

# Penn State University Football Media Conference

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University Park, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach James Franklin

### Press Conference



JAMES FRANKLIN: All right, appreciate everybody coming out. I guess the numbers are down a little bit because some people, bunch of students are on Thanksgiving break, which I get.

Just kind of going back through Rutgers, won the turnover battle, won the explosive play battle, won the third down battle, won the sack battle, won the drive start battle, won the penalty battle, so all those were positives.

One of the big positives for the offense, the offense met their explosive play battle and their third down battle, and we only had one missed assignment during the game.

Again, Ty and Ja'Juan and the staff and players did a really good job.

Talking about players of the game, offense, Beau Pribula; defense, Chop Robinson; special teams, Alex Felkins and Riley Thompson. And then D-squad players of the week being Addison Penn, Jack Lambert, Lamont Payne, Kaleb Artis, and Jace Tutty. Appreciate all those guys and their hard work.

Just some last few positives. Played really good complementary football. We emphasized critical stats versus Rutgers this week. Turnover margin, field position battle when it comes to special teams, and then the line of scrimmage battle when it comes to rushing, who rushed for the most yards in that game, and we were able to really be successful in all three of those stats.

And then I thought our specialists are playing at a really high level. Our punter, Thompson, 52 yard average; our kicker Felkins, two for two on field goals and three for three on extra points, and also two touch backs.

And then Tyler Duzansky doing his job. All positives.

Michigan State, got a ton of respect for Harlan Barnett as a man and as a coach. He's really well thought of within the conference from all the coaches. Has been there for a while. Obviously a Michigan State guy.

Kind of getting into their staff and what they do, Jay Johnson, offensive coordinator, his fourth year at Michigan State. They're a spread team; west coast based; 11 personnel; wide variety of runs that center around zone schemes.

They're an 11 personnel team the majority of the time. They will mix in a little bit of 12 personnel.

We have been pretty impressed Maliq Carr, a big tight end, 6'6", 260 pounds. Really has the ability to make plays in the passing game. Is a challenge there, is a problem there.

Running back Nate Carter and then wide receiver No. 83, Montorie Foster, all guys that jump out to us on tape.

And then defensively, Scottie Hazelton, fourth year at Michigan State. Has done a nice job. They are a four-down front, some variation of 4-3, or 4-2 when they go nickel.

Been impressed by Cal Haladay, local kid playing middle linebacker for them. Very productive. Aaron Brule, the linebacker, and then their nickel/safety 43 Malik Spencer, and last, they safety, No. 1, Jaden Mangham. So guys that we got a bunch of respect for.

On special teams, Ross Els, their punter, Ryan Eckley, No. 96, and then their kick return, punt return No. 2, Tyrell Henry.

Don't have any other changes to discuss on the depth chart. No real changes when it comes to redshirting, so open up to questions.

**Q. Good afternoon, James.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: String beans or collard greens?

**Q. String beans. I do like collard greens as well.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah. Some of these I knew what the answers would be before I asked.

**Q. I like collard greens.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Dinner rolls or -- we're not done, Rich. Dinner rolls or cornbread?

**Q. Oh, man, that's tough. We usually have dinner rolls, but I like cornbread as well.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: So which one you going with?

**Q. In a pinch, dinner rolls.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Okay. Again, I figured. Then the last one is the best one: The Thanksgiving dinner or the leftovers?

**Q. Leftovers.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Nice. Nice. Okay.

**Q. Except I'm not going to get any this year because you're playing on Friday.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: You can take some Tupperware with you, can't you?

**Q. I don't know how the airlines will take that.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: That's fair. That's fair.

**Q. Have you learned anything about Drew Allar that you're willing to share with us since Saturday? If he can't go, how ready do you guys think that Beau is?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, so if you guys want to speed up the process, have your answers ready to go.

Yeah, we expect Drew to go, just like we planned on last week. I still think both of those guys will have roles. Not dinner rolls but roles.

