



Brian Kelly - Head Coach - Notre Dame

Q. Brian, on the final play with Malik, did you want him throwing into the end zone? Spiking it?

COACH KELLY: No. We had a play that was called. Just wasn't aware of the situation as well. Obviously didn't coach it well enough.

Q. When you decided to punt late in the fourth quarter, was it a tough decision? No decision?

COACH KELLY: Ended up being the right decision in this situation. We were backed up so much we were giving up points if we didn't. We don't want to give up points away. We would've gave up points if we didn't punt the ball there.

Q. With Kizer, the first time he got hit in the head did you have to run him through concussion protocol? What's his status at this point?

COACH KELLY: He's clear. Just talked to our medical personnel. I don't know. That doesn't fall under my purview. We have a medical spotter and observer as well as a medical team that observes anything relative to concussions.

I mean, we're talking about protecting the quarterback. I've been on the wrong end of that play now this year at Syracuse and here against Virginia Tech. That was clearly a quarterback that gave himself up and then was hit.

So we're either going to protect the quarterback or we're not. So I don't quite understand what the rule is, because it's being officiated clearly differently.

But going back to your question, we have a medical team that evaluates all that.

Q. Just to be clear: after the second hit that took him out of the game, he's fine in the locker room?

COACH KELLY: Yes, he's fine. He's clear. He has no symptoms.

Q. You had 299 yards total offense first half; 118 second half, and 67 came on one run. In layman's terms, what did Bud Foster's defense do in the second half to take your effectiveness away?

COACH KELLY: I mean, I couldn't tell you until I watch the film specifically. We missed some -- we had some balls that were catchable that we didn't catch.



You know, I just don't think we executed quite as well offensively. I would have to really watch it specifically to tell you. I thought we weren't as sharp in the second half as we were in the first half.

Q. When you strung several three-and-outs back to back, when that's happening, and I know you have three people making decisions or contributing to the decision making, do you take over a little bit more in that situation? Just kind of throwing ideas how to spark something?

COACH KELLY: You know, too many cooks at that point really creates problems. So I'm trying the best I can to offer some solutions, but you really have to trust in the play calling. And the execution, quite frankly is part of that.

So play calling, execution. We had some opportunities we didn't convert. You know, really a tale of two paths. You're right. Obviously offensively we got it going very well in the first half; in the second half we weren't as sharp.

Again, I need to kind of watch the film to find out exactly what that was.

Q. Coach, didn't seem like there was much of a pass rush. Was it the fact he was getting the ball off fast or...

COACH KELLY: I think when he had, you know, down-the-field routes, we were forcing the ball. We were giving him some pressure.

When he got into his five wides the ball was coming up too quick. We weren't going to be able to get to him. It was catch and release.

You know, then there were some matchups which we didn't quite like. The fullback, when he's in the game, you know, you have to be careful with your personnel. You can't take out and go -- so you get some favorable matchups, and they were able to exploit that a couple times.

So, again, in answering your question, they have some personnel matchups that make it difficult sometimes to get the right guys on the field.

Q. DeShone obviously wasn't as accurate. First half I think I think he was 3 of 18; second half I think 3 of 15. Was he doing anything or was it the defense?

COACH KELLY: You know, I think there was a little bit of both. I mean, we had some opportunities that we missed in terms of throws. We had some opportunities that we missed in terms of throws. We had some catches that we didn't make.



I don't know that there is one thing. When I caution you about watching the film, I think there are a lot of different things. I don't think it's just one thing. Maybe a couple protection issues. Couple routes that weren't run properly.

I think maybe couple things that we could have done better in terms of play calls. A little bit of everything. I don't think there was one specific thing I can put my finger on.

Q. (Regarding call.)

COACH KELLY: I did.

Q. Thoughts on that?

COACH KELLY: You know, I mean, listen, Virginia Tech won the game. It's not one play. We teach that. I told them that he did exactly what we asked him to do. That's force the defender up the sideline. So he executed the technique that I've been told over and over again when we have officials that come to you are practices and tell us that that technique is acceptable.

It was not an acceptable technique tonight.

Q. You've bounced back from difficult losses before in terms of effort. Is this one any more difficult to come back from just with Senior Day? You see players on the field, tears coming down.

COACH KELLY: These kids are wonderful kids. I mean, I'm at loss for words really as to what to tell them, you know. It's just been a difficult year.

