

September 26, 2012



An interview with:

**FRANK SPAZIANI
BOSTON COLLEGE**

COACH SPAZIANI: Thank you. We've got the Clemson Tigers coming in. Obviously a very talented football team. We're happy to be having them at home.

With that, any questions.

Q. Frank, I don't know that there's a good time to play a team as talented as Clemson. Considering they're coming off a nationally spotlight game, making a long road trip, can any of that play into your favor?

COACH SPAZIANI: Well, once again, to get into the psyche of your opponents, how they're going to think, how the coaches thinking, I'm not that smart.

I'm sure Dabo (Swinney) is going to have them ready to play. We need to make sure we're ready for a very good Clemson team coming in on their A game. That's how we're preparing.

Q. When you look at their array of weapons that they can put out there on the offensive side of the ball, what are some ways that you can slow them down to any extent?

COACH SPAZIANI: Bad weather (laughter).

They got a lot of weapons and they pose a lot of challenges. As you alluded to, at all the skill positions, big-league wideouts, tight end, running backs. They got it all, they know how to use them. It's a tremendous challenge.

Once again, there's always things you can do. It's about executing them. So we got a game plan, but we got to execute it.

Q. You have some of the ACC's offensive leaders with Alex (Amidon) and Chase Rettig. What is the big difference for

you on the offensive side in terms of production besides the hire of Doug (Martin)?

COACH SPAZIANI: It's consistency, those guys maturing a little bit. That's been the biggest thing.

Q. Are there still areas that you would like to see improve? When I talked to him, he told me the offensive line might be the most improved part of the team.

COACH SPAZIANI: We've seen improvement on the offensive line certainly.

Q. I was interested to see that Nick Clancy is leading the nation in tackles. He's a fifth-year guy, am I right, that has not gotten to play much in the past. Is that because of Kuechly? Where does he come from and what does he do so well?

COACH SPAZIANI: He taught him everything he knows (laughter).

One thing, it's a product of opportunity. Kudos to Nick for having the opportunities and getting some production. Nick, as I said earlier, has been a pleasant surprise. He came back as a fifth-year senior with no guarantee of anything other than we needed him, his leadership and his attitude, his institutional motivation. The opportunity to play has certainly turned into production for him.

Q. What does he do particularly well? He must be doing something really well.

COACH SPAZIANI: Nick has always had physical talent. He's strong, he's fast, he can run. He's just adapted better to being inside there. It's a product of him being in a little better position maybe for him and certainly the opportunities. But he has the physical tools. He has been handicapped in the past by injuries and some other things.

Q. Coach, I was going to ask you about Bobby Swigert, whether he's been on the practice field, what the hopes are for him this

week?

COACH SPAZIANI: Bobby got back to doing some limited work last week. We've been pushing him along. He's making progress. Just how much, how often he plays is yet to be determined right now.

But he's making progress on his recovery, so we're happy about that.

Q. Is it too optimistic to look for him this week or something you play by ear?

COACH SPAZIANI: He's been practicing. Once again, that will be determined on Thursday. But he's been participating more and more in practice. Hopefully he'll get to the point tomorrow where we can make a positive decision on his participation.

Q. Is that a good problem to have when you have a guy like Alex playing so well, guys you like like Jonathan (Coleman), the group that has been playing pretty well?

COACH SPAZIANI: More talent is always a good problem, yeah. Bobby (Swigert) is a good football player. He's experienced. He brings a lot of things besides his physical skill to us. His leadership and his maturity out there. We're happy to have him practicing at least.

Q. What are some of the things that Doug (Martin) has brought as a coordinator to the offense and what were some of the things you saw in him when you made the decision to bring him in?

COACH SPAZIANI: Doug is very bright. He understands how to use his personnel, attack defenses. He's very conscientious. He's very positive. He's a very good football coach. The more you're around him, the more you can appreciate what he brings to the table.

He's upbeat, positive, has an idea what he wants to do. Once again, he's always part of the solution, not the problem. He looks at the positive things. So far we've had a lot of positive things. We need more, though.

Q. Was it his first priority to get a relationship with Chase?

COACH SPAZIANI: Yeah, the offensive coordinator always has to assess his quarterbacks. Right from day one, we all knew, the people that are here, what Chase's abilities are, skill set is. When Doug came in, he recognized it himself. He

likes working with him and they get along. Now it's a matter of production.

But it's a good fit.

Q. Frank, this offensive scheme seems to be a sharp departure from what you guys have done over the years. Can you say specifically what you were looking for schematically when you went out and were looking for a new coordinator?

COACH SPAZIANI: We had been unable for a number of reasons to be successful on offense. Once again, it's a complicated answer. But we wanted to be able to get ourselves into where we could run the ball, throw the ball, score more.

Doug, he brings that to the table. He has his offense, but he understands how we need to play football and what our guys can do. That's always the mark of a good football coach.

You have a system, but you got to play with your players. Doug has brought that to us.

An interview with:

DABO SWINNEY CLEMSON

COACH SWINNEY: Good again to be with you this week.

This is a big challenge for us, going up to Chestnut Hill, a tough place to play, a place we've only won one time. I have a lot of respect for Coach Spaziani, the way he does things there, just their program as a whole.

Look forward to the challenge. They've had an open date to get ready for us, so I know we'll definitely really have to play very, very well to have a chance to win this game.

Very impressed with what they're doing offensively. They got quarterbacks throwing the ball for almost a thousand yards in three games. Big arm, very efficient, knows their offense, is operating it very, very well.

Big up front. Two pounders at running back. Got a couple of wideouts that are really capable of making some big-time plays. So it's going to be a real challenge for our defense.

Then defensively, Boston College has always been outstanding on defense. Their scheme is challenging. They know exactly what they're doing. They are who they are. They play to their strengths.

Last year, last couple years, they've had (Luke) Kuechly up there. He's gone. Now he's gone, you look up, three of the top four tacklers in this league, the top two tacklers in the nation, are at Boston College.

They know what they're doing on defense. This is a game we're going to have to execute on high levels in all phases. They are very good in the kicking game as well. Big challenge for us to get back on track and find a way to win up at Boston. .

Q. You played and coached at the University of Alabama under Gene Stallings. How much of your coaching traits come from your time with Coach Stallings? Do you have much communication with him these days?

COACH SWINNEY: Man, we don't have enough time to talk about my time with Coach Stallings. I spent seven years with him playing and coaching. I consider him my mentor. I stay in touch with him quite often. He's been here to Clemson five or six times. We talk on the phone. Talked to him a few weeks ago.

We stay in regular communication. He's been a great resource for me as I've started my head coaching career over the last few years.

Good man. Was a great example to me trying to do things a certain way, being the kind of father and husband you need to be in this business as well.

Q. I know you probably don't want to go into it, but you seemed to be going really strong into the third quarter with Florida State. Where did the momentum shift away from your team?

COACH SWINNEY: We had two plays back to back. They ran a little speed sweep that we did not fit properly on the outside, really hurt us there. They got a touchdown off of that. Then the offense came back and really answered with a field goal. Put us up 10 again, kind of got the momentum back. After we kicked the field goal, we got a kickoff. We forgot that we need to cover the kickoff. Next thing you know it goes 90 yards the other way.

That to me was the turning point, kickoff return, punch it in for a touchdown there. Cut the

lead to 3, and really ignited the flame down there. Got the crowd rolling. That energy and momentum was pretty powerful. We needed to answer on offense. We went three-and-out. They came right back.

It was just a tough little stretch there where we had a chance to finish the game on defense, offense and special teams. We didn't step up and get it done. A game we led for almost three quarters.

Disappointing we didn't finish. Tough place to go and win. You have to give Florida State a ton of credit. They played their tails off, made plays, took advantage of the opportunities. That's what good teams do, especially at home.