And I think Beau will be ready to go. He did a great job. He didn't flinch. The staff, the players didn't flinch, and went in and made plays week I have like we expected him to make.

But it's too early for me to say. We have not practiced yet since the game. All indications I think we'll be back to normal.

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

JAMES FRANKLIN: Good, Mike. You got your answers, or do I need to ask you?

**Q. Same questions as Rich?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah.

**Q. Collard greens by a mile.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Wow.

**Q. Cornbread by a mile.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I didn't expect that. Mike --

**Q. Yeah. And what was the other one?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: The last one was the Thanksgiving dinner or leftover.

**Q. Right, right, leftovers.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Mike, I didn't realize we had so much in common, me and you.

**Q. We got a thing. We got a thing.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah.

**Q. Okay. Wide receivers, it seems like the last couple of weeks, maybe you'll disagree or tell me I'm wrong, but seems like the last couple weeks they have been less involved not only in terms of production, but in terms of how much they've been targeted even. I know you didn't throw the ball much at all Saturday, but Lambert Smith played more snaps than any other wideout but was not targeted at all. Are you at the point where you're sort of game planning around as much involvement of the wide receivers as you previously had, or are they just not getting open enough?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, so number one, that was something we talked about this morning. We obviously want to get those guys some more targets. I think I told you guys this before, a lot of times we have -- whether it's shots, and we had lengthy discussions about that, or targets. A lot of times we'll check out of the play because we don't get the look we were anticipating.

We want to get as many guys touches as possible, but I will also say, too, I think our tight ends have been very productive all year long. I would say that has been part of it as well, is emphasizing getting those guys more targets.

Earlier in the year, you know, you guys said we weren't targeting the tight ends enough, so that's the real reason why we changed it.

Honestly, it's a combination of we got to get those guys a few more touches and targets, no doubt about it. There has also been I think us playing a little bit more 12 personnel and a little bit more of that in the passing game, too.

**Q. Collard greens, cornbread if it's ham -- no, cornbread if it's turkey, rolls if it's ham, and dinner is better than the leftovers.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Say that again about what you're pairing. You're doing wine pairings with the cornbread, right?

**Q. Yeah, got to be the good cornbread. Can't be the dried out stuff you get at some places. I can't make cornbread. I'm not good at it. I dry it out, so I have to do cornbread with turkey and rolls with ham. Usually that's a turkey on Thanksgiving obviously.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Got you. Okay. I don't know if that is obvious, but, yeah.

**Q. It's a turkey, it's Thanksgiving. It's got to be.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Okay.

**Q. I mean, that's my opinion.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, yeah. Opinions stated as facts. It's not the first time we've been down this road with you guys.

**Q. I want to ask you about the consistency of the defense from week one through I guess last week. You mentioned that every team, every season, no matter what the sport, has ups and downs. Seems like the defense has been, I mean, I would say consistently productive from snap one through the last snap of the last game. Where does that mentality come from? How have they been able to kind of keep that even keel when it's -- it seems like it's not an easy thing to do.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, so couple things. First of all, we been fortunate to play good defense here for a while, but I do believe that Manny has done a phenomenal job of not only taking what we been able to do here over ten years, but taking it to another level.

Obviously we've discussed the slightly different style. This style you have the ability to be more suffocating, which we talked about in the past because there is just not a whole lot of gimme free yards on the field with as much press coverage as we play.

I think he's done a really good job of teaching and promoting standards of what the standards of the Penn State defense are all about.

I think he's done a really good job of teaching the defensive players how to view the game specifically on the defensive side of the ball, but also teaching football in general, which we spend a lot of time on.

And I think Manny has done a really good job. One of the things we talk about, we'll have a message in the team meeting, and I love the coordinators to take that message and not only reinforce the message, but also talk about how that connects to offensive or defensive football or special teams football. Then you go to the position rooms and the position coaches do the same thing.

