

Virginia vs. Maryland in basketball tournament ends in big upset

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A stunned No. 1 seed Virginia team walks off the floor after a loss to No. 16 seed Maryland on Friday, March 16, in Charlotte, North Carolina, in an ACC game in the NCAA Tournament nicknamed March Madness. Photo by: John McDonnell/The Washington Post

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina — His face red from crying, Ty Jerome walked with fellow Virginia guard Kyle Guy and coach Tony Bennett to the interview staging area. It was shortly before midnight on Friday, March 16. The three men were about to answer questions about what had just gone wrong.

The Virginia Cavaliers had just lost a game everyone expected them to win. They entered the NCAA Tournament as the top-ranked team in their conference, called the ACC. Their opponent, the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Retrievers, was ranked last.

The Retrievers' surprise win made history. It was the first time a No. 16 team beat a No. 1 team in the NCAA.

The game wasn't even close, either. The final score was 74-54.

A week ago, the Cavaliers were feeling confident as they had just won the ACC tournament on March 9. So when the larger NCAA tournament started on March 13, they were thought to have a real chance of winning it all.

Huge Loss For Cavaliers

"You know, it's basketball. You're not going ..." Jerome said, his voice cracking and trailing off. "I mean, I don't know why. I don't know why, no. I guess we didn't, maybe we didn't come ready to play today. We didn't shoot well. That definitely doesn't help, but only to have five assists as a team is pretty bad, so I guess we didn't move the ball well, didn't shoot well."

He added, "I don't have the answers."

In the first half, the Cavaliers' struggled to get into a rhythm, especially with their three-point shots. The two teams went into halftime with the score tied.

Then UMBC scored the first six points of the second half. At that point, it was as if the Cavaliers forgot how to hold their defense together. They were unable to get deflections and steals as they had done all season. They failed to close out on 3-point attempts. They didn't fight for position under the basket.

The Retrievers, meanwhile, played some of their best basketball of the season. They made 12 of 24 3-point attempts and connected on 68 percent of their shots overall. They scored 53 points during the second half alone.

During the season, Virginia allowed an average of just 53.4 points in an entire game.

Nothing Was Working For The Team

Bennett said that he and the team had talked during the season about not letting their success go to their heads. Now, they would try not to let the loss weigh too heavily on them. "That can't, in the end, define these guys and our team or us because it was a remarkable season," he said.

For whatever reason, though, nothing was working for them on Friday night. They ended up going 4 for 22 from 3-point range and giving up 11 fast-break points. They also gave up 33 rebounds and only grabbed 22.

Jerome had just three rebounds. In addition, he gave the ball over three times, his most turnovers in more than six weeks. He also went 2 for 9 from 3-point range. In total, he took 16 shots and scored just 15 points.

"It's a blur right now," said Guy, who was voted the ACC tournament's best player. "It's really hard to answer these questions, as you guys know."

Disappointing Ending For Seniors

In what turned out to be the final game of his college career, senior guard Devon Hall had a poor shooting performance as well. He missed all six of his 3-point attempts and finished with two points, having made one of nine shots.

The ending was no less disappointing for senior forward Isaiah Wilkins, the ACC defensive player of the year. After playing 24 minutes, he was disqualified when a fifth foul was called against him. It was the first time he "fouled out" this season, and it happened on Wilkins' last night in a Virginia basketball uniform.

"I hate for this team, the way they played to lose like this, but for Devon and Isaiah to go out like that," Bennett said. "When you're in the arena, stuff like this can happen, and all those who compete take that on, and so we'll accept it."

The bottom line, he said, was simple. "They played well, and we did not."

Quiz

- 1 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-5].

Which selection from the introduction BEST supports the conclusion that the Cavaliers were very disappointed by their loss?

- (A) His face red from crying, Ty Jerome walked with fellow Virginia guard Kyle Guy and coach Tony Bennett to the interview staging area.
- (B) It was shortly before midnight on Friday, March 16. The three men were about to answer questions about what had just gone wrong.
- (C) The Virginia Cavaliers had just lost a game everyone expected them to win. They entered the NCAA Tournament as the top-ranked team in their conference, called the ACC.
- (D) A week ago, the Cavaliers were feeling confident as they had just won the ACC tournament on March 9.

- 2 Read the paragraph from the section "Nothing Was Working For The Team."

Bennett said that he and the team had talked during the season about not letting their success go to their heads. Now, they would try not to let the loss weigh too heavily on them. "That can't, in the end, define these guys and our team or us because it was a remarkable season," he said.

What is the MOST accurate explanation of this paragraph?

- (A) The team's coach believes that they lost because they were too sure that they were going to succeed.
- (B) The team's coach believes that they should be proud of their season and not be too upset about the loss.
- (C) The team is upset because they think the loss will be the only thing people will remember about their season.
- (D) The team is upset because they think their other wins in the season should have counted for the tournament.

- 3 One MAIN idea of the article is that the UMBC Retrievers' win over the Virginia Cavaliers was a huge surprise.

What is another MAIN idea of the article?

- (A) The players were disappointed because they were unable to play as well as usual.
- (B) The players were forced to answer questions by reporters after the game ended.
- (C) The two teams were tied at the end of the first half of the game.
- (D) The two teams both hope to return to the NCAA Tournament next year.

- 4 Read the paragraph from the section "Huge Loss For Cavaliers."

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HOW does this paragraph support the MAIN idea of the article?

- (A) by illustrating the reaction of UMBC to their win against the Cavaliers
- (B) by elaborating on the way the Cavaliers players worked together as a team
- (C) by emphasizing the Cavaliers players' confusion and disappointment
- (D) by introducing Cavaliers player Ty Jerome as the ACC tournament's best player