

# Penn State University Football Media Conference

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## Coach James Franklin

### Press Conference

**JAMES FRANKLIN:** Like always, appreciate you guys coming out, covering Penn State football. Appreciate it. Really do.

Kind of get into last game, some of the things we usually talk about. Lost the turnover battle; won the explosive play, we won the third down battle, we won the sack battle, we won the drive start battle, and we won the penalty balancing. All those things are positive.

We have done a great job all year with the turnover battle. We got to make sure we buckle down on that and continue. That's been a huge part of our identity and our success.

When you talk about the players of the game on offense we had Tyler Warren. Defense we had Adisa Isaac. On special teams, obviously Daequan Hardy. The D-squad players the week was Matt Detisch, Tyler Holzworth, Kaveion Keys, and Kolin Dinkins and DaKaari Nelson on special teams.

Our D-squad has done a great job all year long getting us prepared. The practices have been fun. They really have, how our guys are competing, not only the good on good periods but the D-squad periods as well.

Positives of the game, obviously we won, but most importantly we got better. We got better during the week at practice and I thought we got better on Saturday.

I think you guys know Nelly, Dr. Josh Nelson who works with us, does a great job. That was kind of his message at either breakfast or pre-game meal. I can't remember. There is a lot of ways you can look at it. We talk about our process of getting better each week and each practice. You can look at Saturday as a culmination of the work you do throughout the week, or you can look at Saturday as another day to get better just like the practice days.

I thought that was a really good message for our team and I thought we did that.

I think we're playing really good complementary football on



offense, defense, and special teams. I think that's been really important for us. One of the things that Manny was talking about the other day, something we take a lot of the pride in, I think we are one of the top teams in the country of not allowing opportunities into the red zone. People aren't getting to the red zone.

Funny, because some of our red zone stats aren't good from early in the season. Well, hadn't been a whole lot of opportunities to improve because we're not letting people down there, which I'm totally fine with that.

I also think that's a team stat. That's a team stat that our defense is getting a ton of three-and-outs and our offense is either scoring or able to get a couple first downs before we punt people deep and make them drive the whole field.

So as a head coach I'm always looking at what are the team's stats. Just like I remember coming up in the profession lot of the people used to talk about time of possession being an important stat. Saturday was a perfect example of that. If you get turnovers and return punts for touchdowns, your time of possession is not going to be very good.

Your defense going to go right back on the field when you return two punts for touchdown. A lot of people have gotten away from that stat. Some other things, obviously we were explosive on special teams. Daequan Hardy's punt returns, that was a school record and tied a season record. Thought we played very physical on both fronts.

We talked about all season -- excuse me all week last week we talked about their identity being the most explosive offense we had seen this year. We took that identity away from them. Whenever you're able to do that to a team, you got a chance. You really do.

And then we played 76 players in the game, which continues to be a trend this year, something I think has been really helpful for us.

Areas of improvement. Got to start fast on offense. Our 2s and 3s, when they get opportunities to go in the game, got to play at a higher level. Ball security and then perimeter blocking.



Getting into Ohio State specifically, Ryan Day, a ton of respect for Ryan and Ohio State as a whole. When you look at who they are, offensively Brian Hartline being one of the most respected wide receiver coaches in the country and recruiter. This year, has become the offensive coordinator.

Offensively I think Ryan is still heavily involved in what they're doing, but they're continuing to do a really good job. They are still a spread offense. They will go tempo as well, but I wouldn't necessarily say that's all they do. A lot of times they're trying to get a look at the defense.

You talk about personnel, obviously it starts with Marvin Harrison. We're very familiar with him. Everybody in the country is. Tremendous, tremendous player.

TreVeyon Henderson, the running back. Cade Stover is probably the guy that I don't think is getting enough attention and enough love. He's been a very productive player for them; has elite ball skills.

Emeka Egbuka, another guy that we got a ton of respect for. Miyan Williams, the running back. Some guys we left out based on we're not sure if they're going to play or not, but a ton the guys we got respect for.

Defensively, Jim Knowles, who, again, we're very familiar with and has done a really nice job last year, did a nice job. And then obviously this year has taken it to a whole 'nother level. They're a 4-2-5 scheme. You're seeing a little bit more of the three safety look this year than they ran when -- excuse me, that he ran when he was at Oklahoma State.

I think they're doing a little bit less than maybe they did the year before, but what they do they do really well. Obviously I think that has equated to them doing a really good job of limiting explosive plays.

