**Virginia Tech Football**

**Head Coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights**

**Media Conference**

**October 25, 2018**

***Opening statement***

“Congratulations to Coach Johnson & Georgia Tech. they played really well tonight. Thanks to everybody that came out. We certainly do appreciate the fans support. I know everybody’s disappointed in the outcome of the game. My initial thoughts – obviously we rolled through the first three series offensively. I don’t know that I’ve ever seen a team execute at such a high level for three series and then just shut the valve on it execution wise. It’s a little bit disappointing. If you go back drive-by-drive and look at the plays. You know a game like that the margin for error is very very small. It was pretty much shared across all position groups when I think about it. Each position group kind of contributed to that. We struggled defensively. With stopping the run we obviously know what they’re going to do. They’re going to show up and run the triple. Quarterback sweep in the first half and then it was inside a little more than the second one.

***On the muffed punt:***

“It certainly was a big play no question. I don’t think it’s the only play. If the offense wants to grow then they’ve got to keep us in games that are like this. We had every opportunity to and for whatever reason didn’t execute. Certainly that along with several other things were pretty big factors.”

***On if Georgia Tech made changes after the first three possessions:***“No, they did not. They played their defense. They switched on blitz that they hadn’t done before. Just the guys switching the gaps. They didn’t do anything different. They lined up and played their defense.:

***On what made Georgia Tech’s offense difficult to defend:***“I think the first thing is you don’t ever see it. You played 10 games of triple option it’d be a little bit different but you play one every year here. The carry-over from week to week is not there. It’s just a completely different animal. They’re very good at it. Paul’s been doing it for a long time and they’ve got some good athletes out there executing on a pretty high level. And they have answers too. He’s a good coach who’s had good success where he’s been and when you adjust, they adjust.”

***On the targeting call on DB Kahlil Ladler:***“At first I thought they were looking at it for the spot but then they came over and told me they were looking at it for targeting. I understand. The targeting rule with the way it is, there’s going to be some plays like that. I don’t like it because he’s a great kids and I hate that he’s going to have to miss the first half of the next game. It wasn’t anything malicious obviously. He was playing hard but those are the rules. With the rules the way they are there are going to be some targeting calls where they guy couldn’t of done much else.”

***On lack of depth on defense hurting in the second half:***“It seemed like we were pulling guys off the field left and right. It certainly took its toll I guess.”

***On prognosis for Jarrod Hewitt and Dylan Rivers:***“I don’t know. Jarrod tried to go in the second half and just couldn’t. I know that they x-rayed Dylan and there’s no break. We’ll know more tomorrow where we’re at with that stuff but we have an extra couple days hopefully to get the guys ready for the next one because it’ll be a physical one, too.”

***On whether GT’s QB Oliver was different than Marshall:***

***“***I don’t think so. He’s just as good of an athlete as the rest of them. They’re all pretty talented. I don’t know that there’s a huge discrepancy between what you get form those guys.”

***On the technique of GT’s offensive line:***

“Yeah you can’t go backward on those stances. You can’t pass protect.”

***On GT HC Paul Johnson saying GT blocked tonight like they never blocked before:***

“In the first half they ran the quarterback sweep a bunch and that’s not something they run. Usually it’s an option You know you’re going to get something different going into the game so you defend what you can defend and try to adjust and make the adjustments happen.

***On being worried about answers he has to find for the team:***

***“***I look at as our quest for improvement. That’s where we’re at. I think the most important thing for us is to stay together and focus on getting better. I’m not going to say the words that we talked about at the very first of the season but we have a relatively inexperience group that has got to stay focused to tart continuing to improve. You can’t lose sight of that.”

***On the highs and lows of the season:***

“Today, sitting here 20 minutes after the game I’m fuming about how that could happen. It disappoints me that we could execute at such a high level and then have plays there that need to be made. I’m not taking away from Georgia Tech’s defense but I’m just saying that there were several things there that should’ve been routine that we stopped making or we didn’t have the focus or the discipline to make. That’s got to change. That’s mentality. That’s discipline level. That’s attention to detail that we have to have as a group.”

***On if seeing the bounce back from ODU gives him confidence going forward:***

“I think we have a resilient prideful group. I really do. There’s an element of our team that doesn’t know what they don’t know but they have a tremendous amount of pride. Certainly they bounced back that time but it doesn’t mean they’ll bounce back next time. We’ve got to make ourselves do it. We’ve got to have that type of mentality. There’s only one way out of it and that’s to focus on our improvement. Roll your sleeves up and buckle down and go to work trying to be as good as we can be. Whatever that is. That should be our focus. Nothing else other than our improvement on a daily basis to be as good a football team as we can be.”

***On keeping the players’ confidence up:***

“I think there’s an element of coaching there as far as keeping the guys going and continuing to try and put them in good situations and hopefully leading to positive good outcomes and in turn boost their internal confidence. The good thing is we as a team have been through those things now. We’ve been through hard times. We’ve lost a heavily favored football game. We’ve won big games on the road. We’ve stopped a team on the two-yard line and drove 98 yards in 6 and a half minutes to win the game. There’s some positives to draw back on but I think it’s important as a coach to highlight those things regardless of the outcome. Bud does a great job at that with the defense. Brad does a good job with it offensively. And James does a good job of it with special teams. You can’t hide the result on the scoreboard. You can’t hide what we have to improve on whether you won or lost. We have plenty of things to draw confidence from but I think you as a coach has to continue to encourage and do your best to put them in good positions so they have the opportunity to have success.”