

# The Wahoos Seal off the Regular Season with a Win over Wake Forest on Senior Day

*With help from their seniors, the Virginia Cavaliers comeback in the singles matches to defeat the Demon Deacons of Wake Forest.*

Katie Taylor | February 21, 2018

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Joined by assistant coach Gina Suarez-Malaguti (left), head coach Sara O’Leary and assistant volunteer coach Aaron Paul, seniors Cassie Mercer (left) and Theodora Radosavljevic (right) were celebrated prior to Sunday’s match against Wake Forest. (Photo Courtesy of Bill Bunting).

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**– The sun was shining on Snyder Tennis Center as No. 22 Virginia (15-7, 9-5 ACC) clinched a 5-2 victory over No. 28 Wake Forest (17-12, 5-9 ACC) Sunday afternoon. After losing a tight, three-set match on Friday evening to the Clemson Tigers, the ‘Hoos were re-energized and looked hungry for a win on Sunday afternoon.

After facilitating conversations about boosting the team’s energy levels from the close match on Friday, Virginia’s head coach Sara O’Leary praised her players for revitalizing their energy today. “The team really came together and came up with some ideas as to how they could have better energy and they showed it today,” O’Leary said.

Starting out with a strong performance on the doubles court, the Deacons' dynamic duo, junior Emma Davis and sophomore Chandler Carter, outplayed UVA's No. 16 ranked duo, sophomore Rosie Johanson and junior Meghan Kelley, in a 6-3 win over Virginia. Wake forest extended its' lead to 2-0 as Davis grabbed a win on court one when UVA's sophomore Rosie Johanson retired after the first set in singles.

However, UVA's senior Theodora "Dora" Radosaljevic brought the heat at No. 5 when Radosaljevic captured a win over Wake's M.C. Meredith (6-4, 6-4) and put Virginia on the scoreboard (2-1). The celebrated senior ignited a ripple effect of energy that consumed the resilient Cavaliers, who won the first set in five out-of-six matches.

"I'm really proud of the way we responded and the resilience we showed after, losing a close doubles point and Rosie (Johanson) having to retire. Each player really focused and took ownership of her performance on her court (in singles)," said coach O'Leary.

With her parents and young siblings cheering in the stands, senior Cassie Mercer followed teammate Radosavljevic's example by tying the overall match score with her win in singles against sophomore Chandler Carter (7-5, 6-2).

Out of the orange and blue crowd, Mercer could hear her young siblings and encouraging mother, Laurie Mercer. Her supportive mother, who has been especially noticeable this season, received the team's "Fan of the Year Award" during the senior day celebrations.

After playing her last match at Snyder Tennis Center, Mercer reflected on the support she has received over the years from her teammates and family. "My parents and siblings have sacrificed so much for me and love me unconditionally," Mercer said. "They are extremely important and motivational to me."

Mercer and Radosavljevic cheered their underclassmen teammates on as sophomore Chloe Gullickson defeated Wake's junior Anna Ulyashchenko (7-6) (3), (6-1). Gullickson joined her seasoned teammates as they supported junior Meghan Kelley in her match against last week's ACC Freshman of the Week, Deacon Eliza Omirou (6-4) (6-3) to secure the 4-2 lead for the Cavaliers.

With the help of sophomore Hunter Bleser on court six, the Wahoos locked in the victory. Fans applauded and praised the players as the orange and blue teammates hugged and celebrated in the glory of coming back to win the match with a final score of 5-2.

### **On the Horizon**

Entering next week, the Hoos and their conference opponents will compete in the ACC Women's Tennis Championships. Mercer after the game, "we've been working hard all season and been very consistent with conditioning and training. I think that we're in really good shape going into the ACC tournament. This was a good practice before then."

A few days of rest and obligatory ice baths is the prescription O'Leary recommended for her players as the Cavaliers look forward to traveling to Cary, North Carolina to compete in the ACC

tournament. No. 6 seed Virginia will play the winner of Wednesday's match between No. 11 Wake Forest and No. 14 Notre Dame on Thursday.

*"On my honor, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment"* - Kathleen Taylor