

October 30, 2013



An Interview With:

DABO SWINNEY CLEMSON

DABO SWINNEY: Just quickly, proud of our guys for bouncing back this past weekend and getting a good win and getting back on track around here. Another tough challenge this week going up to Virginia. It's been quite a while since we've been up there. Good-looking football team, a lot of talent on this team, a lot of young talent. They're really competing very hard. I know their schedule is not what they want, but make no mistake, this is a football team that I think is a lot closer than people think.

Offensively I think they're starting to come into form. Their quarterback is playing very well, coming off a really good game against Georgia Tech. Got good skill guys, really big in the offensive line and tight ends.

Defensively very young but very talented. Got a couple of guys that just jump out at you on tape at linebacker, at safety, and the defensive line. So for us it's just about trying to continue to find ways to win and approaching it as the biggest game of the year, and we've got an open date coming up next week, so try to do everything we can to really empty our tank and play our best game this weekend.

Q. Talk about Virginia; what have you seen in their video because I know they're a couple plays from being over .500, so what have you seen?

DABO SWINNEY: Well, just kind of what you said. They're very close. I mean, sometimes you've got to look beyond -- everybody just says, oh, well, they're 2 and whatever, and all of a sudden they're not a good team, and that's just not reality. We had in 2010 a team that I think we lost five games by less than six points. I mean, every

game seemed like it was three points, and our guys competed their tails off. We just were in that process of learning how to win and growing some guys up and all that kind of stuff.

I see a lot of similarities in this Virginia team. They've played a very difficult schedule. I think every team they've played has a winning record and is probably going to be a bowl team. So it's just not like they haven't played anybody. A lot of people rate their schedule as the toughest in the country at this point.

They've just, I think, got a lot of youth. They've got 13 or 14 freshmen on defense. They've got a young quarterback who is really, really talented and getting better. But I think their future is very bright, and as you said, they're just a few plays away. Nobody wants to hear that, but I think with a little patience this team is going to step up and be one of the surprise teams in the next year or so.

Q. I was reading the game notes this morning, and this is the last game until 2020 when you're facing Virginia, so is that kind of weird with the scheduling the next couple years?

DABO SWINNEY: Yeah, that is kind of unusual. We played them here, I guess last time was in maybe '09, I think. We played them up there in '08, played them here in '09. So playing them now, and yes, it's kind of unusual to be that long. But I'll tell you what, they've got a lot of young talent on this football team that I think over the next couple years they'll be a real force in that side of the conference.

Q. Could you talk about the process of putting that Florida State game behind you, and was there any hangover, so to speak, going to Maryland last week?

DABO SWINNEY: Well, I mean, it's just like anything, you come off an emotional win like we had against Georgia, and you've got to get ready for South Carolina State, and then you come



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off an emotional loss, same thing. Our mentality every week has just been, regardless, this is the biggest game of the year, whether you win or lose. I just believe that if your team takes on that mentality and you develop that type of culture in your program, then you're going to be able to be consistent. If you don't have that culture in your program, then you're going to be up and down. You're going to be a team that's probably going to lose a couple you shouldn't lose or whatever.

I just think that our guys have done a great job of going back to work regardless of the win or a loss, and that's the main reason that we've been able to be incredibly consistent over the last three years. I mean, I think we're seventh in the country in wins over the last three years. And the reason for that is you move on to the next game. You can't sit around and dwell or bask in a victory or dwell on a loss. You have to move on. It's a season. You play 12 games, and every game is a season of its own, it's four quarters of its own, and then you just try to find ways to win.

I thought our guys did a tremendous job last week. We responded defensively, handled some adversity in the game. We had three turnovers, which is disappointing, but they got negative nine yards off of those three turnovers, so for your defense to go out there and respond like that is impressive.

And then offensively scored 40 points and 550 yards, and first time in school history to have a 160-yard rusher and a 160-yard receiver. I would say they responded in a big way going to a place and beating a team that has a winning record and was undefeated at home. I was proud of them.

Q. If I might ask an unrelated follow-up, are you aware of the history with the two quarterbacks where Tajh has been something of a mentor for David Watford, that they went to rival high schools, et cetera?

DABO SWINNEY: Have not really talked to Tajh. I know he knows him because we actually talked about him yesterday. I was just telling him how impressed I was with him and his potential and his ability. But we didn't have a long, detailed discussion about their background, but he said he knows him.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Watford, too. When you look at him on tape he's a young quarterback playing for the first time. I think he threw 62 passes last week. Do you

see development there? Do you see him growing into the role?

DABO SWINNEY: I really do. I mean, listen, he made some throws last week, I just kind of stopped the film and ran it back a couple times. He made a couple throws from the pocket, some deep comebacks from far hash to the field that were on time, were accurate and had great velocity. I mean, that is a big-time play, a couple of those throws that he made. And then he's made some great throws coming out of the pocket on the move. They run a lot of boots and some roll-out type stuff, and he's very accurate on the move.

And then you see him take off and run, he can definitely do some things with the ball in his hand.

I hadn't really seen him to be honest with you very much until I really started studying Virginia, and man, he is a very talented young player that I think has a very bright future, and you can tell that they're trying to bring him along. This time next year he's going to be a lot better than he is now, and a lot of the people around him are going to be better. I think he's one of those guys that everybody in this conference is going to take note of over the next couple years.

Q. Another guy that at least the last two weeks I've seen make some big-time catches was Tim Smith. He's an older player, but he's made a couple of dramatic catches the last two weeks.

DABO SWINNEY: He really has. In fact, that was one of the things we were talking defensively yesterday. He's really become, 20, his number, he's really become kind of the go-to guy, and you can tell that he's confident, he's kind of taken ownership of that position. He's a return guy for them, as well, and I think he's having a heck of a year for them. He has made some huge plays as of late.

JIMBO FISHER FLORIDA STATE

JIMBO FISHER: Very excited the way our team played last week against North Carolina State. I thought we started well and played very well. Thought we kept good focus in the game, got a lot of young guys a lot of time which I thought

was very critical for our future and down the line the rest of the year. Again, was very proud of the way our guys practiced last week and coming off a big victory versus Clemson and staying focused and being able to play well against NC State who we knew had a great ballclub.

So very proud of that, very proud of the development that we have, looking forward to this week's game against Miami. Like I say, it's great for -- it's one of the great rivalries in college football. It's a very influential in the ACC race, very influential in the National Championship race, and I think it's also great for our conference, understanding how great the ball is in the ACC.

Like I said, Miami is a great team, very well coached and we look forward to the challenge we have this weekend, and our guys are doing the same thing.

Questions?

Q. Everybody knows about Duke Johnson, but can you tell us about some of the other players on Miami's offense that you guys are focusing on?

JIMBO FISHER: I mean, Stephen Morris is a great player. The two tight ends do a great job, 46 and 82 do a great job. Allen Hurns does a great job; Stacy Coley does a great job; all the receivers. That whole group of guys can make plays down the field and they're getting them the ball, and they can throw it, they can run it. Their offensive line does a great job. They have playmakers at all positions. We have to pay attention to everybody.

Q. As far as facing Duke Johnson this week, what's your assessment of this run defense at this point in the season?

JIMBO FISHER: We feel good. We're very physical all week and our guys are doing a good job at the line of scrimmage and it's going to be very critical and we've got to fit things right and spill things right and take on blockers the right way and not have a lot of "I" violations.

I think it'll be -- I like where we're at right now in our run defense, but it's going to be a great challenge.

Q. How do you kind of keep your team kind of focused on when you're winning big like this and you've got a Miami team that's been struggling to win? Are you having to sell your team on this difficult opponent this week?

JIMBO FISHER: No, no the at all. This Miami. They know each other. They're No. 6 in the country so I don't think you have to sell them on anything. This team is undefeated. You look on the film you see a very well-coached, very good football team.

Q. I'm going to take you back to 2011, actually. You had that three-game losing streak, and since then you're 26-3. My question is what was the atmosphere around the program at that point after those three losses, and what has changed since to make you guys so successful going up to this point?

JIMBO FISHER: Well, I think in that game if you go back we lost a hard-fought game to Oklahoma, went right to the end. We lost our quarterback, had to go to Clemson, played a tremendous game at 35-30, had a chance to win it at the end. Two very good opponents, very tough losses. And then we were really banged up and we had to play Bobby Hart. People forget Datko never played a game after the Clemson game and all those games. We had about four or five guys that we lost, a lot of guys on offense going in, and EJ couldn't play going up there. The doctors said he could not play and at halftime they said he could, and so we got back in the game but we lost those games, but it wasn't bad. Our kids handled it well and we dealt with the adversity and played through it.

I just think we can learn to continue to prepare well and practice well, and we got healthy, and I think that's another good thing that's going for us right now. Your health of your team and the maturity, I think we're just older and we just understand those situations better.

Q. It was just your second year at that point. How did the fans deal with that little streak?

JIMBO FISHER: I mean, they have to deal with it one way, we have to deal with it another. We have to focus on what we do, and you can't worry about that. I'm sure everybody doesn't want to lose, but that's part of the game, and you as a coach have to keep staying true to what you believe in. We were able to do that and ended up with a good year.

Q. How do you stop the two-headed monster that Miami has in running back; they

have Duke Johnson and they have that guy Dallas Crawford. How do you stop those two?

