

Virginia Tech Football
Defensive Coordinator Bud Foster Q&A Highlights
Wake Forest Week Press Conference
Nov. 5, 2019

On whether he brought enough pressure on the final drive against Notre Dame:

“At the end, we had some pressure, but we were down [Jermaine] Waller, down Chamarri Conner, [Caleb] Farley went down. All of a sudden, we’re scrambling to have DBs in the game. To run some of the pressures that we run out of that package, I was concerned that we could turn somebody completely loose. The coverage that we play, it’s a good coverage for us. On the 4th and four, we had a chance to stop them and it was empty, we brought heat that they couldn’t block and in the end, it was a race that we didn’t play very tight coverage on. We replayed that again today offense against defense and some final plays. Then we’re playing 4th and 10, and we really can’t be in better coverage. We’re playing soft, we have two whole players just reading the quarterback. The quarterback’s reading the whole way to number 83 and we don’t track it. That’s the disappointing part.

“Those are great calls and great coverages. Could we have pressured? Yeah, but we had concerns about personnel. Had they done certain things at certain spots, that was my concern, just letting somebody completely loose. The last play of the game, we expect that play at certain times. That was a big call because they had the ball with the clock running. If they run the ball, who knows what the situation may be. We just didn’t leverage the ball well at one spot. We had three guys coming and the ball was able to bounce outside and we couldn’t create a play. That was my big reasoning about playing the coverage that we did and some of my concerns.”

On what went wrong on the 3rd and 4th downs on that final drive:

“We just didn’t execute. We played really well early. We had several three-and-outs. To get them in those situations, there were several things. I think a big play in the game was when we got the turnover. There were two scenarios, when we had them on 3rd and 9 from the goal line and they got a first down when we could’ve got off the field there. Or, when [Jermaine] Waller got the penalty, we had a great call and a great play, when all of a sudden, we’re getting the ball at midfield with some momentum. Those plays are as big a factor as those final ones. I’m really proud of our kids, how they fought and how they played. Those couple of guys that had some opportunities, would they like to have some plays back? Yes, but that’s part of it. Now we have to get ready and play a really good Wake Forest team.”

On what the celebration of his career on Saturday means to him:

“I haven’t thought about it a whole lot. They asked me to say a couple things and it kind of hit. Saying some things to a camera that I guess might be put in public, who knows? This game is about the players. I’ve been very fortunate and blessed to be at one place as long as I’ve been. In this profession, you wear a lot of different hats. I’m seen as a coach, but I’d like to think former players and players now see me as more than that. Hopefully, I’ve helped them grow

and develop on the field, but most importantly off the field. The game has never been about me, it's been about the players. I've been a facilitator, a helper, a mentor to help these guys achieve success. That's what I'm most proud of and the relationships it has created. I want this game to recognize the longevity and consistency we've played with around here and the culture we've built. I have not taken one snap. I've played a lot of snaps emotionally with these players, every one defensively, but I've never played one physically. This thing is a celebration of me, but it's a celebration of every player I've coached."

On CB Chammari Conner's absence for most of the game vs. Notre Dame:

"He just didn't feel like he could turn it loose completely, and that is unfortunate. Khalil Ladler came in and played a good football game. Hopefully, Chamarri will be back because he can do some things coverage-wise from a speed standpoint that is a plus for us. [Khalil] Ladler can do some certain things, but there are certain coverages that you might want to play and have the freedom to play a little bit more. He just didn't feel like he could turn it loose. I don't know if it was the cold weather, but he's working really hard to get back to full speed to play like we need him to. He did some things today. We're just kind of limiting what we want him to do and not put him at risk. Getting him better every day and hopefully he'll be ready for Saturday."

