

November 7, 2012



An Interview With:

**FRANK SPAZIANI
BOSTON COLLEGE**

FRANK SPAZIANI: Obviously we have a very talented and well-coached football team coming into our stadium here. They have sights on the National Championship. So we've got our work cut out for us, and we're practicing trying to get ready for them.

Q. When you watch Notre Dame's star linebacker (Manti) Te'o on tape, what jumps out at you about what makes this guy so good?

FRANK SPAZIANI: Well, he has tremendous instincts and his motor is running. He's a football player. He has intensity and he understands the game, and you can see he loves to play football.

Q. How do you try to contain a guy like that?

FRANK SPAZIANI: Well, they've got a lot of other problems (for us), too, on defense (laughing). We have to do what we do, and we'll understand where he's at. But you certainly have to game plan and try to help yourself out and in the best way you can. But it's about us executing what we have to do.

Q. I wanted to ask you, you guys played these guys to a two-point game last year at their place. What has happened to them to transform them from a good team as they were last year into an undefeated National Championship contender this year?

FRANK SPAZIANI: Well, you know, I think Brian (Kelly) would be better off -- the guy to ask that. But from afar, they've got three years in the system now, and that helps, and certainly more experience, understanding their players and their players understanding what's expected of them. They certainly added some key ingredients.

They're playing with some confidence, and they certainly have added a different dimension at quarterback.

From afar, that's what I see.

Q. Does it help at all, on paper this is a mismatch, they'll be heavily favored, everybody in the country will expect them to win again. Does it help out that your guys have played them and played them so tough a year ago that maybe there's some confidence that won't be reflective of the records?

FRANK SPAZIANI: Well, you know, certainly positive past experience is good for your psyche. But that's limited. I mean, this is a different team and different players. I'd have to go down and look at how many guys started in that game and played and go through it.

But yeah, there's some positive carryover. But once again, it is different from year to year. These are totally two different teams.

Q. Spiffy Evans is having a remarkable year returning punts. I know he hasn't returned that many, but 31 yards per punt return, and I've not seen an average like that in some time. What is it about him that makes him so hard to contain when he fields a punt?

FRANK SPAZIANI: Well, circumstances have dictated that. I think we've done a good job on our punt return scheme, Xs and Os, and then I think Spiffy has gotten a little more confidence and he knows where we're going. We're not doing much back there, and it's a matter of seeing an opening and taking it, and we've gotten a couple breaks with kicks and coverage and things like that. You put it all together, and it leads you to a 31-yard average, which has been a big plus for us.

Q. Do you find that teams are kicking away from him at this point in the season?

FRANK SPAZIANI: We haven't seen that. We haven't seen that.

Q. I wanted to ask you more about the rivalry. These two teams have played a lot in the last 20 years, and it's been a very competitive series. Can you talk about the fact that the two best Catholic football playing institutions in the country -- how much do you guys recruit against them for players? How much does this mean to your kids to play Notre Dame almost every year?

FRANK SPAZIANI: Well, I think it's a good rivalry for us, and I believe it's a good rivalry for Notre Dame. But I think we should be playing each other every year.

Having said that, yeah, we recruit against each other, but it's like -- we go head to head sometimes, but not as much as you would think because of a lot of things we have in common. But we have a lot of things in common, and lately it's been competitive, so there's your rivalry.

Q. And of course it'll continue when they half join the ACC, right?

FRANK SPAZIANI: (Laughing) Yeah, I haven't figured that one out yet. I'll let those guys who do the scheduling and everything figure it out. But yeah, I mean, like I said a couple weeks ago, whenever they announced they were coming in, I thought they were in the conference.

Q. Obviously when they're coming in the conference to play five games a year, they will not be playing you every year anymore. Can you talk about that?

FRANK SPAZIANI: Well, I think it's a good rivalry. I think it's a good rivalry for Boston College, and I think it's a good rivalry for Notre Dame. We have a lot of things in common, and there's a lot of just -- looking at it on the surface, we should be playing each other. It makes sense. But once again, there's a lot of other factors that go into -- making sense isn't always the thing that works out.

An Interview With:

DABO SWINNEY CLEMSON

DABO SWINNEY: Good to be with you guys again today. For us, we're excited about getting back home, and we've got an opportunity to finish our season here at home, and we're excited about that.

Proud of our team for how they've played on the road this year, good win up at Duke last week, played a very, very complete football game, and our team is really trying to just continue that trend of improvement and really focused on trying to have a great finish.

We're going to have to play well this week against Maryland. They're probably as good a defensive group as we've seen. They're top 10, 11 defense in the country, and offensively obviously they've had some issues at quarterback, which is incredibly unfortunate, but now 31 has had a game to play, and I was pretty impressed with the way they coordinated their plan last week and was able to pull it together with not a lot of practice.

But they've got good people that are very capable in the offensive line, at running back and at receiver and tight end that can certainly beat you.

For us it's just about continuing to try to prepare with purpose and play with great effort, emphasize technique and stay committed to the things you've got to do to win football games, and that's really what our team is focused on.

So we look forward to getting back in the valley this week, and with that I'll take your questions.

Q. My question to you is with the continued evolution of mid-week college football games, do you think there's a trade-off between the national television exposure you get versus a potential loss of a potential visit weekend?

DABO SWINNEY: Well, you know, I mean, I guess that's to each his own. To answer for us, to be honest with you, there is a trade-off just from a recruiting standpoint. We try not to do a lot of official visits on game weekends. We really try to do our officials after the season because you can just -- it allows us to really sell Clemson in the

best possible way when you just have more time. Game weekends; there's always a lot going on.

We have a few of those, guys that are mid-years and maybe guys that are getting ready to make an early decision. But even if they're not official visits, you have a lot of unofficial visitors that come in on the weekends. So yeah, there's a definite trade-off there. You lose that opportunity to get a lot of guys on your campus for a ballgame because obviously during the week, Tuesday or Wednesday or whatever, they're practicing and preparing, as well.

And that's not really something that we have done much of. We've had some Thursday night games, but we would never do more than maybe one in a year. But you see some of the other conferences and schools that do that, and the reason they do that is to try to get the TV exposure, and they have to ask themselves that question, is that exposure worth the trade-off of not getting them on campus for maybe that weekend and not being on TV.

Yeah, it's just kind of -- it all goes back to money and revenue, so that's just decisions that each school has to make, but ultimately it comes down to, I think, the TV dollars.

Q. You mentioned Maryland's defense. What stands out to you about it when you watch it on film, and also with the way you guys are rolling on offense, does it really matter who you're playing on defense now? You're starting to get that feeling like you got last year when you guys were rolling so much on offense?

DABO SWINNEY: No, it matters. We've played well, but we've got to keep it going and continue to do things that give you a chance to be successful. But listen, their defensive front is very good. Joe Vellano has been there for 10 years. I don't think he's ever going to graduate. The guy has got to be like a seventh-year senior or something. He is a really good football player, and he has been since he's been there. He leads the league in tackles for loss. They lead the league in sacks. They're very active at linebacker. They're a 3-4 personnel but they'll give you a lot of four-man front, three-man front, bring pressure. They've got really good size in the secondary. Just a very physical, well-coached defense. A new coordinator, and I've been very impressed with what they do. Like I said, they're one of the top in the country.

And their offense has not been great because of the issues that they've had at

quarterback, so to me, that's even putting more pressure on their defense, and they continue to play well. They've played a lot of snaps, and they're just a really, really good group with a lot of talent. And obviously losing No. 9 is a big loss for them, as well, because I thought he was a great player, an NFL guy. So that hurts them. But the guy that's going to take his spot, heck, he had 12 tackles against us last year.

They're just a good group that plays really hard and well-coordinated. But for us, it's about execution. It still comes down to just doing the little things, proper technique, communicating properly, making the right decisions at quarterback, throwing and catching, taking care of the football.

Q. I was at the game last Saturday night in Durham, and I was impressed by one thing: Obviously you guys had your way on offense the whole night, but defensively I thought there were some shaky moments early, and as the game went on, you guys gradually clamped down on them. What did you do? Were you making adjustments or what happened to give you that kind of control later in the game?

DABO SWINNEY: We really played good the whole game. Early in the game we gave up the two big plays that were really just -- not to take anything away from them at all because I thought their receiving corps are outstanding and their quarterback is really good, but it was really poor technique and understanding on our part by our two DBs in those two situations. They just -- the one, he knows he's got no help inside, and for some reason he's just trying to do too much and he's looking in at the backfield, when he has one job, get inside technique, stay on top and just put your eyes on your guy, play your guy. Because when you don't, that's what happens. And their receiver did an excellent job of stemming the route, and our guy is looking in at the backfield and he's got no post help, and what does the guy do, he runs to the post. So a well-executed play and a poor job.

But it wasn't a bust, it was just more a technique issue with us. In the early part of the season we were having some busts and just from a lack of understanding how to apply the defense to what we were seeing, especially early in games. We're just not having that as much.