A guy that I got like a coach crush on, is No. 35, Tommy Eichenberg. Just a really good football player. He's fun to watch. Physically he can make the plays. He's obviously the quarterback of the defense. Everything goes through him. You pick up a lot of stuff off tape watching him as well as TV copies. Just a really smart, instinctive, athletic linebacker who we have a ton of respect for.

No. 8, their safety, Lathan Ransom, defensive end who had a career game against us last year.

JT -- make sure I say this right -- Tuimoloau. I tried my best. JT, all due respect there. I did work on it. Ton of respect for you and how you played. Again, he had a

career game against us last year.

And then cornerback No. 10, Denzel Burke. Those are the guys that stand out to us, and then special teams Parker Fleming with Xavier Johnson as the kickoff return guy, and Jayden fielding as their kicker.

So tremendous challenge. Also tremendous opportunity. We're looking forward to going to Columbus and play this game.

Open up to questions.

**Q. Good afternoon, James. How are you?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Good, how are you?

**Q. Well, thanks. You said Marvin Harrison is a tremendous player. You coached wide receivers. What makes him such a tremendous player?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Well, I think number one, the thing that jumps out to me is his body control and ball skills. He's got the ability to contort his body in the positions and catch the ball effortlessly.

I think that's the first thing.

The other thing, he's just smooth and fluid. You know, a guy that you guys are familiar with that I think was smooth and fluid similar to him is Jahan. The difference is this guy is doing it at 6'3", 6'4". It's interesting, you watch him on tape and he looks like he's got good size, but when you see him in person he's a big dude.

And I think it's his consistency. He's just consistently made plays. Obviously he makes spectacular plays, but he makes the routine plays as well. So he's obviously somebody that we got to be aware of at all times. We got a ton of respect for him and how they use him.

**Q. Drew going home kind of in a way for this game, back to Ohio. Do you have to have any conversations with him, first big game -- really big game on the road going back home, or is he one of those guys that you don't worry too much about mentality-wise with that?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Well, I wasn't going to talk to him, but this is my third interview today and everybody obviously is talking to him like that, so I am going to talk to him. We don't really do things like that, but I am going to have a conversations with him because I can't control the things outside of our building.

But, yeah, I want Drew to do the same thing he's done all

year long. I want him to prepare the same way. I want him to practice the same way.

You know, I don't think he's a big social media guy, so tune all that stuff out, get better this week through his preparation and performance, which is really no different than any other week.

**Q. Ohio State quarterback, Kyle McCord, a guy you recruited out of St. Joe's Prep. What have you seen out of him on film so far this season?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, obviously a big arm. He's a good sized guy. Been in their system for a while, so understands their system. He's surrounded with a ton of talent, wide receivers, tight ends. I think I told you guys I love their tight end. He's been extremely productive.

And then obviously they got running backs, so they do a really good job of -- I think they're approaching it a little bit like we've approached it with Drew with the first-year starting quarterback. You know, he's doing what he needs to do for them to be successful offensively and win games.

If you look at his touchdown-to-interception ratio, really good. Really good. So I'm not surprised obviously. His high school coach is on our staff. You know, we recruited him. We know a lot about him. We had a ton of respect for him out of high school and continue to.

We think he's going to be a challenge for us on Saturday as well.

**Q. Well, I was going to ask you about scheduling and long balls. In any case...**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Too soon.

**Q. You're a guy that does things intensely, and we've talked about explosive plays ad nauseum at this point. Without them, without some of the personnel things that you want, health-wise, getting Trey back, how you approached offense this year has been so intentional, and I would say different to a certain extent than how you've done it the last nine years. You didn't need to reinvent the wheel to beat the teams you beat, but there is something to be said for how do you approach the big two if you get to those games and they mean what they mean? How do you balance what has worked for you against those teams and not reinventing the wheel but going, let's know that we want to play this way going into this game and getting good at it?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think what you have to be

careful of is you have to understand and figure out what the identity of your team is and embrace that identity no matter what the outside world is saying.

You have to be comfortable in your own skin and own who you are and how you have to play. That doesn't mean that you're not looking to improve in certain areas.

I think the Iowa game is a really good example. We went in at halftime and said, look, let's not change who we are. Those runs in the first half that were going for three to four yards started to go for eight to ten yards.

For me, I think staying true to our identity and what has got us here, while still saying, okay, these are some areas where we have to improve, whether that's on offense, defense, whether that's on special teams.

