

Perkins, Taulapapa lead Virginia past Georgia Tech, 33-28

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. -- Bryce Perkins loves that new playmakers are emerging for Virginia, making their best playmaker -- Perkins himself -- even more effective.

The senior quarterback threw for one touchdown and ran for another as the Cavaliers shut down Georgia Tech after halftime in a 33-28 victory Saturday.

"It's incredible, especially hard on defensive coordinators trying to scheme personnel-wise for players," Perkins said after throwing for 258 yards and running for 106 more, his second consecutive game with over 100 yards on the ground. "The more we can get guys going, the more difficult it's going to be."

Perkins completed 24 of 35 attempts and hit six different receivers, led by Terrell Jana with nine catches for 108 yards. Jana caught 13 passes for 146 yards a week ago in a victory against North Carolina, giving him 22 receptions in two weeks after he'd managed only 31 in the first eight games.

"He's reliable and he's always in the right spot," Perkins said. "I just have a connection with him just knowing where he's going to be at most of the time."

Perkins also hit Billy Kemp with a critical third-down pass as the Cavaliers ran the last 5:30 off the clock to ice the game.

The game was also a coming out party of sorts for Tavares Kelly, who replaced a banged up Joe Reed returning kickoffs and gained 129 yards on five returns. He brought one back 40 yards to midfield to set up the last touchdown drive of the first half and had a 38-yarder in the second half.

"TK is an explosive player so I'm glad he's getting his footing in the game," Jana said. "We've seen him do things in practice that I haven't seen anybody do so if he can keep showing that in games and keep making plays I know he can make, it's going to be an exciting season."

Wayne Taulapapa ran for two touchdowns for the Cavaliers (7-3, 5-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), who maintained their perch atop the Coastal Division. Virginia has a bye week ahead and then a home game against Liberty before closing the regular season at home against Virginia Tech, which has won the last 15 meetings.

James Graham threw for two touchdowns and ran for a third for the Yellow Jackets (2-7, 1-5). Jordan Mason ran for 94 yards, including an 8-yard touchdown run that pulled Georgia Tech with 33-28 with 5:30 to play, but Virginia managed a pair of third-down conversions on the ensuing drive and ran out the clock.

First-year Yellow Jackets coach Geoff Collins was emotional after the game.

"To come out and play at a really, really high level and fall short is painful," he said. "I hurt for them. I hurt for the coaching staff."

Perkins hit Joe Reed for a 9-yard touchdown and scored on a 3-yard run, giving Virginia a 24-21 lead just before halftime. The Cavaliers touchdown came on a four-play drive that included a 43-yard run by Perkins from midfield. It came immediately after Georgia Tech stopped the Cavaliers on a fourth-and-4 play and then drove 65 yards on three completions -- the last a 25-yarder to Malachi Carter -- to take a 21-17 lead 44 seconds before halftime.

"It was a huge play and I feel like Bryce kind of bailed me out," Mendenhall said, second-guessing his decision to try for the fourth down play.

Graham finished 15 of 22 for a career high 229 yards. Earlier, Graham hit Ahmarean Brown for a 59-yard score on the opening series of the game.

THE TAKEAWAY

Georgia Tech: Graham came into the day having completed just 43.4% of his passes but showed far more effectiveness against the Cavaliers' depleted secondary, which has lost six players for the season to injury. Graham's 59-yard touchdown throw to Brown on the opening series represented more yardage than he managed all last week against Pittsburgh, when he was just 3 of 13 for 57 yards.