A prime example of that is our first six

games we had 19 rushes of 20 yards or longer. In our last three games we've only had one running play of 20 yards or longer. That's just a product of these guys growing up. They're just more knowledgeable. They get it more. They've been coached, they've made mistakes, they've learned from their experience, we've got good depth. Those young guys are coming along, and as a result we're playing faster, more physical, more violent, because there's not a lot of thinking going on. They're able to react and apply our defense.

Just proud of the improvement, as I said, early in the season we were going to be a work in progress, and that's what we've been, but we're playing pretty good football now. People are going to get 1st downs and there's going to be some plays made, but it's a four-quarter game, and we are improving not only throughout the season but we're improving throughout the game, and that's a really, really positive sign for our defense.

Q. Have you ever won so easily a game where it was a 4-0 turnover margin?

DABO SWINNEY: No, and probably won't win many of those to be honest with you. But you've got to give credit to our defense. They got zero points off those four turnovers, and to take it a step further, our last eight turnovers that we've had, we've given up zero points. And so our defense deserves a lot of credit for that.

We lead this league in red zone offense and defense, and to me the name of the game is points, and that's where our defense has really done a good job all year. Early in the year we gave up some big plays and all that, but we've been pretty good red zone and 3rd down all year. Our defense gets the credit for that. But you won't win a lot of games when you're minus 4 in the turnover margin. The flipside of that, that's why we talk about turnover margin all the time. When we win the turnover margin we are incredibly difficult to beat. We've only -- last time we lost was the Auburn game of 2010, it was like the second game of the season, and that was in overtime at their place.

So it's important that we win that turnover margin. That's a real key stat for us, not that you can't win if you lose it, but it's very difficult, and that was a big positive from the game the other night was how our defense responded.

Q. How much have you seen of Stefon Diggs this year, and I guess have you seen any similarities between what he's been able to do

this season to what Sammy Watkins did last year?

DABO SWINNEY: Well, yeah, I've seen him, obviously. I've seen a good bit of them and him, and he's second in the league in all purpose. He's a very, very dangerous player. It's probably not fair to compare him to Sammy (Watkins) at this point just because they've had a totally different situation at quarterback than what we had last year. But he's an incredibly talented player, that's pretty easy to see. There's no doubt. I mean, he's a guy that can take it the distance, bringing kicks back and catching the ball on screens and getting the ball in the running game and being able to get a lot of yards after he touches it.

Very, very talented football player. Not quite as big as Sammy, but still has good size and is on his way to having a really, really good freshman year.

Q. Obviously Tajh Boyd came out of high school as one of the top quarterbacks in the state of Virginia, a state that obviously has a handful of other ACC quarterbacks. What were your early impressions of him when you got him on campus?

DABO SWINNEY: Big-time skill set, natural leader, fun to be around every day, serious about being great. Had a lot to learn, had to get him healthy, had to kind of change his body a little bit. He was coming off a knee surgery. He's just continued to grow and mature, and he's really developed into a heck of a quarterback this year. He was a good player last year, not a great quarterback, and this year he's really matured into a very, very good quarterback, and he's become the leader of the team. He's not just our quarterback, he is the leader and the heart and soul, and I'm really proud of his overall development, and I look forward to bigger and better things from him.

Q. Obviously we saw a couple good runs out of him against Virginia Tech and some other teams. How much liberty do you give him along those lines?

DABO SWINNEY: Well, that's a big part of what we do. That was one of the things last year down the stretch where we really graded him down on, and he just was very inconsistent with his decision making in the run game. And this year he's been outstanding, and he's got a much better

feel of not just making those decisions in the run game but his scrambling and where -- his pocket presence and understanding the rush and the rush lanes and being much more decisive when he does decide to tuck it and go. And he's in great shape.

Last year, and we've talked about it many times, he came in about 220 and by the end of the season he was up in the upper 230s, just wasn't quite the same. Heck, he was 218 yesterday. He's just in great shape physically and mentally. His ability to run the football and his effectiveness with that has been a huge, huge part of our success this year.

Q. Chandler Catanzaro was just named one of the -- I guess a semifinalist for the Lou Groza Award. What has he meant to your team, and how has he matured as a kicker since he arrived on campus?

DABO SWINNEY: Well, he's meant a bunch of wins for our team, first of all. He's been tremendous, and his maturation process has just been awesome to watch. He had a really tough, well-documented freshman year. It was an incredibly difficult year for us because we just could not score that year. We moved the ball very effectively but we couldn't get it in the end zone and we couldn't make the kicks, and it seemed like the closer we were, the worse we were from a field goal percentage.

But I just really believed in him because of what I'd seen in practice, and he just hadn't quite transferred it, and it was just a tough freshman year, and it wasn't all him. We had snapping issues and holding issues, and it was everything involved.

I said something that year that I kind of went out on a limb and made a comment after his year, we were going out and we were going to sign a kicker, but that didn't mean that I didn't believe in Catanzaro. In fact I thought he would turn out to be one of the most consistent kickers that we've had here at Clemson, and people looked at me like I had four eyeballs at the time.

But it was easy to say that because of the work ethic that he has. He's a mentally tough guy. Now, some kickers you get around these guys, and boy, they can be not as mentally tough as you want them to be. But this guy is -- he's got a football mentality, he's an athlete and a great competitor, and all he did was go back to work, and he's just been tremendous, absolutely tremendous. He's the all-time most accurate guy

here beyond 40 yards, he's set the record here, he's got an incredible streak, I think 20 in a row. But he's a weapon. That's what he is. He's really become a real weapon for us, just like Sammy Watkins. He's a playmaker, and we've got a lot of confidence in him.

When we get anywhere down in there, anywhere near that red zone area, hey, we have got points, and it gives your team a lot of confidence. And it also allows your quarterback to have a mentality of listen, let's be smart here, because that was one of the things that happened his freshman year, all of a sudden our quarterback, everybody gets frustrated because he couldn't make a kick and now you start taking chances you shouldn't take and you're turning it over, and it's just not a good situation.

It's been good to see him grow, and I'm happy for him. It's a well deserved honor for him to be a finalist for the Groza Award, and I hope he wins it.

Q. I was just looking at some notes, and it says you guys are going for the all-time record winning streak at home this Saturday, that it would be 11 straight. I noticed you're finishing up with three games at home. Can you talk about the advantage of playing in Death Valley.

DABO SWINNEY: Well, we've actually won 11 in a row, and we actually tied the record versus Virginia Tech. If we can win this weekend, we would set the all-time record here at Death Valley for wins in a row, and I think we've got the third longest home winning streak in the country right now. To be able to win this week and set that record to me to be something really special to be a part of. They've been playing here 117 years, and there's been a lot of good teams. To be a part of that type of record, that type of consistency, that's what you want in your program.

In fact, when I got this job, one of the very first things I said to our team was if we're going to be a consistent program at Clemson, if we're going to take this program back to the top and be a national contender, we've got to win at home. It starts at home, because we were very inconsistent. We've really been able to kind of create that culture here, and that starts with our players and our coaches. They've done a tremendous job.

Our fans have been incredible. They've

brought a lot of life to Death Valley. The energy that they bring is awesome and gives us a great advantage every time we line up and play in that stadium.

But our guys, they take a lot of pride in playing at home. They take a lot of pride. And then we won four road games this year for only the second time in 15 years. Just trying to build consistency from a winning standpoint is what we're trying to do this year, and we've made good progress. So hopefully we can get that done and keep it moving forward.

An Interview With:

RANDY EDSALL MARYLAND

RANDY EDSALL: Just listening to Dabo,(Swinney) you know we've got a tremendous challenge as we go down there to Clemson. It's their homecoming game, trying to break a record for the most consecutive wins there at home, and when you take a look at their personnel, they're an outstanding football team that's playing very, very well, so we've got a lot of work to do and a lot of work ahead of us as we prepare to go down to Clemson on Saturday.

Q. With the way Clemson's offense has been playing lately, what can you possibly do to contain these guys, especially on defense, what do you need to do better than you did against the Yellow Jackets?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I don't think anybody -- you're never going to shut them down, you just hope you can do enough to slow them down, because when you take a look at Tajh Boyd is playing very, very well, and then DeAndre Hopkins and Sammy Watkins and Andre Ellington, Brandon Ford, all those guys are very exceptional at their positions, and then their offensive line is playing well.

Again, I think the biggest thing you've got to do is just be very sound, very disciplined in terms of what you do, and you know that you have to defend everybody. You've got to defend the quarterback, you've got to defend the running back, you've got to defend the receivers, you've got to defend the tight end. It's an offense that

puts a lot of pressure on you, and nobody has really shut them down, so what you've got to hopefully do is do enough to hopefully maybe get some turnovers and cause some disruptions where you can get them off the field a few times.

Q. Now that you've seen Shawn (Petty), I'm just wondering what the balancing act is in terms of being able to do, tailor things to his strength but not overloading his plate as you move forward.

RANDY EDSALL: Well, we've got a really good feel for what Shawn can do and how much he can handle, so we'll have a game plan put together that takes advantage of his skills and then also combines what we know we can do with the other players that we have on offense. And again, I know -- we know how much we can give him and how much we can go into the game with, and that's what we'll do, and I think he'll play better having a game under his belt.

