

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Pat Narduzzi

### Press Conference

Pitt - 30, North Carolina - 23 (OT)

COACH NARDUZZI: What a ball game, huh? You guys sleeping in here or what? I'm so happy for those guys in that locker room. Veterans Day. Great win. Want to thank all the veterans out there across the country. Everybody that protects this country and fights for us, you know. Our kids fought hard just like they have fought and appreciate all the efforts today.

What do you say? I talked to our defense today. We had a 30-minute meeting over in the Durats [phonetic]. And after base got done I said, everybody's talking about offense. You win championships with defense. That was a championship effort today by our defense. Three fourth-down stops. We turned the ball over late. Forced them to a field goal.

There was talk about letting them score and we would go down and score. I was, like, I can't do that. We're going to stop them here, but when they got it down to, I think, the 1.

Just incredible efforts by a bunch of guys. M.J. Devonshire with the finishing touch, and I think Cobb [phonetic] puts the pressure on the quarterback at that time. Our kids were fresh. That was part of the plan.

We didn't practice much this week. We had to keep them fresh and I got that from Coach Tomlin. I appreciate Coach Tomlin and how they deal with it in the NFL. It's nice to have neighbors like that.

We took it easy. We had a Sunday jog through. We had a Monday walk through, which is a Tuesday and Wednesday practice. And then we played fast on Tuesday which was our perfect Thursday practice. I thought our kids' legs were fresh. To me that was critical to winning the game today.

Our kids played -- I don't think they want to practice anymore. I think they just want to walk through, jog through and get ready to go.

**Q. What was the big change in the second half when**

**your offense had trouble (indiscernible)?**

COACH NARDUZZI: You know what, I don't know. I don't know what it was. We'll watch the tape and find out. I didn't see any adjustments out of them defensively. They played a lot of different coverages, trying to confuse people. We'll look at the tape and find out.

But they did a nice job in the second half and that happens sometimes. Great teams find ways to win it in a different way. That's what our kids did today.

**Q. (Question off microphone). Was it frustrating that you couldn't run the ball?**

COACH NARDUZZI: They couldn't run the ball either. I don't know what we rushed for. Hey, that sometimes happens. You can't get frustrated. You give them credit. They've got a bunch of good football players over there, too. They've got a bunch of four- and five-star guys, top-10 recruiting classes. And it just didn't look like it today, the way Pitt played.

**Q. (Indiscernible) on fourth down, the defense 0-for-4 holding North Carolina (indiscernible)?**

COACH NARDUZZI: I think we're number one fourth-down defense in the country. I think people should probably just punt or do something else. Our kids, again, give the defense credit. Give our players credit, our coaches credit. They've done a great job all year long. And they did it again today.

Those are some huge stops. And, again, they played lights out in the first half. I counted four or five three-and-outs early, maybe out of the first six or seven series. They did some stuff in the second half offensively. Started moving the tight end around. Couldn't get a bead where the tight end was at. I don't know if that's something they made adjustments at halftime or not. But they certainly were moving around because we had them bound up pretty good early.

**Q. Devonshire, you touched on it, coming in hasn't had the impact as he would like to have. How big is it for that moment, the walk-off interception there?**

COACH NARDUZZI: It's big time. I think he's sitting in the

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room right there. Everybody gets their opportunity. When you get an opportunity you take advantage of it. That's great for his confidence, he's been playing well of late. He's been playing good all year.

You've got Damar who falls down early. Looked like me out there. But he played well. With A.J. Woods out, and I expect him to be back this week, M.J. took over as a third corner and got some quality reps today. I'm happy for him. And he's an Aliquippa boy. Good to see the Quips get it done today.

**Q. (Indiscernible) talk about the first half. (Indiscernible).**

COACH NARDUZZI: You've got to rebound. That's how you -- you have to have a short memory. And he made a couple of big plays early.

But as soon as I saw him go low, we saw the coverages they were in, we hadn't really shown him that play. He was running a slant and I thought, oh, it's going to be a touchdown here. And there it was.