JIMBO FISHER: I don't know if you ever stop them. They're very good players. You've got to beat blockers at the line of scrimmage, you've got to get guys and tackle well in space because the thing about it, even when you've got guys there to tackle them, they run through you or they make you miss. That's the challenge of playing great players. You're going to play very well, keep great leverage on the ball, going to have to rally to the ball, going to have to tackle in bunches and make sure we keep them hemmed up and not give them big gaps because they're all great players.

Q. Talk about this rivalry; what is it like having both teams undefeated and helping this conference get back to where it was before?

JIMBO FISHER: I think it's very good. It's good for both schools. It's good for the state of Florida. It's good for the ACC, and it's good for college football. I think it's good all the way around, and like I say, it's one of the great traditional rivalries in the game, and it's great to see both teams up there.

Q. I'm just wondering if you have a memory of this rivalry, of this series, that sticks out most to you from when you watched from afar?

JIMBO FISHER: I don't know if there's any one. To me the thing that always stuck out to me is how competitive the games were and how athletic and good the teams were and how well they were coached. It was just at that time it was the epitome of college football and the top -- arguably the top two programs in the country consistently. To me it was just the great competitiveness and the great athletes that were on the field. Every year you watched it, the game was almost always the same. No matter who won or not, it was always very similar games.

Q. I'd like to ask you a little bit about Lamarcus Joyner. What sets him apart as some people say the best cornerback in the country? What is it about him that's so outstanding?

JIMBO FISHER: I think the one thing is he has a true burning desire to be a great player. He puts his heart and soul into everything he does, and he's not a selfish guy. He's a tremendous team player and understands that and a great leader when he goes to that, affects the guys

around him. But when you watch him play and practice, he loves everything about football, the workouts, the practice. He truly loves it, and I think it's just his great consistency and passion to compete and play, and that's why he plays so hard. When you watch him, he truly loves what he's doing.

Q. Without giving away a game plan, what are the effective ways that you can use him against Miami, because they're one of these teams that's got obviously tremendous skill players at receiver?

JIMBO FISHER: They do. He can play man, he can play zone, and he plays over the slot, plays at nickel. We've used him as a blitzer, we've used him as a man cover guy from there, a zone cover guy. He has the versatility to do a lot of things, and we've used him that way all year long.

Q. Last year you guys had 24 fumbles and interceptions combined, and this year on tape you've got 17 already. Is the attacking defense provided by Coach Pruitt working, and you obviously can't prepare for how to force turnovers, but do you feel like this defense has guys in the right place to make plays?

JIMBO FISHER: I don't think there's no doubt we're keeping great leverage on the ball and we're rallying to it and we're not having a lot of "I" violations, and we're seeing the ball when it's thrown to make plays, and we're tackling in bunches and being able to strip the ball. I think we're playing with just a lot of confidence right now, and I think it's critical, the more confidence you play with the more good things happen to you.

RANDY EDSALL MARYLAND

RANDY EDSALL: Well, we're just going to take this week and work to get some of our guys back from the injury list and then just work to get better on some of the things that we need work on, which is got to get better on 3rd down defense, 3rd down offense, got to stop turning the ball over offensively, and those are things that we'll take care of this week.

Q. I wanted to ask about your

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attendance this year. You guys are drawing about 5,000 more fans a game. Is that gratifying to you, or what's your take on the increased attendance at Maryland games?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I think it's a combination of a lot of hard work by a lot of people here within the athletic department, plus with the players that we had coming back, I think, and guys going out there and playing hard. So I think it's a combination of a lot of things. We're pleased that it's up, but we want to get it to where we've got it sold out here every weekend, and that's what we're going to continue to work on.

Q. With Mike's departure this week, how will you elevate now at left tackle?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, what we'll do is we're going to practice today and tomorrow, and we've talked about things, and we've got things in mind. But we'll end up putting that out when we get the two deep out at the beginning of the week.

Q. I wanted to ask about your wide receiver play. Jacobs obviously had a huge play in the game Saturday, but after losing your top two guys against Wake, can you talk about how your other guys have responded and how you feel they've stepped up?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I think that Levern has shown progress and has made some big plays in the last two games against Wake Forest and Clemson, has big-play capability, and again, I think the other guys are getting better but were inconsistent, and that's the thing that we've got to continue to work with those young men on and continue to coach them to get them to where they're more consistent play in, play out, doing the things with their route running and blocking. You know, they show signs of doing some really good things, and then they show signs like where you scratch your head and say, what were they doing.

That's just something that we've got to continue to work on, and we'll work on that this week.

Q. How tough is it with the shuttle at quarterback? You've obviously had to change there, too.

RANDY EDSALL: Again, it's one of those things that you can't worry about. You go with what you have and everybody has got to adjust, and the quarterbacks throw to all the different receivers during individual, and we do things along those lines, and then we get in team and have that.

But again, all last week during practice, Caleb worked with those, so whoever has been out there, CJ or Caleb, they've been working with those receivers they're going to be playing with in the game. No excuses, we've just got to get better.

Q. Looking at the numbers here, it looks like you were one of the best teams in the country in plus turnover caused margin early in the season, and then the last four games have been completely the other side. I don't think you've changed coaching methods; what's happened in your eyes?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I think we did some careless things on offense to cause that, be it interceptions or be it fumbles, and then we finally got three turnovers this past week against Clemson, but didn't get any the other games. That's all just little things. You might not play the technique properly, your eyes might not be where they're supposed to, or when we go in and have the opportunity to strip the ball, we didn't strip the ball. I just think it's one of those situations where we caused too many ourselves, and then not getting them is because of those little technique things and not taking advantage of some of the opportunities we did have to be able to get some turnovers.

Q. Is it something you emphasize before the team goes out and takes the field each Saturday?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I mean, we work on it every day in practice. We work on getting turnovers each day in practice. We always talk about winning the turnover battle before each game, and again, I think it's one of those things that if you do what you're supposed to do and put yourself -- use the technique and put yourself in position to be able to do that, you can, and then also to understand that, like I said, when the opportunity presents itself where you see a ball that's hanging there or the guy is not covering up to get the ball out.

We talk about it during the week, we practice it, and then we always talk about it usually the night before the game in terms of winning that turnover battle.

Q. I wanted to ask you, you've got a couple of linebackers who have performed well. Cole Farrand is coming off a 23-tackle

game; Marcus Whitfield leads you with seven and a half sacks this year. Just talk a little bit about what those guys are giving you at linebacker.

RANDY EDSALL: Well, those are the two positions within our scheme that the guys should be very productive, and Cole had a lot of tackles against Clemson. Again, the reason you make those tackles is because the defensive line is doing their job and you're doing your job of reading your keys and following those keys and taking you to where you're supposed to be.

And then Marcus is a guy who's kind of stepped into the starting role and has just been very productive and has done well, and again, I think it's more of a factor of those guys doing exactly what they're coached to do, putting them in a position, and other guys around them that are doing their job that allows them to have the success that they're having.

Q. And also with a week and a half until your next game, will that be enough time for CJ Brown to heal? What's his status?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I think CJ will be fine. We're going to go out to practice today and he's going to be out there on the practice field. I think hopefully, barring no setback, he should be ready to go.

Q. Just how timely was this bye week and how optimistic are you about getting multiple players back from that long injury list?

RANDY EDSALL: Well, I think with where we were health-wise, I think it's an opportune time for us in terms of this bye week falling where it did. Again, I'm optimistic we'll get some guys back, but again, I don't want to make any comments today because the fact is we haven't been on the practice field yet this week. We'll be out there today and tomorrow, and we'll see how things go.

But I'm optimistic we'll get some of those guys back.

Q. From a program standpoint, when you have injuries, the mounting injuries this late in the season and you've got guys that you've already earmarked for red shirt, how do these mid- to late-season injuries affect everything, because there are certain guys that you don't want to burn their red shirt this late in their freshman campaign.

RANDY EDSALL: Yeah, there is, and I think that's a concern that all of us at this level

have, head coaches have, from the standpoint that we'd like to see the rules altered where you could take these freshmen at this time of the year when you do get these injuries to be able to play them and where if you had five years of eligibility or you could play them in X number of games. But I think that's a concern, and here we've got healthy bodies on our team that have progressed throughout the year where they've gotten better where now they're in a position where they're able to contribute, maybe early in the year they weren't, and to sit here and have to make the decision as to do I burn a kid's red shirt with only three games to play or four games to play, I wish we could get something done about that, because again, I just think that's -- it makes a better product that you can put on the field, and also to be able to have guys out there who are healthy, who can contribute in one way, shape or form. I think that's something that needs to be looked at, and hopefully that's something that we'll bring forward to try to get changed.

SCOTT SHAFER SYRACUSE

SCOTT SHAFER: Thanks for having us on, as usual. Had a good bye week, got the kids healthy and had a chance to really focus in on the academic side of things a little bit heavier and feel good about that. Now we're 100 percent focused on the next game against a well-coached Wake Forest team.

With that, any questions?

Q. Having that bye week, coming off that lopsided loss to Georgia Tech, what's kind of been the focus there? How much have you kind of looked at that game and said, well, that's because we were playing a unique offense in Georgia Tech and how much of that is we need to work on this and this and this during the bye week?

