

**October 31, 2012**



An interview with:

**FRANK SPAZIANI  
BOSTON COLLEGE**

COACH SPAZIANI: Thank you.

We're going down to face a Wake Forest team that in the past BC and Wake Forest have had some very competitive games. I see no reason why this one shouldn't be any different than the past.

We have our work cut out for us every time we face a Jim Grobe team.

Questions.

**Q. Frank, were there certain things you did particularly well in the win last week that you want to see this coming week?**

COACH SPAZIANI: We made some plays, winning plays. We made some on defense. We certainly made some on offense, certainly in the kicking game. When you have that, the ebb and flow of the game, certainly can build on it. That contributed to our success for sure.

**Q. What was it about that week that those winning plays happened finally?**

COACH SPAZIANI: Well, once again, we practiced better and we changed things up a little bit. There were opportunities that we hadn't made in the past for whatever reason that we were able to make last week.

That's one week's sampling. We'll see if we can continue doing it.

**Q. What concerns you as you look at Wake Forest?**

COACH SPAZIANI: Wake Forest is always extremely well-coached. Jim has done a great job, he and his staff. You know they will have you dissected. They certainly have a very capable receiving core, big-league back, big-league quarterback. They've been able to hang in there on defense all the time against us.

It's a competitive game for us.

**Q. Coach, when you get the win to break the losing streak, when you go to practice this week, do you see a difference? Does it carry over at all?**

COACH SPAZIANI: Oh, yeah, yeah, absolutely. Once again, I don't think it's a difference that the naked eye could run out and see and go, Wow, what a big difference this is. There's a little bit more bounce in everybody's step, starting to feel good about themselves.

Human nature. You have some positive things happen to you, you start to feel a little better about yourself, you get validated on what you're doing. It's certainly positive.

**Q. The big storm mostly passed a little south of you. Did you get any impact?**

COACH SPAZIANI: No, actually we've gotten very lucky. We practiced on Sunday. The bulk of the storm hit. I mean lucky as far as preparing for Wake. We don't practice on Monday. The coaches were able to get in and do their work. School was closed. Yesterday it abated and we were able to get out and practice in decent weather, so...

**Q. Alex (Amidon) had a big game Saturday. He's had a consistently good season. What are the things that make him such an outstanding receiver?**

COACH SPAZIANI: You hit the word, 'consistent season'. He's been a consistent player since we've been here in the aspects of he comes out to work. It's important to him; he gives a hundred percent. He's just built on his freshman year, sophomore year. Usually your third year is when you start seeing kids blossom.

I'm happy for him. It's a product of his hard work and consistency.

**Q. Is he one of these guys what they call a possession receiver or does he have good speed to go?**

COACH SPAZIANI: No, he's got good

speed. He's deceptively fast. The other thing, to go back to your previous question, Doug Martin has done a great job with our offense, certainly utilizing the talents that he has available to him. We all recognize what Alex brings to the table, and Doug has done a good job in bringing it to the field.

**Q. Johnathan (Coleman), before the season you said he would be one of the more interesting players to watch as he came into his own. What have you seen from him throughout the year, how he's performed, his consistency level, things you might have expected?**

COACH SPAZIANI: Well, Johnathan, as we mentioned earlier on in the year, where he came from, his background as far as football and stuff goes, his athletic skills are not even questioned. Just didn't have the fundamentals and the base, if you will. He certainly has the athletic talent.

He's made progress. Certainly this year he's taken baby steps since he's been here, but this year he's taken some giant steps. He's getting better every week, learning to work, getting confidence. I'm happy for him because he's got unlimited potential. Hopefully we're just seeing the tip of the iceberg.

**Q. Is it more discipline, better committed?**

COACH SPAZIANI: I think it's just a matter of maturing and learning what it takes at this level how you have to prepare yourself, how you have to work, all the different things that you see.

Once again, I can't say it enough: the offense has helped. We have a little stability over there, we understand a few more things, understand Jonathan's ability. His work ethic and his desire to be good has been his biggest asset.

An interview with:

**DABO SWINNEY  
CLEMSON**

COACH SWINNEY: Good to be with you guys this week. Excited about traveling up to Durham. Very impressed with Duke. It's easy to see why they've had the success they've had this

year when you really watch them on film. Very sound offensively, defensively. Dangerous in the special teams. Just a lot of guys that you can just see believe in what they're doing.

They play very hard. They've had a couple games that have gotten away from them, but they have really competed their tails off for four quarters every week and we're going to have to play well.

We look forward to going up there. Had a good week of practice so far. Looks like we're going to be a little bit healthier this week than last week, which is a good thing. A couple extra days was good for us coming off the Thursday night game.

Look forward to coming up and competing at a place that our none of our guys have been up to before. Hopefully it will be a good trip for us.

**Q. Dabo, middle linebacker is such a critical position to the defense. What led to you giving Spencer Shuey a chance in there a couple games ago?**

COACH SWINNEY: Just performance, just how he played in the Georgia Tech game. We thought he played great in that game. Stephone has been great, too. We just felt that Spencer out-performed him. We tried to reward performance around here, hold these guys accountable weekly.

It's been good because I think Stephone (Anthony) has responded. But Spencer has followed it up now with a couple good ballgames and is playing really well for us. Just really simply the way he's performed.

He's a fourth-year guy. Really smart. Really understands what we're doing. Committed himself physically. He's gotten his body in great shape and is playing very fast. A lot of that is confidence in the knowledge of what we're doing.

Again, I think that's been a real positive. It's created the kind of competition that we like.

**Q. You mentioned this is his fourth year in the program. Some guys hang around that long and never do really develop as much as you would like. He seems to have really peaked at this point of his career. How much improvement has he made since he first came?**

COACH SWINNEY: Oh, man, he's made a ton. He's always been a good football player. Spencer has never been a bad player. He had a

lot of learn, redshirted, didn't get a lot of experience at linebacker as a redshirt freshman and sophomore. He's been a great special teams player since he's been here. Been probably one of the most respected guys.

My experience has been kind of the opposite. Most of the guys that are committed - you have some guys that don't pan out, usually they're not quite as committed as they need to be - but Spencer has always been a committed guy. Guys like that, if they continue to work, usually they end up being very solid players for you as juniors and seniors.

I've seen a lot of guys that their best years were their junior and senior year. To me that's the way it should be. Guys should be improving, getting better. Spencer Shuey is one of those guys that has developed nicely and got an opportunity this year.

We had some opportunities with guys being out, things like that. Shoot, he stepped up and has taken advantage of it, earned the trust of his coaches and teammates. He's performed very well, very well.

**Q. With Sammy (Watkins), just wondering after his performance last week if he's kind of finally hitting his stride after the early season for him.**

COACH SWINNEY: Yeah. He really has not played bad. Again, he played great in the first game, just didn't play a whole lot. One of his first touches went for a touchdown. Didn't play great at Florida State. That's when he was starting to get a little sick. We didn't know. Next thing you know, he's out another game. Then he came back. I thought he played pretty doggone good against Virginia Tech. Over a hundred yards all purpose, did some good things for us.

People expect him to just do the superhuman stuff because that's what he's made look easy. He hadn't had moments like that yet. But I knew it was just a matter of time. He's just too good a player, practices great.

Certainly didn't expect him to go have 200 something yards, but I thought he would play well against Wake Forest, and he did.

He's played four and a half games now. He's kind of settling in. As I said last week, we're going to need him to play great down the stretch for us to have the type of finish we want to have. Good to see him be able to make some of those plays that people expect him to make, running

away from people, breaking tackles, that type of stuff.

Again, as I tell people all the time, he impacts the game regardless of what the stat column says.

