

**October 17, 2012**



An interview with:

**FRANK SPAZIANI  
BOSTON COLLEGE**

COACH SPAZIANI: Thank you.

Well, second half of our season. We're obviously going down to Georgia Tech to face a very difficult game against Georgia Tech. We're looking forward to it.

With that, any questions.

**Q. Coach, this Saturday you face a team in Georgia Tech that runs an offense not the same as Army, but somewhat similar. Any benefits to your defense in already having faced an option-based running team?**

COACH SPAZIANI: There's a couple layers, the yin and the yang to that. Playing against a similar offense has to be beneficial in experience. On the other side of the coin, I think Georgia Tech now gets a little better understanding how we might be playing certain things. We have to be aware of that. It's a two-headed coin over there.

What do they do differently? Different athletes, that's the first thing. You have to remember, Paul (Johnson) is the Naismith of that offense, if you will. He invented it. He knows it better than most people know their defense. That's what they do different.

**Q. The flipside of that question. With them tweaking their defense, what has it been like to prepare this week for being the first opponent that they have without Al Groh on the sideline?**

COACH SPAZIANI: It's a little cloudy, as you would imagine. It's a little bit of professional guesswork. I wouldn't imagine them changing too much. There's going to be some subtle differences we're going to have to be prepared to adjust to.

**Q. Coach, let me ask you a couple of quick questions. Chase Rettig has had a solid season for you so far. Talk about his development, his adjustment to the new offensive system, how things have progressed during the season so far.**

COACH SPAZIANI: Well, if you go back in the beginning the year, there were a lot of questions certainly about our offense and Chase's progress, how many offensive coordinators he had. What we tried to say back then is Chase is a very good football player. We kind of handicapped him a little bit in the beginning.

Things have stabilized a little bit offensively. Chase is a highly motivated young man with a lot of skill. Doug has done a great job over there on offense working with him.

He's what we thought he would be when we got some things ironed out and gave him some tools to work with. He's made tremendous progress, as has our offense.

We've had some issues early in the year with dropping the ball and things like that. But the offense has not been the problem. They've made tremendous progress really.

**Q. You've played several young players this year for you that really haven't played before. Talk about those who have played, who stood out for you in the first half of the season.**

COACH SPAZIANI: Well, playing young players, it's good that you have talented young players, and it's bad that these talented young players don't have the experience.

We've had to play (Kieren) Borcich. Malachi Moore had to lose his redshirt last week. Of our linebackers, Tim Joy has been a solid backup for us. We've had offensive receivers help out. There have been a number of guys that have contributed and have had to step up and play because of various reasons.

An interview with:

**DABO SWINNEY  
CLEMSON**

COACH SWINNEY: First of all, it's good to get back in action this week coming off I think a very productive open date, especially being able to get our players healed up and fresh. The guys that were hurt, couple guys missed our last game, getting those guys back is very good.

I like where we are right now. I like how they've practiced, come back to work this week.

Huge challenge in Virginia Tech coming off a good win versus Duke. As you mentioned, a team we've now played for the third time here in the last year. But a lot of respect for Virginia Tech. They've pretty much been the measuring stick of our league. Look like they're starting to really play with a lot of confidence. We'll have a big challenge here on Saturday. We'll have to play very well.

Offensively they want to run the ball, but it all starts with their quarterback. He's as good as there is out there. Defensively they're really doing a lot of things from a pressure standpoint that we're going to have to be ready for. They're always solid on special teams.

It's going to take a complete game for us to have a chance to win. But look forward to playing and getting out in front of our home folks this Saturday.

**Q. Coach, I wanted to ask, you mentioned the running game. Really hadn't gotten into gear until the Duke game. What did they do well to be able to move the ball on the ground against Duke? How important is their running game in getting yards from their quarterback?**

COACH SWINNEY: They're a balanced team. They want to be a balanced team. If you just look at what they've done, they've thrown it 200 something times, rushed it 200 something times. But being able to involve that quarterback is huge. This is a 6'6", 250-pound guy who when he gets downhill on you, even if you got a guy there, it's hard to get him down.

He made a pass the other day, they had him sacked, and the guy was hanging from his knees but couldn't get him down on the ground. He's able to get the ball off. Just his sheer physical presence in the running game. Doesn't necessarily have to be a called run. He has the

ability to extend plays. We're very familiar with that. He's a dynamic guy and can hurt you in a lot of ways.

They've done a good job. They're doing a lot of things from a motion standpoint that's creating a little bit of hesitation with how you flow your backers in some of those things. He's done a good job of reading things.

They want to run the zone, the power, get downhill on you in a heartbeat. But they got it going against Duke. Looked like they started to click, get their confidence, probably played some of their best football of the year in that game on both sides as that game continued to move forward.

Big challenge for us in being able to stop them. Then they rotate those backs. I think all those backs are really good players. All of them have done some good things. Those two freshmen look like they have a chance to be good. The Scales kid is a big, strong, physical runner. Mixing it up, creating some hesitation with the shifts and movements they've done, the speed motion, the timing of the snap, when that motion is coming. All those things I think helped them get the running game going.

**Q. Without giving anything away, when you look at the way they go personnel-wise, do they tip what they do based on the game or can they do everything with each of those backs?**

COACH SWINNEY: Not really. They're pretty much going to run their system regardless who is in there. I'm sure they have things they'd rather do with certain guys. But they pretty much call it the same.

**Q. Alabama-Tennessee week. Former alma mater. I wanted your thoughts on how special that rivalry was. You went 4-0 against Tennessee.**

COACH SWINNEY: Bringing back good memories there, I like it. Third Saturday in October. It's always a special time. That's one of those great games to be a part of, those traditional games.

We had a nice little run there while I was there, had some really hard-fought games. The one that probably sticks out the most to me is 1990. That was my sophomore year. We'd go up there. We weren't a very good team. We were 0-3 that year, might have been 3-3 when we went into Knoxville. They were either No. 2 or 3 in the

country. Really had a good football team.

We end up beating them 9-6. They're lined up to kick the game-winning field goal. Stacy Harrison comes off the edge and blocks the kick. It ricochets off his helmet 20 something yards down the other way. Next thing you know we line up, Phillip Dole knocks in the game winner.

A huge win for us. Propelled us to go on and have a huge year that year. Another one that stands out at Legion Field. They really had us beat. We had beaten them several years in a row. We put David Palmer in at quarterback. The game, they pretty much had control of the game. He took us all the way down the field and ended up in a tie.

But a lot of great games with those guys. I'm sure this weekend will be another one.

**Q. Question for you about your offense. What convinced you to go to the spread last year? I'm sure you've answered this hundreds of time. Curious what you think of this season-long trend in college football of lots of teams scoring lots of points. Do you think it's good for the game?**

COACH SWINNEY: Well, for me personally, I pretty much knew what I wanted to do for a while, I just didn't really have quite the personnel in place to be able to do it.

When I made the decision to go to this particular style of play, I didn't want to be a four-wide, throw it every down. When people throw the spread, the spread has gotten lumped into everything. I want to run the football. That's first and foremost with me. That's just what I believe in. I think you got to be able to run the ball. There's different ways to run it.

I wanted to be able to be more of a spread power team, have the ability to run the ball effectively, a lot of play-action built in, play fast, put a lot of skill on the field, create matchups in space. That's really what has happened.

That's one of the issues with the tackling. It's become much more of a space game. Not everybody is playing in a phone booth anymore like we used to. There's a lot more one-on-one matchups. That's been an issue with some of the tackling. You get a great skill player. He's been able to win most of those types of matchups.

