

WAKE'S VAUGHN FOCUSED ON CLEMSON

This was a very different interview for me because of the fact that it was done in two parts. I'll explain. I actually started my interview with Wake Forest senior safety Chip Vaughn last week. But he had to leave early because of a meeting.

We picked things back up on Tuesday. It was almost like we never stopped talking. Chip was very fun to talk to. I wanted to see what his mindset was like heading into tonight's big game against Clemson. I was curious to see how much that 24-17 loss to Navy affected the guys. I'm convinced the loss might've motivated Vaughn a little bit. He's mad they lost. But he understands that defeat could benefit the team in the long run. He's also happy to still be unbeaten in ACC play.

He and I talked about a number of topics during a cool conversation earlier this week. We talked about his connection to Winston-Salem, sheriff deputy Robert Bethea, Philadelphia Eagles safety Brian Dawkins, PS2, Chess and the NFL. Take a look at some of the other things C-Vaughn and I discussed.

Anthony: Chip, what's good?

Chip: What's goin' on?

Anthony: Nothing much. I'm chillin'. But you've got to tell me how the team feels after suffering that loss to Navy.

Chip: To be honest with you, a lot of guys are down. A lot of guys are sad, pissed off and things like that. Right now, we're trying to get back on that horse and keep going.

Anthony: No loss is good. But can this benefit the team in the long run?

Chip: Oh yeah. I see this as a very humbling experience. It lets everyone know that you can't just come out here and show up. You have to be ready to perform for four quarters. That's what we needed. And, we got a big slice of humble pie against Navy.

Anthony: No doubt. So, is it a good thing to have an open week after a loss like that?

Chip: It's definitely a good thing. Everybody has been looking at the film, lifting more... we've gotten back to the basics.

Anthony: The fact that you guys can still go unbeaten in conference play has got to be a motivating factor.

Chip: Yeah. It is. The only good thing to come out of that loss was the fact that it wasn't a conference game.

Anthony: So, are you guys ready to take things out on Clemson?

Chip: Definitely. I can't put it into words how anxious the team is to get back on the field. We want to prove that wasn't the 2008 Wake team that lost to Navy.

Anthony: How's the preparation been heading into the Clemson game?

Chip: Almost like summer camp. We've had a lot of full pad practices, a lot of live scrimmages. Coach Grobe was very upset with our performances last week. He said that we won't play that soft again. He's been pushing us these last few practices.

Anthony: I bet. I'm picking you all to win the ACC.

Chip: 'Preciate it.

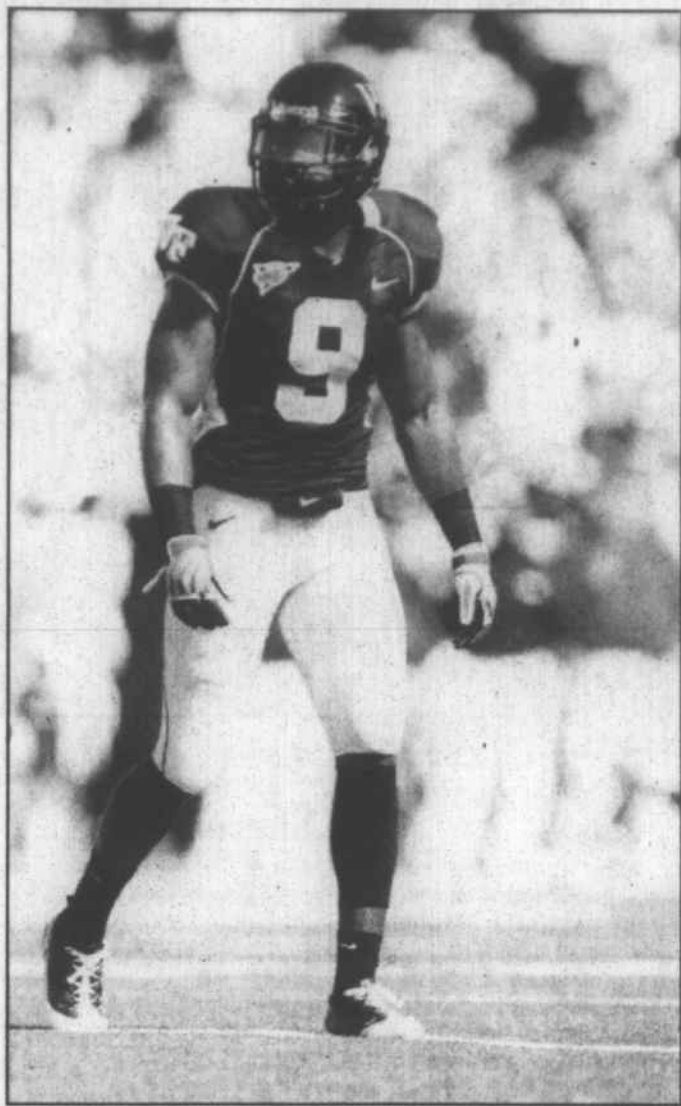
Anthony: No doubt. But tell me which team you think has been the surprise in college football this year.

