

Virginia Tech Football
Defensive Coordinator Bud Foster Q&A Highlights
Duke Postgame Press Conference
Sept. 27, 2019

On the defense after the first-quarter fumble:

“I wrote down some things during the course of the game. Number one with that, we didn’t respond to adversity very well. That’s one thing that we’ve really talked about. It’s hard to practice that but we had some situations these last couple weeks, in the open date, that we created some turnovers. We’re able to get our guys off the field, but then turn around and put them back on the field. All you want to do when you put them back on the field is that next play, we need to make a stop. That’s the one way you can practice that. I didn’t think we handled it very well.

“You got to give Duke credit. They hit us on a couple gadget plays. We busted two gaps. We’re a gap control defense and we busted on their two long running plays with the quarterback and the last one that popped, we lost coverage in our gaps and that’s disappointing. We were bad at times. We were good at times, we were bad at times and I was probably even worse. I know Coach [Fuente] probably came in here, I know what he told the team and probably what he told you, but we’ll roll our sleeves up and go back to work and go attack this thing.

“Where we got to be is we got to be consistently good. We’ve got to do it all the time. We’ve got to make sure we leverage our gap or we’re hitting in the proper gap or we’re playing proper leverage on the back end, doing those kinds of things. Those are day one things that we’ve got to continue to do and do better. It’s disappointing as a coach that we have to continue to harp on that, but that’s what we got to do.

“We’ve got a lot of football left. I know we’re disappointed right now. It seemed like that turnover and then how that next play just took the wind right out of everything, out of the energy in the stadium it seemed like. That’s kind of what I got out of that thing. We came back out in the second half, we had an opportunity to make a stop. They got a couple first downs, but we did get a stop. We couldn’t get anything generated and then we gave up a couple big plays there in the second half. You can’t give up explosive plays. You got to give credit on a gadget play here or there and then obviously they had the fake punt which was a big play off of a stop. Those are plays that will come back and haunt you and they did. That’s kind of it in a nutshell when it’s all said and done.”

On the defense’s adjustments to Duke’s three-step offense:

“I told our kids, I mean the three-step stuff in today’s football, don’t get frustrated by that. That’s going to win some battles, but that’s not going to win the football game. That didn’t win the football game, what won the football game was us being undisciplined and explosive plays and two gap plays. That’s not adjustments, that’s just basic stuff. They can dink and dunk, that’s just going to happen. They didn’t get any explosive plays out of the empty stuff and that type of thing right there, but you can’t get frustrated on that. The big thing you can’t do though is have yards

after the catch and there was a couple of those that we missed a couple of tackles on the perimeter which are disappointing, you eliminate those plays. Those pester you, but they shouldn't win a football game, you know what I mean. We just got to make sure that we understand that. We get them to where it's third down, we got to get off the field. I think they were 50 percent on third down, we got to be better than that when it's all said and done."

On how Duke's tempo could affect the defensive rotations:

"I don't know if it impacted us much. I played a couple of linebackers tonight, too. Those guys did a great job in practice and there needs to be some competition. I've got some really good players, but we've got some good backup kids that they're earning the right and opportunity, and that's not taking any continuity away from what we do. There are some young guys that have to continue to play better and be consistently good and we're talking about some of those young guys up front. We got to make sure we win our gaps and take the proper steps. It's little things like that that make the difference in whether a play pops for 20 yards, there's a couple of things, whether we fit right in the secondary or we leverage our gap up front. That's just the nature of the game with spread offense, but we are a gap-control defense. If the ball pops, that means somebody's busted and that's the disappointing thing."

On the team's mindset:

"We'll be able to find out this week. I thought we had a great couple of weeks of practice, I really did. I thought, to be honest with you, I thought both sides of the ball really got after it, you know what I mean. We emphasized the first couple practices getting back to fundamentals and really working some of those younger guys like those defensive linemen. I saw big improvements, but we've got to go back to work and make sure that they understand that you got to be consistently good. We can't be like this, you know what I mean, and it goes back to our consistency in our practice habits and everything we do. They got to understand that there's a fine line in between winning and losing and it could just be a handful of plays. That's really what it was tonight when it's all said and done was a handful of plays. They can move it up and down the field on three or four yard routes and we'll tackle it and get in some situations, but the explosive plays those are what drive you nuts. Those can be avoided when it's all said and done and that's the part that's frustrating."

On what the response should be after the game:

"Obviously, I hope there's disappointment. I hope there's disappointment more importantly from our players. They're the ones that obviously put in a lot of work - obviously our staff does too, don't get me wrong. You want them to hurt and you want them - you're going to go through and we've had a lot of success here but it didn't start out that way. We had to come in and roll our sleeves up and go to work every day and fight through some really tough times. When people that were naysayers and people questioning what you do, but we believed in what we can do. I believe in what we do right now, what we have here, the staff and the people here. We just got to be consistent in what we do. We've proven - this staff has proven what you can do when guys execute and that's what's exciting. We just got to roll our sleeves up. In today's world, you got to block out the social media, you got to block out all those things, the chat lines, all that stuff that goes on out there and the only people that can control what we control is us. That's really what

we're going to do. We're going to go back tomorrow, the players are off, we're going to go back as a staff, but we're going to go back Sunday, we're going to roll our sleeves up and go to work. We're going to be demanding and we're going to have high expectations of our kids to uphold what our expectations are and that's the bottom line."