For me, I knew I had a special quarterback in Tajh Boyd that was here. I knew that I had a great wideout in (DeAndre) Hopkins who just played as a freshman. I knew I had a great back and a couple great tight ends, Dwayne Allen,

Brandon Ford, those guys. But we had some great wideouts committed, Sammy Watkins, Martavis Bryant, Adam Humphries, Charone Peake, some guys that were coming in here.

I wanted to be a little different in our conference. That's why I made the decision that I did. We hired Chad. We've done very well. We've rushed of the ball effectively. We're throwing the ball. I think defenses will catch back up. I don't have any doubt about that. It goes back and forth in cycles really. But I love what we're doing.

As far as is it good for college football. I'm sure when the forward pass came out, there were a lot of people back then going, Man, is this really what you want college football to be? I'm sure you had some similar reactions. I remember when, man, we broke the I, we split the tight end out, that was such a big deal.

What I think is great about college football is you have so much variety. It's not the same every week. There's 120 something Division I teams. The NFL has 32 teams. They recycle the coaches and players. It's basically the same thing and that's fine. It's a different type of game. But in college football, you see a little bit of everything.

People have to be creative because sometimes you're at a huge disadvantage from a talent standpoint. It's fun to see the creativity that you have in college football, in my opinion. I think it's great.

But again, change the channel. You'll see a defensive game on this channel. You turn the channel, you're seeing a high-scoring game.

I think it goes in cycles. I would say right now there's probably some offenses out there that are a little bit ahead of the game maybe on some of the defensive things. That will all change. It will all go back the other way and there will be more adjustments.

I also think that things come back around. Some of the things that you're not seeing as much of now, 10 years from now you'll probably see it a whole lot more. It just kind of goes back and forth and I think it makes it fun.

**Q. Dabo, my question would be, why do you think there is this surge in offense? High schools are running these schemes. Just fast guys that might have been defenders now playing offense at the college level?**

COACH SWINNEY: I think it's a little bit of all of that. I think the big part of it is the skill sets

are so much more refined nowadays because of what's going on at the high school level.

These high school coaches, it's not like when I was playing. Everybody played football. We didn't have Internet. We didn't have 50 million distractions. You didn't have all that stuff. Now these high school coaches, they got to compete with lacrosse, golf, whatever, fall baseball. It's limitless the things these high school coaches have to compete with to get players.

I think what's happened is you've seen a transition and a change. Guys have tried to make it a little bit more fun. They've had to adapt to keep people involved so they don't just not play and play basketball, for example. Basketball, you can play year-round. Baseball you can play year-round. The seven-on-seven, all that kind of stuff, being more creative, I think they've been able to develop a lot of skill. I think that's just kind of transferred over into the high school level.

You look at what's going on with these quarterbacks. Some of these guys that maybe used to play other positions are playing quarterback now because they want a guy that not just can throw it but who can run it and be very dynamic.

I think that's all part of it. It's kind of trickled up, if you will. I think if you really look closely, I think there's been a transfer to the NFL. Usually everything trickles down, but I think in this case it's trickled up.

I think you'll continue to see that, I really do, because people are going to do what they got to do to win. That's really all it's about, just trying to give yourself the best chance to win on game day.

An interview with:

## **JIMBO FISHER FLORIDA STATE**

COACH FISHER: Very excited about the upcoming matchup with Miami. It's one of the great games that you're able to play at Florida State. Such great tradition and history, respect for both organizations. It's a great opportunity for our team on national television.

Very proud of our team last week, Boston College, played a solid football game in all three phases of the game. 99-yard drive. Kids got into

confidence, played very well, played a very solid football game.

But this week is about Miami. We have to get back in the groove, keep our confidence level high and keep great preparation for Miami. Miami is a very athletic team, can run great on offense, athletes that can run on defense, good on special teams, present a lot of problems. Do a lot of things scheme-wise and schematically on all sides of the ball. Very well coached. Great matchup. But that's one of the reasons you're at Florida State.

Questions, please.

**Q. Like you just stated, the Florida State/Miami game is a special game. So is Florida State/Florida. Talk about the differences and similarities between the two games when it comes to recruiting.**

COACH FISHER: I guess because Miami, the kids in Miami, they love the city. You have two kinds, in my opinion: the kids that are truly loyal to Miami, the university, but even the city, they want to stay, or guys that want to get out.

It is a very important game because it does bring justification for a young man to leave Miami and come to Tallahassee and do some of those things. It is always good. The people in the state always look at how those games go and always have done.

**Q. The rivalry has been downplayed a little bit nationally, but where do you think it stands from your perspective?**

COACH FISHER: I think it's one of the best ones in the history of the game. This is one of the reasons you come to Florida State to play. They're No. 1 on their side, we're second on our side. A lot of implications in the state. To us, it's one of the major, major games of the year, and a huge game for us.

**Q. You've talked previously about EJ's (Manuel) development from his first day on campus to now. What have you seen this season?**

COACH FISHER: Consistency. I mean, a guy who understands the ups and downs, wear and tear, playing quarterback for a whole season, how to prepare, not get too high, too low, great leadership, not let the situations of a game affect you. You just see the maturity really coming out in him.

**Q. Could you talk a little bit about Dustin Hopkins, the all-time leading scorer in the ACC. Obviously your offense has put him in position to do a lot of that kicking. Talk about his durability, longevity.**

COACH FISHER: The thing about Dustin, he's a phenomenal athlete. He's really big for a kicker. He's around 6'2". He's a 4.5 guy. He verticals high to mid 30s. Dunks basketballs, all that good stuff. He's a really good athlete. I think that helps his durability, his athleticism, his flexibility, all the things that go with that.

Just a tremendous player as far as the range he has on his kicks, how hard he works. Like I say all the time, he's a better person off the field. He's a tremendous student, ambassador for our school, represents what's right about college athletics, people in general. Doesn't get too high or too low. Keeps everything in perspective. He's one of the special guys.

**Q. A lot of the times some of these high scorers are kicking a lot of short field goals. Talk about his range.**

COACH FISHER: He's probably more long range. We get aggressive. He's hit one up to 55 a couple years ago. He hit one the other day 51 yards into a slight breeze right before half, big momentum swing I thought helped us. He has a huge effect in a lot of ways. We're not scared to put him out there at different times in the game. Having that there, it's a big weapon.

An interview with:

**RANDY EDSALL  
MARYLAND**

COACH EDSALL: Thanks.

Well, we're coming off a good win over Virginia. Now we get to play a very difficult and tough NC State team here at home. We just know it's going to be a very difficult, very physical, hard-fought game on Saturday against them. We're just trying to get prepared this week to go out and play to the best of our ability on Saturday.

**Q. In general, how have you seen Evan Mulrooney improve as a player?**

COACH EDSALL: Evan had an opportunity to go in and play against Virginia when

**ASAP** sports

...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at [asapsports.com](http://asapsports.com)

Sal Conaboy hurt his ankle. I've just seen a guy throughout practice who has just gotten better, communicating there on the offensive line, kind of being a leader for us as a backup. Also just in terms of his fundamentals he's gotten better. I've seen a steady progression since he's been here.

He went and made the most of his opportunity on Saturday in a tough situation. I thought he held his own. He's a guy that I think will continue to get better because he's a guy that really wants to get better. He's a hard worker. He's smart. He's a good guy to be around.

**Q. Randy, I told your brother that I would ask this question, so blame him if he didn't warn you. For the last two or three years, your quote from that basketball game has been dredged up about Maryland not losing to Virginia. Any regrets about having said that? Did you think it would have the life its had?**

COACH EDSALL: No. I mean, you say it at halftime of a basketball game. I was really referring more to basketball than what I was football.