SCOTT SHAFER: Yeah, we've gotten by the loss. We've had tunnel vision after that Sunday of looking at it, and our tunnel vision is a focus right on Wake Forest, and for the bye week a lot of focus on ourselves and looking at what we've done well, what we've struggled with and really focusing in on the improvement of the things that

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we haven't done as well and trying to accentuate the positives and trying to build off of those types of schemes and concepts on both sides of the ball as well as in the kicking game.

Kind of a focus on ourselves, and then a full direction right at Wake Forest.

Q. Any few things that you really need to improve upon from the Georgia Tech game?

SCOTT SHAFER: A lot of -- there's a lot of things. It was a perfect storm. We didn't play well. I didn't have them prepared well. We just tried to flush that thing and move forward to be quite honest with you and got back to focusing on the things from our self-scout, cut-ups throughout the season that we've already had a chance to look at, evaluate once or twice coming off the first bye week, and now the second bye week add to those cut-ups and see where we've made improvements and what we liked going into this next game.

Really our focus was on ourselves and the production or lack of production of the things we did throughout the course of the first seven games.

Q. Talking with Coach Lea last night, he said you guys are waiting to see how Dyshawn's ankle would respond this morning after his first practice with contact. Have you heard anything on how he's feeling?

SCOTT SHAFER: Yeah, he's doing well. He practiced yesterday, ran around pretty good, and then he was in for treatment early this morning, and he's done a nice job staying up on the treatment. We're ramping him up each day and looking forward to getting him back on the field.

Q. Is there any kind of feeling like now that you guys have gone back to kind of your traditional 4-3 working in the Okie, as well. Is there any kind of feeling that the defense might be looking that a little bit more or kind of getting back to what it's used to, might be a little more beneficial in some senses?

SCOTT SHAFER: Yeah, I mean, we changed with Georgia Tech, right wrong or indifferent, but other than that, we've been playing this scheme. The kids enjoy it and they like playing in it, and I know they're excited to get back out there against the Wake Forest team and run the stuff that we run. So really anything more than that, I'd say back to work.

Q. I wanted to ask you looking at film, how disruptive is Nikita Whitlock and what do you have to do to keep him under control?

SCOTT SHAFER: Yeah, he's a great player, very disruptive, really can't block him with one guy very effectively. Love his motor, actually love watching him play. I hate to say it. I wish he wasn't playing in this game coming up. But he's fun to watch play. Extremely disruptive. I think the biggest thing is you have to run your offense, you have to account for him, but you also have to stay within the framework of what you do. But you can't create -- you can't try to create too many one-on-ones with him because he does a great job with that.

Very good football player, plays with a great motor, fun to watch.

Q. And on the other side, Michael Campanaro is putting up historic numbers. How do you account for him? He's not physically going to run past you or jump over you, but he catches 10 passes a game and seems to be unstoppable on 3rd down or something. How do you deal with that?

SCOTT SHAFER: I've watched him for a couple years, and I kind of would disagree as far as -- I think he can run past people and can go up and catch the ball in difficult situations. I've seen him do it all. I think he's going to be a very good NFL wide receiver. He reminds me of Welker, that type of player. But he does have better speed than people give him credit for in my opinion. Another phenomenal football player.

You know, he accounts for 32 percent of their offense in the breakdowns that we've had, 44 percent of all the passes thrown have been thrown at him. In clutch situations they're going to him, creating mismatches with him on the linebackers or nickelback. So we have a difficult task in front of us, but it's a task we're looking forward to giving them a good shot. You really can't necessarily keep him from catching a pass, but you have to do a good job tackling him when he does and change some things up and try to cause a little bit of confusion and change up some of the reads for the quarterback, who's done a nice job the last few weeks, as well.

It'll be a good challenge for our kids, and we're looking forward to it.

Q. When you've got a quarterback

coming off a really rough game, of course everybody had a rough game in the last outing, but are you concerned at all with where his confidence is, and if so, how do you get that back up to where it needs to be?

SCOTT SHAFER: Yeah, yes and no. He's a fighter. He's a hard-working kid. He's had all kinds of major speed bumps in his life, and he can brush it off and go to the next game. We talked about one game that didn't go the way we wanted to, but now you get rid of it and focus on the future of the next game, the preparation, and you just talk to him, talk to him no different than you would your own son, hey, how you feeling, how's your mindset right now, what are you struggling with, what aren't you struggling with, how can we get you better. Communication is the key, regardless if you won a game and you're worried about they're too big for their britches or you lost a game and you're worried about them feeling sorry for themselves. You bring them back the same way; you be consistent as coaches and leaders and give the kids an opportunity to communicate with you then you go to work on it. The biggest thing is you man up and you face it like a man and you prepare like a man for the next game, and Terrel has done a nice job with that and so has the rest of the team. I'm impressed with the bye week in preparation for this Wake Forest game.

JIM GROBE WAKE FOREST

JIM GROBE: We're disappointed that we came out of Miami with a loss. I thought our kids played really, really hard, and Miami played really good down the stretch and got us. But I was proud of the way our kids played.

Now we've got to try to regroup and go up and play a talented team in Syracuse that's very well coached and another road game for us. We've got a big job in front of us and are disappointed that we weren't able to make it happen down at Miami.

Q. Coach Shafer was just talking about some of the numbers as to touches that Mike Campanaro gets, and I was curious whether you've ever worried whether you rely on him

too much. It sounds like if you ever do, you've moved on.

JIM GROBE: Yeah, I worry about it. I think one of the keys to being a good football team is having a little balance, and you typically think of balance as being run-pass balance, but I think also as much as we're throwing the football right now, you need some balance in who you're throwing it to. That's one of the things I think Syracuse does a nice job of. I think they've had 16 or 18 kids catch passes for them.

For us I think going forward the next four games, and none more important than the one we're getting ready to play up at Syracuse, but I think having a little bit of balance -- we had a little bit of that, a little better balance, I think, at Miami with Tyree Harris stepping up. It looks like we may not have -- Tyree got hurt in the Miami game but had a great first half, and we had Jared Crump stepped up a little bit and caught some balls for us. I think if Matt James, Brandon Terry, some of the guys that have kind of been in the shadows would step up, it certainly would help us. But we're happy to have Mike Campanaro, we just can't expect him to catch 14, 16 balls every time out. We've got to have somebody else help us out.

Q. Obviously coming into October you guys weren't looking too good, but obviously you played much better this month. Why?

JIM GROBE: I don't know. I think we got embarrassed down at Clemson, and I think that was probably kind of an important point in the season for our kids, especially our seniors. I think we went down there expecting to play well, and we didn't. And I think coming back, I think we just got a little bit more energy. I don't think we're taking any games for granted. Hopefully won't do that going forward.

But I thought early in the season we really didn't have much of a sense of urgency, and I think we've got that now. But going forward we're going to have to have that because we're playing four really good football teams here at the end of the season.

Q. Talk about Syracuse; what have you seen on their video? I know they've been having an up-and-down year, so what have you seen?

JIM GROBE: Well, they're just a very well-coached football team, and they've got a lot of

talent. They give you a lot of problems from a defensive standpoint. They pressure you from a lot of different areas. They like to blitz. They like to mix their coverages up. So that's going to give our offense problems.

And then I think their offense, they've got a very talented quarterback, actually a couple kids that play good for them, and I think they're a physical football team. They like to run the football, and they like to throw off the running game a little bit. What I like as a coach, we're really more of a throw team trying to find a way to run it, where they run the football and then can hurt you with their passing game off the run game.

And then they're very well-coached in special teams.

So I think just balance-wise, I think they're like every other team in the Atlantic Coast Conference. You've got to play every week out, and we're just very impressed with what they've done so far as a football team. I think you've got to throw out the Georgia Tech game. Any time you play a wishbone team, anything can happen. Especially playing a wishbone team on the road.

Aside from the Georgia Tech game, we see a team that has been very competitive and very well-coached and good talent.

Q. How do you rebound from the tough loss to Miami? You guys had them for three and a half quarters until two minutes to go. How do you tell your players to get back in the swing of things for this weekend?

JIM GROBE: Well, I wish I knew the answer to that. I could probably tell you Saturday night after we play up at Syracuse. But it's not easy. Our guys, really for three games now, have played really, really hard, and we were able to get NC State and we were able to get Maryland and then had a great chance to get Miami and didn't get it done. We've got a team that any time you've got a team that really plays their hearts out and comes up short, your biggest worry as a coach is being able to get them back up again.

But we have to. We're not very good if we don't play with a lot of emotion. Hopefully we'll be able to get them back. I have not seen any problems in practice so far, so if practice is any indicator, I think our guys are working hard again and they're trying to prepare the right way. Whether or not we can bounce back, we won't know until after we play Syracuse.

Q. You touched on how you have to leave that game behind. In some ways it might be easier to bounce back from losing by three or four touchdowns than to have one slip away from you like that. Does that kind of spread throughout the coaching staff, as well? What do coaches do to put a game like that behind them?

JIM GROBE: Yeah, I think it's hard. Seems like the kids always bounce back quicker than the coaches do. I don't know why that is, but it seems that way.

I think in some ways it's tougher to get the kids emotionally back up. After Clemson we were embarrassed and it was a little easier to bounce back, and I think now being that close to beating a good football team on the road is somewhat, from an emotional standpoint, harder. But I think the one thing that we've tried to do is not try to completely forget about it because there were some mistakes that we made in the kicking game, on offense and defense that really kept us from winning the football game. So I think part of you wants to move on as quick as you can and put it behind you, but you've really as coaches got to focus on the things that we could have done better, and so I think that's what our coaching staff has done. I think rather than trying to get it behind us as quick as possible, we've really tried to use it as a teaching tool, and even though it feels really, really bad, there's some things that obviously we could have done better.

