

Virginia Tech Football
Head Coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights
Media Conference
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"Back at it today, kids had a good recovery day yesterday. This will be a five practice block ending with our second scrimmage. We've got a lot of work to do, but I'm encouraged and happy about some of the progress we are making. Sunday we have fan appreciation day, and we are looking forward to that. It's always a good time with our fans. Congratulations to Andrew Allegretta (new voice of Tulane Athletics) for his job, he has been a pleasure to work with over the last several years."

On his takeaways from the first scrimmage:

"Some good and some bad. Some good competition out there. There are some guys out there competing for chances to play, which is a good thing. That was kind of our base installation now we will move to some situational work like redzone, offensive lineman, third down and in-game situations this week."

On what he likes about the second cornerback position:

"I like the way those guys are going about it. You got Jermaine Waller, Jovonn Quillen, Armani Chatman, Caleb Farley, and we haven't even gotten to Jeremy Webb. There is good competition there for a starting spot, for back up spots and those guys are continuing to work and improve."

On what he wanted to see Caleb Farley make strides in:

"I think he needed to improve his overall strength. He hadn't played football in a while, and he was playing a new position. He has got to be a little bit stronger in the run game. I think he would tell you that. Continue to become a better tackler – he is a willing tackler. This offseason his strength numbers have increased, and that's giving him more confidence when it comes to trying to get guys on the ground."

On his impressions on RB Keshawn King:

"Explosive. Had a couple of nice runs in the scrimmage. He is not scared, and he pours it up in there. He has got some elite quickness, and he has been fun to watch so far. We've got a lot of work to do with him, but he has had a good camp thus far."

On if blocking is a struggle for young running backs:

"Being an every-down back and running the ball occasionally are two different things. But I have seen that he is Keshawn is a willing blocker. King is not scared to run up there and throw what weight he does have around."

On if he has noticed the positive attitudes in the locker room have translated to the field:

"I think we are continuing to get better. I think there are many reasons like more knowledge, more strength and better condition, more time in the program. The guys seem to genuinely

enjoy each other's company. There are a bunch of factors contributing to what we hope is improvement."

On what he has seen from DB Chamarri Conner:

"I was pretty pleased with him coming out of the spring. I'm pleased now. He is a strong kid who is a good tackler, intense competitor. He was one of our better special team's players as a true freshman last year and has settled into that role pretty well. I'm excited about his future."

On what he has been most excited about so far in camp:

"It's always fun to see the young guys out there. I always try not to make too much out of them after six practices. There is still a long way to go, but you work to recruit guys and develop those relationships. It's always fun to finally get on the field with them. There are some guys who we expected to be good that we are excited about. I don't know if there is one thing that has been surprising to me, but I felt good coming into camp, and I still feel good now. We've got a good nucleus of guys that care about each other and are working hard towards improving."

On if he challenged any individuals to be better leaders and if he has seen improvement there:

"I don't know if there was a single person that was called out to be a better leader. I think there is a challenge for our leadership council to continue to set a good example and bring some other players along. There are some young player's involved with that, and It's always interesting for them to find their way as leaders when they have only been here a year or are going into their second year in the program. There is nobody specifically, but as a group, they are doing a really good job of trying to bring other along."

On if he is encouraged by the defensive line:

"I feel good about the young guys. It's still early, but there have been encouraging signs from Norell Pollard, Mario Kendricks, and Josh Fuga. I'm really excited about the future and what they can be. Jaylen Griffin is a guy at end that's becoming more comfortable there as well. There are some definite signs of progress and hope. Obviously, that's not to discount Jarrod Hewitt, DaShawn Crawford and some of those guys but those three news guys are pretty talented."

On his thoughts on OL Doug Nester:

"If he continues to work hard, he's got a chance to have a really bright future. He's is incredibly diligent, and he's got an element of perfectionist in him in terms of really wanting to do well at concentrating and the mental part of playing offensive line. We knew he was talented; we knew he was a great person with a great family. If he stays on course and continues to work, I think he's got a chance to be a really good player."

On what DB J.R. Walker's summer has been like:

"He has had a good summer. You forget that some of those guys that come in at a semester that it is really their first summer. Sometimes as coaches we forget about that because they have been here a semester. So you throw them into the older guys with the freshman that didn't come in early, and they are kind of by themselves. He was certainly challenged, but he finished the summer strong. We are really proud of that, and he continues to develop. What

role? I'm not sure yet, but he stood out in several special teams drills and has a chance to be a good player for us."

On if some of the older offensive linemen have a chance to work their way into the mix:

"Absolutely. Tyrell Smith has been a great leader for us and not just in that room but for the entire team. He is an incredible worker with great strength numbers, and he knows this is his last go-around, so he is pushing hard. T.J. Jackson is maybe the most unique athlete I have seen out there in terms of his size and athletic ability. Every day he continues to take steps forward to being a good player. He is just a big special athlete. He is a really athletic person and a really special athlete. He is a pleasure to be around with a wonderful mother. I don't say this about many people, but he brightens up a room when you are in there - That's T.J Jackson. He has a great smile; he always in a great mood and always gives a positive spin to other people. He is a good athlete, and he will lose a little bit a weight here in fall camp. It's always been something we have kept an eye on a managed. He seems to be able to move at a pretty high weight. They are definitely pushing, and they are going to have opportunities."

On the offensive line compared to last year:

"We've got a couple of tackles with some experience that didn't have much experience last year. Luke Tenuta is a guy who is pushing for playing time. He is well over 300 pounds and really has been impressive. He has been pushing at the tackle spot as well. We do have some size and athleticism and a little bit of experience. That's been key to get some game reps for those guys. You never have enough, and we always want more. I'm encouraged that these guys have played and they do have some size and athleticism."

On any update on Brock Hoffman or Braxton Burmeister:

"There is no update on Brock. Braxton was denied (immediate eligibility). He and his family with compliance are working through the appeals process. I don't have anything for you on Brock."