Chip: It would have to be Alabama. It's got to be Alabama. (Both smile.) It's got to be them. They came out and beat Clemson. They put that whuppin' on them Georgia boys. They've definitely been the surprise team to me.

Anthony: How much SportsCenter and College Gameday do you all watch?

Chip: (Laughs.) A lot. We watch all of that. We see all that stuff that comes on TV. It feels good to see that we're finally getting some respect out here. At the same time it's not going to our heads or anything like that.

Anthony: To me, you look like a Brian Dawkins type of player. Who do you model your game after?



Wake photo
Wake Forest senior safety Chip Vaughn is ready for tonight's game against Clemson.



Chip: You hit it right on the head. It's between B-Dawk and Sean Taylor.

Anthony: What are you usually doing when you're not busting heads or studying?

Chip: Most of the time I'm just chilling on the couch, watching TV. A lot of the times I'm on the Xbox 360 too. I'm usually playing Madden. Call to Duty, college football and all that stuff to pass time.

Anthony: Do you play seasons or do you just play against friends?

Chip: I do it all. I play friends online. I'll start a franchise and dynasty. I do a little bit of everything.

Anthony: How much love do you give yourself on the games? Do you boost your ratings up?

Chip: I did when I was a kid. I don't anymore. Even if they have me with a bad rating, I just make it work. I like to play with my friends that play at other colleges. I'll call them and tell them how sorry they are in a game. (Both laugh.)

Anthony: How much do you think of the NFL?

Chip: Probably everyday. I know that a lot of eyes are watching. It's like an interview. I have 12 more games to impress them (NFL scouts). I have to get better every week. So, it's definitely on my mind.

Anthony: Have you seen any of the mock drafts? If so, what round are you projected to go?

Chip: Yeah. (Smiles.) I've been predicted to go anywhere from the first round to the seventh round. I've seen it all. I know I have to keep getting better each week. (Smiles.) Creme is always going to rise to the top.

Anthony: Do you have a favorite team?

Chip: My team has been the Green Bay Packers my whole life. After this season I won't have a favorite team.

Anthony: OK. Tell me something about yourself that everyone may not know.

Chip: I can cook. I'm a real good cook. I'm a beast in the kitchen. And, I play chess.

Anthony: (Smiles.) I bet all of you Wake guys can play chess.

Chip: (Laughs.) You would think that. But there's not a lot of us out there, though. I think it's kind of like a lost art.

Anthony: Maybe. Hey, I know that you have some Winston-Salem connections. How are you attached to this

city?
Chip: My father is actually from East Winston. I have a whole bunch of cousins around here. I was born in Goldsboro. My mother's parents stay there. They come to the games. So, I have a lot of ties around the whole state.

Anthony: You have an uncle that's a sheriff deputy (Robert Bethea) too. Every time I'm around him he has something to say about you.

Chip: (Smiles.) Yeah, uncle Rob. He has his shirts already made up for the game. I talk to him about every other day. He's always like, "Man, you got to get better Chip. You were playing a little soft." (Both laugh.) He always tells me how bad I may have played, and how I have to step up my game.

Anthony: (Smiles.) That's funny. Um, what's your favorite TV show?

Chip: (Laughs.) "The Boondocks." That's my favorite television show. And, "First 48."

Anthony: What are you bumping before games?

Chip: I'll have a little DMX, Tupac and some Biggie. It's kind of funny because I was just making my little playlist for the game on Thursday. I'm downloading a whole bunch of DMX because that's my mindset right now. I've got to let the dog out on Thursday.

Anthony: That's what's up. Talk about how much things have changed since you've been here.

Chip: We didn't have great leadership when I first got here. A lot of guys were out for themselves. My whole class came from winning high schools. But we went 4-7 when I first got here. I was wondering what I got myself into. Then, we went 5-7. But we lost a lot of those games by 7 points or less.

We were playing not to lose. After the '05 season our coaches kind of busted our a\$\$s. We started to play to win. Guys started to get more and more confident. Then, we started playing like it was high school again.

Anthony: When you first got here did you really believe you would have a chance to win the conference?

Chip: It's funny you asked that. When coach Grobe was recruiting me he said that he couldn't promise me that we'd win a championship. He promised me that I'd have a chance to play early. Even when we won the ACC that wasn't our goal. We just wanted to go to a bowl game. When we got to that sixth win we

started to believe we could win the whole thing. That's when our confidence started changing.

Anthony: Do you think coach Grobe will stay here forever?

Chip: Forever? I don't know. Money talks. But coach Grobe is a great guy. The whole city loves him. So, I don't know. Wake and coach Grobe is a really good fit.

Anthony: No doubt. Let's finish with free association. Uh, Chip Vaughn.

Chip: Deacon.
Anthony: Wake Forest football.

Chip: (Pause.) OK... the future.

Anthony: Virginia high school football.

Chip: The greatest high school football in the country. (Both laugh.) I got to rep them.

I've got to.

Anthony: (Smiles.) I see. (Both laugh.) Winston-Salem.

Chip: Home away from home.

Anthony: Number two (Alphonso Smith).

Chip: Playmaker.

Anthony: No doubt. (Smiles.) And, the winner of the Wake and Clemson game.

Chip: Them Deac' Boys.

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