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An Interview With:

FRANK BEAMER **Virginia Tech**

FRANK BEAMER: We're really, really excited to be coming back to play in the ACC Championship Game. It's been work. I'm very, very proud of our program for getting us to this game. But it hasn't been an easy trip here.

We've hung in there, and like I've said quite a few times, we haven't always been pretty, but we've always played hard. So I'm really proud of our football program.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Logan Thomas. What has been the difference to him just gaining some confidence and improving his play? He looks like a different quarterback than the one that showed up against Clemson.

FRANK BEAMER: Yeah, I think experience. He's a guy that's very smart. He's always in control on the football field, and I think as he's gained experience, he knows where he wants to go with the ball. He's more accurate because he knows that sooner, and it all just comes with experience.

You know, you thought that was going to happen, but you never really know. But the guy is just -- he's been really good for us, taking care of the ball, really pleased about that part of it, and then his play there on the field and his accurate throwing, that's been a real plus for us.

Q. How have you seen him improve as a runner? It seems like that's been something watching you guys on television he's really improved that part of his game, as well.

FRANK BEAMER: His running?

Q. Uh-huh.

FRANK BEAMER: Yeah, he's -- when he gets going, he's a fast guy, really. He's not quite

as quick as our former quarterback, Tyrod. He's not like that. But he's quick enough, and he runs, and he's a tough guy to bring down.

Q. Where do you think you guys have made the most progress since the last time you played Clemson?

FRANK BEAMER: Oh, I think offensively we're a better offense right now. And of course that goes back to your quarterback and his play. But you know, we have the ability, I think, to be a balanced group. We've got the ability to throw it, but we've got the ability to run it. So I think that part has improved.

And defensively, you know, we've played well. We've had some tough injuries over there. But again, we've always played hard and fairly efficient there.

You know, special team wise, we've kind of -- we haven't always kicked the ball well, so that's been a little bit of a struggle for us. But you know, I think for the most part our coverage teams have done okay.

Q. I also wanted to ask you about your senior class because this one could be the winningest senior class in school history, but I feel like we've said that before about recent classes. How do these guys keep topping each other?

FRANK BEAMER: Yeah, I'm proud of a lot of our seniors classes here lately, but this crowd does have a chance to go out as the winningest senior class ever. We've been fortunate to have a lot of good kids through here and to be able to win a lot of football games, and you don't do that without good players. I'm pleased for them.

Q. Back in the preseason Logan was talking about when he came to Tech, he expected to play tight end, and he was a little disappointed he didn't get to play tight end. At what point did you guys realize this was a quarterback and he was a quarterback and not a tight end?



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FRANK BEAMER: Well, we asked him to try it there when he first came in, and being the kind of guy he is, I think a very unselfish guy and so forth, he worked at quarterback, and we thought he -- you watch him out there, and not just his throwing and his running but just how he handles himself.

To me he's a perfect quarterback. You know, he's a great leader, he's got great respect from his teammates. I think he has a great way in the huddle, and all those other things that you want your quarterback to be other than being smart and competitive and all those things, too.

You know, just kind of kept working at it, and he sat there behind Tyrod who's a pretty good guy to learn from. The problem is he didn't get to play much. We had so many close games and were just never really able to get him in a lot of games or as much as you'd like to. That's why I said, the experience has really helped him. Each and every game I think has really helped him this year.

But I think he's just -- he's got a future at quarterback. The way just all those things he can do, and he's got a good, lively arm, and as I said, the more he learns, the more accurate he gets because he knows where he wants to go with the ball. I think he's got a future there.

Q. Now, he was talking about how that first Clemson game was kind of a watershed game for him, not what he did but what he didn't do and what he learned. He was pretty down on himself after that game, and he said it's been a big learning experience for him. Did you talk to him after that game, or did you even need to? Did he realize -- and was it that bad a game for him?

FRANK BEAMER: No, I'm sure he and Coach O'Cain talked, but he learns. You show him the video and he learns from it, and he doesn't make the same mistake twice, and when you play Clemson, you're playing a good football team, some good people chasing you around there in pass rush, and so it's one of those games that I think he just learned from and became a better quarterback.

Q. You mentioned not always kicking it so well. Is it safe to assume that Danny will continue as your punter on Saturday?

FRANK BEAMER: Well, he sure did a great job yesterday. You know, we'll -- that's kind of a week-to-week thing here, and we'll --

Branthover I really feel like has got a great future, he's a freshman and a little bit inconsistent now, but he can bomb it. A few weeks back he had the second longest kick ever in Tech history. And I'm certainly pleased with the way Danny punted the ball yesterday.

Q. Was part of your comfort with him just the fact that he is a fifth-year guy and he's been not necessarily as a punter but in so many big spots before?

FRANK BEAMER: Yeah, and then he got in there in pregame, and he only kicked a few balls, but I mean, he bombed them right away. So we decided there in pregame that we were going to go with him.

He's a guy that -- he answers the bell. I mean, his play at wide receiver, punt returns when he came in there that week and punt returned for us, he did a great job, he's just one of those guys that is smart and a good football player and answers the bell.

Q. I was just wondering, how much stock do you put in that first game during your preparation? I think the line came out already that you guys are favored in this one even though you lost that first one. But when you're preparing for this one how much time do you spend studying that first one or just preparing for maybe a completely different game?

