

**Virginia Tech Football**  
**Associate Head Coach/Defensive Coordinator Bud Foster**  
**Spring Preview – Media Conference**  
**March 20, 2017**

***Opening Statement:***

“I am looking forward to another spring. Obviously, this is year 31 for me (at Virginia Tech). It is pretty exciting. I am really jacked about that, but at the same time, we have some holes to fill for this year’s group. Obviously, we lost four starters that were extremely productive for us in Ken [Ekanem], Woody [Baron], Chuck [Clark] and Nigel [Williams]. Then right now, as I’m sure you guys have seen the injury report, we have four potential starters out this spring with [DB] Mook [Reynolds], [CB] Greg Stroman, [DE] Trevon Hill and [DE] Vinny Mihota. With that being said, the cupboard is not bare, but at the same time, it makes us a little thin for the spring.

“With the same token, it’s going to get us some guys in certain spots and give them the opportunity to get some reps and get better. That’s our main objective for us this spring, defensively. You have seen that we moved some guys from offense to defense and that type of thing, but we are going to find out who can play. We are going to evaluate their strengths and their weaknesses. We are going to hopefully put them in the right spot that is going to maximum their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. They are going to have to learn positions. Some of them are going to be learning new positions, and they need to learn the expectations of those positions and what we expect as coaches from the defensive side of the ball. That’s kind of where we are. I am excited about who we have. I would like to have a few more guys healthy, but it is what it is. It is a good opportunity to get some guys better and get them ready to go.”

***What type of skill sets makes [DB] Divine Deablo a good fit at defensive back:***

“I am anxious to see that to be honest with you. Obviously, you saw what he could do on special teams making plays and throwing his body around. He can bend his body. For a big kid, he has tremendous feet and suddenness. He is not a long strider that takes time to get up to speed. We have him playing safety right now, and I am anxious to see it. We haven’t seen him cover one-on-one yet. We haven’t seen him do any of those kinds of things yet. Those are things that we are going to have to assess, evaluate and find out. Who knows? He might be a corner. I’m just throwing that out there. There are still some question marks. I do like his toughness. I do like his football IQ. I do like his mindset. I am excited about having him on our side of the ball.”

***On if he learned anything from last season and if he has to adjust anything going into year two with head coach Justin Fuente’s tempo:***

“Not necessarily. I like the up-tempo from the standpoint of what we see. We see it quite a bit during the course of the year, so practicing against that prepares in a better way for the fall. To be honest with you, in the spring time, I am not so much worried about them offensively as I am trying to find out who can play on our side of the ball. We will scrimmage. There are different mindsets. Obviously, you like to compete and do all those things, but I may run the same defense five plays in a row just because I want to get a defensive end exposed to a look that he needs to see, and he is not going to see that if you don’t rep it a lot. During the spring time, I will give up a play so a kid can see a play so to speak. That’s part of what we want to do in the spring. Spring, for me, is about developing and growing your talent. You have to get them in position to be exposed to things that they need to be exposed to at their position. That’s kind of my goal. You have to let those kids see themselves on film and see how they react to those types of situations. They have to learn from it. Then we will grow from it. I don’t know if I answered that, but I

do like the up-tempo. Again, my mindset is more about us getting better and improving. We are not so much worried about them and the tempo.”

***On if it changes his idea on the team’s depth and rotation:***

“Not necessarily. We always wanted to try and get as much as depth as we possible could have. When we are really good, we are two-deep on the defensive line and we can rotate through there. That’s a position where they are in a hand-to-hand combat situation, and you can ask those guys to chase the ball really hard. I am moving some guys around at linebacker to try and cross train some guys in case there is an injury. You are counting on some young guys to step up, but if those guys can’t do it, I think we are cross training some guys to play some other positions. Then we are really trying to find some depth in the back end just in case we do have to substitute, then we are going to be in a position to be able to do that.”

***On losing Chuck Clark this season and how do you replace him:***

“That’s such a critical position for us, our free safety slot. He’s one of our quarterbacks of our defense. That position entails a lot. It is part corner. You have to be a good tackler. You have to be a good cover guy. Then you have to be a great communicator. What we have done right now, we penciled Terrell Edmunds into that spot for this spring. I think it is natural for him. He is a guy that has played corner for us. He is a very good tackler, and he is a very good finisher. That position, because of our coverage concepts, gets a lot of one-on-one coverage, whether we are in man or zone – more so than our rover position, and he has all that skill set. I think it is a natural position for him, and he is excited about it. Then we have [DE] Divine [Deablo] working in at that spot. I want to see if [DE] Divine [Deablo] can fit into that spot right there for us and try to bring him along as well. That is a critical position for us. Not that rover is not, but the safety position entails a little bit more coverage responsibility than the rover position does. I think Terrell [Edmunds] is a perfect fit for that spot.”

