

December 5, 2020

Virginia 43, Boston College 32

Scott Stadium (Charlottesville, Va.)

Bronco Mendenhall Postgame Press Conference

Opening Statement

"I'm so thrilled for our class of 2017. I'm so thankful and so proud of how they played at Scott Stadium. I'm thankful for their contributions in our program; the progress, the determination and the example – just basically who they are and who they've become. There hasn't been anything easy about this year and they just keep playing while doing whatever they have to do and whatever they can do, which is honoring the commitment they made at the very beginning of the season. They wanted to play and have demonstrated that every single week from beginning to end.

Brennan Armstrong continues to be exceptional and continues to get better and better and better. To have had the start we had without Brandon, and then obviously when he's come back and to see where the team has gone, he certainly deserves a lot of credit. Robert Anae on our offensive side of the ball, the innovation, the use of resources, the plan, the design and the yield has also been, I think, very strong in terms of matching and making the best of what we have when we have it for each game.

I think Boston College is a very good football team. I think they're coached well. They've demonstrated that the entire year. And I think their culture is strong I think they're very competitive. I think it was a great win for our program under very unique circumstances. I'm happy for our team."

On the defense stepping up, specifically the defensive line and being short-handed:

"There's up to six defensive linemen that are out. Five of the starting front seven that have played most of the year out. As you saw, Noah Taylor wasn't with us tonight or Jahmeer Carter. We moved Tommy Christ back over from offense to defense. We played not only Su (Olasunkonmi Agunloye), but Jordan Redmond contributed at a high level. And so they've just done a really nice job of putting the next person in. Hunter Stewart is now helping us at outside linebacker. Matt Gahm stepped up and Elliot Brown. And so there's new faces and new names with a similar result in the front seven. That was really helpful in helping us make, or as the game went, for Boston College just to be one dimensional and get enough pressure on the quarterback and enough sacks. And for us, in the secondary, to make just enough plays in terms of turnovers or stops to have the success we wanted."

On bouncing back after the start to the season:

"I couldn't be happier because, as you know, I believe in will before skill. They said they wanted to play and things didn't go the way we wanted to at the beginning with Brennan getting hurt and with that tough stretch in the beginning, and yet they have just kept going. Everything that we do in our program, my passion is to prepare them for their lives and for the world, and it's so easy to stop when things get hard. It's easier to opt out than opt in. They have just opted in and then they've stayed in. And that is powerful for just hardships that come in life. And I've tried to teach and I've really worked hard to help them know how powerful it is to just keep going. And certainly, having success helps that. And so, man, to have that happen now – and I made the same promise to this team as I made way back when I became the head coach – and that was that it wasn't a matter of if, it was when. That this team, this season that we would start to have success. And that was during that hard stretch, and I believe that. I knew that. But, those words are pretty hollow until you see it. But they trusted. And now that that's happened, again, it just is so fun to see them put that all together and realize that hard work and determination and dedication and resiliency and perseverance does matter and it does win. At the end of the day in terms of well-being and happiness."

On recovering momentum in the second half:

"I don't know for sure that we did truly turn it around. The outcome says that, but really just our production and making the critical plays was, I think, the determinant there. And then late, because we struggled making some plays on any down-field pass, it allowed Boston College to kind of hang in. But, we were making so many plays at the right time, especially offensively, and just enough defensively where that ended up, I think, creating the momentum that you're talking about. It's just through making the right plays at the right time. Offensively consistently and defensively just enough at the right time."