

## WEEK 14 – ACC FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

### HEAD COACHES & PLAYER QUOTES

**Georgia Tech Head Coach Chan Gailey:**

**Is Wake Forest doing anything differently, or are they doing the same things better?**

"They're doing some different things. It almost seems to me that they had one direction in mind when they had Micah Andrews and (Ben) Mauk, and when those two guys got hurt, they had to incorporate a lot of other things instead of putting the pressure on those two positions. They've evolved into letting the wideouts carry it a lot and a lot of those kinds of things. They've adapted very well. I could be totally wrong, but that's what it seems like to me."

**Do you know Jim Grobe very well?**

"I really like him. Great guy. He coached at the Air Force Academy, and while I was with the Broncos, I would go down there because Fisher (DeBerry) was there, and he was on the staff with Fisher. I would visit with that staff and get to know that staff when he was there. Some guys I recruited ended up working for him when he left the Academy and took the Ohio job."

**How much has Kenny Scott progressed this year as a cornerback?**

"There have been times when Kenny has played very well. There have been times when he hasn't played well. He probably is not where I had hoped he would be, but he is a better football player than when he started. He has more knowledge, he has more understanding of the game. I don't think he's quite where he can be, or where he will be in the future if he keeps working."

"He's always been the guys we put on their best guy and say, here, you've got him. At times he's done a great job, and at times has let them catch some passes we didn't think he'd let them catch."

**What does it say about the conference when none of the teams like Miami, Florida State and Virginia Tech are in this championship game?**

"I think people need to get used to the teams going to Jacksonville having one or two, or even three losses in some cases, because this is such a balanced conference. Almost anybody can beat anybody on a given day. You're not going to end up with an undefeated team going into the conference championship very often."

"I think everyone is working toward that. We've seen a steady climb since I've been in the conference of teams getting better and better each year."

"The problem is (regarding those who say the ACC is weaker this year) when you don't win the right way, people tend to look at you sideways. Not only do you have to win, you have to win the right way. Everybody decided that USC beat Notre Dame enough to move up. Everybody thought Michigan played Ohio State close enough to stay at No. 2. It's how you win or how you lose, and that worries me. If you take a bunch of guys that may not be the biggest or fastest but refuse to lose, that says something about them. They're probably going to be successful in life."

**On James Johnson being the "other" receiver.**

"In my opinion, he's gotten better every week. He really has. He probably has made as big a jump as anybody from the beginning of the year to the end in terms of learning his position, doing a good job, set guys up, win one-on-ones. I'm really proud for him. He's made a big jump this year."

**On Reggie Ball's ability to bounce back from a poor performance.**

"He's competitive as all get-out, that's why. It's not easy to play quarterback. If it was easy, anybody could do it. You look for guys who have that competitive spirit and can come back. We've seen it from the beginning of a game to the end of a game. He's led us back in the fourth quarter two or three times this year. There's something there."

**What attributes did you see in James Johnson?**

"He's got very good hands. He can pluck the ball. He has quick hands. He can be running and reach up and catch the ball in a hurry. He's very smooth and quick runner. His head doesn't bounce up and down when he runs, so you don't lose sight of the ball."

**What kinds of things did you see in Kenny Scott?**

"You normally don't find corners with that kind of height, speed and wingspan. He has great reach. He can get into balls that others might not be able to. He has shown times of being very aggressive."

**On Wake Forest's Jon Abbate.**

"Excellent, instinctive, tough football player. You look out there and see him at 5-11, 230, he looks like a fireplug and you don't think he can run like he does. He shouldn't be able to get the corner and make a play, but he does. He's tough, physical and aggressive. He plays with passion."

**How many times have you and Wake Forest crossed paths in recruiting, and do you many times want the same kinds of players?**

"Wake Forest's parameters for what they want to have and Jim's idea of the kinds of players he wants to have ... I think we're on the same page, very much so."

**Is it fair to say that you and Wake Forest are trying to build your programs the same way?**

"I would say that's a fair statement."

**How impressed are you with Wake Forest QB Riley Skinner and how he has stepped in?**

"Amazing. It really is amazing. He looks cool as a cucumber back there. He doesn't get rattled. He throws the ball where he is supposed to throw it and makes good decisions. He gets them in the right plays. He's technically very sound, not flashy, but very effective. And evidently tough, he has to block a lot."

