

November 13, 2021
Virginia vs. Notre Dame
Charlottesville, Va. (Scott Stadium)

Bronco Mendenall Quotes

On what he saw from Jay Woolfolk:

"I love Jay Woolfolk and I thought he handled tonight on par with it being a first start against a top ten team, replacing what I think is the best quarterback in the country. Our team also saw what we look like without Brennan and how they have to step up. Without looking at the difference between Brennan and Jay, Jay has a bright, bright future. I really liked the way Mike Hollins stepped up in the run game and Keytaon (Thompson). Those are the kind of efforts around Jay that we would have needed sooner. But I thought Jay did a nice job. I think Notre Dame is good on defense. They gave him a lot of looks and pressure and got to him, so the protection has to hold better. But, I thought it was a solid start for him."

On what he knows about Brennan's injury:

"I made this statement last week and, at some point, the week before that. I don't think there's another quarterback in the country doing more for his team than what Brennan is doing for us. That was validated to me this evening. So now, how and where we construct our offense and our productivity certainly has to be different. We have a better idea now, but I knew it would be tough. His injury didn't look good early in the week and it looked better every day and even all the way to warmups. We're not ruling anything out, but it is literally day by day."

On the rest of the offense stepping up without Brennan:

"Everyone else now has to be better. The protection, the separation on routes from a defender, everything has to be better now from more sources. This is the first missed punt Finn has had in I think his college career, so it surprised us all. There was also the missed field goal. So those are easy things to see, but they are more impactful when Brennan is not our quarterback. I don't want us to play tight, this is just now an opportunity to challenge, and everyone needs to do more. That was basically my message after the game and it was clear tonight."

On the defense's tackling troubles:

"The issues are athletes in space and yeah possibly a bit of the fact that it's the end of the year and we've been grinding. We need more guys to the ball. The best defense is when unblocked players have a chance to make the play. However, great running backs always make the first guy miss. You just see that over and over. We saw Nick Grant at the end make some really nice tackles. Our message at half time was leverage and tackling, leverage and tackling, leverage and tackling. Great tackling comes with great leverage and some of those we were inside out rather than outside in. But I did see improvement defensively and I saw more consistency. I saw us making more critical plays when we had to make them to keep the points down and get off the field. So yeah, we can work on the tackling for sure, but there's other things I liked tonight."

On how Keytaon Thompson helped out Jay Woolfolk:

"I think you saw Jay relying on him more as the game went on because he knew what Keytaon knows. I talked to all the receivers at halftime to get more separation and clearer windows. To get more openings and make it easier. Keytaon took that to heart and then that chemistry started to emerge. When that starts to happen with more than one player then Jay starts to be able to distribute the ball elsewhere rather than just the one guy he is trusting more which is how it went towards the end."

On De'vante Cross's Injury:

"De'vante has a knee injury that the MRI read ended up being much more significant. He's tough. He's been playing, I don't know with what level of damage, but it finally passed the pain threshold and we had an MRI. There was an extra one that was done and the read was that this injury is not playable. This has to be fixed and fixed right away. He's working through that news. We're supporting him with that news and we miss him. I'm thankful to him for just all the effort and the commitment to our program and what he has helped us do. That kind of news comes to all of us at some point, but usually not that sudden and so that is a bit harder to digest and we are working through that."