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An Interview With:

DABO SWINNEY CLEMSON

COACH SWINNEY: Really proud of our guys and how they competed last Thursday night. Just a big win for us. Happy to be 9-1 at this point in time. It was a good off weekend for our players.

And this is a special week for us here at Clemson going into our last home game, it's Senior Day, it's Military Appreciation Day for us, and so this is a special weekend, a sellout crowd, and really excited about hosting The Citadel and you know, our senior group, seeing them finish their career here at Death Valley.

Will be a bittersweet day but looking forward to another tough challenge in the Citadel Bulldogs and hopefully finding a way to get win No. 10.

Q. What does it mean to you playing against this team?

COACH SWINNEY: Well, I have great respect for The Citadel and Coach Higgins in particular. I've had an opportunity to coach against Coach Higgins, and just have a great respect for how they handle their business, the way they have to recruit, all of the things that they deal with. And from a military standpoint and football, and I just think that, you know, they do a great job down there, have kept up with them for quite a while.

And for it to Be Military Appreciation Day for us and hosting a military school, I just think that really adds to the weekend and again, it's just a privilege to be able to take a little time and take this game that people love so much and bring recognition and honor to our military and the great sacrifice and service that they give all of us.

Q. I know a lot of schools wear different uniforms. Are you wearing camo or any military stuff for Saturday?

COACH SWINNEY: We do. We do every year actually. I know for the last several years, we've worn some camo and it will be the same this weekend for us.

Q. Just looking at the ACC schedule, and it seems to me that this late in the season, five teams in the league are going outside the league and three of them are playing FCS teams, which is something I'm used to seeing at the first of the season but not at the end. Can you talk about the philosophy of stepping out of the league this late and what you're looking for scheduling?

COACH SWINNEY: Well, I just think it's a very common thing for a lot of the teams. Most of the teams that have a traditional big rival game at the end of the year. This has become kind of part of the scheduling philosophy, if you will, in that.

You look at Alabama I think plays Chattanooga this week. I'm not sure who Auburn plays. But getting their guys ready for next week, this is the first time for us that we have, you know, had a non-conference game before we play South Carolina.

I just think it's a bitter situation from a scheduling standpoint, but in a perfect scenario -- sometimes you just don't have any other choice or option. If you can, it's good, and I think that's what you've seen in a lot of these other teams. I know Florida State, I think they play -- I think it's Idaho, I think. I'm not sure, I think Florida is playing somebody else, maybe an FCS school.

So just part of the philosophy of trying to get your guys ready for a final big challenge to end your season and get everybody ready for that post-season play.

Q. Is it difficult at all, you're talking about emotionally, it's Senior Day, so that should generate plenty of emotion. Is there any danger of looking ahead to a tougher game and taking this one lightly?

COACH SWINNEY: I don't think it's any

different than any other game throughout the year. You just try to -- you're just trying to have the best season you possibly can.

And for us it's the mentality every week that, hey, the season starts today and this is the most important day of the year, and trying to just play to a standard each and every week, not to the opponent or to a league or to a ranking or anything like that.

I mean, it's about just playing to that standard, being the best you can be. Our guys have done a great job of that. We've been very, very consistent because of that mentality, whether you -- or you get a big win against Georgia and then you've got to go play South Carolina State the next week and that's not a knock against South Carolina State.

Obviously a difference in emotions and our guys have done a great job; or, you have a tough loss and you have to go on the road, being able to respond in both of those situations is a huge part of being able to have a consistent program.

Q. The Alabama/Auburn game is coming up, and you've played at Alabama. Wanted to get your thoughts on what that game meant to you and how big that game was.

COACH SWINNEY: Well, it's a huge, huge game. It was a privilege to be -- I grew up obviously at Alabama, and like a lot of the kids in that state, the dream was to be a part of the Alabama/Auburn game, and I was part of 13 of them. A lot of great memories, huge emotions. Great when you win; really, really tough when you lose.

Just like it is here in the Clemson/South Carolina game. It's a privilege to be a part of a game like that, and again, great when you win and very difficult when you lose. Should be a great one for us and a great one for them both -- all four teams playing at a high level and all four teams, top-ten type team. That's the way it ought to be in college football.

Q. Georgia Tech, Robert Godhigh, just curious your impressions of him and what he can do.

COACH SWINNEY: Shoot, he was great in our game. He was I think the first guy in the history to have 100 yards rushing and receiving against Clemson.

So I have great regard for him. I thought he was a heck of a player going into the game and certainly coming out of the game, he made some

big, big plays for them. He's not very big, but he plays big on the field.

Q. Do you feel like he deserves consideration as a top running back? He plays true tailback, but all-ACC?

COACH SWINNEY: Absolutely. I'm sure he's definitely a candidate for that. He's had an excellent year along with Sims, their guy in the backfield. He's had a great year, too.

Q. Last year was on the disappointing side for Sammy Watkins, at least by the standards he's set in his freshman year. How would you say that he has bounced back this year? He leads the conference in receiving yardage and he's averaging 15 yards a catch, nine touchdowns. What kind of a -- how would you sum up the year?

COACH SWINNEY: Well, just again, I wasn't in that crowd that thought he had a bad year last year. I just think -- he was very productive for when he was on the field. He really only played in about seven games, so the continuity and the consistency and the rhythm was never there. And Nuke Hopkins was having such a big year.

But this year, he's been on the field every week and all of those things have been there, the consistency, the continuity, the rhythm, all of that. He has I think been the best receiver in the country. I don't think there's any doubt about it in my mind. Just incredible season, some unbelievably explosive plays. He's made great catches, a lot of yards after the catch, a lot of big plays downfield. He's ran the ball very, very well, a lot of yards after contact.

So he's just had a great, great season and really proud of him. In three years' time, he's going to have just about every record in the books here at Clemson, records that have been there for a long time.

I'm really proud of him, the consistency he's played with; and he's worked so hard. It's easy to coach guys -- other guy, especially when your best players are your hardest workers. And Sammy Watkins is obviously the best player, and, man, he sets a standard for everybody else from a work ethic standpoint and that just makes it easy to coach this team.

JIMBO FISHER FLORIDA STATE

COACH FISHER: Very proud of the way our guys finished off the regular season ACC schedule against Syracuse. Syracuse, again, was playing exceptional football and playing very well coming in.

I thought our guys played very well from start to finish. Really proud of the way we started, but also the way we finished. We kept our focus throughout the game. Offense and defense and special teams all had their moments of creating big plays and big opportunities. Again, very proud of the guys' focus, and it goes back to the way we prepared and hopefully we'll continue that trend.

And when we practice well, we play well; and we've seen that so far this week in the preparation for Idaho. We have Idaho coming in, very big game for us. Again, Senior Day, last home game, so we need to focus, we need to play well and need continue to get better. Still have some little things that we need to clean up and continue to grow at, but very proud of this team about the way they approach things and the maturity and the intensity which they play with throughout the game.

So looking forward that and looking forward to a great game with Idaho this weekend.

Q. Just wanted to ask you, with the Iron Bowl coming up, you were a former assistant at Auburn, how big was that game?

COACH FISHER: I played in two. My first two I ever played in, Alabama was defending national champion, they had one loss in 28 games; we were undefeated won that one. The next year we were undefeated; they were undefeated; we one tie and they beat us by a touchdown. I mean, great games.

I always said this, you wasn't happy when you won; you were more relieved. I mean, the game, it meant that much and it was one of the great rivalries in college football, and there will be a lot on the line this weekend or next weekend for those teams.

So it is a very big game and it is one of the great rivalries in college football.

Q. Talking about Idaho this weekend, what do you see from a team that -- used to be in the Mountain West Conference but I think

they are in the Sun Belt next year. What do you see of them on film?

COACH FISHER: Paul does a great job on offense. They have some guys outside that can run, very dynamic guys. They are very quick, change of direction, good ball skills. Paul does a great job on offense. They give you every look possible.

Defensively, they will press you and look at you -- I mean, pressure you and come at you. A couple big inside tackles, mix the coverages up on the secondary. They have done -- Paul will do a great job there. He will get those guys going and play well. You can see them getting better and better each game.

Q. And Paul, it's his brother, now at Western Kentucky; have you ever faced the Petrino family before?

COACH FISHER: Oh, yeah, when I was in the SEC and at different times, we definitely played against each other.

Q. You guys have been rolling over people by such large margins, everything has been lopsided; you haven't had a close game. I just wonder, has this team hit a peak or is it still getting better or can it still get better?

COACH FISHER: I definitely think it can get better. We haven't played our best football yet in my opinion. We have played good football, but there are still things we need to clean up and we know that. We have not played our best football yet in my opinion.

Q. Can you just give me a few examples of what you need to clean up?

COACH FISHER: Well, we've had some issues -- different times, different things, but the focus and concentration, I mean, we have not had it for a full game in my opinion. We've played well in spurts and different times and for large portions of a game.

But I'm talking about for 60 minutes in all three phases and being clean on everything we do. I mean, there's still things every day that we are working on: Whether it's coverage; whether it's pass rush; whether it's protection; whether it's our reads on routes and how we get to places. There's things that we are trying to get better at every day, and they are not where we totally want them to be yet.

Q. You mentioned focus a couple of times. Are you at all concerned you're playing a 1-9 team that's traveling across the country, a week before you have a big rivalry game with Florida; is it at all a concern that your team will focus and really be at its peak against Idaho?

COACH FISHER: I'm concerned all the time about those issues. I think it's a sign of maturity and where your program is.

