

ACC FOOTBALL

**HEAD COACH
QUOTES**

WEEK 14

**GAMES OF
NOV. 29**

Boston College Head Coach Jeff Jagodzinski Quotes

Q: How will you be handling (QB) Dominique Davis' preparation to start this week's game?

A: We're going to have to get him focused in to our game plan, and that's about all you can really do. As far as accelerating it, I think it's going to go as fast as it can go. We just need to have a good game plan for him, and Steve (Logan), I'm sure, will do a good job of making him understand the game plan and the execution of it. That's what we've got to do.

Q: Considering the situation he was thrust into, how do you think he handled the pressure?

A: Okay. I always tell these guys, "you're only one snap away from being the guy, and you've got to be ready to go when that happens." When you get thrust into a situation like that, you've got to go out and perform. I think he settled down toward the end, and we had to make some plays, and he made some.

Q: Will you spend any additional time on the field with him?

A: We'll spend as much time as we can with him, you only get 20 hours a week with your players, so you're limited that way. But it's not like the guy hasn't done it. In fact, last week, he split the reps with Chris (Crane) in practice. So he's going to be the guy know who's going to have to do it.

Q: He had mentioned that he was a little overwhelmed with the situation at first. Did you see that playing into how he played early on?

A: Absolutely. We had some opportunities there with him early on, with some of our read stuff and if he would have pulled it, he would have been in the secondary. It's just a learning process. You can't simulate game speed in practice, you just can't do it. That's the adjustment I think he needs to make the most, and I think he did at the end.

Q: How do you balance teaching him the things he needs to learn with not overwhelming him?

A: I think our coaches, Steve (Logan), in particular, know what he knows. He works with him every single day. Those are the things we'll concentrate on, and the things that he can't do, we won't do. But we've had him in the program, it's his second season now, so I think we know what he can do and what his strengths are.

Q: After overcoming the loss of four starters, how has your team done?

A: Good. I anticipated being right where we're at.

Clemson Head Coach Dabo Swinney Quotes

Q: Opening remarks.

A: “It was a great win for us Saturday (at Virginia). I’m really proud of the team to go on the road three out of the last four games and find a way to win a couple of them. It is really difficult to beat Virginia in Charlottesville. It turned into a little bit of a slugfest.

Our team won the battle. Our defense played an incredible game. Offensively, we found a way to get it done in the clutch.

“It has been a good week for us so far. I’ve been talking with the players and listening to them. This game means a lot to them. South Carolina is a good, capable team on both sides of the ball, in particular defensively. They play defense in the SEC and play some of the best opponents week in and week out. We are very familiar with them and they’re familiar with us. Each player knows their personnel very well. It’s a little different for us because they have a new defensive coordinator this year.

“I would say that both strengths on the teams are the defenses. Offensively, Coach (Steve) Spurrier is going to have those guys ready to play. We will have to be very smart as far as what we do defensively. They are capable running the ball. They have some playmakers. #11 (Kenny McKinley) is a player. #84 (Jared Cook) is a guy that makes play after play. They have a young freshman (Jason) Barnes that is beginning to emerge as a really fine young talent. It will be a big challenge for us defensively.

“It should be a great matchup. I’m really excited to watch these seniors play their last game here at Death Valley.”

Q: On the rivalry.

A: “I didn’t really understand it (the rivalry) before I came here. I spent my whole life growing up around the Alabama vs. Auburn rivalry. I was a part of 13 of those as a player and a coach. There are a lot of similarities. It means a lot to the state. Most people grow up either a Clemson fan or South Carolina fan. It’s been a lot of fun. Fortunately, we’ve been able to win four of them and just lost one.”

Q: On Clemson domination in recent years.

A: “Clemson had the better team on many of those days historically. Clemson has won a national championship, a bunch of conference championships, and a bunch of bowl games. Over the last several years, South Carolina has done a really good job. They’ve really improved their program. Coach Spurrier has done a tremendous job. They’ve won seven games this year. They’re battling and competing with everyone. This is a whole different era. We have to show up and play this Saturday.”

Q: On players’ respect for him.

A: “It means the players know that I care about them. It means a lot to know that they care about me. They’re young players and people. No matter what happens, they will be resilient. They’ll put a great product on the field next year.”

Q: On South Carolina's two-quarterback system.

A: "We have to prepare for their offense regardless of who is the quarterback. Both are very capable with extremely capable arms. Both have had big moments. We have to prepare for what they do offensively and how they may attack us."

Q: On offense.

A: "We've gotten better. We've improved in a lot of areas. For us to be able to run the ball eight straight plays to win at Virginia shows that we're growing up a little bit up front. The future is bright for those kids. They are getting better and better. Cullen (Harper) has played better. We were 1-3 and now we're 3-1 (in the second half of the ACC schedule)."

Q: On team being close to winning an ACC Championship.

A: "I think we're close. Clemson has everything that it needs to win here. Clemson has passion and pride. Facilities are coming in line here, which had been sorely lacking. We've been able to go and recruit. 'There is something in these hills.' There is a good foundation here. There is really good, young talent on this team. These guys have high character and good academic support."

Q: On South Carolina tight end Jared Cook.

A: "He's tall. He's a wideout that has grown into a tight end. He has excellent ball skills. If you get him in the zip code, he has a chance to come down with the ball. They do a good job at creating mismatches. We have to be smart on how we prepare for them. He's a very good player."

Duke Head Coach David Cutcliffe Quotes

Opening statements about North Carolina game

“We’re going to have one big Thanksgiving gathering Thursday after practice. I’m gonna let them eat all the turkey they want and hopefully they sleep. And on Friday they’re going to come hungry because we’re going to need to because we’re playing a very balanced football team. North Carolina is the most balanced team that we have met. They are equally as good offensively, defensively, and in the kicking game. A very good football team is a reason they have a minimum of seven wins. So the challenges keep getting bigger, but we’re excited and looking forward to the opportunity.”

On looking at what N.C. State did to beat North Carolina

“Russell gave them fits, was all over the place, pulled the ball down and scrambled, got outside. He just deals you fits anyway and they made all the plays. They were physical at times on offense and managed it real well. N.C. State’s big and physical up front on defense and I think they kind of shocked them with that a little bit. They pressured the quarterback. We’re not a matchup like they are physically so we have to look at our own opportunities and our own ways to try to be as successful as we can be. We’ve learned a lot from a lot of tape. It should be an interesting challenge and like I said, they’re real good.”