FRANK BEAMER: I think you've got to go back and look at that and learn from it and see what they did and see what they're doing now that might be a little bit different. But I think any time you've got to go back and look at how they played against you for sure.

Q. Does it mean anything then coming in with losses in three of their last four games, or is that kind of just a moot point since this is a championship game?

FRANK BEAMER: Yeah, the thing you know, they've got a good football team and they're well coached, and this is a championship game, so you know that they're going to be well prepared for this one.

Q. Your teams have twice come back to win in the ACC Championship against teams that have beaten you earlier in the season. I was wondering if you could draw anything from

those previous experiences trying to do it again this year.

FRANK BEAMER: Well, this is a new year and another team, and we were fortunate to do that a couple times. But I don't take much from that. I just think you've got to get ready to play a great football game. We had a great win yesterday, but I think we've got to get past that. You'd like to think about that one for a while, but after our staff meeting at 2:00, that was over for the coaches, and now on to Clemson, and now we've got to make sure our players feel the same way or do the same thing tomorrow. After we have our team meeting with them, we need to turn all our attention towards Clemson.

Q. I know it's pretty easy to get guys motivated for an ACC title game, but is it even easier considering the way the first game went? I'd have to imagine the team is pretty excited to get another shot at this?

FRANK BEAMER: Well, they beat us. They beat us soundly, and they certainly took it to us. There wasn't any question about that. They deserved to win. You know, I think our players understand. They've seen firsthand the players at Clemson, and like I said, they're a well-coached football team, and you understand you'd better get ready to play your very best if you're going to beat them.

Q. It's probably a little early to reflect on anything, and I know it's hard to quantify this sort of thing, but given what Coach Foster has done with that defense this year, plugging in so many young guys, losing a handful of starters and couple of key reserves, when you look back at the end of the season do you think you might realistically say this is maybe the best coaching job he's done in his career?

FRANK BEAMER: Well, he's been good for a long time and been good in a lot of big ballgames, but certainly he's earned his pay here this year. The injuries he got and the people that's out, there are some key guys there, Bruce Taylor, our linebacker that led us in tackles, and so yeah, he's done -- he and that staff, the whole defensive staff, have done a tremendous job, and I think our offensive staff has, too, bringing this offensive team along. I feel like we've improved offensively as we've gone through the year. I'm tremendously proud of our coaching staff and the job they've done this year, really.

Q. Do you think Coach O'Cain, the switch to letting him call plays, do you think Coach O'Cain has made that difference this year, or can you look to something else, as well?

FRANK BEAMER: Well, last year we had a good offense last year, and I don't know exactly where we ranked, but we scored a lot of points last year, too.

But I've been pleased. I think the whole operation, I think Coach Stinespring on the sideline where he can talk to the players, look at them and talk to them, and then Coach O'Cain I think has done a good job calling plays.

Q. If things continue to play out the way they are, you'll be among a handful of teams that's sitting there, one loss and kind of in the conversation there at the top of the BCS. Are you still kind of a plus-one guy, or how are your views kind of morphing with postseason football?

FRANK BEAMER: No, I really am a plus-one guy. I really believe if we could get it down to the four teams, two games, those four play, and then you have a championship game after that, and I think as I've told you a lot of times, the year we played Auburn down in the Sugar Bowl, that's the one that kind of convinced me because they were undefeated along with two other teams and they didn't get a chance to play for the National Championship, and they were good enough to do it. They were a really good football team.

You know, that's -- and of course it kind of got a lot of discussion here about a year ago, two years ago, and the presidents voted that down. But you know, that to me I think would be the best solution to this whole thing if we could get down to four teams.

Q. And did you kind of feel that way back in 2007 when you sat there at No. 3 in the BCS after the ACC title game?

FRANK BEAMER: Well, you know, yeah. I just think generally speaking -- and people always say, okay, how about that fifth team. Now they talk about how about that third team. But I don't think a fifth team is probably as controversial as a third team. You know, I think -- and maybe some years it might, but generally speaking there's about four teams that have a legitimate shot. This year

there's probably more than that. I'll be honest with you, you look at it and there's some one-loss teams there that are very good. This might be one of those years where there's more than four. But generally speaking I think there's about four teams that have a chance to play for the National Championship, or have a chance to win a National Championship, probably should say it that way.

Q. You guys have become such frequent participants in this game. It's kind of seen as an expectation on the roster. Do you get any sense of relief on their part that they got to where they're expected to get?

FRANK BEAMER: Well, I think some people might expect you to get there, but this is hard, and to get to the championship game in the ACC, I don't take it for granted myself. Like I said, it's an honor to get here, and we've worked really hard to get here. It's been a grind.

So maybe some people just assume we can make it back to the ACC Championship game, but I certainly didn't, and I don't think our players did, either. They know how hard that is to get there.

Q. How much of an advantage is it to be very familiar with kind of playing on that stage?

FRANK BEAMER: I think experience helps you some, but to me it's one game, it's two really good football teams, and everyone knows what's at stake there. So I'm not sure that has great, great value.

Q. I was curious, how do you get a team's confidence back? Have you ever been a part of a team that's had a peak and then a lull like Clemson has had this season and have you had success restoring confidence in similar situations?

FRANK BEAMER: You know, the thing I know about Clemson is it's a good football team. What I saw here in Lane Stadium, it's a good football team, some excellent players. I think it's a well-coached football team, and that's what I know about Clemson.

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