And again, everybody on offense just has to step up and do their part and try to make his job that much easier.

Q. Do you think that it helps him out going into this game that he kind of got into a better groove in the second half of last week's game?

RANDY EDSALL: Yeah, I think he felt more comfortable. He felt better. I think he understood just what the speed of the game is, and that was a tough situation for him to go into. And like I said, he settled down, and when you look at it, we didn't have any delay of games, we didn't have any procedure penalties. I thought that he did a good job, and again, you could see him get a little bit more comfortable as the game went on. And again, the game will even be faster this week with the speed and athleticism that you see from Clemson's defense.

Q. Ideally how many quarterbacks, scholarship quarterbacks, do you like to have in the program, and do you think looking down the road that this changes your thinking at all? Or do you think you would always have somebody who played quarterback in high school maybe at some other position?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I would always like to have four quarterbacks, scholarship quarterbacks on my roster. And then of course

you're going to also have some walk-on quarterbacks, as well. But I also think you're going to recruit, at least we're going to try to recruit some guys that might have been quarterbacks in high school that can play another position because I think their athletic ability and things along those lines, when you start getting into having five or six -- if you have six quarterbacks you can't give them all reps and then you're taking scholarships away from other positions where it can be more advantageous for you. I think you run into problems that way.

But the big thing is, I said it yesterday in my press conference here on campus, it's just unfortunate because it's happened at one position. I mean, injuries happen, but we just got them all at the quarterback position this year, and it's unfortunate. And probably it'll never happen again, but it has nothing to do with anything that we're doing, the type of surface that we're playing on, any of those sort of things. We've just been unlucky.

Q. With all the turnover at quarterback, how difficult has that made it to take advantage of what Stefon Diggs is giving you as a receiver because obviously it's a two-part thing when you have a weapon like that at receiver? Has that made it more difficult to get him the ball and exploit his talents?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I mean, he had two touchdowns last weekend against Georgia Tech, but again, you're always going to have things in your offense to get him the ball, and you can do that with the quarterback in there, and we did that with all the different quarterbacks that we had.

So again, it's one of those things where we'll have a -- we have a part of our offense that's dictated that these are plays that we can run to get touches for Stefon, and that's always going to be the same regardless of who the quarterback is, and what you want is you want to make sure that the quarterback that's in there has the accuracy when he's open and the play is called for the ball to go to him that they're there. But you can get him the ball other ways in terms of through the run game and then also doesn't change from a punt return/kickoff return standpoint.

Q. Coach Swinney was just asked before you were on about comparing Diggs to Sammy Watkins, who had a fabulous freshman year last year at wide receiver, also as a kick

returner. Looking at the two of them, do you see any similarities?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, yeah. They're both dynamic play makers. They're guys that can touch the ball and make great things happen when they touch the ball. Sammy is an inch taller and 20 pounds heavier than Stefon right now, and I think Stefon will get bigger and stronger throughout the years. But no, they're both guys that can make plays with the ball, and whether it's receiving the ball or returning the ball, both very dynamic players.

Q. Who steps in for Demetrius Hartsfield, and what should we expect there?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, Lorne Goree will step in for Demetrius, and Lorne is a guy that has played for us and has played well when he's been in there, and now he gets the starter's role and gets an expanded role. And again, we think that he'll do a good job. I feel bad for Demetrius that he's not going to be in there. He meant a lot to our team in terms of what he did on the field, the leadership that he brought, and now he's just got to have to help us lead from the sidelines. But it's a tremendous blow to him and to our team, but we know that Lorne has the ability to step up and go in and produce the way that Demetrius did, and he's going to have that opportunity now.

Q. Since you had to take another linebacker and put him at quarterback, are you getting thin at that position at all?

RANDY EDSALL: No, not really. I mean, we took Alex Twine and moved him from the Sam from outside to inside, so we're okay there. Bradley Johnson will move over behind Cole Farrand, and then Avery Thompson who's played this year will move up behind Kenny Tate. We're still there, but at this point in time we'll do what we have to do because we're not going to go and burn any red shirt -- any kids that we decided to red shirt this year. We'll just have to make some other adjustments. Hopefully we won't have to, but if we did because of injuries, then we'll make those type of adjustments.

An Interview With:

TOM O'BRIEN NC STATE

TOM O'BRIEN: We welcome Wake Forest here Saturday. It's our annual Toys For Tots game that we've done here since I got here. When I got here, our warehouses and bank was broken here for Toys For Tots, so we've done a great job here at NC State collecting toys for kids. The Marines will be here, General Osman will be here to take part in the coin toss, and the last five years we've raised over \$200,000 for toys for children at Christmas. That's the setting for this weekend game, and certainly a big game against Wake Forest coming up.

Q. Coming off the UVA game, what's the approach this week in terms of anything you want to fix on offense or improve on offensively heading into this game?

TOM O'BRIEN: Well, certainly the thing is we've got to get back to fundamentals. It's still, once again, the difference in our season has been four games we've lost, we turned the ball over 19 times, and the last two weeks we've dropped 19 balls. Taking care of the football and doing the things that you have to do fundamentally, we do those things, we're successful, we win. That's the formula and that's what we have to get back to.

Q. I guess no one can say that you didn't tell us last week that Virginia would be ready coming off a bye. Was there anything about their team that surprised you? For instance, they hadn't been able to run the ball very well.

TOM O'BRIEN: No. I mean, as I said last week, I thought it was a perfect role reversal game, the way it was set up and the way it was going, and a team that has had success like they had a year ago and with their seniors and everything, you could expect that type of football game out of them, and certainly we were concerned coming off a really disappointing, tough loss to our rival North Carolina a week ago.

They controlled the line of scrimmage, and that was the most disturbing part for me, and us as a coaching staff and the football team as they watched it, they controlled the line of scrimmage both offensively and defensively.

Q. When you think of this rivalry and your experience with it, what are some of the biggest memories to you and what does this rivalry mean to you?

TOM O'BRIEN: Well, certainly within the state of North Carolina, it used to be the Big Four, now it's -- we only get to play the big three, I think, all of us because of the way the structure is set up right now. But probably when they were just up the road here a little bit back in the old days, it might have even more because you would have walked to both schools to play the game.

Certainly it's an important game, we're on the same side of the bracket in the conference which is always important that you play those games, and for us it's a home game.

Q. When you look at this Wake Forest team, what are some things that stand out to you that they do well that you feel like your team really needs to focus on this week?

TOM O'BRIEN: Well, you know, it's a typical Wake Forest team, a lot of red shirt seniors and juniors, a lot of experience, been in the program for a long time. Certainly the heart and soul of the guys on defense is Whitlock in the middle, No. 50. He's played for a long time, makes a lot of plays, causes a lot of disruption there. They're great run-to-the-football, get-after-you type of guys there, and then certainly (Michael) Campanaro is back, and he and (Tanner) Price, they're on a different wavelength than everybody else. They know where they're going to be and what they're going to do, and Josh Harris does a great job when he gets the ball in his hands of making things happen.

They're very inventive with what they do offensively, and the 3-4 allows them to do a lot of different things on defense.

Q. I noticed in late September you guys really seem to be getting your running game going and it's sputtered since then. Is that a function of the guys you've lost on the offensive line or is there some other reason that it's kind of struggled?

TOM O'BRIEN: Well, I think it's twofold. Number one, the offensive line has been makeshift, cut and paste and put things together. We started five offensive lines I think in the first seven games, so I think that's part of it. The second part of it is Mustafa Greene was dismissed

from the football team, who was our best running back, and then James Washington suffered an injury early, came back and got hurt at Carolina, only played four of the previous eight games, and he was our most experienced running back.

So I think the experience in the backfield and the changing cast of characters up front has been the reason we haven't had the continuity that we need.

Q. Has that also made it tough on (Mike) Glennon, that he's had -- without the running game to take some pressure off, he's faced more pressure defensively?

TOM O'BRIEN: Yeah, I think that's a true statement. But he's our best player. We've got to keep the ball in his hands the best we can. But certainly we need to run the football better than we have.

Q. You guys have been one of the most puzzling teams to figure out this year. How frustrating is it from your end not knowing what you're going to get every weekend from your guys?

TOM O'BRIEN: Well, you know, we've gotten great effort. Didn't seem to have it last week, just -- I don't know, been a lot of hypothesis as to what happened last week, and I haven't accepted any of them because I think you can play well each and every week. I think it still comes back to the fact of what we said. If you don't turn the football over and we don't give up the big play on defense, and that's been the underlying fact when we've lost four football games. When you turn the ball over four times in five wins and you turn it over 19 in four losses, it's pretty apparent what you have to do to be successful.

Q. Considering the expectations that you had for your guys entering this season, how much of a disappointment, I guess, has it been for you?