**Q. Certain things you liked out of your performance from that game last Thursday?**

COACH SWINNEY: Well, our quarterback got back on track. I didn't think he had played particularly well the last couple ballgames. He didn't play terrible; he just was not quite as sharp.

I thought he was outstanding. I mean, he really played extremely well. It was good to see him perform like that. Took care of the football.

We just talked about Sammy. It's good to see him have a break-out game like that. Again, we're really going to need him to play well down the stretch.

Good to see us spread the ball around to a lot of guys. I think that's what makes us dangerous, when we involve a lot of people.

Defensively our best performance. Good to see that. We're getting better. Five sacks, creating turnovers, tackling better. Those are all positives at this point in the season because, again, I know where we were. I know how far we've come.

Again, we're still a long way away from being great, but we are much improved. The guys played with great energy. They just seemed very focused on trying to be the best that they can be each day, each game. I like that mentality that I see out of our team.

Solid, solid win for us in executing our plan to win. That's what we got to keep focusing on.

**Q. How much of that was playing Wake versus Virginia Tech the previous week?**

COACH SWINNEY: He did not play well against Virginia Tech. He missed some throws that were open. Not to take anything away from Virginia Tech, but he wasn't near as sharp in any phase of the game against Virginia Tech. Just played much better. So that was good to see. Things he controlled. He performed a lot better in that area.

**Q. How did Bashaud Breeland look last night in practice?**

COACH SWINNEY: Pretty good. Feels a lot better. We'll go again today. I think he's going to be able to go. Probably will not start, but looks like we'll have him available and ready to role.

**Q. Regarding Duke's passing offense, is it the sophistication of it, the confusion it can create?**

COACH SWINNEY: The biggest concern is it's hard to get to the quarterback. They get rid of the ball. They are very sophisticated. They're very well-coached. They know what they're doing. It's all coordinated extremely well.

Every defense has weaknesses. The quarterback knows where to turn the ball to. He just doesn't hold the ball. That's why they're one of the least-sacked teams in the game. Lots of screens, then they'll take their shots. Even when they do, that ball comes out. You can tell that's something they coach very hard.

That's the biggest thing, is we've got to try to find some way to affect the quarterback and make him a little bit uncomfortable, maybe have to throw some balls earlier than he wants. One of the ways we got to be able to do that, we have to be effective in coverage to help our guys a little bit.

It's a big challenge. They have the ability to move the ball against anybody they play. We're going to have to be really sharp, especially in the secondary, that second level, with our backers, being coordinated, being where we're supposed to be, when we do bring pressure, matching up well.

An interview with:

**JIMBO FISHER  
FLORIDA STATE**

COACH FISHER: Getting ready for a Virginia Tech team as we took a couple days off after the Duke game. Pleased with the way we performed at Duke. Got sloppy at the end with ball security, have a couple things we need to clean up on special teams. Need to continue to get better in all three phases.

Played good early in all three phases. Duke is a good football team, well-coached. Like I say, we played well. We're getting better and better as a team each week. Like where we're going.

Going to have a huge challenge next week. Nine straight weeks of play. We needed to take a couple days away, recharge our batteries. We'll practice Wednesday and tomorrow. They cut their teeth on Thursday night football. I hope our kids can respond very well.

Questions.



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**Q. After seeing how well Duke played against a pretty strong North Carolina team the week before, what did you do differently to knock them out so early and control the game?**

COACH FISHER: Well, I think we controlled field position. Our special teams did a great job. Our defense played lights out. Converted on some big-play opportunities. They knew Duke was a great team. Had great respect for Duke, had to play our A game. Got a fast start in all three phases, were able to keep it going.

**Q. You were able to attack them deep a couple of times. Is that something you saw?**

COACH FISHER: We always look for explosive plays. I think explosive plays in today's football, we talk about the turnovers, the penalties, those things, but explosive plays are critical. We have good skills guys, we're constantly looking for those. Some opportunities presented themselves. EJ (Manuel) did a good job of reading some things and got the ball down the field.

**Q. Jimbo, Dustin Hopkins not only now is the all-time leading scorer in the ACC, he's one of the top in the NCAA. Can you talk a little bit about having a weapon like that, what he's meant to the program.**

COACH FISHER: He's tremendous. Everybody looks at the points. What he does on kickoffs, field position, being able to kick that ball high enough, not let certain guys touch the ball, it's a tremendous weapon. His ability to have the range on the field goals and the consistency, it's a huge weapon, a vital part of recruiting. We're blessed to have him. I know that.

**Q. He's a pretty good overall athlete.**

COACH FISHER: He's a great athlete. He runs 4.5, dunks the basketball backwards. He's a tremendous athlete.

**Q. Thought about another position for him?**

COACH FISHER: No. Too valuable right there. Don't want to get him hurt from kicking.

**Q: Coach, with your game with Virginia Tech a week away, talk a little bit about the experience of playing in Blacksburg, what that will mean for your team.**

COACH FISHER: It's a great challenge. That's a very tough environment, hostile environment. They have a lot of great tradition at Virginia Tech. They adjusted to Thursday night football, making them home games. It will be a huge challenge for us, to see how we accept that challenge as a football team that grows and gets better on the road.

It's going to be a very tough challenge, no doubt.

An interview with:

### **RANDY EDSALL MARYLAND**

COACH EDSALL: Well, we have a tough one against Georgia Tech on Saturday. Again, they're a team that were leading every game they've been in in the fourth quarter. We know it's going to be a tough one. We know we're going to see an offense that really likes to run the ball.

Our defense is going to be tested severely. Offensively we're going to be looking forward to getting Shawn Petty under the center, see how he's going to go out and help us try to get a win.

#### **Q. (Questions regarding the storm and the two quarterbacks practicing this week.)**

COACH EDSALL: Fortunately for us, Monday is always a day off for us when we had the brunt of Hurricane Sandy. So we didn't practice that day. We were able to get our normal work in on Sunday, which is limited for us on Sunday, but we got that in.

Yesterday we ended up having to go to play inside. We were able to get done what we needed to do on a Tuesday. Now we'll look forward to getting back out there today. We'll continue to watch how Shawn (Petty) and Brian (McMahon) progress.

#### **Q. What exactly does Shawn look like out there? How is he throwing the ball? Does he look like a linebacker at practice?**

COACH EDSALL: He played quarterback in high school. That was his primary position in high school. Again, he's doing the things that we're asking him to do. We're putting together a plan that we think can take his strong suits and

mesh them in with the abilities of the other guys we have on offense that we would like to get the ball. We'll go from there.

Again, each day you see progress being made. I'm sure we'll see more progress being made today, more progress tomorrow. He'll be ready to go come Saturday.

#### **Q. Was he kind of wide-eyed when he first realized what was happening, what his new role was going to be?**

COACH EDSALL: I tell you the truth, he was very excited about the opportunity. When I went to him last week and told him we were going to put him at quarterback, his eyes kind of lit up.

I think it's something about that position. Once you've been a quarterback, you always want to be a quarterback. I think what Shawn has in mind is he wants to do very, very well so he can stay at quarterback.

No, he's been good. He's been learning all the things that we've been teaching him. I think he's really looking forward to the opportunity that he's going to have under center on Saturday.

#### **Q. Randy, with Shawn, I gather he started picking up the offense last week. How much does that limit things in terms of a guy who is still learning the scheme, what to do in the huddle?**

COACH EDSALL: Well, again, he's been a guy who has been in a quarterback situation. He knows how to handle the huddle, everything else. Big things for him are in terms of the terminology, all those things. Again, maybe the checks that we have in.

Again, it's one of those things that we have to do as coaches. We started last week, we started to build a package for him a week ago. You add to it and you see how much he can handle. We'll have a game plan and packages ready to incorporate him on Saturday, what he does best, what the other guys do well.