Manny has done a really good job of that, of teaching football, of setting standards of how we practice, whether it's a full-speed drill, jog-through period, and has just really, really taken the defense to a different level from a consistency standpoint.

Then also just the style that we're applying overall. But it's just he's done a really good job, and really the defensive staff, I know Manny would want to credit the defensive staff as well. Anthony Pointdexter has been great. Terry Smith has been great. Deion Barnes has been great. Really the analysts as well.

I think that's another thing that is interesting. Manny trusted -- didn't really want to make any changes on the defensive staff. Wanted to hire a defensive coordinator and keep the staff intact. He came here, brought Coach Lyster with him and Coach Lyster has done a great job.

Those two guys have really done a good job of just kind of melting in with the existing staff and just playing really well.

So, yeah, I think your description is well-deserved and Manny has done a phenomenal job. It's been earned and appreciated across the board.

**Q. Green beans, cornbread, and leftovers.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Nice.

**Q. Yeah.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Nice.

**Q. Leftovers are key.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Leftovers that night or leftovers that

morning, the next day, or all of the above?

**Q. All of the before, but the leftovers that night after you take a nap during the Cowboys' game and waking up and hitting the leftovers is I think a pro move.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Fair. Is your leftovers like another plate or a sandwich made with all of it on there?

**Q. It's a sandwich.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah. I like what you're doing, John. I like what you're doing.

**Q. So James, Nick Singleton, he's had his moments, but it's probably fair to say that the season hasn't gone the way that many thought it might for him after the way he played as a freshman. How have you seen him kind of handle this season week by week, practice by practice?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I understand the question, but I guess what I would say is to me, there is a lot more to playing well than just the runs and just the stats.

So for example, I think when we go back and grade Nick's tape this year and compare it to last year, I think he's going to grade out as well if not better in being a well-rounded football player.

So what I mean by that is if you look at him blocking for Kaytron Allen on the goal line touchdown the other day, he blocked his guy five yards into the end zone. I think that's a distinct improvement from where he was last year.

If you look at his ability to catch the ball, run routes, and be a legitimate factor in the passing game, I think he's dramatically improved in that area of his game.

Again, if you just take the stats, yeah, I get it, but when you study the game like I know you are as a true football guy, really study the tape, I think he's improved as a football player.

And I think down the road when these things are evaluated by the people that evaluate players nationally, I think this year is really setting him up for a ton of success in his future, not only at Penn State, but afterwards.

So, again, I view it differently, right? There is also players that may have three or four exciting, explosive runs, but then they're not doing the other things, and fans and a lot of media are, oh, he had an unbelievable game and they really didn't.

You know, so I think when you're really studying the tape and all of it, I think he's had a better year.

**Q. Happy Thanksgiving. I'm coming to Donny's house Thursday.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: So does that mean you're...

**Q. Yeah, cornbread, collard greens, and dinner. Yeah, that's mine.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Nice. Nice.

**Q. So how do you assess the way Ty and Ja'Juan called that game offensively? And also before and after Drew left...**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, to me it's all of it, right? To me it's all of it. I was very pleased with how we operated from the Lasch Building and in the office and how we game planned, how the scripts were done the night before, how the cards were done early for the scout team and we could look them over and work through in detail, are these the exact looks we're anticipating getting in the game.

I thought the collaboration, the environment that was created that everybody spoke up and had opinions, I thought that was really good. I thought Ja'Juan and Ty were really good complementary pieces of each other. I thought when they got up in front of the team they did a really good job of explaining how we are going to play offense this week and how that's going to put our team in the best position to be successful.

I thought all that stuff was really good.

On game day I thought they did a really good job throughout the game of making them defend the whole field, putting people in conflict, and also when we had success with plays, going back to them and forcing the defense to adjust.

A lot of times you have a successful play, you want to run it before they get back to the sideline again. You don't want them to get back to the sideline and let the coaches get on the chalkboard and make the adjustments. I thought the halftime stuff was really good as well.