Similar situation with our game against them here last year. It was a hard-fought game by two good teams. Disappointing we lost. But that one's over. Even if we would have won the game, we would be talking about moving on, staying focused, finding a way to win this one. Nothing has changed in that regard. It's all about this game regardless of what's happened in the past.

Hopefully we'll learn and grow from that and get better as a team this week. But I would say that kickoff return was the turning point.

Q. What adjustments, if any, do you feel you need to make going into Boston College this weekend?

COACH SWINNEY: It's not as much adjustments as it is execution, doing the fundamental things properly. We got to get 11 guys executing all on the same page, especially defensively, playing with the proper technique. We got some guys giving great effort. You have to have effort with technique. That's what leads to execution.

So we just got to improve fundamentally, technically. That's really the main thing. It's not as much adjustments. There's nothing wrong with our scheme. We've got good schemes. We have to execute things a little bit better.

Q. Frank was talking about some of the positives that Doug Martin has brought to the offense. When you look at them on film, what kind of improvements do you see?

COACH SWINNEY: Well, they're just much more dynamic. They're totally different looking at them as far as throwing the football, their efficiencies throwing the ball, really understanding

how to attack the defense. They're real big up front, like they always have been. They do a good job with their three-step game. Keeping you off balance with the play-action. They have shifts and motion.

They're playing at a tempo. They're never been a tempo team. You watch the Miami game, heck, they're snapping the ball. Miami is not even lined up. They're barely getting down. That's a real change.

They do a good job of throwing the ball to the running backs. They run the lead draw in the zone as well as anybody, do a good job with their screens. They still have their physical approach they've always had, but much more dynamic in different ways than they have in the past.

It all starts with the quarterback. This guy can play. He really understands what he's doing within that scheme, knows where to go with the ball. We're going to have to do a good job of being where we're supposed to be in tackling people. He's going to get rid of it. He doesn't hold the ball very long. You don't throw for a thousand yards in three games by accident, 950 or something. Impressive, especially when you played Miami and Northwestern as two of those opponents.

I'm very impressed with what they're doing offensively.

Q. I saw last week where you had started transitioning to Eric Mac Lain to offensive guard. What does he have to do to establish himself at that position?

COACH SWINNEY: Well, it's going to be a great move for him and our team. It's something he really wanted to do. He has a role for us at tight end. He came to see me a week or so ago and said it's been on his mind. Just felt that long-term that would give him more opportunity. I didn't disagree.

I definitely think he can be special in the offensive line. I think he could be okay at tight end, but he's probably going to max out at some point. This is going to give him an opportunity to really play more, play longer at this position.

I'm happy he's made the move. He's moving to tackle. That's what we see him as, but he could play guard. One of the things we're excited about him, he's similar to Brandon Thomas, who played some tight end in high school, as well. We see Mac Lain as a guy that can play either tackle position or guard position. When you have guys like that that bring that type

of athleticism and flexibility to your offensive line, that is a big-time plus.

We kind of told him that we're going to give it the next three or four weeks to try to transition him and get him up to speed. He's been in meetings for a little over a week with the offensive line. Right now we have to keep him in No. 88, because his role he's performing at tight end is important. He's in our short yardage and goal packages. Once he's up to speed, feels like he's ready to go, we're going to move him into 78 and probably keep the jersey on the sideline if we're able to get him in the line here the next few weeks.

Trying to get him to the open date and bring him along after that. I'm excited about him. He knows the offense. Not just like he's moving over from defense and doesn't have a clue. Should be able to come over a little quicker than somebody moving from the other side of the ball. But I think he's got a great future there.

An interview with:

JIMBO FISHER FLORIDA STATE

COACH FISHER: Looking forward to having a great game with South Florida this week. Come off a very tough and competitive game with Clemson last week. Very proud of our kids for battling, hanging in there, making enough plays at the end to do it. Clemson was an excellent football team.

We have our hands full coming into South Florida. They're very talented, athletic, got a lot of guys can run, a lot of guys our kids know very well, well coached well with Skip (Holtz). Do all three phases very well.

We have to put last week behind us and move on to this week, another steppingstone as far as the maturity of our football team, being able to do that and win a significant game, then be able to move on.

I think our kids practiced extremely well yesterday. I liked the whole attitude. They seem to be doing very well, but we need to go out and play because South Florida is a very good football team and will be bringing their A game. So we

have a great challenge this week.
Questions, please.

Q. Your last eight games, you have five of the games on the road. Talk about how tough that will be. Also against South Florida, is this a matchup, a rival game, you would like to see every single season?

COACH FISHER: We got a lot of games on the road. That's always a challenge. There's always distractions. You are never at home, different things going on. Sometimes it can work to an advantage because it does put you together a lot more, as crazy as that sounds, in hotels and meetings. Sometimes it can be a great time of camaraderie and depending on each other. Great challenges on the road.

We have some excellent wins. South Florida is a great opponent. Always have played extremely well. Defeated us the last time they played here. I'm sure they'll be looking to do the same thing. It was a very good game. We have to bring our A game.

Q. Is there any particular moment that stands out in last week's game that turned the momentum in your team's favor?

COACH FISHER: I think there was two significant plays. There were a lot of significant plays in the game. Two times we responded extremely well, the game was 28-14, Kelvin (Benjamin) took a shuffle pass and went down the sideline for about 60 or 70, set us up for another score, we punched it in. Clemson responded 31-21. Then we responded with a big kickoff return to get us back to the 10. We were able to punch both of them in for touchdowns. Clemson was hitting us hard. We responded back, got the game back. Our defense, that's when they started getting their feet on the ground and started getting stops and then we were able to take the ball back and take the lead.

Those two plays were significant plays in the game answering big punches by Clemson. We were fortunate to get the ball in and keep that momentum going.

Q. B.J. (Daniels) has had a good performance against FSU last time. Can you talk about your defense and how you feel they match up against them this year.

COACH FISHER: I think it's going to be an extremely tough matchup. B.J. can run, he can throw, he is strong, not a little guy, he's strong,

dynamic, a great competitor. We're going to have our hands full, have to be very disciplined in our rush lanes.

The other thing is when he scrambles, he has such a strong arm, he can throw the ball extreme distances, so you have to play the ball in the deep part of the field. They like to throw go routes and get the ball to their big receivers. We have to match up in the secondary. They'll mix in the run with a quarterback run. It's going to be a tremendous challenge for us. We're going to have our hands full.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the psychology of coming off a game that ESPN's Game Day is there. You have a big emotional victory. How difficult is it to come back a week later and play a game that doesn't have quite the hype?

COACH FISHER: I think it depends on your football team. I think it depends on the maturity of your football team and how driven and how attention to detail they are and how much they really want what they say they want. I think that's an extreme challenge for them.

I think as a coaching staff it always is, too, because you have those games. You're used to moving on. Again, we'll find out what our football team thinks and does by the maturity in which we play the football game with and prepare for them with.

Like I say, it's another challenge for us, like every week is a different challenge. That's one of them this week.

Here is my point. I don't look at this as a lesser game. I think South Florida is an extremely talented football team. They played Rutgers and just went and defeated Arkansas they have extremely good players. They have guys on their team when they defeated us up here last year. They're going to bring their A game, so we better bring ours.

Q. You mentioned earlier a lot of your guys know their guys. How much of a factor is that in terms of the knowledge of these kids? Sometimes people might be intimidated by the school's reputation at Florida State. These guys at South Florida played high school against your guys.

COACH FISHER: There's no doubt. In their mind, that gives them more motivation and

more energy to try to knock you off. I don't think there's any doubt.