**How tough is it to defense a team that runs it two-thirds of the time, yet is effective when it throws the ball?**

"The thing you have to worry about with Wake is that they're trying to run the ball horizontally. They are speed to the corners trying to get outside. Then when you get caught up in that is when they throw it down the field to Idlette or one of their other guys. They catch you off-guard with all that sideways stuff, then they run North and South or they split that big fullback up the middle. They're one of the few teams in the country that get you thinking sideways, and then you have to worry about North and South. They're unique in that respect, and they have such great speed you have to honor that."

**On Tech fullback Mike Cox**

"The fullback, the way we have used him, is he has to be a good blocker and be able to catch the ball coming out of the backfield. We don't run the fullback a lot ... Really we don't run the fullback at all. Mike happens to be a tough guy who is a great blocker and can catch the ball. The thing that makes him unique is he is an excellent athlete. He's not an undersized guard playing in the backfield. He is a true athlete who just happens to be 6-1, 250 pounds. He's got great hands. In my opinion, he's the prototypical NFL fullback."

**How has he graded out this year?**

"As a winner. Most every week he grades out a winner."

**Would there be an occasional plan where you would include a couple of runs to the fullback, and how would he do?**

"He'd do just fine with it, but that doesn't happen very often. He'd probably move to tailback if we were going to do that."

**Is that a tough sell when you're recruiting a fullback?**

"For some guys, it is. They don't want to hear that, and if they don't want to hear that, they don't need to come here. There are enough guys out there who understand what the process is, what their future is, what they can do with their abilities, and they're willing to accept the role."

### **Calvin Johnson, WR**

*Wake Forest covered you man-to-man last time you played, do you expect the same thing this game?*

"Yes, they show a lot of one-on-one coverage but I really won't know until the game starts. But in watching film, that's what they've done a lot of the season."

*Does one-on-one coverage make you happy?*

"Yes. Definitely"

*On rebounding from loss to Georgia:*

"It's obviously a very tough loss. It's one of the biggest games we play every year. We know what we have ahead of us. This loss is going to linger, but we're just going to focus on not having that losing feeling again."

*What is it like to play on this big of a stage like the one of the ACC Championship?*

"It's big. You never know when you'll be in this situation again. You can't say that you'll be in the ACC Championship again next year or ever again. You have to take advantage of it now."

*On James Johnson's improvements on the field:*

"He's come a long way. Last year he played in a slot position, but he has come on big this year and he's going to be even bigger next year. I can't wait to see all the improvements he'll make by next year."

*What kind of rivalry have you developed with corner back Kenny Scott in practice?*

"It's a competition every time we go one-on-one. Everyone is watching so it's like both of our show time to make big plays."

*What's the best thing Kenny Scott has shown you in practice?*

"I can't say for sure. I don't know. We don't see that much of each other in practice. One-on-one for us is only a few minutes and a couple of routes, then we both face our scout teams. Back in the spring we saw a lot of each other. He's very physical."

*Does Kenny Scott ever say anything to you in practice?*

"We don't talk trash out there. The defense talks but I don't talk. I just go out there and take care of my business."

*What is Kenny Scott like on the field?*

"He's like your typical corner back. He has a little cockiness about him and that's good. You've got to have that. You've got to be aggressive like that to be a good corner back."

*You're going against some former teammates at Wake Forest. How do you feel about going against them?*

"We talked I think Saturday night or Sunday. We told each other that it was going to be interesting and was going to be a good game. We're going to have fun out there like we had fun last year when we played against each other. We didn't see that much of each other last year. It's just fun being out there on the same field."

*Is this a different Wake Forest team than last year?*

"It definitely is. It's a different team from last year. They are overall a better team than last year. They've stepped up their game a lot so we're going to have to bring our A game."

*Has Wake Forest changed their game and their schemes much from last season?*

"I can't really say with much certainty. I haven't watched a lot of film on them so far. We've watched a little bit and we'll watch more today."

*How would you rate your season so far?*

"I've produced more this year than I did my previous two years so I consider that a success. We still have two more games and two more goals as a team and I have personally. I'm striving for good games in those last two games and then I'll rate my season."

*On the unexpected representatives in the ACC Championship game:*

"I guess people just expected it to be Miami and Virginia Tech to be in the championship game, but eventually every one else's level of play is going to catch up with theirs. That's what you're seeing this year. The outcome of that is having these two teams in the championship game."

