

**Virginia Tech Football**  
**Bud Foster Q&A Highlights**  
**Wednesday Media Conference**  
**October 23, 2019**

***Opening statement:***

“DeAngelo Hall was named the (Virginia Tech’s ACC) Legend for this coming ACC Championship Game which is pretty cool. He’s one of my all-time favorite players, and he’s maybe one of the most dynamic guys to wear a uniform here at Virginia Tech. He’s just a great competitor and a great football player, went on and obviously had a big-time career in the NFL. I’m really happy for him and proud of him. He set a standard here that all defensive backs have looked towards and followed. It’s a great recognition for him, and I’m excited for him.”

***On CB Armani Chatman playing for the injured CB Caleb Farley vs. UNC:***

“I thought he stepped in nicely. He played behind the receiver on the goal line there when they scored on the pylon, which is a good teaching moment. Luckily it didn’t cost us the game. Armani is a guy that’s continued to improve, he has a lot of abilities and a really good skillset. He’s going to continue to play a bigger role, and he’s obviously some good things on special teams. He showed the other days that he’s a play away from being the guy. His practice habits have improved. I think his biggest challenge is challenging him to understand at that position at this level you have to really be locked in mentally and physically play after play and play at a high level. I think that’s his biggest challenge right now. He’s learning how to do that and be an all-the-time guy, and once he gets that and understands that completely then I think he’s got a chance to be a really good football player with his skillset.”

***On the defense practicing two-point conversions:***

“We usually go through what we see. We break down their film, and if we haven’t seen a lot of goal line film this year, whatever film or information we have from the past we’ll research. Actually, about every two-point play they (UNC) ran we executed it and had seen it on film. Our thought going into this game primarily was that they had three two-point play scenarios and they ran the ball every time. They didn’t do that on the last play obviously. They ran the play that [Khalil Ladler] made on the quick pitch, and that was one of the plays they ran earlier in the year – it might’ve been against South Carolina. But two-point plays are something that we actually did today. We took our first offense against our first defense. They had three two-point tries, and obviously we see three totally different schemes, personnel, and plays, then our second team defense went against our second team offense. This is a great opportunity for us to work on that, so every Thursday defensively we will rep on two, three, or four two-point plays that we’ve seen or know that they’ve run in the past against some looks. So that’s one thing we’ve prepared for. Today we also put the ball at the six yard-line and 10-yard line and that was a last play of the game scenario. The offense has to score to win and defensively we need to stop them to win. So, we make it competitive but also give us an opportunity to execute in those situations when it’s all said and done.”

***On dropping eight men against the sixth overtime two-point conversion:***

“It is unusual, sometimes that’s a gut instinct. Part of it was their formation. They put their formation into the boundary, and I knew they were going to try to isolate on our rovers on the inside. I just wanted to get another zoned off guy into the boundary and make them hesitate a bit. That was a good observation, I did drop eight, but that was based on their formation more than anything.”

***On the play of DL Jarrod Hewitt:***

“Number one, Jarrod continues to be one of our leaders. Number two, his body of work on Saturday was a result of his body of work during the week. He’s a great leader, great work ethic guy. Overall, Saturday was probably his most complete football game. In the run game, he was disruptive and chasing the ball, in the pass game you saw the pressure on the quarterback and a couple of big sacks. But he has been one of our leaders and one of our best football players since this winter. He bought into it being his turn to lead by example and be a vocal guy. He was around some really good people, particularly Ricky Walker in that defensive line group. I’m sure Jarrod would tell you he was a great mentor for him to look at his day of work, how it should be, his preparation, and how he goes and plays the game. Like I said, he had one of his more complete football games. He played physically and played fast, and he was able to get some pressure on the quarterback, which was big in the game.”

***On the lack of examples of veteran leaders on a very young defense:***

“I don’t know if we’ve been that young. We’ve had to replace eight or nine starters before, that’s a lot of guys to replace, but in the past, it seemed like we had some more experience. So, it’s hard to go back and see if we were that young. The exciting thing now is that I feel like we went through the transition with Coach Beamer and Coach Fuente personnel-wise. I think these past two years have been transition years more than anything.

“Also, we lost some upperclassmen through that transition, so we were cycling through a lot of young players – some really talented players – and they gained the experience on the go. Unfortunately, we didn’t have a lot of guys who were holdovers. I would’ve loved to have Tremaine Edmunds, Terrell Edmunds, and some of those guys stay around and lead by example. Some of these guys didn’t have those guys in front of them, so they’re learning from us or having to buy into it and new leaders come to the top. Like Jarrod Hewitt, who had the opportunity to see Ricky Walker, or Rayshard Ashby who had an opportunity to see Andrew Motuapuaka work. In those rooms you see two guys be great leaders. A little bit with Divine Deablo who saw Terrell Edmunds and Greg Stroman work, but there’s just not very many of them to set an example, so to speak. So, some of it is self-learned or self-taught and as coaches we have to demand, and they have to understand what the expectations are.