Q. There was a lot of national attention accorded, deservedly so, to EJ Manuel after the game. People are saying now he's inserted himself in the Heisman Trophy conversation, et cetera. Obviously EJ has been an elite quarterback. Did that game highlight him to everybody else? Did he just go out and do the kinds of things that you knew he could do?

COACH FISHER: Yeah, I think he did. Like I say, the media are going to promote and push who they think should be in the Heisman. That's a great award and wonderful, but it's not what you play for. If that comes within your teamwork, do the things you got to do, that's great. The scenario, do you want show dogs or hunting dogs? Show dogs get all that hype, which is great, but I'd rather have guys that can hunt, can handle all that and go play well. I think EJ understands that.

If that's what the media wants to do, great. I think EJ will keep a level head and understand how to prepare and practice each week and play and won't put any added pressure on himself.

Q. When you looked at film and examined that game, how did you grade his performance?

COACH FISHER: Played extremely well, I mean, extremely well. He got us in and out of the right plays, did the right things, got the right reads, got the ball to different receivers on different coverages. Had a lot of backside three and four reads on routes and different things. When his primaries were there, he was taking them.

He was very clean in the game as far as what I was concerned about reads, decision making, leadership, all those types of things. I thought he played an excellent football game.

An interview with:

**RANDY EDSALL
MARYLAND**

COACH EDSALL: Well, of course we were disappointed with the loss to West Virginia, but I thought our guys competed very, very hard.



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Other than probably about eight plays in the ballgame, if you could have had those back, some of the mistakes we made, the outcome could have been different.

But we're just going to head back out on the practice field today and tomorrow. Guys will be off on Friday, Saturday, then get back to it on Sunday in preparation for Wake Forest. .

Q. What have you seen from A.J. Hendy the last two weeks on scout team that might encourage you as to his health and his return soon?

COACH EDSALL: Well, I've just seen a guy that's gone out there and done more the last two weeks. We'll find out a little bit more about him today as we go out there and practice today and tomorrow as we head into Wake Forest.

But I feel pretty good that he'll be available to us. Hopefully that will be the case.

Q. Pretty good defensive performance last week. You gave up passing yards, but that's going to happen against that West Virginia offense. You only gave up 25 rushing yards. Talk about the West Virginia offense. Do you think it's a one-dimensional offense, and talk about their running game last week.

COACH EDSALL: We thought, having a history of playing West Virginia, it was just one of those things where I didn't feel, our defensive coaches didn't feel, they don't like to run the ball. They do it just to kind of make sure they have something in there because they'd rather throw the football.

We went with a game plan that could take care of those things. We gave up three explosive plays, two of those were for touchdowns. That's something that if we just played the things a little bit better and some guys did their job, we would have prevented those.

Like I said, we just felt like West Virginia is a team that really doesn't want to run the ball. That's why we were able to be successful. Our kids played very, very hard.

Q. Randy, you played four non-conference games. You have an off week. Is that as good a time as any to have a week off with the balance of your schedule being ACC games, you can heal up some, fine tune?

COACH EDSALL: I think it is. I always

like to play the non-conference games first, get them out of the way, then you go and focus. Just so happened we had the bye at this point in time in the schedule.

I think it comes for a good time for us from the standpoint that we had a lot of injuries early on, starting to get guys back. I think we'll get even more guys back. Also it gives us a chance because we are so young. We were able to find by playing a lot of people, we found out some things. Now as we go forward, we have a better idea of who we are, what we can do.

Again, if we need to make any changes within our starting lineups, it gives us some extra time to get those guys that are going to be in those positions some extra work as we head into conference play.

Q. What are some of the things that you have learned about this team through your four games so far?

COACH EDSALL: Well, I learned we're still a young team because we got guys that can make some dynamic plays, but sometimes they're going to make mistakes, too.

I found out that this is a team that's going to play extremely hard for the full, entire game. It's a team that has a lot of ability and potential to continue to get better. I see a team that's gotten better from week-to-week. That needs to continue. It's a team that I feel really understands what we want to do and what we need to get done in order to be successful in the ACC race.

Q. You mentioned the offensive line at West Virginia. If you look more at that, (Andrew) Zeller and (Mike) Madaras playing more.

COACH EDSALL: That's why we're going to practice today, to be able to take a look at some of those things. Like I said, we'll have a better idea after we get through these practices, how we want to go as we continue to start practice again on Sunday.

A lot of those things we want to take a look at today and tomorrow, then move forward from there.

Q. Having the four non-conference games, the bye week, then the ACC schedule. With such a young team, how much progress do you think you have made? Are you pleased with where you are at heading into conference play?

COACH EDSALL: I'm pleased with where we're headed, not pleased with where we're at. I'd like to have more wins. I'm pleased with the improvement I see taking place. I'll be more pleased as we continue to improve from week to week.

Again, you get a chance to go back this week and take a look at the cutups for the first four weeks. You can see where we were in the first game, you see where we were in the fourth game against West Virginia, you can see a definite improvement in each phase of the ball, within the individuals on each side of the ball.

You see the improvement, but you know we still got to get better and we're not happy with what our record is. We just need to keep going out there and keep working hard each and every day in practice to get better. That's what we're going to do again today.

Q. I was looking at the numbers. It's a truism you don't win with a freshman quarterback. Your guy made a quantum jump against a quality team. Can you talk about, was it a dramatic improvement for him or had you seen it coming like this all along?

COACH EDSALL: I think the thing is, knowing Perry (Hills), you could see it was coming because of the fact his demeanor, how he approaches everything, how passionate he is about doing well.

And I thought as the game went on against West Virginia, standing on the sideline, I could almost see the game really starting to slow down for him as opposed to the other games.

I don't know why, but it just seems to happen. That's just the way it is. All of a sudden it just clicks. So I think the game's going to get slower and slower for him, which is a good thing.

Again, he's seen so many different things in four weeks, really four different kind of defenses and everything else. But I just think it's going to slow down for him and he's just going to get better and better.

Experience is a great teacher. He's had a tremendous amount of experience. The thing is, he's taken some shots. He's gotten hit way too much. But you don't see him backing down or shying away. That just tells you about the mental and physical makeup of the young man.

Q. Ever sit back and think in a year or

two the combination of Hills and (Stefon) Diggs, two freshmen performing at high levels, what they'll be like in a year or two?

COACH EDSALL: Well, yeah. And that's why you have to have patience. That's why you have to remember who those guys are. When you throw all the guys in the backfield playing their first games, you just got to understand, you got to have patience.

When you take a look at the things that we did against West Virginia, how we progressed each and every week, it is, it makes you feel good that you have those type of players that you're going to be able to build your offense around, that those guys are going to be even more successful the more they play.

An interview with:

**TOM O'BRIEN
NC STATE**

COACH O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Certainly we look forward to the opportunity to get into the conference, play a conference game. Going on the road to Miami, a team that really had a great victory this past weekend at Georgia Tech, really important. Quarterback had a great day throwing the football, all kind of record numbers for him. Certainly, as always with Miami, they have great skill, great speed, great change of direction, great explosiveness with their people.

It will be a big challenge for us, but we look forward to the opportunity to go play. .

Q. Coach, I want to ask you about Shadrach Thornton. It seems strange he doesn't play at all first three weeks, then, all of a sudden, bursts out and has this game. Can you explain what happened?

COACH O'BRIEN: What happened is last Sunday we had no healthy running backs. He was the only one that was healthy. As a freshman, pre-season camp you could see some signs. He got much better by the third scrimmage. When we gave him the opportunity to play in a scrimmage just before the end, when we scrimmaged basically the young guys, he really had taken a step forward.

It was kind of necessity that we had to play him, but he certainly was ready to play and did a great job on Saturday night.