But if how we practice is indicative of that, which is generally is for us; Monday and Tuesday have been outstanding practices for us. I mean, yesterday may have been one of the best Tuesdays we've ever had in all phases.

So hopefully if they are doing what we believe in, you know, we won't have that happen.

Q. Just wondering, do you know Paul Petrino at all?

COACH FISHER: Not really. I know him, coaching against him, but I don't know him personally, no.

Q. I guess you're not surprised that another member of that family has gone into coaching.

COACH FISHER: They are great football minds. They are, they are great football minds.

Q. Any characteristics of his team that you see at all?

COACH FISHER: Yeah, always dynamic on offense. They are offense-minded guys. When you watch them coach, you pick up ideas of what they do all the time. They are guys that you always like to know what they are doing because they have a tremendous IQ for offensive football and do different things.

Q. Just wanted to ask you about Tim Jernigan. Can you talk about how he's played?

COACH FISHER: Extremely well. I mean, very physical, but also very disciplined inside, not just always trying to make the plays but understands how to hold his gap and let other guys make plays and a tremendous leader and sets the tone for us up front. Timmy is playing exceptional football, exceptional football. I mean, I would be hard-pressed to say anybody is playing any better football than him.

RANDY EDSALL MARYLAND

COACH EDSALL: Well, we are very happy with the win that we got last week down at Virginia Tech. I thought our kids played hard and came away with a good victory.

Now we have Boston College which we know is a tremendous challenge with Andre Williams in terms of what he's done playing football and they are playing very, very well. We have to make sure that we have a good week of practice and give ourselves an opportunity to win on Saturday.

Q. The ACC has done a great job of getting teams Bowl eligible. There's already eight including yourself and there could be more. Just wanted to know from your perspective, when you have to fight so hard to get into the post-season, how important is it that the conference does what it can to find a home for everybody, even though there's probably going to be more than the slots that the ACC has partners with?

COACH EDSALL: Well, the thing that we can control -- we just have to try to win as many as we can.

You know, you appreciate the number of spots we have, and you hope that everybody has an opportunity that is eligible. You hope it works out, but with other conferences and everything else, you're not sure of. But we appreciate everything that everybody will try to do to make that happen.

Q. What do you feel you did particularly well against Virginia Tech that you need to keep that up in that regard this week?

COACH EDSALL: Well, I thought we played very hard. I thought we didn't make a lot of mistakes. You know, we didn't give up a lot of big plays to their offense, and we made the plays when we needed to against a very tough defense that Virginia Tech has.

You know, we just stuck with it and we just believed in each other and knew that we could win the ballgame. So we just need to keep having that kind of feeling and have that kind of focus and preparation and really not beat ourselves.

Q. You had a lot of sacks last week, but obviously facing Boston College this week, how do you feel about your defense, especially a run defense this week?

COACH EDSALL: Well, you know, we'll be prepared. They present a tremendous challenge with what they do running the football. They have an outstanding running back who is an All-American in my opinion and a Heisman candidate.

And so we have got to make sure we put the best plan together and give our kids the best opportunity to go out there and be as productive as they can.

Q. Yesterday a couple of the players were saying how getting that sixth win and Bowl eligibility was like taking a monkey off their back, alleviating the burden. What do you think about that? And in some ways did, it help maybe remove that pressure that had been hanging over them for a couple weeks now?

COACH EDSALL: You know, I think there is something to that. And again, I know -- we know the goals that they have and what they want to accomplish, and I think that they knew the magic number, the least to be eligible, doesn't guarantee anything, but you have to continue -- we got that and we have two more games to go.

Now I think what they want to do is just continue to work to get better than what we were last week, and knowing that they do have six wins under their belt, but they are not satisfied with six wins.

Q. Playing Boston College this week and Senior Day, what does Senior Day mean for you with these outgoing seniors?

COACH EDSALL: Well, it's just a chance to honor them for the job that they have done throughout their career here at Maryland and for people to recognize them. You know, you're proud of all of them. All of them have contributed to the success in different ways.

You know, it's just neat to be able to have a day for them before the game starts, where you can honor them and their families. All of these kids are great kids and, they are going to be successful in whatever they do after football.

Q. Last year you coached against Steve Addazio when he was at Temple. What type of offense is he running this year, while he

was at Temple last year -- is it the same offense or different?

COACH EDSALL: It's a little bit different. A little bit different but same principle. Steve is a guy that always likes to run the football and be hard-nosed, and big, physical offensive linemen that get after you.

It's really the same principles but some different things than what he ran a year ago. It's not as much quarterback-oriented in terms of running as it was a year ago.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Andre Williams and defending him. He has more than a hundred carries more than anybody in the ACC and he's already broken the ACC rushing record. What makes him so tough and what do you have to do to stop him?

COACH EDSALL: Well, he's strong, he's powerful, he's explosive. He's got great lower body strength and he can run with his pads out in front of him. He's flexible. He's got a good offensive mind, too. But he wears on you. And what you've got to do is you've got to tackle him. You've got to wrap and tackle and bring your feet. He's an outstanding player.

Q. Can you tell me how confident you are in your rush defense? You've had some very good games against the run. You had a couple where you got chewed up a little bit. What's the difference in the games where you've been very successful and the ones you haven't?

COACH EDSALL: Well, the thing about anything on defense, it's about everybody doing what they are supposed to do collectively on each and every play, and if we can get everybody doing that, then we'll give ourselves an opportunity to play well against the run. But you can't miss gaps. You've got to tackle. You've got to be able to get some penetration. You can't let them stay on schedule.

So it's a mixture of just playing great team defense. When you play great team defense, then you have a chance to stop the run. But if you're not playing great team defense, then it's hard to stop the run.

Q. Is there anybody on your defense that you think is a key to stopping the run?

COACH EDSALL: I think all 11 guys are

the key.

SCOTT SHAFER SYRACUSE

COACH SHAFER: Starting off, we're extremely excited about playing our road rival in Pitt. We've been playing them every season since 1955, and it's just great to get that old northeast rival back together here in the Dome. And the only new part of it is now we are members of the ACC. So it's an exciting time for Syracuse and we look forward to it.

Q. One of you guys is going to become Bowl eligible, but the ACC is already pretty crowded with eight teams Bowl eligible. So I'm looking at how many slots there are, just what is your take on -- given how hard it is to get your team to the post-season, once you make it there, how important is it that there's a home for you?

COACH SHAFER: Obviously it's important for all the programs that are looking to get in that position. But really, for us, the focus has got to be just getting the next win, and if we stay small with our target and our focus is on that, all of the bigger things take care of themselves.

So really, that's the approach we're taking and that's the belief I have. I always talk to the kids about controlling the controllables, and as a coach, you have to do the same thing and I really think focusing in on those smaller targets is the key to getting the opportunity that could come down the road.

Q. I know you guys have needed to be a little creative on offense this year, and you moved Ashton around some. Do you guys have a feeling at this point on where his best long-term fit is?

COACH SHAFER: Well, again, when we get through the season, we'll look at all those things with everyone on our team.

But right now, he's a good weapon for us on offense. He's getting to the point where we can move him around a lot and play him in different positions on offense, and really, that's our only focal point right now is finding ways to get him and the other guys that we believe give us a chance to stay creative and put the ball into our playmakers' hands and focus in on getting that next win.

Right now, we try to stay small with our mind-set and not look at the big picture until we get through the season.

Q. I know this is a little bit big picture. Dan Conley is a guy you've said you respect and you've mentioned you guys initially recruited him on defense, and he likes his fit there long-term; is there any chance that could happen down the line when you consider at the end of the year?

COACH SHAFER: We're just looking at trying to get the next win.

Q. I'm interested in the scores you've put up this season. There's four games of 40 or 50 points you've given up, but three games in the second half of the season, where in total you only gave up one touchdown. Is it just the quality of the opponent or is something else going on?

COACH SHAFER: I think it's all-inclusive. You know, we've played some of the best teams in the country, especially with offensive weapons, and they did a good job against us and we didn't do as good a job as we needed to. I think it's all-encompassed, I really do. I don't think it's any one thing.

Going into each game, you have a good plan in your mind and then you come out of it and you learn a lot about yourselves and the opponents that you played.

For instance, last week, the biggest lesson I learned is that Florida State team is the real deal. They are as good as I've seen in my whole career. They put it on tape against us and everybody else they played.

So at least we know where the bar is set and what we have to start doing both in recruiting and preparing from a team point of view and personnel point of view to try to fight the good fight to get through battling those teams, especially the Clemsons and the Florida States of the world.

For me, it's just great for the conference to see that we have a team that has a great chance at going and winning that National Championship, and another great BCS team in Clemson. You know, I think it's all-encompassed when you look at the struggles we've had, and it's all-encompassed when you look at the positive games we've had, as well.

Q. What have you done well in those three games? I'm talking about NC State, Wake Forest and Maryland, where you only gave up 13 points total.

COACH SHAFER: We were consistent with our production to stop the run. We tackled well. I thought the coaches had a good plan with all three of those games with some wrinkles in it to change things up, and we pressured the quarterback in those games. So I think those are probably the constants.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Terrel (Hunt). I know he has not thrown for a touchdown since the Tulane game. How hard is it for an offense to kind of gain confidence and a rhythm when you can't get a passing touchdown aside from the wide receiver pass?

COACH SHAFER: I think if you look backwards, you're making a mistake.

