

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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## Pat Narduzzi

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We will hand things off to coach for his opening comments.

PAT NARDUZZI: Obviously as we sit here on this Monday, it's always nice to be 2-0, not play your best football. I still think the best football is ahead of us. I don't think our kids are particularly happy as well after just watching the tape, seeing the situations we put ourselves in. The details weren't there.

That game could have very well been 30-zip or 42-zip. You just leave some plays out there, which like I said, it's great to win a football game and still have a lot of things to clean up.

That's why they call us coach. It's why we like to coach the game, is to make things better. We're like the doctors of football. We get to go fix them all. If nobody got sick, there wouldn't be a use for doctors. If nobody messed up and had problems, there would be no use for coaches. That's why they call us coach.

We look forward to correcting some of the things we made mistakes at, clean it up. I'm very optimistic with the type of football team we have. I like what I see, period.

Questions.

**Q. How much of what happened on Saturday can be attributed to no spring ball, disjointed off-season, things being all messed up during the summer?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't think anything. We sit there and say that's an excuse. That's exactly what it would be, an excuse. Nothing to do with it. We had plenty of time to get stuff right. It's normal game stuff. What I saw Saturday is not different than last year in game two, three, five, six, seven. We are always going to make mistakes. As coaches we're striving for perfection. We'll take some excellence there.

We're not going to get perfection. Kids are going to make mistakes. They will not be perfect. We'll fix some



mistakes, they'll make other mistakes we've got to correct. That's just the nature of the game.

The other guys are on scholarship, they make plays, too. Offense, defense, special teams do stuff you didn't expect to see. Just the detail stuff, the penalties, all that stuff that really bothers me because that sets you back and can cost you a football game.

**Q. Jason Pinnock and the safeties, they've seen receivers like Atwell before. What are you hoping to do?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Tutu is a great player, explosive, probably a 10 400 meter guy, may be one of the fastest receivers we've ever faced. He's excellent. They'll try to get him matched up on Paris and obviously Damar, the slot receiver spot. He's dangerous.

We're going to have to have great eye control out of our DBs to stop Tutu. I love that name, too (smiling).

**Q. Do you think Paris and Damar are particularly anticipating that matchup?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think so. I think everybody would like to play against the best. He's obviously a pre-season all ACC guy. I think that's what you play this game for, is to get matched up, show what you have against the best.

It will be a great matchup for both. Both will see him for sure because they'll run formations in the boundary. Paris will get his taste and Damar will get it to the field.

**Q. Dez Fitzpatrick I think was actually recruited by you guys at one point. If you remember, what did you see from him in the recruiting process? What have you seen from him on tape?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't remember the recruiting process. I remember the guys we get, lucky that. I know he's from Michigan. Farmington Hills kid. I can't remember the recruiting. I have to go back and look at my notes.

He's a great player. Doesn't matter what he did in high school, if we recruited him or not. It comes down to what he does on tape. He's a big body receiver. He'll go up and get the ball. He's strong, got strong hands. Again,



somebody else we have to deal with.

**Q. How did Quez grade out against Syracuse?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Quez did a great job. I was excited for him. He played really well, made tackles when he needed to make tackles. He covered well. He played pretty darn good.

**Q. After reviewing the tape, have you seen anything that indicates what's going on with Kessman?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, we've noticed a couple things here. He had opportunities. We'll get it fixed, too. Same thing, coach-wise, that's our job to get him right.

I don't know how many of guys golf. Sometimes you can think too much about that or this. You think I'm going to fix this, keep my elbow straight, my hands on my club are different, maybe fix my feet, my shoulders, keep my head down, look at the ball.

There's so much to do at that position, sometimes you have to just wipe it clean, start fresh. That's what we'll do with him this week. I think we'll get him right.

**Q. Can negative thoughts also creep into pre-snap penalties?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, it certainly could. To me it's just more nerves. I don't think they're sitting there saying, Hey, don't line up wrong, then they line up wrong. Bryce Hargrove, you watch it, they called illegal procedure on Bryce. He does what he normally does. He in a three-point stance. Looking back for the indicator from the quarterback. He slaps the center. They called him for illegal procedures. It's like, What are we talking about?

There's some things that I guess on TV gets blamed on our kids, but not necessarily.

**Q. What did you make of the running game? You went to the decision to give Vincent Davis a bigger role. You get the four-minute drive at the end. As a whole, how did he run the ball?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Vince did a nice job. Like I said, nobody is taking that thing over and said, I'm the guy. I think it's kind of a work in progress still. Again, Sibley did a nice job when he was in there. A.J. did a pretty good job when he was in there.

There's so many things going on protection-wise, running the football-wise that we're just going to continue to see who's that guy back there.