They work so hard. They play so hard. They have been ahead in so many of these games and been so close in the four quarter. Unfortunately, it's just one of those years where -- I haven't had one like this in my 25, 26 years of being a head coach, where it hasn't gone their way.

It's not just one thing. It's a jump off side here. It's I have the quarterback -- I didn't pick up the quarterback in zone read. You know, it's just a little bit of everything unfortunately.

Q. Do you wonder if this team will have it next week, that they can withstand this after the rest of the season?

COACH KELLY: I have no doubts that they will have the effort, the intensity, all those things necessary.

But they're going to have to battle again late in the game and find a way to win the football game. We have not been able to shake the little things that keep cropping up.



Now, it would be nice if we could figure out how to protect the quarterback with officiating and things of that nature. That would help us out a little bit, too.

Q. Kind of a follow up. This is Game 11. Just like déjà vu all over. 24-7 lead, have all the momentum going your way and it's just like the balloon pops. Never been through this before. Can you try to put it into words?

COACH KELLY: I just love our kids. I love the way they battle. You know, we're going to wake up from this nightmare and we're going to be 11-0 I think. Maybe not. I just don't -- they work hard. They did everything I wanted them to do. There are some things we're going to have to do in the off-season to address it.

There are a lot of inexperienced players that are going to benefit from this. I'm not benefitting at all being in front of you losing this football game. It's not helping me any. It's going to help those guys that have gone through it.

So we'll bank on that.

Q. Just quickly, you mentioned how you need to get the officiating right on DeShone. Because he's a bigger quarterback and also a mobile guy, do you feel that the refs kind of officiate him differently than they would a smaller guy or pocket passer?

COACH KELLY: I'm going to ask them to go see Roger Goodell. That may be the way to do it. Maybe he could do something about it.

I think Cam Newton feels the same way in the NFL. It's just not right. We're either going to protect the quarterback or we're not going to protect the quarterback. I've had this go against me, the same exact play. We lost a kid for the game.

Just have to figure out what they want to do with this. The supervisor of officials has got to make a clear edict as to how they want this officiated. He clearly has not made it clear enough how this is going to go.

So that's all I'm going to say on it.

Justin Fuente - Head Coach - Virginia Tech

COACH FUENTE: Awfully proud of our football team today. Things did not start well for us in any phase of the game.



They continued to battle back in an absolutely beautiful environment; really special celebration of college football. My first trip here. It's everything that I had been led that it would be.

Also, before I take questions want to thank the Hokie Nation. Hokie Nation. It was a fantastic turnout. They were loud and proud and a lot of fun to play for.

Q. What did you tell the guys at halftime? We heard the TV interview. Didn't sound like you were particularly pleased with the first half.

COACH FUENTE: No. I mean, I don't think there was any great revelation at halftime. It was just, We've got to play better. We're out there dropping the ball on the ground and giving up big plays; you know, just not playing Virginia Tech football.

I think guys kind of settled down and got their feet underneath them felt like if they just execute they would have a chance to have success; that's what they did.

Q. (Question regarding momentum in the second half and Cam.) Did you worry that might take the wind out of your sails there?

COACH FUENTE: I was pleased with how we did respond. Cam in particular, and the team. Obviously that was a big play. We felt like we were going to have a big pass play there and it didn't go our way.

Then in turn, they hit us on a long run I believe it was after that. Our guys just kept battling through. I don't know if it's their belief in each other or the work that they've put in, but they just kept plugging away.

Q. Was the unsportsmanlike conduct penalty partly the call and your team's play, or all just that call?

COACH FUENTE: You know, I think -- I obviously disagreed with the call vehemently. But, you know, I wasn't trying to make a point, I can tell that you much.

I wasn't trying to do anything other than I wasn't very happy. I really wasn't happy that I got the penalty. Not with them, but with myself.

You know, I mean, we approach those things on a daily basis on it's my job to do a great job setting that example.



I wasn't happy with either set of circumstances at the time, the call nor the way our team had been playing.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH FUENTE: Well, I thought it was big. They were all big in a close game like that. We felt like we had a little something going there offensively heading into the half, even though we were down and it hadn't been particularly pretty.

Then felt like we had a decent handle on their adjustments and what our answers were going to be. It was nice to see C.J. in the No. 25 streaking down the sidelines. Certainly was a big play for us.

Q. Jerod had a very accurate day throwing the football. What did he tell you about these conditions and how was it affecting him? Obviously he handled it quite well.

