

Virginia Tech Football
Head Coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights
Media Conference
October 15, 2018

Opening statement

“Again, thanks to everybody that made the trip down on Saturday to North Carolina to support our kids. It was a fun atmosphere and I’m very proud of how our kids continued to battle and didn’t panic. They tried to play the next play and found a way to get a win. We have tons of things that we need to work on in all three phases of the game. I think that will be probably what I stand up and say here every single week with where we’re at. Just continuing to find ways to focus on our improvement. That’s going to be the single biggest focal point of what we got going on. We’ve got a little bit of time here, but it will be an interesting week with it not being a true bye week with Georgia Tech coming to town on Thursday night. We got to find a way to continue to improve while also preparing for the difficult task of the triple option. We got a little bit of time off for our kids to get healthy and get fresh, then we’ll be back at it later this week.”

On what the schedule will be like with a bye week but a Thursday game on deck:

“It’s a little bit of a different deal just because of the Thursday game. Ordinarily we would go off on Monday and then practice the rest of the week to get guys out on the road recruiting. But because it’s not a traditional bye, we will take a little more time off on the front end. We will go Monday and Tuesday with the kids off in terms of not practicing and then we’ll go Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and a little bit on Saturday morning then get them out of here and the once they get back we’ll do our game week prep.”

On what the preparation is like going into a matchup with Georgia Tech from a defensive standpoint:

“Well, it’s a little bit more difficult with trying to find how you can simulate what you’re going to see. When you play somebody that plays a little bit more traditional offensively, it’s a little bit easier to service each other in terms of getting a little bit of good with good work to try to simulate what you’re going to see here. It’s a totally different deal. It’s going to be a challenge, though we have experience in this arena in terms of having a defensive staff that has obviously faced this scheme many times before. We need to translate that experience to our players, many of whom do not have much experience.”

On what the plan is to do with the scout QB and who that will be in prep for Georgia Tech’s triple option:

“I’m not sure yet, we’ll have a staff meeting today and tomorrow before we practice to talk about that. We haven’t had a discussion yet.”

On the 18-play, 98-yard drive versus North Carolina and how that showed the capability of the offensive line:

“I think I felt good about that in terms of what we ask our kids to do in the off-season and how we practice. I have felt good about that the entire year, including our opening game down in Florida, which could’ve been a very hot and warm environment. I felt good about it and certainly and staying on the field for that long was kind of odd. After the game we’re in the press conference and somebody asked how North Carolina was about to score and win the game. My mind was like yeah they’re about to score, but in my mind, I knew that there was pretty of time left, but I really didn’t fully grasp how much time was left until I started watching film. There was like around seven minutes left in the game and it didn’t really occur to me that we had been on the field that long. It was an interesting turn of events. I feel good about our receivers and the fact that we have six guys that we feel pretty comfortable with helps. I thought Steven Peoples was huge, he’s been really important for us.”

On QB Quincy Patterson seeing his first action of the year and the plays he ran versus North Carolina:

“Well it’s something we’ve talked about all year. You know, just to be clear Hendon [Hooker] is the backup quarterback. He [Patterson] has continued to get better, continued to improve and we’ve always felt pretty comfortable with some things with him and we talked about it again heading into last week, as we do every week. I think maybe it was a good time to have him handle a package of things and get into the game.”

On the celebration with DC Bud Foster after the game:

“I wasn’t intending to tackle him, I was just happy and I felt bad when he went down. I tried to grab him keep him from going down and I felt like he kind of pulled me down to the ground, too (laughing). I was just glad he wasn’t hurt, you know, that was my first concern. He’s had that bum knee so I’m glad he wasn’t hurt.”

On whether he still plans to redshirt QB Quincy Patterson:

“We’ll kind of just take it week by week, as we see how things just go. I really believe it’s just too hard to say exactly what’s going to happen. There’s a lot of football still to play and you know, if he plays in some more games and gets close to that four-game mark, you know we’ve been having those conversations but then we’ll make a decision on it. Obviously, if we do play him and we get past the four games, I want to make it worthwhile.”

On looking at prospective punt returners with C.J. Carroll calling it a career due to injuries:

“Absolutely. We have not been very consistent there. It’s something that we need to improve on. Part of that deal is communicating, it’s not just catching the ball but you’ve got all these guys that don’t know where the ball is because they’re trying to block. Those guys knowing where the returner is, peeking the returner, and the returner communicating with those guys is really important. We’ve got to get to the point where we can field the ball and communicate on a consistent basis. We have worked with [Hezekiah Grimsley] and [Sean] Savoy, and we have worked with [Bryce] Watts. We’ll continue to try and work through that here in the next several days just to see if we can be a little more consistent.”

On the growth of true freshman OL Christian Darrisaw:

“I’ve been really impressed with his maturity level, his intelligence to play as a young player. Obviously, he’s a talented young man. We felt like that was the case when recruiting him, even though, I don’t know if much has been made of this or not, but he wasn’t much of a highly recruited guy, but we really felt like he has some good tools. We’ve been most pleased with his maturity level, his toughness level. He’s been battling through some things, we’d really like to get him healthy for the stretch run here, but I’ve been really pleased with him. I’ve used this term, I don’t want to overuse it, but I’ve used it in reference to [Rayshard] Ashby, he’s mature, he’s another one of those guys who is wise beyond his years.”

On WR Tre Turner’s knack for making timely catches:

“I’ve been really pleased with his competitiveness. He’s another kid that’s really sharp, that picks things up really quickly and adds versatility. I think as he goes through his career, he’s going to continue to add some strength and continue to be a versatile player for us, but you’re right, he just keeps showing up at critical times and making plays. We’ve got to continue to be consistent, but I’ve been really pleased, most pleased with his competitiveness. He practices well and is anxious to get out there and compete against good people.”

On the uniqueness of the first six weeks of the season with seemingly a different schedule every week and a game cancelled due to a hurricane:

“Yeah, it’s been, quite candidly, a way too eventful nine or 10 months. Obviously some of it is beyond our control, the weather and some things, but there has been nothing normal about anything the past nine months and it is up to us to control the things that we can control and grow up and mature, so that we can get on a regular pace. You just have to adapt, it does no good to pout or whine about it or do anything other than continue to teach those lessons and be ready for change. In between the schedule and some things that we’ve done, it has not been normal. Then again, what’s normal (laughing)? You know, you’re coaching a bunch of kids that are working hard and trying to improve and want to play well and represent Virginia Tech. I’m enjoying that, I really am. We’ve got some really good people that we’re enjoying being around on a daily basis.”