All you can do is look forward and try to focus in on the game plan at hand and try to control the things that the coaches have taught you throughout the course of the week. And if you do that, good things end up happening, and that's the focus with both Terrel and anyone else on the team at their different positions; to try to improve upon.

I mean, you can't look backwards. That's not a positive way of looking at getting better. You have to control the controllables daily and work towards the small goals and objectives that the coaches put in front of you throughout the course of the week and believe in the system, and know that good things will come if you just focus on those types of things.

Q. I guess looking at Terrel and just stats aside, are you happy with how he's grown? What have you liked and where do you think he could be doing a little bit more?

COACH SHAFER: Terrel, he's a competitor, so I am happy with that side of him as a player and student athlete.

He just has to continue to work on his consistency, and the guys running the routes have to continue to work on their consistency to give him a chance. It's all-inclusive. I've said it many times; the quarterback is going to take the brunt of the criticism when you're not as productive as you want to be in any particular area with the passing game.

But there's more to it than just the quarterback. It's all-inclusive. So all 11 guys have

to do their part to upgrade our productivity on offense.

Q. Coach Lester and even Coach McDonald said timing routes where a big thing with Terrel; sometimes he might just be releasing a little late. Do you see that as one of the biggest things he might need to fix?

COACH SHAFER: Yeah, Terrel is working every day at trying to improve his reaction time at seeing the coverage and throwing to spots. Coach Moore and the wide receivers are working hard at learning how to find those windows and then go get the ball.

The good quarterbacks put the ball in the open area and the good wide receivers go get it, and that's an area that both sides have struggled at, and that's why we're working the heck out of it every day.

Q. You held Pittsburgh to I think 13 points last year. What did you do well in last year's meeting that you need to recapture this week?

COACH SHAFER: Well, I think, you know, consistent with most of the games that we've played well on defense, I think that we had good answers to the run game and the play-actions off the run game, and, you know, kind of kept them out of groove, out of tempo with regards to pass protection and timing of getting balls out and being multiple with our pressure packages, both the run and the pass.

I think it all comes together when you stop the run first and have an opportunity to pressure the quarterback in early situations.

Q. Talking about the big rivalry game against Pitt, what's it like playing them every year, even if it's not a BIG EAST game; now it's an ACC game.

COACH SHAFER: It's great. It's what college football should be about. With the push towards the big mega-conferences, to some degree, I'm saddened that some of the rivalries are not played anymore. We don't play West Virginia anymore. That was a great game.

So I'm glad that we are able to do two things, first and foremost, this week playing a Pitt team that we've been playing for the last 55 years; I think it's great for the fans in both towns and for the fans in the northeast that have watched these

games for so many years.

And I'm equally excited about the fact that we are re-doing the Boston College game, too. I think any time you have that familiarity with an area and a fan base, it's a positive thing. And that's one thing that's nice with the ACC bringing ourselves into the league, as well as having Boston College and Pitt, you get that opportunity to see some of those old-time rivalries stay the course. I know the fans enjoy it and I know our fans are fired up about it.

Q. Talk about Pitt's quarterback, (Tom) Savage, what type of quarterback have you seen this year? You've seen a lot of different quarterbacks through the whole year. Just that you can about that.

COACH SHAFER: He's a big, strong-armed kid. We played him three years ago, I guess it was, back when he was at Rutgers. Very talented, highly-recruited kid coming out of Pennsylvania there. And he's having a good year. You know, I think he's got 18 touchdowns, seven interceptions, if I'm not mistaken, which is not a bad number.

He's talented. He stays the same. He handles tough situations well. He bounces back. He's a tough kid. He takes some shots and comes back the next play and completes a big ball. He's a good football player, and seems like he's just a great kid, too, from everything I've heard.

JIM GROBE WAKE FOREST

COACH GROBE: You know, we had an open date this past weekend, and I think that was good for us. A lot of times, when you have an open date, you don't know how your kids are going to bounce back after having a weekend off from playing. But I think in our case, it was really good for us. We would have probably been down a handful of starters had we had to play last week.

So I think the open date from a health standpoint came at a good time. We'll still be without a couple pretty good players this week. But you know, hopefully we can play better than we've played the past couple games.

Q. There's obviously a lot at stake for both teams in this game. What do you sense is the mentality of your guys going into this one?

COACH GROBE: Well, I think we are fine. We are disappointed that we haven't played very well the past couple times out. But I think our kids like to play football and we know we've got a great challenge. Duke is playing great football right now and we are going to have to play really, really good to win.

I feel like our football team is in a state of mind where we want to play better. So hopefully we'll get a great effort Saturday.

Q. Have you had a chance to talk to Coach Cutcliffe at all this season about what's going on over there?

COACH GROBE: I have not. I have not. We generally visit when we get together for spring meetings, but he's just doing a great job, got good kids playing really, really well and they have got lots of confidence. They are just having one of those years, and can't say enough about the good stuff he's done.

Q. Duke has an opportunity to do something that's never been done, much like you guys did in 2006 at your school. As that season went for your guys, how did you keep your players from getting too tight as the stakes went higher and higher?

COACH GROBE: Well, I think we just tried to stay consistent. We tried not to change things from week to week. It's one of those old add ages, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

I think what we tried to do, as much as anything as coaches, is just continue to do the things that had gotten us to a chance late in the season and try not to, you know, invent anything. We just wanted to keep things kind of on an even keel and try to remain the same emotionally as you had throughout the course of the season. When things are going well, you just want to try to keep it on an even keel.

Q. I wanted to ask you, Duke has been using two quarterbacks and Coach Cutcliffe said he'll continue to do that. Does that present any special problems or do you have to be aware of which guy is on the field at all times?

COACH GROBE: Well, I think that both of

the kids are really good duel-threat quarterbacks. One is a little bigger than the other one, but I think both kids throw the ball well, and they both run the ball well.

So I think, you know, a lot of times, when you're playing two quarterback, you don't have the success that they are having, a lot of times it's because you don't feel like one kid is really good enough.

But in this case, you've got two quarterbacks that are really, really good. I think that's the problem that they present defensively is no matter which kid is in, they both have the ability to throw the football effectively, and of course both of them do a nice job running the football.

Q. In this series, you've had absolute mastery over them; there were a lot of close games which you guys always won until last year. Did that change the dynamic of the series at all, the fact that they finally got a breakthrough? Do you think it mentally changes anything?

COACH GROBE: I don't think so. I think we both -- you know, since I've been here, have been very competitive. I think both teams have gone after each other, and I really believe some of the years that we won, the games were so close, it was just a bounce here or a bounce there that determined the game.

And so, you know, we have never felt like this was a series that we had the upper hand in. We always felt like playing Duke, that we had to play our best football to win, and you know, most of the games that we played were nail-biters.

Q. When we look at Duke on film, what's the reason they are doing so well this year? Do they look better to you than last year in any certain areas?

COACH GROBE: I think as much as anything, they are just finding ways to win. That's what it's all about. It really doesn't matter, you know, how you get there. I think at the end of the game, if you've got more points than the other team, that's the key, and that's what they have been able to do. I think a big part of it is they have been able to finish games. They have been in a lot of close games and when they get to the fourth quarter, they find ways to win. That's what good teams do.

Q. The biggest worry in your defense against this offense this week?



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COACH GROBE: I think they are balanced. I think they have four running backs that probably anybody in the league would like to have right now. I think all four running backs are averaging over five yards a carry, and both of their quarterbacks are very capable of throwing and running the football.

And they have got a good group of receivers, a nice tight end to throw the football to, and Crowder is a special player but they have some other players that are good players.

I think balance is probably the thing that bothers you the most. Most teams are either better running or better throwing the football and this is a Duke offensive football team that's got good balance; they are capable of beating you both ways.

PAUL JOHNSON GEORGIA TECH

COACH JOHNSON: I tell you, we are disappointed with our effort on Thursday night. I think Clemson played a very, very good game; and you couple that with we didn't particularly play well and got off to a slow start and dug ourselves quite a hole. Again, I don't want to take anything away from Clemson, because I thought they played an excellent football game.

Outside the league this week to play a team that we don't know a whole lot about, coming from the SWAC conference, which has historically had a lot of good players. Our big focus this week is trying to get better at what we do. Certainly we've got room for improvement in that area.

Q. Looking at the ACC schedule this week, there are five teams that are stepping outside the league and to me that just seems unusual this late in the season. Usually you play your non-conference games fairly early. Just wonder, can you talk about the philosophy behind that and what you're looking to get out of this kind of game this late in the season?

COACH JOHNSON: I think what happens is inevitably with the schedule, it wouldn't be my philosophy. If I had my druthers, I would rather play all four non-conference games first.

I think we've talked about that as a group as head coaches. I think that we need to start to try to work towards doing that. But with the TV

agreement and with some of the games that they want early, that makes it tougher to do that.

And then you couple that with a couple of us, three teams in general, us, Florida State and Clemson, all have the big SEC rival game, the in-state rival, and historically that's been played the weekend of Thanksgiving. So that kind of hinders that, too.

Yeah, you would much rather not be out of conference, I don't think, this late in the year.

Q. The other thing that is kind of interesting, you finished your conference record, you're 5-3 in the division, kind of sitting in the clubhouse at 5-3 watching other people. Are you going to be doing a lot of scored board watching to see if you can get a share of the division title or maybe in a situation where you win the tiebreaker and go to the Championship Game again?

COACH JOHNSON: I don't know about scoreboard watching. I mean, you know, we are where we are, and it's out of our control.

