

September 4, 2021
UVA v. William & Mary
Scott Stadium (Charlottesville, Va.)

UVA Head Coach Bronco Mendenhall

On opening the season with a shutout victory:

“It's just great to play football and have our fans here. I saw something that I hadn't seen maybe in my whole time here where as soon as they opened the gates our student section were racing to get their seats up at the front. Yeah, that was a moment that I'm not going to forget, that was just gratifying. And we continued to play and we continued to improve. And it got cleaner and better as it went. And, yeah, I think there's a lot to build off and certainly a lot to work on, but I like the start of our season. And I liked what I saw in terms of potential diversity and a number of players contributing with room to grow.”

On defensive execution:

“We did a really nice job with our perimeters and our depth and so everything was inside and in front end; we tackled well for an opening game. We didn't tackle much in fall camp, working to keep our depth as healthy as possible for a long season. That was a little bit of an unknown, except we had experienced players, so I was hoping we would see that and it looked like it was the right call.”

On the team's identity:

“I would say a little bit jittery, a little bit just forced and just not quite as confident and rhythmic, and the game just seem a little fast as we started, since we have some new players in increased roles. And so, with Ra'Shaun Henry and Dontayvion Wicks, and even Jelani (Woods), there's increased roles for new players and I think that showed as well. And then players that have played a lot like Wayne (Taulapapa) and Billy (Kemp), but even Brennan (Armstrong), right, things were not quite as clean to start. So, the supporting cast will have to continue to grow and develop into their roles, that are now not backup roles or supplemental roles, but kind of primary roles. And then, I think as the game went our protection and our blocking also improved and started, you know, I would say, adequate but not dominant. I just thought it got better as we played.”

On Brennan finding his passing rhythm:

“I think so, and just identification of coverages and confidence in the pocket, and it just took a little time, and I think one of the catalysts plays was Keytaon's play. I saw really nice things from Ira (Armstead). I saw nice things from Jacob Rodriguez. I like Devin Darrington, the way he ran the ball, as well as Ronnie Walker. There appears to be the makings of a pretty diverse offense with a lot of different opportunities, again with room to grow on the execution.”

On the secondary:

“I think I can read more into it than maybe what what's being presented. I mean there's a lot of work that goes into fall camp and a lot of work preparing for an opponent and a lot of execution just to play a football game, and so I saw enough to be encouraged; and again, I thought our leverage and our tackling was strong. So yeah, I thought it was a really nice start for secondary.”