On Wake Forest's passing game:

"I'll tell you what, their quarterback is dynamic. The Newman kid is big, athletic, he's got a lot of arm, he's very accurate. Their receiving core might be the best in the league. Obviously, Surratt is playing extremely well. The Washington kid - those are two great targets that have great ball skills, good speed and great body presence. Hinton took Dortch's spot, who was always the guy I thought of. I've been impressed with his speed, quickness, and explosion as a return guy. He's capable of big plays. Their backs are solid. The Carney kid reminds me a lot of Sam Rogers, just a winning guy. Tough, hard-nosed, complete football player with the ball in his hands, and blocking when the ball is not in his hands. Walker III and Beal-Smith are really quick, dynamic guys. They have three seniors up front. You have a team with a lot of experience, playing with a lot of confidence and talent. We're going to have to play a great football game. We got to stop the run. Their passing game concerns me because they do it so well and they have such big targets. They're very explosive in all they do."

On preaching detail to players that prepares them for the next level:

"It's a combination of a lot of things. Number one, myself as a player. The only way I could get on the field was to give great effort, compete and to be the best I could be. The game demands that, I don't care what sport you play - basketball, baseball, football, tiddlywinks, I'm sure there's an art to that, too.

"I was always a blue-collar guy. That was the only way I could play. To get to a point where you want to be the best, I always wanted to be the best I could be. If I could help someone that had an abundance of more talent than I ever had, if I could encourage him by my approach, that would make him better. That is what we try as coaches to do. To establish that foundation, that accountability, and what the expectations are. Not so much what Coach Foster demands, but what the game demands to be successful.

“To play at a certain level you have to practice, perform and compete. Then, do it over and over again. That is where it’s hard to do. That’s what I’m most proud of, the consistency. We’ve had a lot of good runs and good years. I think the kids we have right now are really seeing that. Do we always get the results we want? No, but we’re seeing what it takes to be successful and what it takes to give them a chance on Saturdays. I hope that’s what they were reflecting about because then when you go to the next level, obviously we’re playing at the highest level you can in college football and when you step on the field, there’s a fine line between winning and losing. [It’s] the details, but then establishing that work ethic, consistency, accountability and determination at the next level in football or life, I hope I helped them with a foundation in being successful with everything they do.”

“When they go to the next level, I think they’re surprised. They think there’s going to be comradery in the NFL, but you’re going in there to take another guys job and they’re not going to take you under their wing like they do here. I think that is an awakening for those guys. They saw that they at least have the foundation of work ethic and being able to control what they can control and hopefully that will take care of itself. That allows them success in the league, a work ethic second to none and they’re team first players. At that level, they appreciate it.”

On the development of CB Armani Chatman:

“I really like where Armani’s gone. I saw a guy in the spring with a lot of potential and ability. Obviously, he played a little receiver in high school and defensive back. He wanted to come here and play defensive back. I was excited about that. I didn’t know initially how good of a corner he was going to be. I saw a lot of good skill set. He’s been a guy that had to understand the competitive nature of this level. To do it all the time, play in and play out. He knows he’s going to be challenged all the time and every play. That is where I see his development improving. His overall consistency and body of work. He’s got a lot of tools, but that’s the case with a lot of young players. I see a guy that is improving each and every day, every week. We’re going to need him to step up this week. Obviously, with Waller down in the first half, he’s going to have to step up and not just participating, but performing. He doesn’t have to do it himself. We need to get pressure on the quarterback and he needs to lay with good technique and fundamentals, do his job, and play with great visions and make big plays.”

On what he saw in LB Rayshard Ashby during recruiting:

“Number one, what I saw of him in high school is what I see now, just a great football player. He’s very instinctive. Probably the closest thing he reminded me of was Vince Hall, watching him in high school. He had a great nose for the ball. His football IQ and his approach day-to-day, I thought that is what he had, but it’s even better now. He is a coach on the field. He’s just a phenomenal football player. I love what he’s about. He’s never been on any list. He comes to work every day, he’s great in the classroom, he competes in the weight room. He’s out there making every call, I don’t care what it is. He calls the formation, the backfield. He’s so alert and into it, just a complete guy. He is getting recognized for his body of work. That’s how he approaches every day. That is something he’s earned and deserved for his work and preparation. I’m excited for him. He is rubbing off on some other guys. I’ve got a good room defensively, specifically at linebacker and he’s the leader of that group.”