COACH FUENTE: Yeah, I felt like the wind was a much bigger factor in the kicking game than it was throwing the ball. I thought both quarterbacks threw the ball into and with the wind pretty well.

I think there were a couple plays that it did affect the ball flight a little bit. Sometimes when you're going with it it's harder to control the ball. Jerod throws a fairly tight spiral. We throw a lot of balls underneath, and he was pretty accurate with it today.

I just for whatever reason, early in the game we were having a hard time handling the football, as if we had never done those things before. It was really an odd set of circumstances. I'm not sure why. Once they settled down they handled it much better.

Q. After you win the game, standing there with your wife, can you describe that moment for you, what it felt like?

COACH FUENTE: Well, I'm awfully grateful, when I think back, of all the football games I've been a part of in my life. The first thought is not throwing a post for a touchdown or scoring a touchdown or calling a play that results in a touchdown, or any of those things.

It's always getting a chance to share those things with other people. Having a chance to share that with Jen was special. Virginia Tech is a special place. I don't mean just a special place to coach football, but it's a special place to be a part of.



The pride the people have in Virginia Tech, whether they live in Blacksburg or work at Virginia Tech or went to school there, it's palpable. You can see it.

Sometimes you can see it a little bit easier at road football games. It was a great example of it today watching the Hokie Nation turn out and cheer on our kids. I tell you, I'm working them hard now. They work hard. To get that reward is special.

Q. What did the rally say about Jerod Evans' makeup?

COACH FUENTE: Well, you know, I think he's got confidence in himself, first of all. I think he knows, but he's also honest with himself and knows when he's messed some things up. Wasn't just him that led to our rough start. It was a lot of people.

I think he's got faith in knowing that if he continues to do what we're asking him to do on a consistent basis, that will lead to him playing efficiently and us ultimately having a chance to win.

There is no time for sulking out there in front of 80,000 people when things aren't going your way. You can go in the tank or pick yourself up and go back to work. That's what he did, and what you have to do if you're going to play quarterback, and ultimately what the team did.

Q. They had 299 yards on you before halftime, and then they kind of shut Notre Dame's offense down. Did Bud's adjustments give you guys a chance there late?

COACH FUENTE: Certainly. I mean, there were I don't know how many series in a row there where we were getting stops. I don't know what the numbers were. There was a point in time where it became much more difficult for them to move the ball.

I think that is a credit to Bud and our defensive staff and knowledge of our scheme and how to manipulate it to give ourselves the best chance, it's a compliment to our players in how they settled down and began to play the way that we all believe they're capable of playing.

Q. What would it mean to win the ACC Coastal?

COACH FUENTE: I don't know. I want to win the game next week. With that game does come the Coastal Division Championship. I don't know what it means other than we get a chance to play again if we win. We get an extra game together, our group, seniors, kids that have given so much to our program, get another opportunity to play.



So beyond that in year one, two, three, I don't know. I do know that these kids want to do it, but we'll have a tremendous task ahead. I don't know who won the Georgia Tech game.

But I've seen Virginia in crossover film, and they're continuing to get better.

Q. Are you a guy that talks about conference championships with your team beginning of the year?

COACH FUENTE: No, I haven't talked about that much. Until we got down here to the last -- we were in it and playing championship games. But we didn't lay out things like that.

We focused on the internal things that give us a chance. I think it's understood though if you coach at Virginia Tech you're expected to compete for the Coastal Division Championship. I think those kids know that, too.

DeShone Kizer - Jr. - Quarterback - Notre Dame

Q. Was this your last game at Notre Dame Stadium?

DESHONE KIZER: I don't know yet. I think that there's definitely an opportunity, once again, to possibly play at the next level. I think that after next week we'll evaluate the season and evaluate the situation as a family and make sure that we pick the right choice, well informed.

Q. You spent about 15 minutes out there with your family on the field. Just why did you decide to do that?

DESHONE KIZER: Did the same thing last season, too. I think it's awesome to soak in the moment. That was our last home game of the 2016 team and I think that it was an awesome opportunity to take it all in with my family. The ups and downs. Definitely just feel what it's like to be out on that field.

Q. Did you do it with your family last year too?

DESHONE KIZER: I did. My parents both came down last year.

Q. You guys were in a great rhythm in the first half offensively and they got the best of you in the second half. Did they change things up from your point of view, did they start taking something away or was it something else?

