

September 24, 2021

UVA vs. William & Mary

Scott Stadium (Charlottesville, Va.)

QB Brennan Armstrong

On breaking out of a slow start to the game

"I think in the first half I was trying to push the tempo and in my mind I was pushing it, I was just moving a little too fast, wasn't when things slow down wasn't reading too much just kind of trying to push. Yeah, once we got to the second half, I wasn't pleased with what happened in the first half, so I just started to slow things down like Coach Mendenhall mentioned before. That last drive felt the best. I felt like I was looking over, reading through my reads, seeing everything I needed to see. But yeah, just the first game, figured we'd come out a little bit faster, but we didn't. That's not something we got to fix this coming week against Illinois."

On the defense stepping up when the offense was feeling slow

"Yeah, it turns into a shootout and I'm happy our defense did that, I mean that's what their goal is. They said they're gonna try to get a shout out every week, and they did that. That takes a lot of stress off us, especially when we weren't clicking in the first half, you know, we weren't scoring, they had us, the defense kept us, you know twice, and like on our 30 and we didn't score there, two times. So that was frustrating, but they kept battling, they kept doing their part, and yet so we finally kicked it on and got some points to make it a little bit easier for them to relax and start playing."

On looking towards the Illinois matchup

"Yeah, it was a good little icebreaker this week. Now we start getting to a Power Five, Big 10 conference with Illinois. I'm excited just to go and continue to get better this next week; figure out what we need to work on. Obviously start faster. I'm excited to see what our guys do next week."

WR Demick Starling

On his touchdown scored

"I think that play is also something that we practice a lot. I just read the defense and when I saw the ball was in the air, all I could think was touchdown. I just wanted to take my opportunity and make the best of it."

On offensive performance tonight

"Our offense has a lot of weapons. You know, like I said, in practice we get into our rhythm a lot. After coming in from half time and seeing us making plays, that's what we do naturally. Seeing the ball move around to everybody is just a wonderful feeling. Also seeing the older guys and the younger guys score, have fun, and make plays - there is nothing better than that."

On leading up to this game

"After fall camp, having a coach like Coach Hagans and having older guys like Billy [Kemp], Ra'Shaun [Henry] and Tay [Dontayvion Wicks], it helps you build confidence. Coming into the game, I had more confidence than ever. I have people ahead of me and Coach Hagans helping me out and pushing me daily."

On the energy of the game

"It was wonderful. It was amazing. I really didn't know what to expect, because I had my COVID year and it wasn't really that many fans, but just the energy and the atmosphere left me speechless, I can't even explain it."

FS Joey Blount

On the improvements made from last season

"I really think our communication was really good. What we saw all throughout the week with our reads and the formations they gave, I think they did a really good job adjusting their effort to the ball. I really do think that the team that we were at last year, as a secondary, to this year is night and day. I truly believe that I think today was a good outing for us all. I think there's things that we need to go back to the chalkboard and talk about and really get better at though."

On the defense's mentality in the first half

"I don't know, I don't think so. We've been there as well. The offense held us up and we've been down. It was just a good way for us to keep them up. Like I said, all around defensively, clicking on all cylinders; the run game, you're stopping the run, they didn't take many deep shots. So we cut everything in front of us. I think overall, as a defense, you're tackling really well. It was just a really good job. It's like you said it's complementary football and just staying positive, staying there for the offense and just encouraging them to get it going."

On the defense's confidence in tackling coming into this game without tackling in preseason

"I mean, I was confident in myself with tackling but as a teenager, I was a little worried. Tackling, you know, first game of the year, a high amount of jitters, everyone's excited. Some people missed a couple tackles here and there, but I wasn't too worried for the defensive sake; I think everyone was really locked in, making sure we're really good tacklers."

LB Nick Jackson

On the presence of students at the game

"Students were just all there and they brought a lot of energy, they brought a lot of juice, and we missed the Fourth Side for us last year so it was great to have them."

On how the energy of students impacts the defense

"That brings a lot of energy for the defense, I mean every play they're being crazy, just being them. You got all those guys out there, all those girls, I mean everybody, the Fourth Sides just brings a lot of energy and it's just awesome having them back."

On the performance of the younger players tonight

"I was just encouraging them and telling them that I was proud of them and this is their time to put it on tape, and all the hard work that they put in. This is bigger than high school so I mean, just get ready for the stage."