

University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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Pat Narduzzi

Press Conference



Notre Dame - 45, Pitt - 3

PAT NARDUZZI: First off, Notre Dame's got a great football team. They played like the No. 3 team in the country today. They made plays on the ball. We had three interceptions. We lost the field position war big time. You're never going to win a game, you're probably going to lose big when you throw three interceptions. Joey didn't have a great day.

But like I said, you got to give their offense and their defense and their special teams credit. They made plays and we didn't. But time of possession, 40 to 20, we couldn't sustain drives offensively and put our defense in tough situations and when you do that against the No. 3 team in the country you're going to have problems winning football games. So I'll open it up for questions.

Q. How do you explain how things got out of hand there? You mentioned a couple stats there but what actually went wrong?

PAT NARDUZZI: I'll going to start off, again, giving Notre Dame credit, period. They're the No. 3 team in the country. They played like it. They're as good a football team I have seen walk on the field in the last six years. They're talented from front to back on both sides of the ball and we got beat by a better football team, period.

I'm sure the tape will see that. I'll watch the tape and we'll evaluate it and probably have more answers for you when we get together again. I don't know whether that's Monday or not. I don't know what our schedule is with EJ. But I feel comfortable talking with you again on Monday, if that's what EJ says. I don't know what our schedule is with the open week, but I would like to watch the tape before I make any comments.

But, again, I want to give credit to Notre Dame. They are a really good football team. They're physical. They're big, like I told you last Monday. They're a talented football team. I thought we would stack it up better. I thought we would be able to throw the ball better. I did not think we

would run the ball great on that front, which they're a top run defense in the country, I think, you know, and that's what it is.

So we'll look. We'll re-evaluate. We'll regroup. I think we need an open week. I think there's only two Power 5 teams in the country that played 7 games, or 6 games for that matter, and we just got to regroup and find ourselves.

Q. With 1:22 left in the first half there, you guys have three timeouts, you're on Notre Dame's 36-yard line. I mean, you guys kind of just sit on the ball. Are you content at that point going into the half with what it was or what happened there?

PAT NARDUZZI: I'm never content. But with 1:22, I don't feel like we were going get into a two-minute drill and do anything crazy, and then we give up a blocked punt. But with 1:22 and the backup quarterback in there, didn't want to go slinging it around the park and see something bad happen. So we figured we needed to regroup and get in at the half and just see what we had to do.

Q. I think it was early in the second quarter you guys had the -- decided to punt at Notre Dame's 37. Was there any -- what was the process there in deciding not to have Alex attempt a long field goal?

PAT NARDUZZI: Another field goal, just, I think it was going to be a longer field goal than we wanted to. The wind out there was swirling a little bit at that time and just didn't feel comfortable. Thought it was better off to just pin them, not give them a short field and play defense.

Q. The defense has given up a lot of big plays, long touchdowns during these last four games. Is it simply just -- is it the front end not getting home or are there mistakes in the back end that you're seeing repeatedly?

PAT NARDUZZI: There's a little bit of both. The one they hit, the big one, we brought pressure, we hit the quarterback right as he released it. So, again, I would have to watch the tape and see how our paths were when we did blitz. We did blitz on that down. We were in cover 3. And you got a 6'3" receiver on a smaller corner, I think, a little push off, whatever, a little lean on a guy, and number 11 makes a big play. And then Eric came out of



the middle of the field and he's got to finish it up and at least give us another yard to stay in down there.

Q. Talk about the quarterback play. You mentioned Yellen having a rough day, but also Beville, he looked like he only got one series in before you went to Patti. What was it like to kind of juggle quarterbacks out there today?

PAT NARDUZZI: Not easy. You know, it's not easy juggling quarterbacks, but we'll look at the tape and see where we are with the quarterback. But it's not easy when you have your backup in there and, again, against a really good defense.

Q. When talking about some of those long touchdowns that you guys have given up during the ACC play here, as a coach, what, if anything, can be done to fix that or to prevent those or, at this point, does this just seem like kind of a fundamental flaw with this group?