#### **Q. Offense simplified because of that situation?**

COACH EDSALL: Again, a lot will depend as we go through the week in terms of the load that we feel like we can put on him, how much he can handle, how much he can master in a short period of time.

**Q. Watching your game the other day, looked like (Caleb) Rowe was in the game 'til the end. Talk about the mind-boggling nature of losing all these quarterbacks, whether you feel jinxed at all.**

COACH EDSALL: No, I don't feel jinxed. I think it's one of those situations this year that we're a little bit unlucky at the quarterback position.

I think if you take a look historically at teams throughout the years, you're probably going to lose maybe two to five players a year with knee injuries. For us it just happens that we lost our quarterbacks.

He was. He was in the game all the way 'til the end. It was the second-to-last play in the game on a third down when he came out of the pocket, ran the ball, came over to our sideline. As he went down, he felt his leg buckle. When he got up, I saw him, he didn't get up right away, kind of got on one knee. I saw he had a problem. He was limping a little bit. In my mind I'm thinking, We got to get Shawn ready to go.

The trainers came to me and said he was okay. He went in the last play. But overnight it stiffened up on him, swelled on him. We got the MRI on Sunday and found out he tore his ACL.

It's unfortunate for Caleb. I think he's got a bright future. I thought he did a lot of good things in the game. He would even learn from the mistakes he did make.

But we just have to move on as a team. I can tell you, all the guys on our team have a lot of confidence in Shawn in terms of him going out and playing. Everybody knows they've got to step up a little bit more. But we're excited for him.

I'm excited for our team. We've had upbeat practices Sunday and yesterday. We expect the same. We'll go out, compete, do everything we can to support Shawn. Everybody will step up and do their job to support him, as well.

**Q. How does Georgia Tech's defense look different since they made their coaching change?**

COACH EDSALL: Well, I don't think you see as much pressure as what you saw before. Again, I think there's subtleties there. I think they're running around very, very hard, playing hard, giving great effort. Again, it looks like they might not be as complex as what they had been previously.

**Q. When you say 'pressure', you mean blitz pressure?**

COACH EDSALL: Yes, in terms of some of the pressures they're bringing, trying to bring on you.

**Q. You have a very young team. Has focus or maturity been issues with this team?**

COACH EDSALL: I think our team has handled all the situations pretty well. One thing I wish we could have done a little bit better is finish the last two ball games we had where we could have made one more first down on offense or had one more stop on defense.

But we're getting great effort from our guys. Again, I just think sometimes when you have young guys out there playing who don't have a ton of experience, what happens is they get put into some situations where they may not have seen it. It might be the first time. They might not react the way you want.

Again, we've been in a lot of close ballgames all year. We're 4-4, so we do know how to win close games. But then we also still have to be able to make a couple plays at the end to secure some other victories, as well.

**Q. The game last year against Tech that Andy (Gonnella) got hurt, do you know how he's doing?**

COACH EDSALL: Andy is doing really well. He made a remarkable recovery from that injury. Like I said, he's a great young man who really worked hard. We can't thank the people from Georgia Tech enough for the assistance they gave him on that day with that horrific injury that he had.

**Q. Do you know what he's doing?**

COACH EDSALL: He's working back up in New York, still trying to get some other things going, but doing really well.

**Q. Does the kicking game situation remain the same with Brendan (Magistro) doing 35 to 40 and Brad (Craddock) further after that and how do you get Brad's confidence back just mentally?**

COACH EDSALL: That's the plan right now. Again, as we continue to practice the rest of the week, we'll have both of them kicking. We'll see how it turns out. But that is the plan.

Again, that is the one thing as coaches

that we have to figure out and help Brad (Craddock). We went out on Sunday, and he nailed seven kicks right down the middle, did a good job. We just got to get him to be more consistent, for him to relax and use good technique. When he does, he can be outstanding. He has a good leg.

That's something we as coaches have to continue to work with him on, to get him to understand. He really has the ability to be a really good field goal kicker.

An interview with:

**TOM O'BRIEN  
NC STATE**

Certainly we have to regroup after a really tough loss for us last Saturday. Playing a Virginia team, a little bit of a role reversal than we were a year ago. To think at that point we're 3-3, really banged up and beat up, had an open week before we went to Charlottesville, come away with a victory.

Virginia is a similar situation. Have an open week, get themselves healed, come down here. We're going to have to play great here on Saturday in order to have a chance to win this football game.

With that, I'd be happy to take any questions.

**Q. Tom, obviously Virginia has been dogged by turnovers this year. Seems like you've run the gamut with turnovers. What are the keys to not turning it over?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, certainly I think quarterbacks throw interceptions. Sometimes you can't really get on a quarterback, if he's making good throws, the ball just happens to be interceptions. He's making bad decisions, that's one thing. You can't discourage a kid from trying to throw the football.

Fumbles are a matter of concentration work and personal pride. It's something we spend a lot of time practicing, making sure we don't fumble the football. I think that's something that can be corrected, fumbling the football. Interceptions, sometimes stuff happens.

**Q. You forced 16 turnovers. Virginia has forced four. Historically have your teams been good at forcing turnovers?**

COACH O'BRIEN: As we started to build this program the first couple years, we certainly did. But I think the last couple years since Jon Tenuta has been here, I think he's helped a lot in creating havoc. I think my first, second, third year, we didn't intercept any passes. We have to learn to play our coverages, learn to do what we're coaching. We've been able to do that. Now we are intercepting the ball, knocking it out.

**Q. Helps to have (David) Amerson?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Helps to have guys up front that can rush to help those boys in the back.

**Q. Are you happy or unhappy with the number of dropped passes you've had this year?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Certainly you can't be happy with dropped passes. Once again, I think that's a matter of concentration. We had 10 on Saturday. We have a quarterback that threw for 460 yards. If you catch some of those passes, some of those are game-changing passes. He might have had 600 yards passing the ball.

I've always talked to the quarterbacks about it, the law of averages is going to play out. They're going to make 10 great catches in the next four games. They owe us those. They have to find a way to make 10 great catches and get us back to even.

**Q. When a team doesn't have a lot of seniors, is younger, is it usually the case maturity issues are going to come with that team?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, I mean, I think that's a big problem. The more seniors you have, I only got four games to play, it picks up the whole football team. Certainly it picks up the whole team when this is my last year, there's leadership, they're pushing the younger guys to play. Some younger guys say, I got one or two more years to play. There isn't a sense of urgency when you don't have a senior football team, I think.

**Q. What are the pitfalls of playing a team like Virginia that's lost six in a row, not having the kind of year they would like to have, getting your guys ready for a team like that?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, I drew the analogy when we started this conversation. We've talked a lot about that, tried to put ourselves in their position because we were in it last year, how they're preparing it.

One thing we always concentrate on, try to push, is that we have to outwork the team we're going to play on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. I don't know how they're working, but we have to make sure we're outworking them, taking care of ourselves.

We still have a lot to play for. This thing hasn't been decided yet. We lost our hammer with the loss at Carolina on Saturday. There's still a chance. Florida State needed help for somebody to beat us. We need help for somebody to beat Florida State, we're right back in the thick of things.

We have a lot to play for and can't afford a mis-step anywhere along the way.

**Q. What do you see about Virginia that potentially they could jump up and bite you?**

COACH O'BRIEN: They have a great tailback. They have two of them in (Perry) Jones and (Kevin) Parks. They're playing with basically (Phillip) Sims as a first-year quarterback. The open week can do wonders for a quarterback, to go back research what he's done. He's got some things in their offense they can correct. It gives chances to the quarterback coach and their offensive staff to emphasize and to make him successful.

