

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Pat Narduzzi

### Press Conference

Pitt - 21, Syracuse - 10

PAT NARDUZZI: Okay. Obviously we're 1-0 in the ACC and the goal was to come out here today and be 1-0. It's a win. It was a lot uglier than I would like it to be and I told the team afterwards. Just disappointed more with just the penalties that we had, just some stuff that you don't expect to happen at all. Run down, run down, you know, the things, I mean, Hargrove has a 15-yarder after a first down, we get a holding call after a quarterback back scramble. We get a turnover down on the, whatever, inside the 20-yard line and we spin the ball, we get 15. We, the next series, we stop them, thank God. Next series we got a guy jumps over the punt wedge, I guess, which, again, you can't do it, and it's a freshman. But just things like that just can't happen. I just told them championship teams don't do those things. Really, the entire game, four quarters was really more about what we did, not what they did.

So disappointed in the execution of just a lot of things today. But the defense played outstanding. We gave up one touchdown in the first half. It was a busted coverage and really gave them that too. We gave them a field goal and, again, gave them, defense went three and out and we gave them three points there. So really gave them the 10 points and just disappointing.

So questions.

#### **Q. How did you think Rashad looked in his first game back?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I thought he looked outstanding. I thought Rashad coming back, it was great to get him and Keyshon back, and they practiced all week. It was good to get both of them back. And I'm sure we'll watch the tape and say there's a lot of things he could have got better at, but he's so smart and made a lot of plays today.

#### **Q. This game kind of looked a lot like last year. Were you kind of hoping to show more of a killer instinct in the fourth quarter this season?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know, of course. Of course, we would like to. I think that's the disappointing thing. And, again, we kind of kept them until the game. We could have knocked them out early in the third quarter. We gave them opportunities and, again, defense stood up and survived. Special teams, still disappointed in our field goal team. And again, a lot of things I'm disappointed in, but I'm happy we got the W.

#### **Q. Was that the vibe too in the locker room post-game with your players and assistant coaches, that you guys feel like you guys maybe didn't to enough today?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No doubt about it, because I told them that's the vibe. I'm sure they see it. They know it. I got guys coming up saying, My bad, Coach, I'll never do it again. But it's, like, that stuff can't happen, the details, and but you know what? You beat an ACC opponent, made a lot of mistakes, and were still able to win by two scores, and I think that's the most important thing.

#### **Q. What do you make of some of the issues Alex Kessman had today?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I'm not sure. I'm not sure. We had -- one was a, you know, a hold problem and three. We'll look at the tape and just try to figure out what he's doing wrong. And I believe going into the game, he was 6-6 against Syracuse, all time. And the noise wasn't very much out there. They're screaming from the sideline. Like I said, I got to do more. We got to bring a whole team up when we do field goal period and just scream and shout and whatever, I don't know. But we just didn't execute. Like I said, to not execute and still win the game is a positive.

#### **Q. You often like to say that the biggest improvement is from week one to week two. Kind of what do you attribute maybe the miscues this week to? Is it mental? Is it physical? Is it maturity?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No, we grade every play mental, physical, so that's a great question. But I would say it's a lot of physical and mental, really, when you look at it. It's a combination of it. I think our kids had a great week, as good a week as I can remember having, period, which I worried about too. I was like, you know, I think I told you guys the other day, Tuesday was so good that I had to yell



at them for something just to yell at them because it was so clean. But we just didn't come out and execute. And, again, give Syracuse credit. At times they made some plays, but you make your best improvements, maybe we'll make our best improvements from ACC 1 to ACC 2. The great thing is you get a win and we can go coach them hard on Sunday when we watch that tape and fix a lot of things.

**Q. You touched on it a little bit, but what impressed you the most about your defense today?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Oh, gosh, their ability to get the quarterback. I don't know how many sacks we had, but the kids stayed in their lane. We had seven, so we're short from last year. So they did a better job protecting. And we missed a couple too. We let him go and they had a couple. But just the pressure and really the coverage. Obviously when you're getting sacks, the coverage is good. Jason Pinnock played lights out as well. I've been impressed with that guy. That guy's playing, he's playing his tail off, and that wasn't, that touchdown we gave up obviously was not his fault.

**Q. Who was supposed to be covering over the top there?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't know. I'll have to go back and watch the tape. It doesn't really matter. We'll watch the tape and see, but we obviously didn't execute.