DESHONE KIZER: Their defense coordinator is among the best of them and they made a couple adjustments in the second half that made our game plan become, it wasn't unsuccessful. I think



that there was a couple situations in which the balls that we expected to be wide open (instead) were going to be contested. And as quarterback, I have to make sure that those balls are in a position for our guys to catch it. And as far as running the ball myself, I have to make a couple better reads in those situations when they do make their adjustment.

Q. Were you disappointed that there wasn't a flag called on the helmet-to-helmet hit on you in the third quarter?

DESHONE KIZER: I just play. I'm 250 pounds. Running the ball as a quarterback, there should be a guy there ready to hit me every time I go down. Obviously, there's a bunch of rules set in line to protect the quarterback in those situations. If neither the guy upstairs or the guys on the field felt the need to eject a guy or call targeting, then they're right. We move on.

Q. What kind of memories will you have of this season?

DESHONE KIZER: I think that this season is one that there's going to be a lot of memories to pull from. There's, it's easy to enjoy a win. It's not easy to go through a losing season. As a quarterback who has seen both sides of this at the college level, I think that the losing side I'm going to learn a lot more from. These experiences here have been priceless in the sense that I really figured out who I am as player and as a quarterback and as a leader and through this season, I think that the best opportunity or the best experiences I've gone through are through those losses and figuring out how to appreciate the things that go into winning.

Q. When you and your family make the decision about your future, do you anticipate coming to a decision quickly or are you going to take your time to really think it out?

DESHONE KIZER: Obviously, I have no idea. I know that as a business major, as a guy who considers himself an athlete, I'm going to make sure that everything is calculated and that I'm well informed before I do make a decision.

Q. Is the confidence going into a final drive today, was that the same as all season or when you've had some struggles and at the end of games there, was it any different?

DESHONE KIZER: Any time the ball's in my hand I think we're going to score. With the guys that we have out there at skill positions, and one of the best offensive lines in the country, you've got to have all the confidence in the world that things are going to end up the way they're supposed to. Obviously, we go out and try to execute what the coaches call. When you don't execute, you don't win.



Q. When you left the field after spending time with your family and you kind of spun around and looked at the field one last time, were you thinking about it, at least at that point, that like, okay, soak it in just in case?

DESHONE KIZER: Let's be real, the opportunity will be there. We'll see. I have no idea. Like I said, I'm going to make sure that we figure out everything that we need to figure out and make sure that the decision we make is well informed and there's a chance that that was the last time we walked out of there, it's a special place.

Q. How frustrating is it just to lose in that home finale?

DESHONE KIZER: For the guys who are guaranteed for that to be their last opportunity to play in the stadium, I think that it's very frustrating. Those guys go out and block for me, they block for everyone who carries the ball, they hit, they put their bodies on the line, they go through a lot for success. And when you don't have success as a leader and a quarterback of this team, it's very frustrating.

Q. Coach Kelly kind of described it as a loss for words with the way you guys have lost this many close games this year. He said it's just one of those years. Is that kind of the same feeling for you guys as players?

DESHONE KIZER: Yeah, you know, I think that I did a good job of avoiding all your guys' questions through all the other losses and at this point, what else am I supposed to say? It's just unfortunate this is how the season has gone. I do believe that in every game we played, we had an opportunity to win. We beat ourselves, in a sense, from stupid penalties, stupid decisions on reads. I think that, once again, every opportunity that we have been out there, we have had a chance to win the game and for us to come up short by an average of something around five points on all those games, is very frustrating.

Q. Do you anticipate any issue with you guys getting up for this final game? I know you guys love to play.

DESHONE KIZER: No, it's USC in the coliseum. Notre Dame, USC, what else do you play this game for? What I do know is we have seven days to practice together and prepare ourselves against USC and I think that with the mindset of that I just saw in that locker room that everyone's going to be a hundred percent committed to doing whatever it takes to beat those guys and finish the season off on a win.

Q. Does the way you lost this one on Senior Day, does that add a little bit more to that final game?



DESHONE KIZER: Every loss adds to that final game. I think that what we want to be remembered for is not the season that we're going through right now. So, the best thing to do is to go out and try to dominate our rival from across the country.

Q. If this is the last game, what are you going to miss the most about playing here?

DESHONE KIZER: There's no reason for me to get into that. I have no idea. I have no idea.

Q. I know that you said you were fine when you first got up here, but it appears that you grabbed the back of your head on that first hit. What happened on that play, what did you notice?