On Thaddeus Lewis’ status

“Right now he’s working, he’s still day-to-day, but he’s improving and we’ll release on Thursday where we are. He has worked on Sunday and worked this morning. How far he gets is to how much he plays. I expect him to play, but I don’t know if he’s going to play a lot. We’re getting both guys as ready as we can get them to play.”

On the senior class

“I have given them a lot of thought since Saturday night. I had that long bus ride home to think and all I could think about was our seniors and the lost opportunity to play in a bowl game because of what they’ve accomplished. The first thing they accomplished beyond my imagination is the unselfishness of this team. It’s unbelievable. When you don’t throw the ball enough to a certain receiver, he’s pouting after a game, or a guy didn’t get enough snaps on defense. There is none of that. Everyone on this football team is focused on the success of the team and that doesn’t happen without special seniors. I’m still having a hard time getting over that feeling of those seniors not playing in a bowl game.

On play in November

“I said we’d be defined in November and we have been. We’ve learned a lot. We’ve played in my opinion three quarters not very well. That was the last quarter of the Miami game and the last half of the Clemson game. Circumstances in both games were a little different. The rest of the time, you’ve seen our time fight, scratch, get better and get themselves in position to win. What we learned is that we’re not at the point, whether it’s seven in a row and fighting an injury or learning how to finish a game. We’re not quite there, but what we did learn is that we never changed and it’s because of our seniors. As I

define this team in November it might be different than people that look at the record. But our program has grown and that's what these seniors have done. They're leaving a place better than they found it and what more can you ask a group to do.

On crowd for Saturday's game

"I hope the Duke people show up here Saturday to send these guys off. We need a full stadium with a great atmosphere. Some of them are going to be in North Carolina blue and they should support their team. The Duke fans around here need to show up and show up early and set an atmosphere in that stadium. This program deserves it and most importantly I'm saying this on behalf of our senior class.

On North Carolina's quarterback situation

"They're the same with both guys. It's unlike what we had at Virginia Tech where we had two distinctly different guys. We have to stop their receivers, tight end. They have a lot people to stop. They have balance everywhere on their team. Great offensive line, defensive front and that's where the game starts. At quarterback, whichever one is there, is not going to change what we do."

Florida State Head Coach Bobby Bowden Quotes

With such a convincing win at Maryland, will the challenge this week be getting the guys to put that behind them and focus on Florida, a team that might be the best you've faced all year?

“I don't think it will be any problem. If you were playing a minor team, it probably would be a problem. But playing Florida, that would be no problem.”

The way your guys jumped on Maryland and put together such a complete victory. Was that something you've seen coming in practice or anything?

“It was one of those things you wonder when it's going to start. It seems like every game that we've played that we have lost, we have found a way to self-destruct. The other team playing good and us making mistakes equals a loss many times. Now last night, just like I told Coach [Ralph] Friedgen after the game, you finally had one of those games we've had. Where you go out there and find ways to lose. Anyway, that was the big key in that ballgame.”

Can you remember a game in the last few years where you've had such a complete performance, on offense, defense and special teams?

“Probably Notre Dame, 37-0. That was kind of that kind of a game, where everything went our way. Have there been others in between? Probably, but they don't jump out. I don't know, how about the Boston College game last year when they were No. 2 and we beat them? That wasn't as clean-cut a victory as this one was.”

Can you talk about what Dekoda Watson has brought to the team?

“Well, Dekoda has missed a whole lot because of his injuries, and right off the bat he missed three ballgames [due to a suspension]. I'll tell ya, he brings an outstanding athlete to your defense. And he has a lot of enthusiasm, and a lot of confidence. If you keep him under control, he's a pretty good football player.”

You've had a few years now to look at Urban Meyer's offense, and you haven't had a whole lot of success yet stopping it. Is it one of those things that you have to play it a few times before you get a feel for it?

“Well, all those people that have played him this year, they didn't seem to come up with a plan. And they played him over and over too. He has got something special there. It looks like he's got all the ingredients to play his offense the way he wants to play it. It looks like he's got the runners, he's got the line, he's got the receivers, he's got the quarterback, he's got the speed, he's got the broken-field ability. It looks like he's got an offense with all the ingredients. Everybody has tried to stop him. Even the game they lost, [Ole Miss] had to score how many, 31, to beat him? That's the way I look at it. I look at it like, "Do you think you can find a way to beat him this year?" "Yeah, put about 50 points up

there.”

When was the last time you remember facing a quarterback that did so many different things, that you had to face year in and year out?

“I can't. We've played quarterbacks that were a lot quicker and a lot faster, a lot shiftier, but he's a different thing. He's bigger and can run. He's not going to get you with his blinding speed, but with his quickness and his size. He can stand back there and throw the ball – seems to have all the throws. No, I haven't faced one like him. I've faced them smaller and quicker, but not like him.”

How nice is it to come into such a big game with a lot of momentum the way you do after a convincing win at Maryland?

“That was big, now. You hit that one on the head. If we'd have gone up there and got punched around, then looking at Florida this week, then I'm afraid your kids would have had no confidence. But there were enough good things that happened in that ballgame the other night that makes you feel like, "Hey, we're going to get into this thing." Now the thing that scares me most is the thing we did the worst against them last year and the thing we did the worst in that game last night, and that's poor tackling in the open field. If you can't tackle in the open field, you can't beat Florida.”

This has obviously been a crazy year in the ACC with so many teams still in the chase so late in the season. Your team still has a chance to get into the ACC title game if Maryland beats B.C. Do you remember anything like this?

“I can't remember being in this conference, the last 18 years, with it being where it is right now. Where there's still three or four scenarios. Every week, it reduces the scenarios. We've done all we can do. We will not worry about the rest of it one second. If it happens, it happens. We will put all of our concentration on Florida.”

Were you surprised at how well your players adjusted to the cold weather. They seemed more comfortable in it than Maryland did.

“Our kids really adjusted to that thing well. I was really worried about that. Tuesday, we had one of the coldest days to practice that I can remember here – that's 32 years. It was cold. And our kids threw the ball and caught the ball pretty well. I was amazed, and I told them so. Then the other night, you went out there and it was very much the same way. Our kids went out and had a taste of it Tuesday, and I think they were determined that they were not going to let it bother them. They handled it very good.”