In that moment, just trying to get the crowd fired up so the team could come out and the crowd could get behind them a little bit more in the second half. It was nothing ill-willed toward Virginia. It was just one of those statements you make, getting people fired up. In this day and age you have to be careful about that because everybody hears it and it goes out all over the world.

**Q. You probably wouldn't say it again?**

COACH EDSALL: No, I wouldn't say it publicly again (laughter).

**Q. Coach, your defense is one of the most improved in the nation this year, ranking ninth nationally in rushing and total defense. What has been the impetus to this?**

COACH EDSALL: I think, first of all, it starts with Brian Stewart and the coaching staff in terms of teaching the players, the scheme, getting them to understand it, which they do. But then when you take a look at our defense, when you have A.J. Francis, who is a senior, Joe Vellano, who is a senior, Kenneth Tate, who is a senior, Demetrius Hartsfield, Eric Franklin, I think those are the guys there, those seniors, that really said,

Hey, we want to try to do something a little bit special. They've done a great job of leading and making plays. Then you incorporate some of the other young guys we have into the system.

But it's a group that really feeds off of each other and plays off of each other. Everybody is committed to doing their job, doing it to the best of their ability. I think that's why we've had some success in the first six games. But we have even higher expectations for ourselves. We got to continue to work hard each and every day, each and every week to obtain those standards that we want for ourselves on defense.

**Q. Do you have any more clarity this week on how the run game might go?**

COACH EDSALL: No, I mean, we'll know more on Thursday once we get through practice and everything. We have confidence in any of the guys that we have out there, again, just in terms of what we want to do from a game plan standpoint.

But, no, we'll be fine. We'll just keep working at it, on the run game. That's all we can do. The players are working hard. The coaches are working hard. We'll get it resolved some way, somehow. We'll just keep working at it.

**Q. Randy, I know you don't like to revisit history. Is it hard at all not to look back at last year's game at all in terms of using it for motivation?**

COACH EDSALL: No. Like I said, we're a different team from last year. They're a different team from last year. This is a whole new year.

Again, I'm worried about what we're going to do this Saturday, not what we did back last November. Again, like I told you yesterday, yeah, you might look at the film to look at a couple things. Like I said, this is a whole different team, a whole different situation this year than opposed to a year ago.

**Q. Randy, if I'm not mistaken, Stefon Diggs had something like 240 (239 actually) all purpose yards on eight touches the other day. As you look at that, is there an ideal number of touches you'd like for him to get each game? What are the upper limits of how much you can use him?**

COACH EDSALL: Yeah, I mean, we'd like to get him the ball as much as we can. Again, when you play wide receiver, there's only so many ways to get him the ball. But the other thing is, there's also times when you have him in there,

you're doing some things with him, he attracts the attention of other people, it opens up for the other ones.

On the touchdown that Perry ran, we put him in motion, faked it to him. Had three or four guys going with Stefon. Even though he didn't touch the ball, that play was a big factor because of him.

We're trying to find as many ways as we can to get him the ball and get it in his hands, let him do things. Again, if we can at least try, and sometimes you don't hit what you want to get done, but if we can get it to 10 to 15 times or so, then I think we're doing okay. Really like to have a minimum of 10. How many more we get after that, 15, that would be a bonus. Again, situations will dictate how many touches, as well.

An interview with:

**TOM O'BRIEN  
NC STATE**

COACH O'BRIEN: Certainly we're hard at work getting ready to go play the University of Maryland. They're playing great right now, coming off two victories, especially one on the road. Senior defense that's playing great, second only to Florida State in every major category defensively as far as the conference is concerned. Then certainly they're very explosive on offense. Tremendous speed and skill at the wide receiver, tight end position.

Be a great challenge for us. But we look forward to the opportunity.

**Q. Even though your quarterback is a fifth-year senior, on Saturday he'll be making just his 20th career start. Talk about what you've seen in his play this year.**

COACH O'BRIEN: Certainly he's gotten better each and every game. Last year was his first year starting. We had some growing pains about midway through the year. A lot kicked in.

He started off this year, had a couple of miscues early there in the Tennessee game. But he's come back and played well the last three games he played.

He set a record throwing the ball against Miami. Came back in the second half against

Florida State. I think threw for over 200 yards actually when we needed him there mostly in the fourth quarter. Converted three straight fourth-down conversions.

He's very confident right now in what he's doing. Our team has a lot of confidence in him. He's performing at a high level.

**Q. Tom, could you talk about the effect of an open date after the big win against Florida State. Would you have liked have gone back into action after that momentum or do you think people would have been talking about that game all week and not concentrating on Maryland?**

COACH O'BRIEN: I think we've had more success here after adversity than we've had success. I think it's better for us to have taken that time off and to let them enjoy themselves a little bit. It was such an emotional victory, especially coming off the heels of a game in Miami that we certainly could have, should have, would have, whatever, against the University of Miami. That helped.

Plus certainly midway through the year we have guys with bumps and bruises, banged up. We're trying to get as healthy as we can as we go back into the second half of the season, six straight ACC games. I think it comes at a pretty good time for us.

**Q. If you were listening to Randy Edsall about Stefon Diggs, obviously you've seen film of that Virginia game where he kind of took it over. What kind of thoughts do you have on him?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Certainly you have to know where he is. He's very dangerous in the kicking game. The good thing for us we played Miami, Florida State, who also have guys who are dynamic in the kicking game. I think he probably has as much impact on the conference this year as Sammy Watkins did a year ago coming in at Clemson.

I know our defensive coaches, they're hollering every day at practice pointing out where No. 1 is. He certainly has our attention.

**Q. One of the issues that you've been able to manage this year is several injuries on your offensive line. They seem to still be effective. Can you talk about the people who are involved in what's going on there.**

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, I think Jim Bridge did a great job last week against Florida State. We

lost three starters. One of them is gone for the year. Hopefully we can try to get the other two guys back here somewhere the second half of the year.

To put that group together and do what they did against Florida State, only giving up one sack, was a great night for those kids.

Duran Christophe, who started some last year, started the year in the backup, he was pressed into a starting role. But I think the play of two young guys, Cam Fordham played right guard, we put (Joe) Thuney in, who is a redshirt freshmen at center, Cam Wentz played right guard and center against Florida State, got into a little rotation. Those guys did a great job.

**Q. On the other side of the ball in the second half against Florida State, your defense really seemed to come alive. What was the difference between the first half of that game and the second half, and how do you expect that to carry over the second half of the season?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, we had some problems getting them adjusted on the sideline in the first half. At halftime we did a better job of getting the defense on the same page of what they were doing. Once we were able to play some of the Florida State runs better, and the other thing we did better we were able to get pressure on (EJ) Manuel. He got out of the pocket and killed us last year. We contained him better with secondary contain, pressuring him, getting four sacks on him.

Hopefully it's something we can build on and get better at. That's the goal every week, get better in practice and get better each Saturday we play.

An interview with:

**JIM GROBE  
WAKE FOREST**

COACH GROBE: We had an open date this past weekend. I think that was good for us. We probably had maybe as many as a handful of kids that wouldn't have been able to play last Saturday from injury. Hopefully we'll get those kids healthy. Looks like we're going to have a few of them back, maybe all of them back, for Virginia.



visit our archives at [asapsports.com](http://asapsports.com)

We'll see.

We're looking forward to playing again.

**Q. Saturday's game at Virginia marks the beginning of the second half of the season for your team. In what areas would you like to see improvement and who have been the positive impact players for your team?**

COACH GROBE: From our standpoint, certainly we'd like to be more consistent in all areas: offense, defense and kicking game. Our kicking game has been really spotty. We've had some good things and some bad things.

