

Virginia Tech Football
Head Coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights
Notre Dame Week Press Conference
Oct. 28, 2019

On QB Hendon Hooker's status for the game:

"It's kind of interesting. It may be covering ground you already know, but when he kind of slipped in the game, I thought that's when he got hurt. That was not it. Talking to Hendon, it was the play before that. So, he's out there going (at practice) and looks good."

On the number two QB spot:

"Quincy's [Patterson] taken more reps, as we prepare for this week and on in the future. We'll still need Ryan [Willis] as we move forward, whether it be situationally or just in the game. Things can change awfully quickly, all three of those guys have to be ready to play."

On taking anything away from Notre Dame's game as last week at Michigan:

"The weather certainly was a factor. Just watching the game, I know that we will see the Notre Dame team that we saw in all the weeks before that. Just reading their comments and watching the game, they'll be ready to respond after that game last week."

On Notre Dame's experienced defensive front:

"If you look at their team across the board, they seem to be an older, developed, team. Particularly on the defensive front, where they can certainly rush the passer and have been very good against the run. It's going to be a big challenge for our young guys to keep their technique when playing against really talented, good, football players."

On RB Cole Beck from Blacksburg:

"Well, he's been hurt, so he hasn't been practicing. So he hasn't had much of a chance to develop, but we're anxious to get him back healthy and get him out there and see what he can do."

On Notre Dame QB Ian Book:

"I really felt like last year, I believe it was last year at some point, but I may be wrong, some point early in the year they made the move to go fully with [Book] as their quarterback and it really changed them offensively. It really hasn't stopped since they made that move. He's a guy that can throw the ball, but is athletic – gets out of trouble, makes plays with his feet, keeps his eyes downfield, and can really hurt you on the move. I think he's been a really efficient, good player for them and maybe one of the reasons over the last year and a half they've made pretty big strides on that side of the ball."

On Tech's WR group being fully healthy:

"It's nice to get them all out there together, competing for playing time. I hope that they can continue to improve. I think Jafar [Williams] has done a great job with them, bringing those guys along. I'm optimistic that they can continue to get better and kind of get their feet underneath

them and hopefully for this big long stretch we've got here – five straight games – they can stay healthy and continue to be productive.”

On whether WR Hezekiah Grimsley has been injured:

“He hasn't been hurt. There have been some personnel deals, some things that have happened during the game that we've ended up in some different personnel groups.”

On whether there is anything he can take from the 2016 Notre Dame game in preparation for this week's game:

“I don't know how many of them (current players) we've got that were there, it doesn't seem like very many. We know we're going to go play a very talented football team in a hostile environment, so I don't know if there's much to take from things that happened (three) years ago.”

On how LT Christian Darrisaw has played this season:

“He's a talented young man that works hard, is incredibly tough, has played through the bumps and bruises that maybe some other people wouldn't have been able to play through, particularly last year. He just continues to improve and has been a source of comfort for us at left tackle at a young age. He works hard on his craft, is highly intelligent, understands what we're trying to get accomplished, and just continues to improve.”

On rotating Silas Dzansi and Luke Tenuta at right tackle:

“If you have a couple guys that you feel like deserve that opportunity, I think you owe it to the team to keep them fresh and keep them rotating in there. Luke [Tenuta] continues to get better and we've had some issues with Silas [Dzansi] in terms of just cramping, and being fresh towards the end of the game so it's been good to get him on the side a little bit so he can be fresh when he's in there.”

On the developing chemistry of the young guys in the locker room:

“I've enjoyed it. We've got a long way to go and we'll have plenty of tests in front of us, but I like our group of guys, they seem to enjoy each other's company and enjoy competing together. We're still learning and evolving as a team from a maturation level and preparation every week. That's something that I think is a little more normal for older players and little bit harder, a little bit bigger strain on the younger guys, but I've enjoyed it thus far and I'm excited about what they, and what we, can be as we move forward.”

On the competitive nature of the ACC Coastal Division from top to bottom:

“I feel like we had the same discussions last year. I feel like it's just the way the division is, it seems like anything can happen and in some cases anything has happened. In my short time, it seems to be a fairly regular occurrence.”

On whether RB Jalen Holston is closer to returning from an injury suffered at Boston College:

“He is. We're certainly in the realm of saying we're looking at things in terms of weeks as opposed to months now. He's made good progress, I just don't know when [he will be

available]. He's doing quite a bit more than he has, not in terms of practice, but just in terms of mobility and running around and that sort of stuff. Those things are kind of hard to project, but I still feel like there's a good chance we'll have him, I know he wants to be back. We'll have him at some point during the year."

On DL Zion Debose dressing again for the first time in a while:

"Yeah, he hurt his foot on a freak deal – non-contact deal – early in the year. He's working to get back, just got to knock the rust off. It's one thing to be healthy, it's another thing to be ready to play. He's working hard, getting some good reps in there, trying to work his way back into the rotation."