Last year's game in Gainesville, it seemed like Florida really put the game out of reach. Do you remember a game in which you were manhandled in that way?

“No. What did they score, the first seven times, or something like that? No. We got manhandled. We simply could not stop them. The big key was at the half, we were down

what, 10 points or something like that? That's usually where we go in, get regrouped and come out and win the third quarter. And I remember we had to kick off to them. We told our kids, "Let's kick off and stop them, and get that ball back and score, and get this game back in our hands." And what did they do? They scored in about five plays and didn't throw a pass. That was the tempo of that game."

What have you seen from Florida's pass defense? They have like 20 interceptions. What is Christian Ponder going to have to do against them to be successful?

"They're good. I feel like he's probably playing a year ahead of schedule with that defense. I haven't studied them yet, but I don't think they have a senior. They're playing a year ahead of schedule, in my opinion. I wouldn't expect them to play this good without any seniors back there, but they are. And we know that is something to be reckoned with."

In your three losses, the turnovers have played a major role and really been your downfall. Obviously, you want to protect the ball, but how do you make sure that happens?

"Well, you talk about it. But that doesn't do it. You've got to go out and practice. The coaches have to look at the boys and make sure that they are protecting the ball, covering the ball, clutching the ball, and carrying it like it's supposed to be carried. Our coaches have got to keep their eye on that. And if they get lax, a kid might quit doing it, and then you lose a ballgame. So it's a matter of us communicating it to them and then seeing that they do it."

Because of the nature of this game, and when it's played so late in the year, there have been a lot of times when one team is in the national championship hunt and the other has a chance to knock them out of it? Obviously, this rivalry doesn't need more incentive, but what does that add to the game?

"There's been many times. Ever since Coach [Steve] Spurrier was there, there were many times we were playing for a national championship and he wasn't, but you still had to get by him," Bowden said. "Then there were times that they were going to play for the national championship and had to get by us. But I don't think you need all that. Not for this game. This is Florida-Florida State. This is Auburn-Alabama. This is Mississippi-Mississippi State. This is Georgia-Georgia Tech. This is something that's been going on for years and years and years. And your kids realize the influence of it."

You said earlier that you think Florida is better this year than last? Do you remember an offense you've gone up against that was this dynamic? They put up some crazy numbers in the SEC this season.

"That's the way he's recruited. He's got those great receivers, great runners and great quarterback. The offensive line's doing their job. That's all you can do. Now it's a matter of do they want to turn it over. But you don't have to do what they're doing to be good."

You can take a ballgame where an offensive ballteam will line it up tight and control the ball. Run the ball, making 4 yards and making 3 yards and making 4 yards, getting first downs, and that great offense over there can't get on the field. There's other ways to win ballgames. But just as far as explosive power, evidently they and Oklahoma are in a class of their own.”

How do you coach the players to get them more at ease and comfortable early in games to prevent that type of slow start?

“You've just got to work on it. It all gets back to blocking and tackling, you know it? We'll work on our blocking and see if we can't block them. We can talk about all the skill they've got – all those receivers and runners. You've still got to block. So whoever blocks the best will have a lot to do about that.”

You mentioned that your best bet might be to score 50 points. Given the way the offense has been playing, particularly in the red zone, does that give you more confidence going into this game? A year ago, you scored like three times in the first half, but they were all field goals. You obviously can't exchange field goals for touchdowns.

“No, and that's exactly what happened last year. We took the ball down there about as many times as they did, but they scored touchdowns. We took it down there too, but we couldn't get in. So we kicked field goals. We've worked real hard this year on our red-zone offense. We've done better, but you've got to do better than better when you play them.”

Florida has really made a lot of big plays with its special teams in recent weeks, and breakdowns on special teams have been a common thread in some of your losses. Is that one where you can't afford to get beat in this game?

“That's another area you can't use. They have as fine a kicking game ... from what I remember of them last year and what I've seen of them this year, in regard to kickoff returns, punt returns, punt coverage, punt blocks, kickoff coverage ... they are as dangerous there as they are with their offense. They are as dangerous there as they were with their defense. He plays all three areas of the game to win. And so far, every game except one, he was the master in every one of those games. I don't know what happened against Ole Miss. But nobody plays great every Saturday.”

With all the talk about Florida's offense, it seems like their defense gets overlooked at times. But when teams make mistakes, they seem to really capitalize on them.

”You're right. They get smothered by their offense. You'd think it's all offense, but if you watch the film, their defense is taking the ball away from people, and their defense is scoring points.”

What are some things that your offense will need to do to move the ball effectively?

“Well, execution is such a key. You can't turn it over. You've got to keep the ball. You've got to utilize every drive. And when you get into the red zone, you've got to score touchdowns instead of field goals. That's probably about the key to it right there. I think we kicked four field goals last year, and it didn't mean a thing. They were scoring seven, and we'd get three. You can't win that game. So get into the red zone and score touchdowns instead of field goals. And then don't turn the ball over and give them anything easy. And don't let them have the long play. Do they ever play a game without getting long touchdowns?”

The way you're talking about this Florida team, do they remind you of that 1993 team you had, which dominated everybody except that one Saturday against Notre Dame? Florida had their one off game against Ole Miss.

“Yes, they have that kind of superiority. We had that kind of superiority back then.”

How nice would it be to play a bowl game in the state of Florida or even in Georgia, as opposed to going farther away? That would make it easier for your fans and alumni to travel, etc.

“Playing in Atlanta would be good. Playing in Jacksonville's good. Playing in Orlando ... all of those would be good for us because that's where most of our boosters live. In fact, we probably have more of them in Atlanta than any we have anywhere else but Miami. But there's no doubt about it. You can service them better, and the kids' families can get to go see the game better.”

On the recruiting front, it seems like most kids are committing earlier these days. Do you think the result of the Florida game still has much of an impact on recruiting?

“Most times, I don't think the winner of this game will sway a whole lot of kids. It might be some. There might be one or two players that might get the urge all of a sudden. "Hey, I'm going there. They're on top." But at the same time, there might be two other guys that say, "I'm not going there. I don't believe I can play for them. They're too good I'm going over here." I'd rather take my chances by winning.”