And I told -- after our offense scored I told the defense and Whipple, I said, they will not score a touchdown. There's no way. I was just glad we didn't have to kick a field goal there. But I knew there was no way they were going to score on our defense. Had a lot of faith in how our kids were playing.

**Q. (Indiscernible) the linebackers on Monday going into this game. (Indiscernible), but had a really big night (indiscernible)?**

COACH NARDUZZI: He was outstanding. He's taken over that Mike position. And he makes a lot of plays in there, too. He makes them wherever he is. And I was happy with the effort he put out there today.

**Q. What did they do to protect the quarterback in the second half?**

COACH NARDUZZI: Say that again?

**Q. What did North Carolina do to protect the quarterback?**

COACH NARDUZZI: I don't know. We'll have to look at it. I think they did some different slide protections away from the back, just different stuff that, I could probably do an hour dissertation for you. But we'll see.

I didn't think we blitzed well in the second half. I thought there were times where we could have bull rushed the

tailback and knocked him into the quarterback. We let him scramble out of there. So, there's some things we gotta fix. It's a little bit what they did, but it's a lot of what we did.

**Q. What are some things that M.J. Devonshire has provided in practice and things we don't see?**

COACH NARDUZZI: M.J. is just a steady guy. He just does his job. He's trying to get better. He played safety all spring, and we moved him to corner probably at the end of the summer, just thought that was going to be the position for him. And, again, he's a steady guy. Again, he's got a lot of confidence now. So he played well for us today.

**Q. (Indiscernible) 17, maybe needed to get the run game going a little more than you did?**

COACH NARDUZZI: You try to get it, you gain one yard. Kradel was out of there. I don't think that helped a whole bunch. Houy didn't play today, probably could have. We were able to save him.

Ryan Jacoby got his waiver too. Transfer from Ohio State. We may need him as the season goes on. We're excited. Got the news Friday -- yesterday was Friday, but it was a Wednesday.

**Q. You have to keep the offense focused, how do you keep focused after that interception so late in the game, kind of turned things around?**

COACH NARDUZZI: I didn't have to do anything. I don't have to keep them focused. Kenny comes back and does what he does. That's Kenny Pickett. Nobody's perfect. That tells you what kind of competitor he is. He made a mistake, it was a screen, and we'll look at the tape see what happened there. But they made a play, we didn't. Maybe trying to force the ball in there and be the hero. But Kenny Pickett comes right back and does what he does.

**Q. What does that tell you about the group?**

COACH NARDUZZI: We've got a great football team. I think we've got a championship football team in that locker room. When you talk about the explosive offense we have and have had all year. And again our defense keeps getting better every week, I think. It says a lot about those guys in there. They work hard. And we've got a good football team in that locker room.

**Q. What can you say about the fans staying through the rain?**

COACH NARDUZZI: Love that question. Panther Pitt were outstanding. They were loud. I told Cal, at the coin



toss, I don't know if we'll win the coin toss. But we like to play defense. If we're not, we'll be right down in the end zone with the students.

My hat goes off to them. They were great. And hats off to Heather for getting those guys cranked up in the end zone, whatever those things were. She comes up with something new every week. So thank you, Heather. You've got one more next weekend, so get it done.

**Q. You mentioned earlier this week they were going to throw some design runs at you. How do you feel you guys defended that?**

COACH NARDUZZI: We did a great job. He ran a quarterback draw early and we stuck him. When you talk about pure quarterback runs, I think we handled them better than anybody did. He got us on some scrambles, I think it was poor pressure, just angles and letting them get out of the pocket. That's where he got his yards at least in the second half on scrambles where we didn't have good ratio as far as our pressure goes and just keeping him -- we just didn't do a good job pressuring.

There's times our guys should have had sacks. We'll look at the tape see. We bottled him up pretty good and again it wasn't designed quarterbacks. Phil Campbell had one hell of a -- excuse my language -- hit on fourth down and one. Him and Deslin. I think Deslin had his feet, and Phil Campbell came in. That was a big-time play down about our 30-yard line going in.

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