TOM O'BRIEN: Well, I've been around long enough to know that everybody -- there's only one team that meets its goals every year, and that's the team that wins the National Championship. That's what you go in, you try to win 14 games, that's what you want to do. Life is about readjusting and setting different goals as you go along. You only worry about the things you can control. We talked earlier about all the problems we've had with the offensive line and running backs and trying to get a running game to help the

offense out some. That's what happens in college football. That's why each week you worry about what you're able to control that week, because you don't know what team you're going to have until the trainer tells you who's going to practice and what you have.

And then you take that product and you do the best you can to try to put yourself in the position to win each and every Saturday, and that's the way it goes.

And then at the end of the year, you're either going to make goals like winning seasons, go to bowl games, those things, or you're not.

An Interview With:

JIM GROBE WAKE FOREST

JIM GROBE: We've got to get ready to play Saturday. We know we're going to play against a very motivated North Carolina State team, a very talented team, well-coached team. We were fortunate this past weekend to get a win against Boston College. I thought the Boston College kids played really, really hard, and we felt fortunate to get a win, and we're going to have to step up to another level this week. We've not played particularly well at NC State, and so we know it's going to take a great effort on our part, and we know we'll have to play really, really well to have a shot to win.

Q. It was unusual to see a statistic like 57 passes attempted with one of your teams, and I know they were a lot of underneath routes and short things. Is that the kind of trend that you would expect to continue, or was that just one of those things, taking what they gave you?

JIM GROBE: Well, I think that's a little bit out of my comfort zone. We would like to have more balance. We would like to run the football better. Actually Josh Harris had a pretty good day. I think he had 80-some yards (84) and averaged about four and a half yards per carry. So Josh had a pretty good day. It varies week to week honestly what people do defensively dictates more to the offenses as far as what we do.

I think going into this Saturday we'll just

kind of see what happens. But I think with Boston College I think we felt like that throwing the football was going to be a little bit more successful against them. They've always done a pretty good job against us stopping the run, and so that was kind of the plan last week. But going forward it'll change week to week.

Q. You mentioned that State would probably be motivated. The kind of game that they had against Virginia, was that a not-good thing for your team?

JIM GROBE: Well, I think -- I think every week is different. You just -- every Saturday is different. They've been like us; we've been through kind of a gamut of emotions this year. We've had ups and downs, and we've had weeks where we've played really good, we've had weeks where we didn't play good. Your competition varies week to week.

I think it was unexpected that they would lose to Virginia this past week like they did, and I think typically when teams with good coaches and good players and teams that have been successful in the past stub their toe, they typically bounce back in a good way, especially from a motivational standpoint.

So I've just got a feeling that they'll have a good week of practice, hopefully we'll have a good week of practice. But I think we're going to face an NC State team that's going to be a full-speed football team this Saturday, I don't think there's any question.

Q. I've been looking at the records of the series, and it's struck me it's an oddity in the ACC, it's so much a home field series that in the last 16 games you guys are 7 and 1 at home, and NC State is 7 and 1 at home. Is that just an oddball thing, or is there some home field factor here maybe more than normal?

JIM GROBE: Well, with those numbers, it would seem like there's something there. Obviously 7 and 1 at home makes it seem like home field advantage plays a pretty big part. I think part of that makes us realize that our kids are going to have to play really good to have a chance.

We've been beat pretty soundly a couple times at Carter Finley. We've had a couple games that have gone right to the wire that have been really, really close, and we know that going in there and getting a win is not going to be easy.

But we've always, for whatever reason, had a tough time going over to Raleigh and

playing. I think their guys play well at home, and obviously when we play here at home, we play a little bit better.

When you go on the road in this league, you've got to pretty much steal a base to get a win.

Q. The other thing I was going to ask you is Tom O'Brien, they've had trouble running the ball lately. You guys have been up and down all year on the running game. How difficult is it to get it to balance off the passing game?

JIM GROBE: It makes it so much easier if you've got a little bit of running game because it gives you a chance to be a little bit more confident to try to throw the football when they're not expecting it and run it when they're not expecting it. But if you're not getting much out of your running game it puts you in long yardage situations too much.

So I think especially if you're able to run the ball successfully on 1st and 2nd down, it makes the throw game so much easier. But you just never know going in. Every week we go in to a game we're trying to run the football, it's just a matter of whether we're capable of doing it or not. I think -- I would guess Tom has got the same thought we've got, that your throw game is going to be so much better if you can balance it out with a little running success.

Q. In terms of your defense, what do you need to do as good or better against NC State coming off that BC game?

JIM GROBE: Well, the thing we did well against Boston College is we forced some turnovers, and I think that's for all defenses, and especially for teams, if you're going to win, you've got to manage the turnovers. And I think one way to help you more than any other way is to force some turnovers on defense. We had a couple of 4th down stops that were big for us. A 4th down stop is really a turnover for all intents and purposes, and so I think in the games that we've won, the games that we've played well defensively, we've been able to hunt up some turnovers.

You know, I think that would be important Saturday, but I know after last week I know Wolfpack turned the ball over a few times against West Virginia, and that got them in trouble. So I know their emphasis this week is taking care of the football, and I think when you play good defense, you find some turnovers.

Q. I wondered what kind of recruit was (Michael) Campanaro coming out of high school, and did you suspect early on that he would become the player he has?

JIM GROBE: Well, we thought we had a really, really good football player. What happens to us sometimes at Wake Forest is we have to be careful that we don't put too much stock in height, weight and speed because some of the biggest programs beat us out on those type kids. And so we felt like Camp was a home run as a player and as a kid, loved his family, all those kind of things, the intangible kind of stuff. But he's not very big, and that's what I think got a lot of people off of him.

We thought that he had -- we kind of compared him to Kenny Moore. We kind of thought we had a guy that might not be the biggest guy, but we loved his ball skills, we loved him as a running back, we thought he could play running back or be a receiver. He had really good hands.

I think our thoughts were we never dreamed he'd be as good as he is right now, I don't think you can ever plan on that, but we thought we had a really good football player. We thought we had a guy that didn't have some of the tangibles as far as height and weight kind of things, but we felt like we were getting a really quality football player.

An interview with:

PAUL JOHNSON GEORGIA TECH

COACH JOHNSON: Good morning. Certainly we've got a huge challenge this week. I think North Carolina's probably one of the hottest teams in the league. If I'm not mistaken, they're undefeated at home, scoring a bunch of points and playing pretty good defensively. They've had a bye week, so it gives them two weeks to get ready. So I'm sure we'll have a big challenge when we roll into Chapel Hill on Saturday.

Q. As a guy that's coached quite a few good running backs, I just wonder what you think when you watch Giovanni Bernard on film, and how tough he is to deal with?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, there is no question he's a tremendous player. He's got great

balance and speed. He had a great game against us a year ago down here. He's very capable, and he's got a good combination of what a running back should have. He's a very talented player, no question.

Q. Do you try to avoid punting to him or do you punt it and just hit the side coverage?

COACH JOHNSON: I think you've got to do what you do. He's not back there all the time, but you've got to take care of your business and stay in your lanes and get somebody down there if he's back there. You can't really change the way you play. If he's back there, we'll have to punt the ball, I guess. So we'll just have to try to deal with it.

Q. Just with that Carolina offense in general, what are the keys that you need to do to these guys on Saturday?

COACH JOHNSON: First thing, you've got to limit the possessions. If you get 20 possessions a game, you're going to score some points. A normal game for us has been 9 or 10. So they're getting the ball twice as much as you'd get in a normal game. So you've got to keep your offense on the field and try to limit the game and do that. That would be number one.

Second you've got to try to contain the running game because if they get that going and they can do whatever they want, then they become very, very hard to stop.

Q. Coming off your performance last week, do you like your ability to stay on the field and keep those guys off the field this week?

COACH JOHNSON: We'll see. I don't think there will be 20 possessions in our game whether we're on the field or not. I think it will be a little different from that aspect. Now we've got to do a better job stopping them when they do have the ball than we've done most of the year. But I'd be the most surprised guy in the state of North Carolina if in the end both teams had the ball 20 times. I don't think that will happen.

Q. Just wondering how you felt playing both your quarterbacks worked out for you last week. There are now a couple teams in the league that are playing two guys. Sometimes it

works and sometimes it doesn't. Just hoping to get your thoughts on what works well for you guys?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I thought they both played well. We've played both quarterbacks a lot this year. That's not the first game that they've both played. I thought they both did some positive things. We plan on probably going that route again this week. I don't know how much we'll use each one, but I feel reasonably sure they're both going to play.

Q. Did you use Vad more this week than had you in the past or was it about the same?

COACH JOHNSON: He probably played a little bit more. We divided it up and went a couple series at a time. I think he had one more series overall than Tevin. It just kind of worked out that way.

Q. You heard Mike -- probably heard Mike refer to Owen Smith's per carry average. I think I'm looking at your stats here. If they're correct, carried it 54 times this year. Is part of his high total the fact that he doesn't get the ball a lot? Is there an element of surprise there? If he gave it to him 20 times a game, would he gain 8, 9 yards a carry?