**Q. If Vincent is the every-down guy, does that make someone like Daniel Carter a particularly effective change of pace, different back, bigger, he can run straight at somebody?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, A.J. Davis is the same way. Carter is that physical one. If you stood them right next to each other, one would be as thick as this podium, the other one would be thick as this mic right here. Two different paced guys. Vince is quick twitch, got a lot of wiggle to him. Daniel is going to run at your chest.

**Q. Did you watch the Louisville-Miami game on Saturday night?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Heck yeah, man. I was home early for that game. Spent a lot of time watching that. If I didn't watch it then, if it was played at the same time our game was, I'm watching TV copies. I like to see every view you possibly can.

**Q. What was going through your head? Obviously it was a track meet, high-scoring game. What were you keying in on?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I'm just trying to look at everything, just like I would a normal football game, when you don't see the all 22 videotape that we'll see in the office the next day.

You notice their speed. When I'm watching them, they're fast, their O-line is aggressive. They're very aggressive. We're going to have to work on cut blocks on the backside, some of their wide zone. They love the wide zone play.

Defensively they're active. They're athletic and they can run.

**Q. Your defense has put up some impressive numbers through the first two weeks. Do you have to change per opponent or are you a guy that tries to say this is how we play, this is how we're going to play, come at you?**

PAT NARDUZZI: They'll know how we play. We're going to kind of come at you, okay? I wouldn't say we change anything. We've installed our defense back in fall camp, just like we did our offense. Then we kind of melt to you. We'll adjust things. We got this big bucket of defense, just like we have a big bucket of offense. You pull it out, I don't like it, put it back, I like this, let's wear this today.

It's really tweaking your defense weekly to stop what they do particularly well. It's Tutu this week. Last week, I give credit to Jason Pinnock.

Taj Harris. Taj we knew lined up on their right, our left the entire game. Jason Pinnock, we lined him up, that was part of tweaking it. Usually Jason lines up to the boundary. Quez, you're to the right side, put Jason to the left side. Jason locked him down the entire game, locked him down. Any time he had him one-on-one, the guy didn't do anything. We took their best player out with just tweaking what we do.

Sometimes we're field boundary, sometimes we're right-left. Sometimes we're far sideline, near sideline. That's just talking our corners. What's the plan this week? I don't know. But we'll have it figured out.

**Q. What has DJ Turner brought to your offense?**

PAT NARDUZZI: He's somebody that Kenny can rely on. DJ has done an excellent job of catching the ball. He had three catches Saturday. Two really nice catches, not easy balls to catch, but he came up with them.

You watch tape of games here the last couple years. Thrown behind, it was a tough catch, sorry, coach, I didn't get that. DJ, he's making those plays for us. That's the first thing I said in the offensive staff meeting, That guy is making plays for us that maybe weren't made before, tough catches.

I think that is what great receivers do. Anybody can catch it right here. But who is catching it down here or behind you? There's not going to be perfect throws all the time. Quarterback is under pressure, he's going to throw it. Hopefully you make a play.

**Q. How did your offensive line grade up, pass blocking, run blocking?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Hargrove was at 93%. I think Carter graded out at 92%. Jimmy graded out at 87%. I am making up some percentages. Kidding you.

They graded out solid. One winning performance up there. Who was it? Golly. I think Carter Warren graded out at winning, everybody else was high average. They all graded out at just about winning against Austin Peay. When the competition steps up, obviously it's a little bit different. You always say if a guard grades out at 80%, does that mean the D tackle graded out at 20%?

All those grades are subjective. They did some nice things. I'll put it this way. Forget grades. As a whole, I thought our offensive line played much better. Even though they got winning grades a week ago, I thought they played better Saturday than they did the week before.

I thought there was more physical play, guys stayed on their blocks, they sustained. I was much happier this week with our O-line than I was the week before.

**Q. Right tackle, Keldrick, what did you see from him?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Not as clean as you'd like. They showed him one new front he had never seen before. I don't think he had a good answer for it. But he didn't play great. He didn't have a winning effort, put it that way. But again, he's still young, new. It's a different speed for him. He's athletic, tough. He'll bounce back.

**Q. Would you rather have faced them coming off a win or a loss like that, Louisville? Would it be better for you guys if they won on Saturday? Does that affect one week to the next?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think we got like 15 people on here. I could ask 15 people, they'd all have a different answer.

I don't know. Doesn't matter. We get to face Louisville. Win or loss, it doesn't matter. Really doesn't matter. They're going to be prepared. We're going to be prepared. We get to go play.

I really can't answer that question because I don't know. Like, we're playing with minds, feelings. Doesn't matter. I'd much rather come off a loss personally because I think you're hungrier.

