

Virginia Tech Football
Postgame Media Press Conference
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Virginia Tech Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights

Opening Statement:

“First of all, thanks to everyone who came out, sold-out crowd, we really appreciate it and don’t take it for granted. Our kids enjoy it. Getting to play at home after last week. I am proud of the fact that we built this ever since camp started. We have had 28 practices and two games. We just had one on Monday night and trying to take an inexperienced group and have them handle that. The emotions of that is sometimes challenging and our kids did a really good job. Today’s performance in all three phases was not perfect by any means. We had a mistake or two on defense as well as some mistakes on special teams. We acted like we were allergic to the ball for a little bit on offense so plenty of things for us to work on that we have to improve, but that kind of has to be the rock of our team to improve. It was good to get some of our unexperienced guys into the game to play live action football. As a tribute to our starters, they took care of business and beat the other guys.”

You got some younger guys in some a lot of and what was the real value of this game to get some of the younger guys in there develop some depth.

“Sure that is what you want to have happen. You like for them to get comfortable and have them play as quickly as you can. I was glad that we got to do that. I stressed to them at halftime that the next 30 minutes of football is important for the future of our football team. We can teach off of that. They can understand the importance of digesting the game plan we are calling, plays on offense and defense that are in our game plan to the twos and threes specifically. They have to know what to do and be able to adjust their emotions on situations. There were tremendous amounts of that.”

Has Josh Jackson been as efficient as it looks like? It seems like he is getting a lot of guys involved. He’s been on target. Is he being as efficient as it looks?

“I think at times is the thing that we work on is making the average player more efficient and consistent and with Josh, he did that today and did it last week. There will be an evaluation of process as the season moves on and as we get better around him. I won’t get tired talking about the quality of experience and the playmaking ability of the team surrounding him. Josh needs to distribute the ball. He’s almost like the point guard and the ability to distribute the ball to those guys in space is important.”

How do you think your team handled the short week?

“I was fairly pleased. It was a pretty large challenge; it was no ordinary short week. We played on the road in a very late game, a very emotional game. We were all operating on very little rest which is part of it. I’m certainly not complaining, I’m just saying usually when you play a short week, you play a 7 o’clock at night Thursday game and you have a little bit more time. Thinking about the team, I was most concerned with our ability to be fast, but our kids handled the preparation part very well.”

You pulled people very quickly when they fumbled, is that a standard Justin Fuente thing or was that a short week you wanted to send a message there?

“No, I mean, I told them that we will pull people out of the quarter if they fumble the ball. That is poor discipline and poor attention to detail. So I was not pleased with that. If you don’t take care of the ball, it’s hard to trust you on this team. We’ve got guys laying it on the ground and we are teaching lessons. We are trying to get better and all those sorts of things and that’s not winning football.”

That Rickie Walker injury in the first quarter, how frustrating was keeping him out? Was it precautionary?

“Yes, it was precautionary. The results, we looked when he was assessed, were good and we will look at it as the week goes on.”

You averaged 6.6 yards per carry in that game last year. You averaged about 2.9 in FCS play. What did you like about your run game other than the fumbles?

“Last year, in this game, we got it handed to us between the technique and scheme that they ran and their physicality, but certainly this was considerably a better performance running the football. Hopefully, we continue it as the season goes on.”

When you were rotating guys in and out will that continue to happen?

“No, but we do have some guys that are competing for jobs, so we wanted to put guys in even when there was doubt that the game still wasn’t ours, to see how they perform.”

Did you ever consider playing red shirt Quincy Patterson or how close are you to playing him?

“Yeah, I was proud of both of our backups, both Ryan and Herndon. He had that long run that was great down the sideline. Yes that was part of what we talked about. I didn’t want to put him out there that late, just kind of how things unfolded. They held the ball for a while on that one drive and a really good opportunity never really came about for us, but it was something we talked about.”