

# Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Virginia Tech Hokies

### Coach Brent Pry

#### Press Conference



BRENT PRY: I appreciate y'all. Exciting day. I love being able to talk about our Hokies. It's a long day. I told the guys they'll feel like they got their butt kicked at the end of it.

There's a lot of excitement around our program. One of the big reasons is these three guys I was fortunate enough to bring today. I want to thank them for their time and effort. I want to thank Dr. Sands, our university president. Whit Babcock, our athletic director. I want to thank the Hokie Nation selling out five of six games last year in the middle of a rebuild.

We've got some good momentum, but nowhere yet are we the team we can be. We need to have a heck of a camp. The guys have a great mindset, invested everywhere they need to be invested. I'm excited about the team that we can be.

I'll take some questions.

**Q. Going into year three, what have you achieved with this program and what is still out there?**

BRENT PRY: I think first of all, it speaks volumes to the culture in our locker room, in our building. We've got great people that want to be at Tech for the right reasons, players and coaches.

We've got players that decided to return and spurn the NFL, spurn other opportunities, maybe to make more money. We have coaches that turned down opportunities to stay at Virginia Tech. There's a belief in our team. There's a belief in our process. The culture is strong. To me, that's where it starts.

**Q. How do you define 'accomplish greatness'?**

BRENT PRY: I think first of all for me it's about doing things the right way, at a high level. We're doing that. We have great kids that are committed in the right places, that

understand accountability, that aren't afraid of hard conversations, that love and understand what great competition does for you.

They pay attention to details, and they work and are receptive to coaching mentality each and every day.

**Q. Your last post before this, you were a defensive coordinator at Penn State under James Franklin and Manny Diaz was the defensive coordinator there. He gets an opportunity as a head coach at Duke. Full-circle moment. What does that say about the way James Franklin runs his program?**

BRENT PRY: First of all, James Franklin I consider to be one of my best friends. We came up in this business together. He played quarterback for my father at East Stroudsburg. I was a young coach on his staff. He gave me a great opportunity at Vanderbilt and then Penn State.

I learned a ton from James. He has done a great job. Ricky Rahne at Old Dominion, Charles Huff at Marshall. He's doing things the right way. I have a ton of respect for him and Manny. Wish him a ton of luck all season long, except for one week (smiling).

**Q. Tell me about now this year Virginia Tech-Miami rivalry coming back, the expectations on that one, how excited about bringing that back for the program?**

BRENT PRY: Bringing what back?

**Q. The Miami-Virginia Tech rivalry. What is the excitement about that?**

BRENT PRY: It's hard for me to talk about that because right now all I want to talk about is our pre-season camp. But I do understand what that rivalry means to Virginia Tech faithful, to the alum, to the fans, former players. I was part of some big games in the three years that I was at Virginia Tech. I do understand that.

It's good for college football. It's good for the ACC. I'm excited about the game, but it's pretty far down the road for us right now.



**Q. You have some big guys returning. Your top four receivers have returned. What are your expectations from this receiver room?**

BRENT PRY: I'm very proud of that room. Arguably a real concern, our most concerning position going into last season, and this year, I'd say, could be one of our greatest strengths. Coach Mines has done a great job developing those guys, recruiting to that room.

I think the competition that we create with our defensive backs, with Dorian and Mansoor and those guys. I believe the relationship that Kyron has with those wide receivers has been critical. There's a lot of good things happening in that room.

**Q. A little bit about the continuity in the roster, the NIL and transfer portal era. What you were able to do this off-season is rare. How valuable is it to have the most returning production in the country?**

BRENT PRY: I think that's valuable for anybody. You want that. I think it goes into bringing the right people into your program, guys that want to be at Tech for the right reasons.

I think it goes back to being a strong brotherhood. These guys love playing together. They believe in each other. They believe in team first. They enjoy Virginia Tech.

I tell it all the time. I meet with each and every player at the end of the spring. The last question I ask them is, Do you like it here? To a man, all but four or five, the response was, Coach, I don't just like it here, I love it here.

