

Virginia Tech Football
Defensive line coach Charley Wiles Q&A Highlights
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On DL Houshun Gaines and where he sees him now:

“He’s having a dynamic camp. He brings a lot of energy to our practices and the meeting room. Houshun [Gaines] loves football, he really does. He’s got a great football IQ, watches film with a purpose and he’s really good with the younger guys and his approach at meetings. He asks really good questions in our meetings and we talk ball between each other, which is good for the young guys. He’s really much into it and I’ve liked the way he’s evolved and really, he’s one of our leaders. No question.”

On what the conversations are like with Gaines’ dad:

“His dad calls and not about football. It’s just making sure he’s doing what’s right and taking care of his school and taking care of those things. When I went through the recruiting process with him, I got to know his dad well. We got that kind of relationship.”

On how DL Vinny Mihota has been recovering from his knee injury:

“I was really concerned going into the last scrimmage but he moved around good. We limited his work, he started doing 50 percent of the work, I’m talking good on good, and then we got him up there to about 75 percent. And then he played 19 plays in the scrimmage and I was pleasantly surprised how well Vinny moved around. A lot of that has to be mental, too, with trusting that you have to put that foot in the ground and playing ball again. He’s down a nice job with rehab. Now it’s coming down to being in football shape, he’s coming along.”

On who else has stood out on the defensive line:

“I tell you what, I was real pleased with the way the whole defensive line played in that scrimmage the other day. Our young ends continue to improve, which includes Eli Adams and TyJuan [Garbutt] and [Nathan] Proctor. Those guys got a year under their belt, they are looking good, big and strong. Those younger redshirt ends got better and came out and played. I think Jarrod Hewitt took over the scrimmage at times, looked really good. I saw that quickness that we really recruited, which is a product of Coach [Ben] Hilgart.”

On the improvement of DLs Robert Porcher IV and Zion Debose:

“Robert took another step the other day ... Coming in from high school he had surgery and wasn’t very strong. He’s gained some weight and has made his mind up that he wants to be a defensive tackle. Zion, we have challenged him and just to be more physical. I was played with what he did in the last scrimmage. He can run and is athletic, we saw some of those things in the scrimmage. They both are coming along.”

On if the defensive line operates in a vacuum and can’t be concerned about the youth behind them on the defense:

“It’s kind of a vacuum and everyone has their job to do. We can’t all of the sudden compensate for somebody else, we got to do our job. Hopefully, we can continue to get better. We have a chance to have more depth this year than we’ve had, especially at defensive end.”