We could have -- had we played better Thursday night and found a way to beat a good Clemson team; we knew going into that game we had a chance. If we won that game, I felt like we had a chance to win the division with the tie breaker or out right. There's still that chance.

I think the Coastal is pretty well balanced and I don't know that there's one team that's head and shoulders better than the rest. You just step back and let the guys play out and see what happens.

Q. You talk about the need to improve the last couple of games. How hard is that to do with your 11th game of the season? And early in the season when you see how things are shaping up and are obvious, but is it more fine-tuning, or are there certain things that you really go hard after?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think it's going to be easy for us to improve off our last game on Thursday night. When you start out with something as elementary as catching a kickoff, we dropped a couple of those. I think we started six of our possessions inside the 20-yard line; 260 yards in field position we gave up with where Clemson started and where we started. And against a really good football team like they have got, you're not going to overcome that kind of thing.

You know, lining up on the line of scrimmage when you punt the ball and not having

the 25-yard penalty for having too many guys in the backfield, which is what it ended up being, and we had to re-kick.

Those kind of things that are self-inflicted. You know, when you play, you're going to have a team that's going to beat you sometimes and you're going to beat them sometimes. But what we have got to stay away from is the self-inflicted stuff. And regardless of what week it is, we can improve on that.

Q. What have you been able to find out about Alabama A&M?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, of course, we swap all the tape and you talk to coaches. The coaches in that league seem to think that they are probably -- their front seven is as physical as anybody else.

I'm sure they will have some good players. They have got a thousand-yard rusher. They play two quarterbacks. They are very multiple in what they do both offensively and defensively, they do a lot of things. You just have to play the game and see. Coming out of that league, there's been a lot of guys that go to the NFL, so I'm sure they will have some good players.

Like I said, again, our focus is on us and trying to get better at what we do.

Q. We were talking to Coach Swinney earlier and he thinks Robert Godhigh is the first guy that's ever rushed for a hundred and received for a hundred yards against them. I just wonder, can you talk about his versatility and how impressive he's been?

COACH JOHNSON: Robby has been a good player for us all year. He's probably been one of our more consistent guys. He's been really special with the ball in his hand. He's created a lot of long runs, and he was able to get some play-action passes to the back side unbalanced. He caught a couple of big pass plays. We had about three more that we could have caught, that would have helped him even more; it would have been big plays. But he's been a really good player. He's very consistent, plays hard and loves to play the game.

Q. I think he leads the ACC in yards per carry, too, by a pretty wide margin.

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I think he's going to break that record. Orwin Smith broke that

record a year ago, the guy that plays the same position, for year, and I think Robby is going to eclipse that. Robby has him by half a yard or more per carry. There have been a lot of really good backs in the ACC through the years.

Q. Is that purely speed, or is there some other factor involved in getting that yardage?

COACH JOHNSON: Well, I think that he's a good player. He breaks tackles, and also where you get the ball has a lot to do with it. Those guys get the ball mostly on pitches and on the perimeter, and when you are as talented as he is, you have a chance to break good plays; as opposed to a guy who is getting the ball 30 times a game inside the tackle box, they are probably not going to have that kind of yards per carry.

LARRY FEDORA NORTH CAROLINA

COACH FEDORA: Our football team is looking forward to playing an 8-3 Old Dominion football team that has been coached very well and who is in the middle of the transition from FCS to FBS, and these guys have done a tremendous job. They have got a great quarterback, a kid that's completing over 71 percent of his balls. He's got four receivers that are catching over 40 balls. They really move it around quite a bit and have done a tremendous job.

So we have a tremendous challenge, this week, just getting ready for this football team.

Q. The conference has a great chance of having more Bowl-eligible teams than there are contracts with the Bowls. Wonder from your perspective, knowing how tough it is to get to the post-season, how important is it that there's a home for the Bowl-eligible teams?

COACH FEDORA: Well, it's extremely important that there's a home for your Bowl-eligible teams. You know, nobody knows how that's all going to shake out, but I think in the long run, it usually works out.

You know, one good thing about it is the fans travel and they love Bowl games. So there's usually going to be a home. So it's not something that I really spend a lot of time worrying about.

Q. Talk about the quarterback for Old Dominion; he's one of those pro quarterbacks you might see on Sunday afternoon.

COACH FEDORA: I tell you what, he is a very talented young man. Earlier in the year, as we watched crossover tape, kept seeing him against various defenses. All of our staff kept making comments on, wow, that quarterback is special.

I mean, he can extend plays. He's got a great arm. He knows where to go with the ball. He's just a playmaker is what he is and there's no doubt he was -- you can see why he was the national Player of the Year last year in the FCS. He's a sophomore. The guy is very, very talented and does a great job within their offense. And I think Bobby Wilder and those guys do a great job using all his tools.

Q. Talk about your team, what do you guys have to do? You're 5-5, and a lot of coaches don't look ahead, but I know you want to get that sixth win. What is the key to win on Saturday?

COACH FEDORA: Well, for us, it's been the same as it is all year. First of all, special teams, we need to create a game-changing play on special teams, and then offensively, we've got to take care of the football and we've got to be -- you know, we've got to do, really, a great job in all the critical situations. That's going to be key.

And then defensively, we've got to adjust to their tempo and we've got to do a great job of stopping the run. We've got to stop the run and then we've got to be in position to not give up big plays as they put the ball out in space.

Q. Regarding Ryan Switzer, obviously the initial blocking on a punt return sets things up, but once he finds an opening, can you describe sort of how instinct and vision take over, and what makes that so exceptional for him, whereas for other guys it might not work as well?

COACH FEDORA: Well, first of all, he has the skills, the skill level and the skill set that you need to be a great punt returner. He's got great speed. He's got great, great quickness and that is probably the biggest key. And then confidence is very important.

You know, I mean, he really believes he's going to make guys miss and so the other guys

know, they have just got to get on guys and stay on them a little bit longer, because he's going to make a few guys miss. And when he does that, anything can happen.

And he just, he does, he's got great vision and he's got some quickness, some things that other people don't have.

Q. What's it like for you on the sideline? He breaks one in the game and then to do it a second time, how long has it been since you've seen that?

COACH FEDORA: Yeah, I was thinking about it. I don't think I've been in a game that -- I haven't been involved in a game like that that with evident had two punt returns in the same game. I mean, is it a hundred years of North Carolina football? I don't think it's ever happened here. It's a pretty unique thing.

Q. I'm just wondering, when you guys were sitting at 1-5, how did you just keep the players heads-up and not let them get discouraged with that start, and let them know there was still a lot to play for?

COACH FEDORA: Well, it goes back to your philosophy. You can't just be about when things are going good, everything is going great. Your philosophy has to be sound and you have to know that you've got to believe in your philosophy.

And our staff did a great job of just keeping their nose down, kept working, nobody panicked and they were able to show the kids that there's no reason to panic. We're close; we just have to make this play or we have to do this or we have to do that.

The kids kept believing. They kept working extremely hard. They had great attitudes. And that's one thing that I can say about these guys: Their attitude after a game or going into a game has been the same each and every week. That has been very consistent, which is what we're looking for.

Q. Does it take a unique or a special group of players to be able to do that and keep believing and not get down on themselves?

COACH FEDORA: I think so. I think first of all, that leadership comes from the staff and then the leadership goes to the leaders on your team, and then the entire team has to buy into it.

For us, it's earlier in the year, so you could go a lot of different ways, and that's why I give credit to the staff and those seniors and the

leaders on this football team, how they kept everybody together.

Q. You're facing Old Dominion this week. What's your assessment of your pass defense and your pass rush at this point in the season.

COACH FEDORA: Well, it's going to be very, very critical that we are able to get some pressure on the quarterback and try to harass him and try to get him to make some throws early, and then we are going to have to hold up in the back end, too. I mean, we don't want to cover those guys for a long time, because if he gets a set back there, he's going to pick you apart.

And they are going to make some plays. That's going to happen. Any time you're running this style of offense where probably 50 percent of the game, they are in an empty set, I mean, you are spreading the field and you're going to create some one-on-ones; that if a guy misses a tackle, it's going to be a play.

That's why we have to do a great job of tackling in space.

Q. You mentioned seeing Old Dominion on some crossover tapes you were watching for other people. I know you watch as many tapes as you can, but is it more helpful when you get a tape of someone like Old Dominion against Pitt that you just played so you get a little better judge of how they perform because you know what they are going up against?

COACH FEDORA: Yeah, it really is. That helps quite a bit. Not only that, it also helps your players to understand that, hey, they just played this opponent, so they know what this opponent is all about, and then you're able to watch Old Dominion against that opponent and say, you know what, hey, this is a good football team. They are moving the ball around on this team and they are doing what they want, and so that helps. I think it helps in the focus for your football team.

So, yeah, it really is good to have that good crossover film.

Q. The thing about your players seeing it and believing it, there were some comments that came out of the press conference Monday that the players talked about when they played East Carolina earlier, that maybe they didn't

give them the respect they deserve. Do you think that's a lesson that was learned then?

COACH FEDORA: I tell you what, it better be a lesson that was learned. This is one thing we talk about as a team throughout the season.

All of the mistakes that we make during the season, and whether it be in a missed assignment or a scheme, we are trying to -- we go back on Sundays and we try to correct all of our mistakes that we made in a game. And then we talk about making sure that we are able to focus so that we don't make that same mistake again.

And so, yes, I hope that is a lesson that this football team has learned, and if not, I'll be very, very disappointed if we are not ready to play on Saturday. And again, that's my responsibility.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...