Again, I think I've said this to you guys before, studying the analytics are important so you're aware of what those things say, but a lot of times those analytics and trends are there for a reason. It means you're good at something.

One of the big mistakes you can make is get to certain games that some people say are this or that and you try to be something that you haven't been in the previous six weeks.

**Q. You mentioned before that you had no recruiting drama with Drew and his family after he committed. Why was that? How are you able to avoid that?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Couple things. First of all, I think it's how we do things. I guess what I'm saying by that is we never pressure a kid to commit. Never have. I don't believe in that.

Actually, when kids call to commit to us we usually try to talk them out of it. I would rather you not commit than commit and change your mind down the road. That's why when it happens it bothers me. We were as thorough as he could be with the kid, with the parents, with the high school coach, the trainers, with everybody. Is everybody on the same page or let's not do that.

Commitment for us and for them is a strong word, so I think we're very up front and transparent about that on the front end.

The other thing is we typically recruit kids and families that come from, you know, similar background where that's important to them as well.

You know, for Drew I think part of it was -- I think a lot of people forget he was not this high-profile guy in the

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

beginning. Even when we started off -- when we offered and started recruiting him.

We thought he was really good and had a ton of potential, but he wasn't really viewed that way on a national scale yet. He kind of earned it old school, blue collar, the Penn State way.

He kind of just kept getting better, and then went from a three star to a four star and four star to arguably, depending on which service you follow, No. 1 recruit in the country.

And then some of those people that hadn't offered him before started to offer him. Again, because of I think Drew and how he's wired, and mom and dad and how they're wired and how they raised him, and then how thorough we were and how thorough they were, it didn't change.

I remember them calling us and saying, hey, we just want you to know this coach called us and like we don't know how to like do it because we don't want to be rude but we don't really want to talk to them and I don't want you to hear we're talking to these people because we're not.

They were just super transparent, and we did the same thing. If I remember correctly it was during COVID, so wasn't like this sexy recruiting process. I think they came up and drove around campus by themselves with no tour or nothing.

So I think it's just a combination of how we do things. We don't offer playing time. We don't do a lot of things that I don't think are realistic in the recruiting process.

We try to treat people and I try to treat people the way I would want if my son was being recruited, how that would go. Some people are really drawn to that; some people aren't.

So we're not for everybody. We're not going to just tell you everything you want to hear. And to be honest with you, I don't want the same in return. What do you like? What don't you like? Let's talk through this. For the most part we don't have a whole lot of drama, and that was the same with Drew and his family.

**Q. Drew, especially the last few weeks, has he improved in anything in particular that people might miss from the outside looking at the games? Any specific that you can point to?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah. I think, you know, I was just about to answer this and I don't want it to come off the wrong way. Again, I am being measured. I don't want this

to sound like I'm being a smart Alec.

But it's probably why I got so like uncomfortable last week, is you spend your whole career trying to get quarterbacks to take check downs. Like every quarterback wants to throw the corner route or the go route or the post. I mean, who is throwing check downs in their backyard, right?

So that's why I got so uncomfortable and upset last week. It was just so foreign. So here we got a young kid who is starting for the first time, and we can call those plays and he'll take the check down.

To me, he's doing a really good job of keeping the main thing the main thing, which is protecting the football, trying to create explosive plays when they're there, but not forcing them.

Managing the game. And when you say managing the game, sometimes people look at that as like not a compliment. Like their quarterback on every play, whether it's a run game, whether it's RPO, traditional pass, there is a lot on that guy's plate to make sure we're not running dead plays. So he's being graded mentally as well as physically on every single play.

He's done a really good job. Getting more and more comfortable with that every week. I think he's refining his process of how he watches film, studies the game plan, so I'm very pleased with him. I want Drew to understand this and I want our team to understand this. That's what I addressed with them on Sunday. That is what we have to do this week.

If our process is what we say our process is, we just have to take the next step this week and get better again this week. Not do anything more than that. Drew doesn't have to be anything more than he was the previous weeks. Just continue to refine the process.

So I think he has just been steady, and to me, when you're steady and you're making small gains daily with your mental approach and emotional approach and physical approach to the game, you get better and you'll like where you'll be at the end of the season.

That's what he's doing. And not listening to all the other stuff.

So I hope I answered your question. It's hard because my nature is not to be measured, but then I come in here wanting to be measured because of all the other stuff.

