

Swinney: Elliott will do ‘as good a job as anybody could’ in dealing with Virginia tragedy

By Ian Taylor
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CLEMSON — Many worlds were rocked, college football among them, when the news of a shooting at the University of Virginia on Sunday night began to spread.



University of Virginia athletic director Carla Williams and head football coach Tony Elliott speak to the media during a press conference Tuesday in Charlottesville, Va. (Associated Press)

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According to local police, Cavaliers receiver Lavel Davis Jr., of Dorchester, receiver Devin Chandler and defensive end/linebacker D'Sean Perry — all three juniors — were killed by former UVA running back Christopher Jones Jr. Two other students, an unnamed female and junior running back Mike Hollins, were also

shot and hospitalized.

“Just keeping Virginia and everyone involved there in our prayers, and I ask that everyone will do that as well. Obviously, just a very tragic situation,” Clemson Tigers head coach Dabo Swinney said in his regular Tuesday press conference.

Quarterback D.J. Uiagalelei called the shooting “catastrophic” and sent his thoughts and prayers to the victims, families, players and coaches affected.

While it may have happened 400 miles away in Charlottesville, Va., Swinney and the Tigers have a personal relationship to the situation with Cavaliers head coach Tony Elliott is in his first year as head coach of the Cavaliers — his first head coaching position — after spending 11 seasons on Swinney’s staff at Clemson as running backs coach and offensive coordinator.

“My heart goes out to (Virginia head coach Tony Elliott) as well in having to really lead his team through this. Nobody is better equipped than that man. Definitely heavy hearts all throughout college football and certainly our league.”

Swinney said that while it was “as tough a situation as you can be in as a coach,” he felt Elliott would handle it as well as anyone can.

“Tony is one of the best people I know. There’s not many people you trust your life with, he’s one of them,” Swinney said. “I just know that God’s put him there for this time. Nobody wants to be in a situation like this, but again, all the things that he’s been through in his life and the challenges that he’s been through, he will do as good a job as anybody could possibly do in nurturing these guys, putting his arms around the Virginia family and just making sure that these young men grieve and can process things move forward with their lives. I don’t have any doubt about that.”

Tigers offensive coordinator Brandon Streeter said that Elliott’s presence at Virginia did make the situation hit closer to home, while also calling his former coordinator the right person for the situation.

“He is a people guy and he knows the right things to say and how to move forward,” Streeter said. “Our thoughts and prayers are up for those families that are affected and obviously the program and coach Elliott. He’s there for a reason, and I know God will be with that whole situation.”

In a statement, Elliott said that Davis, Chandler and Perry were “incredible young men with huge aspirations and extremely bright futures.”

“I cannot find the words to express the devastation and heartache that our team is feeling today after the tragic events last night that resulted in the deaths of Lavel, D’Sean and Devin, and the others who were injured,” Elliott stated. “Our hearts ache for their families, their classmates and their friends. These precious

young men were called away too soon. We are all fortunate to have them be a part of our lives. They touched us, inspired us and worked incredibly hard as representatives of our program, university and community. Rest in peace, young men.”

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Swinney updates Tigers' injuries

In his Tuesday news conference, Swinney gave an update to multiple players who are dealing with injuries, including that defensive back Malcolm Greene is done for the rest of the year with a groin injury. Linebacker Trenton Simpson and receiver Beaux Collins are both listed as day-to-day with ankle and shoulder injuries, respectively.

He also noted that safety Tyler Venables will miss their Saturday matchup with Miami due to a hamstring injury he suffered against Louisville.

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Carter named ACC Linebacker of the Week

Clemson sophomore Barrett Carter has been named the ACC's Linebacker of the Week after a stellar performance in Clemson's 31-16 win over Louisville on Saturday. Carter, playing a bigger role with the absence of Trenton Simpson, racked up eight tackles (3.5 for a loss), two sacks, an interception and a pass breakup.

Carter's selection is Clemson's 10th ACC weekly accolade of the season and its second ACC Linebacker of the Week award in that time, joining Jeremiah Trotter Jr.'s selection following Clemson's win against Florida State.

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