November 20, 2013



An interview with:

PAUL CHRYST PITT

COACH CHRYST: Certainly disappointed in the outcome of last week's game. But got to take the positives that came from it, build on them. Certainly there's enough things that we've got to continue to try to correct.

Looking forward to going up and playing a good Syracuse team. Had a good couple days of practice so far and need to finish out the week.

Q. Paul, defensively anything in particular you were not too thrilled with last week that's a point of emphasis this week?

COACH CHRYST: I think there were times where we didn't do a great job, had some opportunities to tackle and missed some tackles. I thought we had a couple opportunities for some interceptions, take-aways. And I thought there was some really good play.

You probably get that in a lot of games. But there's areas where we got some good pressure at times, but we got to get it from more than just Aaron. There's enough things that we certainly can work on.

We gave up a couple big plays where we didn't have our eyes right, guys out of position. Like anything, when you look at your defensive corrections, you look at what gave up the big plays and is there anything we can do or try to help correct, help our players with. Then when you have opportunities for take-aways, we all know the value of those. Missed tackles or anything where you're out of position.

Q. What do you need to do offensively to score more than you did at Syracuse last year?

COACH CHRYST: Well, there's a ton of things we've got to do to score more. Last year, different team. But I think when we've been able to be fairly efficient on offense, we've been able to run the ball, being able to pass. Big thing is being able to convert on third downs. We have to protect the quarterback. Didn't do a good job of that last year at all.

Certainly there's a different group of guys going up there. But we can't have the performance we had last year certainly.

Q. When you saw it live, then again on tape, were there common mistakes made in the two punt returns that went for touchdowns?

COACH CHRYST: Yes, I think there were. We've got to look at the things that we can control. Certainly saw a number of things. I also don't want to minimize the effort that their return unit made. Did a heck of a job. Anytime you do it, I want to give him credit for making that play.

It started from our kicks where we really want them to go. We missed tackles on it. We had some guys not get off a block at all. Those were specifically on both.

There are certainly things we have to take responsibility for and areas where we can get better. Like I said, I don't want it to come off like you don't appreciate and give credit to not just the returner, but the unit. They also made a play.

There's certainly things we've got to clean up.

Q. Does the fact that the winner of this game becomes bowl-eligible, does that put an added element, an extra edge to it in that you could go ahead, get that out of the way, not have that come down to your last game of the season?

COACH CHRYST: Yes. I mean, certainly I've been in that position a number of times where you're playing your last game for the bowl. It's always better if you can be bowl-eligible before the end of your last game.

In many ways you'd like to say it shouldn't change the approach, shouldn't change the way your guys feel about this. Our players were able to play Syracuse last year. Before I got here, they played them. They certainly respect the players and probably have the most familiarity with this team as anyone, for some of our older players.

Like I said, you'd like to be bowl-eligible after week six, then it's week seven, week eight, on and on. But I don't think it changes, Boy, it's that much more important, or our guys are more excited. Playing Syracuse stands on its own merit and that has our kids' attention.

Q. In your interactions with the guys, especially the seniors this week, do you see a rising sense of desperation? Maybe that's not the right word. With only two games left in the regular season, five wins, do you see guys that need to take charge of things this weekend?

COACH CHRYST: You're right, I don't think 'desperation' is the right word by any means. Like you said, I feel good about the sense of urgency certainly.

Q. Talk about this rivalry between Pitt and Syracuse. Goes back to the Big East days. What is your take on this game against Syracuse?

COACH CHRYST: Well, certainly I have a lot of respect for Syracuse. One game I was a part of, we got beat. But I think, like Pitt, Syracuse has had a lot of really good players, good teams. There's a tradition there.

Our older players have familiarity with their older players. I think there certainly is a lot of respect for Syracuse. I think every time we play, it's a big game.

Q. What are you going to do this weekend when you're playing in the Dome? You haven't played in the Dome at all this year.

COACH CHRYST: We played up there last year. It's a factor you have to account for. We're not going to change anything. It's like anytime you go on the road, you got to be able to adjust the best you can on game day. There's no way you can quite simulate it. The big thing is focusing on what we can control.

We have plans that we do when we play on the road. Certainly for the Dome, we've got a plan. We'll use that and hopefully that will help our kids feel comfortable when we get there.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Syracuse running back Jerome Smith, what kind of problems he presents. What kind of runner do you see him as?

COACH CHRYST: A good runner, physical. I remember watching just some games last year of him. Just hard. Got a lot of respect for him and appreciate that kind of back. I think they've got a good combination in their backs. It's a pretty nice way to be able to go about it.

They've got two different guys, a little bit of a change-up to it. Certainly that's going to be a big part of the game, is if we can tackle them and do a good job versus the run.

Q. You've had several games where you were very good against the run, a couple that you weren't. Is there a difference other than the quality of the opposition?

COACH CHRYST: Each week it's different, like you said, with the quality of who you're playing, and how they're playing even on that day.

There's things, when you look at those games where we've done well, there's kind of reasons why. We're getting a lot of hats to the ball. When we haven't done as good, you see some of the things, be it a missed tackle, not getting as many hats to the ball carrier. There are some common themes.

When you take a look at the end of every season, you look at the big runs, there's some common themes that apply always. You could probably say the same when you take a look at your lost yardage, tackles for losses, or one- and two-yard gains.

I think that part of football stays fairly consistent.

An interview with:

FRANK BEAMER VIRGINIA TECH

COACH BEAMER: Well, we have a very, very important game left, University of Virginia. Got an off week here. Probably from a health standpoint, that's not bad. Probably from a mental standpoint, it's not bad.

But we're practicing three times this week, not long practices, but short, very quick practices. Their movement, I want it to be quick. Then we'll go into our regular game preparation next week.

Important game. Need to play our very best.

Questions.

Q. Coach, because coming out of your last bye, you lost two games after that, is there anything different you do as far as your approach, how you treat the bye week this time?

COACH BEAMER: Well, actually we're practicing one more time this week than we did last. We're actually practicing one more time next week.

I think from an emphasis standpoint, an execution standpoint, we'll see if this way doesn't work better.

Q. With the difference the offense showed between Miami and Maryland, is there anything you would like to see more or less of out of your offense right now?

COACH BEAMER: I think continuing to work. I think Maryland should get credit because I think defensively they played extremely well against us, kept us off balance a little bit. We'd like to get back to how we were doing at Miami. Different games, different ways of attacking you. But still the fundamentals of running the football are still there. We need to block, get a little gap, back stick it up in there. If we did that, it would help Logan and our passing game.

There's no secrets here; it's just a matter of getting it done.

Q. Statistically there's not a whole lot of difference between this year's offense and last year's. Are there things you've seen in this year's offense to suggest that things are moving forward with this new offensive staff or anything you've seen that you like what they've done so far?

COACH BEAMER: Yes. Again, I go back, and I had good coaches last year. We do things a little bit different. I like the way we do things. I like how we coach on the field, our offensive thoughts, what goes into the game plan. I mean, I like it a lot.

I think over time this offensive staff is going to be really, really good. I've always been blessed with good coaches. It was that way last year. I'm

as positive as can be that we're heading in the right direction right now.

Q. Is there a way to explain the ups and downs that you've had, looking so good last week against Miami, then struggling like you did against Maryland?

COACH BEAMER: Again, I think it's different personnel each week, different defenses they run. But there shouldn't be that big a gap.

I think personnel enters into it, their personnel, your personnel, how consistent that personnel is. I think we'll continue to get better. The more we're with this offensive staff, then with our players, I think the better it will get. No question in my mind.

Q. Frank, what will you do on Saturday as far as watching the other coastal teams play? The scenarios are almost impossible to calculate on what can still happen in the division. Do you sit back and watch? Will you think, Well, if this team wins, that will help me, so on? How do you approach all that?

COACH BEAMER: I think the losses that we've had, for us to still have a chance of representing our side, the Coastal, in the championship game, I feel fortunate that we're in that position. We know what needs to happen for us to do that, for us to represent the coastal.

I think you'd like to see that happen. At least this Saturday, it's out of our hands. It's in somebody else's hands. I think we look at the games, see what happens, and go from there.

Q. The scenarios are so crazy. Could you have imagined anything like this at the start the season?

COACH BEAMER: It makes it interesting. For us to sit here with three losses in the conference and still have a chance of representing our side is very unusual.

But I think there's a lot of teams on our side that are very close to each other. That's the way it's turned out.

Q. I know you have an off week this week after the Maryland game. Talk about what happened to Logan Thomas last week. Seems like he had an off week. Did Maryland's defense just swarm him a little bit more?

COACH BEAMER: No, I think sometimes

you look at one guy. I give credit to Maryland's defense. I think they were very good, had a good game plan, all that. But for a quarterback, it's really the people around you. I don't think there's any question about Logan's talent. The pro scouts that come through here, there's no question about Logan's talent. That's not in question.

I think how consistent you are around him, that goes to your running backs, to your wide receivers, to your offensive line, to your tight ends, how consistent they play really affects the production of your offense.

That's kind of where we are right now. I think, without question, we're a little bit too inconsistent in how we play around our quarterback.

Q. I know you have an off week. What is it like playing against the Cavaliers?

COACH BEAMER: For us, our fan base, it's the biggest game of the year. I'm sure it's the same for them. It's been a big game around here for a long time. It will continue that way.

I think it's two programs that do it the right way. I think recruiting-wise, how we do business. I would hope the fans in this state would be proud of both schools and how we go about our business.