I think we know that we lost to a good football team, but at the same time had we done a few things better in all those three areas, I think we could have won the football game. And then I think going forward if we can improve, if we can keep getting better each week, then I think hopefully we can play good football here down the stretch, and we really need to play good football this Saturday because we're playing a very well-coached, talented Syracuse team.

Q. Coach Shafer was saying that he just enjoys watching Nikita Whitlock play. How is that for you? How much fun are you having watching him this season?

JIM GROBE: Well, it's been good. You know, I think last year he went through a tough year because he stayed banged up most of the year. He's been relatively healthy this year, and he's kind of a guy that we need him to play well

every week to be a good defense. In a 3-4 front like we play, we have to get really good play out of our front three guys, and it starts with him down inside.

When Nikita is play well, it really, really helps us, and I think in the last four games we certainly need our seniors to play their best football and hopefully he will. But we're playing a very talented center with Syracuse, MacPherson, a really good center, so I think Nikita has got his work cut out for him Saturday.

PAUL JOHNSON GEORGIA TECH

PAUL JOHNSON: Good morning. I'll tell you, we were fortunate to get a win last week at Virginia. We fought through a lot of adversity, but any time you turn the ball over like we did, it was a struggle. Hopefully we can clean that up, clean the penalties up. We had done better against Syracuse the week before in that aspect, and then we kind of fell back into that routine again.

Playing a very good Pitt team who had a good prep against Navy last week to see a lot of what we do, so it'll be a good challenge this week to get ready to play.

Q. I'm sure you get this question a lot, but college football is supposed to be an aerial circus, or it's evolving that way anyway, but you guys do it by throwing the ball 15 times a game and running it very well. How do you do that, and I guess recruiting is the base for all that, isn't it?

PAUL JOHNSON: Well, it's just a system that we choose to run. I think that sometimes that gets perpetuated because more people probably throw the ball. But if you look, I don't know about this year, but I know a couple years ago when Alabama won the National Championship, in the National Championship game I think they threw the ball seven times. I've just always had the belief that if you can run and stop the run, you're going to have a chance to win. We'd like to throw it more efficiently than we have and maybe a little more, but just the nature of what we've done in the last couple of weeks, the secondary wasn't really involved in stopping the run game a whole lot, so there wasn't a lot of reason to throw.

Q. What about Vad Lee? What kind of athletic ability and intangibles does he bring to your offense?

PAUL JOHNSON: Well, I think Vad is a really good dual-threat guy. He's got good size and speed. He's got a good arm. He can throw the ball if we can give him time and protect him a little bit. He's the kind of guy we were looking forward to getting in our offense. He's kind of a dual-threat guy.

Q. You guys have won two in a row now. Are you doing anything better in the last two games than when you were losing three in a row, or is it a question of who you're playing then versus now?

PAUL JOHNSON: I think it's probably a little bit of all of the above. We played really poorly against Virginia Tech. That's probably about as poorly as I've seen our football play maybe since I've been here. I think you have to give them some credit for that, too, but we played horrendously. We played a little bitter at Miami and didn't get it done, and then at BYU we played pretty well for three quarters and couldn't finish. But there's some good football teams, all three teams we played. Got it going against Syracuse and really struggled a little bit at Virginia. We were our own worst enemy; we ended up with probably 500 yards, but we couldn't hold on to the ball especially in the first half.

Q. Talk about playing against Pittsburgh. You haven't played them in so long, since I think you were with Navy, so what have you seen on film that might be similar to the team you saw a couple years ago?

PAUL JOHNSON: Well, I think they have some very good individual players. I was impressed just watching them on tape. Donald, the defensive tackle, No. 97, is probably as good a player as we've played against or as we've seen. He's very talented. I think the Mike linebacker No. 44 is also a really good player, and then offensively they have two really good wide receivers, an experienced quarterback, and you know, they've got a pretty good football team. They're very capable, and we'll have to play much better on Saturday to pull out a win.

Q. Talk about your offense. What do you guys have to do, because it seems like

you're putting up a lot of points, but the defense are having problems stopping the other guys.

PAUL JOHNSON: Well, we just had a shutout two games ago defensively. We didn't play very well at Virginia. I think that the offense put the defense in a bind a lot, and really to their credit, we turned the ball over four times in the first half and we were ahead 14-10 at halftime. So actually they played pretty good. They gave up some yards, but clearly we've got to play a little better pass defense than we played at Virginia. You know, we got hit with some plays. But our defense has done a pretty good job stopping the run for most of the year. It'll be a good challenge on Saturday because Pittsburgh has a good power running attack, and they give you a lot of looks and they certainly know what they're trying to accomplish offensively.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Jeremiah. The Pitt coaches were raving about him yesterday and his pass rush ability. Do you like to move him around, typically line him up on the left side over the right tackle, or is he the kind of guy you can move around so the offense doesn't know where he's coming from in?

PAUL JOHNSON: Well, he moves around a little just depending on the defensive call, but for the most part he's on the left side at defensive end. He plays with a great motor. He played really hard last week. He played 90 snaps, and he was playing just as hard on the last one as he did on the first one.

He loves to play the game, loves to rush the passer. I just hope that we can get him into some situations where we can do that, because like I said, they're pretty good with the power running game.

Q. Last week both Laskey and Sims had big games. Can you talk about the importance of making the option go, of the B-back being successful in the middle? How important is that to the execution of your offense?

PAUL JOHNSON: Well, I think it's important, you know, to get those guys going. Now, defensively teams can take that away from us if they so choose, and what we've got tab able to do is hurt them with the other stuff if they do. But both those guys, and we ran a great deal of plays last week where there was no read, we were

just hard dives or some zone stuff to those guys, and they did a good job running with the football.

Hopefully they can be productive this week. As I said, Pitt is awfully good inside. Their two defensive tackles are good players and the Mike linebackers. It's going to be tough treading for our B-back in there.

Q. Can you talk about Zach's development a little bit? Didn't he get to play a little bit when David was banged up last year?

PAUL JOHNSON: Zach was actually our leading rusher a year ago. He played a lot. He started and played a lot because David was hurt, and then David was playing better than him earlier in the year, and Zach started to come on a little bit. David is a better blocker, and that's probably why he starts in front of him.

LARRY FEDORA NORTH CAROLINA

LARRY FEDORA: We are looking forward to getting back out on the field Saturday and playing our next game and continue to build off of the momentum that we have created in the last few games just as far as playing good, solid football, and I hope that continues as we go, and we get much better as a football team.

Q. I know there's been a bit discussed about the rotation that you're currently doing with Williams and Renner, but what are your thoughts are having to defend possibly a rotation with NC State with Mitchell possibly and Thomas and having to kind of do the looks offensively and defensively this week?

LARRY FEDORA: Yeah, it makes it much more difficult when you're trying to prepare for two different quarterbacks, when you're preparing for multiple things offensively. It just makes it much more difficult. Your defense has to prepare for quite a bit, and it waters things down for them.

You know, hopefully our guys will do a great job in preparation this week, and we will be ready to go on Saturday.

Q. What are some of the differences you've seen between them as quarterbacks?

LARRY FEDORA: Well, looks like they

feel more comfortable running one more than the other. They like to throw the ball with the other kid. You know, there's a lot of different things. You see different things formation-wise, you see things motion-wise. You know, a lot of it is just the unknown of what all they can do with these kids because they've been rotating them pretty thoroughly throughout the year.

Q. You've been saying that you felt the team was getting better even though it was not showing up in the win-loss column. Coming off a win is there something you can point to on the team to say, okay, this is what I was talking about and you did pay off here on Saturday?

LARRY FEDORA: Well, I hope so. Each week we're trying to build off of the positive things and get the negative things corrected. As we've gone, I can say that each week we're making fewer mistakes. We haven't cut them all out, but we're making fewer mistakes, and the mistakes that we're making lately, we've been able to overcome. So that's a big part of it, also, is just the mindset when you do make a mistake, it's how you attack it.

So I do feel like our guys are starting to get a little bit better feel for taking care of the football, playing smarter, playing faster and being more phenomenal.

Q. I wanted to talk about what happened with your defense last week. Going into that game y'all were statistically the worst defense in the ACC but played a very strong game against Boston College, a team that has some weapons. I just wondered if you would -- what happened in that game, where the progress came from, and do you expect that to continue?

LARRY FEDORA: Well, we continued to get guys to -- they're playing better each week. We really are. They're starting to feel comfortable. You know, they're relaxing and just playing. I mean, having fun, not worrying about making mistakes. In that result, we're playing better defense. Our mental errors have cut way back. We're probably a little bit more simpler than we've been, and we just let them play, and our guys have come through. We're making tackles. On the one long run we had the missed assignment on the inside and we had a tackle go the wrong way and it created a gap that we weren't prepared to defend, so that hurt us. They took advantage of it. But

other than that, I thought our guys played very well throughout the game.

Q. I know this is your second rivalry game with State; how different in terms of mentality and emotion is a game with a rival like State than your ordinary, every-week game?