I thought though the one backed up situation, if I was going to be critical in any area and I could have been better here in helping them, I thought the one backed up situation where we didn't take time of the clock, didn't get a first down, and put our defense in a position that was not advantageous. That was the one thing I will be a little bit critical.

Got to get a first down or at least got to run the ball and eat some time off the clock with the plays we call. Besides that, I thought it was really good and I think they'll build on it this week.

I think the biggest thing that I said to you guys before is both Ja'Juan and Ty are loyal and appreciative to Penn State, loyal and appreciative to our players, and to the staff. They've created an environment like that, which I thought was really good last week, and I think we'll refine the process even more this week.

And I think it was one the few weeks, again, where third down and explosive plays, we met both of those in the same week. I can't remember a week where we only had one missed assignment. The game plan was smaller and tighter than it had been all year, but still enough to cause challenges to a really good defense.

I think Rutgers is a really good defense and do a good job.

**Q. We're going with string beans for Thanksgiving, traditional, though I do love collard greens. My wife is from Northern Kentucky. Her honey cornbread, got to go with this. Would you like to try some?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I was going to say, because I did get the cranberry sauce I think it was the last year that may have been the best cranberry sauce I've ever had from Ben's mom. So say it again? It's honey cornbread.

**Q. Yeah, sweet cornbread.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I don't like the other stuff.

**Q. Yeah, the other stuff is not right.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah.

**Q. So you would like to try some?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, like I don't know if one slice will be enough. If possible if she could make...

**Q. We make it in bigger portions. You're good.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Right. I would like the whole portion if possible for me to really be able to tell.

**Q. We'll make it happen. Thanksgiving leftovers for a week afterwards. Okay.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: So a week? When is it getting on the edge?

**Q. As long as the turkey is good.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Okay.

**Q. So Beau Pribula, haven't seen him throw the ball much. Talk about his passing game. You had hoped to get him more pass attempts earlier this year. Talk about his throwing game for us.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think a couple of it is it's situational, right? Like we've had passes in for him every week, but then you also get into a situation where the majority of his reps have come in four-minute football where you're trying to run the ball as much as you possibly can. By running the quarterback you even the numbers out.

It's funny, because I ran up to him on Saturday, and although there was a lot of time left in the game, we still wanted to milk the clock. It's funny, one of the chain gang guys was kind of upset because we were in the huddle too long early in the call. I'm like, we're doing that on purpose.

We're in a good position with the game right here. We want to put a really good drive together, eat the clock. I said something to Beau about it and Beau was like, yeah, I'm used to this. I know how to operate. This is what I've been doing all year long.

So, yes. But, again, I think part of it is where you're at in the game and does the situation warrant that. As you can imagine, there has been more in his package than what you've seen.

Yes, sir.

**Q. I hate all these things you guys are talking about with the food. I don't eat any of it.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: You hate them? It's not that you don't like them?

**Q. I eat turkey, stuffing, yams, smother it all with gravy, and that's it. I only eat one Thanksgiving meal a year. Only eat turkey once a year. Those are the only things I'll eat. I'll eat five pounds of it, but that's it.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: You eat what, turkey, stuffing and gravy?

**Q. Has to be Stove Top stuffing, not the bird stuffing. I'm pretty particular with that.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Does that make you particular that



you like Stove Top?

**Q. Yes. I hate bird stuffing. I make my own Stove Top and everybody else eats the bird stuff.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: You call it burnt stuffing.

**Q. Bird, the stuffing that...**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Bird. I'm like, it doesn't have to be burnt.

**Q. My wife cooks an excellent turkey, so I hope everybody else can say that as well.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Nice recovery. Do you not eat vegetables in general?

**Q. I do not eat vegetables in general at all unless it's smothered with Ranch dressing.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Wow.

**Q. Yeah, I'm in bad shape. I work out a lot, but I am worried about the vegetable thing.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: You take vitamins?