***On how nice it is going into year two with head coach Justin Fuente:***

“It’s a little bit different right now. Football is football. There were some uncertainties with how some guys were going to work with each other and things like that, even though I never questioned that. After being involved through a spring, summer and season with him, I am as excited as I have ever been. I really like the chemistry of our staff and how we work together. There are no egos. There are guys that want to compete, and you expect that. We are all in it for one another. Obviously, Justin [Fuente] spearheads that with his mindset and mentality, but I am really looking forward to it. It is another opportunity for us to grow. Obviously, last year, it was fun to be relevant again and get back into it. This year, we have some holes to fill on both sides of the ball. We have some playmakers to find places for, but I feel really good going into this year. The players have all bought in, and I feel really good about where we are right now.”

***On his options at mike and linebacker:***

“Right now, [LB] Sean Huelskamp is out. He had knee surgery again, so he is out for the spring. I was actually going to look at switching [LB Sean] Huelskamp and [LB Tavante] Beckett anyway just to try and crosstrain some guys. Right now, what we’ve done is taken [LB Tavante] Beckett and put him behind [LB] Andrew [Motuapuaka] at the mike position. We’ve taken [LB] Anthony Shegog, who could be our starting whip, but at the same time, we want to give [S] Deon Newsome a little bit more work at the nickel whip position. We are taking [LB] Anthony Shegog, and he is backing up [LB] Tremaine [Edmunds] right now. Just in case. I have some young guys coming in that I am really excited about, but they are young guys. It is hard to pencil in those guys right away to see if they are ready to play yet. We are cross training those guys. [LB] Tavante [Beckett] played backer last year, and he did a nice job in a backup role as a true freshman. I have a lot of confidence in [LB] Anthony [Shegog]. It seems like the closer he gets to the football, the more productive he gets. He played our bandit spot in our 30 package, which is like our backer

position anyway. I think it is kind of an easy move for him in a way. Our whip and backer positions are similar, yet different. There will be some carry over, but we are just trying to cross train some guys there. [LB] Eron Carter is a guy that will be working the third 'Mike.' Then right now, [LB] Daniel Griffith will be working our third backer. He is a walk-on kid from the tidewater area, but he's shown us some things, so we will see. I really like how [LB] Anthony [Shegog] has learned things. I really like [LB Tavante] Beckett's mindset. [LB Tavante] Beckett is a really good football player. He is a little bit undersized, but I really good football player. He is very instinctive. He knows where the ball is, so I think the 'Mike' position will be a very natural position for him than backer."

***On how critical this spring is for the backup players and if DE Trevon Hill is going to be able to participate in practice this spring:***

"He is going to be limited. He will be able to do some drill work, but no contact work. I am not concerned about that. My only concern with Trevon [Hill] was him keeping his weight and that type of thing, which he has done that. With the weight program, we were hoping to gain about another 15 pounds on him. Going back to our film, those guys were very productive. The key is to find some backups. We moved [DE] Emmanuel Belmar from linebacker, and we thought that was going to happen anyways – moving [DE] Emmanuel [Belmar] to defensive end, which is more of a natural position. He reminds me of Nekos Brown in a lot of ways. He was very similar. He was a linebacker, but he always played with his hand in the ground. He was a little bit more productive with his hand in the ground than he was standing up. All of the sudden when we did that, you saw him take a step forward. Which was really encouraging, and I think that is just a natural spot for him. We do have [DE] Raymon Minor. [DE] Raymon [Minor] was a guy who we were trying to figure out where the best spot was for him, and he is going to get a lot of reps there at defensive end. We also have [DT] Jimmie Taylor. We kind of moved [DT] Jimmie [Taylor] around a little bit, but because of the injury situation, he is going to be moved back to end. Those will be our four primary guys at the defensive end position, and they are going to get a lot of reps this spring. They need that, and we need them to take a step forward, and that is a critical position for us this spring."