LARRY FEDORA: Well, preparation-wise there is no difference. The difference is when you get out on the field on Saturday. That's when all of that emotion and all of that excitement comes through, and then it boils down to how do you handle it. Do you go out there and you lose your mind or do you focus and you do your job and you're able to make decisions under duress? And that's when your mental toughness shows up.

But I mean, to me it's just the fun part about college football is having those regional rivalries and everything that goes with it.

Q. Eric Ebron is on the verge of setting all kinds of records for tight ends, school records for tight ends. What's been the progress you've seen? I mean, he was really good last year, but what's the progress he's shown you from last year to this year?

LARRY FEDORA: Well, Eric has become more of a complete tight end. I mean, just more of a complete player. Now you can -- you know he's going to handle himself at the point of attack. You know whether he's attached or unattached. His football IQ has gone up tremendously. He understands what we're trying to do with the package, and he feels very comfortable doing it. So now he's just able to turn loose and make plays, and I think that's what you're seeing him do. He's out there playing and he's having fun playing the game, and he's making plays in return.

Q. Have you had to speak with him about his use of social media, and in fact do you talk to your players in general about how --

LARRY FEDORA: Yeah, we do talk about that quite a bit, actually. You know, it's just something that you can't ignore nowadays because it's a part of their world. It's a part of all of our world, and it's a world that I didn't have to grow up in, but these guys do. We constantly are talking to them about making good decisions and being smart about what they say and how they say it and just understand that sometimes it's going to be

perceived differently, and no matter what you put out there, you've got to live with it.

Q. It looks like NC State has had some success this season running the ball. Just your thoughts about the NC State running game and the challenge it's going to present to you guys.

LARRY FEDORA: Well, they have. They've been pretty efficient running the football. I think they're averaging 180, 185 yards a game rushing, which is good. So that to me, they're going to spread you out, they're going to get into a lot of different formations, motions, shifting, all the different things they can do to try to throw some eye candy at you and get your eyes where they shouldn't be and get you out of a gap, misaligned, all those things. But they still want to be able to run the football, there's no doubt about it, and offensive line-wise they're going to come off the ball, they're going to try to create some gaps for you, and the running backs do a really nice job of running it, and so do those quarterbacks.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 30, 2013



An interview with:

**PAUL CHRYST
PITT**

COACH CHRYST: Certainly looking forward to going down to Georgia Tech and playing who we think is a really good team. Got to rebound from a tough loss against Navy. But so far we've had a couple days of good practice and looking forward to Saturday night's game obviously.

Questions.

Q. Talk about the two straight weeks you're playing a team that plays the option.

COACH CHRYST: I think anytime you're playing teams like this in option football, you've got to be disciplined. You've got certain guys assigned to certain things. Guys have to do their job, obviously do it well.

Everyone's got to be accountable. You can't do someone else's job, yet you don't have as much overlap. We have to be disciplined, certainly tackle well, got to do a good job of getting off of some blocks.

It's a challenge. Tech obviously runs it very well. We've had a chance and we certainly saw it at a different speed Saturday against Navy than we did against our scout team. The disadvantages, they've got some pretty good film to look at.

That's all part of it. We got to go out and play and execute on Saturday night.

Q. Have you ever been down to Atlanta before as a coach?

COACH CHRYST: I have not played down there at Tech. Played against the Falcons, but never against Georgia Tech.

Q. Are you worried that you're not good defensively against an option team?

COACH CHRYST: We're not playing Navy again. We did some really good things against them. Obviously had a couple long drives at the end of the game. We've got to clean that up.

No, I don't feel there's something inherent about that offense that we can't handle. Yet certainly have a lot of respect for Georgia Tech. I think Paul has run that for a long time. He certainly knows it inside and out.

But we've got to execute, right? That's what it always comes down to. Certainly it presents unique challenges. There's some things we've certainly got to clean up from the game and some things we've got to build on.

Q. On the offensive side of the ball what do you need to do consistently better?

COACH CHRYST: I think it comes down to when you've got an opportunity to make a play, we've got to make a play. We did a better job on third down last week, but we still had some crucial third downs that we didn't. You've got to do that.

Offensively we've got to be prepared. Last week we knew going in there was a high chance for limited possessions. We ended up having 10 possessions. One of those was 16 seconds left in the first half where the ball is on the 1, just tried to finish out the half. We had a couple three-and-outs. That doesn't help.

We have to be efficient I think against Georgia Tech. We're certainly going to have to try to run the football. They've don't give up big runs. But we've got to try to establish the run. Got to be efficient on third down, try to keep some drives alive.

A lot of the old adages, taking care of the football, will apply to this game. We have to be efficient with the opportunities we get.

Q. I know against the option you have to take away all three things. It starts with that dive read. They have two guys in Laskey and

Sims that have been very successful. That may be the strength of your defense, the interior with Donald. Can you address the one phase of the option game, how important that is to stop, how tough it is going to be to stop?

COACH CHRYST: Yeah, it is tough. Strength is with Aaron. Anytime you're strong up the middle, baseball you have to be strong up the middle, football the same thing. The dive is where it starts. They got a chance to be able to get double-teams on Aaron, that's going to hopefully free up some other guys they've got to handle.

That is the starting point. They know it. We know it. If you just have one way to take away the dive, you can be vulnerable. At the same time if Aaron can create some havoc in there, it does free up some other guys. Sometimes you're robbing Peter to pay Paul. If you can get a couple guys to hold up inside, you can kind of cover, get some overlap players.

Q. They use two quarterbacks. Thomas came in and gave them a lift last week.

COACH CHRYST: He did.

Q. Present different threats from the two guys?

COACH CHRYST: Yeah, I mean, I think they're different. There's always that fine line, though. It's a hard enough preparation just all together. You don't want to make it so unique to the personnel changes that now you're doubling the amount of preparation.

I think you certainly see some things. They're obviously different players, different strengths. But you got to be careful of not overplaying that too much. You end up being kind of being a jack of all trades, master of none.

Q. Paul, are teams running away from Aaron since he had so much success earlier in the season?

COACH CHRYST: I don't think so. I think they're certainly aware of it, accounting for it. I don't think right now that we've necessarily seen that, where they're just saying, We're going to run away from him. Sometimes I think that's where he is also pretty dangerous.

I know just going against him in practice, it's not that simple playing against him that way.

An interview with:

FRANK BEAMER VIRGINIA TECH

COACH BEAMER: Really impressed with Andre Williams and this Boston College football team. Their toughness, their execution. They present problems on both sides of the ball. How they come after you on defense, the toughness in their running game.

You see so much open-field read option stuff, they kind of get you back to the basics. I think we've got to do a great job of preparing for an offense that's kind of different than normally what you see during the season.

We know we better crank it up and show some toughness ourselves.

Questions.

Q. The deal with Michael Branthover, when you paged him out of the stands on Saturday, what happened there?

COACH BEAMER: Ludwig pulled a muscle in warmups. We had a couple guys there that could do the kickoff. I really felt at practice Branthover was the second best kickoff guy as far as the distance goes, time after time distance.

We decided to get him out there. We weren't planning for our kickoff guy to injure himself during the warmups.

Q. Have you ever done that before, track down a player minutes before kickoff?

COACH BEAMER: No, I don't think so. I don't know that I've ever had a kicker hurt himself during warmups.

Q. Cody Journell, he's been here so many times, made so many kicks. Is there anything you do different with him, especially since it seem it is like he's pushing everything kind of to the left?

COACH BEAMER: We sat down and visited yesterday. I do think if you're not careful, you start thinking about it too much, you start overanalyzing.

What I told people, I told him yesterday, I've seen him kick too many good balls right down the middle to overanalyze. Get out there, free your

mind up, stay within your thoughts, go kick.

He kicked well yesterday. He's too good a kicker. I just believe he's going to come back stronger than ever.

Q. I was asking some of your players yesterday. But since you have had a little more time to look back at the film, is there anything you can put your finger on that keeps your offense from keeping the drive going once you get to the red zone?

COACH BEAMER: I think you really can go back to just lack of execution. I mean, I told our people, Are we asking you to do something you're not capable of doing? If we are, tell us. Are we asking you to do something physically you can't do? Tell us.

I don't think that's the case. I think it's a matter of concentrating, being right time after time after time, being consistent time after time after time.

Q. How do you rebound from last week's tough loss to Duke, now taking on a very good Boston College team?

COACH BEAMER: Well, it's not easy. I said all along, how you respond to disappointment. Duke played well. Give them credit. But it was a disappointing loss. We feel like we had opportunities to win the football game, but just didn't get it done.

Now do you come back stronger than ever, mentally tougher than ever, or do you give into it?

I think in everyday life people go through that struggle. We as a football team, that's what we'll find out this week.

Q. How tough is it to play up at Boston College at Chestnut Hill? Seem it is like a noisy place.

COACH BEAMER: Yeah, I like it. The stadium is kind of in there nice and tight. The fans are into it. I think it's a good stadium myself, great fan support. They get into it. I personally like playing when the fans are interested in what's going on and they're there to cheer on their team.

Q. I hope you get up there before the parade starts for the Red Sox before Saturday.

COACH BEAMER: Are they playing Saturday night?

Q. They're playing tonight and Thursday. They might have the parade on

Saturday. The City of Boston, they might do it Saturday or Sunday.