“But I really am seeing a big improvement particularly since the Duke game. In the Duke game mentally, I don’t know what the situation was, but we’ve really responded and have played consistently better in most instances. I know defensively we still need to clean up a couple things like the long pass play in the second half. There was a bust in the coverage and the communication. They were in a three by one, we were playing a quarters concept, and our

corner played our Tampa Two coverage and should've been running with that guy in man-to-man. So, those are the things that are frustrating in a young group that we have to clean up still, but we're eliminating some of those things that we did a little bit more of last year and early this year.

***On CB Caleb Farley and DL Deshawn Crawford's injuries:***

"Deshawn has continued to work, and we'll get Caleb back. This week we're getting an opportunity to work some guys in like Jaden Cunningham who stepped in and played. Today he was in middle drill, and I'm really excited about him. We kept Deshawn out, hopefully we'll get him back by the end of the week. I'm expecting both of those guys to be back fully and ready to roll."

***On replacing Rob Porcher with Josh Fuga and Jaden Cunningham:***

"We're planning on it. That's the nice thing about this new (redshirt) rule, they can get four games in. I'm excited about both of those young men. Jaden is a big physical kid. Fuga is the same thing. Obviously, Jaden is a little more mature from an age standpoint and a little more mature physically. He's not in very good shape, I was asking about his foot today he said 'My foot's feeling better but my lungs are burning a little bit.' But we're going to do it by committee with those guys. They give us something that Rob didn't. Rob had a little bit of athleticism, but he wasn't very strong at the point of attack. With shoulder surgeries and things of that nature he hadn't really had an opportunity to get in the weight room a whole lot. With those guys and the other two freshmen, Mario [Kendricks] and Norell [Pollard], those guys give us something that Rob didn't. Particularly Jaden and Josh because they're bigger bodies, they can hold the point a little more. Josh has continued to get better and improve, and he was excited about the opportunity to play. But we have to pick our times to play them with those four games, but obviously those times are winding down with us just having five regular season games left."

***On finishing games defensively:***

"I think we are better. We still haven't put together the full, complete game that I would like us to particularly from a mental standpoint – like giving up that big play I just mentioned. We have to eliminate those. It isn't just playing with great effort for 60 minutes, its executing and playing a complete football game physically, emotionally, and mentally. I think emotionally we are playing a much better game. I think we have handled the ebbs and flows and momentum swings much better the past few weeks. We're always striving for perfection, hoping to get excellence – that's kind of what our mantra is and that's where we can still be a little sharper. To be the kind of defense we want to be, we have to eliminate some of those explosive plays, particularly plays that come down to breakdowns, more mental than they are physical. It's going to happen in the physical part of it sometimes. We're closer, but we're still not there yet from that standpoint. But I do think that the last couple weeks we played an emotional game for 60 minutes. We handled the ups and downs and the emotional swings, particularly in the Miami game and this game – two big conference games. I think our kids showed a lot of character in both those wins."

***On whether Chamarri Conner was injured late in the North Carolina game, or if Khalil Ladler had earned the opportunity to be in the game:***

“Chamarri, his hamstring ended up getting really tight and he felt like he was going to pull it. [Chamarri] played a great football game himself. He was all over the special teams. It was good that Ladler was able to step up and it shows a bit about him. We talk to our guys about the fact that it’s going to take everyone. Anybody or everybody that’s on that bus or at the hotel or on that plane, it’s going to take everyone. I think the Miami game and particularly this game they showed it. It took everybody and it says something about those guys being ready to play and prepared to play. When their number’s called, their teammates are counting on them and Ladler did a great job stepping in. That wasn’t a situation – I trust Chamarri but Ladler also got a chance, particularly those two-point plays because we’ll run those with our second group and he got a chance to see those things and was ready for it.”

***On what tradition means at Virginia Tech and his favorite one:***

“Well (tradition) obviously it means a lot. The tradition goes way back before any of us. With the ‘Ut Prosim’, that I may serve I think that tradition is second to none and how the alums go out and approach their day-to-day life and that type of thing. We’ve tried to embody that with the Lunch Pail when it’s all said and done. That’s something when I became the coordinator I felt that we needed to create an identity as a football team, much like the university has done with the Ut Prosim and the symbolism with that. That would be the thing that I respect the most out of the tradition here, of the giving back to society, giving back to people and treating people the way you want to be treated. I think to me, that’s the biggest tradition and thing that I see from Virginia Tech that I hold true to my heart.”