Q. Speaking of freshmen running backs, Miami has a guy (Duke Johnson) that is leading the nation in all-purpose yardage. How big a problem, what do you see from him?

COACH O'BRIEN: He's really a talented athlete. He has good vision. He really has good speed. The thing he does, he reads the blockers very well for a freshman, understands the schemes, putting himself in position.

Certainly he's run through some tackles, too. He's a complete guy, somebody I don't think one guy can bring down. We're going to get a lot of guys on the football on Saturday if we're going to stop him.

Q. Bryan Underwood has caught a touchdown in each of your games so far. Can you talk about the progress he's made this year, how he's been standing out.

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, we talked about it in pre-season that he had spurts last year, showed up here and there. We had high hopes for him. He had a knee injury in pre-season camp, came back early, tried to get back in the Tennessee game, wasn't a hundred percent. He's gotten better each and every week.

It's pretty unusual to have four touchdown catches in four games for him. He's had his opportunities. When he's had the opportunity to make a play, he's been able to make it and get the ball in the end zone.

Q. You've had David Amerson picking off a pass in three straight games. How much do you think he learned or responded to the opening game against Tennessee? He seems to have come back to the level he was last year.

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, he certainly was disappointed with his performance at Tennessee. He had to have amnesia, which is really good to have if you're a cornerback. Certainly he wanted to get back on track and prove that that wasn't what he was capable of doing after we talked about some of the things in the Tennessee game.

He's had opportunities. When he's had opportunities, the thing about David is he can make plays, and he's done that for us three weeks in a row now.

Q. What does the running back group look like going into this game? What do you see his role moving forward, Shadrach?

COACH O'BRIEN: I've always said about injuries, one man's misfortune is another man's opportunity. He made the most of his opportunity. Going forward, he's going to be able to play.

Right now, (Tony) Creecy, we didn't play him last week. He didn't make it on the practice field until Thursday last week. He's listed as a starter. I think those two will handle most of the load come Saturday in Miami.

Q. When you watch the game film of Miami's game against Georgia Tech last week, there were some really strange runs in that game. Did you see anything why the Miami offense was so strong early and late and had such trouble in the middle?

COACH O'BRIEN: I think that can happen when you play that type of offense that Georgia Tech has. It has to do with possession time and being on the field and being off the field.

They came out strong, had their opportunities, made plays. But then you knew that Georgia Tech was going to come back, which they did. Certainly we went through the thing last week with playing a wishbone team in the Citadel. The Citadel was outscoring their opponents 35-7 in the first quarter and 45-7 in the third quarter.

Miami did a great job of catching up to it early. Paul Johnson does a great job of finding formations, finding ways to make sure the count works for him. That's what I credit the Georgia Tech comeback there in the middle.

Then Miami caught up to the offense, kind of even there at the end, was able to make the play in overtime, if that makes sense.

Q. You mentioned controlling the ball and everything. You have had one of the best third-down defenses in the league. That's obviously important for getting off the field. What is the core of that, the secret of that?

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, I think both Mike Archer and Jon (Tenuta) do a great job of finding ways to put pressure on the quarterback. That's been our success in the past, it's certainly our success here, is getting in to the quarterback, getting to him, creating havoc, then do a pretty good job of matching routes on the back end.

Q. How much has the offensive line improved since the Tennessee game and how much of the success running the ball had to do with them on Saturday?

COACH O'BRIEN: I think they've gotten better. We lost our left tackle, so we had to regroup again after the Tennessee game. The kid we were playing, Tyson Chandler, hadn't played before. I think he started to get better. I think that helped it. No disrespect to the Citadel, but we were playing a IAA school. Sometimes those help. I'm certainly not being disrespectful to them by saying that.

An interview with:

DAVID CUTCLIFFE DUKE

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I think our team is excited about starting conference play. Non-conference games, obviously they all count, they're all important, but there's nothing like playing in your league against opponents that you play annually.

Certainly this game has been very competitive in our world over the last four years, but haven't won it. A big challenge to our squad. It will be a big challenge. A typical Wake team, a Jim Grobe coached team. They're running the ball well right now, don't make mistakes, play good football in all three phases. So a huge challenge to start our conference play for us.

Q. Coach, you learned under three Hall of Fame football coaches. Talk about learning alongside three great coaches and what all coaching tactics do you take into your program at Duke?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, I'm pretty fortunate, aren't I? I think about what you just asked often. I absolutely learned different things from three different people. You start with great organization, great planning, communication, consistency, attention to detail. Those are the things that were absolutely the same.

It was amazing to watch those men day after day. They were so consistent, persevering

through anything. It really left a strong imprint on me.

From a management style, all three completely different. I think the thing that I learned most there was to be yourself. I saw all three people be successful, end up with Hall of Fame careers because they were sincere in being themselves.

I think that lesson for young coaches is extremely important. You can push people, you can be challenging, which all three were, but you better truly care for the players. I would think maybe one of the more important things, you can't fool young people, you have to care about your people.

Q. Is being your own self coach in your own eyes how you've been able to develop quarterbacks so well?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I think that's a big part of it because those relationships are so real. That's kind of, number one, my management style is more of a building of a relationship with not only the players but the staff. I think that certainly helped me through the years.

Q. Now that you guys are halfway to a bowl game, is that something you stress to the team or try and stay away from?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: They're aware of it. I've talked to some of our captains and seniors about that very thing. You're not going to fool kids. It's on their mind.

But I think this team has got a lot of people that's played a lot of football. So you don't get there unless you win the next one, whatever the next one is.

For our team, it should be an easy task to focus only on what's there in front of you, and I hope we do that well. We're going to need to do that as a team. For us to win, period, each week, it takes us playing well in all three phases. That's what our team has to focus on.

Q. I know you're friends with Jim Grobe, but is he driving you nuts in this series or what?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I am very good friends with Jim Grobe. I think he's great for college football. He's not just an outstanding football coach, he is an outstanding man. His teams do things to win.

I would like to think we can be competitive and win our share, but we've got to prove that.

Q. David, what were the factors that went into the decision to move Brandon Braxton from wide receiver to safety? What did you see in there that led you to make that switch?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, he was so aggressive as an offensive player. Anybody that saw him cover kickoffs, cover punts, he's a natural tackler. He has a nose for the ball. He takes great angles to the football. We needed some athleticism back there, someone that do tackle in the open field. Brandon can do that.

This day in time with all of the bubble screens, spread formations, you've got to develop your secondary with people that can make plays in the open field, and Brandon is one of those guys.

Q. How do you like the way he's playing back there so far and how good can he eventually get, considering he's just a junior?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, I wish we would have done this move earlier, to be honest with you, because I think he can be outstanding. He's big. He's a 6'2" guy with good size and strength, can run. There's no top end for him. Everything that's happening to him basically is happening to him for the first time. It's all still new. He's playing really well.

I tell you what he's doing better than anything else, he's tackling really well, making big plays at critical times for us.

Q. David, could you talk about the impact of Michael Campanaro?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, Michael, he was the same last year. He does everything well. He is really strong. He's really fast. So he's physically talented. He is fiercely competitive. Once he gets the ball, you can tell he thinks he can score, break a tackle, make a move. Great hands, he's a deep threat. He goes across the middle and catches the ball with no fear. He takes those screens and makes them immediately dangerous because he's such a good open-field runner.

He's a guy that makes a lot of things about their football team go.

Q. The last two years you have been right at the bottom of the league in sacks, pass-rush. This year you're third, right near the top. It's almost all coming from your

defensive line. I think only one combined sack from secondary linebacker guys. Can you talk about the improvement there, where it's coming from?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Those guys, as you know, have now played a lot of football. They're not puppies any more. We got slapped around a little bit. Rick Petri has done a tremendous job in every respect with them, being aggressive. I think we have more people, which helps us be a little fresher. We've had a lead.