**Q. Yes.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Somebody said they've never eaten a vegetable.

**Q. Al Michaels.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, yeah.

**Q. I've got an easy question for you, although this might be hard for you to come up with an answer. What are you most thankful for with Penn State football and being the coach?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Talking about specifically professionally with football?

**Q. Any criteria you want. What are you most thankful for about your situation?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I think the people, you know. I love the players that I've been able to get to know and their families on a significant level over the last ten years.

You know, that's probably become more -- probably become more aware of that even, to be honest with you, because of Vanderbilt. Like it's amazing how many of

those players that played with us at Vanderbilt have stayed in touch, have come here to visit, that I connect with when I'm out of town.

Those relationships are real significant relationships. You see players coming back to games here or on the road, the relationships with the players and the ups and downs and twists and turns of what healthy relationships go through with the staff, all the people that work in the Lasch Building, all the different roles, you know, I think about the people on campus that have been able to develop relationships, whether it's Neeli Bendapudi or whether it's Michael Wade Smith or Pat Kraft or Vinnie, Matt Schyler, you know, I think back to people like Dave Joyner who hired me and gave me this opportunity, and Sandy and Eric Barron.

I just think about the people. You know, I think about the quarterback club, which was something I was like against when I got here. I'm going to go over during the week and that relationship -- I look forward to that now with the quarterback club.

Sometimes you don't necessarily want to go to the press conference and answer questions; sometimes you don't want to go to the quarterback club and answer questions. But I would say the people. Steve Jones and Jack Ham and just the people. Chris or Greg.

I think at the end of the day, that's really what it is, right? It's about relationships and people. You got your family and then you have your extended family. So that's probably the thing I am most thankful for, is all the wonderful, different people that I've gotten to know.

I think you guys have heard me talk about this before. That's what so great about college football, is the locker room is full of people from totally -- I mean totally -- different backgrounds.

I think our world can learn a lot from a college football locker room, because literally you got people that could not be any more different, from the way they were raised, educational experience, ethnic backgrounds, religious diversity.

It's as good as it gets in my opinion. I think a lot of people can learn a lot by being a part of a college football locker room, and probably a lot of sports, to be honest with you. I think that's where sports are so valuable to the educational process, which I know is questioned at times.

Deservedly so questioned at times.

When the professors come and they're part of our guest coach program, I think they leave feeling like, you know

what? This is truly a complement to what they're learning in the classroom, and I'm very proud of all of that.

That's probably the things I'm most thankful for.

**Q. Have to follow up on that. I would say a Southern kind of thanking, Thanksgiving, so collard greens, cornbread, deep fried turkey on the day of Thanksgiving.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Hmm. Why southern?

**Q. Well because that's more or of a -- I think a Northern Thanksgiving is more the traditional green beans, rolls.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I agree with that. Where does your affinity come for Southern?

**Q. I learned to deep fry turkeys a while ago and I kind of enjoyed that.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Interesting.

**Q. Yeah. To get back to what you were just saying, the relationship --**

JAMES FRANKLIN: How do you do it? I see a ton of videos of people burning their houses down or their cars down.

**Q. Haven't done in in a while. Since we moved into a nice house that kind of ended, at least a decent house. You do in the yard or whatever.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah.

**Q. It's a lot of fun. You should try it some time.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Okay.

**Q. Going back to what you were saying about relationships and whatnot, can you talk about the relationship that Ty and Ja'Juan have built? We see them before every game running around field together. These are guys from two different backgrounds, two different age groups, but looks like they really get along. How important is that with what they're trying to do together here or what they are doing together?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: I think that's something we work hard at. We spend a lot of hours together, so a lot of times that happens organically and naturally just over time.

I think you guys know we do the share thing where guys

get up in front, players and staff get up in front of the team and share some personal things about their background. That's been helpful.