Thankful for our collectives, for the Hokie way and for triumph. We don't go outbid anybody for anybody. But we're going to be competitive and aggressive in that space. Our guys deserve that.

**Q. Lane Stadium has the best game day atmosphere.**

BRENT PRY: Thank you, you're right (smiling).

**Q. It's an outer body experience, difficult to explain. What is it like coaching on Saturdays there?**

BRENT PRY: I love running out of that tunnel. Even when I watch the highlight video of it, I get chills. It's special.

I think for all of us, you love the competition, you love playing in front of big crowds, the excitement of the entrance. So we're very fortunate that way.

Our fans are some of the best in the country. They pack the place. They're jumping to that tune. We come out of the locker room and Johnny Cash's God Will Cut You Down is slow playing as you take that walk. By the time you hit that tunnel, man, it's the best.

I just try to make sure I don't stumble coming out. That's all (smiling).

**Q. Before you became a head coach, you had 30 years of coaching experience. How did that all prep you to become the head coach of what is considered the flagship school of Virginia?**

BRENT PRY: He said that, I didn't (smiling).

First of all, I'm fortunate to have been around some great coaches, starting with my father, 45-year veteran coach, college, high school level. He and I have the distinction of both coaching in a Rose Bowl and both losing to USC in a Rose Bowl.

He's my greatest influence. Learned a lot from him. Obviously, James Franklin, Jeff Monken, Rickey Bustle, Bud Foster, Frank Beamer. So many guys you learn good things from. Honestly you learn some things that you don't want to do, not how you want to do it.

There was no recipe, playbook, for the transfer portal when I got to Tech. We hadn't had those experiences yet.

I think I'm blessed and fortunate to have been around some great coaches, guys that cared about the players, relationship-oriented. I still today when I see Coach Beamer, I feel like a young GA. I just want to make him proud. I got a ton of respect for him.

I see Bud Foster at our practices all the time. He's my greatest defensive mentor. I'm very fortunate to be the head coach at Virginia Tech. All of those people, all of those factors played a part in me having this opportunity.

**Q. What strides have you been able to make from year one until now in terms of recruiting from the DMV?**

BRENT PRY: To me that's home turf. It's too easy to get to Blacksburg from the DMV. There's too many relationships that we have on our staff with coaches and programs in the DMV. There's too many great programs to not return to the DMV each and every year. We treat it like home turf.

We've made some good strides there. We're invested there, like we are in the Commonwealth. Just makes too much sense for us.

**Q. When you talk to these legends that have come before you, how hungry does it make you to bring back that standard?**

BRENT PRY: I appreciate the question.

It's one of the reasons I returned to Tech. I want those expectations. I understand those standards. People talk about how you handle the expectations. Well, we all know that has nothing to do with the team that we can be when we go to Nashville. At the same time we all came to Virginia Tech because of those expectations.

This is a place where you should expect to compete for the playoffs and expect to compete for a championship. That's who Tech is.

**Q. Is there a win that you had in the off-season that you'd be willing to share with us?**

BRENT PRY: A win?

**Q. A win.**

BRENT PRY: Yeah, it's called three weeks of vacation (laughter).

I tell you what, the thing I'm most proud of is there was no sign of complacency on our football team, our staff, players. A lot of pats on the back. There was success. There was accomplishments. There was no sign of anybody coming off the gas, which I was very proud of. I consider that our biggest win this off-season.

**Q. You said that you're looking forward to having a heck of a camp. At the end of August, how will you know you had a heck of a camp?**

BRENT PRY: Yeah, to me there's always weaknesses. There's areas you know you can be better at. There's areas you know through experiences you've got to be better than where you're at now.

It can be depth, it can be technique, somebody getting a fundamental squared away. It can be ball placement, consistently catching the ball well with a particular individual. It can be making sure we have enough to the playbook to be challenging when we need to be down the stretch. There's a lot of things.

You're always working to be better. As a coach, you always have concerns where you're not at the ceiling, where you're not reaching potential. You always strive for that.