You also have to put this into the equation. We have a pretty sizable lead in three of our ball games; that forces opponents to throw and put you in those positions.

It's a good trend. Let's just keep it going.

Q. The converse of that is you have the lowest sack rate per pass of anybody else. Can you talk about what your line is doing so well and how much of that is Sean (Renfree) getting rid of the ball?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, that's a tribute to Kurt Roper and John Latina's planning and work with those particular people. That's a product of our system. Those guys, John and Kurt, have been in this a long time, trying to throw the ball on time. Wake Forest does a great job of that. Throw the ball on time, know your protections well, know where your problems are.

Again, experience is a phenomenal teacher. We have a very experienced quarterback and a very experienced offensive front. So we're pleased to this point. Again, we're a work in progress one week at a time.

Q. Sitting where you guys are now at 3-1, seeing how the rest of the schedule sets up, how crucial do you feel this game is if you want to get to the six wins for the bowl?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: We really don't think in those terms because I'm not sitting there writing off anything left on our schedule. Every win is critical at this point for us. It's a conference game. Each conference game kind of has its own life. Unfortunately this Wake game has been very difficult for us. We've lost so many close ballgames.

I think that becomes very important to us, that we feel like we've got to get our competitive edge going in this series. Hopefully we can be on the right side of a close ballgame.

An interview with:

PAUL JOHNSON GEORGIA TECH

COACH JOHNSON: Good morning. Certainly we're coming off of a difficult loss. It was a crazy game last week, and I thought Miami played well and we just didn't do enough to get it done. Looking forward to moving ahead and playing again on Saturday. We've got a Middle Tennessee State game coming in, they've scored some points and have some momentum winning their last two games.

So a chance for us to get back out there and play again, and do some of the things better that we didn't do last Saturday.

Q. I'm curious about your triple option offense. This is the third year you've faced Tennessee. Do you see, when an opponent has a familiarity with that, do you see a better approach from a defense after they've seen that a couple of times before?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think it varies. Sometimes you do, sometimes you don't. Certainly I think it's probably about the same as anything else, in my opinion. But I don't know that is the case but it might be. I guess we'll see.

Q. Middle Tennessee has had a different defensive coordinator each time they've faced you guys. Is that something that matters in the game plan to you?

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, it matters a lot. You don't know what they're going to do when they have a new guy. We'll try to run our system. Whatever they lineup in, we'll try to figure out an answer for it, if we can.

Q. Can you talk about where you feel your special teams are overall?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think in some areas they're improved, and in other areas we took a step back. We had a terrible blunder last week that created a safety. We did have a couple of nice punt returns and gave up a long kickoff return. So it's been a mixed bag. Our punter is a true freshman, Ryan Rodwell. He went in last week and did a nice job. We've got confidence that he'll be okay. He's the first scholarship punter we've

recruited here, so I think he'll be fine.

Q. Is it too early to remind your team that the Coastal Division race is not over?

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, but believe it or not, Heather, we don't talk about that a lot, especially in September. We knew that the month was going to be important. We dug ourselves a hole. Right now our goal is to try to beat Middle Tennessee State. We'll worry about all that stuff when it comes time if there is a reason to worry about it in November.

Q. I was just wondering, going back to the Sun Bowl last year, that's three of your last five games have been overtime losses. Is there anything as a coach that you go back, can you rethink any decisions that you make in overtime, the way you approach overtime, or is it just three games is just happenstance?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, you rethink everything, not just the overtime. You rethink every decision. You go back and look at it. All three games have had the same MO. All three games we were ahead in the fourth quarter. The other team scores on the last possession to put the game into overtime. Well, actually, Utah we had 40 seconds or 50 seconds left and missed the field goal. But haven't had any momentum, lost the coin toss in all three.

Quite frankly, Virginia Tech, we throw an interception, and this one, we had nine guys running one play, and one guy running the other way, so we were our own worst enemy. So it's been disappointing, I think, with all of them.

Q. Middle Tennessee's Anthony Amos is leading the Sunbelt in receiving. Is he somebody that's jumped out at you on film at all?

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, the quarterback's experienced. They throw the ball around a lot, and they have a nice scheme. So they do a good job with what they do.

They're very similar to what they've been in the past, and they present a lot of problems for you.

Q. Paul, you've had success against Middle Tennessee, but they have beaten ACC teams in the past. What makes them difficult to play against?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I mean, I think they're similar to a lot of people. They have some

good players and they have a good scheme. I don't think they'll come in here intimidated. They've played plenty of BCS teams and schools. They have a lot of kids from Georgia. Historically when we play teams outside our league with a lot of kids from Georgia, they really get up when they play here.

Q. Are there certain characteristics of Rick's (Stockill) coached teams?

COACH JOHNSON: No, I think they spread it out offensively and throw the ball around, try to get the ball in space to their playmakers, and thus the lines of scrimmage are always very important. Sometimes it can be less so in those games.

An interview with:

LARRY FEDORA NORTH CAROLINA

COACH FEDORA: We're looking forward to getting back out on the field in front of our home crowd. It's nice to have this two weeks in a row, so our players are focused on going out and playing as well as we possibly can. Again, the focus this week will be on ourselves and how we can get better as a football team. So looking forward to getting back out there.

Q. Coach, through the first three games, your quarterback nearly has 1200 passing yards and 11 touchdowns, that's pretty impressive. How do you see the pace of the offense at this point going into week five? Where do you think it's going to go from here?

COACH FEDORA: As far as the tempo of the offense or just overall?

Q. Yeah, overall, the tempo of the offense.

COACH FEDORA: Tempo-wise I'd say we're around 60% of where we'd like to be. Whether that's on track or not, I don't know. I don't know if there is a measuring stick that if you know from week to week. But we're constantly harping on it, emphasizing, trying to get better with our

tempo. Each rep he feels a little more comfortable. It's important that he gets as many reps as possible.

We continue to improve as an entire team, I think Bryn's probably starting to understand that he doesn't have to make everything happen. He just has to distribute the ball.

Q. What are you looking to see from your team particularly this weekend before you get into the heart of the ACC schedule?

COACH FEDORA: I'd like to see great energy level throughout the entire game for 60 minutes. I'd like to see us play a complete game. Improvement made from last week in each of the three phases of the game. I think we're slowly getting better each week, and overcoming some of the problems that we've had I'd like to see improvement. If we can keep building and put one brick on top of another, we'll eventually have that wall built.

Q. Where do you think you've made the most progress in the first few weeks?

COACH FEDORA: Probably I would say special teams-wise. I would say special teams has gotten better each week. We've made some things happen. Probably in the last couple of games, we've had probably three, well, in the last three games, we've had four game-changing plays. If we can do that week-in and week-out, we give ourselves a chance to win.

Q. We're doing a getting-to-know-you-and-see-you type of deal. You being your first year coming into a situation where there is some stuff going on. Talk about the focus of your football team coming into this year, and how you've gone through the season and that type of stuff?

COACH FEDORA: Well, I'd say for us this year as a staff we're trying to figure out what the identity of this football team is. It's an ever-evolving process. We're still in the process of trying to figure out who we are. What is the identity of our offense? What is the identity of our defense? And what is the identity of our team? So our focus each week has been on us and how we prepare. What it takes to prepare to be successful. What each guy needs to do to be the best football player he can be on Saturdays.

Q. For you personally, how long did it take you to get assimilated to the school and

the players and that kind of stuff to sort of leave your thumbprint?

COACH FEDORA: Again, that evolves constantly. I don't know. I assure you, I don't know everything about all of our players. I don't know everything about this university. I don't know everything about this program. But it's something that only time -- that time can help that. It takes time to get to know them. Takes time for them to get to know you. Because you can practice all you want.