Still have huge guys up front. Three of their starters are back from last year, functional offensive line.

Defensively they're the third best defense in the conference. We already played Florida State and Maryland two of the last three games we played. So they're third best in the conference statistically on defense. Coach (Jim) Reid does a great job of putting them in position to be successful.

They're a good football team that's had some misfortune. Hopefully we can make sure we take care of ourselves and win the football game on Saturday.

**Q. David (Amerson) gets a lot of credit at corner. Can you talk about C.J. Wilson?**

COACH O'BRIEN: C.J. had to sit out the first four games of the year, then played him in the Miami game a little bit. Didn't have the type of game he wanted to have or we wanted to have.

He kind of backed up Juston Burris, especially in our substitution defense. Juston dinged himself up a little bit Saturday. C.J. got in, had a chance to play, intercepted the ball in the end zone, stripped the ball from the receiver downfield, had a chance to make a third play. Ball bounced off his fingertips. If he catches that one, it's a pick-six, there's nobody, he's running 35 yards for a touchdown.

Like a lot of our kids, we preach to them, when you get your opportunity, you have to make the most of it. He's been a great team guy, working hard in practice. Got his opportunity on Saturday, made the most of it.

**Q. Does the other corner position get picked on?**

COACH O'BRIEN: I don't know if people pick on people one way or another. I'm sure they may go in, in this pass, we're going to go here or there. Most people are progression passes, go one, two, three, dial up whatever pass they think.

An interview with:

**JIM GROBE  
WAKE FOREST**

COACH GROBE: We're disappointed we didn't play well against Clemson. Of course, Clemson I thought played great. They got a heck of a football team. Thought their guys played lights out. We didn't play as well as we needed to to compete and have a chance to win.

Hopefully we'll bounce back and play better this week. We've got a Boston College team coming to town that has some confidence after beating Maryland last weekend. We know we're going to have a tough time this Saturday, but hopefully we can play better.

**Q. How important is getting to a bowl game for your program?**

COACH GROBE: Well, I think it's important. We feel like here bowl games are kind of a measure of how successful you are. So I think it's very, very important.

I think it's tough to get one, though. With the schedule that we play, the people we play

against, it makes it really tough to find six wins.

Of course, you're kind of torn, your goals going into the season, everybody would like to win the division, play for the ACC championship. But I think bowl games are very important.

**Q. Do you feel at this point now with four games left on the schedule it's crunch time for you guys?**

COACH GROBE: Yeah, I think we missed a couple opportunities earlier in the season. I think we're disappointed that we had great opportunities against Duke, against Maryland, didn't get it done. Our backs are against the wall right now.

With four games left, we have four really good teams to play. We'll have to play our best football to win any of them. To win two of them is going to be a challenge.

But I think we're capable of winning all four. It's a matter of staying healthy, playing good, having a good plan as coaches, having the kids go execute it.

Yeah, I would say our backs are against the wall a little bit for sure.

**Q. Jim, (Michael) Campanaro caught six passes. Watching him during the game, then watching on film, how did he really play? How rusty was he?**

COACH GROBE: He was pretty rusty. For him, he had gotten to where, when he broke his hand early in the Duke game, he was really playing well. He was blocking well, running his routes great. He catches the ball really well.

The nice thing about Camp, he can do something with it after he catches it. He was playing at such a high level. You compare where he was to how he played against Clemson, not very good.

But he did give us a spark. The kids like having him out there. They feel better when he's on the field. Made some nice catches. Didn't run his routes as sharp as we need him to. Wasn't as well-conditioned. He hadn't done much in about three weeks.

Hopefully after this week we'll get him in shape a little bit better and he'll be a little bit sharper running routes, running the plays the way they're designed to be run.

**Q. Is he able to go full tilt in practice without any restrictions or reservations?**

COACH GROBE: Yeah, he is. He's really to the point where I don't think we worry about his hand as much. It's just getting him back in shape, getting him back to playing at a high level.

**Q. Jim, how much do you write off last Thursday as playing a great team or how much of it is this is what we need to do better than last week?**

COACH GROBE: It's tough. I think any time you get beat by a really, really good football team you have a tendency to want to go ahead and put it behind you as quick as possible.

As good as Clemson is, as talented as they are, especially offensively, we just didn't play very well. We had a couple plays in the game where they just had a better player and made a great play. But several times we just didn't play the coverage very well and gave them big plays.

I think part of it is we got to chalk it up to getting beat by a better team. The other side to that is we didn't play as good as we were capable of. It wouldn't have taken much on our part to be better in our coverages, limit their big plays.

If we just limited a couple of those big plays, now it gets interesting in the fourth quarter. I think all the credit goes to Clemson because they made the plays they needed to make. But it wasn't total mismatches physically, it was our kids really not playing the way they were coached to play.

We want to put it behind us, but we also want to improve. You don't improve much if you don't learn from past mistakes.

**Q. How confident are you that you can rectify those things this week?**

COACH GROBE: We have another really good throwing football team. I really like their quarterback. He's a big, strong-armed kid. Got a great sense of their offense, a big arm to get the ball anywhere down the field, does a good job with his underneath stuff. They have two or three receivers. Amidon kid is special. Swigert kid is a good player. They have good receivers to throw the football to.

We better improve. We've got to play better than we did against Clemson or some of the same things will happen because Boston College is really, really talented throwing the football.

**Q. Most teams running the spread don't even have a fullback. You have a guy leading your team in touchdown catches. He's never a runner. He blocks and catches passes. Is that his role?**

COACH GROBE: Yeah, a little bit of a switch for us. Unfortunately we played Tommy

(Bohanon) as a true freshman. I wish we hadn't done that. I'd like to have him for another year because he's really starting to come into his own.

We felt like this was going to be a season where we weren't going to be able to spend a lot of time lining up in the I formation, running power and iso, stuff like that. We kind of made him a hybrid. Sometimes we'll get in the I, but we'll offset him, we'll put him at tight end, put him at slot in a wing position, use him as a blocker, but also use him as a receiver.

In the past he's been a short-yardage kid for us in the I formation, but we really haven't had a chance to do that with him. We've used him primarily as a blocker and receiver but at the perimeter running up inside.

He's got good hands, become a dependable guy for us. I think our quarterbacks feel as good throwing the ball to Tommy as anybody on the field.

**Q. The passes he's catching, is he catching those coming out of the slot or as a fullback?**

COACH GROBE: Mostly from a slot position, tight end alignment. We get him more in the flat out of the backfield, more down the field from the slot or wing position.

An interview with:

## **PAUL JOHNSON GEORGIA TECH**

COACH JOHNSON: I tell you, it's a really tough challenge, I think, going to play against a Maryland defense that's not only really good in rushing defense, as you said, but they're good in total defense and scoring defense as well. I think Randy (Edsall) has done a great job coaching this year, coming through all the adversity they've had with injuries on the other side and all those things.

We'll need to play a lot better than we did a week ago. We played against another defense that was pretty good, and they lived up to the billing and we didn't hold up our end. So it will be a challenge. It's a little bit of a challenge trying to prepare for them because we haven't seen the quarterbacks on tape. You just have to kind of

guess which direction they're going to go with him. Also they have a new defensive coordinator that we haven't played against. So lot of challenges, but looking forward to having an opportunity to go play again this week.

**Q. You mentioned the difficulty in preparing for their offense because you haven't seen and there is no tape on this guy, and you don't know exactly what parts of their package they're going to be able to put in. So how do you practice against what you think they might do?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think we have to try to make sure that we shore up our end, the things that we haven't done well. They're going to run part of their package. We just don't know which they'll highlight. So we have to guess a little bit, just be prepared. Part of playing defense is hopefully you have a scheme that you can lineup and play and be sound no matter what they do.

