

Virginia Tech Football
Head Coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights
Media Conference
April 3, 2018

Opening statement:

“We are over half way into spring and we had a good week last week. We kind of have broken it up into segments, with going Tuesday, Thursday and then a scrimmage on Saturday. We will do the same thing this week. We have gotten good work in. Again, we are still focusing on player development. We have a load of things to get to this week, but we are excited about it and are looking forward to getting back on the field later today.

“I do want to invite all of our students to practice at the stadium Tuesday night on April 10. It has been a fun event that we have enjoyed doing. We will let them come on the field afterwards and hang out a bit. It will be really enjoyable and we are really looking forward to that. I hope a bunch of our students come out and spend a little time with us.”

On wanting more explosive plays out of the running game and if he has seen that in spring practice:

“Well, I think there are different ways to make the unblocked hat miss. I guess I should say I think there are different ways to have the unblocked hat not bring you down. With Steven Peoples, he has a different style than Deshaun McCleese. And I think those guys in particular are embracing that style and are understanding what they need to, as well as going along with techniques that it takes to get you to that point, in terms of what they are reading and making sure they are reading their keys. But I think each guy, it has been my experience, has an understanding that at that spot what he can do to help gain more yards, whether it is trying to make a guy miss or putting your shoulder down and trying to run through arm tackles. It’s about embracing that, that’s what is key to those guys continuing to get better.”

On what he has seen from the younger RBs and if they have developed:

“[Terius] Wheatley has made huge strides from a physical standpoint, but he still has strides to go. He is an explosive and talented player who has been exposed to different stuff, with being to a bunch of different schools throughout his life being a coach’s son. I have been pleased, anxious and happy about his development. I still think he has a lot better to get, but he can certainly run a little bit.”

On how much RB Jalen Holston has progressed:

“He’s made large strides and he is now back out there practicing, he hasn’t done that much of that this offseason, so he has a good bit of rust right now. There was one part during the season when I thought he made large strides, but now I think he is focusing on getting back, like, in practice shape and knocking the rust off right now. He has made improvements with protection assignments and playing without the ball. He’s been a fairly skilled runner that hasn’t really

changed. I think learning to play without the ball in their hands is the key for most guys coming out of high school.”

On wanting to see more consistency and accountability from the older guys in the secondary and if they have provided that so far in the spring:

“I think Jovonn [Quillen] has made some large strides and I have been pleased with his development. We still have some guys who are older that are still working on that stuff, and I’m not singling out Adonis [Alexander], but just several guys in general have that stuff and just need to get it taken care of. And if they act in that manner, we will move on. But I have been pleased with Jovonn and the way he has continued to improve and work hard every day.”

On senior DB Adonis Alexander:

“Adonis loves playing football. I love Adonis and I love all of our guys, but they all have their own things that they have to overcome and handle. Each guy is different and he is not the only one by any stretch of the imagination. I’m not going to get into a public admonishment of each player who is working through things, but he has a lot of great qualities and he enjoys being a part of this football team, as do some of the other guys I’m referring to. Hopefully they will do right in all areas of their lives so they can be a part of this part.”

On DB Bryce Watts getting in on special teams last year and how has he done trying to take on a larger role:

“He’s much more comfortable and confident in what he is doing out there. He still has some physical development that he has got to do. He’s been a track guy so the weight room has been a little bit of a welcome challenge for him. But he has done a good job in that respect, though, he still has several steps to go in that regard. But I think when you watch him practice or when I’ve been around him, he feels a lot more comfortable on what is going on. Coach [Brian] Mitchell has been hard on him and pushed him to continue to improve. He has taken some pretty big steps forward.”