**Joe Anoai, DT**

*How does it feel to be getting ready for the ACC Championship after aiming at this for so long?*

"It's a bit different because usually this is a week we've had off and this is a week we've been able to take advantage and rest, and just get away from football. That's not the case this year and we're very excited about that."

*Has it been hard to bounce back after the loss to Georgia?*

"Not really. Any time you have a coach like Coach (Chan) Gailey. He rallied us up Sunday night and explained to us what's at stake. Of course tough loss anytime you lose to a team you want to beat as bad as we wanted to beat Georgia. When you don't get the job done, it's going to hurt. But we have more important things on the line right now. We have the ACC Championship and that has got to be our number one focus."

*Will a win in Jacksonville (Florida) help make up for the loss to Georgia?*

"Yes, it definitely will. It will open our eyes to a different view of things right now if we go down to Jacksonville and get a win. Getting a win in Jacksonville will do a lot more for us than getting a win in Athens (Georgia) would."

*On Wake Forest's scheme:*

"They force you to play assignment football. You have to take care of your responsibilities. If we just play within scheme and play the way we're taught by Coach (John) Tenuta and his staff, we'll be fine. We just have to take care of our number one responsibility and after that try to make something extra happen."

"I don't think there's any scheme out there that really works against us. We blitz and everyone knows it but we can alter our blitzing to attack tendencies where we feel they're going to be coming at us. It really doesn't matter what a team does. It's all about our preparations and our adjustments."

*Did Wake Forest make changes to their scheme since last season?*

"They did change some things. I think their coaches have done a good job changing their scheme to fit their personnel. I feel like they've got their program going where they want it. Their coach is using their players to the best ability he can and they've done a good job over there."

*What is it like playing with Kenny Scott?*

"He locks down 25 percent of the field. Anytime you can take a sideline away and be a great cover corner, it's about the same as having a great defensive end who can lock down his side of the field. It takes a lot of worry and pressure off the rest of the defense. He's done a great job for us."

*How did Reggie Ball handle the loss to Georgia?*

"He bounced back immediately. When we were in the locker room up in Athens, he was already thinking about Jacksonville. He's one of our top leaders. He's a senior leader for us and captain. We believe in him and we know that he's going to get the job done for us."

*On Georgia Tech playing in the ACC Championship Game:*

"It's a great feeling because it gives a new face to the ACC. Everyone looks at the ACC and thinks of Florida State, Miami and Virginia Tech. Playing in this game allows us to show the type of program we're building around here. The same can be said of Wake Forest. It just goes to show that this conference isn't just three-deep. We have a bunch of programs that are top players in the game and this year we've been able to showcase that."

**Andrew Gardner, LT**

*Is this year's Wake Forest team different than last year's?*

"Way different. It's obviously a completely different team. The Wake team we saw last year, I mean I don't know what their record was but they didn't go to a bowl game and this one is 10-and-2. Obviously they've got things going right in that program and they've found a way to win."

"I know their offense does a good job taking care of the ball and they don't make a lot of mistakes. They don't make a lot of penalties and they don't turn the ball over. Their defense has caused a bunch of turnovers too. They've intercepted the ball a lot. We have to stay on the right side of the turnover margin and be careful not to make many penalties."

*On James Johnson:*

"If there was no Calvin (Johnson), then James (Johnson) would get a lot more attention and probably get a lot more stats, too because you'd have to throw him more. But from a team standpoint, we all know how valuable James has been and the number of good plays for us. I don't think we'd be anywhere near as good of a team without him at wide receiver."

"Having James and Calvin is huge, because if a team only has to shut down one guy, that can completely shut down your passing game and that's not good. You need to have that second guy so they can't always focus on the one guy. We can always burn them with our second guy."

*What is your impression of Jon Abbate (Wake Forest LB)?*

"He is definitely the leader of that team. As he goes, they go. He's a real hard worker and hard player. He makes a lot of hustle plays. I played against him last year but we'll see what he's like this year."

"From playing with him, I know he's more of a try to run through you guy then trying to run around you. I remember last year on a couple of blitzes, I was ready for him to try to make me miss so I stayed high, then he tried to run through me. Fortunately for me, he didn't get around me or anything. I definitely think he's more of an old-school type linebacker."

*What is it like this week preparing for this game after targeting this goal for so long?*

"It's definitely good to be here. We've almost reached our goal. If we win this one, we're where we need to be. We've had some tough losses this year we'd like to forget but a win like this, and an ACC Championship will go a long way towards making us feel better about some of those losses we've had."