COACH BEAMER: Whatever happens, we'll work with it and get on with it.

Q. True freshmen had three interceptions Saturday. Can you talk about how unusual that is for guys that young to be making that kind of impact, playing that well.

COACH BEAMER: Future's bright, I can say that. Kendall had a terrific day. Had a couple more in his hands that he had a chance to intercept. He has a great knack for the game. Both of them are smart kids, tough kids, great athletic ability. Kendall athletically made some great plays to intercept the ball.

Facyson was hurt last week and didn't play, but we expect him back.

Those are two guys you look forward to watching them play here for a while.

Q. Have you relied that heavily on true freshmen in that position in the past?

COACH BEAMER: No. Exum was hurt, but now he's back. It ended up we needed these two guys to come through for us, and they came through probably better than you could ever expect.

Q. I thought it was unusual, you were playing true freshmen in the secondary. They had three true freshmen that played extensively. Is there something going on that the guys are ready earlier now?

COACH BEAMER: Well, I think the further you get away from the ball, the quicker you can play. I do believe that. If you got athletic ability, good nose for the football, I think you can come in and play in the secondary. It's not like a defensive lineman where you're relying on people next to you, particularly like an offensive lineman where you're always working with another guy.

Experience means so much. I think the further you get away, the better athletic ability helps you play quickly.

Q. What is it about Andre Williams that makes him so special? What sets him apart from some of the other backs that you face in the ACC?

COACH BEAMER: Well, he's strong, number one. Then he's got that quick step, that

little juke step. Doesn't take him long to change directions. You put power with that quickness, you got you a good back. That's exactly what he is.

An interview with:

MIKE LONDON VIRGINIA

COACH LONDON: We can go straight to questions.

Q. Coach London, talk about Clemson. What do you see on their offense? They have a very good quarterback, but the last couple weeks he had some issues against Florida State and Maryland. What have you seen on film?

COACH LONDON: They're still a very explosive offense because of the surrounding cast he has around him. Sammy Watkins is a dynamic player, stretches the field vertically. Every time he touches the ball he has the capability of going the distance.

The running back, McDowell, another very good player. Humphries, the other wide receiver. They're elements of their offense. I know Tajh has always been a very good player for them, kind of distributes the ball, does some things himself.

They've got some weapons on offense. They move the ball. They're scoring points. Tough games they're playing, they still have the ability to rely on the defense that gets the ball back to them.

Q. A lot of these players on both sides are from Norfolk, where Michael Vick used to play. Have you recruited there before? Talk about that area.

COACH LONDON: I'm from the Tidewater area. Tajh went to Phoebus High School. I went to Taft High School and Bethel High School. My dad is Air Force retired 30 years.

I know the area well. I know there will be a large following coming up to see Tajh as well as some of our players on our team. It's been an area that's been very productive with players that have gone all over the country, but particularly going to the two in-state schools.

Q. I know you're limited in what you can say about injuries. I think the league policy is that if somebody has a season-ending injury, those are reported on Mondays. Just wanted to confirm something you said earlier. Are you expecting Urban, Nicholson and Canady to come back at some point?

COACH LONDON: I would say yes to that. What they have are not season-ending injuries. It's just a matter of time when our doctors and their bodies are ready to go.

Q. Has it been a little bit longer you might have expected in one or more cases?

COACH LONDON: It's hard to say. As far as the diagnosis of particular injuries, based on each person's body. When you have ankle sprains, you're a big guy, you're in the trenches and you're battling, twisting and turning. It's just one of those things that when they're ready through treatment and through the guidance and the suggestions of our doctors.

They want to play. As I say, it's one of those things, as I'm sure a lot of things teams are going through, having key players out, but when they're ready, they'll definitely be back and ready to go.

Q. Just watching your team the last two weeks, I've seen Tim Smith make two pretty remarkable catches. He was really covered in traffic. Can you talk about the quality of being able to bring the ball down in that situation and how you evaluate Tim's development there.

COACH LONDON: I could tell you a couple weeks ago we made the receiver switch because we weren't pleased with the production and things that were going on. Kind of felt there was some complacency coming from that particular group.

I can point out Tim and Darius Jennings as two individuals that decided to step their game up.

Tim has always been a vertical threat stretch type of guy. He had a career game this past game. I think it's amazing how when your college career is about to come to end, the sense of urgency some men have about the sense of finality about the situation. I'm not saying he turned a corner because of that. You always try to appeal to the competitive part of individuals. Fighting for the ball, blocking on the perimeter, all

those things I think Tim has done a really nice job of encapsulating what he wants to be remembered for when he's done playing here.

Q. A different angle. Last few weeks, really last four weeks, you've been competitive, had games get away from you at the end. Do you fear with the losing streak you lose that competitiveness, the confidence wanes? You're not getting beat bad, blown out, manhandled, you're just not quite winning these games. At some point does the disappointment overwhelm the team? Is that a danger?

COACH LONDON: You can't let it get to the point where you show your frustration in terms of giving up or giving in. I mean, obviously, we played in games that we've done well but have not done well enough in terms of points or keeping people out of the end zone or in terms of capitalizing on turnovers.

It's discouraging, but at the same time you always have to continue to talk to the players about it's an opportunity to change, to turn, to make those plays, things to happen that can lead to victories, lead to positive things happening in games.

You're dealing with the psyche of young men that are 19, 20, 21 years old. We're ruled by the psychology of results. Right now we're not winning games, but guys are practicing hard, there's effort being given.

We'll continue to keep working, continue to keep expecting and demanding their best, and see a breakthrough.

Q. I know circumstances have dictated a lot of the way that game went. You have thrown the ball a lot this year. Would you just as soon not have to throw it 60 times in a game again?

COACH LONDON: If the end result was in a win. I guess I'm trying to say you do whatever it takes to win the game.

Obviously, going into last week's game, defensively, they're in the top 20, 25 in total defense. Doing an excellent job stopping the run by bringing safeties down in the box.

You want to take advantage, or whatever opportunities present itself, to be successful. As we went on in that game, some of the opportunities were those matches and those pass patterns that Darius and Tim were able to catch.

I believe you have to be able to run the ball in order to control the clock. As this game played out, we had to throw the ball. We had some success doing it. We had to, more than anything else, capitalize on five that we weren't able to get points from.

Q. David Watford had great statistics in that game. How did he in your eyes play in that game? How has he developed this year?

COACH LONDON: As a first-time starter in the college games that he's played this year, looking for a level of progress. Each game, the last couple games, he's progressed in a lot of things. The poise.

Someone asked about the balls that Tim caught. There were some that were thrown that were right on the money. Sometimes that takes a maturation process. Sometimes you have to be in a college football game in order to make those types of decisions. It's easy in practice.

David continues to get better. He's going to have to get better. He has to play his best football game as we play a great team coming to Charlottesville this Saturday.

More than anything else, maturation process of a new quarterback that's in a system that's getting better as it goes along.

An interview with:

STEVE ADDAZIO BOSTON COLLEGE

COACH ADDAZIO: Obviously looking forward to playing Saturday. We're playing a great Virginia Tech defense, number three defense in America. Five in rushing defense. Two in passing defense. Second ranked in sacks with 28. Returning nine starters.

This is as good a defense as I really think I've seen, certainly in the top three in my career. I think they do an unbelievable job with their scheme. They get their players to play hard. They have good players, good coaches. I'm really, really impressed with that defense.

Of course, their special teams, which Coach Beamer has always been known for, I think are just outstanding. They play fast and physical. They've got good scheme. That's the sign of a

really good football team, obviously a really good head football coach and assistant football coaches.

On offense, their quarterback, Logan Thomas, I think is just a heck of a football player. Big, strong guy that can throw it. Receivers that can catch it. They're a scary offense that can certainly send the ball down the field on you. He can become their power back.

We've got our work cut out for us, needless to say. But we've played a lot of tough teams here. This is another one coming right in here that Chestnut Hill.

We're excited about the game. I think our players are excited to play this quality an opponent. Working real hard in game plan and preparations.

Questions.

Q. When you look at them offensively, why have they not been able to get going in the run game?

COACH ADDAZIO: I always think that's a hard question. There's not a single answer to that. There's a lot of factors that go into the run game. It's your offensive line, you're tight ends, your running backs. There's a lot that goes into that. There's a lot of gel that has to happen. But it all starts up front. So there's a lot to it.

I've watched them. They're averaging 124 rushing yards per game. They're averaging passing 335 total yards. Averaging 21.5 points per game. I remember at Florida there was a time when Tim Tebow was a bit of our power back. Sometimes Logan Thomas creates those yards for him. He's got 258 yards rushing on 101 attempts.

There's a lot of ways to skin the cat. I think he presents that. I think they've got the redshirt freshman, sophomore, Coleman and Edmunds. I don't know if I'm answering your question, but I see them being able to run the ball. They're a scary team because they have the wherewithal to run the power game, but yet they can also get on the perimeter on you. Of course, their quarterback's got a big arm.

Q. You coached with Scott Loeffler. What is your opinion, take on him? What is that relationship like, if it's there?

COACH ADDAZIO: It's a great relationship. I think that Scot Loeffler is really one of the young, bright minds in football. I've been around a lot of great football guys. Scott really knows football. He really has a great sense of the game, really in a lot of different styles of offenses.