I'm sure the young man is a good athlete, and he'll have a set of skills. Maybe we have to adjust on the fly.

**Q. Conversely from your offensive standpoint, where do you -- what kinds of things do you need to do to get back?**

COACH JOHNSON: Third down a week ago was awful. We didn't convert any third downs. It was a funny game because there weren't a lot of possessions. The other team managed to hold the ball, and we scored once on defense and once on special teams. We had the ball maybe eight possessions. We missed a field goal, kicked a field goal. We couldn't stay out there and convert third downs. If you don't convert third downs, you're not going to be on the field long enough to get any rhythm going.

**Q. I know that you got Vad (Lee) in the game last week and are facing a decision there at quarterback. Just wondering what he's been able to do for your offense and what the competition has been like out there at practice?**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think that Vad's a good athlete. We're certainly excited about him. He's going to play some on Saturday. We haven't decided yet in what role and exactly how that's going to be. We've still got a couple days of practice, and that will determine to a large part what happens.

**Q. What's the competition been like with him and Tevin (Washington) this week?**

COACH JOHNSON: It hasn't been any different than it has any week, really. They get along. They try to help each other out. They try to make each other better.

**Q. Has it lit a fire under Tevin at all?**

COACH JOHNSON: I don't think so. Not any more so than normal. Tevin's not been a problem practicing and those kind of things. He usually comes to work.

**Q. Just to follow up on that, what do you need to see out of one of these quarterbacks in practice, or what do you need to see out of one of them in the game to think, "okay, that's exactly what I'm looking for"? That is the guy, this is what I need.**

COACH JOHNSON: Well, you want somebody that can not only run the system and do what you're doing, but also maybe that can provide a spark and some big plays. I think what gets lost and we struggled a little bit record wise this year, and it's not up to what we'd like or expect is the fact that in spots, Tevin hasn't played that poorly. He's done some good things. It's kind of highlighted when you're not winning when you struggle a little bit. So therefore he's under that microscope.

Certainly Vad's a little bigger and a little faster with a stronger arm, and right now doesn't have as good of working knowledge in the system and the experience that he has. So it's kind of a tradeoff with what you go with.

**Q. Whichever quarterback you pick will be facing a Maryland defense that I don't think has given up more than 20 points in a game in quite some time I guess. What challenge does that defense pose for you as you look at them on film?**

COACH JOHNSON: As you said, they're really good on defense. I think they've got good down guys. (Joe) Vellano's certainly one of the best players in the conference. The linebackers are really good. You couple that with two pretty good corners, and those are the ingredients to have a good defense. They played well, and it will be a challenge for us no question.

**Q. You're going up against a guy, Joe Vellano that a lot of people think is the best defensive tackle in this league. Can you talk about him and what you have to do, the problems he presents?**

COACH JOHNSON: He got my vote a year ago when he had 16 stackles out here against us when we played. But I think that you just try to neutralize him. He's a good player. He's going to make plays. You try to be in a position to help double him or help chip on him when you can. It will be a challenge to our offensive line. They know who he is and are aware of what he's done. He's a good player. You're not going to completely stop a player like that. He's going to make plays.

**Q. I wondered if you've been in touch with Jonathan Dwyer. He got a chance to play in Pittsburgh and has obviously been playing very well?**

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, Jonathan was here a couple weeks ago. He was here at a game and around. We're excited for him now that he's finally getting this opportunity and making the most of it. So it's great. We're proud of Jonathan.

**Q. Is it me or does he look a lot bigger now? Has he put on weight to play for them?**

COACH JOHNSON: He's probably a little bigger than he was here. He's probably a little better proportioned too. So I'm sure he's worked hard. Jonathan's a competitive kid, and I'm sure he's done what he had to do to get on the field and be successful.

An interview with:

## LARRY FEDORA NORTH CAROLINA

COACH FEDORA: Our football team is welcoming this open week, and a much-needed open week after 13 straight weeks of practices. So it will enable us to get some guys healed up and also work on some fundamentals that we need to improve on. So hopefully we'll be a better team coming out of this open week.

**Q. In your estimation, what is it that makes Eric Ebron so tough for defenses to cover?**

COACH FEDORA: Well, one, he has great speed for a guy that's 245 pounds. He can

run routes like a wide receiver. He not only uses the defensive back's leverage, but he understands how to break the leverage down and take advantage of it. Then he's a big bodied guy that knows how to use his body. So he's definitely a weapon for us all over the field.

**Q. Just to follow up, it seems like there's been a lot of big moments and then a couple of moments where I don't know if concentration is an issue or consistency. What is the next step to him getting even better?**

COACH FEDORA: Well, I think he's still a young player. You've got to improve each and every day. So what we need Eric to do is become more consistent. He's got the ability, and we put a lot on his plate this last week. He was also playing defense, he's involved in our special teams and he was playing offense.

So I knew going into the game that he was probably going to have some problems offensively because we're asking him to do so much, and it did. He had a couple of drop passes that he doesn't normally have. This week of fundamental work will really be good for him.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about the two-point conversion Saturday. Is that something you call from the sidelines before the kick?**

COACH FEDORA: Which one?

**Q. Both of them.**

COACH FEDORA: No, the second one was a botched snap. It's something that you work on every week. Didn't handle the snap correctly. We have a designed play if that happens. Our guys executed that play, but the first one was cold, yes.

**Q. Was it something you saw on film and you felt like you could exploit?**

COACH FEDORA: We just felt the way they had aligned to the look we had given, we'd be able to take advantage of something. So if you notice we lined up the first time, and that was basically to get a feel for what they were going to try to do against it. Once we saw what we wanted, we could take advantage of it.

**Q. Although your guys can't go to Charlotte for the championship game, how important would it be for them to finish first in your division which you could certainly do?**

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COACH FEDORA: Well, first of all, we've never done it here so that was our number one goal going into the season was to win the Coastal Division. Whether or not we're recognized or not, I mean, it's still about our football team and what we and what our goals are and what we can accomplish. So we can't worry about what happened outside. It has nothing to do with this football team right now. So that was a goal.

It's something that's still very, very important to us. It is a thing that our guys are taking a tremendous amount of pride in right now.

**Q. I'm curious with the off week how you handle that? How many days do you give them off? Do you work them a little harder this week in the middle of the week knowing you have another week to get ready?**

COACH FEDORA: Yeah, a lot of it depends on when your open week falls in your season and what's going on. This is late in the season for us. 13 weeks straight of practices since August 2nd. For me, we worked Sunday night with normal practice, and we came back and worked out on Monday which we don't ever do, because we weren't game planning on Monday.

So we've got some fundamental work and conditioning. But more work with our seconds and our other guys who are redshirting, to get some good work with them. Then Tuesday more of a practice, and still concentrating on our twos and our other guys. We had about an hour scrimmage for our guys that are not playing.

Today we'll dedicate the entire day to Georgia Tech to get a jump there. And then they'll have Thursday and Friday and I say that, but they're going to lift and get some conditioning in on Thursday, and they'll be off Friday and Saturday. Then we'll come back and go to work on Sunday.

It's about for me at this point in the season, with these guys and the way it is about getting guys healed up that need to get healed up that we're going to need down the stretch. It was also continuing to develop the depth that we have in the season. Because a lot of those guys have played for us. They played for us and they've done well. So we need them to keep coming on.

**Q. How big an advantage is it to have an extra week with Georgia Tech and their offense is a little different?**

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COACH FEDORA: Yeah, no doubt. If you asked every coach they would all like to have an extra week for Georgia Tech's offense. It's definitely difficult to try to get ready for and defend in two days on a Tuesday/Wednesday or two days and a week. So hopefully these extra days will help us a little bit.