I expect we're going to get the best Louisville team. They're going to be solid there. What would you rather have? Who knows. Maybe they're feeling sorry for themselves. You're flipping a coin.

**Q. Calijah Kancey had the second most tackles for loss, second most sacks. How do you feel about his performance? Do you think he'll see an increase in snaps or you'll change up the way you're using your interior defensive linemen?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We rotate those guys through. Calijah had a heck of a game. Explosive. We want to see him do that every day in practice as well. If you can pass that message on. Can't be a sometimes thing.

I don't want to hear about gamers. I've had gamers come and say, Coach, I know I didn't practice well, but I'm a gamer. Guess what? We're not going to find out in the game because you ain't getting in there.

He has gotten better every week. Calijah as a football player we know is explosive, he has the ability to get to the

quarterback. He'll get better. He's still a baby. He's learning how to practice. He's learning from the older guys. It's just a matter of fitting into that culture as far as the way we practice every single day. He's going to be a great player for us. Based on Saturday, his reps will increase, but so will his practice habits, too.

**Q. Cunningham and Hawkins, obviously we haven't touched on them yet. What does Hawkins do that might be different from other backs you faced in the past? Cunningham, how he operates the offense?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Javian is explosive, put it that way. When he gets the ball, looks like he's shot out of a cannon. Besides the O-line running their tracks and zone, you notice Hawkins is running downhill. He's flying. That's one thing I notice about him.

Obviously Michael, he's a great player. Got a great arm. Throws all the intermediate balls really well. Can low the deep ball. He can run. Makes good decisions for the most part. Obviously they're happy with him. He's a high-ranked quarterback in the ACC, in the country. There's a reason why. He's athletic, a guy that can do a lot of different things.

We're going to have to wrap them up. Tutu, Javian, Michael, we're going to have to wrap those guys up because they're explosive. A lot of weapons.

**Q. You said you felt like that game could have been 42-0. It's easy to figure out how you could not give up the 10 points on defense, the turnover. How can your offense double its production from what it should on Saturday? What things do you need to see from them?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You have to execute. When you watch the tape, one guy didn't do this, whether it was a chip in a defensive end or tackle inside on pass protection so Kenny has time to throw it where it's supposed to be. Kenny missed a couple throws as well. He wasn't perfect.

I mean, it's just making plays when you're supposed to make them. Don't have a penalty in this area. Three times where we had to send our field goal kicker out there. I said, We can all point at the kicker. There's those fingers pointing back at ourselves. How about we score touchdowns when we're inside the 25 yard line? I want touchdowns, not field goals. I don't want to send the kicker out there, I want to send our offense out there and celebrate in the end zone. They don't say, Our goal this week is to kick a bunch of field goals. The goal was execute in the red zone, sudden change, whatever it may be.

I think we punted once and kicked a field goal. Maybe it's two field goals. We didn't score off those short fields, one at the 49 and one at the 33 yard line.

**Q. You know Alex is capable. How is that conversation? What kind of adjustments does he need to make to make those kicks?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We won't get into the adjustments. I got a ton of faith in Alex. He's a mature kid, smart, he gets it. He is the last guy that wants to let anybody down.

Like I told him, I'm not sweating it because I got faith in you. I know he'll get it fixed. The great thing is he didn't cost us a loss. He's out there getting his practice in. He's not doing well. He's no different than a left guard or a corner that didn't cover a guy or held on a play. He didn't execute properly, neither did Kirk the one time as far as just putting a hold down.

I got a ton of confidence that he's going to get that thing done. Not worried about it.

**Q. Far from a perfect game. You said that at halftime. You still won. What does that say about your team?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Again, last year we played down a little bit. We come back at the end of the game, try to win it. I like that part.

I think we got a great football team. I think we can do great things. But we got to execute and pay attention to details more. I go back, we practiced really well last week. But we almost practiced so well it scared me.

We'll find out what we do this week practice-wise. But we got a good football team. Got a football team that's capable of going to do whatever they want to do.

**Q. You mentioned the offense needs to deliver, execute in the red zone. Other than the pass to Jordan, a lot of the stuff was short. Were there plays open downfield to be made or was it there wasn't maybe time for those plays because of the pressure Kenny was facing?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Sometimes it's the pressure. Sometimes there were guys open. You'll see there were some guys open at times that we didn't hit. It's a little bit of everything.

But it's a matter of just executing and having time, everything being right. Again, it could be a runningback that just slips off and doesn't get a big piece of that three technique, whatever it may be. All of a sudden the quarterback gets pressure, has to run to the left when it's

open to the right, so... Sometimes happens like that.