COACH JOHNSON: I think it's the nature of what we do and where he gets the ball. We don't just hand him the ball and have to block everybody. Most of the time when he catches it, it's on a pitch. It's on an option play where we've gotten to the outside where we're pitching the ball. Everybody should be accounted for.

Now that doesn't take anything away from his ability. He's a gifted runner and he breaks tackles, but you know, I don't think it would be -- you can answer your own question. If you give the guy the ball 20, 30 times a game, I don't think there's anybody that's averaged that many yards per carry.

Q. You've had a pretty good season from Jeremiah (Attaochu), and he's been good for a number of years, it seems. What is it about him that maybe sets him apart a little bit?

COACH JOHNSON: I think he had a good game Saturday. That's probably the best game he's played all year. Jeremiah's got a good motor. He's got good skills. He's a guy that runs well and he's big. He needs to be more consistent, but he's got all the tools to be a really good player. He was

very productive Saturday at Maryland. That was his most productive game of the year.

Q. About Orwin (Smith), I think against BYU and also against Maryland that you put him on the outside at the wide receiver spot instead of in the slot. Was that to take advantage of things or a different way to get him the ball?

COACH JOHNSON: I think he did it against BYU. We didn't put him out there against Maryland. We just had a couple of plays we wanted to get him the ball. A match-up that we thought we could explore.

Q. Do you anticipate doing that again?

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, we could do it again.

Q. You were talking about possessions and controlling the ball. On the other side, one of the big thoughts about North Carolina is how they were going to play an up-tempo game and keep defenses on the field by not subbing and running quick plays. Have you seen a lot of that on film and does that present a lot of difficulty?

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, well, I mean, that's the way they play. Certainly if you can stay on the field, common sense would tell you the more plays you run, the more yards and more points you're going to get. Now it also would tell you that that's more turns for your defense to play as well if you're moving the ball and scoring. What I'm talking about is possessions, the number of possessions.

If you get two teams that are playing that way and throwing the ball and playing fast, there is going to be a large number of possessions in the game. For instance, you break down their game against N.C. State, I think both teams, there were 20 possessions in the game. Okay, typically for us in our last two games, we've had 8 and 9, not 20. So that's half the time. That's the kind of game that we'd want to play.

I don't think it will be an 8 or 9 possession game. But I don't think it will be a 20-possession game either. So that's what I'm talking about. You've still got to play defense. You've still got to try to keep them from scoring and converting on third down, all of those things. I mean, they could

conceivably play a 12-possession game and score on 7 of the possessions and you've still got 50 points. But you've got a better chance if you play 12 possessions than if you play 20, I think.

An Interview With:

LARRY FEDORA NORTH CAROLINA

COACH FEDORA: We're excited about getting back out on the field with this team. The way we walked off the field the last game was very exciting, and I think our players are biting at the bit to get back out there and play together. We're going to have a tremendous challenge this week with Georgia Tech coming in here and what they have to offer. So we're interested in finding out where we are as a football team.

Q. T.J. Thorpe got hurt in training camp and it looks like he's probably going to red shirt. But how has his development come back? We've seen him in practice running routes. What's he been like getting back to where he was?

COACH FEDORA: Well, I think he's closer. He's been -- what he's been allowed to do now is he's been released to run routes. He actually jumped in the other day when we were doing reverses there and throwing balls to him. He's not supposed to be doing that yet, but he's biting at the bit to get back out there. But he has been released to run routes against air right now with no balls thrown to him. I think he's progressing and on pace for doing what they want. I look forward to getting him back full speed.

Q. They've been playing both their quarterbacks a lot this year and particularly last week. Just wondering how you go about preparing for (Thad) Lee and (Tevin) Washington?

COACH FEDORA: Well, you really can't change what you do. I mean, you only have time to prepare for the offense and not for a particular player. The offense is very difficult to defend, and you only get a limited amount of reps and you've got to do a great job of assignment discipline and making sure your guys understand what they have

to do in each situation. So for us, whether it's Tevin Washington or the Lee kid, we're going to have to do a great job against either one. The offense itself is what creates the problem.

Q. Do you feel you have an advantage by getting an extra week to prepare for that offense?

COACH FEDORA: Well, whether we have an advantage or not, I don't know. It's given us some extra time and extra practices. It's something that's much needed when you face that style offense. I don't knee if we have an advantage, but we are utilizing our time as well as we can.

Q. With this game and Tech trying to stay on the field with their offense and keep you guys from being on the field, what do you expect from this game in terms of possessions you might be able to get in this game?

COACH FEDORA: Well, that's going to be interesting. From studying them, I don't know exactly where it is. But it's somewhere probably 9, 10 possessions, maybe 8, somewhere in that area where they're probably averaging a game. They do a great job of eating clock. They do a great job of four and five and depth and they can beat you with the big play.

We understand we're not going to get the possessions we've normally had in a game because of their style and it's just the way it is. So we've got to be very efficient. When we have the ball, our offense has to complement our defense. And when we do that, we have to be efficient offensively and move the chains.

Q. What role will (Vic) Koenning play having played Tech in 2008? How has that impacted the game planning for them?

COACH FEDORA: It's had a tremendous impact one. Vic has played against Paul before. You know, actually all of our coaches and our staff at some point have played against the triple option so they've had some experience against it. But Vic has played against him in particular, and understands what it's going to take and understands the difficulty of it. I think has done a good job of understanding, hey, you can't do too much in a given week to prepare for it, and your guys, whatever you do, they've got to do it well. They understand they're going to make some plays on you. That's just the way it is. I hope that's an advantage for us.

Q. How different does Tech's defense look to you over the past two weeks?

COACH FEDORA: Scheme-wise, not much difference. I think they've probably simplified things. They're not doing as much as they were doing early. I think what you're seeing is their kids. Now you're seeing the athleticism in their kids come out. They're playing faster and playing harder because they know what to do.

Q. How is Junior Knokonde doing?

COACH FEDORA: Yeah, Junior's a kid that's a really raw athlete that is going to be a good football player. We're really excited about him, and we're red shirting him this year. He's a very, very strong kid. I was surprised how strong he was, and it's just natural strength. He runs really well. I'm looking forward to seeing what he does this spring.

Q. Eric Ebron's been one of the more productive tight ends. What is the thinking behind playing him on defense? What do you get out of playing him at defensive end?

COACH FEDORA: Well, for that game, we had some guys really beat up on the defensive line. It was more out of a necessity of needing somebody to get a little bit of some pressure on the quarterback. I think Eric did a nice job of filling in. He played about 10 or 12 snaps for us in some third-down situations and did a nice job of it. Helped us get some pressure, and created them to adjust their protection to him which enabled us to get to the guy in the fourth quarter.

So Eric's a tremendous athlete. He played the position in high school. He was able to fill a need for us.

Q. Anymore two-way players down the road?

COACH FEDORA: Possibly.

Q. Have you done that very much in the past?

COACH FEDORA: A little bit with guys that are special and can handle it. The thing I ask is if a guy can do that, he's got to be dependable on his side of the ball first of all. He's got to be a guy that the coach relies on that knows he's going to do his job day-in and day-out. Because when you do that and move him to the other side, a lot of his energy and thought process goes into learning what he has to do over there, and it usually takes

away from what he's doing on the original side of the ball.

We saw that in the game the other day. Had he some uncharacteristic drops that people would say, well, that has nothing to do with it. But I beg to differ. I think it definitely does have an effect on how a guy plays on his original side.

An Interview With:

MIKE LONDON VIRGINIA

COACH LONDON: Yes, very important home game this Saturday against, as is mentioned, the Coastal leader in our conference, the Miami Hurricanes. Coach Golden and I have known each other for quite some time. Even back to the Boston College days with Tom O'Brien. So they're playing well, and we look forward to the challenge as they come here this Saturday in Scott Stadium.

Q. Obviously there must be a different feeling around the team this week after winning a game. Have you kind of sensed spirits lifted and increased confidence now to make a stretch run?

COACH LONDON: Well, there's always a level of optimism, particularly after a game you practice for well and you're able to achieve some of the goals that you set out for. That was turnovers and not give the ball back. Though we had one turnover but to hang on to the ball in that regard. And just played really good sound defense or scored on defense or scored every quarter in that game and have played a really smart game.

When you have things like that, you can use it as examples to the players that if you execute or do what you're supposed to do, then the results can be positive for you.

So with that game behind and this game forward, it's all about, again, paying close attention to the details of the game planning and the preparation and things like that to play a very fast and athletic Miami team.

Q. I noticed that Kevin Parks has played well for you. Recently two 100-yard games in the last three. What's he been doing well?

COACH LONDON: When you look at our backs, all of them have kind of a role that they take and utilize, whether it's a special teams role or third down role or Perry Jones who can get in there every down, first, second, and third down. Kevin is for his stature is very stout, big legs, very strong. He's sort of a downhill runner. Some runners his size are kind of jump-cut kind of guys.

But Kevin over the last couple years has shown that when he has an opportunity to run the ball downhill and he has an opportunity to run over or run through arm tackles, that he's shown that. So I think just being his strength, such a low center of gravity, he's very rugged, and he can catch the ball too coming out of the back field. So it makes him a multi-dimensional type of player. But his ability to really hit it downhill, down field is something that is a positive for us.

