

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 4, 2021  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Pat Narduzzi Press Conference

Pittsburgh 51, UMass 7

PAT NARDUZZI: It's good to get number one under our belt. I thought our kids came to play. Early in the first half we did some things just to slow us down, whether it was a turnover, misalignment by a young receiver that can't do it, just an unforced error. We had, I think, two turnovers and we had a snap go over the head in the second half.

But overall offense put up 51 points, and the defense was pretty nasty early.

Like I told the guys in there, you make your biggest improvement from week one to week two, I truly believe that, and we'll clean up a lot of things. I think some of the guys will find out if they should be a starter.

This is a good scrimmage. It's scrimmage number three. We only have two during camp, and that was scrimmage number three, and you can find out when the live bullets are flying who's going to make a play and who's not.

So there's a lot of great things out there. We'll look at the tape and I'll have more information for you on Monday.

Questions?

### **Q. Vincent Davis out there in the second half, was that part of the plan?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I said something to Andre, I said, it's hard to get them all in there. But when Vince got out there, he's special.

Just going from what we saw in camp, and thought Izzy did some good things, I thought Rodney Hammond did some good things. Daniel Carter got in late and got himself a nice run.

We'll look at the tape. Disappointed in that first fumble out of A.J., but overall good. I think just coach's decision, and I think Vince is a good football player.



### **Q. What were you hoping to see out of Lucas Krull, him missing basically an entire year?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No doubt about it. I don't know when the last time we had a tight end in with five catches, and Gavin I think had two, so you look at seven catches out of that tight end. We've got to keep those two healthy.

I think Jake Zilinskas came in and gave us some good reps as far as just blocking. But it's good to see our tight ends get out there and make some plays, and Lucas is a big target. Got to be great for his confidence. He didn't start off that good a year ago, but he's rolling. Right where he needs to be. He's excited, and I think confidence is good for everybody.

### **Q. Your defense kind of overwhelmed the UMass offensive line. Who stood out for you on defense?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't want to sit here and say -- the first guy I'll talk about is Kancey. I thought Kancey did. Johnny Petrishen did some nice things. But we'll look at the tape. I think they had three 1st downs in the first half, so a lot of guys stood out. It takes 11. One of their mottos is 11 as one, and it takes 11 playing together. I don't like a couple of those drives at the end.

We had I call it a selfish penalty with David Greene, who didn't hit the quarterback late from the interpretation, but kind of the way he drove him into the ground that they didn't like.

We haven't had the opportunity to drive many quarterbacks into the ground, so we've got to clean that up. That caused a drive where they missed a field goal, and then their only touchdown they scored was on a snap over the head.

Nick changed a play and Owen thought he said hike and I think it was on the first sound and he snaps the ball. That was their only touchdown drive off a turnover.

### **Q. Four sacks from linebackers; typically your defensive line has been the leader for you, especially your ends there, but you have a really experienced group of linebackers. Do you see this playing out this way with this team, those guys being able to lead the pass rush, as well?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, they're going to have to. When we blitz them we expect to get home. Phil Campbell I thought played great. You'll watch one of his first hits on the quarterback, if he just sticks hand out here, knocks the ball out, a turnover on a quarterback is more important than a sack, counts as a sack as well.

But get the ball out down on about the 20 yard line. But we've got some experienced linebackers that are explosive, they're fast, and we'll get our pressure from them like we did a year ago, and our D-ends will get -- I think we missed some plays. Our defensive ends there's a couple times they got away, and we're going to have to be a lot better against Tennessee.

**Q. Talk about your offensive line progressing through the game, not only the 4th and 1 stop, but ultimately you got guys got four different running backs with touchdowns in this game. How did you feel about that?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, I wish we didn't have the puppy in there. I think Rodney was in there. I don't think he ran it as hard as he needed to. Probably a coaching issue there.

First we need to get him going, probably coaching mistake there. He just didn't put his head down. I would hope he could bury it in there. Probably had some nerves going on and some butterflies flies in his stomach. We'll look at the tape and find out why, but I thought they did a good job.

Started off a little slow, but you've got to run the ball to get a feel for it, and I think once you start running it and you go, okay, I was happy with the way they ran the ball, and we're only going to get better.

**Q. You called Kenny Pickett a warrior before he took a really nasty shot early on but came right back out. Can you talk about what you saw?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, I mean, he's a war daddy, warrior, whatever you want to call him. He's tough. Again, just took a shot in the chest, I guess. I didn't see it. My eyes were down the field.

But he's fine, and it was good to get Nick Patti out there and good to get Davis Beville on the field as well. So we got three quarterbacks reps today, and Davis took him down for a touchdown, and Nick scored one himself.

**Q. He seems like such a confident guy out there --**

PAT NARDUZZI: He's confident and made good decisions. He didn't like where he was going to try to throw it, and then tucks it and goes, but he threw a nice first

pass. I think he threw his first completion on an out to Shocky maybe. They're all blending together.

But we'll go back and look at it him and Davis had some nice throws.

**Q. Jaylon Barden hit a long touchdown downfield and then the kickoff return, as well.**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, kickoff return; I wish he'd scored. He should've stayed on the outside, I guess. We'll look at the tape and see, but he's explosive, he's fast, and we saw good things out of him. Shocky, as well. Shocky had a nice second quarter.

**Q. Were you surprised Kenny came back in after one snap?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No. Are you surprised?

**Q. I wasn't out on the field.**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know Kenny Pickett.

**Q. How bad was he hurt?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Not very bad. Just got the wind knocked out of him, I think.

**Q. Your running backs only, I think, Hammond had eight carries and that was the most. Were you guys trying to spread it out and get everyone involved?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We were just trying to find out what we got. A.J. started it off, like I think I told you guys on Thursday, and we spread it out and we're going to look at the tape and find out who we've got to go, because we can't play four backs all year, or five backs. I don't know how many played today, but it's hard to get them all in there. We will look and see what we like and go from there.

**Q. Two kickers, they both kicked, like you said. How would you -- obviously Sam missed one, but what did you think of their --**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think, again, we missed an extra point, which only extra point I can remember was in Boston a year ago, so we can't miss those. Those could become critical points next week in Tennessee.

I thought they both kicked well. We'll look at it. First time both those guys going out there in live action. Good scrimmage for them.

**Q. (Indiscernible) linebacker again at the start. What have you seen from his progression as a linebacker in terms of knowing defense and being comfortable in those calls and that situation?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, he's a smart kid, one of the smartest guys on our defense without a doubt. Wendell does a nice job, too. We've got two starting Mikes and Chase Pine can go in there, as well. Those guys are kind of floating from the money or the boundary backer in Mike and he can play it all, but Voss had a great week of practice and we gave him the start, but we feel great with Wendell, as well.

**Q. In the second half there you had some of the starters come out, and having some of those guys come off the bench there, who really stood out to the in the second half there?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I kind of mentioned to you guys about Jaylon Barden, just watching him catch that deep ball. Again, we saw the tailbacks, but that's the one guy that came off the bench and had two nice catches, I thought, over on their sideline.

I didn't know if he was going to look fast enough on that last ball. Looked like he was jogging down the field and all of a sudden he snatched that ball, but kept his feet inbounds so I would say him and then it's hard inside. You had a true freshman, Terrence Moore, playing center, so I think he had a little penetration one time, but overall I thought you put a young freshman in there at offensive center, he's got a nice future here.

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