He's a bright guy. He really knows football. He has a great appreciation for the run game and for the offensive line component, though he was a quarterback. I think he's a tremendous person. Loyal guy. Hard-working guy. Really I can't say enough good things about him because that's how really strong I do feel about Scott.

Of course, I'm not really going to care too much for him this week, but that's just the nature of the way it is in competition, right? Getting ready to play each other. We'll put all that on hold until that game is over.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Scot Loeffler. Did you ever consider hiring him at BC when you got the job there for offensive coordinator?

COACH ADDAZIO: I certainly would have. What happened was, Scott, when I was at Temple, left and took the job at Auburn, which was a great opportunity for him. I was very encouraging for him. Of course, I hired Ryan Day. Ryan was my coordinator. When we came to Boston, Ryan had been at Boston College, Ryan is my coordinator. I love Ryan to death. That spot was filled.

But Scott and I, we certainly talked a whole bunch. I loved working with Scott and would have loved to work with him again. He's a heck of a guy now, heck of a football coach. He really is. He knows what he's doing.

Q. Being down here in North Carolina, what is the atmosphere like in Boston? Do you make it in the newspapers with all the World Series mania going on?

COACH ADDAZIO: Well, obviously the World Series and the Red Sox right now, as it should be, everyone is engulfed with the Red Sox and should be. It's the coolest thing in the world. Playing for a world championship. I think it's awesome. We've had great coverage here, great media interest. Especially for a team that we're rebuilding, starting fresh, it's just been a great environment up here.

There won't be many people that won't be watching that game tonight, I promise you.

Q. You don't have tickets, do you?

COACH ADDAZIO: No. I got a few things to do here. We're going to work and strain here. But the game's on late enough, this is our Wednesday, we'll be able to catch part of it. I won't

be able to get out there.

After being out at practice this morning, it was pretty cold and rainy. I don't know if I can sit outside one more time.

Q. Anybody growing any beards?

COACH ADDAZIO: No. I mean, we probably have some coaches losing some more hair. But actually Sean Sylvia, one of our safeties, has one of those beards going right now. He's a huge Red Sox fan. I tease him every day. It's hilarious. He looks like the guys on the team.

Q. I know just like the Red Sox it's an all-hands-on-deck situation for your receivers. Could you speak to maybe one guy you've kind of tapped to help fill the void with Spiffy Evans' absence, David Dudeck. Would it surprise you to know he was a utility guy in high school?

COACH ADDAZIO: You know, I didn't know that. Dave might be one of the best competitors on our football team. He's the guy that took every snap at pre-season camp, tailback receiver, et cetera. He's a highly accountable guy. Dave is going to go out there and do his job, be where he's supposed to be, catch the ball if the ball is thrown to him. We're going to rely on him heavily as not only a receiver but a punt returner. I know Dave will get that job done.

Q. What concerns do you have about him making that transition back from running back to the receiver slot?

COACH ADDAZIO: Well, he's been doing that now for a while. I think Dave used himself as kind of that slot guy to begin with.

Just really being precise in your routes. He's got to be a great technician, be able to get in and out of cuts. To be really able to extend for the ball, that's something we're working hard with our receivers on, not trying to catch the ball in their body, but to extend to the ball. When you're playing man teams, you have to do that. It's not like you're going to have clean catches.

We're working hard with him and the other receivers on that, as well as perimeter blocking like that. That's a real work in progress.

Q. I asked Dave this, but your take. What credit do you think he deserves for Andre Williams' thousand-yard season having repped as much as he did at pre-season camp?

COACH ADDAZIO: You're 100% right. I'm telling you, that kid took about every snap in

pre-season camp. It was unbelievable sometimes the licking he would take. That gave Andre an opportunity to keep his body intact and fresh. That is a huge factor. It's one of those unknown little things that kind of people take for granted. But we don't here.

He's a warrior, man. That guy right there is an unselfish guy who lays it on the line every day. You could tell him to play D tackle, he'd run in there and do it. Those guys are invaluable.

An interview with:

DAVID CUTCLIFFE DUKE

COACH CUTCLIFFE: It's a perfect week for an open date. I stated that before the Virginia Tech game, that if we were fortunate enough to win, it would take a little while to get our feet back on the ground.

The thing that made me happiest this week, it didn't take any time to get our guys' feet back on the ground. We practiced yesterday and today extremely well. Really, really pleased with that. Also a good time for an open date.

We had eight starters that have been out this week and just unable to practice. I hope and believe that we'll get maybe all of them back for the North Carolina State game, but certainly weren't ready to play anywhere near full speed this week. We've taking an opportunity to rest them after a very physical football game in Blacksburg.

With that, I'll take any questions you have.

Q. Could you dissect and analyze the pass defense that you just beat this past weekend. How tough is it to make your throws against that type of tight coverage? Does it force a quarterback to even be more precise in terms of the box he has to fit?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I think that man coverage, and they pressed us across the board, is predicated on how good a pass-rush you have. You better not live in it if you're not going to get to the quarterback. So I think that's the first formula you have to dissect, is are we going to protect the passer well enough to let the routes come to fruition to where you can separate.

We really protected the passer pretty well -

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not pretty well, but real well against them. You have to be accurate as a quarterback. We spend a lot of time in one-on-one receiver versus DB coverage, which is all man work.

Anthony just didn't have his day. We were not very good in that regard. If you're not very good in that regard, then you're behind down and distance consistently. It wasn't just a very good formula.

But, yes, you have to execute. We have always executed well. I believe we will again, given the opportunity. But we certainly didn't on Saturday.

Q. It was ironic, you have your quarterback throw four interceptions that game, but he invariably beat Virginia Tech using his feet on that touchdown. Is that maybe a little bit of a wrinkle that a team like a Boston College could throw at them?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, it depends on your quarterback again. I think that more and more, as you look at Virginia Tech, what they did with Logan Thomas, a number of people in our league, if you got a guy that can beat you two ways, it's to your advantage.

The quarterback run going into the game was a big part of our run game plan. It was executed pretty well. Looking back at it, probably didn't do it enough. Certainly something that I think most of us this day and time do. But whether Chase Rettig wants to run a lot or not, that's up to Coach Addazio and his staff.

Q. I was talking to Coach Beamer that he has two freshmen cornerbacks. You played three true freshmen that made great plays. Can you talk about the fact such young guys are playing and having an impact. How difficult is that for a real freshman in the secondary?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, when you're getting into zone concepts, a ton of different concepts, it can get tough. One of the things we did, and we knew we were going to play some young people, everybody knew that, it's kind of how you design your secondary.

All five players are extremely talented athletically, the two at Virginia Tech, the three we're playing with. Bud Foster has done a great job of using those guys well. We knew going in they're tremendous. The same thing can be said for our guys. Jim Knowles has done a good job with the defensive design to allow those guys to be successful.

I think it's the tip of the iceberg. But I can only speak to the three we've got. I think it's the tip of the iceberg for those three. We're fortunate we were able to redshirt. We just signed the best group of defensive backs that I've ever been around. We have some that are redshirting that I think are going to have an impact on our program long-term as well.

Q. Will Monday's average is down two yards this year. On the other hand, you are leading the league in net punting. How much of that is Monday adjusting what he does, or how much of it is better coverage from your team?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, it's a combination. But hang time and placement is critical. Our athleticism is so much better. So our punt coverage. I also credit Zac Roper, his hard work, that he's accomplished.

Certainly Will is doing what we're asking him to do. He'd like to hit a few of his balls a little better than what he has. But he's gaining ground on that.

It's a work in progress. We worked hard this morning on punt protection, coverage. I went out there and worked with him early. I don't want him to strain. We really want to maintain hang time, minimize returns. For example, Stanford last year, you hit a bomb, but they run it back for a touchdown. That changed that game, in my opinion, a year ago. They weren't having very much success on offense.

So we're trying to really focus with Will on placement and hang time. He's done a really good job with that.

Q. What does it mean to be bowl-eligible two straight years?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I think it's significant for our program. But it makes me smile, it's great for Duke. It's great for our students, the fan base that's been so loyal, people that have continued to follow Duke football through some lean times.

I'm not being humble, but I really enjoy it for that purpose. Then the other is our seniors. My greatest joy comes from we have 11 scholarship seniors, that they will always be the class that was able to accomplish something that had never been accomplished, and that's to help lead a football team at Duke to back-to-back bowl

games. I'm very happy for those guys.

I won't be around when they tell their grandchildren about it, but they will one day, and that's pretty cool.

Q. Are you going to be watching the Miami game?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Absolutely. We'll see part of it. I have a speaking engagement Saturday night so it's going to hinder me a little bit. You know what's great about cell phones is that I can get some TV on the cell phone. So I'm going to sneak in some looks there. I should be through early enough to see most of it.

An interview with:

AL GOLDEN MIAMI

COACH GOLDEN: We just finished our Wednesday practice and our preparation, getting ready for a great environment and opportunity for our program. Going to keep preparing, keep our heads down, block everything out, get ready to go up to Tallahassee on Friday.

With that I'll open it up for any questions that you have.

Q. Al, Stephen, you mentioned he looked better than ever. How do you feel about his chances for Saturday?

COACH GOLDEN: I think he looks great. I think he'll be able to close this chapter, go out, have fun, play the game he wants to play.

Q. The contrast of the two teams. What Winston gives Florida State, precocious kid, brings an outward joy, really out there, whereas under you, your team kind of seems like they're a little bit more buttoned down. Can you talk about that, the contrast. Do you think it's okay your team does seem buttoned down?