At the end of the day, they're just two really good guys and have really good families, and I think specifically for Ja'Juan and probably Ty a little bit as well, but the longer you're in this profession, you realize what we have here at Penn State is hard to find.

A place where you legitimately can offer a kid a great education, you can play big time football at the very highest level, in a community that makes sense in terms of raising your family and seeing your family and then work around good people in the office. An environment where your kids and wife can come to the office every single day.

So I think they're old enough and experienced enough to appreciate that. They been places where -- maybe they've gone somewhere and didn't get that, so they value it here. Or seen people leave here and go somewhere else and been trying to get back here since they left.

I think all those things and that perspective is valuable, and I think with those two guys, I think they're experienced enough to recognize it.

I think they've also developed deep and significant relationships with their rooms. I also think that's one of the reasons why they've recruited so well at their positions and why we probably have such great depth at those two positions. I think other people recognize that as well, the type of men they are and how invested they are here.

**Q. Coffee, black, one, two, one. You got it?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Why are making things more challenging than it needs to be?

**Q. First answer was beans; several were into rolls, two; and one was regular Thanksgiving.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Okay. I don't think we said option one, two. We just listed them out.

**Q. Speeding up the process.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I don't know.

**Q. Few minutes ago you said that the game plan was smaller and tighter than it has been all year. I guess did you feel previously that it was maybe too robust? Was this beneficial or just the perfect storm that it lined up that way?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, again, I think this is kind of like when I get asked questions that I think, I don't know if necessarily they're meant to be, but I get asked questions sometimes about the players or staff that if I answer it the way you asked the questions could be divisive.

I get questions, and I'm not saying it's meant to be, but I don't want to do anything that's going to come off as disrespectful to anybody that's been here.

What I will say to answer your question is that's always the challenge, right? How tight can you get the game plan to allow the players to get enough reps versus all the looks in the game to play fast and assignment sound, but not too small that there is not enough things in the plan to give the defense challenges and issues.

So that is always the constant battle. I remember when I first became a coordinator, being a west cost -- coming from a west coast system the game plan was massive.

The longer you do it you realize you want to give the guys just enough, so every year my game plan got smaller and smaller and smaller.

Again, that's where it's an art and not just a science. Where is the sweet spot? We try to say, okay, the numbers, how many plays do we have in the game plan in week one, week two? Let's go back last year. How many plays did we have in the game plans? What games did we play the best in? What was the sweet spot?

Not just the number of plays in the game plan, how many of those plays are new concepts, not the same play run from a different formation with a different motion. That's fine. How many of those plays are new concepts as well?

What's the sweet spot for that as well? Typically that may show up on third down and red zone or with a trick play or shot.

So all those things have to be factored in, and to me, that's where the best ones are. They're as tight as they can be with the game plan, but not so tight that it becomes simplistic and easy for the defense.

So that's constantly a challenge each week. Then I would also say the more complex the defense you're playing, then probably the smaller the game plan needs to be.

The more base and standard the defense is, then maybe you can be a little bit more creative. You're trying to balance all of those things each week.

That's a constant battle and struggle.

**Q. String beans, cornbread and, Johnny nailed it, it's the post-Cowboys-after-a-nap leftovers that really hit it.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Nice. I think that was the quicker way of doing it.

**Q. All about efficiency over here. (Laughter.)**

JAMES FRANKLIN: My wife, that really drives her crazy. Ask her two different questions, I go yes, she hates that.

**Q. We talk about Drew a lot, especially last week and how he was handling the change. Where was his confidence level at Saturday before he left the game, and do you feel like you were able to build things before he exited with the injury to where he felt confident and good?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think he's been confident each week. I think his numbers back that up. His numbers are really good.

Has there been times where he hasn't been in rhythm? Yes. Has there been times where he's missed some throws that he would like to have back? Yes. Has there been times where we didn't protect him as well as we should have? Yes. Sometimes we didn't create enough separation in the passing game, whether it's tight end or receiver or running back? Yes.