It's a big game for us, I can tell you that, no question.

An interview with:

MIKE LONDON VIRGINIA

Q. Coach, I wanted to ask you to give us an inside report on morale, feeling of the team, off week after the long losing streak? Is morale still good? Do you feel good about how you can finish the season?

COACH LONDON: Yes, morale is very good. When you only have six seniors on your team, there's a lot of guys on the team that although the season has been disappointing, there's no bowl opportunities, there's still opportunities for them to get better, for them to continue playing, for them to develop the kind of skills we need to be successful here.

No one's hanging their head. Guys are preparing. They're practicing well. Practices have

been very spirited. That's what you want it to be. You want guys that want to be competitors and have a chance to win games regardless of what's going on week in, week out. That's been a very positive point for the guys. It's been good to see.

We'll continue on until we play the last game as far as trying to create an atmosphere of the type of things that you need to do in order to win games. That's about effort, it's about energy, it's about passion. I would say our attitude here for the fellows, for the players, has been good.

Q. Was there anything specifically in terms of tactics or strategy that you worked on during the off week to try to improve?

COACH LONDON: Well, to me it's all about you got to have a base of fundamentals that, regardless of what the scheme is, you always have to go back to, back pedal, the way you run your routes, the way you release the ball, so many different things.

An open week gives you a good amount of time to dedicate to those things. You can always put the schemes in, but you have to be fundamentally sound, be in position to make tackles, who is forcing the ball inside. Spent a lot of time on that basically. Those are the things that we believe you have to do well in order to play well. So we spent more time on that.

Q. I know coaches talk about when they go to bowls, one of the things that helps for that is the extra practice, gives you longer to look at your younger players, redshirts, people like that. Not having that opportunity this year, did you use the off week to do anything with the younger guys that may play a big role in the future?

COACH LONDON: There's a fair amount of players that are playing as youngsters. They are getting those reps.

But you are correct in some of those players that we've redshirted, there were periods on points and practices that were emphasized on developing the young players.

The biggest thing with bowl opportunities, you have a chance to develop players, particularly your young players. This season we played so many young players, their ongoing development has been developing as the season has gone on.

Your open weeks you do take time to develop those guys that are redshirted and guys

that haven't played a lot.

Q. Mike, earlier this week at your press conference Monday, there was a lot of talk about the explosive plays this season, maybe the drop-off in plays of 20 yards or more. Last week Dominique Terrell had a fair number of plays after that length. He's made periodic appearances lately. What's happened to him this season?

COACH LONDON: Nicky, as we call him, is a guy that is still very much in the mix. We made the receiver change, if you can remember, a few games back. All that was geared towards getting better production from catches and from blocking, route running, all those things.

Nicky, again, is a guy, like Darius Jennings, when the move was made, that didn't pout his head. Just continued to try to find a way to help this team win.

He's practiced well. He's done a lot of things that a veteran player can do to help younger players. He became a selfless player, dedicated himself to whatever role we've asked him to do, to take on, to mentor the younger players, and he's done that.

Although not being as productive on the field as he has been in the past, he's very much a part of the team. We have a receiving group that we're looking to find the right mix.

We're finding guys that have chances to do some things for us. But, again, when you talk about Dominique Terrell, he's been a great teammate despite not having the opportunities.

Q. Do you feel his confidence was eroded at all but some of the drops of the punts, particularly at Pitt?

COACH LONDON: Every player is, I'm sure, conscious about doing the things that can help the team win. No one wants to drop passes or not run the correct route. When that happens, you also have to have consequences to that. You have to have options for that. That was done in the moves we made to make sure we had those opportunities.

Nicky will play in games. Didn't have as prominent a role as he had in the past. Going down the stretch, he'll be involved in some things that we have going with different packages.

Like I said, he's become a great teammate. He's not walking around sulking or anything like that. He's embraced the role. Now

he has to increase being a team leader, and he's done that.

Q. Coach London, talk about the season. It seems like it's been a struggle for you guys. How can you keep your team positive playing against a team like Miami?

COACH LONDON: It was sort of the question that was asked a few moments earlier about the attitude and the mindset.

Again, we're a team that has six seniors on it. There will be a lot of players that will be back two, three years, have a whole college career ahead of them.

The one thing we want to focus on is always having a chance to compete. You look at college football, this past week, the things that happened, teams that won, teams that overcame large deficits. It's about continuing to give great effort.

A lot of players on this team have been successful against Miami. It's one of those things you have to create that mindset, that balance of, we got two games left, and we want to play to the best of our ability to send these seniors out.

There's been no problem about maintaining the passion or the energy, those things that you want guys to have. If you have a senior team, sometimes they realize things aren't going to go that way, the season can go south, attitudes, practice and effort.

As I said previously, our practice, effort and attitude has been very good. We're excited about traveling down and playing Miami.

Q. How difficult is Miami's defense? They've been slacking the last three games. Seems like they're a good defensive unit. What have you seen on film?

COACH LONDON: Obviously they're big and they're athletic. There's a lot of things that they do, kind of multiple looks that they give, a 4-3 and a 3-4 look. Anthony Chickillo is very accomplished for them. Perryman, their linebacker, is a very good player. The corner, Howard, and Jenkins the safety. They play very aggressive.

One of the things that we'll have to make sure we do, we talk about first downs, third-down conversions are going to be important for us because they'll give you different looks.

When you have an athletic team like that,

you're right, teams have been running the ball on them. At the same time you have to look at the film, you have to look at what they can do, just not feel that you can come in and dominate a game with them because they're so explosive on defense and they have the weapons on offense to put points back on the board.

An interview with:

STEVE ADDAZIO BOSTON COLLEGE

COACH ADDAZIO: Obviously we came off of a great win here last Saturday which gave us an opportunity to become bowl-eligible. More importantly our seniors really had a great success to their Senior Day here at Alumni Stadium. It was really a special moment.

We're getting ready right now to play just an outstanding football team in Maryland. Obviously really well-coached. I have a lot of respect for Randy Edsall, the job he's done. I know he's a great football coach. His team is well-prepared.

Very, very strong on defense, especially up front, and on offense full of play-makers. C.J. Brown, their quarterback, is playing outstanding. So we know that going on the road, going to their place, going with a team that had a great win at Virginia Tech, this is going to be quite a challenge for us.

So we're preparing as hard as we can right now and trying to get ourselves ready to get the competitive excellence to go down there and play the best football game we can possibly play.

Looking forward to the challenge. And with that, any questions.

Q. Steve, I wanted your perspective on becoming bowl-eligible. There's a lot of teams in the conference who have either done that or are than the verge of it. Just knowing how hard it is to get to the post-season, from your perspective, how important is it that there's a home for all the bowl-eligible teams?

COACH ADDAZIO: Well, I think it speaks to the strength of the conference. The ACC, our conference, is very, very strong. Not only do we have strength at the top, but we're also having a lot

of programs like ours that have been down, that are coming back up, creating great balance.

It's a good problem to have. Obviously all teams that get the bowl eligibility want to play in the post-season. It's a real benchmark. Obviously, that's what it is for our program.

I think the most important thing right now, I told our team, is that we need to get our seventh win. The more games you're able to win, the better situation you're in, the more locked in you are to actually getting one of those slots.

So when you're in a competitive conference, which is a great thing, this is a by-product. We know what we have to do. We have to play our best football right now. We have to come down the homestretch strong. That's all we've talked about for getting ready for Saturday.

Q. Do you think you have a Heisman contender in Andre Williams?

COACH ADDAZIO: I think Andre is an outstanding football player. The answer to that is yes. The definition is being a dominant football player, leading rusher in America. High, high character. A great human being. A real student-athlete. Certainly extremely valuable to our football team. I would say he fits all that criteria.

Here what we do, we really don't talk about those things. Go on the field, play as hard as you can, have some team success, because with some team success individual honors will follow. That's kind of what Andre is all about, what we're all about. There's not a lot of conversation about it. I think that's all the more reason why I think he is a good candidate.

Q. Steve, following up with Andre, among all the records that he has set and is on the verge of setting, one of them is he's not that far off from the conference record for number of carries in a season. He has a hundred more carries than anybody else in the conference. How does he stand up to all that constant pounding, because he seems to get stronger as the games go on?

COACH ADDAZIO: Well, he's a real strong, physical guy to begin with. I mean, he's a big guy. We're real, real careful. Right from the beginning we started pre-season camp. How many reps he took in camp, really doesn't take a lot in practice right now.

What we try to do is get him to the game. Obviously last week I think he had 42 carries. So he's taking care of himself. We really try to help him with that. Obviously some good fortune. I'm an offensive line coach, that was my career. We have really honestly one of the best offensive lines I've ever been a part of. So the front blocking unit, the O-line, the tight ends have been outstanding. I think our quarterback getting to the right place, it's been a real team effort.

I think with that approach to practice, that approach to understanding what gives people an opportunity for success, I think it's a very healthy environment.

Knock on wood, he stayed physically healthy. Hopefully we can finish strong.

Q. Do offensive linemen really enjoy having a guy with that kind of success? Does it raise their level of play when they know this guy only needs a seam and he can bust a play?

COACH ADDAZIO: I don't think there's any question that offensive lines have great pride in being able to try to rock off the ball, create seams, be able to give an opportunity, whether it be protection for the quarterback, or whether it be running lanes for the running back. It's kind of their job. They have a lot of pride in that. They have a lot of pride in the success that Andre has had because it's reflective on a bunch of people who have worked real hard in that.