Q. You're playing so many guys on your defense that are really young. One of the veterans that you have is Jake Snyder. I just wonder what he's meant sort of as one of the more experienced players on that unit?

COACH LONDON: Well, that's a great question because we lost Billy Schautz early on. And Jake became the elder statesman, the guy that's been in football games before. He consistently grades out a winning percentage because he's just a smart football player. He knows understands formations, down and distance. He reads stances. He can communicate well with the guys up-and-down the line of scrimmage. So when you have guys with that type of experience, and there is a big play in the game, and the emphasis of the detail of playing the play correctly, he's able to share some insight even for a brief moment to those guys particularly down line guys who get several young players. But he's able to get that sort of insight prior to the snap.

When you have a presence like that on the field, it helps in the overall production, and overall execution. Jake has done a great job for us. Actually still has another year of eligibility. We're lucky to have him and he's very important to the defense.

Q. Is he one of those guys you just plug in there and don't worry about him because you know he's going to do his job?

COACH LONDON: I believe so. I believe he studies the game. He understands the game. As I said before about the quality that's he brings to the table as far as knowing the game. You can count on him. He's a reliable player. So he may not be the fastest guy off the edge, but he'll work to put himself in position to make a play. As I said, it's like having another coach on the field, particularly for those down guys with (Chris) Brathwaite and (David) Dean, and Eli Harold, all those young guys out there.

Coaches aren't standing out on the field when those plays are called or those defenses or those one-time big third down stops or big plays, he's able to communicate to those young guys.

Q. Far be it for me to check out Twitter or anything like that. But it seems like a lot of your guys were talking about voting, and seemed to be excited about going to find the polling place, and read where one guy was going to drive home during the afternoon a couple of hours to vote. What did you tell them about voting? Did you encourage them to vote? Did you say anything? Were you worried they might be out on the road? What was your take on the whole thing?

COACH LONDON: No, my take, and as I told them, to be able to vote in America is a God-given ability and right and opportunity for everyone. It's a process in which you can participate in and talk about what should have been done or what needs to be done, then you can get involved in the process. One way to do that is to make your voice heard by voting.

It's a Democratic process that this country is founded on. So for them, coming from the University of Virginia, and as strong as the school is with its academic reputation, to be involved with government and to be involved in what's going on, I think to me is a no-brainer. So a lot of them had the opportunity to do that and expressed excitement about doing it. Just standing in line and seeing the process, as you walk through, you have to provide your I.D., just all those different things. That's another life experience that a student-athlete here at the University of Virginia can enjoy.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the two-quarterback philosophy. It's working for Georgia Tech. It's working for you guys. Why

do you think that is? Because sometimes it doesn't, but it's been successful for you guys, especially last week.

COACH LONDON: I think we've been down the 'try this guy', 'try that guy' approach, and it got to the point where both of them have talent. As I always say, skill sets in terms of running our offense and executing it. The other thing is both of them are selfless. They're both guys that actually like each other. Some people think that guys are adversaries because of it.

But they split reps in practice, and it's allowed us to do some things offensively to take advantage of those skill sets that they have. The other thing is they both have bought into it. There's not an ego between Michael or Phillip. We have to get the job done when we do this. We will win. That's all that matters to them. That is the bottom line of trying to prepare whoever it is to go into a game and help us win. So we'll continue that approach here. Hopefully all the way through the end of the season, whatever that may be.

Q. How do you decide how to use them in terms of do you go into the week saying, okay, you're going to play this series, you're going to play that series? Or do you let the game dictate how that plays out?

COACH LONDON: It's a little bit of both. Not very scientific. Say you're going in for the first series, and it's two plays and it's out. The situation may dictate what and who, where the ball is, what is the score just different things. But it's a process as we go along as the game is being played.

Coach (Bill) Lazor and the offensive coaches upstairs, and the looks that they're getting consistent or not consistent is something that they keep in mind before making any substitution patterns or starting substitution patterns. So we'll look to find those moments again that will be best, not only each guy, but best for the team.

Q. I know you gave Luke Bowanko the offensive player of the week. What went into that? What did you see from film of how he did? Just how has he made that transition so far from guard to center? Seems like he's adapting to it at this point in the season?

COACH LONDON: Yes, he is. Actually it was co-offensive players. It was Kevin Parks and Luke. Kevin for his 115-yard rushing total. But Luke has done a really nice job of handling the front. Most offenses your center identifies the Mike linebacker or identifies the potential blitz, and

Luke does that. He does it regardless of the fronts and the movements and things like that.

This is a guy that had a shoulder surgery right after the bowl season last year and then right there in the summer had his other shoulder done. So he's a tough guy, but he's a smart guy. As I say, he's got another year himself. He's just really blossomed into being a good football player. When your center position can make the calls at the line of scrimmage and get you rechecked in terms of blitzes and stunts and things like that, that's pretty good. I've been here where sometimes the quarterbacks do it. I've been where Elton Brown may have played tackle or guard, and he'd do something like that. You like the guy that's in the middle to handle the ball 100% of the time and be definitive about the call that's need to be made, and Luke is that kind of guy.

Q. He's got such a big personality. Does that help with communication, I guess, on that line?

COACH LONDON: Well, he's a true student-athlete. He never has any problems in class. He's engaging in class. He's a great teammate. He's got a personality. You're right. He likes to have fun. He's taking care of his body. A guy that's had two shoulder surgeries and has put himself in a position to play well, play strong, play smart he's got to have a lot going on for him and Luke does.

An Interview With:

FRANK BEAMER VIRGINIA TECH

COACH BEAMER: They (Florida State) are 8th ranked and probably deserve to be higher. This is a fantastic football team, a very talented football team, a very hard-playing football team, athletic. So they have our utmost respect, that's for sure.

Q. Considering you came into the year replacing four starters up front on the offense and then you lost the one guy you had back, how would you rate the offensive line's ability to compete this year in the face of all of that?

COACH BEAMER: I think they continue to get better. The other part there is Wang has been in and out so much. He's having a hard time keeping him in there too. So that offensive line, that is the one place that you want people, continuity, and we just haven't been able to keep that week-in and week-out.

Q. Have they been good enough for to you win games or has it been a major problem?

COACH BEAMER: No, no, I think they have had their moments. Just like I've been talking. I think our running backs are young, and sometimes they look young but they played enough games now that that really shouldn't be the issue.

I think we've been spotty at the wide receiver position made some catches, haven't made some catches. So I think the inconsistency is a little bit here and a little bit there on our offense.

Q. As you look at Florida State's defensive front, what do you see there in that match-up?

COACH BEAMER: There are not many teams that can just rush four and get constant pressure on the quarterback. They're one team that can. Then they're extremely fast at linebacker and extremely quick in the secondary. So they earned that number one defense in the country. They play that way.

Q. Is there a tradeoff with potentially hosting perspective student-athletes on a visit and losing that experience for them?

COACH BEAMER: Well, I think there's good and bad in all situations. There is a lot of excitement about Thursday night games here in Blacksburg and over the years. If you can play, and you're the only game on, and one or two games at the most. So if you can play well, I think it's an advantage for your program.

Q. Once the game is out of the way, is that an added benefit for you guys to get your coaches out on the road early for Friday and Saturday games to evaluate talent and meet with kids that are interested in your program?

COACH BEAMER: Well, yeah. You pick up a couple of days that's being back-to-back Thursday night games. You get a couple of extra days in the beginning of it and get a couple of extra days in the end of it. I think extra day's rest for

your players and recruiting for your coaches, I mean, that's big right now.

Q. I guess as a tribute to your program that you guys haven't been in this position in ages. You have a losing record in November. Is there any kind of difficulty from a mental aspect of keeping the positive vibe that you usually have this time of year or has that been difficult?

COACH BEAMER: No, I think our practices have been good. I feel like we've got good talent. We just haven't played well as a football team consistently. I don't think it's lack of trying. I just think it's something here, something there, and it keeps -- the other side of it. We've been on the other side of it a bunch of times where you get some momentum and you made one good play and here you make another good play and you make another good play. So we've been on the other side of that too.

Q. You mentioned earlier some of the inconsistency at receiver. Do you think that's been the biggest problem with the dropoff statistically from Logan Thomas this year that he hasn't been as accurate. His interceptions are up. Is that dealing with a new set of receivers that haven't been as efficient as the guys you lost?

COACH BEAMER: Well, I think it goes back to your offense. You've got four new starters and now five new starters. The guy that was very depended on a lot, Andrew Miller, had a season-ending injury. So I think that affects you. The running backs in the running game, that affects how your quarterback can play and how you can call plays and not get into 2nd and 10 and get a big pass-rush. Then receivers, being consistent and catching the ball and being where you need to be and so forth; I think all of those things kind of go into it.

There is just a lot of new people around Logan. But as far as his toughness, as far as his dedication to winning, as far as his ability, that's not in question.

