

**October 16, 2021**  
**Virginia vs. Duke**  
**Charlottesville, Va. (Scott Stadium)**

**Virginia Head Coach Bronco Mendenhall**

***On winning at home after two gutsy road performances***

"The team was really well prepared and those last two games were super emotional and draining and tough and physically taxing. You never quite know how that's going to affect your team. The preparation this week was strong, so I didn't see any changes that way from the last three weeks- I'm talking about from Wake Forest on. As the expectations and the demand has been increasing, they've been answering the bell that way. I did not see the outcome or the type of game this turned out to be coming, but I'm certainly thankful and grateful for the preparation our players put in, and how clean and how well they played collectively. I'm really proud of them."

***On the defensive performance/shutout***

"Coach Howell, Coach Poppinga, Coach Hunter, and Coach Sintim, as well as our GAs and Dante Wilkins and Chris Peace, who have been trained in this program, you can't work any harder, man. They've been working their guts out. I'm grateful for that, and our intent was to continue to build consistency and capacity, and that's what we saw today. But we have seen it, in my opinion, each game since UNC; (it) hasn't been perfect, nope. Have there been lapses? Yes, but I have seen that trend. I'm thankful for their work, their efforts, but really coaches can only coach. Players let themselves be coached, and our team is responding well, and I'm happy for those kids to have that kind of success today and turnovers matter, as we know, and just really pleased with a tangible result and reward for their work."

***On offensive production***

"I've said it before, I think Coach Cutcliffe was one of the best coaches in college football and I liked their schemes, and I liked their execution. Again, I didn't see this outcome. But what I did know is they were good in coverage and they're good in pressure, and if we could have a strong passing game, the run game then could be the complement at a higher level, and it played out like that, which is really helpful, which added just an element of uncertainty, I think that helped us."

***Building momentum into the end of the season***

"It's essential. As you already mentioned, they all are essential to win the Coastal and we really framed it to where I'm just acting like we're waiting to get a call after the play to see if we get another game. We're really just thinking only about one and if we play well and when we play well then, they call us and say, 'hey you get to play another one'. That focus is really what's required, and we already know what we have to do to win the Coastal division and how we have to do it. That's going to be one at a time. The next one is the next one."

***On keeping possession***

"Lots and lots of emphasis, starting from Wake Forest, and it's starting to manifest, but it's not accidental. We've been intentional. It's what we have to do at a higher level to have the season that we want and what you just mentioned has been targeted as one of those things and really gratifying and it doesn't always work and you never sure if the timing and how long it's going to take, but that has been our intent, and wow, does it make a difference. We started fast, and we were consistent finishing. It wasn't long before the game was going our way, and again, I didn't see it coming. I didn't know when it would come, but today was a great day."

***On kicker Brendan Farrell***

"Farrell was the player I chose to break the rock today after the last three weeks or so. And let's frame this, Hunter Pierson won the job then got hurt running a fake in practice, a non-contact fake on grass. Then Duenkel, our second kicker, goes out - which then leads to Farrell who wasn't taking reps kicking field goals, he was just taking reps punting, and he just puts it through the uprights. That's an amazing story, so he was my choice he broke the rock today, and it's a great story. I don't want to make too big a story because I want to just to keep going like it is and it's awesome like you mentioned."