I think offensively we've been throwing the football a lot. We just haven't been a good throw-catch team. Part of that is our offensive line has been so banged up, it's been tough to protect.

Defensively, throughout the year we've shown flashes here and there. But I think the biggest thing for us is just consistency. We'd like to be a more consistent team throughout the second half.

We have Nikita Whitlock back. He played pretty good against Maryland. He was hurt for most of the season. Got healthy against Maryland. We'd like to see him continue. He's a key guy for us. On the offensive side of the ball, we have to have Tanner Price play better. Around him we've had so many injuries to the offensive line and wide receiver position, it's affected him the past couple times out. We got to get over that. We have to just take care of business.

When you got a good player that has a lot of guys around him hurt, he's got to be dependable and consistent. I think what we're looking for Saturday, we need Tanner to be more consistent, too.

**Q. Jim, have you been struck by the infrequency of your games with Virginia over the years? Obviously it has to do with the two divisions in the ACC, but you haven't played up there in five years.**

COACH GROBE: Yeah, it's hard. We had the same problem with North Carolina. When we went over to play at North Carolina last year in Chapel Hill, we lost something. We just didn't have the same spark that you normally do playing the Tar Heels. We lost over there, then we kind of got our minds right and got a win over here this year.

It's hard when you don't play conference teams every year. It's been a long time. I think Virginia is a great game for Wake Forest to play. We're very similar academically, that kind of stuff.

I think it's a game I wish we played more often. But I think expansion has been good for our league, good for our schools. But it is a problem. When we go five years before we play at Virginia, that seems strange to me.

**Q. Personally do you like to go up there, having played up there and coached up there? I assume you still have friends up there. John Walker for one.**

COACH GROBE: John and Tom McGraw, all those guys, they're my buddies. You know what I'm going to say. I'd love to come back, see old friends, have a homecoming type deal. To come back and have to play makes it tough. It's more of a business trip than anything else.

I loved my time at Virginia. I loved the people there. That was one of the really special times in my life was going to the University of Virginia, staying on, having a chance to be a graduate assistant with the football program.

But going back up there now, I wish I could kind of relax and enjoy it. But we got a lot of work to do to get a chance to win.

**Q. Will Sonny (Former UVa Head Coach Sonny Randle) be up there?**

COACH GROBE: You know, he typically would be. He's probably not going to make this one. He's having some problems health-wise right now, not anything he's not going to get over, but he's having some problems with his back right now I think. I think coach probably won't make this one, but he'll certainly be there in spirit.

I played for him and coached for him. He laughs that I got him fired twice as a player and as a coach. But I think he loves Virginia, too. It's a tough one.

**Q. You never know how he'll behave on the sideline.**

COACH GROBE: Well, I tell you the good news is, I survived playing for him and I survived coaching for him (laughter). Now I think he probably wants to see the Deacons win as much as I do, so it's a good thing.

**Q. You mentioned him a little bit, but what is the latest on (Mike) Campanaro's status?**

COACH GROBE: I think he's healing. He's probably not healing as fast as he wants to.

He probably would have liked to have been healed for the Maryland game.

I would think Clemson would be a stretch. I think probably Boston College is a little bit more realistic. Hopefully by then. They didn't have to do surgery. They just casted him. He just has to heal up.

I think right now I would say we're hoping to have him back by Boston College. If we got him back for Clemson, it would be a real stretch, I think.

**Q. How good do you think you guys could be at full strength? At what point do you expect to be that?**

COACH GROBE: Yeah, well, going into the season, you always have some injuries. That's just part of the game. The difference for us has been some of our best players have been injured. Camp is arguably the best player on offense. We lost Antonio Ford at Maryland. I think he was our best offensive lineman. As far as guards and tackles, Garrick Williams. But guards and tackles, Antonio was the best. Losing Matt James, he broke his collarbone, won't be back this season, he's out. Terence Davis separated both shoulders, hasn't had a lot of practice. That's been his biggest problem. A lot of guys that we thought were going to be key guys for us have been out for a long period of time or are gone for the season.

We're not going to get them all back together, but certainly I think getting Campanaro back would be huge for us. If we could stay healthy down the stretch, piecemeal that offensive line back together. We're in a situation right now with Sherman Ragland down, Campanaro down, Matt James down, Terence Davis being up and down, we just don't have a lot of options to throw the football. Being a throwing offense, that's not a good thing.

**Q. What are you trying to do to replace Antonio?**

COACH GROBE: We've been blessed because we've had Steven Chase come back from an ACL. I've never had that happen before. We have him braced up. He actually started and played the whole game at Maryland at left tackle. That gives us a little bit of flexibility. We took Whit Barnes, our backup center, and put him at guard. He's kind of the guy that's taken over for Antonio right now.

We're not real deep. That's our problem. If we could kind of find five guys that could play these next six games, play all the snaps, at least

the lion's share of snaps, we could be okay. But we really can't afford to lose anybody else.

**Q. The offense seems to be up across the country, hurry up, no-huddle. I'm curious to how you see the pendulum switching back with the defenses?**

COACH GROBE: I think from a defensive perspective, I think what it's basically forced you to do is get out of huddling on defense. You don't see many defenses ever get together and actually huddle anymore. That's been the biggest change I see. You basically have to have a call right away and get lined up.

So many of the hurry-up offenses, they're kind of hurry up. They're at the line of scrimmage, ready to run a play, then they check with me on the sideline, that's basically looking over and seeing the coach wants to change the play. Defenses are changing defense. You made the first call, the offense is called, now you change to try to counter what they're doing.

It's really become, before the snap, a chess game. In the past I think it was more usual for an offense to call a play, the defense to call a defense, you line up play, do it again. Now there's a lot of things going on today before the snap of the ball.

**Q. Paul Johnson was saying yesterday, he was talking about the changes they were going to make. It refers to what you're talking about. Can you see making sure the guys know what they're doing, can you see that paying dividends?**

COACH GROBE: Yeah, I think in that cat-and-mouse game that's being played today, a lot of times the offenses will act like they're changing the call, but they really don't. They like what they see, they let the kids run the play. Defensively I think now the game is, are you actually changing to a different defense or are you signaling basically that you're staying in what you got?

I think it's just really a roll of the dice for both sides now. Eventually if the offenses figure out there's no advantage to trying to hurry at the line of scrimmage, the defense is going to change just as frequently as they change, you may go back to seeing people huddle again. It all runs in cycles.

**Q. Jim, just wanted some of your thoughts on Virginia. Obviously you've seen the stat where they've out-gained their last three opponents and lost all three games. Do you see any similarities between what the two teams have been going through this season?**

COACH GROBE: Well, I think the thing that's gotten us in the last two games against Duke and Maryland, we didn't win the turnover battle. We had a chance to win both games, but basically turnovers got us. I think that's been a problem. They've had quite a few turnovers offensively compared to the number of turnovers they're getting on defense.

That's kind of a thing, we worked on it all the time. I'm sure Mike and his guys work on it all the time. That's kind of the one thing that's hard to control. Usually if you're putting up really good numbers, which they are offensively, it usually comes back to taking care of the football.

**Q. How about special teams?**

COACH GROBE: I think special teams are a problem for everybody in that what we would like to do, we have very little depth at Wake Forest, I don't know what Mike's situation is, I don't know what the depth deal is for him, but for us at Wake Forest, we have very little depth. One of the problems we have on special teams is if you just threw out to each coach who's primarily involved with the punt team or the kickoff return team or whatever, they pick all our starters to be on those teams. The problem is by the fourth quarter you might not have anybody left.

So you've got to balance out. We typically let our best players go right to the punt team. Whoever is running the punt team, in our case Derrick Jackson, he gets his pick. Then it goes to kickoff cover. If you have a good kicker and a good punter, and if you don't have, they could be the factors. Typically if your special teams are really good, you've got enough depth that you have enough backup guys playing on those special teams that can get the job done.