Your 15 days of spring ball, you don't get to see them in the summer. You get 29 practices in fall camp. But until you get out there in the games and when things are really happening and there is some pressure going on, you really don't know a whole lot about your team.

Q. The Vandals come in at 0-4 and lost to Wyoming in overtime last week. In your experience, are teams like this 0-4, 0-3 teams, are they typically dangerous teams to have to deal with?

COACH FEDORA: No doubt about it, especially when you have an 0-4 team that is probably the best in the country in my opinion. There is talent out there. That quarterback can throw the football, big guy. They've got skill guys that can make plays. They're sound in their special teams and defensively. They have unfortunate things happen to them. Yeah, I think you're always worried about a team like that.

Q. What has Tommy Heffernan done to work himself into the starting lineup? Have you considered adopting his hairstyle?

COACH FEDORA: I have. I've thought about growing my hair out like Tommy. But I don't know if that will work for me. Maybe I need to wear a wig. Maybe on the sideline, who knows. But what Tommy has done, first of all, he plays with great effort and intensity all the time, and that's whether he's on special teams or on defense. Then he's gone out there and known what to do and made plays. When we put him in a position, and he's gotten the opportunity to get out there and play, he's performed. He's made plays. He's proven that that unit, the defense or the special teams that he's on is better when he's on the field than when somebody else is out there. So therefore he plays.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the turnaround at Louisville. At halftime, it looked like you guys were just totally outclassed and humiliated. How important was that in terms of momentum of the team, the morale of the team, that kind of thing?

COACH FEDORA: I think that is very important. Because, up until that point, I had no idea whether the team -- you want to say your team's never going to quit and always fight. They're going to give you all the things you talk about. But until you get put in that situation, you never know. And we were in that situation. We put ourselves in that situation, but we did climb out of it. That was a great thing to know about this team. I think the team gained some confidence in themselves knowing, hey, we don't have to wait until something happens like that before we start playing with that energy level.

So if we start out that way, hopefully we won't be in that hole. I think hopefully we've learned. We won't put ourselves in that situation again. But if we, do I expect the same fight, and will and scratch, and all that it takes to get out of it.

Q. What was the locker room like in that game? Was it technical, did the players stand up? Did the coaches challenge them? What was the mood there?

COACH FEDORA: I think we do like we do every day. The coaches come in and talk about what needed to be done, what was wrong, and went out and made the adjustments with the players. Then it was basically the only person doing any talking after that was me. Weren't a lot of nice things said, but the challenge was set before them and we went out and the guys got after it.

I don't attribute it to any halftime speech or motivational speech. It was more of a challenge. A challenge to who each guy was as an individual, and each guy responded very well.

An interview with:

**MIKE LONDON
VIRGINIA**

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COACH LONDON: Good afternoon, everybody. Yes, we have an opportunity to come off the road, two tough losses coming back at home, in front of our home crowd playing a very good Louisiana Tech team. Obviously you look nationally where they are offensively, and they're in the top categories of putting the ball in the air, on the ground, scoring points. The first two games scoring 52 points.

So they do a great job of putting points on the board. They're fast, athletic, remind us of a fast, athletic TCU team. But we're ready for the challenge. We're ready to play our best game and get us an opportunity for all three phases of our team to click. The challenge is presented, and the players have had a good first few days of preparation and looking forward to playing on Saturday.

Q. What can you do in practice to eliminate the turnovers? I'm talking to Mike today. He said that this is a team that's big on stripping the ball?

COACH LONDON: Well, you know there are a series of drills you do in terms of ball security, but they do a great job. You have to keep emphasizing. You have to emphasize when it's out there, the guy catches the ball, they do a great job in running and converging the second, third guy in is actually tugging at the ball. You try to mimic that in practice with your show or your scout teams. You want those types of guys getting around the ball like that.

Then you also in your own particular drills, you do ball security drills. Whether it's the quarterback or in the pocket, having to protect the ball, having two hands on it. The runners, you see pictures of high and tight guys, having six points of pressure in their forearm and up in their biceps. You keep talking about those things.

Then when you show the practice tape, you show if we're negligent, and whether the quarterback holding the ball or the runner holding the ball. You point it out and say, listen, this team I believe led the country last year in turnovers. Right now they lead the country in forced fumbles. So it's very heavy emphasis on ball awareness at all times because they do an outstanding job of hunting the football.

Q. Coach, I know Mike (Rocco) has started 17 straight games. But Phillip Sims has

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had some plays the last few weeks. I wonder how that rotation stands, and is he pressing Rocco for a start?

COACH LONDON: We're always evaluating what our players are doing, particularly Michael and anyone else that goes into the game. Eyes are always on the guys that handle the ball 100% of the time. It's no different. Michael will have the opportunity to play and start this game out and hopefully there is an opportunity to get them in the game.

Everyone understands how we distribute the ball and move this team how we move, how we set ourselves up for scores is always important. That's why you practice. I think both players right now are having a good week of practice, understanding that they have to play well.

Mike understands he has to play well. Phillip understands if he goes into the game, he has to play well. At that this time last week, we were in the same situation, 2-2. The last five of our eight games are at home in our place. So I expect the execution of the offense to improve. It has to be done. It has to start with the guys taking the snaps.

Q. Does Sims have any strengths or stylistically are they the same?

COACH LONDON: They're two different types of players in the standpoint that Phillip is understanding a system he's coming from to where we are now. Mike's had three years of learning. Phillip's had months of learning. There are some things that one can do better than the other, but you go back, and the other guy can do some things because of balance of the offense and things like that that the other guy doesn't know he's improving on.

So both of them played in the pro-style offense, and as we continue the learning curve of one, the other one understands that he's got to play better and execute and everyone's embraced the challenge. On game day Saturday we'll see who rises to the challenge.

Q. Can you go into further detail about what a big test this is going to be for your defense? Is what kinds of things you've focused on specifically this week to prepare for them?

COACH LONDON: I tell you, Heather they put up a lot of points on the board. When you look at their possessions sometimes you look at their possessions and you see three or four, and you

think, man, they had to punt the ball after having three downs. But their possessions are three, four plays and it's a touchdown, or three, four plays and it's a field goal or they put points on the board.

They run a style of offense, and west coast offense and who they play that dictates the ball being stretched vertically and horizontally. They present a challenge like that with getting very fast, skilled, wide receivers in space. Their running backs, everyone catches the ball because of the type of screens that they run. So it's a different type of challenge, you know, when a team is so balanced as they are.

You look at the top 25 in passing, but I believe also in running. They're up there in the country with points. So we have to play a style. And the other thing that they do well is they have the hurry--up offense. They don't let you sometimes sub or get a nickel group in there. They keep you off balance that way.

So we've played in games like that before with other teams that don't let you on the field that play with, when I say ten personnel, four wide receivers or go empty and the running backs back there look like wide receivers. So we're going to have to play good coverage. The quarterback does a good job of throwing to spots, not necessarily where the guy is. They do a great job based on coverages throwing to particular spots.

This week we've been dealing with coverages from all types. From zone, to pressures, to three-man rushes to all different kind of things. You try to change the look that the quarterback sees. But it is a challenge of that style of offense that presents itself. They spread the ball around, and then they have very, very good skilled people.

Q. Have they gotten your players' attention pretty quickly? The defensive guys watching film this week?

COACH LONDON: Absolutely. You look at the tape, and any time you're putting 50, 60 points up on people, and those plays or three or four series plays going into long touchdown passes or a tunnel screen that they get them out of space, and the guy misses a tackle, then it causes, you know, those long runs. So it's gotten our attention.