DESHONE KIZER: The guy hit the back of my head and it hurt for that second and I grabbed it and I got up and continued to play ball.

Q. So you immediately felt better?

DESHONE KIZER: Yeah, you know, any time you get hit you're going to take a bruise and some sort of a shot and you let the adrenaline kick in, get back out there and continue to do your job.

Q. What about the one on the final drive, too?

DESHONE KIZER: Oh, that was the same situation. I was in shock, took a blow, came out, got evaluated and I'm fine.

Q. What did you learn about yourself in the season? Obviously, it wasn't the way everyone wanted it to go, but what do you take away from this is it in terms of personal growth-wise?

DESHONE KIZER: It's easy to lead on top, it's difficult to lead when you're not on top. And I think that as a quarterback who has seen both sides of this in two seasons here that personally I have tried my hardest to maintain who I am and the identity that I have as a leader and it's been tested on both sides. And I think that moving forward I have to focus on maintaining that same style of leadership, being the same guy every day, and doing whatever it takes to lead an offense to a successful game and get as many wins as we can.

Mike McGlinchey - Sr. - Offensive Line - Notre Dame

On getting ready for USC after the loss



“This one hurt. It hurts that we couldn’t send our seniors out in the way that they should have been. These kids have done everything and more for our program and it’s a tough loss. It’s football. We are playing to get better and improve to get ready for a good USC team next week.”

When asked about the offense in the first half vs. the second half

“I don’t think we played as well as we can. It’s a combination of Virginia Tech making great changes in the second half offensive and defensively, while we didn’t. That’s the way football goes, whatever team make the fewest mistakes wins and that was Virginia Tech today.”

On how the younger guys on the team benefit from these losses

I think any experience you get for next year is good. The feelings you’re feeling right now are definitely beneficial for us moving forward. We understand how bad this does feel and what we have done, or haven’t, in these close games. This season allows us to hit the ground running next season and this week as well. Like so many teams have talked about before, when life hits you hard it’s a time to grow and that’s what we are going to do.”

When asked about getting ready for next week

“There’s not a doubt in my mind that we will have a great week of practice, just as we have done all year. It’s never been an energy effort or enthusiasm thing, it’s just a matter of execution for us and we have keep going at it, keep improving and that’s all we can ask for. There’s never a doubt in our minds that we are going to be ready to play and fight for what we want to do.”

On doubts during a last minute drive

“That’s not something you can do as a football player. Doubt has never crept in, it’s just a matter of different things that hit us and lack of execution at certain points that has really shot us in the foot this season. It’s kind of been the same story each time we lose and it’s tough to swallow because it’s always something different. It’s really never the same thing that bites us but there’s never a doubt in our minds that we can do it and we know we can do it. It’s just a matter of getting it done.”

James Onwualu - Sr. - Linebacker - Notre Dame

On the leadership needed for next week against USC

“That’s our rivalry. Everybody is going to be fired up for that game, especially some of the older guys just to go out on a win and to play one of our favorite rivals for the last time.”



On being on the field for the last time at home

“It’s just so many memories that I have really enjoyed. I’m really reminiscing on the good times trying to think of all the times I’ve really enjoyed out here with the guys that I love, the team that I love and the school that I love. It’s been a blast.”

On the differences in the second half

“They started getting on a roll. The defense needed to come up with a couple more stops. The offense needed to score a few more points. We just couldn’t pull it out, and it was tough.”

Cole Luke - Sr. - Cornerback - Notre Dame

On his career at Notre Dame

“The experience has been one of the best that I have ever had in my life. Coming to Notre Dame was one of the greatest decisions I have ever made. I have met so many intelligent people and great people in my four years here alone that have made me into the man that I am today. I feel like I am a stronger man and a better man since I have been here. I have learned so many valuable things that I can take on forward through my life, and spread nothing but knowledge amongst other people. I have just learned so much, and this opportunity has been one of the best that I have ever had.”

What this experience has done for him

“Just this education, is so strong. It has prepared me for so much that I am going to have to go through with the rest of my life. This season alone has been rocky, but I think that is definitely going to happen with other situations in my life. Things aren’t going to go my way, but I think being in this situation, having to handle this situation, going through adversity is going to help me later on.”

On how his experience has helped him to get ready for the next level

“You just try to understand that not everything is going to go your way 100 percent of the time. The way you react and the way you face that adversity you are given says a lot about you as a person, and it’s going to show. Not everything is going to go your way, like I said, like this season. You know, we’re busting our butts in practice, but we’re not getting the results we want. Are you going to fold? Are you going to crumble? Or are you going to keep practicing your butt off? I think that says a lot about the person.”

