

October 16, 2021

Virginia vs. Duke

Charlottesville, Va. (Scott Stadium)

Duke Head Coach David Cutcliffe

Opening Statement:

“When you have circumstances at any time, football or life that occur like this, it obviously becomes somewhat of a gut-check. Without doubt, I think that's how I would describe it. But when you hit these times, I will simply tell you that, in our program, we have all run through these times, we have seen them. Also, we're all accountable. Every one of us. we own this; every one of us. The more you grasp ownership, the more you realize after as you study something. We will take our time, we'll be patient with this. None of us individually have all the answers. We're gonna hear a lot of people with a lot of answers and it's just not that easy. We'll all be owners of every part of this, we'll all work at this together. And there's a lot of things that seem to be outliers today. I thought we had better matchup in both lines of scrimmage and that didn't hold true and when you're losing there on both sides it's very difficult. It's difficult to defend the pass downfield when there's not a pass rush. And when we can't knock people off the line and run the ball, it's difficult to play offense. I can go about a million reasons of here we go but that's not the approach. The approach is finding a way to get better, and the approach is again owning it which starts with me. Every one of us are tough-minded enough and have enough character to take this on. That's where it all lies.”

On accountability after a big loss:

“I mean obviously everybody's disappointed, maybe to the point of somewhat devastated right after that kind of loss. It's hard. These are the times you start wondering if the sun's gonna rise, but it does. And that's why I told them; we're not going to be in any big hurry. It's not a rah-rah answer. It's an answer that you dig deep inside yourself as to what you have to assess with what you're doing. We all have parts in this that we have to assess and assess what we're doing collectively. Again, it goes back to all of us owning it. I don't see a negative attitude; I don't see or feel any give-up in this team. Everything gets harder when you lose three in a row. And we have to avoid, as I said, locker room lawyers. We have to avoid coaches thinking they've got all the answers, players thinking they've got all that, anybody. We have to learn that we, together, have to accomplish what we've got to accomplish to get back on a winning track. This team's capable of winning and we have to believe that first and then we have to move towards it.”

On the disappointing end to the first drive:

“Well, that's if at first the game breaks against you then don't let up, put on more steam. For me to sit here and tell you that doesn't hit you hard, absolutely it does. It hits you hard. And when we go back to the question about pressing when you've lost three games or two games in a row you really have to work hard at saying “here we go again”. You know life will have patterns, football will have patterns like that and it's up to us to break them. If you don't break the cycle who's going to? So, we're going to call on some mental toughness and we'll talk about this as a team. There's no magic formula for this. We just have to be mentally tough enough to handle all of these circumstances we've been dealt with, knowing in the long run we're going to be better because of it. We're not interested in a cycle of negativity. We're interested in breaking the cycle or anything that we think we need to by being strong individuals and a strong team.

On the exchange with Coach Mendenhall at the conclusion of the game :

“We're just friends and we have known each other a long, long time. I wished him well and he wished us well. That's about it. We had a good talk before the game too, but there was nothing there that was a concern for me or a doubt for him.”