We really focus on that. As you pointed out, he has a lot of carries. God willing, he stays healthy here, he'll have a lot more. That's kind of our emphasis.

But I tell you, around here it's really looked at as a real team thing. It's the defense being able to make third-down stops, being able to create turnovers. It's the offensive line being able to protect the quarterback and knock people off the ball. It's the quarterback's ability to manage and generate the whole offense. It's been a real healthy environment.

We'll continue to stay that way because of the character level of the kids that we have.

Q. You talked about the offensive line, one of the best you've ever been a part of. Give us a couple of individuals that have really stood out to you. We have to do All-ACC voting. Sometimes offensive line is toughest for us writers to judge.

COACH ADDAZIO: Well, you have Matt Patchan, who is our left tackle, who is a

phenomenal football player. Not only is he big and athletic, but he's a tough guy, plays real physical edge, as does Ian White, right tackle. You have two bookend tackles that are really strong. Ian is a really physical guy. They enjoy the physicalness of our game.

Our center, Andy Gallik, is just outstanding. I've been around some really good centers, Mike and Maurkice Pouncey. Those guys were finishers, they were tough, physical. That's how these guys play.

Andy has all the characteristics. He can reach a nose, he can pull, get out in the perimeter, he can finish. So those three guys are outstanding.

Bobby Vardaro and Harris Williams at the guards, we do a lot of pulling, trapping, kicking. Those guys do a great job with that. They're very physical.

Another thing that people don't understand, you have to have good blocking tight ends. Mike Naples, C.J. Parsons, those guys, Jake Sinkovec, are guys that have really done a great job because they extend the gaps.

Our offensive line coach Justin Frye played for me at Indiana. He's just a phenomenal offensive line coach. Done a great job with these guys.

They're physical, they're tough, and they like it. That's a good thing.

An interview with:

DAVID CUTCLIFFE DUKE

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I mentioned this yesterday in my press conference. I'm most pleased with our team's ability to go back to work. Have been very good about that. Our leadership, we went on the field Sunday of this week, I thought had our best Sunday, and we followed up with a good Tuesday, a good Wednesday. I like that.

The thing we've got to do is obviously take what we're doing on the practice field and apply. It's Duke-Wake Forest. It's big here and it's big in Winston-Salem. A rival football game between two very good football programs that do things well. Always a war, and we expect nothing less this week.

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With that I'll take your questions.

Q. Coach, you have a couple rivalry games coming up. Talk about rivalry games, how much more emphasis you put on those games. When you started your coaching career under Coach Bryant, did he treat the Iron Bowl as a big-time rivalry?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: No question, whether it was Alabama-Tennessee, one of the first big ones obviously. Then ending the year with Alabama-Auburn. You understood what it meant.

I think you do have to take rival games and make them different. When I was at Ole Miss, certainly LSU and Mississippi State, there's always more than one. At Tennessee, we had Alabama, we had Florida. Certainly there you had Vanderbilt and Kentucky, so loaded with them.

Here, with the proximity of the schools, the four ACC schools of North Carolina, it's just natural for us and Wake. We played very hard and lost all of them but one as we've played these guys. We know it's a war. We've got to go be the best Duke we can be. That's the bottom line.

Q. What year were you a student assistant at Alabama?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I was there in '72, '73 and '74.

Q. Wake Forest's offense, after three or four games when they were struggling on offense, they went to some very wide splits on the offensive line. For at least a couple games, it really seemed to give people problems. Is that something that was a surprise factor there or is that difficult to deal with?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I'm certain it surprised people. We've done it here. We did it here in 2009, looking for something to shake ourselves up.

But they're in and out of it. They have the ability to do both. Certainly they've got a good program, smart coaches, smart young men, so they're able to execute some of these things, have veterans, veteran quarterback. It does cause you problems.

We're preparing to play against a lot of different types of looks offensively going into it not knowing for sure what you're going to get.

Q. On the other hand they haven't changed much on defense, or am I reading that wrong?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: No, they don't change a lot. They're very good at what they do. Nikita Whitlock is one of the best defensive players in the ACC. They're good at what they do, but they're very multiple on defense. You're really not certain exactly.

They do a really good job game planning an opponent both sides of the ball. They have what I call a blended game plan. What they're doing offensively and defensively kind of coexist to help what they believe are the best way for them to win a ballgame. They're a very versatile team on both sides of the ball.

Q. Obviously some people were surprised you putting together another good season like last year. Do you go into the season thinking, We could have another decent team? Does your success this year surprise you at all?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: No, not really. I thought we had a good football team coming out of spring practice. I told our team that quietly. I told our team quietly what some of our expectations were. I feel like we'll be good. This isn't a flash in the pan. We're going to be good next year if our team has the kind of work ethic that this team has. So it really didn't surprise me at all.

Q. Did you think you had a coastal division championship team on your hands?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: I thought we had a chance to compete. I don't care where you are. I've rarely looked at any team, and I've been around some really good football teams, and say, This is a championship football team.

As you look at a team, you make an assessment, Can we compete for a championship? Are we capable of competing for a championship if we do the right things? It takes a little bit of luck from an injury standpoint, which we haven't been lucky at all in the past, but a little better off this year. All those things enter into it.

When you start becoming a good program, you start looking at a team that you believe this team is capable of competing for its division championship, therefore capable of competing for a championship. That's been our goal here, is to reach that level.

Q. Whitlock is so quick, can make one move and get around the center. Do you try to

get a second body on him if you can? What's the best way to deal with a guy like that?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Yeah, that's ideal. But you can't run every blocking scheme that way. He's not only quick, he's extremely strong. He's got great hand quickness to go with the foot quickness. People don't really understand how critical that part of it is.

He's not easy to deal with in any form or fashion. But their other players aren't either. Good linebackers, their two ends on the edge. You've got to block everybody.

He creates a lot of havoc. I think they do a tremendous job coaching defense and a tremendous job with their scheme. But certainly any coach know schemes get better when you have guys like Nikita Whitlock. He is a disrupter in there.

Q. Their offense has pretty much disappeared after Campanaro got hurt. Do you think with the bye week they had last week, that settled in on them, they'll have some things for you that possibly you haven't seen before?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: Well, there's always that possibility after an open date. They've got other good players, believe me. They have been successful against us offensively in the past. We have our hands full just lining up and playing as well as we can play is what we need to focus on defensively.

Defensively you got to defend, you got to tackle well. You can't give up big plays. Regardless of what Wake Forest runs, the emphasis has to be on Duke playing very, very good team defensive football.

Q. You sound so matter-of-fact about the success you have had this year. I'm wondering if it's been all business from where you sit or if you've allowed yourself a little emotion, if it feels like a special season for you?

COACH CUTCLIFFE: You know, I'm smiling more than I normally would at this time of year. I wouldn't lie to you about that. I'm wanting our players to enjoy this. I certainly want our staff to enjoy this. These years don't always fall in place no matter where you are. I think I've learned that as I've gotten older.

I'm not going to go around getting grumpier. I've heard people describe coaches, The only thing worse with this coach when he's

losing is this coach when he's winning. I don't want to be that guy, so I'm trying not to be that guy.

But we are doing what we expect our team to do, no question about it.

An interview with:

AL GOLDEN MIAMI

COACH GOLDEN: Obviously we're returning home to play Virginia, a team that has played really well against us the last couple years. It's going to be a great challenge. David Watford, their quarterback, very impressed with him. The number of completions he had in one game, Georgia Tech, 43, the number of completions he's had for the year. Kevin Parks, their tailback, has been a big, physical, downhill runner. They're getting a lot of help from (Darius) Jennings and (Tim) Smith at receiver, (Jake) McGee at tight end, and Keeon Johnson coming on for them as a freshman wideout.

On defense, very physical, very aggressive signature Jon Tenuta defense, a lot of take-aways, doing a great job on first down and getting a number of three-and-outs per game.

Great challenge for us. We have seniors that have been through a lot that we have to support and play really well for on Saturday. That's something that we're anxious to do here at Sun Life on Saturday.

I'll take questions.

Q. Al, have you noticed a day at all since Duke (Johnson) got hurt where just like the emotional balloon has been emptying out around your team or for the most part have guys stayed up?

COACH GOLDEN: No, I think guys have stayed up. It really hasn't been about Duke getting hurt. It's been more about Stephen (Morris) getting healthy in the last two weeks. I think that's something that everybody's excited about. Obviously we feel like Stephen has a chance to continue to play better and take a big step here down the stretch.

Randy got hurt. Everybody was disappointed for him because of the type of person he was. But it really hasn't been where it's

impacted us negatively.

Q. Do you anticipate Phillip on Saturday or not?

COACH GOLDEN: I do not. Right now he's doubtful. Again, stranger things have happened, but I don't foresee it. He did not participate with us today.

Q. Do you see any similarities between Watford and Stephen Morris maybe in terms of build, strong arm, athleticism?

COACH GOLDEN: Yeah, I think you can make that case. I think obviously David is young, showing what he can be, to go out and complete 43 balls in a game. 60% is a good number for as young as he is. I think that's a good comparison.

He's got a good arm, he's been making good decisions, especially with his quick throws underneath. I think that's fair.

Q. How about the running of both quarterbacks? How much does he want to do and how much do you want him doing?

COACH GOLDEN: Well, he didn't do any for I guess about two months there. Really the first time he scrambled was against Virginia Tech. He scrambled one time. I think everybody held their breath. He scrambled a little bit more the other day, moved the pocket.