An interview with:

## **PAUL JOHNSON GEORGIA TECH**

COACH JOHNSON: Good morning, I tell you, we are excited to have a chance to get back out there and play again after coming off a bye week, I think the bye week came at a good time for us. We are able to regroup a little bit and heal up physically, so anxious to get back out there and get started again.

I know that Boston College is struggling like we are, and we fully expect that we are going to get their best shot when they come in here on Saturday.

**Q. It seems to be a trend this year, more teams are going for it on 4th down and they are doing it more frequently. Your team has sort of been at the forefront of doing that for several years now. Two parts to my question: is that part of your general philosophy and why do you think it's catching on across the country?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, as a general rule, our philosophy, because we have basically been running offense, we felt like we were in a situation where it was less than a couple yards, felt good about having a chance to pick it up. That, and the other thing probably is the score of the game, that certainly dictates on how the game is going. If you're having a hard time stopping the other team, a lot of times you don't want to give up a point if you have a chance to make a first down.

I think that's something you have to look at overall in national scope of things. The games are becoming much higher-scoring games. So it lends itself sometimes to more teams going for it, just by the nature of the games are played.

**Q. I'm curious, just your thoughts on the bye week, the extra time, how much of an impact does that have, how much of an advantage is it in game planning, and do people really change much in their bye week?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think it varies. Depends on everybody's individual situation. Like I said, whenever it comes. We were pretty beat up

physically, so it came at a good time for us and we needed to revamp some things and change some things, so it's at an appropriate time for us.

How much people change I guess is depending on their situation and what they are doing at the time. I don't think you can put -- one size probably doesn't fit all.

**Q. Working on something on your senior class, and I know that this group is part of your first class and part of your second class, whether they red-shirted or not, wonder if in your experience -- what makes them special compared to maybe some of the other classes?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think that each class is special in their own way and each has their own individual identity. But this class, a lot of these kids were committed when we got here. We took over in December. So it's not a very big class. It's probably split in that the kids who red-shirted were more than likely committed when they came and the ones who didn't, and it played early, would have been our really first class that we recruited.

We have only got about nine or ten of those guys, and you know, they form the leadership of the team and have been a lot of fun to work with and they are a great bunch of guys. I think all of them are going to get their degree and that's a positive.

**Q. When Al Groh was at Virginia, he was one of the few guys around using the 3-4. Seems now like more and more teams are using it, I believe Maryland and Wake Forest, although I guess there's a difference between the two-gap and the one-gap --**

COACH JOHNSON: I'm not sure that I could explain it.

**Q. Is the 3-4 something you like? Is it something that's going to be around in college football, do you think? I guess that's maybe a question for another day but what do you think of the 3-4 just off the top of your head?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think the 3-4 is fine, it's like any scheme, you can do a lot of the same things out of whatever you do. Certainly Al is very knowledgeable in what he does, and he's probably as knowledgeable as anybody in the country in two-gap and what they do from that aspect of it.

For me personally, here it wasn't working. It could have been personnel, it could have been a lot of things, but it just wasn't working. But I think it could certainly be a good scheme and clearly he knows what he's doing with it, there's no question about that. He's done it for a long time and had a lot of success with it.

**Q. Just wondering if long term it's a possibility you can stay in it and go to the one-gap?**

COACH JOHNSON: You know, we'll probably -- we can't just start over, so we'll base out of that. We'll do some different things a little bit different than what we have done in the past.

**Q. How much more have you been involved this past week because of the changes on the defensive side and going forward, how much more do you expect to continue to be involved with the defense?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I've been more involved because I guess for the last two and a half years, I pretty much just kind of let Al (Groh) run the thing.

But our defensive coaches still are in charge. I wanted to make sure we get the right base in and we get some of the stuff that I wanted to do and then we'll let them coach.

I'll probably stay involved depending how it goes. I needed to be more involved, anyway. Truth be told, I probably let it get away from me more than I needed to.

I think it's good for the kids to see me over there once in awhile, as opposed to being on offense all the time. It's something that I'll be more involved, depending how it goes, will determine how much.

**Q. Is that something you enjoy or is it tough to juggle, because you already have so much on your plate just being head coach?**

COACH JOHNSON: I enjoy doing it. I think that when you have a chance to do it, and I'm fortunate, the offensive staff here has been together for a long time and most of them either played for me or coached for me for double digit years. I can slide over there some and get away.

So it's been fun for me. You know, I want to reiterate the fact that those guys on defense are still running it. I'm not running the defense. I'm just there to help.

An interview with:

## LARRY FEDORA MORTH CAROLINA

COACH FEDORA: This is a very important game for us. It's the 99th meeting and game for the Victory Bell and it's something that our players take a lot of pride in and so we are excited to the opportunity to play. We know Duke, they are going to get after it. They are one win away from being Bowl-eligible, and they would love to do it against us.

**Q. One trend has been obvious in football this season is the offenses being up in yards and points. Curious how you see defenses ultimately being able to swing the pendulum back against no-huddle?**

COACH FEDORA: Well, I think you'll see more defenses putting more athletes on the field. I think that's what you're going to see. They are going to try to get personnel along with your personnel groupings a little bit more, get more athletes, guys that can make tackles in open spaces, which is obviously what the spread tries to take advantage of.

**Q. Do you see schemes more simplified or more complex?**

COACH FEDORA: You know, not only are we talking spread but we are talking tempo. So you can't be too complex with what you're trying to do, because you've got to be able to do it and you've got to do it fast. Kids have to be able to process it.

So I think what you see, teams doing simpler things and trying to put more athletic players on the field. It still boils down to personnel and it still boils down to guys making plays in open spaces.

**Q. From what you've seen on film, what makes (Duke wide receiver Conner) Vernon such an effective receiver for them?**

COACH FEDORA: One, he's obviously played a lot of snaps. He's very comfortable in what they are trying to do. He can run. He's got a knack for getting open and he's got great hands. I mean, he's a guy that is very confident, if you put the ball anywhere around him, he's going to make the catch. And so I think, one, a quarterback has a comfort level there that if -- he may not be wide

open, but all I can do is get the ball in the air where he can get his hands on it and he'll make the catch, and he's done that.

**Q. How much did you know about Giovani Bernard before you took the job? But did you know him from recruiting or his press clippings or did you not know about him at all?**

COACH FEDORA: I had seen tape on him when he was coming out of high school. Just like you evaluate any running back. So I had actually seen high school tape on him when he was coming out and then that year, he rushed for 1,200-something yards. I didn't keep up with the injury and all those things but he rushed for 1,200 yards throughout the season and was doing some pretty nice things for them as a redshirt freshman. That's something you see nationally and that would have been all there was to it.

**Q. What were your first impressions when you actually saw him practicing?**

COACH FEDORA: He was one of the guys that I felt like -- I never like to make assumptions in spring ball, especially in the first couple days because you're in shorts and helmets, but he's one of the guys in shorts and helmets that it was a no-brainer. You know, the ability to see the cut-back lanes and see the holes to the shiftiness, the ability to make you miss, but also the ability to take it the distance, that was very obvious in the first couple practices.

**Q. How much do you feel you can use him? Is there a certain number of touches you would like for him to get each game, a certain number you wouldn't want to go over?**

COACH FEDORA: Just depends on the flow of the game. I don't feel like at this point that he feels anywhere like we could overload him. I don't see that. One, he missed two whole games and so it's not like he is worn down or tired.