**Q. I want to ask you about something that also came up a lot in 2016. This team has been sensational in the**



**second half of games all season; first half you've had some slower starts. What do you attribute that to this year, and do you have more focus on being sharper earlier in games?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I think I had the same answer in 2016, but with a different commissioner. Pettiti came and saw me before the season. He said, look, I want drama, so wait until the second half, get everybody watching the game to make it exciting is a similar answer with a different commissioner in 2016.

Yeah, I think sometimes when you have a young team you got to be able to make adjustments in between series. It sometimes takes getting in the locker room and settling them down and saying, this is what's going on. We got to find ways to do it faster and we got to be able to start out fast in practices and games and play at a high level.

Again, at the end of the day, I do think we're playing really good complementary football. That's a term that's thrown around a lot, but I think we're probably more complementary and more balanced than we've been in the past.

I think the players and the coaches have done a good job of embracing that. The coordinators get up on Sunday and I talk to the team and offense, defense, special teams coordinators get up and summarize the game as well. We do that as a team. Some places don't.

I think it's important for our defensive players to hear what Mike is telling our offense. They're learning football. I think it's good for the offense to hear from Manny because they're learning football.

As you can imagine, what the offense is teaching in two-minute usually the defense is teaching the opposite; maybe a different way of looking at it.

So one of the things I think has been really good is a lot of times we'll talk about an offensive stat but it's really not an offensive stat, it's a team stat. The offense, I think we may be leading the conference in points right now; is that right? That's not an offensive stat.

Our defense is putting our offense in a position to have short fields. That's a team stat.

Just like I talked about on defense and red zone opportunities against our defense. That's a defensive stat, but really the way we're playing, it's truly a team stat. I think one of the things that's been really good is Manny to get up and address the defense but talk to the offense about what the offense is doing to put the defense in the

best position to be successful, and Mike doing that with the offense and then to the defense.

I think that's been really good. And then Stacy as well. I don't remember what your original question is, but I hope I answered it at this point. Did I? Okay.

**Q. What was it that you saw in Drew and your staff before everybody else did? You mentioned it took a while for him to go up in the ratings. Was there somebody pounding the table for him initially in the process?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think Mike got here, and obviously at that point we already had t Beau committed if I remember correctly. Mike really liked Beau, but we felt like we needed to get two quarterbacks in that class, and that's another thing we're pretty up front about with people.

Obviously not only is he scouring the country, at Penn State, but he had already done that at his previous institution. And then I think, let's be honest, on top of it, he's from Ohio. If you got buddies and friends calling you about guys, it just is more natural to kind of find out about guys and be aware of guys that are from your area just because of the connections and the network you have.

So I think that kind of got it started. We liked his film. You know, his transformation, he's got a quarterback coach, Brad Maendler. I've never seen a transformation like it. To be honest with you, I don't really -- I didn't even really believe in it. I've always been a believer that you can really improve quarterbacks 90% of the time through their footwork and timing and their anticipation and pre-snap understanding of defense. That's when the game starts to slow down. That's where you can really help quarterbacks, especially at the college level.

We just don't get that much time to do straight Indy with guys. Brad's ability with Drew's commitment and work ethic, his transformation was crazy. That just continued. He just kept getting better. His high school ran a wide open spread offense, which I think also helped him get a really good feeling of depth and space and how to make people defend 53 and 1/3, and he's got the arm to do that.

Sometimes you got quarterbacks that are sequential thinkers and sometimes spatial thinkers like a point guard. Good ones can do both, and he has the ability to do both.

It's like both things. It's not one thing. It's Drew's work ethic and drive to be good. He's got some obviously physical gifts in terms of his body type and arm strength. And then he's been surrounded with really good coaches. His high school coach at Medina High School as well as

the training, Brad Maendler, who I already mentioned.

And then also coming to a place like Penn State that is going to run a system that is pro style and got some spread elements, but we have enough flexibility within the system to take advantage of the things that we think he can do well.

So I think it's a combination of things. Again, like always it goes back to how you are raised at home. I think mom and dad did a really good job with him. Just a very steady, level -- we talk about humble and hungry, and I think he's that.

**Q. You haven't been in a lot of close games where the game is really on the line in the fourth quarter for a long time. It's a good problem to have. I don't know what you can do about it. Is it a concern that your guys have not had a ton of reps, couple minutes left and it's all on the line?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Again, I think you control the things you can control. I think we've had some situations where maybe we went into halftime and the game was closer than maybe people thought it would be. Maybe there was some sense of that.

