

# Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

Thursday, July 25, 2024  
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## NC State Wolfpack Coach Dave Doeren

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Doeren.

**Q. It seems like you have been super active in the transfer portal. How much of a role has the transfer portal played for you and your program?**

DAVE DOEREN: Yeah, I think year to year for us it's just another method of adding talent, adding the key ingredients to the roster. It's all based on need, where you may have a void.

In the past, pre portal, you would look into the junior college areas, sometimes find a transfer that was a grad to fill a spot where maybe you had an injury or player left early to go to the NFL.

Obviously, as you know, now there's outflow and inflow coming in at different times differently than there ever has been.

For us, it's assessing your roster. It's never ending, changes weekly on kind of where you're at based on the health of what's going on, who's coming back, where you think you need to be better. Just getting into last season and how all this stuff came together, I mean, we've revamped our recruiting office two years ago. Once this stuff started, felt like we were chasing our tails a little bit.

Came up with a plan based on the NFL model on how they assess, evaluate. Once players are deemed players they would want on their rosters, how do they go about the process. Then integrating that into our program.

Have a great recruiting staff. It was regionally based. You look at Jordan and Grayson, two guys that chose to move on from their schools. They were guys that are in-state players to us, guys I knew would have personal value in staying home and doing something with the team that has the largest alumni base in the state.

Sometimes things just kind of click. There was a bunch of

guys in this cycle that wanted to come back to the state. Noah Rogers, Daylan Smothers, several guys from Raleigh or North Carolina that left and wanted to return back closer to their families and be a part of our program. We were able to get the right type of guys.

That's the biggest thing. When you want talent, that's one thing. Being here 12 years now, I'm not going to take a risk on the culture with that talent. You have to find guys that fit what we're all about. It's earned, not given. It's guys that want to work, enjoy the brotherhood of the game, that are willing to sacrifice for the cause.

We were blessed this year. We had a bunch of really good players that fit kind of the design of what we were doing, that fit returning players as well. Guys like Davin that have helped build this program, we don't want to sacrifice all the hard work of the players that have been here for a guy that's coming in for a year. They needed to understand they were joining something, and in that helping them to continue to grow what we do and increase what we're doing.

We're very pleased. Obviously two of the guys are here. The team is pretty mixed if you look at that recruiting class. There's still a great emphasis on high school recruiting, as well.

**Q. These last couple years your team has talked about wanting to be different, doing things that take this program to the next level. What have you seen from your guys this year that might prove that they are different?**

DAVE DOEREN: Well, we're about to hit the grass on Wednesday. I think every day we're out there it's a measuring stick, it is. We're one of five programs over the last four years that have won eight or more games in college football. We've sustained a level of competitive greatness that not many people have been able to do.

With that being said, we want to win a championship. So different is that. It's taken the program from the second most wins since 2020 to winning the league. That is different.



What we did last year and the year before and the year before is good. Winning nine games is good. We don't want to be good, we want to be the best at what we do. These guys understand that.

We've talked a lot about what it looks like to be the best and how do we do that, using the voice of the players to describe that. What does it not look like? What do we need to stay 8-8 from, safeguard our program there?

There's been a lot of discussion, a lot of hard work by these guys and our staff as we evaluate our schemes to utilize the roster talent, to utilize the coaching talent that we have, to be integrated together.

Each day it's really a challenge. You go out there day by day trying to be better than we were. A year ago Wednesday when we started camp, that's a measuring stick to when we start camp this Wednesday. It's everything. It's how the grades come in from the summer, what Thunder says about the summer workouts, what Justin Smith says about the guys in the training room, in the nutrition area, ask how the guys are doing.

You're always looking for signs of improvement and signs where we need to call this up, talk about this, we're better than this. Just holding each other accountable to what we want. We want to be elite.

That means everything that we do, can't cut corners. It's going to be something that we push forward together.

**Q. The last few years the running game hasn't quite been there for this offense. You get a guy like Jordan Waters out of the portal. How much better does that make this run game?**

DAVE DOEREN: Jordan is going to help us in the run game, for sure. The whole offense in general, it always starts with what is the quarterback going to do, right? We feel great about what Grayson can do. Then the offensive line, the blocking schemes that those guys are good at, the depth that you have there. How the tight end plays into that game.

Blocking at the perimeter is critical. There's no doubt being balanced on offense is something that you know I like. At the same time we're going to play to our strengths.

To answer that question today, we need to get on the grass, go through training camp, see where we're at. I feel good about not just Jordan but the running back room in general. It's a great room. There's good leadership but there's depth. There's competition and the guys are

working hard. Jordan has done a really nice job showing them what it looks like coming back from the season he had last year. You have young guys below him.

That's part of your job as an older player, this is what it looks like, this is what it doesn't look like, holding those guys to a standard.

I know coach and I and the staff on offense, offensive football has changed a lot, you guys know that, with the rule changes, the linemen down the field, the RPOs, tempo.

Now you have another change, sideline communication, which allows our coaches to speak to these guys in the huddle on the field. You're going to see another evolution how to plays into offensive football this fall which hasn't been talked about a lot.

I'm excited to see how that does things for us and how we can take advantage of what those rules bring. I think for Grayson and for any quarterback, he would tell you having a run game helps, it changes the coverages you're throwing the ball against. It does. If they're worried about what's going on with the handoffs and pressure we can put on people not just with the runs but the RPOs behind them, it opens up a lot of things.

When you're talking about getting one-on-one coverage with the receivers we now have, obviously KC coming back, Dacari Collins came on in the spring, the way we've seen Wesley Grimes and Noah Rogers coming in from the transfer portal, the weapons for him are different out there. It plays into the entire thing.

Not that you just call plays where you're taking what they give, but sometimes you are. When you can spread the ball around to different people, it just opens up things and creates a different pressure system on the defensive coordinator. That's one of the things that I really like about football. Trying to create chaos on the other side of the ball.

If you're on offense, defense, whatever that is, let's make their jobs really hard.

**Q. Looking at the fact that you've spent a lot of time within the ACC, you've seen change, new institutions come in. We see accomplish greatness. When you look at this conference throughout, how would you define it, who is coming in, what this looks like?**

DAVE DOEREN: I think maximizing the gift that God gave you, to me. One of the tenets, one of the standards of our program is no underachievement allowed. That's

maximizing the opportunity you have as a person. Accomplishing greatness is that. When you go to bed and lay your head down, did you do everything you could that day to be the best version of yourself? If I get enough coaches and players to do that on a daily basis compared to those we compete against, the score ends up being the consequence of those actions.

What does greatness look like for NC State? We want to hold that trophy up at the end of the year. Day in, day out, it's about maximizing the gift. You expect to wake up every day, you expect for things to be a certain way. We all know that's not reality. Every day we get is a blessing.

Taking advantage of that blessing is something that the older I get, the more that I value. I do. Really the relationships and the gratitude I have for the staff that I get to work with, for the players that I get to coach, I mean, I got a great job. I got great guys to work with. I'm thankful for that. I'm thankful that these guys are here, getting ready to go to work, and the work they put in this summer.

They know it's going to be hard. I look forward to that with them. When you talk about accomplishing greatness, it's not something you can define in one sentence. Football seasons are crazy. The emotional swings that take place day to day, minute to minute, the amount of things that happen over the course of the year, how fast it goes, within that million things that goes on.

It's going to be a fun journey with these guys (smiling). Just really thankful for the opportunity to do this with them, and looking forward to where it goes.

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