**Philip Wheeler, LB**

*On facing Wake Forest's offense:*

"I think we've been known of as an undersized defense with more speed so I think that matches up well with a perimeter team like Wake Forest."

"I think that's our strength, our speed. We have a pretty fast defense."

*How is the team reacting to the loss to Georgia?*

"It's still in our minds a little bit. I think we didn't play bad against Georgia so I think we're still confident in what we can do, especially as a defense. I think it was a win, win situation for us going into Georgia because we knew we had the ACC Championship to play for. I don't think that loss is going to affect us going into the ACC Championship."

*What is Kenny Scott like?*

"He's a great athlete, very fast. He will come up and hit you. He's a big corner, all those good things. Personality wise, he's quiet. I think he's kind of shy. He's just a good guy. I think he leads by example. When he makes a big play, he'll show us that's what we need to do win. He's a big play corner back and that's how he leads, by example."

*On the conference title games having little impact on the national title race this season:*

"I don't really look into that. I just play for what I can play for. The ACC Championship was one of our goals going into the season and I think we are finishing out the season strong. It also creates a bit of a legacy for Georgia Tech. I think this could be the start of something great for Georgia Tech, especially in the near future. We've been an average team but this could be the start of a dynasty here, like at Miami. I think we are only going to improve."

**Wake Forest Head Coach Jim Grobe:**

*On treating this game like every other game:*

"Well, I hope we learned a lesson against Virginia Tech. I think we got caught up a little bit in the bright lights against Virginia Tech. Last week I think the guys calmed down a little bit and really worked hard in practice to go into Maryland with a real business-like approach. We just need to do the same thing. We need to have the same week of preparation and the same attitude."

*On having running back Kenneth Moore and Kevin Harris healthy:*

"It makes us better, no question. Kenny is a great player and if we can keep him healthy he gives us a little bit more speed and quickness than we are used to. Kevin Harris is a much more physical runner and when he is healthy he gives us a little bit of a different dimension. So with those two back, we have a better offense, no question."

*On trusting Riley Skinner:*

"I think the only thing we haven't really worked a lot on is option stuff. But I think he ran the ball very well the other night in scrambling situations. We have some things designed for him to run the football and I think he feels more comfortable now. He really runs the ball with more purpose, so, there is nothing we are worried about with Riley Skinner."

*On his interest in the Alabama job:*

"None whatsoever. Somebody told me the other day that my name was floating all over the place and I said I don't know why it is floating around out there because I didn't put it out there. Wake Forest is my school and I love these kids so much right now."

*On the chance of him leaving Wake Forest:*

"There is nothing that I can think of that would make me leave. We have not only a great place to work and really nice people at Wake Forest, but also a great football team. I think the players we have in this program are going to make us better and better each year. So there is nothing that I can foresee that could possibly make me want to leave this place."

*On Riley Skinner playing in his hometown:*

"I am not worried. He is a really mature guy and I don't think it will affect him. It may help him play a little bit better. I know he is excited and really wants to play well. But, he has been in some big games before and handled it well so I would be shocked if we saw a different attitude or effort on Riley's part."

*On the caliber of this team:*

"It reminds me of a team that we had at the Air Force Academy that went 12-1. We did not have a lot of superstars but a lot of really talented players and a lot of team guys and that is the way this team feels. This is my favorite team that I have ever had. It is the team that I have enjoyed coaching the most. It is the best group of players and guys that like each other. The players care more about winning than about personal stats. There are no egos on this team."

### **Riley Skinner, RS Freshman, Quarterback**

*On playing in Jacksonville (his hometown):*

"Now that it is here, it is just as good as the dream. We came out last week pretty fired up and we knew it was going to be a hostile environment. It was a do or die for both teams. So we knew it was going to be tough being on the road, and I think we came out firing on both sides of the ball. Being able to capitalize when they capitalized was a huge part as far as momentum goes. So being able to get that win Saturday was a great feeling and being able to do things that haven't been done at Wake Forest has been really special."

"Going home to play in Jacksonville, it cannot get much better for me. The only unfortunate thing is that my high school coaches and teammates from Bolles won't get to see me play because they will be in Miami playing in the State Championship, which is great. However, they won't get to see me play."

