



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Head Coach Scott Satterfield

Opening Statement

"I am excited. It's finally game week. I feel like it's been a long time since December, and we've had a lot of work that we've put in since that time to think about all the new scholarship players that we have. They went through the winter program, the spring and summer programs, and our guys have worked extremely hard to come together as a football team. They have worked hard to be a connected football team, to be a disciplined football team, and all the other things that we've worked on this off season. We are excited about playing somebody else and not hitting each other on the field. We are ready to get out on the field and especially getting to play at Nippert in the first week. We have a great venue that we get to play in, and I would encourage everyone to show up and show out in this game. It's such a tremendous home field advantage for us to be able to play at Nippert. Again, I encourage everybody to come out on Saturday and if you're on the fence, come on out and watch our team play. We have a lot of new guys, and they're exciting to watch. We also have a lot of guys back that are exciting to watch. I think about our first games from last year and coming into this year with so many returners. I believe offensively, we had one returning starter last year. This year we have Corey [Kiner], Xzavier [Henderson] and Aaron [Turner] back. There's a lot of guys back offensively, with the addition of some talented players: Brendan [Sorsby], Joe [Royer], a couple of wideouts and an upgraded tight end room. That's going to be nice for us this year. I also think about the defensive side of the ball. We have a bunch of new defensive backs, and we definitely needed to get some more talent there, and we did with a bunch of guys in the secondary. I think about our linebacker room, and I'm as excited to watch that room out of any position. I feel like we have at least six or seven guys that'll be in rotation and will play in the game. They can all run and hit, and I'm excited about that. Overall, we're pumped about moving forward and to play this first game against Towson. We know their coach is in his second season as well and last year they were around a .500 football team, but they play hard. They are coached well and get after it. They make it tough on their opponents and they had a good couple of good wins last year and upset New Hampshire and William and Mary. They have a tight end, and he is on a watch list. He is listed at 6 foot 6 and he's a good player. They're going to try to get the ball to him. Their running backs run very hard. Defensively, they're an odd scheme and bring a lot of different pressures from their linebackers. They try to confuse offenses. They do a nice job, and we have a good opponent here in this first week."

On defending against Towson's offense

“Yeah. I think they like to run it too. Their running back is very capable with what they do. You just never know, especially the first couple games. When guys come in, what's their identity going to be on their team? As coaches, you're going to find out what they feel like they're good at, and maybe try to do that more. But you just never know, so we have to be ready for everything. You have to be able to defend the run and the pass equally as effective, so we'll see. I think for me, obviously, first games, it's more important what our guys do, and how our guys play as an individual, but also as a unit. Figuring out what's going to be our best things that we do this year, and then where we have to get better at. This first game is going to tell a lot about that. I'm excited about seeing a lot of players play. I think we got to play a lot of players early in the season, because what I just mentioned, you're going to get guys dinged up throughout the season, but if you've played guys early, they've got some experience under their belt and you're not just throwing them in the fourth game or fifth game for the first time. They've been able to play. I told our staff to rotate guys, keep them fresh, let's play a lot of guys. It also helps morale on a football team to get guys in there, they know they're going to be able to play, and when they get that opportunity, they have to go make plays. If you can make plays, you'll play more but we're playing a lot of guys. I'm anxious to see what our guys do.”

On how the quarterbacks will execute

“We haven't experienced [Brendan] Sorsby being in a game yet. Our staff hasn't experienced him play but he has played a lot. I think he's a guy that is excited for the game. I think he's probably more of a “gamer”. He's fine in practice and does a great job. When it's time to play ball, he's going to be able to make some unscheduled plays, he's going to be able to make some plays for you that in practice, maybe you don't see as much. I'm looking forward to watching that, and his decision making. He's still a relatively young player, he's only played one year really, so I'm sure he'll make some mistakes out there, and then how do you overcome those? How do you come back the next time? I mean, great quarterbacks that I've been a part of, when they do make a mistake, they come back the next drive and usually go score a touchdown. That'll be interesting to see. He's got a lot of talent and a lot of ability. The team has responded around him. I think collectively as a unit, how we're going to be able to play, because it's not just him, we got a lot of guys. The beauty of it is we got starter starters up front. We got a run game that we really rely on, you know. So hopefully that'll make it easier for him.”

On how he defines success in year two

“Hopefully we can win some games. That's what everybody looks at and if you're not winning games, they don't see that as success. So hopefully we're winning games and we're able to go to postseason play and I think that's certainly something that we're going to gear towards. I think for us, we talked about it all off-season is to defend the Nipp. That's a big goal of ours and our team, and it starts this week, because we're playing at home and hopefully we're playing well here. We got a great home field advantage, packing this place out. We want teams when they come here to worry a little bit and think that's a tough place to go play. So, I think that's our first goal, and hopefully we'll get that accomplished this week.”