Isaac Rochell - Sr. - Defensive Line - Notre Dame



On Senior Night

“I didn’t really envision my Senior Night being a loss, but I’m excited about the way the guys played. I’m sure Coach Kelly said the same thing. I love my teammates.”

On the fight of this team

“A lot of it has to do with the fact that we have a really young team of guys that just want to get better. That’s how they approach practice. They just want to get better day to day.”

On the emotions of the night

“It’s a cool experience. I was telling James (Onwualu) when there were 17 seconds left to take it in because if we do lose, this is the last time we are going to be in this stadium. It’s a cool feeling. It’s something that I know when I’m older that I will remember this moment. It’s unique in that way. I’m sad that we lost, but we have a great group of guys. I’m happy that I got to go out with them.”

Josh Adams - So. - Running Back - Notre Dame

On losing on Senior Night

“We just need to stay positive. This is a brotherhood. You win with your brothers, and you lose with your brothers. Obviously it’s not the outcome that we wanted, especially sending the seniors out. We always need to keep our heads up, that’s just who we are as Notre Dame players. We learn from every game that we play. We always move forward. It’s definitely a tough one, but you always have to learn everything.”

On DeShone Kizer and the hits he took throughout the night

“He’s an incredible player and a tough player. You can never tell them (the referees) how to do their job, and we just do our job. He’s always going to get back up, and we are going to help him back up regardless of whether it’s called or not. We focus on what we can do and on what we can control, and moving on to the next play.”

On his feelings for the seniors

“I can’t imagine. Just me not being a senior, I did not want that outcome to happen especially for those guys. This is my second year here, and you grow with them and build relationships with them. You become closer with them, and I did not want them to go out like that. Personally, I take it the hardest because I know how much it meant to those guys, and I know what it would mean to me if I were a senior. It’s definitely not what I wanted.”



Chris Finke - So. - Wide Receiver - Notre Dame

On his first career touchdown

"It was a great feeling. A lot of fun celebrating with my teammates."

On his role/the play

"I had a post-route. We had a huddle before the play, it was coming out of a TV timeout or quarter, I think. DeShone called me over and said, "Run hard, use the nickel's outside leverage. If it goes outside leverage, put the ball up there." It was a great throw. We had a good idea (it was going to hit before we even ran it)".

On whether his first touchdown was what he thought it was going to be

"It's something you dream of. It's just like I thought it would be, really exciting. It was a great feeling."

On the second half

"They played some great defense. We weren't executing as much as we did in the first half. We didn't get the rhythm going like we had it."

Bud Foster - Associate Head Coach/Defensive Coordinator/Linebackers Coach - Virginia Tech

On the changes made in the second half

"[Notre Dame] did some different things in the first half and I'm really proud of our kids. Let me say this, I'm really proud of them. They worked the game. We were adjusting, adjusting and adjusting. And the kids kept working with us. I told them we've been down before with some different teams in the past and we're going to get this thing turned around, just go play one play at a time. There's a lot of football. They got us on a lot of plays early they had not shown and our kids hung in there and played one play at a time. It's the tale of two halves. They did some unique things. We adjusted, the kids worked at it and the kids came out the second half."

On what he tells his players before a good drive...

"You're just playing defense. They know we've gotta keep the ball in bounds and keep it so the clock can continue to run and I didn't want to give them anything cheap and that was really about



it. We had to drive it and we had the wind in their face and we had to keep them at a distance. In the two minutes, we knew they didn't have any timeouts left and we just needed to overplay the outs and keep things underneath."

On the secondary

"I was very proud of it. I was proud of how the secondary and the whole defense, particularly the perimeter guys, worked the game. We made several adjustments to what they were trying to do and, like I said, they showed a lot of different things that they hadn't shown. You're going to play good people and they're going to make good plays and in the end you're going to play good people and it's the bottom line. It's a mark on the left side of the column and that's all that matters."

On Notre Dame's atmosphere...

"It's a pretty special place, a great atmosphere. I'm proud of the amount of people we have here. It was an enormous amount of people. I've got about 70 from my hometown which is about five hours away that I'm going to hang out with in a little bit. This class went up to the Horseshoe (Ohio Stadium) and won and won at Notre Dame. How many people can say that?"

