

**Virginia Tech Football**  
**Head coach Justin Fuente Q&A Highlights**  
**Game 8 Duke – Media Conference**  
**October 23, 2017**

***Opening statement***

“Thanks again to everyone who came out on Saturday. I thought it was a great environment in Lane Stadium. We’re happy to get the win. We had a lot going on this past weekend between Homecoming and recruiting with official and unofficial visits. And then obviously the football game. I think all in all, it went pretty well. We got another big weekend at home with Duke. It will be a heck of a challenge, and I have a tremendous amount of respect for David Cutcliffe and the job that he has done there and really everywhere he’s been. You don’t have to look at the film very long to figure out that they are very well coached and a talented football team. I know they have lost a couple close games the last couple weeks. But we certainly know that we will have to be ready. I think if you look, I know I’m probably going to mess these numbers up, at the last four games these two teams have played each other, they have split two-and-two and a one-point differential. We had to block a field goal last year to hang on to win by three points, we’ve had a four-overtime game and so on and so forth. You all know as well as I do but it is going to be a tough, hard-fought football game. So, we have to have a great week of practice to prepare for.”

***On Duke’s defense being fourth in the ACC statistically and when he began to take notice of Coach Cutcliffe and Duke:***

“I can’t remember how many years ago it was, maybe five or six years ago towards the beginning of his time there. I have seen them steadily improve, this wasn’t a one-time thing. They have continued to improve athletically, through recruiting. They do some great things schematically. They are able to play man coverage and get down and play tight, competitive coverage. I think they have gradually improved in terms of athleticism, I’m not exactly sure how they have evolved schematically, but they are a fine unit.”

***On what stands out with David Cutcliffe quarterbacks:***

“Well, I think the first thing, never having worked for him or with him, just kind of watching from afar, it’s how sound fundamentally they are. That’s the first thing that kind of jumps out to you. Not that they all are cookie cutters, but you can tell that there is a belief system of how they should play and what their drops should look like, what their posture should look like. To me that’s what jumps out. When I watch those guys is that they have been drilled in their techniques thoroughly and they are able to execute in high-level situations.”

***On how many steps he lasted on the sidelines during Greg Stroman’s punt return TD:***

“He’s a lot faster than I am, I know that. It was just fun. To see him score from out of there, from my view. We really have made a huge emphasis on special teams in general. That unit has taken a lot of pride in that and Greg [Stroman] is a pretty special player and he’s an easy one to root for to do well. I still want all of our guys to do well, but he’s kind of a special kid. And to see

him kind of squirm out of the pile there and come down the near sideline, I had to control myself because I had no chance of staying up with him.”

***On if it was easy to identify Greg Stroman as a playmaker when he took over the job:***

“Well, I just think he is a gamer and a competitor. And when I say that, I don’t mean he takes days off in practice because he shows up every single day and works hard. But what he may lack in terms of size and stature, he makes up for intelligence and competitiveness. I think there was more than just me who realized that. And when I say that, I remember vividly after the Duke game last year David [Cutcliffe] telling me ‘I hope Greg’s [Stroman] okay, that’s a really good kid.’ I don’t know if they had been in touch in recruiting or what, because I don’t know if you all remember, but he got banged up after a punt return last year in the game. So, I think it is just more than myself that realized what such a special youngster he is.”

***On if Coleman Fox has a chance to get more reps earlier in games:***

“Yeah, I think there is a chance. We were down to just three guys in the game and we were really trying to do everything we could to not play Steven [Peoples]. And I feel much better about that this week. Steven could play, but we are trying not to. I have been pleased with Coleman [Fox] and what he has done when he is in the game and how he’s worked. So, we will continue to push and bring him along. I’m not going to discredit what he has done because it was late in the game. When he has had his opportunities, he has done well. It’s certainly worth us considering and recognizing that he’s done a good job when he is in there. I don’t know what that will lead to when we move forward. We’ll see how this week goes, evaluate it and go from there.”

***On how gratifying it was to get James Clark and Phil Patterson back on the field:***

“It’s good to get those guys work. Phil [Patterson] has got to keep coming along, he’s still young. I really feel for James [Clark]. I can’t remember if I talked about this after the game or not, but he has come here for the opportunity to play this last year and was well on his way to contributing, then he’s been a little bit beat up. But has worked his tail off, hasn’t missed a practice or anything. He’s continued to work hard and have a great attitude. You know, there’s a whole lot of ways a guy could go attitude wise in a situation like that. I’m really proud of how he has continued to work. He is feeling better, he’s getting better. Hopefully we can start to work him out there a little bit more.”

***On how far Tim Settle has come along in his conditioning with him playing more snaps:***

“First of all, Tim’s [Settle] a big person. He’s never going to be 270 pounds and play football, he’s just a big kid. But when faced with some challenges in terms of his weight and conditioning well, he accepts those challenges. Whether it is how he eats or whether it is to continue to learn how to push himself. When we first got here, I felt like he was a big guy who just trying to make it through the workout. That’s what he was just looking for and we were trying to push himself through the workout, so he could improve. To Tim’s credit, he has listened to those things and our nutritionists and our strength and conditioning staff are here to help him. That’s one thing that has stood out to me is academics or nutrition or in the weight room, he wants to be better. He’s willing to accept and seek help and listen. It has manifested into him having

success with him being able to play more snaps, do well in school and he's a real popular guy on the team, he has a great personality. So, I'm just proud and happy for him to see him to push and get better."