Georgia Tech Head Coach Paul Johnson Quotes

Opening Statement:

“I was really proud of the effort of our football team last Thursday night against Miami and think we put together all three phases of the game better than we had all year. We played with a lot of effort and it was a big win for our program. This week, we have a huge challenge going into Athens. The University of Georgia is a very talented team. They have unbelievable skill players on the offensive and defensive sides of the ball. Defensively, they are very skilled and run well. We are going to work hard this week and looking forward to the challenge of going into Athens and competing against a top team from the SEC.”

As you look at Georgia on film, what is your assessment of them?

“It’s not going to change what you do from week to week what you have to do to win. They’re very skilled and are going to make some plays. What we have to do is try to limit their big plays and prevent them from being scoring plays. We need to be very sound in the kicking game. On the flip side, we need to take care of the ball on offense and get some big plays. It will definitely be an interesting game.

“They have a lot of things that stand out to me on offense as I watch their film. [Quarterback Matthew] Stafford has a very strong arm and has been very productive. Their two wide receivers [A.J. Green and Mohamed Massaquoi] are really good players and they have a couple good running backs. Between the quarterback, two receivers and the running back [Knowshon] Moreno are all probably first-round draft picks. They are all very talented.”

What enabled you to be so effective against Miami last week and what can you take into this week?

“I think our guys executed at a high level. Our quarterback [Josh Nesbitt] played extremely well. He wasn’t at 100 percent yet, but this week is about as close as he has been in the last two games. He did a tremendous job directing the offense and we got the best game all year from our offensive line. It was an effort game and now we need to play with that effort this week against Georgia.”

Knowing that you need Virginia to beat Virginia Tech on Saturday for you to go to the ACC Championship game and the fact your game is at the same time, how much will you be paying attention to the score?

“I’ll be a little occupied during that game I think! I haven’t thought about it a whole lot this week. It’s going to be what it’s going to be. I learned a long time ago not to worry about things you can’t control. In my mind, after the Miami game we guaranteed at least co-champs of the Coastal Division. Of course, we’d like to have a

chance to play in the championship game, but we've done all we can in ACC play. We are going to focus on Georgia Saturday at Noon and whatever happens, happens."

With this being your first Georgia-Georgia Tech rivalry game, are there any special stories coming out this week?

"Not so far. Our preparation has gone like any other game. Having had the opportunity to coach in another big rivalry [Navy vs. Army], it gives you some experience with this kind of thing. We have to do what we can do, go play the best game we can and let the chips fall where they may. If we're good enough, then we'll be good enough and if we're not, then we won't."

Can you talk about your special teams' performance against Miami and what made you decide to use the on-sides kick in the first half?

"We made some plays and I think we covered kicks well, pinning them inside the 20 yard-line three times. We had a decent night on the kick-off returns, but I think we missed some opportunities in the punting game. There were two occasions when I think we could have blocked a punt. It could have been a really good night in the special teams if we had done a few more things."

Where does Knowshon Moreno rank among the running backs you've faced this year?

"Off the tape, he's the best running back we've played. If you watch all their games, you can probably count on one hand the amount of times the first defender gets him down. He's very valuable in that he's a great pass receiver, is a tough match-up coming out of the backfield and is an all-around great player."

Do you feel the need to do anything or say anything different to your players because of the rivalry game?

"It is what it is. All of the talking in the world is not going to change anything. You have to go out and win the game. All we can do is go out and play and we'll see if we're good enough. Most people probably think we're not right now. My job as the coach here is to get us to the point where we are the favorite. Does that mean that I think we don't have a chance? Nope. I don't know if we do or not, but we'll see when we get there. I'll be able to tell you by the second or third quarter. I know we're not afraid. I'm not afraid. What's the worst thing that can happen? We'll lose. We've done that. All we can do is go play and see what happens and our guys are definitely excited to go do that."

Have you even been part of a rivalry that has been one-sided?

"You bet – the one I just came from! It was pretty one-sided. It

might have gotten in their (Army's) heads, but I don't know. I was on the other side. I know, for us, it was always a big game. People ask me what the comparison is. Picture for 364 days a year that is all you hear. It was no different there than it is here. Every weight in the weight room said 'Beat Army.' The fight song ended with 'Beat Army.' When the freshman squared the corners, it was 'Beat Army.' At Army, it was the same way the other way. I understand rivalries, for sure. I know how important they are. If you said at the beginning of the year that this could be a close game, most people would have said you were nuts. I mean one team was picked to win three games and the other was preseason No. 1 in the country. Here we are and who knows. That's why you don't play the games on paper.

"Any time you coach at a certain place, you appreciate the rivalry. The people at Navy think the Army-Navy game is the biggest in the country. The people here like Georgia Tech and Georgia, while the people at Georgia Southern the biggest rivalry is Georgia Southern and Furman, and then later Appalachian State. Every school has those games. You realize it's important. I don't think you try to minimize it, but when you walk away from it you want to know you did the best you could. There's no magic that is going to happen because it's Georgia and Georgia Tech. The team that plays the best on that Saturday in November is going to win the game."

What differences did you see in your team from the North Carolina game to the Miami game?

"Being ready to play is part of it. You don't want to take anything away from North Carolina because they played well and beat us, but we didn't show up to play. Last week, we were ready to play and I could see it in warm-ups. If I knew the answer why, I'd bottle it and save it for all games. Sometimes, guys are more ready than others. I was talking to [Atlanta Falcons head coach] Mike Smith this morning about the way they came out to play Sunday [vs. Carolina] as opposed to a week ago [vs. Denver]. They're professionals and sometimes teams do that.

"On Thursday, I told our assistant coaches before we came out of the locker room that I had not seen our guys like this in warm-ups since I've been here. You knew they were ready to play. They were excited, bouncing around and you could tell. I didn't know what was going to happen or how we would play, but you could tell they were ready. We went out and played well and it was our best effort game of the year."

Maryland Head Coach Ralph Friedgen Quotes

On injuries for Maryland after last weekend:

"Nothing new to report as far as people out for this week."

On the Boston College Eagles:

"As far as Boston College goes, they are a very good team. They are a big, strong, physical team on both sides of the ball."

On Boston College's offensive line:

"I think their offensive line is extraordinary. They are very big and have really been playing well of late. All the guys are back that we played last year and they have a couple new tackles playing very well for them as well."