**Q. Nobody else is going to ask. I see you're wearing the shirt. What do you think about the uniforms for this week?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I love the uniforms. I've kind of known about the uniforms for a couple weeks. The Steel City pride, I guess. I don't know if I'd say I was involved in some of the designing. Hey, I like that, I don't like that.

When you talk about the devil, Samuel yelling at the devil with the hammer in his hand. The steel in this city, the cathedral, if you knew the backdrop and story about it. Joe Magarac, the cartoon character, the gloves have the yellow reddish fire where you can bend steel with your hands. It's a neat theme.

I don't think our kids really realize what they're putting on. I think they like the look, but later in the week I want them to know why it looks like it does.

It's Pittsburgh through and through. It's the Steel City. We got to go out and play with some pride with those things on.

**Q. Do you think there's anything to the mentality of look good, play good?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think for sure. I think if we went out there dressed in our rags, or in our pajamas, I think we might play like we're half asleep.

If you look good, you do play good. We want our kids to look good. They look good in our normal uniforms. The kids love a different look to go out there. I think they'll be excited.

**Q. You've talked about the disappointment of Saturday. Can there be some good that comes from that early in the season, guys don't get complacent, feel themselves a little too much?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No question. You hit the nail on the head really. There's always good from it. I didn't go home and pout because you got a win. They're hard to get regardless. You're playing an ACC opponent, they're hard to get. We've seen they're hard to get through the years here.

Again, we as coaches expect that perfection as we talked about earlier. We're not going to get it. We want to get as near as this we can. It's my job to get the team ready mentally, physically to perform the best they can. When they don't, obviously I'll be mad.

Again, it will just make our kids come back hungrier this week. If we had blown them out, then I'd really worry about them thinking they could blow everybody out every Saturday. There's some good to it.

Again, there were a lot of great plays out there, great players offensively and defensively. Negative coaches, we always talk about the negative stuff unfortunately. I don't remember all the nice plays. I remember all the, Are you kidding me? Why did he do that? What are we doing? Those are the plays that coaches focus on that. The things that look good, I don't need to address that.

**Q. It's kind of weird talking about statistics nationally because not everybody is playing yet. If you look at it, the ACC has 11 teams in the top 40 defensively. Is that a byproduct of the offenses being ahead of defenses at this time of year?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think there's only 40 teams playing maybe. I don't know what it is. I don't really look at the stats. I don't even care. It's weird. I don't know how the whole year is going to go. The Big Ten is going to play. The SEC playing this weekend? I don't even know. It's just weird. The whole deal is weird.

I don't know how the AP poll works. USA Today, it's supposed to be a coaches' poll. That is the dumbest coaches' poll I've ever seen. They should take the word 'coaches' off it when you don't have teams that are playing there, have teams that haven't got a win yet, other teams have played two games. I don't get it. I don't look at the stats, the poles.

All that stuff, you can't compare it to normal years. You can go say, We're No. 1 in rush defense, No. 1 in passing offense. Right now what does it matter? How many teams aren't even playing? Looks like there were six games canceled last week because of COVID.

I'm focused on our football team, trying to get better every week, making sure our kids stay healthy and safe.

**Q. I asked a defensive coach an opportunity to tout defense and he punted on it. That's not your style. You're supposed to say this is like the '85 Bears.**

PAT NARDUZZI: The defensive coaches, they love punts. When you're a defensive coach, you love to punt. We just punted.

I'm telling you the truth. I'm not telling you what you want to hear. I'll tell you it doesn't matter. It matters what we do after 11, championship game, bowl game, whatever you

end up getting to. It doesn't really matter.

**Q. You don't pay attention to these things, but do you think your players know or care, this is one of those rare games between two ranked teams?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No, I don't think they care. I don't think they knew. E.J. told me that yesterday. I don't think they know. I will not mention it. I don't really care. I'm worried about one game right now, worried about a really good, talented, athletic Louisville team coming into Heinz Field. I'm worried that our kids are mentally and physically prepared for that game.

**Q. Speaking of you're facing a ranked opponent, can you give us insight, who are some of the young players that you're looking at specifically this week now that you've had time to look at the tape, thinking these guys need to step up?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I would say Izzy is one of those guys at tailback that you want to see just have a great week of practice, go out there and explode. Offensively I want to see Danny Moraga get a little more action as well. Not necessarily a young guy, but a new guy. Receivers have done some stuff.

Defensively Bangally Kamara is a guy that's talented, athletic. I'd like to see him not jump over the punt shield as freshmen sometimes do. He's got a chance to be a really good football player.

Trying to think of who else. Did I mention all the young guys? Probably missed somebody. Somebody will be mad at me. Possibly Dayon Hayes. He got reps last week, find out where he is.

With Rashad Weaver and Patrick Jones out there, it's hard to put some young guys out there.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, everyone.

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