

Virginia Tech Football
Offensive line coach Vance Vice
Q&A Highlights
April 3, 2018

Coach Fuente had good things to say about D'Andre Plantin and the work he's done, what have you seen from him so far this spring?

"I'll tell you he's had a tremendous amount of growth in the maturity part of it, he's actually growing up. He's got some leadership qualities and he's always been a guy that I can trust to know what to do and who to do it to, but now he's helping some of those young guys around him and being a leader. Obviously, he hadn't missed a step. I was encouraged at the end of the year last year watching him at tackle. He's stepped in at guard right now and has done a great job so far. Now, we do have practice today."

Where do you have Plantin working and where do you have everyone else on the line working?

"It's been helpful with [Kyle] Chung coming back, and I have him playing inside at center where [Eric] Gallo left. I have [Braxton] Pfaff and D'Andre [Plantin] at the guards. I have [Yousuah] Nijman and [Silas] Dzansi at tackle; I have Tyrell Smith at tackle and I have Christian Darrisaw at tackle. Those guys have been getting quite a bit of reps bit of reps and TJ Jackson is also getting quite a bit on the edge but I've been moving them and flipping them from side to side. Trying to find the best five that work best together."

You mentioned Plantin maturing last year?

"They're all kids until they get here. He just, when you get to college and obviously he's a tremendous talent and I'm encouraged about which direction he's going and another that spurred that a little bit is that he's healthy now. He had some wrist and some hand stuff there for a while and now he feels good. He had a great offseason in the weight room, doing his job in there. Just growing into the spot he's definitely on schedule [offensive] line wise. This is his time now and he's taking advantage of it."

Tyrell Smith took quite a few reps at right tackle in the spring last year. What happened?

"[Kyle] Chung took it, that's what happened. I think we all, you talked about Chung's turnaround it's been a complete 180 in a good way. He is one of the leaders in that room right now. Tyrell [Smith] is having a tremendous offseason also and right now he's, probably this last week he was one of the highest grades there. That was last week and obviously we have another week in front of us and see how that goes. I'm very encouraged with what I've seen this spring. Getting more to where he was last spring and through the summer. I'm not a doctor but whatever a high ankle sprain is it messes you up for a while."

Since you have been here you have talked about being able to move guys around and have depth. How important was to have guys like Plantin, Chung or Tyrell have experience playing multiple positions?

“It’s very beneficial right now because we’re a young room right now. Being able to, for [Kyle] Chung to be back and to be able to honestly play all five [positions] he can, [Braxton] Pfaff can Tyrell [Smith] can abd that just gives you quite a bit of depth to mix-and-match. It gives me the opportunity with some of these young guys to leave them at position. Tell them to just learn this right now and then we’ll expand on that as we mature. I’ll tell you what, I like this group. I was telling Justin [Fuentes] the other day, I’m blessed right now with this large number of guys that actually like practice. It’s a fun group to be around. They’re competitive, they come to train every day, they’re working at it to get better every day, and I couldn’t ask for anything more from that part. Always I’m going to ask more on the production part.”

You’ve had a couple guys that have taken the Fork Union route to get here, what do you look for in guys like that who weren’t heralded recruits coming out of high school, specifically Dzansi?

“Well [Silas] Dzansi came on a visit in January out of high school and he weighed 242 pounds. I got him in January one year later and he weighed 304 pounds, so that one thing I look for down there. Coach [John] Shuman does an unbelievable job of the development of young guys and one thing that I can guarantee when I get guys out of there is that they have seen hard and they’ve been through tough. That’s probably the biggest characteristics I gained from those guys. We have quite a few now, quite a few of the names we have talked about already, have benefitted from being there. Right now the newest one is Christian Darrisaw and I’m excited as I can be about him and of course Silas [Dzansi] is getting better every day.”