**Q. It looked like Kenny was getting pressured all afternoon and a lot of pressure. Could you just kind of comment on that?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We'll look at the tape, but we knew, they always have a good pass rush. They did a couple things different, which we knew they would, like everybody's going to do. But they got a great coverage. They got a great secondary. That's the strength of their defense. And they did a nice job back there with the pressure and also covering our guys.

**Q. You mentioned it earlier in the week that Kenny was a little bit underrated, maybe you called him the most underrated QB in the nation. Did he open some eyes today? Did he gain some respect?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know, he gains respect from me. So I don't decide what you guys decide or the national media decides or what the ACC Network says. I just know that guy's a good quarterback. He threw the one pick in the red zone. He thought they were man and a guy popped up out of nowhere. They usually are running with those crossers and they didn't run and the guy caught him

off guard.

**Q. With Kessman's struggles here so far, does that maybe force you -- when you get into fourth and relatively short situations inside the other team's 30, does that maybe prompt you to rethink your strategy in that kind of situation, just given the missed kicks so far?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, we always do. Based on the down and distance, we're always thinking about going for it, that's our mindset. But it's got to be the right distance, no doubt about it. But no, we got a lot of faith in Alex. Again, he started off slow last year and then just heated up. So we just got to figure out what his issue is and we got a lot of faith in him.

**Q. Did you like what Vincent was able to do on the offensive line those last four minutes, trying to kill the clock and kind of just get the game over with?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, I think there was over a little over four minutes to go and it was a four-minute drill and that's what we said. I got in that huddle and said, Listen, we're going to end the game in a four-minute drill. It's a drill we work a lot, and our offense executed it to a T. They didn't use the timeouts, which I was a little shocked, but so might have been a little harder with them, get a couple more plays in, and really execute it, but they executed it, ran and got first downs.

**Q. In total Vincent had 20 touches, 18 carries and two catches. What has he kind of done in practice to kind of separate himself and earn those opportunities?**

PAT NARDUZZI: He's actually been leading in the back field and just making plays last Saturday and again he had some nice hard runs today as well. But he's doing what we want him to do and he earned those carries. I think AJ came in and did some good things, so did Daniel Carter, so I'm happy with all those guys, but Vince had a nice day.

**Q. You got the two touchdowns in the passing game, it wasn't super consistent, but those were about those medium, 17-, 20-yard passes, what, when those were working what were you guys doing right to get the ball into those spaces?**

PAT NARDUZZI: The one touchdown to Jordan Addison was a heck of a throw and a great route by Jordan, just the way we drew it up and practiced it during the week and we thought that was kind of money. And again Syracuse doesn't give up many. You look at the quarterback last year I think we had more success than really he did, throwing the ball down the field. They threw some bubbles,

but Kenny threw the ball down the field and was more impressive that way.

**Q. Talk about Jordan's play from third down, right before the second touchdown, I think it was third and 10 and he went for 12.**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, what's the question?

**Q. Third and 10, late in the second quarter terrible, Jordan caught a pass on the sideline and bowled for 12 yards to get the first down.**

PAT NARDUZZI: It's a great play. It's an effort play, he's a guy that we trust, we handed him off the ball a few times as well. He made some plays today and he doesn't play like a freshman.

**Q. Lucas had a couple of drops today. Was that just first-game jitters and were you able to talk to him about that?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, you don't want to talk to him too much during the game. He dropped one, came back caught one, then he drops another one that was right there. I don't need to beat him up, he'll beat up himself over that and we just got to get him on the JUGS and keep working it. But maybe first game being the guy and we expect him to make those plays.

**Q. You guys average just under three yards a carry and you talked about Syracuse diverse fronts. What did you grade out, what are your initial reactions to the way your offensive line played today?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know, they played okay, we'll watch the tape and see what we did and what we didn't do, it's hard to say, but they played well enough to win.

**Q. Some of the penalties seemed, I guess random is maybe the best way to put it, but a couple of the illegal formations and things like that seemed like things that could be cleaned up. What do you put on those happening here in the second game of the season at this point?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think we had one in the opener and we continue to just not get lined up perfect. And we had a couple on the punt team as well where we had some misalignments or just, you know, not being on the ball or off the ball, so we just got to clean them up and again go from week two to week three and clean that stuff up. We should have zero pre-snap penalties. Zero.

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