On BC quarterback situation:

"Dominique Davis will start the game. He instrumented the final drive to win the game at Wake Forest Saturday. He is a redshirt freshman. I don't see them changing their offense for him. I think they will do the same thing as they did with the other kid. They have moved WR Billy Flutie to backup quarterback. We actually recruited him as a quarterback and a kicker. I think he's Doug's (Flutie) nephew."

On Eagles' running backs:

"They have two very good tailbacks and both of them are true freshmen. Montel Harris is having an exceptional year. Both of them run very, very hard. They hide behind that big offensive line and they get a lot of yards after the first hit."

On Boston College wide receivers:

"(Rich) Gunnell leads in receptions and leads the league in punt returns. Their deep threat is Brandon Robinson, who is averaging 15 yards per catch."

On Boston College's offensive scheme:

"They do a lot of zone-read option and they do a great job with that. That really sets up their passing game because you have to get an extra guy in the box."

On the Eagles' defense:

"They probably have the best defense in the conference. When I say they are huge up front, that is probably an understatement. The two defensive tackles (Ron Brace and B.J. Raji) probably weigh 700 pounds Raji has six sacks and 10 tackles for loss. Both of those guys are really good players."

On the Eagle linebacker corps:

"Mark Herzlich is really an extraordinary player. Last year, he played inside and this year he is playing Sam and I think he has five interceptions. For a guy his size, he is very athletic in open space."

On the Boston College secondary:

"They have (five) scores on defense and they are leading the country in interceptions with 231. They have a young, inexperienced secondary. Three of the four starters graduated last year and two of them (DeJuan Tribble and Jamie Silva) were all-conference. They've come up and they are playing very well with some younger guys in that secondary."

On Maryland struggling to score after getting inside the 30-yard line in the team's four losses:

"We have some type of invisible line there on the 30 where we just don't do a very good job of executing. We missed a key pass Saturday on third-and-4. We had a guy open and we didn't hit

him. We've had some mental issues down there and I think, to just put in a nut shell, we just haven't done what we need to do in executing at that part of the field. It is an area that we are working at very hard."

On the team's mindset after Saturday's loss to Florida State:

"I was pleased with our practice yesterday. I think we are all hurt. There's not a whole lot we can do about it now. It is over with. We missed an opportunity that we had and you work very hard for it all year long and it's disappointing that we don't do a better job when we have the opportunity. But we do have an opportunity Saturday to play a very good team on the road and I told our team if we win the game, essentially we tie for the Atlantic Division and I would hope that would make us attractive to some bowl games and have a better chance of going to a bowl that our kids want to go to. There is a lot to play for and I was pleased how they responded to that. We really had one of our better Monday practices."

On communication issues on defensive side of the ball:

"It wasn't frustrating for me Saturday. We tried to make some adjustments at halftime and we hadn't really practiced it but I felt the adjustments were necessary. I have some introverted players and it is hard for them to verbally communicate with each other. I'd like to have one guy that can take control back there and set it all up but we don't really seem to have that individual."

On the atmosphere at Boston College this weekend:

"It's going to be tough. I think they are going to be fired up. We should know what to expect going in there. That's just the way it is."

On if a good Monday practice gives an indication on how the team will play:

"I wish I could tell you what to expect with this team. I really don't know. I was encouraged by yesterday. I think a lot of it is an affect on how I react to things. This is a special group of kids to me. I am very disappointed for them. I really wanted them to win this thing. But like I said, that is not going to help us against Boston College. We really need to focus on Boston College. I told them Saturday night after the game that I am coming to work on Monday and I expect them to be ready to go. And they were. I told them our character is going to be tested again and every time that has happened, we have responded."

Miami Head Coach Randy Shannon Quotes

Opening statement ...

This week we have NC State. They've been doing a pretty good job of running the football. Defensively, [defensive coordinator] coach [Mike] Archer has been doing a good job of getting those guys to play on defense. They probably have been one of the top two teams playing well right now over the last three or four games that I've seen in the conference. Coming off of Georgia Tech last week, I think our inexperience really showed up. Our guys will get ready to bounce back, because this team is a team that whatever we have to fix they go back and fix the problems. I have confidence in those guys. We are kind of getting back to focusing on the small things.

On what to expect from NC State...

When you are preparing for a team like NC State, they are a team that has been scoring points. The one thing you have to do is take out the running backs and tight ends. If you add up the running backs and the tight ends' catches, those are the top receivers on their team. Running the football is what Coach [Tom] O'Brien has always believed in. This week we are going to have to stop the run in key situations. They are going to isolate the linebacker a lot.

On what Miami needs to do offensively against NC State ...

Also, offensively we are going to have to be able to score points. Not late in the game like we have been doing lately, but find a way to move the football and get in the red zone and score points. I think that if we convert on that and also win the field position battle with special teams we will have a great shot at this game against NC State.

On telling the guys there is something to play for even if they can't get a championship title ...

I just tell them point blank, eight wins is better than seven, and now we are going to keep going in the right direction as a football team. You never settle for anything less, and with these guys they don't. I think that every time we have challenged them as a football coaching staff they have responded and been able to get things done.

On NC State being hungry for sixth win to become bowl eligible...

We talk about this being their senior day. No one wants their seniors to go out on a bad note. These guys are going to come out ready to play, and we have to respond to that challenge.

On does it matter which bowl game you go to...

No, all that matters is eight wins because if you get eight wins, now you are going into bowl season with a victory. You want to get into a rhythm, a little like in the NFL because you always want to end on a good note then go into the bowl, get another win, they you go into the fall with two wins.

On having diversity on offense...

I don't think you see any offense in America that is going to say this is what you are going to get. You can go to any school, and I think you will see diverse personnel groups with what they are trying to get done.

On what he expects to see the team do better...

We have to develop off of a loss and get done what we have to get done. Offense, defense, and special teams have to get better. Last week, we played awful on special teams, we didn't even win the field position battle. As a team the more you have to emphasize getting better in all three phases, that's when you know you are improving. Have we improved on offense, defense and special teams from last year? Yes. Do we think we need to get a whole lot better? Yes. Those things are never out of our minds.