But you control the things that you can control, and I think we've played the way we needed to play to get better.

But, yeah, I think obviously you got to be able to win big games in the fourth quarter. Got to be able to win one-possession games. We practice those things with two-minute drills and thing likes that.

Yeah, there are some things that are just going to have to organically happen. But we expect this to be one of those types of games.

We've played these guys for a long time. Probably up to the last two years, probably played them as well as anybody in the conference. But we got to find a way to be able to win in the fourth quarter and win these one-possession games.

**Q. That was a great precursor to my question. I know you're not spending much time talking about last year's game. Definitely got away from you guys. How much of an influence was that in the off-season to maybe the bye week as something that you guys talked about, how that game ended? And for Manny specifically, how much is he using that game specifically as a learning tool?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think all of us, right, we're a

combination of our previous experiences. Whether you're a first-time coordinator in this league or first-time player in this league, I think all those experiences, both positive or adversity, I think if you approach them the right way they help you grow.

But we got a ton of respect for Ohio State and their history. And not just now. Like literally from a historical perspective, it's something kind of looking at what Penn State's records were, again, all these teams before we even got here. Those things are important to study and understand.

But I think last year's experience was a learning tool for our entire team, for all of our coordinators and all of our coaches. I think this probably goes back to the previous question. I think we played really well for three quarters and didn't finish.

I think that's a combination of a lot of things. But, yeah, there are opportunities to grow and get better as long as you approach them that way.

**Q. I think they owe you some games from the '50s and '60s. They were all out there for some reason.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Say this again.

**Q. They owe you some games from the '50s and '60s. They were all out there. They played Ohio State out there.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Why?

**Q. I don't know. I guess they --**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Are you saying the away games?

**Q. The games in the '60s the games were at Ohio State.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Not here?

**Q. Right.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: So this is just a new phenomenon.

**Q. They owe you some games. Can you expound on your comment? You called it a tremendous opportunity. Do you see this as is measuring stick and hurdle to clear to get where you want to go?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, as you know, and you know me very well -- I get you're going to ask these questions. We're trying to find a way to get a win this week against a

really good team, against a program we got tremendous respect for, coaching staff we got a ton of respect for, the talent they have.

But we approach to the same every single week. Everybody on the outside is talking. We're approaching it the way we do every single week. This is a really important game. Why? Because of how we've handed the previous six. If we didn't handle the previous six the right way you wouldn't be asking that question.

So each week is really important. That's how we approach it.

**Q. As you guys continued to kind of hunt for explosive plays in the running game, 20 or more yards, how would you assess how...**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Explosive plays 12 yards or more.

**Q. Okay.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I want to make sure I'm clear. So the way we do explosive plays is 12 yards or more in the run game and 15 yards or more in the pass game. The reason we do it that way, that's what most of the analytics people do, so we're consistent. Now when we say, okay, where are we at. Our numbers reflect the same of what the most national analytics people do. Yes, sir.

**Q. How would you assess how Kaytron and Nick have done in situations where you created an opportunity where there is just one guy in the hole and they either make them miss or maybe run through them to turn a four or five yard game into a gain of 12 or more?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Good question. Couple things. I think, again, like real football people, like you guys, like our staff, like college coaches that are evaluating us, NFL scouts, I think those guys are running really well and really hard and really physical.

To your point, are there times where we're in open field and we go run the safety over? Yeah. But, again, I also think that goes back to the question earlier about -- I think it may have been Ben -- about identity. You got to embrace who you are like as a player, as a coach, a leader, as a team. You got to embrace who you are.

This is who we are right now and we're doing it well. I also know when the opportunities present themselves, there is evidence that these guys will make the big plays because there is enough evidence that they will.

I still believe what I've said before. I think people are still

playing us different. I think they're playing us a little bit different than they did last year based on the safeties and the number of people in the box and how they're fitting the runs, saying that you got two proven commodities, we're going to make these two guys beat us or not allow these two guys to beat us.

Again, when we watch the tape on Sundays we've been very pleased with how they're playing and how they're running. Is there some sometimes where they're one-on-one with the safety and they try to go destroy the safety? Yeah. Would you like them sometimes to make them miss? I would say there are examples of them doing the same thing last year and when they lowered the shoulder they punished the guy, bounced off it, and went 60.

I just think those things are going to come and happen organically, as long as we allow them to come and don't create something that hasn't been detrimental to us to this point.