It's not about his ability to scramble, it's about him being able to protect himself in the pocket and have a play-action game, which was diminished during this time that he had with his leg.

Obviously he played better last Saturday versus Duke. We're really not talking about his leg anymore. We're talking about football and getting back to the standard that he wants to play at.

Q. How are the other guys doing besides Phillip? Stacy, how is he doing? Artie Burns?

COACH GOLDEN: Stacy is fine. Corn is fine. Artie is like Phillip, he has not participated yet this week. Herb is still not completely healthy. But everybody else is on track.

Q. If you had to anticipate Herb and Artie, what would you say they are for Saturday?

COACH GOLDEN: Artie is in the class with Phillip. That would be doubtful at this point. Herb has a chance. Hopefully he'll feel better

tomorrow. At least he took some reps, so he's ahead of those two.

You just never know. But Artie and Phillip would be doubtful right now, and Herb I guess would be probable.

Q. The run D hasn't been as consistent these last couple games as you were at the beginning of the year. Anything that you've noticed about why there have been some struggles there?

COACH GOLDEN: We've been on the field too long. We're not as good on third-down defense as we have been. We're not tackling as well. We haven't been taking the ball away. All of that is exacerbated by the fact we haven't been as good as we need to be on third-down offense.

Obviously we've had some turnovers at pivotal moments, like the one on Saturday at 17-7. That was a pivotal turnover. Clearly the Virginia Tech game would have amounted to three pivotal turnovers.

It's the responsibility of all three phases, but certainly as it relates to specifically defense, we have to tackle better, we have to get off the field on third down. We're not as good in the red zone as we have been the last couple weeks. We have to tackle better than we have been.

Q. Why do you think the tackling hasn't been as good as it was at the beginning of the year?

COACH GOLDEN: I don't know. We've had those discussions a million different times. Obviously some of those are private, confidential, if you will. It's something that we definitely looked at in a multitude of ways.

Part of it is that if you don't get off the field on third down, you're on there too long. We got to do a better job of getting off the field on third down. We have to do a better job of taking the ball away. If we don't take it away, which we haven't the last couple weeks, then you can't get off the field.

Third down and no take-aways, as I said, has compounded the issue.

Q. Talk about Virginia, their offense. Seems like they're a very good offense when everything is clicking.

COACH GOLDEN: I mean, very big, physical offensive line. Jake McGee, a tight end, 36 receptions. He's doing a great job for them.

We also see (Zachary) Swanson, 49, who comes in. I think Watford probably benefited from the bye week. Going to come in here ready to go. Parks is big, and I say 'big' because he's powerful, he's got a low center of gravity. He plays like a big back. Obviously they're getting better production of late from the receivers, and obviously Keeon Johnson has made a difference as well, the young freshman.

Again, when they get it going, it's difficult to stop because Watford obviously is throwing the ball well, Park is running it, McGee, what they're getting at the receivers. We're going to have a great challenge and have to play really well.

Q. Talk about Senior Day for you guys. What is special on Saturday for you guys?

COACH GOLDEN: Again, we want to keep our emotions in check. We want to honor the seniors with how we play certainly because this is a group of guys who stood with the University of Miami through a very tumultuous time. Really not only did they not run from a problem, but they adopted it as their own and stayed here until it was resolved, until it was fixed. They delivered us through that. For that we're very grateful.

These young men haven't had a bowl game to play for the last two years, so they have two regular-season games and a bowl game. Our focus clearly all week has been on Virginia, coming off a bye week, who is going to be fresh, and we're going to have to be ready to go.

Q. Have you ever been in college part of a situation like the Justin Renfrow situation where he's playing for opposing teams in back-to-back years? When the matter was posed to you, what was your first inclination? Did you talk to Mike London at any point about it?

COACH GOLDEN: Number one, no. The rule is not that old. These circumstances wouldn't have come up very often. I don't know how many instances since this rule has come up that it has happened. You may know that as you write the story, but I don't know.

As it relates to Justin, he had already gotten a release at the end of April or May and was on track to graduate. So we really didn't get involved with him until, I don't know, late June or July out of need. Obviously, there was a young man that was out there that wanted to go to graduate school, that had fulfilled the NCAA requirements of graduating. So it really didn't

matter at that moment whether or not I talked to Coach London or not. He was not part of their program anymore, and it was really somebody that we needed to help us. Obviously he has helped us at a spot that we needed help at.

Q. Did he approach you first or you became aware of him?

COACH GOLDEN: I don't know. It was one of those deals where we got a release, a form that said that he got a release. I don't know exactly how he came through compliance. We started a dialogue, just like we did with David Gilbert and Pat O'Donnell. Those are all three kids that have helped us this year that obviously because of our circumstance we had to get a little bit unconventional from a recruiting standpoint. Those are three kids that graduated from their programs that thought they could come in and help here and go to graduate school at the University of Miami, and we're very pleased to have them.

An interview with:

**DAVE DOEREN
NC STATE**

COACH DOEREN: Looking forward to being back at Carter-Finley, playing against a good team. Scoring 50 points a game here in their last four games. Quarterback, Carter, playing at an extremely high level, 75% completion rate. Hardy at receiver is over a thousand yards. So an explosive offense, veteran defense. Seven seniors and two juniors.

Playing them at a time when they're playing well. A chance for us to come home and play for our seniors for two weeks. That's where our focus is, is trying to find a way to close out one of these fourth-quarter games that we've been in, get a good taste back in our mouth, continue to talk about building the program, being positive, fighting to the finish, and honoring our seniors here as we close it out.

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

Q. You had a rivalry game with North Carolina, which is obviously the big one. Over the years East Carolina-State has been a pretty significant rivalry game. Do you see that



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around the program, with your players and fans, the hunger to win this game?

COACH DOEREN: Yeah, you do. With our guys, we've talked about the history of the game, some of the great moments on both sides. We know what it means from a lottery standpoint. Also my background, coming from a mid-major, being at a very good mid-major, talking about how important beating teams that were in a BCS conference is for your program.

I know what they're saying at that school. Those things have been talked about here.

We feel like we have a lot to prove, probably more than them to be honest with you. It's a game that means a lot for a lot of reasons.

Q. You talked about honoring your seniors by finishing strong. Sometimes when the season gets away from you, like this one has, the seniors are the toughest to keep on point because they don't have a future to play for. Do you detect your seniors still buying in, still focused?

COACH DOEREN: Yes. I don't feel like they have nothing to play for. All these guys are playing for the university. They know what State has done for them. We've talked about that. They also have ambitions of playing at the next level. Nobody at the next level wants a kid that quits, I can tell you that. They've got a lot to play for.

Q. They're ranked eighth in the country passing offense.

COACH DOEREN: Yes.

Q. Shane Carden threw five touchdown passes last week. What do you see that makes them so good? What enables them to click so well? Describe their offense, what they do.

COACH DOEREN: Well, they've been in the system there for a while, so there's continuity, familiarity, not only with the system and the coaching, but the players they're playing with. They've stayed healthy as a football team for the most part. I think that helps. As you're starting to have success, playing with the same guys over a long period of time, that helps you.

As far as their system, four-wides, they'll get into some two-backs with wide receivers. Up-tempo, screens, shovel passes, vertical passes. They try to find a way to get the ball to No. 2, to Hardy. He's a play-maker, very good punt returner as well.

Just efficient. When I was at Kansas, we played Mike Leach at Texas Tech. Lot of similarity in the pass game. The run game has developed a lot for them. I think they've tried to become more of a balanced team. You can see that with last week's game plan when they ran for over 200 yards. They do a very nice job. Their offensive line knows the ball is coming out. They get in the way, do a nice job of protecting their quarterback.

Q. Also the past couple years, while they've moved the ball really well, their defense has been really poor. This year they're ranked 15th in the country in total defense. Is that more of a big factor of the experience that you were talking about?

COACH DOEREN: Yes. Look, when Ruffin got there four or five years ago, so these guys are four, five, three-year starters. There's seven seniors on this defense. Behind that you have two juniors. So nine of these guys are guys that have been in the system for three to four years. Our guys have been in the system nine months. You know what I mean? There's a huge difference there.

You can see the growth of their defense, the package has evolved, they're able to carry a lot of things because of that, because of the time on task with those kids that they've had. I think they've got some personnel that's playing really well. No. 56 for them is a terrific pass-rusher, plays extremely hard. They've done a nice job schematically of leveraging the football and tackling in space.

Q. Two wide receivers. Rashard Smith threw a touchdown pass, caught a touchdown pass last week. Can you talk about him, how versatile that is.

COACH DOEREN: Rashard is a play-maker. He's played DB before. We call him a football player. Wherever you put him, he makes plays. He returns punts. He's the leading punt return in the conference. Two touchdowns doing that. He was a high school quarterback. He's able to be in the pocket, throw the football, throw pass, not panic. He's got good feet. When he catches the football, he's dangerous. With those jets, he can cut, make people miss.

He just plays really hard. He plays bigger than he is.

Q. Jumichael Ramos, he had a big game. Hadn't noticed him much before. Maybe my fault. Seems like he had a breakout game for him.

COACH DOEREN: If you watched his whole season, he's had one or two third-down catches per game. A lot of them have been acrobatic catches. He had a huge one in the Clemson game. He had two fourth-down catches I believe in that game.

He's gotten better each week. He's learning how to play at this level. The offense is not something that he has to think about anymore. He just lines up and plays.

But he's a tough kid. He comes from a very good program, Lovejoy High School in Atlanta. He was coached hard down there. He's very physical.

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