

Virginia Tech Football
Head Coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights
Duke Game Press Conference
Sept. 27, 2019

Opening statement

“Thank you to everybody that came out to support our players tonight. The crowd was great, had great energy. Obviously, we are not ready and not at the point where we can compete and play and have a chance to win against that team we played tonight. That’s my responsibility and my fault. I do believe in our group and we’ve got to, I’ve got to, find a way to get more out of them in all three phases of the game. We played a good football team tonight and we’re not much of a match for them.”

On the team’s performance coming off the bye week:

“Our kids gave great effort and they were ready to play. We’ve got to get better, we’ve got to get them better. We’ve got to get better as coaches and as a team. They had basically the same amount of time to prepare for us as we had for them. So I don’t know about the bye week or any of that stuff. I know that we have a tremendous amount of work to get done.”

On the momentum swing after the fumble and the following touchdown:

“Well, it certainly was a big play and there were a lot of plays after that. That one play was big. We turned the ball over and they scored on the next play to create momentum. It was a very tight ball game. I don’t think that was the end all, be all, it certainly wasn’t good. But there were a bunch of plays after that. They handled us on both sides of the ball.”

On the decision to put QB Hendon Hooker into the game so early:

“I would say that it’s several factors, being 100 percent candid here. Some of it has been play based. Hendon has worked hard and deserved a chance to play. Ryan [Willis] hasn’t always been as consistent as we want. Both of them are dealing with health issues. We’re trying to split the time a little bit for those guys to maybe lessen the load a little bit.”

On Willis’ ability to get the offense back on track:

“This certainly does not need to fall on Ryan Willis, I can tell you that much. That’s part of the position, just like being the head coach, being the quarterback, it’s a part of it. You get way too much praise when things go well. He, and everybody else, we had numerous spots that have got to become consistent contributors at this level, at a high level playing against good people.”

On whether Hooker’s entrance into the game was planned beforehand:

“I don’t like saying this series because you never know what’s going to happen, but we were going to play him early.”

On Hooker's fumbled exchange to Keshawn King:

"That's on both of them. I don't know, it's hard to tell. Hendon felt like he had the ball in there. I don't have a replay of it. Just talking to both of them, it was both of their responsibility to handle the exchange."

On the offense's struggle in the first four games:

"I would say that, like any good offense, you have to have an identity and we're struggling to find that identity. We're inconsistent in the run game, we're inconsistent in the pass game. It's a combination of all of those things that we have got to find a way to get a handle on."

On the defense after Duke scored its first touchdown:

"They used a three-step game and started to run the ball. We tried to make some adjustments and did not handle those very well. We have to look at the film and figure out exactly where, but we didn't handle adjustments very well."