**Q. I'm sure you've discussed this at length with the media down there. But over the course of your career, how much have you used a primary ball carrier as a punt returner? Obviously, great success with (Gio) Bernard this year doing that.**

COACH FEDORA: Actually this is the first time. Never in the past have I had a guy that had those same kind of skills. So that was a nice thing that Gio was able to bring to the table. But I've never actually had that opportunity in the past.

There were some circumstances around Gio getting into that position during camp. He showed that -- my thought process, never did he say I'm a punt returner. It was just when we had a situation with T.J. Thorpe and Reggie Wilkins, from there it became, okay, if I've got to put the ball in somebody's hands out in open field, who do I want it in? And said, okay, can you catch punts? Then we went from there.

**Q. You don't see that a lot through college football. Do you think there is any reluctance to put your main ball carrier in that role because of the injuries that occur on special teams?**

COACH FEDORA: That guy takes a lot of hits, usually, in a season. But if you look at Gio and what's happened this year, he's only played 370-something snaps and 34 of those have been on special teams. So he's had 340 offensive snaps, and Gio is a kind of runner. Gio is able to evade most of those blows.

So is there a concern? Maybe. From me, special teams is just as important as anything else we do. That's our philosophy here. So it was never really a concern about injuries for me, no.

An interview with:

## COACH MIKE LONDON VIRGINIA

COACH LONDON: Coming off a bye week, we had an opportunity to look at some things and evaluate some of the things that we're doing and get some guys healed up. We look forward to -- it's our road game. Look forward to going down to Raleigh and playing a very good N.C. State team. So the challenge has been presented and we're excited about having a chance to play on the field now.

**Q. How important is getting to a bowl game for your program considering you were able to do it a year ago?**

COACH LONDON: Well, I think that's something that's a by product of having six-plus wins. Where we sit right now, our approach is beyond looking at bowl games. Our approach is being better and improving from the last several games and eliminating those things that have kind of caused us to not come out on top. That's us taking care of the ball, getting the ball, and reducing penalties.

You can look down the road at those things, but my main concern is the most and the immediate. That is the next game, the next game with N.C. State, with the opportunity to, if we play well, have a chance to win. Then you can worry about adding up wins after that. But we're in the process and in the mode of the most important game for us. I know you may say it sounds like coach speak, but for us, the most important game is this next game we're getting ready to play in Raleigh.

**Q. Would the weather this week have been a problem if you hadn't had the open date to start looking at N.C. State or was it not that billing a problem anyway?**

COACH LONDON: Well, as it turned out, very unfortunate for the situation that happened more North of us and the devastation that was incurred. But here in Charlottesville, that Monday the guys were normally off on Monday anyways, so even though classes were cancelled, that didn't impact preparation. Then Tuesday, even though classes were cancelled again, we normally practice

in the mornings, we moved practice back later on that afternoon and were able to get in a Tuesday practice. So we were able to do Tuesday and today, and it looks like everything is fine for tomorrow. So in essence, it worked out to be kind of a regular work week for us.

I think those open week opportunities prior to all this weather being an issue was something that we needed to do to make sure we took care of ourselves as we go down latter part of these games.

**Q. N.C. State has a cornerback in David Amerson that's probably had more interceptions in the last two years than anybody in the country. He had two against you guys last year. When you go up against a guy like that at corner, do you try to game plan to avoid him to go somewhere else? Or do you just --**

COACH LONDON: Obviously, he's a great player. He's a draft pick. I think he had 13 interceptions last year and I think maybe three or four this year. The thing that he does is he'll play -- a lot of people try to put three receivers to one side and try to go one-on-one on the back side with a single receiver. Well, he's that guy on the back side because of the match-ups and the opportunities there, even in the nickel package, when they bring in that extra guy, he's an extra nickel DB. He's always around the ball. What they do as a secondary well is they're always around the ball, contesting passes and things like that.

He's such a talent that he finds the ball. It makes you look at some times what you try to do because you have to look at who you're trying to do it against. You respect all opponents and their abilities. But you have to be aware that there are some players that are dynamic players that you're going to have to pay special attention to.

Over the course of his career, and you can see that he's earned a lot of recognition for the style of player that he is. Rightfully so. So we do have to know where he's at, and be cognizant of the fact that he's always around the ball. Like you said, had he two against us last year and one deep in our red zone. We just had to be aware and take care of the ball which has been our issue.

**Q. Is there some way you can attack him throwing a certain kind of pass or trying to run at him or screen in front of him or something like that to maybe knock him off stride?**

COACH LONDON: I don't know whether you can attack. You take all five offensive linemen and try to block him or something. But I think that he, again, his man-to-man skills are such that that's why he's such a great player. There may be some things that you can do with a high-low concept or slot receivers into the zone or bubble pass, screen passes out there to try to get a blocker on him. But great players always tend to rise to the level of the challenge, whatever that challenge may be. No doubt he's done that in his career, and he'll continue to do it.

But there are some things that, again, as I said, we're trying to be cognizant of where he is, where he's aligned and who is going to block him. That's going to be very important for us.

**Q. The two teams playing on Thursday night on ESPN, Miami and Virginia Tech, you still have left to play. I'm wondering, and I'm not sure if anyone asked you this, if you're going to watch that game or you just don't have time and you just watch film later?**

COACH LONDON: We always, if there's time, sure I'll watch as much as I can or normally on Thursday nights it's game planning and we're doing some things. But since it's going to be on TV, we'll get the TV copy of it so we can hear the commentators and different things like that. So if there's an opportunity, I will. But I know that we'll get the TV version of it.

As you said, there are two teams left on our schedule. It's important for us to see not only take care of ourselves this upcoming week, but also see what our opponents do in coming down the stretch here. I guess the answer to your question would be yes. Thank you.

**Q. Is a bye week always good or are there bad times for a bye week? I assume this has been a good time for you.**

COACH LONDON: I've been on teams where the bye weeks for whatever reason came really early. You're not always looking for -- sometimes the bye weeks may come with a team that maybe is a specialty team, a team that does a certain type of offense that you want to have maybe an extra week to prepare. Most times you'd like them mid-season, not to the last part of the season, but mid-season on because of injuries maybe sustained earlier and getting those guys back because you can regroup or do some things

schematically with your own team. I guess if you asked different coaches what their preference would be, sometimes it just works out.

You have a bye when you have a bye. For us this year, I think the bye came at a time that we needed to take care of ourselves and take a step back and assess what we're doing. But different coaches may think otherwise.

**Q. Continuing along that line how important was it for a guy like Phillip Sims in that bye week to really work on a lot of different things and get some of the system down?**

COACH LONDON: Very important. Not only just for Phillip, but the timing aspect of the receivers with him; the voice inflexion with the offensive line, just so many different things. Then for our other positions, just collectively as well as far as honing in on the technique and fundamentals that are needed to perform, to make some personnel movements and special teams, to make some personnel movements with guys that are playing in the game, guys that have played sparingly in the early part of the year and decided to give them more significant reps. They got those reps in practice.

So the opportunities were extended to a lot of guys to give them more reps, give them more looks, give them more opportunities. So you hope when we get out on the field in game situations, that part of practices and the looks have helped them and will help them to succeed on the field.

An interview with:

## **FRANK BEAMER VIRGINIA TECH**

COACH BEAMER: This time of the year you want games to be important. This certainly is an important game for both of us, Miami and Virginia Tech. Going to have to play a really good football game mistake free.

I think Miami, like us in some positions, have played some young guys. But I see them getting better, and had a good outing against Florida State in the last ballgame. So it's going to be a tough ballgame, so we need to be tough.

