

**Virginia v. Illinois**  
**September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**Charlottesville, Va. (Scott Stadium)**

**UVA Head Coach Bronco Mendenhall**

***On the team's offensive versatility:***

"Yeah, I think it is production oriented, but it's the diversity is really where it is the most impressive. Brennan, I think threw for 400 today, but the size of the chunks that are happening are increasing in the number of targets, so when you see Jelani downfield, you see Ra'Shaun Henry downfield and you see Dontayvion Wicks downfield, it just starts to build. It's hard to narrow down on four different or five different threats and with a quarterback that's making good decisions and fast decisions, throwing accurately, that's leading to points. What we saw today is it certainly could have been more with some field goal attempts and one turnover; but just lots and lots of positive things happening."

***On QB Brennan Armstrong's performance***

"He's unmatched in terms of how competitive, how tough in his determination. He had an injury of some sort and didn't look like it affected him much. It's a great check for our program as to what will the offense look like without him. Luckily the first two games we've had a chance to explore and see and test other players right then. Man, when you want to play 12 and 13 and 14 games, you're going to need to see other players, then the sooner the better. So that's been really helpful."

***On holding Illinois to 14 points***

"We played consistent for the majority of the game. There was very few breakdowns and very few things that didn't fit exactly right. When we didn't, Illinois exploited those on both drives, but it's a really nice start to the season defensively. So far, it's a football team with a lot of contributors and I really like that in terms of just our identity."

***On the upcoming UNC matchup***

"It is the next game, which means it's the most important game, and all the progress and improvements from week one to week two now happened from week two to week three, and it just cycles, and it's awesome that we're at ACC play. Looking forward to it."

***Challenges that Jelani Woods Presents***

"The first challenge is who do you match up with. If you choose to put a linebacker on, and most likely he's not as fast, and there aren't many linebackers that are over six foot six. Then if you choose the secondary route, there's not many secondary players that are six- seven, and they might be fast but they probably don't weight 250. And so really there's a matchup issue, no matter what direction you go. As he continues to master the position, as he continues to keep up with our pace and the conditioning and what it takes to go beginning to end in the game, then the production starts to climb - which from week one to week two, quite frankly, the shock and awe of the pace and then what that felt like to him and the adjustment and the recalibration was just kind of week one to week two where he's just starting. There really isn't a good matchup."

***On creating confusing offense for other teams to review***

"We all have the same amount of time and it's a race. And if you can't name something, it's harder to have the resources to prepare for it. Every minute counts and so the longer it takes to decipher it, and if it's ever-changing, then might still not be enough time. That emphasis, or the influence from my defensive background is, I'm not going to say is the determining vote, but it's influencing it and anything that I think is difficult - we do and add to it. With limited time and a team traveling and an early start, you just run out of time. That's part of the reason."

***On the role of the linebackers***

"Kelly Poppinga is doing a really nice job coaching them. Nick Jackson in week one was just really productive. Noah Taylor as well - and they're both different types of players. What's starting to emerge is the third linebacker spot, in terms of kind of production or naming it. You're starting to see Hunter Stewart emerge and then Elliot Brown. There's a great crop of first years, and they're on special teams now and it won't take long before they're going to be getting reps as well, and our secondary - so really good, young depth."