On Tyrin Smith's offseason performance

"He's an experienced receiver. I think about him and Jamoi Mayes. We just looked it up and they both have had over 1000 yards in their career in a single season and, they both have over 100 catches. I think A.T. [Aaron Turner] and Xzavier [Henderson] have over 100 catches. There's four receivers with over 100 career catches in college football. It's pretty good to have that experience. Tyrin in particular is a guy who knows, not very big, but he can run. He's got a great knack and feel for spatial awareness, getting open and in places and finding grass. He's got good hands, he can catch the deep ball, but he also can catch the underneath. So, I think he's very versatile. I think him and A.T. [Aaron Turner], both of them provide something in the slot that we'll be able to rotate out and really not have any drop off between either one of those guys. I'm excited about both of those guys in the slot."

On knowing more about the team after fall camp

"That's a great question. I asked Dan Hoard, "All the years you've been covering the Bengals and the Bearcats, looking at them in camp, can you tell what kind of team they're going to have?" he said, "No, not really." I mean, it's hard to know. I feel like I know about the players that have played for us. I know how they're going to react on gameday, but the new guys, I don't really truly know how they're going to react on gameday. Sometimes guys play better on gameday. Some guys, sometimes get a little bit of a shell. So that remains to be seen, but I do think after a couple, three games, you get a good feel for the guys and how they're going to play. You also don't know what all your opponents are going to be able to do. You don't know what kind of teams they're going to have. I do think the guys that have played for us, we got a great feel and indication of how they're going to play. Now, we hope the guys that have come in that had great fall camps, some of these freshmen, some of these transfers, we feel like they'll play at a high level, and that's what we're anxious to see."

On if Kamari Burns or Cam Rutherford will be taking over during Dontay Corleone's absence

"We'll rotate, sitting here looking at the depth chart, we have a lot of guys that will play up front. I think Cam [Rutherford] has had a really good camp. He doesn't always go the right way every time because he's still learning the system, but he does a great job of getting pressure in the pocket. [Kamari] Burns brings something a little bit different. He's extremely quick up front, and it has caused some problems there for our offensive line at times. Harris Adams is another guy who's a little bit different. He's a bigger guy. I feel like he can plug the gaps and really create some push, particularly on third down and goal line. So, we're going to rotate those guys, keep them fresh, and hopefully they're making plays."

On injuries during camp

"We've got a lot of guys back. [Phillip] Wilder right now is still a question mark. [Deondre] Buford's back, ready to go. [Judea] Milan is back, still a question mark o-line wise, [Jonathan] harder's back, he practiced at the end of last week. So, we feel like we're getting most of our guys back. Offensive line wise, which is really a good thing, we've kind of been banged up there. So, it kind of hurts our scout teams on both sides, offensive line and defensive line. We've

talked about the defensive line, there's a couple guys that are out for the season, which hurts, and Corleone hasn't been able to go. Those are three guys right there, potential starters. Two of them are out and one of them we still don't know. That's why I think the defensive line is kind of the big question mark for us because the lack of people that we have there that have played."

On Transfer Derrick Canteen being named a captain

"When we brought him in and talked to him and his parents, man, he's high character. He speaks very well. And then I had some guys that I've coached with at Virginia Tech that said it would not surprise us if he's a captain for you guys. They told us that. So, he was well respected there at Virginia Tech. Right from the start in the winter workouts, our strength coach and strength staff would tell me that, "hey, he's a good leader." And then he just earned his respect from the guys. He tries to lift them up. He tries to continue to keep them playing at a high level. He does things right. I think his dad was in the military for 25 years. So, he comes from that type of family, very disciplined, doing things right. So, it really wasn't a surprise when the guys voted him in. We're excited for him to be a leader and a captain on our team. And the other three captains we certainly were not surprised. I mean, they've been the heart and soul of this team the last few years, so I was glad they were rewarded as well."

Redshirt Sophomore Quarterback Brendan Sorsby

On being named QB one, what was it like going through camp up to that point?

"Yeah, obviously Coach Thomas pulled me in there. We met separately. He told me that I was a quarterback; I was fired up. Give all the credit, though, to the other QB for pushing me. It was a great camp, a great spring. I really couldn't have done it without those guys, and we just pushed each other to be better each and every single day. I'm really just fired up to lead these guys and go, try to win some games."

On the competition between Brady Lichtenberg and how much he pushed him

"Yeah, obviously they told me that too. Whenever I came in, whenever I was in the portal, they said, you're going to have to come in and compete for the job, and obviously I wasn't expecting anything to be handed to me. I think me and Brady did a good job of keeping the competition separate from our friendship, not letting it affect us, and just going out there and supporting each other. I think that was huge for both of us. We were up there some nights watching film together and just trying to pick each other's brains and find ways to improve. But, obviously, coming in, I knew that I was going to have to go earn a job, and I'm excited to be the guy."

On the importance of getting out to a quick start in the first game

"Oh, very important. I think that'll kind of whip me into shape the first time I get hit. It'll be a good little wake up call, and that it's really time to go. That season's here, because obviously fall camps are falling by, same with spring ball, you know, obviously season's here, and we got to

get off to a fast start. We got to start hot and just find ways to stack plays together, stack drives together and go win a game each week.”