

Virginia Tech Football
Head Coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights
Media Availability
Aug. 19, 2019

On how his wife and kids get ready for football season:

“Well, they’re all in and are excited for it. They get to come up to practice a little bit and watch and hang out. They certainly have their favorite players, too. But there is a sign in our house that has the countdown of how many days until football. Those girls know the answer, with who we are playing and all of that. They’re fully invested in what we got going on. It’s fun to share it with them.”

On if there is any update on the quarterback situation after the third scrimmage:

“I would say this, we had lengthy discussions with all positions today about reps and where guys are at, as we start to migrate towards scout team. But we haven’t met with the kids yet. So, I won’t talk about the depth chart situation until I speak with them first.”

On the ACC Network and what that means for his program:

“Well, obviously there is a financial component to it for our league. If you look at what this league has been able to accomplish without being at or near the top of revenue numbers that you see in other leagues. I think it’s encouraging for the future of our entire league from just an economic standpoint.

“Secondly, there’s an exposure standpoint. If you really think about it, if you take football and basketball out of it, and you think about the Olympic sports and you think about the wonderful stories with Olympians, great athletes and great people that have come through all of our universities, they’re a lot of great stories. I’m anxious to see the network tell those stories from our school and the other ones. I think it’s going to be good for everybody moving forward.”

On how the field goal and kickoff situations are playing out:

“Brian [Johnson] has been the guy who has primarily been kicking field goals with taking the reps with the 1s. We will continue to see who will take care of kickoffs. [Parker] Romo has done a good job, so we’ll see where he ends up as we continue heading down the stretch here.”

On how difficult it is to keep consistency at the center position with Brock Hoffman’s situation (appeal to NCAA for immediate eligibility) still up in the air:

“Certainly it is challenging. We have had to balance that. But I think the story or the part that’s fascinating is how Brock’s handled the whole situation. It’s really been remarkable. I’ve met with him and he’s preparing himself mentally and emotionally both ways. I really feel for him because this is a legitimate situation. I’m hopeful that in the end, everything gets sorted out with all parties being pleased. But in terms of game planning and reps, you do have to have contingency plans and operate in some form or fashion for both scenarios.”

On the new redshirt rule going into Year 2 and if he has any different approaches with it:

“I think it’s just a more consistent topic, you know? And some of them work themselves out quite honestly. Like, Nadir Thompson’s situation was one that he was well on his way to playing in every game, but early in the season had an injury that precluded him from continuing the rest of the year. But we were afforded the ability to redshirt some guys. They now have four years with our young players that have not redshirted with four years left. I don’t know if there is a change of philosophy other than try to do your best to figure out where you need them early. And when you get down the stretch, seeing if some guys can come along and help you, particularly in the kicking game.”

On the final scrimmage this past weekend and if there were any guys that stood out:

“I don’t know if there are any individual guys that did. I think as a group, they went out there and battled. It’s pretty obvious we lost our legs, though, we still hit some pretty good numbers from a GPS standpoint. But guys battled through. We got to get some guys back healthy, there are some guys with some bumps and bruises that we got to get feeling better as we start to move towards these next two weeks.”

On if there is any clarity on who will be starting in the return game:

“I mean, I still think it’s open. But the two right now are Hezekiah [Grimsley] and Tayvion [Robinson]. It’s those two guys right now in the punt return game.”

On if the GPS has been more helpful than he anticipated:

“Yeah, it’s really an infinite number of possibilities. Getting our arms wrapped around all of the measurements is a real task, with trying to disseminate the information. We have actually gotten some help from across campus, getting some people that have physical education and math backgrounds to see what else we can do and what else we can learn from all of this data. The kids just want to know how fast they ran, but we want to make sure that we are properly monitoring our guys. I think, we will be able to more concretely know when we need to taper back. That’s my hope anyway. Is to have a better feeling for when we are fatigued. So, we are trying to get some benchmarks for volume of work and see how that compares to what we are doing and have been doing. What’s the stress load that it’s putting on our guys, so we can do a good job monitoring that.”

On RB Keshawn King’s chances of him getting into playing a significant role:

“The first thing I would say is that Deshawn [McClease] and Jalen [Holston] have done really well. Jalen has had a great off-season and has done a great job from a leadership standpoint with everybody. He’s had a great attitude and work ethic. I’ve really been pleased with him and Deshawn, too. But in addition to that, Keshawn has come in and has provided us some spark and some flashes. To what extent that will be, I’m not sure yet. But it will be to some extent, just not sure yet.”

On WR Hezekiah Grimsley now embracing the opportunity to return punts:

“Well, he’s worked hard at it. He has gone and attacked it like it is something that he really, really wants. And then he’s been very consistent. It’s not always easy to treat every rep like it’s

a game. That's a difficult mental task, so he's done a really good job of trying his best to treat every rep like it is live action. He's been really consistent and I think that's a product of his work ethic."