Q. How has your recruiting footprint changed over the years? How's the geography where you find it's changed?

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, since we became members of the ACC, we basically recruit

within six hours of Blacksburg. I think there are a lot of good players within that area and the family mom and dad come on visits most of the time. I like the family visiting Virginia Tech, and then they can come back and watch them play without too much trouble. I think there are a lot of advantages in being able to basically recruit. Now if it's a special situation or whatever, we'll go further. You know, six hours, and of course that includes a lot of the teams that we play, a lot of the area that makes it a good situation too.

Q. Do you think this power shift we've seen from the Midwest and Northeast and South and West, first national titles and all those sorts of things, is that going to continue or is it kind of a cycle deal where it will revert back?

COACH BEAMER: Say that again?

Q. We see a lot of national titles in the South and the West. We see the balance power shift from Northeast, Midwest to the Southeast, west. Do you think that continues. Or is it a trend in a cycle over time?

COACH BEAMER: Well, I think the Southeastern Conference is always going to be strong. I think all of us are competing like heck to come to that level and be competitive at that level.

An Interview With:

DAVID CUTCLIFFE DUKE

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Open date came at obviously a good time for our team. Ten weeks into the season we've been able to get work, and at the same time try to get a few people a little more healed than what they've been. We had a lot of people play pretty banged up.

So a good time for us. The focus has been on just purely getting better after not playing as well as we can play over the last weeks. We've looked forward to the open date, getting some good out of it. Look forward to returning back to play next week. With that I'll answer your questions.

Q. I guess obviously you saw early in the week Ross Martin was named semifinalist on the Groza Award. He bounced back after probably his one weak game of the year at Florida State and came back and played very well at Clemson with two 47-yard field goals. Can you talk about what he's given you and how much potential he has?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: It's a difficult transition to be a true freshman kicker, going from kicking off a block to kicking off the ground, to handling the kickoff duties so ably. Ross is a mentally tough guy, a hard worker, and now he's been beyond -- I knew he was going to be really special. But he's been really beyond any dreams you might have for a true freshman. Best part of Ross Martin is you haven't seen his best yet. There is more to come without a doubt.

Q. Your other freshman kicker had been just lights out going into Florida State and had a tough game there. He didn't bounce back as strong against Clemson. He was good, but not at the level he had been at before. Is there a concern there, or do you think the week off will help him?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: He'll be fine. Will Monday's a big-time player. He's one of them that's kind of, to be honest with you, gone through week to week trying to get through being a little banged up. This week will help Will. He had a great day today. It looks like a little time off has helped him.

Q. With the dismissal of Coach Phillips at Kentucky this week and rumors around other programs starting to Heat up, your name is already being bounced around for potential openings. Do you have a message for your team or a planned message for those guys to avoid distractions with your name being out there?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I don't really have a planned message. I haven't to this point felt the need to bring it up to them. But we're totally focused on what we're doing at Duke, and have no interest in talking about anything else otherwise. I think our players trust me in that regard and know that's a sincere statement. So I would leave it at that.

Q. Is it the same message for prospective student-athletes that are interested in coming to Duke?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Sure. We love where we are and what we're doing. We have an incredible relationship with what we hope our potential players are in the future. So we feel very strongly about that.

Q. You've had among your injuries guys in the secondary in particular seem to have been bitten by that bug. But Walt Canty seems to have played consistently for you back there. Can you talk about the season he's had and playing through injuries?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Yeah, he's played through injury. He's been non-contact in practice the last four weeks. He wills himself out there. He's a captain. He's performing like an all-conference performer. He's not going to not miss a practice. He's just limited a little bit in his running. He hasn't been able to do tackling drills and different things. Just a few days' rest, he told me not long before this conference call how much better he felt. He started to feel like Walt again. That's good news for me.

Q. What are the attributes he brings to playing back there at safety?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Walt is the perfect a safetyman. He obviously has a great nose for the ball. He's an incredibly savvy football player, an intense football player. He's one of those guys that gets three steps in before everybody else does, because he senses where the ball is so well. Then he's a guy that can defend the pass. He's just been one of our more consistent football players for four years now.

Q. Usually turnover margin is crucial. Last two weeks you struggled, but you had an 8-0 turnover margin. Have you ever seen anything like that?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: No, and I told our squad that. I said I'm going to start a new lecture circuit, turnover ratio doesn't matter. It's an amazing statistic. To go plus four in two games that we basically get blown out. There are a couple of things there. One, they occurred and it wasn't as hurtful. People weren't turning it over backed up. The other is it proves the old action. I don't mean to make the breaks, but when one comes your way, score. And we haven't been able

to score off turnovers. So it's not the turnover itself, it's what you do with it.

An Interview With:

AL GOLDEN MIAMI

COACH GOLDEN: We're excited about the opportunity this weekend in Charlottesville. We've been working hard, practicing well, and clearly we've got our hands full with a Virginia team coming off a victory in Raleigh, and played really a flawless game, a tremendous game. Six sacks, four takeaways, tremendous third down unit, and clearly on offense, they had everything working, including 250 yards on the ground.

So it will be a tough task for a team that beat us here a year ago. We've got to saddle up and get ready for a great ACC contest. So with that, any questions you have, I'm ready.

Q. What impressions have you gotten from the film of Virginia's defensive line in particular?

COACH GOLDEN: Well, again, I think the first thing that jumps out at you is how good they use their hands. I said it a year ago, I think they're well-trained in terms of their hand to hand combat. They're very rugged and strong. I think you're starting to see Mike Moore and Eli Harold, and some of those young guys step up. (Chris) Brathwaite and all those guys are starting to step up and see more action. That's allowing them to stay fresher. I thought they really got after the quarterback last week. Not just six sacks, but they must have hit him a dozen times last week against N.C. State.

Q. Overall their defense is really young, but is this the time of the year where you're past being a freshman or true freshman or whatever it may be?

COACH GOLDEN: Again, I think that's a Coach (Mike) London or Coach (Jim) Reid question, because I don't know how the young men are practicing or what their reps are for the year. What I can say is a guy in Greer in the

middle that makes it go. I think he's leading the league in tackles. He sees it. He's physical. He's decisive. He runs the show.

Reynolds comes off the edge a lot, number 9. He's active, a very physical player. They are a defense that challenges you. They are a really, really good defense. They have over 43 and outs this year. They're 29% on third down. I think the key for them last week is they protected the ball on offense and took the ball away. So they did a great job.

Q. I'm thumbing through media guides here trying to figure out when you were last with Virginia. And when you were last in Charleston. Am I looking at this right your last game against Virginia was against Miami in Miami?

COACH GOLDEN: How about that? I didn't think of that. You're exactly right. I think it was in the Orange Bowl. I'm pretty sure it was. I think that was my last game, and I accepted the Temple job the next week or next weekend or however it worked out.

Q. Then the last home game at Virginia would have been against Virginia Tech. Not a real close one. But have you been back to Charlottesville at all since then?

COACH GOLDEN: Boy, oh, boy. I don't believe I have been. I don't believe I have been, to be honest with you. I don't believe I have been. I'm searching through my mind right now. But, no, you're right, I haven't been back.

Q. How do you remember those years?

COACH GOLDEN: I have fond memories of the University of Virginia and Charlottesville community. A lot of good friends are there to this day. Obviously, close with members of their staff and the administration: Craig Littlepage, John Oliver, Michael London, Anthony Poindexter. Just really classy people. I have fond memories.

I just haven't been back. It's exciting to come back now as a head coach and bring a team into Charlottesville.

Q. With you guys now in the driver's seat for the coastal, have you noticed any of the few senior leaders that you have step up and make sure their teammates realize just what a big accomplishment this would be at Miami given it would be the first time it's happened?

COACH GOLDEN: I think there is some sense of that. Number one, I don't agree with you in terms of the driver's seat. We're just trying get better today. So I don't want that to be linked with any of my quotes, with all respect. But I do think that the guys understand that we've lost some guys along the way this year, some injuries.

Our team understands that you're not guaranteed anything. You're not promised anything in this game. You couldn't have the type of team that could go 12-1 next year, and the one game you lost prevents you from having an opportunity to win the ACC Coastal and playing in Charlotte.

So I think our guys understand there is urgency here and these games are important in November. We're trying to teach them this process, and kind of impart to them that this is the only thing that holds up this time of year is the discipline and the regiment and the process.

Q. Since you have such a young team, do you need to rely on some of the seniors that you do have to help you out with that message?

COACH GOLDEN: We do. There is no question about it. Mike James has been tremendous. Shayon Green is another young man that's doing a great job leading for us. Brandon McGee, and there are others. There are other guys in the younger classes that are stepping up for us. And that's what we need. We need that guidance because it's something that hasn't been done. For all the great players that have come through here over the last eight years, we have not won our division or won the Coastal. The only thing that we can do about it today is practice well, and obviously play well on Saturday.

Q. I want to follow up on this youth movement that was just asked about previously. With a guy like Duke Johnson really stepping up, do you think having those young talented players, especially guys from the Miami area playing and making an impact makes it easier for you to sell your program to perspective student-athletes?