But those same conversations he'll be having the rest of his career and we'll be having the rest of his career. In terms of his confidence during the week, yes. His confidence on Saturday? Yes. But there is definitely -- the exciting thing to me I think there is a ton of room for improvement with him and with us.

**Q. Green beans. Chris put some mushrooms on them Saturday. They were good. Dinner rolls, and the main Thanksgiving meal. Thankful for that.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: What do you mean? Chris who?

**Q. Chris had green beans with like a cream and mushroom in the media room. You're not up there.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Was it Thanksgiving meal? I didn't know that. I wasn't aware of that. So you're talking about a mushroom soup over the top?

**Q. I don't know if it was a full soup, but tasted good. Green bean casserole.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Who provided this meal? Just so the





BJC Catering people know, the green beans with the mushrooms were a hit.

**Q. There was a report last week that a recruit said you told him before the Michigan game that Mike Yurcich wasn't going to be here. I wondered if you could clarify that or had the decision already been made.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think you guys know me well enough that that's not the case. I can't talk specifics about recruits as you guys know, but I think you guys know me well enough.

Every recruit that I have ever met with I talk to the recruit about committing to Penn State and committing to me, because the nature of college football, I don't want there to be a coaching change or coach leaves to go be the head coach at Virginia Tech or Old Dominion or Mississippi State and now all of a sudden you're unsure.

So I cover that with every single recruit, but I also can see that based on the timing of how things played out that for a young kid, him kind of connecting the dots in the wrong way.

But I know the media that covered that and is talking to a young kid can kind of figure it out, you know. I think you guys know how I go about my business. I would never do that. That doesn't make sense. But for a young kid, I could see how the timing of that, you would connect those dots, and they're not really connected.

But I know all of you guys wouldn't connect the dots that way and wouldn't write it that way because you've been around me and how I go about things for a while. Wouldn't put a kid and recruit in that type of position.

**Q. Flash past or go-go?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: What's that?

**Q. I was trying to cause problems. The flash fast offense of the go-go offense. (Laughter.)**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Oh, yeah.

**Q. Green beans, biscuits, and leftovers. Biscuits wasn't an option, but I run my own playbook.**

JAMES FRANKLIN: That's fair. That's fair.

**Q. My mom said the other week it looked like you could use some cranberry sauce. I don't know what her plan is. It seems almost impossible the off-season is going to come and no one is going to want to hire**

**Manny. As I understand it, which might not be right, his arrangement with Miami makes it a different sort of retention situation for you guys in terms of what he's taking home. Aside from the fact that you've been supportive of guys getting head coaching jobs, pairing that potential with the offensive coordinator hire, how do you attack that, especially in the face of everything that's about to change in the league?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think as you guys know, every off-season that's a challenge when you have good people and you have talented people. We got to do everything we possibly can to retain them and for them to feel good and appreciated, and that's with the entire staff. That's with the entire staff. No doubt about it.

I think what we talked about in the past is what can we do and what do we need to do here at Penn State to make sure that guys don't leave for lateral moves. To me, that's really the main focus. We got to make sure that assistants don't leave for assistant positions and coordinators don't leave to be coordinators. If guys have a chance for a clear, obvious promotion, we want that for him.

We like to create a situation here for Manny and his family that he wants to be here until he has an opportunity to get a really good head coaching job that's going to allow him to flourish. I think Brent handled it probably as well as any. He had a great job, turned down a bunch of jobs waiting for the right one.

What happens is I think the older and the longer you're in this profession you recognize that, right? It's assistant coaches not leaving for titles. If the assistant coaches have an opportunity to go be the coordinator and call the offense or defense or special teams, then they should do that if that's what they want to do professionally.

But for myself and Pat and Vinnie, we're going to try and go everything we possibly can to make sure that guys aren't leaving for lateral moves.

And to me, that's the focus. The other opportunities, I think that's in their best interest if it's the right job, and it's also I think a complement to what we're doing here.

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