Being better open field tacklers, being more aware of when the ball is in the air, converging, and the fact that they're 3-0. I don't know if they're ranked. They probably should be.

But it's a very, very good football team. The fact that we're playing another one, a back-to-back good football team, that's the way it is. That's the way the schedule is set up. But we feel good about being at home and being competitive against this team.

Q. Coach, I see Shepherd leading the league in kickoff returns as a sophomore. Is that a function of -- I know it's a team kind of thing, but what skills does he bring to that that makes him so effective in that role?

COACH LONDON: Well, I think you have to applaud his individual efforts. But I also think that collectively the other ten guys that are out there blocking for him have a lot to do with it as well. Khalek has an innate ability to see and diagnose a hold or perceive a hold, and get through it and run. But we start talking about how our team's going to start returning kickoffs and things.

Last week, their kicker did a great job of hanging it high up in the air, and the ball came down on the 1 or 2-yard line, but they had such a great coverage unit that I think our average position was on the 17-yard line. However, there's been games where kickers with strong legs kick it not as much height, and get it to the 1- or 2-yard line, and we bring it out.

I think when Khalek has a chance to bring it out, and he has a chance to go a long way. He's an asset and a weapon that we need to use particularly with starting field position particularly on the kickoff.

So any opportunity we have to bring it out, we will. But we also have to be cognizant of the fact that what you're starting to see now in college football are some kickers trying to directional kick it high up in the air, to the corner, pin it to the sidelines, all those type of things. But thus far, Khalek overall his body of work has been pretty good.

An interview with:

**FRANK BEAMER
VIRGINIA TECH**

COACH BEAMER: I tell you that Cincinnati crowd is a really good football team. Offensively,



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defensively, very athletic and very, very good. We certainly have our work cut out for us. They pounded Pittsburgh, and Pittsburgh pounded us, so we're in that situation.

Q. I wanted to ask, we saw Tony (Gregory) go to the training room to get that sleeve because of the wet grass. What do you tell a guy like that that's been through so many knee injuries about kind of taking care of himself?

COACH BEAMER: Well, he just runs extremely hard and extremely fast. I don't think you can play the game cautious. You've got to play the game full tilt, so that's the kind of guy that he is.

Q. What's it like for him? He's had the three ACLs, two while he's been there with you. What's it been like watching him fight back each time?

COACH BEAMER: Well, he's just such a fighter and such a positive guy that you're pulling for him. There is no question about that.

Q. Talk about the Cincinnati Bearcats. They play in the Big East, and took on the Panthers a couple weeks ago. You had a hard time against the Panthers. What do you see in the Bobcats video this week that reminds you that the Panthers are the East?

COACH BEAMER: I see an excellent football team. Their quarterback is completing 61.8% of his passes. He's athletic. Had the long run, a couple of them against Pittsburgh. You've got to defend him. I think they're leading the Big East in rushing yards. Got a couple of guys there in Abernathy that presents problems.

Then you look at their defense in 8.5 points a game, third nationally. They are active, led the country in sacks or tackle for losses, something like that. You see on the video how they do that, and they get after you. They're very impressive.

Q. Talk about being the visitors, but technically you're actually the visiting home team, basically is that a big facet for you knowing it is technically a home game in Cincinnati but more or less it's going to be a Hokie crowd?

COACH BEAMER: I don't know who is

home and away. I don't know if that makes any difference. I think how you play on the field will determine the ballgame.

Q. The online depth chart looked like it was updated to have Ronnie Van Dyke as the top whip linebacker. What have you seen out of him progressing over the first couple of weeks? Do you think he'll start on Saturday?

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, he brings a little more quickness to the position. He's been coming along. I think that's the biggest thing. G.W. (Jeron Gouveia-Winslow) is a very smart guy. He knows the game, knows where he needs to be. But I think Ronnie brings a little more quickness to that position.

Q. Do you think Van Dyke will start Saturday?

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, I think Van Dyke will be the first whip on the field, yeah.

Q. Coach you got to play a few guys last week. I just wondered, two young tailbacks, (J.C.) Coleman and (Martin) Scales got to play. What do they bring to the position? Are they guys that figure in your plans big time coming up?

COACH BEAMER: Well, you've got Coleman and (Michael) Holmes. And Holmes is a red-shirt freshman and Coleman is a true freshman. So they continue to grow and learn and mature. And Scales is a guy that's been around here for a while, downhill runner, got some real toughness. And (Tony) Gregory is the speed guy. So you have four guys there that all of them do something a little bit different.

Q. Do you expect to continue to play a big rotation at that position then?

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, we're starting it this week. We'll determine it here later on.

Q. You were talking last week about Brooks Abbott being your kickoff guy and taking his redshirt off. But how much is he really pushing Cody Journell if at all?

COACH BEAMER: I think he's our second field goal guy. He gets the ball up with good height. He's been fairly accurate. But Cody is our field goal guy.

Q. Was that a tough decision to take that redshirt off Brooks and have him be your kickoff guy?

COACH BEAMER: The phase of the game is important, and you want your best people or the guys that you feel are the best out there. So that was our thought process on that deal.

An interview with:

JIM GROBE WAKE FOREST

COACH GROBE: Tough one this past week. We had Army come to town and it was a battle for us. We were fortunate to win. I thought Army's team played great, especially offensively. But we had a pretty good offensive day and felt like we were fortunate to come out with a win.

I know this weekend we've got another great challenge with Duke coming to town. They're playing great on both sides of the ball and the kicking game. So we have our work cut out for us this Saturday.

Q. How did you guys discover Michael Campanaro? At what point after he arrived on campus you guys had hit a home run with him?

COACH GROBE: We thought he was a really good player. The thing that I think everybody was looking at was whether he was big enough. He's not a really tall kid. He's put together really well. Actually, we've used him some as a running back. I think he'd be a really good running back for us, but at the slot position we can get him the football a little bit more.

So I think he jumped out at us on film. I don't think there was any doubt that the guy was a really, really good player. I think the thing that kept some people off of him was his height.

Q. A year ago when you were getting ready to play Duke, you had to prepare for Brandon Braxton as a wide receiver. This year he's playing safety. What do you see from him in that role?

COACH GROBE: Well, I think just a really, really good athlete and an aggressive, tough

player. I think that's the thing that David's (Cutcliffe) done a good job of. He's moved his personnel around that have the best players on the field. I think that's obvious in that move from offense to defense. I think their defense is playing really good football, and we like the back end. The secondary is playing really good. So I think they hit a home run by moving him over to defense.

Q. Is it tough in that his father was a Wake guy? Did you all recruit him? I'm just curious.

COACH GROBE: Well, the thing that happens to us so many times, most of the kids that Duke and some of the other good academic schools recruit, most of those kids are the kids we are after. What happens more times than not is you have kids that commit early to certain schools. Once you start filling up, you only allot so many slots for players with their wideouts, DBs, linebackers, whatever. That's typically what happens. A lot of times you wait too long to make the decision, or you make the decision, and the kids wait too long.

So it kind of plays out that you don't always get your top guys. Sometimes you do. But a lot of times it's a factor of when the school makes the decision, and when the kid makes his decision.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the difficulty. Last week you played a team that's triple option and is going to run the ball 90% of the time. This week you go up against an offense that wants to throw the ball most of the time. How difficult a transition is that to make on defense?

COACH GROBE: I think it's a big transition. Honestly, when you play a wishbone team and your preparation is basically all run game. You don't do any -- really, very few times do you throw passes in practice or even look at it. We take a little period and work on some of their passing game stuff, but you know the game's going to hinge on being able to defend the run.

So last week for Army, we spent an entire week getting ready for the run. This week we're facing one of the top passing teams in the country. So it's a problem, no question.