North Carolina Head Coach Butch David Quotes

Obviously this is a very important game for our football team. It's an opportunity for us to bounce back after two frustrating and disappointing losses. After meeting with the team yesterday and going through the film and we have said this many times this year that the best thing that we've got going on in this program is reality. Coaches and players all the time tell the truth, talk honestly and openly to our players. When they play great we tell them and when they don't play as well we tell them. We make mistakes as coaches, we overestimate things that they can do, if we make bad calls we are all in the same boat together. I think our kids do a good job of looking at film and listening. I think they are conscientious of trying to improve and to eliminate mistakes and certainly there are enough areas of improvement this week.

If you turn the ball over six times you're going to lose and you will never give yourself a chance to win and so from that standpoint you've got to do are pretty simple - you've got to take care of the football. This is a dramatically improved Duke football team. Their defense, especially their front seven, their linebackers are lightning fast. They run the field they make big plays. One of the things that we are so extraordinarily impressed with is their ability to create turnovers.

NC State Head Coach Tom O'Brien Quotes

"I haven't even had a discussion with my athletic director about anything. As I told my team, it's a waste of your breath to talk about it until you get there so our focus is playing Miami."

"I certainly would [feel deserving of a bowl game], but we have to play a football game. Whether we are deserving or not is going to count on whether we can beat Miami or not."

"[Jamelle Eugene] has done a great job... he and Andre Brown have become a great one-two punch for us. They kind of shuttle themselves in and out. They both can do a lot of different things. Jamelle is maybe a little shakier and Andre is maybe a little more powerful inside. [Jamelle] catches the ball out of the backfield, he does a great job. He picked up the blitz on Saturday that gave us our first deep throw to Jarvis Williams. He's been a very complete player for us. He's a great kid to be around. He loves the game of football, he's a great practice guy, and he's a great example to the young guys."

"I said at the start of the season that we might be a better football team but have less wins than we did a year ago.... looking at the schedule before we started. That coupled with the injuries, didn't give us a chance for a while to get to where we wanted."

"They've gotten to be a much better practice team. Our practice the last three weeks has been as good as anytime I've been around here... this Tuesday has to be better than last Tuesday because if it is then we are getting better."

"That's the only way we are going to have a chance to win this week against this football team we are playing with the speed and athletes they are going to bring here."

"My experience has been if you do it and work hard enough that you are going to find a way to win football games. If you're not, then you are not good enough and the only thing you can do is go out and recruit better players."

"[Clem Johnson] is out... it's a huge loss for us. He finally got back and was playing. He was playing the best he's played all year on Saturday. We were getting the play out of that spot at safety that we wanted to get in week one but we didn't get until week 11. That will be a huge loss for us."

"Bobby Floyd and Justin [Byers] handled the safety spot the second half and they will handle it the whole game. Both of them will play... maybe dictated by situations."

"We made a big emphasis already that the season isn't over. All this work and everything we've done, to get to this point, it would be a shame to not go out and give your best effort and play the best you can on Saturday."

"Anybody that touches the ball, and it's been that way for years, can score from anywhere on the football field. That's always a concern when you play this football team."

"They play four-down, seven guys back we played against last year starting on defense. They actually have three starters who are backups, were beat out by young kids, freshman that are playing... they play lock-down man-to-man. They say come and beat us."

"Our offense hasn't even spent two seconds looking at Georgia Tech [vs. Miami tape]. We have nothing in common with Georgia Tech. We are studying the Virginia's the Virginia Tech's, the Duke's... those people who look like us."

"Willis has a chance, as I said before, to play Willie's defense and not our defense. Willie, when he gets free he makes a lot of plays but sometimes when he's not free he has a tendency... basically [not starting him a few games ago] was to tell him you're not going to play unless you do it our way. He's doing it more and more our way and I think that's helped our defense get better. It certainly has. There's a reason why we ask him to do certain things. There's a reason why we ask 10 other guys to do certain things on defense... Willie is a talented, young guy, but he's got some things that he could be a heckuva lot better at if he just does what he's asked to do all the time."

"I think Russell Wilson [is deserving of All-ACC honors] for sure. I think Anthony Hill, the problem with him is he hasn't been healthy enough, but I don't know if there is another tight end in our conference that has been as good as he has. I think you have to give Nate Irving consideration but then again he's only played half the games. It's tough... I think all our guys, a lot of guys should make it but because of our record, where we've been, what we've done, and our injuries, I don't know. We may go through another year without anybody on the first team."

"I think Teddy Larsen and John Bedics, especially a guy like Bedics who going into his senior year thought he had a chance to start at defensive tackle... moved to offense and made the sacrifice he did for this football team... he hasn't missed a play on offense. We rested him here and there."

"Larsen, it's really hard to be a center in major college football and do the things he's done here... he certainly, I think in another year is going to make himself a draftable guy."

Virginia Head Coach Al Groh Quotes

Q: One of the themes that always comes up is players who are recruited by both schools and by both staffs. I imagine that gives you a deep background of the personnel that you are looking at; in some cases you've been looking at these guys since they've been 16 years old. Does that make a difference in evaluating personnel?

Groh: Yeah, very definitely. Last week for example we were playing a team that we haven't played in quite some time with very few players we were familiar with in recruiting, so it really was a start from scratch to identify the personnel and get strengths and weaknesses. This team (Virginia Tech) we play them every year and we know many of the players and so it really cuts down on that work.

Q: What is more important focus for your players in your opinion—is it to be bowl eligible, to focus on your business or are you okay with them thinking they might have a chance to knock off their rival?

Groh: Oh sure, there's a lot of elements to the game. Anytime you add more elements to it in any rivalry games it brings a little bit more into it than the team that you don't play on an ongoing basis.

Q: Has there been any kind of common thread for most of Marc Verica's interceptions in terms of being inaccurate, bad reads, or going the wrong places, etc.?

Groh: When there's too many guys around the player then clearly the read wasn't as precise as we would like it to be. Most of them have been into traffic rather than erratic throws.

Q: Is this conference as indecipherable as the standings would indicate? Here we are in week 12 or 13, do you know who the best team in the ACC is?

Groh: No, and I think the way it explains itself, I don't mean this to be negative towards any player, (but) look at the 12 teams in the conference and ... let's figure out which teams that we know the quarterback is going to be red hot tomorrow.

Q: (Russell Wilson (at NC State)...

