

Virginia Tech Football
Offensive Coordinator Brad Cornelsen Q&A Highlights
Fall Camp – Media Conference
August 2, 2018

On evaluating the wide receiver position and having the depth the staff wants:

“We’re getting better, but not where we need to be. We got some really good experience last year with some young guys and we’re going to have a new wave of young guys that will get experience along with those who got some last year. We’re getting closer, definitely not where we need to be but it’s been a really good summer. We’ve got some of those guys getting healthy that didn’t get to do much in the spring and are working their way back in this summer that we’ve got to get healthy, get back in the mix. That’s going to be a key component for us offensively to be able to take a big stride at that position this year.”

On how many receivers are game ready and if there is a target of how many the staff would like to see:

“For me, you try to get as close as you can to about the eight mark, that would be beautiful. The guys that played last year, the guys that come to mind (Eric) Kumah I think took a step last year as a guy that we can trust to get in there and make plays. He made some plays down the field on 50/50 balls and was consistent as the season went along he was that guy that was there for us. Hezekiah Grimsley had a really good finish to the year as a freshman, he kind of stepped in at a slot position that we needed and he’s had a great offseason and needed one. He played as a true freshman and physically he probably wasn’t ready to, so hopefully that will make a big difference for him. Sean Savoy got some experience, he’s got to keep coming on and get better but he’s got some game time under his belt. Phil Patterson really finished the year well and has had a good off-season. He’s a guy that I think can take that next step that we can really count on. Then you’ve got a couple more guys that are just kind of unknown and unproven that we’re excited about.”

On Damon Hazelton and what he adds to the roster:

“He’s a big kid, he’s a really big kid who had a really good freshman year as a true freshman at Ball State so we know he’s played at this level. We got to see a little bit of it last year at fall camp but most of it was our feedback from the defensive coaches with him on scout team. I think everybody is real excited about him and he’s still got to go out and prove it but he’s getting close and we certainly expect he’ll be there in fall camp.”

On Hazelton’s health and fitness level for the beginning of the season:

“Yeah he didn’t go through spring practice as you guys know, we’re always easing those guys in and Mike (Goforth) and the staff have a great plan for that. We expect him for the first game and expect him to step in and play a role for us.”

On reviewing the Oklahoma State tape, why the running game was successful and can it translate to the 2018 season:

“Yeah I’m excited about our run game. Steven Peoples really has all of the tools that you want for a back, with his power, speed, he’s tough. He just couldn’t stay healthy all year, but certainly getting him back and feeling better for the bowl game I think helped when you have a combination of guys going through there and to keep those guys fresh it makes a big difference. I think probably our game plan to run the ball, try to keep their offense off the field a little bit and schematically that’s what kind of fit the game plan, so probably a combination of all of those things.”

On where he wants to see QB Josh Jackson improve the most:

“He’s got to make the routine plays. There are some big plays throughout the season that he can make and he didn’t make them all. He made some, he made his share of plays but there were too many big plays in the pass game that were left out there unmade and he knows it. I think he took a step this spring but that’s the biggest thing for him. All the intangibles, he’s incredibly intelligent running the offense, making good decisions and taking care of the ball. Those are things that give us a chance to win every week. He had a heck of a year, especially for a freshman so I’m excited about him and the other guys. They all have to continue to improve and there’s certainly competition and young talent so expect a good fall camp from that position.”

On whether RB Coleman Fox having a more prominent role in the offense:

“Well he’s a guy that can do a number of different things and so this spring getting him out of the backfield some to try to expand his abilities and what he can do to try to find a little bit more of a role for him. He’s a guy that we trust and we know what we’re going to get out of him and we know he’s going to be there and as he continues to get bigger and stronger, he’s one of those guys that next thing you know, he’s in there and he’s making some plays.”

On whether Jackson is “falling in love with the process” as Coach Fuente suggested he should:

“Josh is an extremely intelligent kid and his ability to be two steps ahead of everybody else at that position is right there in his grasp. That’s something that he can do and can really help him. But, there has to be time and time and time spent knowing what to do and knowing what the defense is going to do. I think that’s what we’ve tried to push him to do and he has. He loves the game and he loves being around it. He’s spent more time this summer than anyone I’ve ever had at quarterback up there on his own throughout spring and summer. Like all of our guys, we’re trying to get the best out of him and push him and we know the ceiling. We know how high he can take his game because we know his intelligence level.”

On whether the offensive staff has discussed whether controlling the clock could potentially be a key for Tech in 2018:

“It’s way too early for those kind of discussions but certainly once you get going on the season or certain weeks who you’re playing and what they are good or what they’re not good at, those discussions come up. That’s what the head coach is there for and I think last year was a good example. As the season goes on you realize that you got one of the best defenses in the country

and you're inexperienced on offense and you try to play that type of football. At this point, way too early, way too many questions, its about both sides of the ball and all positions just trying to get as good as they can be and we'll get it sorted out when it's time to go."

On whether the offense has the pieces if they need to control a game and hold onto the ball:

"It still comes back to for us about the run game and we've got to get better at the run game. Whether we have to score 50 points a game or we don't have to score 50 points a game, it still goes back to that fundamental part of playing offense. Not where we wanted to be last year there and in a number of places so the process, the formula doesn't really change going into this one. We absolutely have the talent to do really whatever we want to do on offense and we've got to get them there. They've had a great summer and are willing, they are willing and want to be coached and that's where it starts."

On a common thread in the missed big plays down the field that can be fixed:

"It was a combination of things. Josh just missed a couple of throws, protection was there and we got a guy open and maybe just overthrew it or underthrew it or whatever. He missed a few, we dropped a few. Our technique at times down the field and how we're trying to leverage the defensive backs to create more space at the end of the play, so it was definitely a combination of all of those things."