COACH GOLDEN: Sure it does. We're one of the few programs in America that if we can just cultivate from within three or four hours or three to five hours of our home that we can put together a championship type team. So certainly it

does.

There are a lot of teams that aren't blessed with the type of depth and talent level in terms of high school players and having access to recruits. So I don't think there is any question. Guys like Duke Johnson, playing the way he's playing or Deon Bush playing the way he's playing, or Ereck Flowers playing the way he's playing, I think all of the guys. Tyriq McCord, all of those guys coming in and playing significantly and having an impact is certainly going to impact our recruiting moving forward. Guys understand that that's the type of nucleus it takes to get Miami back to where we want to be.

Q. What do you think your current perception is for players in Miami and Miami-Dade County and Broward County?

COACH GOLDEN: I think the perception is that we're looking for young men to join our program and put Miami back where it belongs in the national scene. I keep saying it, but I confront the facts. I know exactly where we are right now as a program. It's not where we want to be. We're building it. We have a long way to go. But it's important to address the facts and not gloss over anything.

We understand what we need to do both here in our program and also in recruit to go achieve our goals and get us back to where we want to be. That is the beauty of Deon Bush or Tracy Howard or Malcolm Lewis and Randy Johnson. Those guys know exactly what the University of Miami is.

They know that when you go to Miami, if you're Duke Johnson, you're going to be compared to Clinton Portis and Edgerrin James and Willis McGahee, and he accepted that challenge. He loves that challenge. Certainly I think we have a lot of young men down here that can relate to that, and they want to be compared to the best ever, and they want to be responsible for being the foundation of this program and getting it back to where we need to go.

Q. I've heard the term self-imposed. Not necessarily from anybody in the know. But I wonder if that's an issue for another time or whether it's an issue at all as far as looking forward?

COACH GOLDEN: I'm sure it's an issue. It's not my issue. I'm out of that conversation. That conversation is between our President, our legal counsel and the athletic director, to be quite

honest. I'm charged with getting a team ready this week, and ultimately to play well against the University of Virginia who is coming off their best game.

We've got our focus squarely on them, and then our long range, obviously, is on the Coastal Division. There is nothing else that we can control. We're trying to prevent all excuses and anything external from getting in the way of what we're trying to achieve. It hasn't been done here. We have a brutal schedule. We're fighting our tails off and we're growing up. We have a big challenge in Charlottesville.

Q. How is your parents' beach house?

COACH GOLDEN: It's standing. Had significant water in it, but it is standing. We're one of the fortunate ones up there. I have close friends that have lost everything, and they're in our thoughts and prayers. We're trying to help them. Certainly my brother Shaun, for a week, hasn't really slept. (He's) with the emergency services and trying to get New Jerseyans back on their feet. Now they're bracing for another Nor'easter tonight from what I understand.

Q. You've been in the northeast and extreme southeast. We've seen the power of college football shift more and more South, and more and more West. Do you see anything that's going to reverse that trend, that divide that we see in talent and rankings and that sort of thing?

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, to be honest with you, I'll help you answer the question. But is that statistically proven that that balance has made a shift, number one, and then also has it been cyclical overtime? I don't know.

Q. More SEC teams have finished number one in the AP polls in the last three decades than they did in the previous three decades.

COACH GOLDEN: Got you. There is no question that right now, certainly in Alabama they're playing at an elite level, and I don't think there is any question about that. But that is the beauty of college football. There are always coaches or organizations that set the standard. You're either going to back down from that or respond to that.

So it's the job of everybody else out there

to get your team, build your team, your program, and your organization to the point where you can knock some of those guys off.

Again, from our standpoint, we've played for more National Championships than anybody in the last 30 years and we've won more. That's what we're charged with. That's our task to build our program. I don't pay attention to anybody else and what they're doing. We just focus on getting the type of recruits and building the program that we want to build that our family and university can be proud of.

An Interview With:

JIMBO FISHER FLORIDA STATE

COACH FISHER: Enjoyed our off week. As far as that, had great preparation this week, good practices. Looking forward to going up to Blacksburg. We'll have a heck of a challenge. As we know, a Thursday night game, they always play well. Frank always has his guys ready to play. They have a great team. Excited. They're very athletic on all three phases. We'll have to be on our A-game and have a heck of a challenge tomorrow night. So we're looking forward to it.

Q. They've had to rebuild their offensive line coming into the year. They've had to shuffle guys because of injuries. What do you see from the play of the five guys they've been using most on that offensive line?

COACH FISHER: They play hard. They're well coached. They play physical. They'll butt you in the mouth. They've done a nice job, and they've moved the ball all year. So those guys have done a very nice job.

Q. You mentioned the fact that they've been able to generate yards. They've struggled to generate points. When you watch them, what do you see preventing them from scoring?

COACH FISHER: Well, sometimes they can be -- the other team makes a great play or you have one miss cue in the red zone, and it can set you back. It's hard. Every team has that factor,

but they are very explosive. I can't put my finger on why. I know what's being coached there, but they are very explosive and are capable of scoring a lot of points.

Q. Virginia Tech's been one of the ACC's consistent winners, but they've struggled this year. Are you surprised by where they are right now in the standings?

COACH FISHER: For a Virginia Tech team not to be at the top, yeah, it does surprise you because they've been there so consistently. It shows injuries, attrition, things can happen in a season. They're still the same coaches and have the same players. They'll still be doing pretty good. But sometimes the reasons for winning and losing are very small, and sometimes the breaks don't go your way.

Q. Just in terms of playing out-of-state, the only time I think you've done that this year was the NC State game. How important is it as a program to win on the road in order to be successful?

COACH FISHER: I mean, we win on the road. Going to Miami is just as tough as going to N.C. State or anywhere else. Whether it's in the state and the competition you play, South Florida's got a great team. It's important to win all the time, at home and on the road. If you want to be a great team, you have to win on the road.

Q. Everyone knows how tough Virginia Tech is to play against on Thursday night, especially at home. What do you feel your team needs to do to secure a win tomorrow night in Lane Stadium?

COACH FISHER: We have to play great, sound, fundamental football. We have to be consistent from the opening snap to the last snap. They're not going to give you anything. You have to earn everything you get. Play consistent in all three phases, play physical, and be able to sustain the surge of energy in the stadium and everything that goes on with playing on the road. We'll have to be very consistent.

Q. I want to ask about Vince Williams. He's played for you in and out over the last couple of years. Can you talk about Vince as a player and a student and what he brings to you guys defensively?

COACH FISHER: One thing, he's already got his degree. He's already graduated. Vince is a great leader. He has great passion for the game. Loves playing, he's very physical. Affects his teammates and brings energy to practice from the guys that aren't there, and he's making them get up and have that energy. Very pleased with him, very blessed to have coached him, and he's a great young man.

Q. Also, Vince's younger brother as well plays for you. Vince said that he's kind of the opposite as his brother. I don't know if you could talk about that?

COACH FISHER: Yeah, he's more outgoing. He's quieter at times. Carlos is a social butterfly. He's always talking to everybody and being around everybody. But they're both great young men. They are different. One's more outgoing than the other, definitely.

Q. The ten-year anniversary of the Devery Henderson catch at Kentucky is coming up?

COACH FISHER: I got you. The Bluegrass Miracle.

Q. What do you remember about that, and particularly the call? Was there any disagreement on the call going in?

COACH FISHER: No, there wasn't. We had practiced that play, dash right, 93 Berlin. I can remember it to today. The thing that was ironic on that is we were backed up inside our pass, hit a pass to Michael Clayton, hit a square and we had one time out left. Hit a 25-yard pass to Michael Clayton. He got on the ground, and we spread it out on the last play. It was almost an amazement.

You saw the ball thrown. The tip happened, and when it hit and I was in the press box, and when it went up in the air, he said, oh, Lord, he's got a chance to hit it, and he did it. I mean, Devery could fly. What happened on the play, the receivers got intertwined and Michael switched places and got to be the jump ball guy, tipped and made an adjustment on the run. Devery got it and once he gets down field, it was gone.

I sat there in amazement it was one of those ironic and iconic times in your career. You couldn't believe you just saw what happened. It was a great team, a great player, and great guys executed that play.

Q. Clayton was the original intended receiver?

COACH FISHER: Well, we're going to get a jump ball guy. They all got bumped off, and Clayton realized that. So he made the tip on the play, and then Devery got in behind and caught the tip on the long run. We'd do that because guys would reroute you as we go down field on that. As a play, we work that play constantly. It was something we've worked on in practice every Thursday forever and ever and ever, and it came through.

Q. Have you ever used that play in a game since?

COACH FISHER: Oh, yeah. I have since. Hopefully not too many because that's when you're behind a bunch when you get in that situation. But it's something we have in our arsenal and still do.

Q. Has it worked since those days? Has it worked for you at Florida State in a game for you?

COACH FISHER: No, in practice it has. We hit it in practice. We hit it the other day in practice, as a matter of fact. We'll keep working that situation.

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