

**Virginia Tech Football**  
**Head Coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights**  
**Media Conference, Spring Game**  
**April 13, 2019**

***Opening statement:***

“I know our kids enjoyed playing in front of all our home fans. Getting on the field again and I hope they enjoyed it. We changed it up a little bit because we needed some of that work early on and we needed to create those situations. I really didn’t want to be tied to a clock and I wanted to get a lot of work in. We had well over 100 plays today. We stayed just healthy enough so we could get that work in. I’m proud of our guys and we obviously aren’t done with spring, we have three more practices left. We will have some good emphasis work on both sides of the ball on Tuesday and Thursday and then preparing for summertime on Friday. Obviously, there is a lot of work to be done on both sides of the ball. We take the good and the bad and wrap it all up. We are in the midst of having a very productive spring.”

***On if Caleb Stewart has done enough for the starting spot:***

“I see him competing for playing time. He is a little bit banged up, he’s got a little bit of a wrist issue and hopefully, we will get that healed up. When he was out we were down to one scholarship running back. We are trying to manage those reps and not overwork those guys. Deshawn McCleave did not play, he had a little procedure done. He will be back and ready to go in a short time. McCleave has practiced mostly in the spring and had done well. It’s fun to see Caleb making progress.”

***On how you would evaluate ball security today and throughout the spring:***

“I would say there were examples on the offensive side of poor ball security that did not cost us. On the goal line with Jalen Holston, we do not extend the ball unless it’s fourth down. Just standing back there and watching us in practice I think we are starting to understand that but we aren’t where we need to be. Just because there is only one turnover because of a desperation throw into the end zone. We need to better on both sides. I think we had opportunities because at times we played pretty good defense today to create some of those strip opportunities, make game tackles and get to the ball. I think it’s at the front of their mind but it’s not ingrained yet.”

***On Quincy Patterson’s power running and his general assessment of him this spring:***

“We are still trying to figure out what type of QB he is going to be. He has less wiggle than he thinks he has. It’s been things that we are trying to work through. He is a big powerful man and he has got to use those things to his advantage when he gets into the secondary. It’s a little bit unfortunate because both he and Hooker have missed a little bit of time in the spring. Patterson didn’t miss any practice but was really hampered throwing the ball with the cut on his finger. I think it was a week and a half or something like that. Now he is back throwing the ball and getting reps. Hooker was a little bit slow because of a twisted ankle. He missed our scrimmage last week. I hate that it happened, I’m glad they were minor things. They are all developing in their own way. We are still evaluating and we are still trying to figure it out. I really like what Hooker can do and some of the progress that he is making. I see him making good decisions. I see Patterson, at times, being able to play faster. Willis needs to continue to be more consistent. They all have a challenge.”

***On his evaluations of the defense, specifically the corners:***

“In terms of developing our corners, I think it helps to have our compliments on the other side, challenging them. Having Hazelton and Turner healthy in practice to continue to push them and keep them out of bad habits. I’ve been pleased with their progress. I think there are some young guys who are going to continue to get better too and push the guys who have experience. We don’t talk about it too much, I’m sure as a group they do feel like that. They would like to get things back to the way it has been. I think as a group we all feel that way. I don’t know if it’s just an offensive thing, a defensive thing, a Coach Fuente thing or a Coach Cornelsen or Coach Foster thing. As a group collectively we are all hungry to go back and play football the right way. The way we want to do it and have the type of team and season that we all want”

***On Dax Hollifield’s progression:***

“His knowledge of what’s going on has improved. He is a very unique individual. Sam Rogers and Chuck Clark like in terms of being able to focus on a task and really pour his heart and soul into it. He has decided to slim up and thin down a little bit. He is in the weight room every single day doing extra. It’s remarkable, his work ethic. I don’t know how he has time to do his homework but he does all his homework too. He is just a remarkable young man that carries so much energy and passion on our football team. It hasn’t taken very long for our entire team to see how genuine he really is. You really wonder at first if a guy can really keep up this pace. Is he really like this? He is and it’s every single day. He is a pleasure to be around and making himself into a productive player.

***On the energy from the team:***

“I enjoy being around them. They are a lot of fun to coach right now. Two things I know for certain is our football team will have success and we will face adversity. How we handle those two situations will determine our long term success. We still have many challenges in front of us but it was fun to go out there with those guys because I’ve been watching them for months now. They were pretty fired up to go play today. We had a team meeting before we took the field and they were ready to tear the walls down. That’s fun when you have guys that want to do it.”