And if you watch the way he plays, he's not taking a tremendous amount of blows on each and every carry. He's not one of those kind of backs. It's not the amount of yards that I'm always trying to keep track of. It's the amount of hits that he takes, because you only get so many of those in a season. So during the flow of the game it just depends on his production and how he's doing.

**Q. Heading into the season, your offensive line was perceived to be a strength of your team and certainly has lived up to that. Can you talk about the progress of your offensive line, and specifically the skills and ability that Jonathan Cooper has and what he brings to the table?**

COACH FEDORA: The offensive line, there was a lot of talk about the offense, the up-tempo, how are these big guys that were recruited for pro-style offense, how were they going to be able to adjust.

For them it was -- and that was a big adjustment for them through spring ball; it was very difficult for them, because you've got big guys who are used to going to a huddle, relaxing, holding hands, and then coming, taking their time at the line of scrimmage and running the play. Well, totally, it was a shock for most of them and probably more plays than they had ever gotten in in practice and their lifetime. So it was a total shock.

So as they trimmed down and got into better shape, they were able to excel. I think, one, the comfort level of being together, because a lot of those guys have gotten a lot of snaps together, they trust each other and know what each other is going to do and so they are able to excel and keep moving forward and now I think they are just starting to hit their stride.

And Jonathan Cooper, I've been coaching a long time, I've coached some offensive linemen that have been drafted in the top five or six in the country and Jonathan has some skills at the offensive guard position unlike any others that I've ever coached. He has tremendous feet. He has feet like a tight end, a very skilled tight end. There are quite a few tight ends out there that don't have the feet that Jonathan has. He's big and he's very intelligent and he understands what you're trying to do, and he's good at what he does.

An interview with:

## **MIKE LONDON VIRGINIA**

COACH LONDON: Definitely getting ready for a Wake Forest team that. By the way, it is an open date for us prior to this game. Coach

 ...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at [asapsports.com](http://asapsports.com)

Grobe and his Wake Forest team is a very well-coached team that I'm quite sure is looking for answers and a balance to what direction they go, as well.

So this is a very important game for us. It's a home game; it's another conference game. And there are some things that we have to continue to keep working on to put ourselves in a position to win, get back in the winning column.

So it will be a very good test for us and one that we are looking forward to.

**Q. Obviously a lot of talk this week about Eli Harold, Chris Brathwaite as well. Are they candidates to start this week or do you think you'll go with the status quo?**

COACH LONDON: Well, they are candidates to play more. So not about the starting part of it; about getting them more reps. It paid off; you talk about going into the last game, about playing more players defensively, and I think it paid off to where they had energy and they went in and they provided some opportunities, some play making skills and abilities for us.

So definitely have a few guys like that that provides somewhat of a spark on defense and to give more opportunities to play. So you'll see more playing time.

**Q. You talked about the possibility of getting more starters on special teams, and Jim Grobe was talking about it earlier they gives I guess his punt team the first dibs on the players in the first choice -- the coaches who coach a specific unit always want the starters and other units may not get the starters because they are playing on some other units. How many units could a guy play on and who gets -- does one of the units get first choice of players on your squad?**

COACH LONDON: Well, you look at special teams and you look at the four full phases of it: Kick, kickoff return, punt, punt return. Obviously field goal block is a function of the defense while they are on the field. Field goal, extra point is a function of the offense when they are on.

And what you try to do is you try to get those players that particularly they are in the coverage aspect of it, you know, kickoff and punt, where they have to go down and tackle potential ball carries, you try to get as many defensive

players as you can, because that's what they do. They open field tackle and they set the edge and they do things that are more similar to them playing a defensive position.

And then, also, you want to be cognizant of the fact that maybe a young player that you had decided to play, because he exhibits maybe a run-and-hit skill, that you may put him on one of those teams as far as a kickoff or the punt team.

On the other side, the skill level of guys that are on kickoff return, could be returners, could be the fullbacks that have some sort of offensive skill-set to them, and also the punt return team.

I guess what you see is you see some teams require a starter to be on one of those four phases. You see some teams that have perhaps maybe two starters on one of the four phases, and it's different. You see a team that has their second team defense and perhaps the punt team where now they go out and they have to protect and they have to get downfield.

So it's kind of based on the philosophy, you might have some depth issues like we have -- or you might like I said try to get young players in the game playing time by trying to get them to be four-phased players.

When you look at our team, you see a few starters here and there dotted on maybe one phase team of it and with some young guys, red-shirt freshmen, or true sophomores backing them up.

But I think one of the things we talked about was for us, because of where we are, trying to get an older guy, maybe another guy another phase of the special teams, and then get into the substitution part of it for on the field scrimmage plays like Eli and Chris Brathwaite and other guys; maybe LaRoy Reynolds is on the kickoff cover team, and he gets his rest when -- regular scrimmage plays, and while you had the opportunity for like I said some of the younger players to play.

So, it's different. It depends on the your personnel and how you use them and what type of schemes you use.

**Q. Your thought coming off the extra week, is a big advantage X's and O's-wise or is it just about getting guys some rest?**

COACH LONDON: I think it's a little bit of both. I think coming off an open week, teams usually don't change the core of what they are and who they are, but it does allow for maybe perhaps some extra study of the opposing team, extra

formations, different plays that haven't been seen. But by the films that we have on a particular team, it does allow for players to have an extra week to get healthy.

I believe there are a couple players that were suspended prior to, I believe the Maryland game, that are back for our game after serving their suspension. So that open week has a lot of different windows that it opens for players to get healthy where you look at what you're doing.

When we have our open week here, we'll do some things getting back to the basics of things but also getting players that have been out for a while, hopefully to get them healed. It does provide, I think, a little bit of an opportunity for a team to rest, get players back and to look at their schemes and how they may attack their next upcoming opponent because of things that they may or may not have seen in the previous games.

**Q. How frustrating has the quarterback position and inconsistency there been for you this year?**

COACH LONDON: You know, we want all the players that are playing on our team to do well. It's just a level of understanding that we are looking for big things from that position.

As everyone knows, the quarterback takes 100% of the snaps and for various different issues and reasons, we have not been operating at an efficient level to help us, but again, the two guys, Michael Rocco and Phil Sims are competitors, are young men that are learning, striving to learn the game and to get us back on track.

We can talk about all the negatives, but again, as you all know, dealing with college kids and their ability to break through mentally, to break through physically, all it takes is a game or several years, where there's some success.

Our job and goal right now is to create those scenarios for those guys, whether it's Mike or Phil to have success on the field.

**Q. How does that evaluation go from here on out from your perspective through the second half of the season in terms of how you want to use those guys?**

COACH LONDON: It's the same in terms of taking care of the ball, making sure that you're running the plays that are more suitable for the style of quarterback that's in there, whether it's Michael or Phil; understanding that everyone is

evaluated and it's not the threat of looking over your shoulder one way or the other.

But we have to understand that production and moving the team is something that's always going to be the forefront of what's important to us. And so everyone has to produce and have to give us a chance to win and give us a chance to compete. It's what we do when you're winning games, it's what you do when you're losing games; it's just about making sure you try to maintain the standard and opportunity for your team to win based on individual's performances.

**Q. I'm sure you'll be surprised to know that the one-gap and two-gap defensive concept confuses me. But regarding Wake's defense, they play a 3-4; how similar is what you saw last week from Maryland -- Maryland describes its defense as a hybrid 3-4; are these two defenses pretty similar?**

COACH LONDON: Quick lesson. Two-gap means you head up one guy, put head on head, toes on toes and when that offensive guy fires out on you, you basically have the A-gap, and I'm talking about maybe a nose tackle to both sides, to the left and to the right. And that's basically what a two-gapper is, by controlling the offensive guy's shoulder pads.

