than 100

rushing yards.

Six players ran the ball for MTSU, and Chaton Mobley led the Blue Raiders with eight yards on four attempts.

Willis connected with DeMario Douglas and Jerome Jackson on touchdown passes of 35 and 5 yards, respectively, in the first quarter to help Liberty build a 14-0 lead.

Douglas caught six passes for a career-high 156 yards.

T.J. Green scored his first rushing touchdown at Liberty on a 1-yard run with 6:55 left in the second quarter to give the Flames a 21-0 lead.



KENDALL WARNER, THE NEWS & ADVANCE

Liberty wide receiver Demario Douglas catches a touchdown during a game against Middle Tennessee on Saturday at Williams Stadium in Lynchburg.



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