*On handling the pressure of playing in front of a hometown crowd:*

"I'm not as nervous as I am excited. I'm not really worried about how I perform in front of my family because that kind of stuff doesn't matter as much to them. I just really care about getting a win. I just want to get to the Orange Bowl right now. So we have to keep our heads on straight."

*On Georgia Tech:*

"It is going to be really tough to get a win against them. They are obviously very physical on defense, and on offense they have some incredible playmakers. So we are really going to have to play hard."

*On being composed as a freshman:*

"One thing that has always helped is that my high school coach emphasized that you have so many people around you that you don't have to make every play yourself. That really helped me in my transition here. To know that we have such a good defense behind us and then obviously having Sam Swank who is one of the best kicker/punters in the country. That really helps us stay calm."

*On playing under the current offensive scheme:*

"Playing in this offense is fun. You get to do everything. I get to throw the ball, run it, block, I have even caught a pass. Everything is great, the reverses are just another play for us. So I don't know too many schemes that can be as fun and keep the defense on their heels like ours does."

### **Willie Idlette, RS Senior, Wide Receiver**

*On the season:*

"It has been amazing. This season has just been great. Being a fifth year senior, this has been a great experience."

*On the gratification of his performance:*

"Well it has been great so far. But, we still have two more games to go so I hope that we can go out there and play as hard as we have been playing. At the beginning of the season everyone had us picked last and to be going down to Jacksonville to play in this game, it has just been really special."

*On playing under this offensive scheme:*

"It is a lot of fun, especially for a receiver. But, it all starts up front with the offensive line. Those guys have done a tremendous job and deserve a lot of credit. All those guys have really stepped up and it is showing in every play."

*On Riley Skinner throwing blocks:*

"We always laugh in the film session. It is hilarious to see Riley out there throwing blocks. He probably has as many cuts as anyone else on the team. But he is a tremendous competitor because he is willing to do that and whatever it takes to win."

**Kenneth Moore, RS Junior, Running Back:**

*On how the team has achieved its success this season:*

"It's basically just believing. That's the one big thing in college sports. Everybody has confidence that we could get the job done. Everybody on the team just said that we can do it. That's why we're having the type of season we're having now."

*On rebounding after the Virginia Tech loss:*

"That was our worst game. We had to let it go. We knew we couldn't play like that anymore. Going into Maryland, we knew it was going to be a hostile environment, just like every other road game we've had this year. We were able to go in and adjust. The coaches made a great game plan for us. We got the job done."

*On playing on the road:*

"You don't think of us losing home games. We've been able to play well on the road. We're happy with that accomplishment, but we have to keep going."

*On switching from wide receiver to running back:*

"It's been an adjustment. The first game against Boston College, with all those big boys in the middle falling on me, I had to be like 'OK, so this is going to be what it's like.' Playing that game and against Florida State really got me prepared for the rest of the season. The adjustments are coming along well."

*On playing in Wake's unique brand of offense:*

"In high school we ran a Wing-T, so I had some experience with an offense like this. It's fun to play in this type of an offense, to keep defenses on their toes and not knowing what direction the play is really going."

*On team speed:*

"Speed is definitely a killer. With speed, you can get some plays off you might normally have gotten off without it. Our offensive line has done a great job with that this year, being able to get to the second level and get their blocks."

**Josh Gattis, RS-Senior, Safety**

*On Georgia Tech:*

"We're kind of familiar with Georgia Tech from having played them last year. I think it's going to be a great match-up. It should be an electrifying game with a lot of big plays. We have a chance to go out there and make history, and we have to prepare ourselves for that."

*On the defensive strategy:*

"Our defense is focusing on trying to limit the big play ability of the Georgia Tech offense. Going into this game, we

know Calvin Johnson is one of the most electrifying players in college football. We have a ton of respect for him. At the same time, you can't just focus on that because they have such a well-balanced offense. They can beat you with the run. They probably have one of the best running backs in the ACC with Tashard Choice."

*On the team's conference awards:*

"It's good to get the individual awards, but you don't get those awards if you're 4-7. The awards are representative of the team's success. Being 10-2, you've got a lot of guys named all-conference, but that's only because of the other teammates on the field. I'd trade in the All-ACC honor for a conference championship."

*On the team's injuries:*

"We have a lot of guys hurt right now, including myself, but when you're winning a lot of that pain goes away. A lot of guys are playing with sprains or tweaked muscles, but you have to go push yourself every week. You can't play the game of football injured, but you can play hurt. That's what we're trying to keep in mind right now."