

Virginia Postgame Notes – Tennessee (9/2/23)

Virginia Team Notes

- UVA drops to 85-40-9 in season openers and lost for the first time in a season opener since 2016, snapping a six-game win streak.
- The neutral site season opener was only the fourth (1890, 1960, 1989, 2023) in the 134 seasons of Virginia football. UVA is 1-3 in neutral site openers.
- Saturday marked the fifth meeting between Tennessee and Virginia and the first since the 1991 Sugar Bowl. The Volunteers are 4-1 all-time against the Cavaliers.
- Tennessee was UVA's first regular season SEC opponent since 2003 (South Carolina).
- Announced attendance at Nissan Stadium was 69,507, the largest crowd in the facility's history. It's the largest regular season crowd UVA has played in front of since 2019 at Notre Dame (77,622).

Player Notes

- **Malachi Fields** caught four passes for a career-high 63 yards receiving. His 30-yard reception in the second quarter from quarterback Tony Muskett led to Virginia's first field goal.
- **Perris Jones** scored UVA's first touchdown of the season, a 17-yard run the with 7:23 left in the third quarter. It was Jones' third career touchdown and his longest touchdown run of his career. Jones has recorded a rushing touchdown in each of the last two season openers.
- Punter **Daniel Sparks**, a preseason All-ACC selection, punted a career-high nine times and accumulated 398 yards. His 62-yard punt in the second quarter was the second-longest of his UVA career. He has four 60-yard punts in his last two games played for the Cavaliers (three 60-yard punts in 2022 season-finale vs. Pitt). He also matched a career-high with three punts downed inside the 20-yard line.
- Linebacker **Stevie Bracey** led the Cavalier defense with a career-high 10 tackles, including seven solo efforts.
- All eight of **Kam Butler's** tackles were of the solo variety, the most tackles in a game he's made in 11 games at UVA. His career-high is 11 while at Miami (Ohio) against Army in 2021.
- Butler and **Olasunkonmi Agunloye** was combined for UVA's lone sack on the afternoon. Agunloye also recovered a fumble on a Tennessee punt return, the first recovery of his career.
- Kicker **Will Bettridge** was 2-for-3 in field goal attempts converting from 30 and 40 yards. He improves to 4-5 from 40 or more yards in his career.
- 19 Cavaliers made their collegiate debuts in the contest: **DT Anthony Britton, DE Mekhi Buchanan, LS Luke Byrne, QB Anthony Colandrea, OG Noah DeMeritt, RB Amaad Foston, K Matt Ganyard, WR Jaden Gibson, RB Jack Griese, WR Suderian Harrison, DT Jason Hammond, OL Noah Hartsoe, S Davis Lane, OT Charlie Patterson, LB Kam Robinson, DB Aidan Ryan, OL Blake Steen, CB Dre Walker, WR Eli Wood.**