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, I've never heard 'buttoned down' mentioned with our team before. It's really hard for me to comment on that, to be honest with you.

I think our guys play with a lot of passion. We've gotten a couple of celebration penalties that I'd like to button them down for those. I don't see how we're a buttoned down team.

I think we play with a lot of energy. I think we celebrate each other's big plays on offense and defense. So I don't know how we're buttoned down. I don't know how that makes us buttoned down.

Q. You have Rashawn Scott back this week. Can you talk about what he brings to your offense?

COACH GOLDEN: He's got to continue to prepare, work really hard here in the next 72 hours to prepare, eliminate any mental aspects of the game. He's got to play fast.

I think he's in good condition. He should be ready for this opportunity. He's played a lot of football for us. It's good to get him back.

Q. I'm wondering about Stephen Morris. How much does he add to your team in terms of his leadership in a week like this where you need some of the older guys to talk to some of the freshmen, tell them what it's going to be like, keep them in check? How important is that part of his personality?

COACH GOLDEN: Stephen can't do it by himself, but certainly he's made a big difference for us in terms of his leadership.

We're really going to need a lot of position leaders, Allen Hurns, Brandon Linder, Shayon Green, Anthony Chickillo, Jimmy Gaines. All those guys are going to have to step up and lead. We're going to need that maturity and poise because it's obviously an elite team who's executing really well right now, playing in a tough environment.

We're going to have to draw on our leadership and certainly our unity.

Q. Even though they've been to big games already, this is up another notch. Is this something you don't know about until you've been through it, that's the best teacher?

COACH GOLDEN: I think obviously experience. We gleaned a lot from our experiences a year ago as a younger team. Now we have to draw on that. We're going to need the leaders to certainly help us do that, really just get the guys who haven't been in there, some of the younger guys, just have to get them executing six seconds at a time and not worry about anything from an external standpoint.

Q. After Florida State has racked up

some impressive wins, what do you have to do to make a game of it Saturday?

COACH GOLDEN: We don't have enough time to cover it.

We have to defend the deep ball. We have to tackle really well. We can't let them be a three-headed monster in terms of the perimeter pass game, the tight end, and obviously the run game.

We have to find a way to get pressure on them. That's the challenge. There's no question about it. We have to do a lot of things better than we did last Saturday. Hopefully our guys will continue to improve as the week goes on.

But no question, that is the challenge here in our building, because we have to stop a lot of different things.

Q. They've had a lot of lopsided wins lately. You have had close wins. Does this feel like a clash of the Titans or are you feeling like an underdog?

COACH GOLDEN: I don't really worry about any of that. I don't mean to be short with you. I didn't really answer questions about being the favorite last week. I don't really want to talk about being the underdog this week.

It's really a function of us preparing our young people for the type of game that we want to play in terms of what our game plan is in terms of what we want to execute, how we prepare, just focus on the process every day.

It's certainly been a challenge for the better part of two years. Hopefully we would have learned a lot from adversity that can help us here in this spot and really get us focused on what we have to get focused on.

Q. I know you want to approach this as the next game. In terms of how hard you've tried to rebuild, can you speak to what it means to be in this game, the whole nation watching, kind of like it was back in the '90s?

COACH GOLDEN: We're excited about moving forward. Last Tuesday was a rebirth, if you will, a renewal. It really gave us the platform to move forward. So we're excited about that part of it.

In terms of everything else that you mentioned, our kids really just have to focus on, look, Florida State has so many weapons, they're going to need every ounce of our focus and energy. Hopefully that is where our minds will be

here in the next three days. That's where it has to be.

Q. What are your memories of Florida State Miami?

COACH GOLDEN: It's the passion, the tradition, how much the games meant in terms of the national spotlight or the repercussions in terms of post-season.

It's exciting to have that opportunity. We want to continue to grow the type of team that expects to be in these types of games year in and year out. That's what we're trying to build.

Q. I know a couple weeks back when you played North Carolina, Ebron, you struggled against. Can you talk about what you learned from that game, covering the tight end, what you're going to do as far as covering Nick O'Leary?

COACH GOLDEN: When Coach D'Onofrio says I spy 85 all week and then we let 85 have 200 yards of rushing, clearly we didn't execute the game plan the way we needed to. We weren't specific enough. We weren't precise enough in the execution. Because of that, the young man had a great game. We did not tackle well. We better tackle O'Leary really well. We better find a way to account for him in the red zone. He's been a touchdown maker for them in the low red.

Hopefully we learned a lot. Hopefully we apply that to Campanaro, although he's going to get his catches, we didn't allow him to have as many as he normally does or the sheer number in terms of yards per catch.

It wasn't perfect, but it was better. Obviously we have the same challenge here with Nick O'Leary, Reshard Green, Benjamin, whatever the case may be.

An interview with:

**DAVE DOEREN
NC STATE**

COACH DOEREN: Looking forward to being a part of a rivalry that's been around for over 100 years, 103rd meeting. Both teams are battling hard. I know it means a lot to our fan base, former

players, current players and coaches. It will be a hard-fought game. I'm really excited to be a part of it.

Q. I know it was against a lot of their second-teamers, but how important was the second half to your team in terms of bouncing back from that horrific first quarter?

COACH DOEREN: It was important. We don't ever want to quit in a game. We came in there to execute and felt like we could run the football. We showed we could do that.

We're playing a lot of our second-teamers, unfortunately, too, with all our injuries. It is what it is. The first quarter was as bad as it could be. I challenged our players. I said, Look, we lost the first half miserably, let's go out and try to win the second half. Let's execute the game plan, get better on offense and defense, turnovers. We executed a surprise on-side kick. A lot better half of football.

I don't care who it was against, the way we played in the first quarter, we needed to go do that. I was proud of the guys for finishing the way they did.

Q. Does the momentum of that carry over to this week?

COACH DOEREN: Well, all year our guys have played hard. We need to execute better. Then I think that was a pretty solid showing of what a difference in execution can be. Everything we talked about was taking care of the ball, running the football, keeping our defense off the field against their offense. We did the opposite in the first quarter. Once we started to do what we needed to do, we did a good job for the most part of staying within what we tried to have from a game plan standpoint.

As a player, you've got to make plays when you're in the right position. You've got to execute the calls. As a coach, we always try to do the best we can to put our players in that position. I know playing like that in the third and fourth quarter will help. But playing our rival helps more. These guys are excited, energized by playing in a game like this against your cross-town rival.

Q. You've watched tape of North Carolina this year. Have you put on the tape of last year's game?

COACH DOEREN: Sure, I've watched it.

Q. Wild game in terms of emotional swings.

COACH DOEREN: Yeah, a lot of big plays.

Q. Does that give you a sense of this rivalry at all?

COACH DOEREN: Yeah. I think obviously the punt return kind of makes it one of those games that real memorable for a lot of reasons. I've been in a lot of good rivalry games. I knew when I moved here that being in a rivalry game that is only 30 minutes apart is unique. I remember when I was at USC, UCLA was right down the street, that was a really unique rivalry. This is similar to that. You run into their coaches all the time. Our players run into their players. You can't go to a grocery store without seeing fans from both schools. It's very unique from that standpoint.

Excited and honored to be a part of it.

Q. Carolina's two-quarterback rotation, what makes them difficult to account for to defend?

COACH DOEREN: Well, starting with last week's game, they both played very efficient within what they asked them to do. Renner is an accurate passer, he's an experienced player. Has good timing with his receivers. He understands where guys are.

Then Marquise, think settled in with some of the runs that he can do. He's reading it well. He understands how long to ride it, when to pull it, when to give it.

You just got to be prepared for multiple systems based on who's in there and be able to execute within the framework of your defense.

So it does give you a few more things to probably have to practice from that standpoint.

Q. You had a really nice game from Shadrach Thornton. How would you assess the way he's come along for you this year?

COACH DOEREN: Shad's really improved, not just as a player, but as a person. His demeanor, the day-to-day way he approaches what he has to do as a running back, the way he studies film, the way he's handling himself in the classroom. I'm really proud of the progress he's made.

He made some mistakes. He paid for

them. He learned from them. Now he's reaping the benefits of maturing, growing up, taking responsibility.

Q. How would you evaluate Brandon Mitchell's return. He got thrown into an inferno.

COACH DOEREN: He did. Like I said, it's kind of a recipe for disaster for the kid. He played in two series against Louisiana Tech, who is really struggling as a team, returns against Florida State on Bobby Bowden, throws a pick on play two.

He pressed. Brandon wants to win so bad. I think it's a great learning experience for him being in a game like this that. He just needs to distribute the ball, give it to the right people, let his arm strength and mobility do the rest. He tried to do too much.

Q. Their leading receiver's a tight end. Is that difficult or different when you know their prime target is a tight end and not a wide receiver?

COACH DOEREN: Well, they're playing like a wide receiver a lot, too. He's like a lot like many tight ends you see these guys. He's a hybrid guy. He can put his hand down and block people. He does a good job of that. They can split him out and put him on the backside of a three-by-one, or on the front side of a formation. They do a nice job of using him on the crossing routes.

Whether you're man or zone, you have to play with attention to him, understand how they use him. That's easier said than done because he's a very good football player and he's a big part of their play selection.

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