

Virginia Tech Football
Defensive Coordinator Bud Foster Q&A Highlights
Furman Media Session
Sept. 10, 2019

On Furman's use of the triple option:

"We knew it when that game was scheduled that they do a little bit of that. That's part of their offense. They'll get into multiple looks with the same personnel but that's a part of their offense. They'll run the spread bone, or whatever you want to call it, and stuff that we've had some experience with from Georgia Tech. They'll shift to it, they'll shift out of it and get into some ace back stuff, some two-back formations and go from two back to the bone, and those kind of things like that.

"We've got to be ready; we've got to communicate, and we got to be ready to get after the line of scrimmage when it's all said and done. This is a really talented football team offensively. An experienced group – the quarterback's a redshirt freshman but he's extremely talented. He has the speed of the guy last week (ODU QB Stone Smartt), but he's a much better quarterback as far as throwing the football, and I think his decisions, from what I've seen in the first two games anyway. He's played a little bit, he played in some games last year and they redshirted him. Really, extremely talented guy. He kind of reminds me of Hendon Hooker a little bit. Not quite as big as far as physical thickness, but that kind of athlete. You guys have seen Hendon when he's in there and has the capabilities with the ball in his hand, but he's got a live arm like that too. They have a dynamic tailback. Well, a couple guys. They've got a couple good fullbacks and they got a couple good receivers. One, number 89, can play anywhere in the country. Just a really fast young man, a dynamic playmaker and the quarterback has the ability to get him the ball. They have an experienced offensive line. I think three of them are preseason all-conference guys. It's a group that I have a lot of respect for. They're well coached. We're going to have to be prepared for a lot of things not just for the bone, the spread bone whatever you want to call it. Then just their multiple formations and then their passing game will follow that stuff."

On Brandon Flowers' induction into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame:

"I tell you what, I got a chance to see Brandon [Flowers]. I hate that I couldn't go to the (HOF) event. Maybe I'll get a chance to go to some of those here in the near future. I'm extremely proud of Brandon. His body of work when he was here and how he took that to the next level made him who he was. He came to work every day. Was he the fastest guy that I had ever? No, but maybe one of the most complete football players. Maybe, one of the better football players period at any position that we had here. Very coachable, very technique and fundamentally

sound, very physical, tremendous football IQ and, on top of that, an outstanding young man at the time and turned into be – what a great NFL career, but what a great young man. Just really, really proud of him. As a coach now, being here as long as I've been, we're starting to see a lot of our guys that we had the opportunity to coach. We had a lot of good years here. We've had a lot of dynamic football players, and Brandon was one of many and I'm hoping there will be several more that's going to be ready to join him. I'm really excited for him."

On Virginia Tech's status as a team that claims to be DBU:

"Yeah, well we stake claim to that a little bit. I think there's a couple other universities. I think LSU, Florida and us are probably the three and maybe Ohio State in that mix, too. We've had a great tradition and we've done some really dynamic things on the back end and really produced some really dynamic players. That goes back to them. I mean, obviously we have a great skill. We develop and have a culture that's a work ethic second to none that prepares them for the next level. I think what we've done over the years is something very multiple on the back end. The NFL guys like our guys because of the skill set they have and also their workman-like approach and their football IQ. That's something we're really proud of and I'll stand on the table to defend that claim."

On not rotating linebackers vs. ODU and the play of Dax Hollifield and Rayshard Ashby:

"I told Keshon [Artis] and I told Tizzy [Alan Tisdale] that that was my bad. We only played 24 snaps in the first half. I didn't want to get those guys – and linebackers are a position almost like tailback, you kind of get the flow of the game. You get a feel of blocking schemes, those type of things of what they're doing. Next thing you know, it's going to be midway through the third quarter before those guys – and I just didn't want feel like, I'm sure they were ready to play, but you know what I'm saying they sat for a whole half in a series or two. That was just my concern; putting them in and making sure that they were sharp. It kind of goes back to the number of plays we were playing early.

"Rayshard [Ashby] played very, very solid. Right now, you guys see, he's a tackling machine. Dax [Hollifield], we got to still clean up a couple things, but he's all over the field. I like the energy that those guys bring. I like the effort that they play with. We're developing the eraser ability, making some good tacklers. Rook [Ashby]'s been playing on the other team's side of the line of scrimmage. We got to get some more play out of the backer spot a little bit, be more productive as far as behind the line of scrimmage and what not. Dax had some plays last year behind the line of scrimmage. Part of it sometimes is the offense you see and what they're doing. That was kind of the situation of not playing those guys, but by the same token, I'm pleased with how that whole unit's working, and in particular those two guys who've played so far."

On LB Dax Hollifield in the first half vs. ODU:

“Probably, he missed a couple tackles that I thought he would normally make, but that also goes back to those guys. I thought the [Lala] Davis kid is a really good back. I think he’s got great feet and vision in the hole. He can make a lot of guys miss. I think the Strong kid’s a good back. I’m telling you, the two kids or three kids that they have at tailback are like those two guys this week. I think that one of the strengths of this team’s offense is their running backs. They’re averaging 292 [yards] a game right now in the first two games. That position alone, at tailback, is averaging over 200 of that. It’s a good unit for them. We got to do a great job.”

On Devon Hunter being back in the secondary after redshirting last season:

“I think I’ve mentioned before, Devon [Hunter]’s done a tremendous job. He’s working at it and continuing to improve and get better. He’s been really good on special teams for us. That’s all those guys, our side of the ball, the majority of them are playing special teams. That’s such a big, big role. The one thing Devon’s done is he’s embraced his role on the team right now, but he’s also embraced getting better knowing that he has an area of improvement and he is working that way, which I’m really pleased with his approach and how he’s working.”

On DT Norell Pollard’s development:

“Norell [Pollard] is a little bit like Dax Hollifield. He is a contagious guy, and he’s got a lot of energy. He is a vocal guy and very enthusiastic. He and Mario Kendricks both have played quite a bit. Now they both have played two college games, and they weren’t here for spring practice. Their little things we are continuing to improve and work on. Their hand placement and their mind are still tying up their feet a little bit, but at the same time, I really like Norell and who he is. I like this young group, and you can throw Josh Fuga into that mix. Those three kids at defensive tackle are going to be really good players for us, I believe. We’re playing with two with Norell and Mario, but they just have to continue to work every day and understand the work ethic it takes at this level to be consistently good. They can take a false step in High school and run around and block a guy and dominate but here that can’t happen. Attention to detail and the little things right now. Our techniques and fundamentals being consistently good are where we have to continue to sharpen the tools in our toolbox. I see those guys wanting to please and do their best. I’m pleased with them, but we are still a working progress. There is so much potential, and we haven’t even come close to scratching. I’m excited about how they are working and where we are going.”

On if Josh Fuga is behind those guys on the depth chart:

“Yeah, right now he is just a little bit. That’s part of it, but I’m pleased a couple of freshmen can come in and play. I wish we didn’t have to play them, but at the same time, those are guys that can do it. I think Josh [Fuga] physically at the point of attack would be okay. He is still a guy that

his mind is tied up with his feet a little more than those other two and probably not playing quite as fast even though he has similar abilities, but it's just part of it."