**Q. Luther (Maddy) was in the last two games. How has his emergence fuelled your pass rush? Is he a big catalyst to the success you're having there?**

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, he's gotten healthy. He battled an ankle there for a while, but, yeah, I think you kind of notice him out there. He's been a good player. He's looking forward to going back to where he grew up. So this game certainly means a lot to him.

**Q. Is he sort of the driving force behind it? Have all the guys come out at the same time?**

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, I think across the board you have (James) Gayle, you noticed him there, and Derrick Hopkins, you notice him there and (Corey) Marshall and (J.R.) Collins, so I think Antoine Hopkins, you know he has been in there. So I think as a group by playing a lot of guys, they can stay rested and go maximum effort every single play.

**Q. The last thing, how important is it to slow down your opponent team's running game when you're trying to get that pass rush going? You're able to do that and let those guys get pressure on the quarterback?**

COACH BEAMER: Absolutely. I think there is a lot of difference if you know it's likely they need to throw the football or it could go either way, run or passes, there is quite a bit of running passes.

**Q. With Storm-related issues, did you anticipate any adjustments you had to make getting down here with your schedules at all or were you guys relatively okay?**

COACH BEAMER: Well, John Ballein handles that for me. I think everything's okay and on time right now.

**Q. The second thing, you guys have been obviously pretty good on Saturdays and Mondays too over the years. But what is it about Thursday that's just seems to bring out the best in your kids over the years?**

COACH BEAMER: We're playing a really good football team as we are this time. I think Miami has always been a team that we've respected. The players they have, how they play, the success they've had over the years. So I think your opponent has a lot to do with that.

**Q. I was wondering if you had back-to-back Thursday games before, and in general, what kind of challenges does this unique schedule present for your team particularly going against Miami and FSU in consecutive weeks?**

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, we've done it the last two or three years, actually. You like being one of the few games on, sometimes the only game, on Thursday night. If you go out and play well -- if you don't play well, it's not real good. I tell you, at the front end of it, you get a couple extra days. At the back end of it, you get a couple extra days. This time of year any extra day of rest is a good thing.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Thursday night too. In most cases it seems like the home team gets even a bigger home court edge on Thursday night. You guys have a better road record on Thursday night. Am I right that the home crowd is usually pumped up, and how have you guys dealt with that successfully?**

COACH BEAMER: We like our crowd here in Blacksburg. They usually get cranked. But I think anyone when you're competing and there is a lot of energy in the place and a lot of excitement and a crowd that is very much into it, I think most players like playing in that type of situation. I'd much rather play in that type of situation like we're going to have down in Miami as opposed to not having much energy or excitement around. I think our players would like that too or do like that.

**Q. You talked earlier about what a big game is for both teams. You guys are in a different situation this year than you or they have been used to in a long, long time. How does that change your approach when you aren't going to win ten games this is year? You still might get in the division championship games though.**

COACH BEAMER: Everything in the ACC is still available for both of us. So you get to this time of year and still have that opportunity so I think you look forward to that. Starting off, this time of year you want to be playing for something and both of us certainly are.

An interview with:

## DAVID CUTCLIFFE DUKE

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, another huge challenge for us again this week, with an extremely talented Clemson team, defending ACC champions and obviously we have Tallahassee pretty beat up physically and emotionally getting beat pretty badly. So a challenging week of preparation. Guys are trying to bounce back, get themselves ready for another huge challenge as we face the toughest part of our schedule down the stretch. With that, I'll take your questions.

**Q. Clemson made a change at middle linebacker a couple of months ago, and I wondered what you noticed about that watching them on film?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: They changed their entire defensive alignment from three down to four down which changes your linebacker play a bit. I think they're probably at a point where they're learning the new system, learning their personnel, had a feel for what was the best combination. For a lot of us, it takes a while to learn your people. It's been good for them. Obviously, they've played well and played more consistent in this circumstance. So it's made them pretty versatile, too, that they can kind of go either way with their three-down front or their four-down front.

**Q. Have you noticed anything from the guy in the middle, Spencer (Shuey)?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Like I said, he's a youngster that I'm very familiar with him. He's from Charlotte. He's a good football player, but, again, he fits what they're doing. He has performed well.

**Q. You guys haven't played Clemson since 2008. Is there an unfamiliarity there? Does it have any impact on the preparation of the game?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I don't think so. Our guys watch a lot of football, and Clemson's got a lot of high-profile players. They keep up with them, so I think our players know who their guys are. They've seen them a lot on TV, and they're playing at home. It might be a little different if we

were headed to Clemson to play.

It's much like it was last week. I think they weren't just familiar with Florida State for a couple of reasons. One, obviously, on the road, they weren't familiar with Tallahassee at all. I think Clemson's got 12 players from the state of North Carolina, a lot of players obviously from the state of South Carolina. We have some from down here. A lot of these kids have played against each other in the Shrine Bowl. They're just more familiar with each other being geographically closer.

**Q. Last week your placekicker Ross Martin had a rocky start. Are you doing anything in practice to challenge him? How do you approach that?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: No, because his practice habits are really good. We've put him under pressure a good bit in practice anyway. So no real change needed. Neither he nor Will had their best ballgames, obviously. So you put it behind you.

I said it earlier this week; you can't ever be great until you learn how to fail then come back and perform at a high level. That's what the great ones do. We've seen placekickers in the NFL, great ones miss kicks in the first half and hit game winners. We've seen quarterbacks throw three interceptions and turn around and put together phenomenal fourth quarter wins.

So that is part of becoming a great specialist is that you have to fail and then turn right back around and be great. That's what his challenge is. He's got to do that for us to be as good as we can be.

**Q. Second straight week you're facing a powerful team. What do you have to do better this time around to make it more competitive than it was when you played Florida State?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: The biggest thing is we're a team that has to represent ourselves in all three phases of the game, which is what we've done. We've worked hard at developing a program like that where our offense, defense, and the kicking game complement each other. When we played pretty darn good in all three of them, we're a good football team. We went to Tallahassee and played poorly in all three phases.

We're not going to survive on talent alone when we close the gap better than what we did by a long shot. But we need all three phases to hold our heads up and play well. We don't have to play

great but pretty well. I think that is the biggest difference. If we don't play well in all three aspects, we'll have a difficult time with great teams like Florida State or Clemson.

**Q. Is there anything you can tell us about (Sean) Renfree, how he's been this week or do we have to wait for the injury report?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I can tell you that he's better than I thought he would have been. He's been able to get some work. We'll see. I think he's going to be cleared and good. But I can't make that call. He's not had any contact or anything close to anything like that, but he's gotten some work.

One of the big things down there was he was so sick before the game, that I think the combination of the two just threw him for a big loop, a big hit, and he was already running the high fever and struggling. I was worried about him in pregame meal down there because he looked horrible. The fever stayed with him through Monday evening. That's one reason he's feeling a good bit better right now. So hopefully he passes all those tests and he says he feels good, then we'll be okay to go forward.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Brandon Connette. Early in the season he was a huge weapon for you a lot of ways. Short yardage, pass receiving. I know he was hurt and missed a couple of games. He's come back. Is he getting close to the point where he can be the contributor that he was from the first part of the season?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: He's kind of pieced together a little bit physically right now. We have to pick and choose our spots. He's got some pretty significant things going on physically. But he is one tough guy. He's eager. We're just kind of taking it day-to-day to see where we can get with him. As you well know, you follow us. It's been one of those years that's been incredible the number of things that players have pushed through from an injury standpoint to continue to play, and he's certainly one of them.