Groh: (He's) the closest thing to it. Now, it took a while. Now he's 11 games better than he was the first week. There's a case there to answer David's question where we can see it's happening. As a result his team is scoring more, he's doing better. But probably with a few exceptions throughout the conference, the quarterback play is very unpredictable from week to week and therefore the results of that team is very unpredictable.

Q: All three phases of the game are obviously important. Do you stress being sound fundamentally in the special teams, an area that Virginia Tech seems to thrive in?

Groh: We certainly do. But we stress that all the time, not only to avoid the things that could take the game away from you, but just in the same context whether it's an interception that you make and run it back or you hit a big play; those are the plays in one fell swoop that can change the game.

There have been certain games this year ... that if you just see the score come across the ticker, you know it's 24-18 (and) that's great, but what it really was was an 18-17 game except this guy ran a kickoff back.

The way it is right now and again because there are no Sam Bradfords, and Graham Harrells right now throwing the ball in this league, that the points have to come from someplace and they're not always coming, for many of the teams in the conference, they're not always coming offensively. I think every team is trying to find them in what ever way they can.

The little bit that I was up on what happened in the Wake Forest game last week is apparently a great example. I don't think they got an offensive touchdown and yet Boston College had to come from behind and beat them at the end and the other team didn't have an offensive touchdown. It's ... a 21-0 Boston College victory except for three unexpected touchdowns... three non-offensive touchdowns. So it's just crazy that way.

I'm sure it's hard for you all to get a sense of it and it's hard going into the game just have a sense of how the game is going to go. You've really got to see from game to game.

Q: As a coach, what does this rivalry mean to you?

Groh: It's fun. It's fun. It's a big game atmosphere, if you like participating in big games and they're the most fun of all. So it's a lot more fun than playing Alaska State.

Q: If you go down and look at how your team's have done against other teams in the ACC with the exception of Florida State and Virginia Tech, you've had a winning record or close to 500 against just about all of them I guess. Do you spend any more time thinking about these games just trying to figure out why the teams haven't done better against Virginia Tech?

Groh: Oh sure. I think from a competitive standpoint anytime that you don't reach the objective that you are looking for, you're spurred to look for more answers (and to) dig deeper.

Q: Is there a common denominator in the games?

Groh: The majority of them have been very close games at the half and into the third quarter. I remember down there two years ago, it's ... nothing to nothing at the half or we're ahead 3-0 and with a minute to go we get sacked, fumble the ball, it falls onto the 15-yard line they score. It stays 7-3 for a long time. Chris Cook goes for an interception (and) misses the ball late in the third quarter now it's 14-3. It's been a lot of those kind of plays.

Last year I think we had the lead (with) 40 seconds to go (and) we're trying to get some more points out of that. We throw an interception (and) the next thing we know they get a touchdown and now we're behind. So it's been those kind of things.

Q: Can you talk about preparing for any one of Virginia Tech's quarterbacks?

Groh: The list is a little bit longer with this team than most of the others. If you include anybody who receives the ball from the center to that question and the answer puts Greg Boone in the mix. We now have three pretty diverse type players.

Clearly there is nobody to compare Greg Boone to, who was a terrific quarterback in high school and excellent safety, really I thought probably the best player in the state that particular year.

There's Tyrod (Taylor) who is kind of a Pat White type of player and there's Sean (Glennon) who seems to be able to do it under any circumstances—come in the middle of the season, come in the middle of the game. They've got a real good stable guys to rely upon (and) can go in number of different directions with what is needed.

Q: With the Virginia Tech defense, they get a lot of mileage out of that side of the ball don't they?

Groh: Yes, they play very good defense. We always appreciate looking at good defense and clearly there's a philosophy and system that has been in place for quite a while. Players are recruited specifically to fit the criteria of the system. Most of the players who are playing because it's a very mature program and system, there has always been depth ahead, so most of those players have been redshirted. What I am getting around to is that the system has been a long time in development (and) most of the players who are playing it, even if they haven't played in games before, have been a long in development. And so the two mesh. You have a well defined (system) and they're well disciplined to what they do. That is they're not buying into the newest fad that is going around ... they know how they want to play and they know who they want to play it with and they get those players and they spend plenty of time training them. And they do a real good with how they put their game plans together and all those things combined make them real tough.

Q: Last year was all Chris Long and Xavier Adibi, but this year there doesn't seem to be marquee guys, especially in the front seven. I guess Jason Worilds is it.

Groh: Worilds is a very good player. He will be a high reputation player by the time he's finished. He'll have a lot of production. (John) Graves will have a lot of production by the time he is finished. (Kam) Chancellor will have a lot of production; he is already starting to get a little bit of a reputation. (Macho) Harris (is) a high reputation player. It looks like the other corner, (Stephan) Virgil 's a very good player. Some of those same players (are) in the same status as some of their predecessors who weren't all that well known until they started accumulating 2-3 years worth of statistics.

Q: You seem to have a greater appreciation for Sean Glennon than a lot of Virginia Tech fans do. What is it that you like in what you've seen from him?

Groh: To anybody, I'd say he's pretty responsible for the fact that there's an ACC championship trophy down there in one of those trophy cases. Not too many championships go to teams without a quarterback who's done a good job. Was he the MVP of the game? I would certainly say that he was the MVP of the game here last year.

So I'm sure those are two games that are very important to fans that he was the MVP of, so from our perspective it's pretty easy to give him his props.

Virginia Tech Head Coach Frank Beamer Quotes

"First of all, I'm very pleased to pick up a win against a much-improved Duke football team. They played really hard throughout, and I was really impressed with them and how they played against us. Of course, this is a gigantic week here. For us, it's the biggest week of the year. We're going to make two players available at Tuesday's press conference. We'll have our offensive coaches available today after practice. The defensive coaches will be available tomorrow. After that, we need to concentrate on Virginia. We need to put all our efforts toward Virginia and getting ready for them. This is a big, big week, and that's the way it needs to be. Both quarterbacks came out healthy. They'll both work this week, and that's the last I'll say about that until after the game on Saturday."

In general, if I told you before the season that you could potentially have one of the top 10 defenses in the country and a bottom 10 offense and still have a chance to win the conference, would you have believed me?

"Well we're sure pleased to have a chance to win the conference or at least get to the championship game. I think we've had a tough schedule, probably the toughest schedule we've had, and we've played with the youngest football team we've had. We're really pleased about having a chance to win the conference."