Ken Ekanem - R-Sr. - Defensive End - Virginia Tech

On second half

"We just made a lot of really good halftime adjustments. Coach Foster is one of the best in the business when it comes to that and we just settled down. They had a lot of momentum with Senior Night and all that, so that definitely helped play a factor in opening up the game. We made a lot of good adjustments, capitalized on their mistakes, got them to jump offsides a couple times and that benefited us in a big way."

On if a win means a little bit more given personal history with Notre Dame

"Yeah, of course, it's a great win. It's a great game to win against someone you don't particularly like. But yeah, it's a great win. We have some momentum going into UVA to clinch the Coastal (ACC division). So it's all smiles."

On getting program back to contending for titles in the ACC

"It's awesome. This is what I envisioned when I came here. Coach Foster was always preaching 10-win seasons, always being in the talk for being Coastal champs and getting an ACC



Championship. When I got here it wasn't what I expected, but finishing out the right way where we still have the potential to have a 10-win-game season and this is great."

On Bud's message on ND's last drive

"Destiny is in our hands. We controlled the game and they wanted to get a lot of deep shots down the field. They had no timeouts, so we had to just do a good job of just keeping the ball inbounds and contain the quarterback and finish the game. We came in here, [we] play lunchpail defense, and we closed out as a lunchpail defense."

On what the offensive score to start the second half did for defense...

"It was great. It created a lot of energy on the sideline. Just having that energy, having a full team functioning and doing well, just lights a fire underneath our butts and gets us going. When the offense gets going we typically tend to play a lot better."

Jerod Evans - Jr. - Quarterback - Virginia Tech

On if Notre Dame is a cooler place to win than someplace else (any random place)...

"Good to win, great to win. (We) got the bad taste out of our mouths, so great to win."

On how big it was to start the second half with a score

"Every time we are on the field I think it is big. We don't take any drive for granted. So that drive was just as important as the drive that was in the first quarter, on our first time on the field."

On if team ever thought "Oh no, here we go again"...

"I don't think that was definitely the case. I have faith, a lot of faith, in (Cam Phillips). He'll make those catches nine times out of 10. So, them going down and scoring, it was just something different on the sideline. The guys were ready, they didn't flinch. When they ended up scoring 17 points to zero, the defense didn't flinch, they knew they were going to get it clicking. They didn't know when but they knew they were going to get it clicking. So, I don't think that was an issue."

On how good it feels to be on the cusp of possibly winning an ACC title

"Right now I'm not thinking about that. I'm just trying to enjoy this win where we came back from 17 points down. I'll think about that when the time comes. I'm just soaking in every game, every moment. It's my first year at this level, so I don't take anything for granted. I'm definitely not looking forward, I want to soak all of it in."



On how tough it was throwing the ball in these conditions...

“First quarter, pretty bad. I couldn’t get a grip on the ball. The one I fumbled just slipped right out of my hands. I’m a Texas boy so anything that’s below 60 degrees is super cold to me. But I definitely don’t let that affect me. I know my team is depending on me, especially when I have the ball in my hand 100 percent of the time. But it was definitely pretty bad.”

Sam Rogers - Sr. - Fullback - Virginia Tech

On falling behind early in the game

“Offensively we knew once we took care of the ball we would be fine. That was the biggest thing early on. We’ve got a lot of character on this team, great resilience, and we showed that again tonight.”

On Hokie Nation (Virginia Tech fan base)...

“They’re awesome. Hokie Nation is just so fun to play in front of, to know wherever you go it feels like you’re still kind of at home. You just hear the “Let’s go Hokies!” chant throughout the entire stadium, and it’s awesome playing in front of them.”

On rivalry game coming up with struggling Virginia team

“I mean both teams are going to want to win the game, no doubt. They’ll find their motivation and we’ll have ours and it will be a good game. We’ll work on that starting tomorrow.”

Cam Phillips - Jr. - Wide Receiver - Virginia Tech

On his dropped pass that led to an interception for ND

“I’m really hard on myself, so when that happened I kind of got down. If I could have made that play, it would’ve been a totally different game. The momentum shift is huge, but things like that happen. I bounced back, the team bounced back, and we ended up getting a win.”

On the 75-yard scoring drive to start the second half

“At halftime, Coach Fuente harped on just staying confident and staying together because we were moving the ball, it was just execution here and there. But we came out and C.J. (Carroll) made a big catch and run and that kind of started everything in the second half for us.”