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't know if I would call it fundamental flaws. Our defense was on the field for a long time today, almost 41 minutes. We got to make plays on the ball. We'll look at the pass. We'll look at what happened. You know, give Ian Book a lot of credit. Even when we did try to -- almost get him, almost get him, how many times did we almost get him, and he scrambled. He might have been the leading rusher. He had a nice day rushing the ball and scrambling out of there, which we knew he had escapability. He's a great athlete. He didn't make any bad decisions. We didn't force him to make bad decisions. He put the ball up where it needed to be. And like I said, I give Ian Book credit. We put a lot of guys on their back in the back field and we couldn't catch him today. He was outstanding and he manages the game. And I told you, he's a leader. We just didn't get him. There's opportunities we had to put him in -- whether it was getting off the field on third down and sacking him and all of a sudden he scrambles for -- I think, the first series of the game he had two third down scrambles where we just couldn't get off a block and make a tackle on him.

So we'll look at that, and as I said, their offensive, line 129 starts, they played like it today, we couldn't get the pressure and Ian Book made people miss.

Q. Do you expect to get Kenny back this season?

PAT NARDUZZI: Absolutely. Absolutely. Hopefully sooner than later. He was out there today and he had a good week, he's doing really well. We'll see. Might be a stretch for Florida State, I don't know, but we'll see.

Q. Can you talk more about the offensive side. There were a lot of drops, so how would you address that going into the bye week here and kind of coming out there?

PAT NARDUZZI: We'll look at the tape, I don't know if there was a lot of drops, I don't know if we had enough balls where they needed to be. I'm not sure how accurate we were today as quarterbacks and throwing the football. We'll look at that.

But we got to make plays when the ball comes to us. We had a couple balls that weren't put where they need to be put. Whether it's over the middle and hanging a receiver out, whatever it may be, we'll look at the tape and see exactly where we are there.

Q. It looked like Paris wasn't very happy about when he came out of the game in the third quarter. Can you talk about what came into the decision to take him out then?

PAT NARDUZZI: It was nothing that we were taking him out for any reason, we talked all week just by rotating those guys that we wanted to get Brandon Hill in the game and get him active. We thought with a lot of the 12 personnel we were seeing, the two tight ends that -- Brandon's a good football player. Brandon, in my opinion, is a starter at safety as well. We got a lot of faith in him, he's a good hitter and that's really what it was.

But nobody wants to be taken out of the game, he wasn't taken out of the game for any reason except to give Brandon Hill a series. And I guess he wasn't happy, I'm not sure, but that happens sometimes.

Q. You talked about the bye week coming up and just getting this team back on the winning track, what was the message at halftime if you could share it to just get these guys focused moving forward?

PAT NARDUZZI: I said, Hey it's 0-0 at halftime we're going to go out and play and I think our kids played hard. We were just outmatched today, for whatever reason. Like I said, I'm going to give credit to Notre Dame, I think they're big, I think they're physical, I think they're fast, obviously they're well coached. And the message at halftime was, Hey, we go out and regather and go. And I can't tell you we played a worse second half than we did first half. It was about the same, from what I saw, except for a couple picks and a couple more short yards.

We gave up a blocked, you know, a blocked punt, and they didn't score in the fourth quarter. And we had a 49-yard drive for a touchdown and you had a 35-yard drive for a

touchdown. So those are short fields and offenses will drool when they get those short fields. It opens up the playbook to do whatever you want to do. You're in four-down territory in both those situations and it's not easy. Both touchdowns, I believe, they had a field goal, you know, looking at it, 14-play, 72-drive, our guys played hard, forced the field goal in the third. And then we had, like I said, that 49-yard drive and a 35-yard drive for touchdowns. And our guys never quit and I never questioned their effort. Like I said, I'm not so sure the second half wasn't better than the first half, but it's a good football team that we played today. They're the No. 3 team in the country and I would imagine you are probably looking at a Clemson/Notre Dame, based on what I've seen in an ACC Championship game.

Q. Do penalties bother you more than anything else?

PAT NARDUZZI: No, penalties? No, there's a lot of things that bother me. I don't know what the penalties were for the day. But now I'm just looking at it right now. 12 penalties? Yeah. There's just little penalties here and there and they will get you. So, yeah, penalties bother me when I see 12 and that's more than we had last week.

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