Q. Does it help that -- I know you don't run the same offense, but you do take a lot of shotgun and spread the field, and you guys run a similar style of offense. Does that help you get preparation in this for Duke?

COACH GROBE: I think so. We've got to have some pretty quick recall this week, because we haven't been doing it all last week. But going against our offense in the spring and in August gives you a little bit of recall. I think it's easier to bounce back. I think it's a little tougher in your preparation for the wishbone. But coming back and getting ready for Duke, having some reps against our offense in the spring and summer helps us get back on track quicker.

An interview with:

AL GOLDEN MIAMI

COACH GOLDEN: We're excited. What a great opportunity, excellent football team coming in. Obviously, really fond of their staff and their head coach Tom O'Brien, one of the best in the business. Clearly the trademarks of a Tom O'Brien coached football team. If they don't beat themselves, they're number one in the ACC in time of possession. They protect the ball really well in taking it away. I think they have nine takeaways over the last three games and given up only three, averaging about 29 points a game, but really balanced on offense. 150 rushing, 250 passing.

The three inside guys, the center and two guards, (R.J.) Mattes, (Camden) Wentz and (Zach) Allen are over 90 starts between them. I know Coach O'Brien is an old offensive line coach, and that is always his baby, and I know they're big, averaging about 318 pounds and a lot of seniors there.

Got a great trigger man in (Mike) Glennon who has been phenomenal in the last three games. Five T.D.s, zero interceptions. Their core group of running backs, we'll see a number of them. (Sharach) Thornton played an excellent game last week with 145 yards and just a number of receivers that we'll see. (Bryan) Underwood, a T.D. in four straight games. (Tobais)Palmer, (Quntin) Payton, so it's a good group on offense.

On defense, what can you say about them? They're getting off the field 25%. Holding their opponents to 25%. They led the country in interceptions last year, and they have six already

experienced safeties. Really, experience where you want it at is the safeties. 37 starts. They're big, strong and physical up front. They have the biggest defensive ends we've seen all year at 281 and 290. And (Brian) Slay's got 17 starts, and I like their linebacker. Strong, physical, downhill guys. What can you say about the corners? They're long and (David) Amerson is as good as advertised.

The kicking game, just what you'd expect from Coach (Jerry) Petercuskie. Fundamentally sound. Excellent in coverage. Just did a tremendous job in all the little things. Their kickoff coverage unit is phenomenal. I think their placekicker has hit something like 57 PATs, and they have a vet as a punter as well.

So this is an excellent team coming in. Obviously going to be a great challenge for our program. So with that, I'll open it up to any questions.

Q. Because you guys are in such a good position for the ACC standings and you have such a young team, have you had to remind them it's still early in the race and that consistency is key?

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, I think, Heather, you cover this conference better than anybody. I think you know what I'm trying to teach them is the process. Because the only way you can win it is to have a process and just go about your business every day and pay attention to detail. That is the only way you defeat complacency is attention to detail. Just all the little tasks that you do every day, just keep checking boxes.

It's way too early to even think about rankings or ratings. They just know this is an excellent team coming in in all three phases: Well-coached, mature, rugged, strong. It's going to be a great challenge for us.

Q. The other question I wanted to ask you with was about the true freshman running back, (Shadrach) Thornton, I think you said was his name. What did you see from him on film? I think he surprised a lot of people?

COACH GOLDEN: Well, it was obviously a coming-out party. I think he not only got 145 yards on 21 carries, he showed explosion and burst, and did a great job of passing the line of scrimmage and hitting the powers and zones really good. Obviously, he's running behind an excellent offensive line, too. So I don't know how much they're going to use those guys in terms of (Tony)

Creecy, (James) Washington, Thornton. I know Washington has already started 17 games. But whatever they do, obviously we're going to have to be prepared for all three of them.

Q. Have you had to take any steps or have you taken any steps in making your home stadium a more difficult place for opponents, a more intimidating venue?

COACH GOLDEN: Have we? I think we've got to get back to being the type of team that Floridians and the Miami faithful are accustomed to being and get back to that standard. Once we do that, the rest will take care of itself.

We have a great stadium. They've played the World Series there. They've played Super Bowls there. They've played National Championships there. The stadium is not the problem. We've got to take care of our business. We can't make any excuses. Clearly we had a big win last week, but that's over. Now we have to take on another team and we have to learn how to do that week-in and week-out. That is the challenge for our team, to be honest with you, not the stadium. The fans will come out.

We put a great product out there. We have played meaningful games. The way you make them meaningful is you win, right? We've got to handle that. I've got to do that, and our staff and players have to do that.

Q. But as a coach, do you feel that's part of your job to make that a more intimidating place, and you do that by wining?

COACH GOLDEN: I don't think there is any question. Here, again, that's why I wanted to come here. The standard is high. You've got a tremendous -- maybe the best talent pool to choose from in the country. You've got a top 40 institution, a small private school. The best, really dichotomy that you could possibly have in terms of a college town in Coral Gables but access to a world class city.

So we've got to get back to producing the type of team that's our fans are accustomed to. And the rest will take care of itself. It's a great place to play. It's not the place's fault. We have to get back to taking care of business.

Q. Has it been intimidating at all since you've been there?

COACH GOLDEN: Has it been

intimidating?

Q. Yes.

COACH GOLDEN: I don't think there is any question the Ohio State game last year was probably as loud and intimidating as anyplace I've ever been. It was as passionate and as loud as anyplace I've ever been in my whole career 18 years. I think I said that right after the game. Our fan base turned out and showed up that night for sure.

Q. I'm just wondering. I apologize I didn't get to see the game Saturday. The question I have is when you have a game like that where you blow an early lead, and being totally dominated in the middle of the game, what brought you back? What turned it around?

COACH GOLDEN: Stephen Morris and Brandon Linder, and some of the offensive linemen stepped up, Shayon Green, and you have to have the element and three things. You have to have conditioning to withstand them and come back. You've got to have the mental toughness and the unity. And, I think we drew on all three reservoirs in that game.

But I think the biggest difference, to answer your question, the biggest difference was that we learned at Kansas State that if we get to that situation and everybody looks at the clock and trying to do something more than their job, that it just unravels.

I think what we had here was a bunch of guys that said I'm going to do my job six seconds at a time on every play for the rest of the game, and then live with the results. Feel good about living and trusting the results. I think hopefully we walked out of that stadium understanding that.

Q. Statistically it looked like a breakthrough game for (Stephen) Morris. Did it look like that to you from the sideline?

COACH GOLDEN: He had a good look. He was confident. I think we protected him well, and certainly some of the throws that he made in the first half could have even had a better game. He would be the first to say he would correct that. Again, I think the biggest thing is staying with the process. Improving every day here. Not having one game high and one game low. Just stay even keeled and keep moving.

Q. Playing so many freshmen, is it tough to get them to play consistently?

COACH GOLDEN: Yes.

Q. Okay.

COACH GOLDEN: Yes. Day-to-day.

Q. One of them is Duke Johnson. I asked you a couple of weeks ago about getting him more touches. I see he's leading the nation in all-purpose yardage. So I guess you're figuring out different ways to get him the ball and get him in play?

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, we're trying to be careful with him because anybody can just say just keep giving him the ball. But the reality is I'm trying to keep his reps down because we are asking him to do a lot.

I think our staff to their credit has done a great job of keeping his overall reps down. Certainly he's playing a lot of football and asking him to do a lot. But I think in the overall scheme of things we want to keep him fresh the whole season and keep making progress. So our staff has done a good job of keeping his reps down.

Q. It helps having another quality running back like Mike James?

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, those guys have done a good job. Certainly the way Mike played the other day, it's nice to see those two guys complement each other.

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