But when you look at Wake Forest, they line up more of a traditional nose tackle on the center, defensive tackles on the offensive tackles and two stand-up outside linebackers.

Maryland did the same, but they also sometimes played a three-technique and brought an outside linebacker up over the tight end, so their's is a little different.

I think the thing that you see with Wake Forest is, I don't think they sit in specifically two-gap, but what they do is they slant and angle and they create other opportunities for linebackers to come off the edge or safeties to come off the edge; and they are moving all the time and it makes your blocking schemes, makes it more of a challenge to block different types of looks.

So it's a 3-4 by alignment, but post-snap, they do a lot of things, a lot of movement and a lot of things to try to confuse you.

An interview with:

## FRANK BEAMER VIRGINIA TECH

COACH BEAMER: What a talented football team Clemson is, and I think very, very well coached, and got a lot of weapons on offense and got good athletes on defense, and just an excellent football team. Going down there, it's a challenge for us, we haven't played as well as we need to on the road, so that's another challenge for us. We are going to have to play really well to hang in there.

**Q. In your mind and your experience, having the extra week coming off the bye, how big of an advantage is that and how do teams use that?**

COACH BEAMER: Well, I think it's big. I think any time you can get extra rest and get people healthy, you get extra time to prepare, that's big. To me that's the two biggest things.

**Q. How has this week gone without Andrew Miller at practice?**

COACH BEAMER: It's going well. We are fortunate to have Michael Via, who has played center in games, a senior, a guy that has been around here quite a bit. And (Matt) Arkema is getting some snaps in there at center also. So, it's going well.

**Q. You've got two Virginia quarterbacks facing off this week in Tajh Boyd and Logan Thomas this week and looking at the stats there are six quarterbacks from Virginia who have started in the ACC this year, what is it about this state that's produced a lot of high-level quarterbacks and guys who are able to start in the ACC?**

COACH BEAMER: I tell you it's just a run of good quarterbacks, and Boyd, I think he's playing outstanding. I think he's running the ball well, runs tough, running the offense well, throwing the ball and getting all those playmakers involved. So we have really been impressed with how he's leading that football team.

**Q. I know that Tajh is from the Tidewater area and you guys have had several quarterbacks—Tyrod Taylor and Michael Vick from that area. You talked about how the guys in that area look up to the older guys; do you notice a culture in that area of quarterbacks that come out of that region?**

COACH BEAMER: It's just an area where there have been some great quarterbacks and it's really pretty phenomenal that as many quarterbacks in the State of Virginia are playing, at the college level, so no question, I just think it's a run of them right now.

**Q. Clemson is going to honor Daniel Rodríguez for military appreciation day this weekend; what were your impressions of him dealing with him, and are you impressed that he was able to reach his goal of playing college football?**

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, we had conversations and we told him -- he knew exactly what he had to do to get admitted to Virginia Tech. I'm glad to see; he's a deserving guy, served his country, very impressive and so I'm glad to see him reach his goals.

**Q. Last Saturday your true freshman running back, J.C. Coleman, gave your team a big spark on offense. Can you talk about his development this year and the skill set he brings to your offense and what other first-year players are having a significant impact on your team this year?**

COACH BEAMER: J.C., I think every week is a learning experience. I think when you're a true freshman playing, it's just new things every week, but I think he's handled it well. He's a mature guy and a very smart guy, and I think he's handled it well and he's gotten a little bit better each and every week.

After that, you know, Demitri Knowles is a redshirt freshman, he's a guy that's played in there quite a bit more. All of our backups in the secondary are freshmen and are redshirt freshmen. Those have probably been the biggest ones right there. And our kickers are freshmen. A couple of them are freshmen.

An interview with:

## **DAVID CUTCLIFFE DUKE**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: We obviously have a huge challenge in front of us playing a very talented North Carolina team. We are coming off a pretty difficult loss but been pleased.

At this point we have practiced with intensity and prepared well. Again, it will be a big challenge. We'll have to prepare well to have an opportunity this week but we are glad to be back at home at Wallace Wade Stadium.

And I've said this all week long, first time that we've played North Carolina on a non-Thanksgiving Saturday, so it's the first chance since I've been here that our students will have an opportunity to go to this ballgame.

So I think we are all looking forward to being back home in Wallace Wade stadium.

**Q. Why was the game moved off of Thanksgiving Saturday?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: They rotate these things, anyway. And I can't tell you a specific answer, trying to make everybody's schedule work. Michael Kelly (ACC Senior Associate Commissioner) gets all the non-conference scheduling, and then he tries to get everything else to work based on the rotation. Doesn't bother me a bit.

Like I said, I'm a traditionalist, but this is a circumstance where it's much better for us from a student body support and fan support standpoint, it's much better for us to play in October, or whenever, just not Thanksgiving.

**Q. If they want to have it at Carolina next year, would that be okay with you, at Thanksgiving weekend?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Yeah, that's where we played last year on Thanksgiving weekend, that certainly doesn't bother me. But for our home game, it serves us better. We have a student body from all over the country and really the world, and so many or most all of them are gone for that Thanksgiving break.

**Q. What are your recollections of (WR Conner) Vernon, and would you have imagined**

**at that point that he would go on to have the kind of career that he's had with you guys?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, saw him on tape but the first real recollection is very vivid to me. It was in one-on-one reels in summer camp and it was in the stadium, and he was so competitive and so explosive. And you're watching him not only from drills to running routes versus air and then into one-on-one, and I just never saw him take one rep lightly. And so I really saw what I thought was going to be a special player. Do you ever imagine someone setting the kind of records he's set? Not necessarily. But I also would tell you, I'm not surprised.

**Q. Two players who have given your offenses significant boost this is year are wide receivers Jamison Crowder and Desmond Scott. Can you talk about the development of a young player like Crowder, and a veteran like Scott who has made a productive move from running back to wide receiver; and also, what went into your decision-making process to make that move?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: All right, well, first on Jamison, that you asked first, I thought by the end of the year last year, Jamison was a real weapon for our offense. He was an excellent return man for us all season long, and I think he's a budding superstar. He's got every tool: Speed, quickness, athleticism, great skill with the ball. I haven't seen anything yet Jamison can't do and a great football mind, a lot of savvy, and another guy that works like Conner Vernon works.

When it comes to Desmond Scott, I've never been around a player that can do what he's done. I don't know if there are many, if any, other players can do what he's done, but our injuries this summer, we have reached a point where we were really good in the receiving core and our plans were going to have to be somewhat altered and Desmond is just so gifted athletically. His ball skills are incredible. He's got great feet and timing and a sense of balance.

So we thought we would look at this as an answer and it went beyond looking at it. Obviously he is a very productive wide receiver. He's really good with the ball after he catches it. He's also a 400-pound bench presser, so you've got a guy in the slot that's really physical. People don't see it but he's blocked extremely well.

So that may be one of the all-time great moves and he's going to end up a guy, one of the three players in the ACC history before the season

is over with a thousand yards on kickoff returns, a thousand-plus receiving and a thousand-plus rushing. So that puts together a pretty nice career.

**Q. With those early morning practices, were you able to stay up and watch that Chargers and Broncos game?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: No, I didn't. I hate to admit that. I saw a little bit of the first half at work, and I told them the next day -- I said, you played well the first half, and you did. You had too much field and too much bad luck. I mean, literally luck; so the pick six and Decker falling down.

I had to go to bed because I had to get up so early. We taped it, so I have seen it since, and he's pretty incredible. I knew they thought they had a good plan for going in, and obviously I thought they did. That's when people play you well on that team.