**Q. You mentioned that Ohio State is using more three safety looks this year. What kind of unique challenges does that present for you guys given how much you use 12 personnel?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think it's the same reason people do it, right? When you're playing, say, a traditional 4-3, traditional 3-4, you got rules of how you account for the guys in the box. How you're going to block to the Sam, combo block to the Mike, combo block to the Will or you're reading the Will in the RPO.

Now they got this extra safety like Ohio State is doing, like Iowa State was the team that made it kind of sexy and popular out there. It's different than your normal rules of how you account for that guy in the run game, how you account for that guy in the passing game either as a blitzer or as a robber in coverage.

No different than in some ways why it's difficult to defend the wishbone when you don't see it all year long or the wing T when you don't see it all year long. Or now, in some ways, a traditional two-back power set.

So that's where it can become challenging, is you're having to teach things different than you normally do, which with coaches, right, just like teachers, you're trying to as much as you can teach like same as or like -- okay, this is like this. This is the same as this. You're putting it into this category. This is how we're going to treat this.

This defense kind of forces you out of that a little bit and it's got to be more specific to this defense and how they play.

So you just don't have the accumulated reps against this type of defense. Unless you're Iowa State's offense who faces it every single day in practice.

**Q. You've talked a lot about Drew's poise this year. You point back to the Purdue game last year is when he really stood out to you. Was that something that you could see during the recruiting process, that he was this type of quarterback with that type of poise as a high schooler, or did you have to see him in the fire before you actually knew it?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think, as you can imagine, most of the guys we recruit, they should be dominating high school football, right? I mean, they should be. They're typically bigger, stronger, and faster, but that also what makes it difficult sometimes when you're just so much bigger, faster, and stronger than everybody you're playing against. How will you handle it when you're on the field when you're not just physically bigger, stronger, and faster than everybody?

Specifically with quarterbacks, that's always hard to determine before games, because with a lot of the other positions you're getting to see those guys in practice in live situations as well. At quarterback you don't get a whole lot of those opportunities unless you're going to make your guys live in practice, which most people are not going to do. They may look a certain way, but then when they get hit from the blindside three times, how are they on the fourth time? Do they start peeking, leaving the pocket before they should?

So at the quarterback position a lot of times it takes truly until they're in a college game to see whether they have that or not. Sometimes we have had examples of guys that maybe they weren't ready for that as a redshirt freshman. Then they are. We had a young man who is no longer with us playing at another school who is playing really well right now that played for us I think a redshirt freshman, and in that moment in that game he may not have been ready for it at that time.

Sometimes you need to be in a game to figure it out at the quarterback position. Sometimes it's just normal maturation process that has to happen and everybody is different there. Some guys can be a really good player as a pressure man by their fifth game. Some guys it takes until they're a senior.

May not be the same type of player. I think Keaton Ellis has had an unbelievable career here and has a chance to play at the next level. Jerry Porter redshirted as a true freshman; Keaton played. Everybody's journey and path is different.

Keaton may end up at the same spot in the NFL. Jerry's career started out different. A lot of different things to go into that. That's to me a little bit of the sad part about the transfer portal, is sometimes guys don't get to figure that out. Sometimes guys come to us and they start doing really well and guys are, oh, he needed a change of scenery. Maybe he's just a year older.

So there is a lot of things that kind of go into it. To me, specific to your question and the quarterback position, a lot of times it take the games. I'll give you another example, because a couple of you guys asked me this question and I was asking myself the same question, trust me. Daequan Hardy. How many times do you really see a punt returner return punts live? You may do punt return in practice. Say you do it I don't know, 50 times. How many times you're actual going live where you want the bullets running full speed down on that guy and taking those type of hits?

I know Terry Smith don't want that. Manny Diaz don't want that. So that's the fine line for us as coaches, the way the game has changed and the amount of hitting you do. Some of this evaluation process -- at most positions you can see in practices or scrimmages because of the way you practice, but some things not.

So I hope that answered your question.

**Q. How do you feel event going to grade out and when do you expect JB will be back?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Good.

**Q. Is it still the same on JB, that you expect him back at some point this year?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I expect JB back. I expect Venga (phonetic) to play.

**Q. No assessment on how he played at UMass?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I think Venga is playing really well. I'm very pleased. We view Venga like we view Shelton. Those guys are starters. If you look at him he's been playing starter's reps or starting games anyway.

So, yeah, he's playing really well. Will continue to play for us and we do expect to get JB back.

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