Does it shock you at all?

"Regardless of how we did it, I believe it's been a lot of hard work by this staff and by these players. We're in a position right now if we win one game, we can get to the conference championship game. That's what pleases me."

Has Tyrod played any differently since returning from his injury?

"No, no I think the other night was one of those unfortunate things. We just got on a bad roll. Like I said after the game, it wasn't entirely his fault. He just got on a bad roll. Most of the time he's on a good roll. We have a lot of confidence in him and feel very good that he's our quarterback."

What are you hoping to accomplish by making the players unavailable to the media this week?

"We just need to really concentrate on Virginia. I feel like that's a gigantic game, and we need to put all our efforts and thoughts toward them."

Is that decision related at all to the incident last week and you don't want another distraction dividing the team?

"Our team is very much together, and I know our thoughts and all our efforts need to go to beating this Virginia team. I watched them on video, and they're a good football team. They're playing good defense with Jenkins. Offensively, Peerman's at tailback, and Ogletree's catching a lot of balls. Their line is good, too. Their tackles are good. Peerman is a heckuva back. Their linebackers are playing great defense. We better keep our mind on beating Virginia."

Peerman's been at UVa a while, but he hasn't carried the ball against you. Is that correct?

"Yeah, he's been injured a couple times."

Could that be an advantage for them, or have you seen him enough on film to know what to expect?

"I think it would be an advantage for us if he were over on the sidelines. If he's in the game, he's a heckuva back. He's a great back. We've got a lot of respect for him."

If I'm not mistaken, you guys have beaten Al (Groh's) team six out of the last seven times. Is there some common thread in that?

"I don't think that has anything to do with this year. We've had a good run. This game you can forget about the past. All that matters is what happens this Saturday."

There's the perception out there that there's a divided locker room between the offense and the defense. Do you think having just the two players available will add to that perception at all?

"Well, I think we're a together football team. I think our senior leadership has worked really hard to do that. We play hard throughout as a football team. The reason we have two players this week is because we want to concentrate on Virginia."

You've played a lot of games up to this point. What makes this week any different?

"This is a pretty important football game. We win this football game we go to the ACC championship game. To me, with this football team, our schedule and the inexperience we've had, it'd be a fantastic thing. So we're going to concentrate on that."

Can you talk about how Macho Harris is playing and what he has meant to this team?

"He's a player. He's one of those leaders who has kept our football team together. I think he's done a lot of good things for Virginia Tech. I think he's helped his career, too. You hope that he comes back and has a great year and helps himself at the next level. I sure think he's done that. We would have liked to get him into a few more kickoff returns, but a lot of times the defense is coming off the field and they're tired. You don't want to take the chance of him running when he's tired or winded. When the ball's in his hands, he's a talented guy. I think he's got a great future as a corner."

Has keeping the football team together been more challenging this year than previous years?

"It's always an issue. Making sure the team is together and that they've got each other's backs. Certainly, that's what takes place with our football team. That goes back to our strong senior leadership and our program. I've said many times, we like the kids that are in our program right now. They're good solid kids that work hard and try to be successful. We like this football team."

Leadership on a team is difficult to come by. Is that something you and your coaching staff have had to foster this year?

"No, no I think they've stepped up. We've got guys on both sides of the ball that have stepped up and have done a good job for us."

How much more difficult is it to make the championship game when you have to beat your rival to get there?

"It used to be that the Virginia game was important. Now that we're in the same division of the same conference, it becomes even more important. It's a credit to both programs. You come down and you're playing for something at the end, both of us are. It's a credit to both programs."

Have you ever seen anything like the ACC this year where week-in and week-out, you never know who's going to beat whom?

"I think there are a lot of good football teams that are about the same. Our record against out-of-conference teams has been pretty good this year. I think it's just a matter of a lot of good football teams that are very close to each other."

Is that good or bad for the ACC in general?

"It's probably pretty good. I know going into last week, every team still had a shot to go to a bowl. When you get down to a couple games left, and that's the case, that's great for the league."

Besides the two quarterbacks, how did you come out of last game health wise?

"We got a little beat up. Give credit to Duke and how hard they play. We had more guys in the training room Sunday morning than we've had all season long. A lot of guys are bruised up. I think everybody's going to make it to the game, but we're going to have to hold back some of those guys from practice this week."

Wake Forest Head Coach Jim Grobe Quotes

On the lesson he learned after last week's game against Boston College...

“You got to make plays. We've played two really good teams the last two weeks and had a great chance to win both games, but didn't make it happen late. The key down the stretch with the teams that we're playing is that you have to make plays.”

On Saturday's game against Vanderbilt...

“It's the last game for our seniors so that should be important. I hope the young guys feel a responsibility to help the seniors play their best in their last game at home. I think as much as anything we're just playing really good teams. I'm proud of our team. We've battled really hard the past two weeks and just come up short. We need another effort like that this Saturday.”

On if there is a scenario where he would turn down a bowl bid...

“Not that I know of. I don't know of any bad bowl games. That's what you play for. That's what the players play for and what we coach for is to have an opportunity to play in the postseason so that's what we're looking at.”

On the injury situation...

“We're really banged up. There are very few kids right now that are playing for us that don't have something wrong with them that limits their performance. I think that's probably the case with most people. Barrett McMillin has a stress fracture and won't be able to play this Saturday. One of the places we couldn't afford to lose people is the offensive line so we've lost another one there.”

On Sam Swank's range after his injury...

“We tried a 47-yard field goal the other night and he had plenty of distance. We kind of discussed a 56-yarder at the end of the game but felt that was a little bit of a stretch. Typically, he can hit the ball that far, but he'd have to hit it so hard that there's more a chance to hook it or pull it off line. He's getting better. He feels better. I think he'll get a little stronger and more comfortable. Shane Popham is still kicking really, really well. Sam was the guy we went with the other night. We'll see how he practices this week and make a decision on Saturday.”

On if Vanderbilt reminds him of his team...

“They do. They're a good defensive football team. They're doing a nice job on special teams. Offensively, they're doing some different things. They run a little bit of option with one quarterback and they are more of a throw team with their other quarterback. The thing that's very impressive with Vanderbilt is not only how hard they play, but they're very well coached.”