**Q. Do you routinely talk to him once a week?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Yeah, either that or text. Both of us are so busy, sometimes it's easier to text back and forth and keep up with each other. He'll critique us a little bit and I'll critique him a little bit. I didn't critique anything he did last week, that's for sure.

**Q. What kind of coaching mind tricks have you used on your players this week to make sure that they don't get too down from what happened in Blacksburg?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, the first thing, it may seem like a trick but I always tell them the truth. You know, and maybe that is a trick. They are used to me telling them the truth.

I told them in Blacksburg in the locker room, and as it turned out after I watched the film, pretty accurately, that I thought we did two things. We got out-fundamentaled when the game turned around and we got out-hit, and that's how you come back in the game. That's what Virginia Tech did. And that was no different than I saw on the tape.

So I told them in the locker room, I wouldn't beat a dead horse on Sunday, and I didn't. I moved right to where we -- what I believe our team is, and I went through each position of our team with an evaluation, a week seven evaluation, what I thought each position had to do to fundamentally get better what we were doing

well, what our capabilities were, etc., etc.

And then afterwards, I challenged them that it's up to them to make the decision, you know, what they are going to do about it. I can't fix it with the talk. And the only way we can work on this is on the practice field and they responded Sunday night and they to this point haven't quit responding. All that means is you've got a chance.

You know, we've got to carry it to the field Saturday. I thought we prepared extremely well for Virginia Tech last week, and I probably wasn't wrong, because the 20-0 start wasn't an accident, either. We were dominating the game. No gifts there.

But we have to obviously maintain that for 60 minutes against these teams that are so physically gifted.

**Q. When something like that happens, considering the history that you have had to overcome there, is it hard, though, even for you not to slip into the, uh-oh, here we go again?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Sure it is. I tell you what I did during the game. I went up-and-down the sideline continuously, and you know, we are only 14 down going into the fourth quarter, and that's nothing. To me, I'm telling them, that's the position you want to be in. That's where good football teams win. You're only 14 down in the fourth quarter, you know, go win it.

What we became is a frustrated team. So my message then and it was on Sunday, as well, is you cannot let frustration be a guide for anything you do in line because it accomplishes nothing, zero. And if you can feel challenged, you can be concerned, you can be a lot of things, but frustration is not one of them, and I saw a bunch of frustrated individuals up-and-down our sideline, and I kept trying to relay that and trying to encourage -- and I guess I am old enough now to realize that I don't get frustrated if I can help it very, very often, rarely, because I've never seen it accomplish anything, and I don't want to see that emotion on our team.

So after the game I said, here is what happened and what I do want to do is put this game behind us emotionally. I don't want to see the emotions that have come out of this game again, either during or after and that's -- like I said, I told them the truth and we have gone on from there.

An interview with:

## **AL GOLDEN MIAMI**

COACH GOLDEN: Clearly got a great challenge Saturday with a Top-10 Seminole team coming down here. A couple good days of preparation for us. Still a couple days left, but at the mid-week spot, we're making a lot of progress. And they are a great challenge in all three phases. I think everybody understands that, and we are excited to host the game on Saturday night at Sun Life.

**Q. This is obviously a great historical rivalry, in-state rivalry. Since you have taken over the Miami Hurricanes, how big is this match up for recruiting, especially instate recruiting?**

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, I think it's always going to be big. I don't think there's any question, it will be a great environment for us here at sun life on Saturday night, which will be great. We'll have all of our top players and many high school coaches in attendance. So from that standpoint it's great.

There's two camps of players, look at this game, some look at -- right now Florida State is No. 10 in the country and some look at that and say, I want to a part of that; and some look at us and say, well, I want to be part of the resurgence of Miami and I want to go and make an impact and bring them back to the top.

Again, I think ultimately, there's some guys in the state that are either a Hurricane or a Seminole and there are a whole bunch that you have to recruit and make sure that your values are the same as theirs and make sure they understand the value of a University of Miami degree and all of the things that we can afford a young man at the University of Miami.

**Q. In terms of the rivalry, it's not one that the national media talks about much the way that it used to; what's your perspective on where it stands?**

COACH GOLDEN: Well, again, I don't know if that's necessarily true right now, from a Florida State standpoint, we have to catch up to where they are right now. They are ahead of us right now.

And that is what makes this game and this

rivalry so good because the other teams have always responded, and if you look at through the years, it wasn't really just an every other year they exchanged wins. It's somebody gets hot and the other organization has to respond, and then it turns around and then you have to do that.

So right now, they are ahead of us, both in years at the institution, but also in the rankings and they were favored to win the ACC and we have to catch up. That's what we are trying to do here not only this week but with recruiting and everything else that you guys mentioned.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about your defense, seems like you guys have made improvements over the last couple weeks, but how far away are they from where you want them to be?**

COACH GOLDEN: Oh, we are not even close. We are light years from where we want to be. We are making progress. I think clearly at linebacker, we had more productivity lately with Denzel (Perryman) being healthy and Jimmy Gaines getting healthy and (Rafael) Kirby getting healthy. I think that's made a big difference at the linebacker position over the last two weeks.

But we are a long way away from being the type of team that gets the number of sacks that we are looking for and gets the takeaways that we are looking for. But I am pleased with their progress and obviously we are playing 20 freshmen or sophomores over there so I am encouraged they are growing and developing.

**Q. Any change in your quarterback situation?**

COACH GOLDEN: Is there any change? No. Stephen (Morris) threw from a stationary position today, but in terms of dropping back or anything like that, he's not ready to do that. Ryan (Williams) took all the reps under center today, Stephen threw a couple drills, but again, no push off, just very stationary.

**Q. Did you ever think you would see a day where defenses averaging, was giving up 500 yards a game, and up till now, what has been the reason for that?**

COACH GOLDEN: Well, I never thought I would see the day where I would play with 20 freshmen or sophomores on defense. So, no, I didn't. We certainly didn't see that coming.

But as you go through the list, you're investing in a lot of guys that are with you for a while. So we are not disappointed, we are not

discouraged. We just have to keep growing and fighting.

All of these kids one day are going to grow up, get stronger, bigger, be experienced and execute at a much higher level and I think it's compounded by the fact that so far we play the hardest schedule in the country. There is no kind of improvement games. These guys have been baptism by fire. There are no games where the ones that are playing half, and the twos and threes finish the game and they learn how to play with no pressure. These guys have all been thrown to the fire, and I'm proud of the way they are competing.

**Q. Is a lot of that in light of the schedule you play, the yards you've given up you feel decent to be 4-3?**

COACH GOLDEN: Obviously we are 4-3 and 3-1, and we lost a heartbreaker last week to North Carolina and we are just taking it one game at a time. Like I said at the beginning of the year: This is a no-excuses year. We are going to play a lot of people. This is not about a stat year and all that other stuff. This is about manufacturing wins. And I give our coaches and team a lot of credit for manufacturing the wins that we have won so far and do it so playing four of the first six on the road.

**Q. What have you seen in the defenses that have been able to slow or stop Florida State's offense? What are your keys to stopping the different weapons that they have?**

COACH GOLDEN: Again, there have not been too many that stopped them, so that's difficult. But I just think they are very balanced on offense, they have a very physical presence to them in terms of their offensive line and their running game. We have seen all three running backs, I think (Chjris) Thompson right now has shown that he's an elite running back. So I think they show balance.

EJ Manuel, his touchdown to interception ration is tremendous, so he's making completions. His completion percentage is over 70 percent; which means he's either seeing it better and releasing it or he's tucking it and running it. They have speed and length on the outside at receiver and a big-time tight end in (Nick) O'Leary.

It's a very complete offense and they pose a lot of challenges to you, and you've got to do well on third down, got to find some stops in the red zone and you have to take the ball away.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...