Virginia: Besides his kickoff returns, Kelly caught two passes for 46 yards, including a 35-yarder on a third-and-2 play from the Virginia 37 on a drive then ended with Brian Delaney's second field goal. Reed, who has five career kickoff return touchdowns, including two this season, remains 11 yards shy of 3,000 career kickoff return yards.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
GT	14	7	0	7	28
UVA	14	10	0	9	33

Scoring Summary -----

	GT	UVA
FIRST QUARTER		
GT TD 13:19 Ahmarean Brown 59 Yd pass from James Graham (Wesley Wells Kick)		
4 plays, 75 yards, 1:41	7	0
UVA TD 8:39 Wayne Taulapapa 2 Yd Run (Brian Delaney Kick)		
9 plays, 76 yards, 4:40	7	7
GT TD 5:09 James Graham 5 Yd Run (Wesley Wells Kick)		
7 plays, 75 yards, 3:30	14	7
UVA TD 1:50 Joe Reed 9 Yd pass from Bryce Perkins (Brian Delaney Kick)		
3 plays, 28 yards, 1:26	14	14
SECOND QUARTER		
UVA FG 10:36 Brian Delaney 24 Yd Field Goal		
10 plays, 49 yards, 4:51	14	17
GT TD 0:44 Malachi Carter 25 Yd pass from James Graham (Wesley Wells Kick)		
3 plays, 65 yards, 0:37	21	17
UVA TD 0:11 Bryce Perkins 3 Yd Run (Brian Delaney Kick)		
4 plays, 50 yards, 0:33	21	24
FOURTH QUARTER		
UVA FG 13:32 Brian Delaney 34 Yd Field Goal		
10 plays, 70 yards, 4:40	21	27
UVA TD 10:57 Wayne Taulapapa 3 Yd Run (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed)		
4 plays, 50 yards, 1:34	21	33
GT TD 5:30 Jordan Mason 8 Yd Run (Wesley Wells Kick)		
12 plays, 75 yards, 5:27	28	33

Team Stats	GT	UVA
First Downs	19	25
Passes for First	8	13
Rushes for First	8	8
Penalties for First	3	4
Third Down Efficiency	3-9	9-16
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	0-1
Total Yards	372	413
Total Plays	54	72
Avg Gain Per Play	6.9	5.7
Net Yards Rushing	143	155
Rushes	32	37
Yards Per Rush	4.5	4.2
Net Yards Passing	229	258
Comp-Att	15-22	24-35
Yards Per Pass	10.4	7.4
Times Sacked	2	0
Yds Lost To Sacks	-10	0
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	4	3
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	6	6
Penalty Yards	51	49
Fumbles	0	0
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Time of Poss	24:46	35:14

Individual Stats

RUSHING						
GEORGIA TECH	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Jordan Mason	19	94	4.9	1	28	
James Graham	8	42	5.3	1	13	
Jamious Griffin	3	7	2.3	0	4	
Jerry Howard Jr.	1	2	2.0	0	2	
Team	1	-2	-2.0	0	0	
VIRGINIA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Bryce Perkins	21	106	5.0	1	43	
Wayne Taulapapa	10	37	3.7	2	11	
PK Kier	2	6	3.0	0	4	
Joe Reed	2	5	2.5	0	4	
Lamont Atkins	1	3	3.0	0	3	
Team	1	-2	-2.0	0	0	

PASSING							
GEORGIA TECH	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
James Graham	15	22	229	10.4	2	1	75.4
VIRGINIA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Bryce Perkins	24	35	258	7.4	1	0	71.8

RECEIVING						
GEORGIA TECH	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Ahmarean Brown	1	59	59.0	1	59	
Tobias Oliver	4	57	14.3	0	37	
Tyler Davis	3	54	18.0	0	38	
Malachi Carter	1	25	25.0	1	25	
Adonias Sanders	5	21	4.2	0	7	
Dylan Deveney	1	13	13.0	0	13	
VIRGINIA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Terrell Jana	9	108	12.0	0	25	
Billy Kemp IV	4	51	12.8	0	18	
Tavares Kelly Jr.	2	46	23.0	0	35	
Joe Reed	5	27	5.4	1	11	
Tanner Cowley	2	23	11.5	0	12	
Wayne Taulapapa	2	3	1.5	0	2	