**Q. Anthony Boone has been so effective for you when he had extended playing time early in the year a couple times. You had mentioned this weekend that he had a little bit of a rough game on Saturday as well. What is the key to getting him going?**

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, he's another one of those guys. You don't want to go into detail, that's battling through some things physically. He's been in the training room a lot. It's not what you would call injured or even questionable or nothing that you have to go there, but he's not full speed. That is the biggest thing is to get him where he can practice consistently. You have some best practice time and things like that that's not ideal, but he's been a little better the last couple of days.

Anthony's got a lot of pride. To go 3 for 15 in a ballgame is unthinkable to him. So he's really worked hard and bounced back. Every time I go into the training room, he's not in class. He's in there. So he's trying to get himself back full speed.

An interview with:

## COACH AL GOLDEN MIAMI

COACH GOLDEN: Obviously we're in our final preparations for Virginia Tech, and our kids are excited about the opportunity we have. Clearly, they're the reigning champions in our division, and it's a big game and we're excited for the type of atmosphere we'll have tomorrow night at Sun Life.

**Q. I'm curious, as you watch Virginia Tech on tape, 92, the defensive tackle, what have you seen from his play and how key is he to what they've been able to do the last two games in the pass rush?**

COACH GOLDEN: I think he's growing up, feeling more comfortable, and playing with a lot of confidence. He's had two sacks in each of the last two games. He's a physical player that has a quick body and transition to a pass rush. It's been very effective for him in the last two games, so clearly we have to account for him.

**Q. How important has it been to be able to slow the opposing team's running game down in order to get that pass rush?**

COACH GOLDEN: That's obviously always been at the foundation of Bud Foster defenses. If you just look at since the turn of the

century, you're talking about leading the country in interceptions, and I think they're number two in TFLs or something to that effect.

But it all stems from playing an eight-man front. One of the things that you have to do is try to drive them out of that. So the only way to do that is to try to have an effective run game and clearly be able to hit some shots on them. So, again, it's been very successful form for Virginia Tech, and they're clearly recruiting to that system and doing a great job with it.

**Q. I know there were some issues during the summer with Stephen Morris' availability being somewhat up in the air. I know he's been dinged up on and off. Since the season started, how do you view his year and his performance?**

COACH GOLDEN: I think he's done a great job. It's his first full-time going into the year, then obviously week to week as a starter. I would say his inconsistency at times is more a reflection of the team than it is just Stephen. When you're young and playing a lot of first-year starters or playing as many freshmen as we've had to play, that usually translates to inconsistency.

Having said that, I'd like to see us here after the break, after the bye week, we had a chance to regroup, get focused and I'd like to see us take a big step here. We have kind of a no more freshman mantra. I think Stephen's going to play tough for us tomorrow night.

**Q. Can you talk about his toughness?**

COACH GOLDEN: Elite. He's elite in his toughness and ability to fight through things. He didn't practice at all for Florida State, but yet went out there and competed against an excellent front and a pressure group. He's had a chance to heal up here in the bye week. He's refreshed. I think the guys around him have grown up, especially on the offensive line or wide receivers and Randy Johnson. So I'm expecting him to really play well for us down the stretch.

**Q. I'm wondering with FSU, if the team is a little more emotional or excited to get back on the field, especially with it being a Thursday and getting the spotlight and everything?**

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, I don't know if that has any impact. I just think the schedule was so brutal, about as brutal as anything I've seen.

They just needed a break. So they didn't practice very much last week. We only practiced in pads two of the -- I want to say two of the seven days of that bye week. So our focus was trying to get our guys healthy and get them healed up, to be honest with you, have some guys mature and grow up.

So I'd be surprised if we're not ready to go in this division and for the most part the conference has gone through Blacksburg. It's a team that's beat us three in a row. Excellent program led by a tremendous coach, and really the kind of beacon of consistency, if you will, in our league. So I think our guys understand what the challenge is.

**Q. With your team healthy now, what is your outlook or expectation, or what is the expectation of the team going forward for the rest of the season?**

COACH GOLDEN: It's just to prepare and try to win the final 48 here against Virginia Tech and prepare and play our best game. It's really not looking forward to -- again, this team is too good and too mature and too experienced for us to start thinking about anything other than the Virginia Tech Hokies.

**Q. Would you buy the statement that the winner of this game has the inside track for the Coastal Division title? If so, how important is that to getting the program back to where it was and I'm sure you want it to be again?**

COACH GOLDEN: Well, the answer to the first question is no. Then as it relates to your second question, we've never won the Coastal. That's one of the things that we stay positive but confront the brutal facts, that's a fact.

It's a big game. We know this division has gone through Blacksburg, and we've never won the division. So clearly, if you want to have an opportunity, you have to beat Virginia Tech. They're the reigning champion, so I think everything starts and stops right there.

If we can do that, then we can start to move forward. But this game clearly is our focus right now. Really, nothing beyond that.

**Q. Historically Miami has had a track record for ordinary games, kind of blasé crowds and blackouts. Then for the big games you get the great atmosphere and the great crowds. Do you expect that Thursday night?**

COACH GOLDEN: I have no idea what to expect. Until we start controlling how we play and playing at the level that we need to and the

standard that we need to, we really can't comment on what the fans are doing.

**Q. Well, I'm just wondering, do you feel from your experience Thursday night home games usually generate the best atmosphere that you can get?**

COACH GOLDEN: Are you talking for us or in the country?

**Q. Anywhere that you've seen as a coach. Don't Thursday night home games usually generate great home field atmospheres or not?**

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, you would hope so. You would hope so. So, again that's for all you guys to write about. Our focus is Logan Thomas, Jimmy Gayle, Jack Tyler and Bruce Taylor, and all the other guys that the Hokies will be lined up across from us on Thursday night.

**Q. As the ranking Jerseyite in the conference, how closely have you watched that, have you been touched by family members or people involved with the jersey shore devastation?**

COACH GOLDEN: It's beyond any scope or anything I could have ever imagined. It was a situation where I wasn't really following it closely through the weekend. Then I woke up Monday morning and saw that really the impact that it was going to have. Then to have friends send me pictures or a video of what it looks like now is unbelievable.

A lot of people don't know it, but we grew up on the shore, literally, 15 minutes from the beach. Lot of our friends have homes on the beach that are not there anymore, just a roof top. So it's tough. We're praying for everybody, and going to do whatever we can to help everybody up in Jersey.

**Q. Your parents live near the shore still?**

COACH GOLDEN: My parents have a beach house. It's on the bay and in one of the areas that was hit the hardest. Those barrier islands, Mantoloking, Bay Head, Seaside, Ortley Beach, Normandy, those areas got really hit hard. So we have no idea whether it's standing or not. You can't get in there yet because of the sand and the flooding, so we have no idea.

But we know friends that have nothing left. There are no 20-foot of dunes anymore and there is no house. So it's tough for everybody.

My brother is the Sheriff of the next county north, which is Monmouth County, and obviously, they were hit terribly hard, and Union Beach and Keyport and the Highlands, and a place we spent a lot of time growing up in Sea Bright, New Jersey. It's tough. It's tough to see on film and recognize areas and understand that the shore line has been changed forever.

**Q. Have you had time to talk to your brother? Has he had time to talk to you in the last few days?**

COACH GOLDEN: He just sent me a quick text. I asked him how he was doing. He sent me a couple of shots of what he's looking at, and it was just only Mother Nature, or I don't think people have seen it unless it was Katrina. Mother Nature or kind of something that was a result of war, you can't even describe it ... 75 percent of Sea Bright is absolutely destroyed. Just half of homes everywhere.

So he's in the middle of it. I'm not going to bother him. I just wanted to tell him we're thinking about him and everybody up there is in our thoughts and prayers.

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