

University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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Coach Pat Narduzzi

Press Conference

Pitt 45, Rhode Island 24

PAT NARDUZZI: You know, good outing by our guys. Again, I say "good." I don't think it was great. I didn't think we had the emotion I think you need to come with every Saturday afternoon for whatever reason. I thought the offense ran the ball really well and were efficient.

Defense, wasn't happy. Gave up a big run. Never like to do that. Gave up some RPOs out of some different formations and stuff.

Give Rhode Island credit. They do some nice things on offense, which we knew coming in. Again, a good football team. A lot better than what we looked like back in the old days.

Coach Fleming, good football coach, and from there, again, it's a win, and preseason is over. We get into Georgia Tech and the ACC next week, and I think that's what our kids are excited about.

Questions?

Q. Isy started the year off with only 15 WVU, now he's been getting something like 155 yards per game since?

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, Isy has done a nice job. When he pops through there, he can pop through as you guys see. The offensive line did an outstanding job, so they've done -- we took what they gave us today, and we were able to run the ball, and if we can run the ball and have the ball for 35 minutes, it's a good day.

Q. Is it fair to say that this is a run-first football team with how the play calling has gone the last three games?

PAT NARDUZZI: It all depends on what they're giving us. You want to throw in if they're playing deep and giving you what they're giving us.



We'll adjust every week based on what we're seeing and what they're going to give us. I'm sure Georgia Tech will be in the box trying to stop the run, and we'll move on to them here tomorrow.

Q. Was there a goal coming into the game to attempt more lateral passes, screens, those kind of things?

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, just again, it's what it is. We were running the ball, and then you're going to have some play action off that. We tried one play action deep shot and didn't complete it.

Again, we had plenty of them in, but you just take what they're giving you.

Q. What went into Ryan Jacoby getting No. 84 but playing tight end for you guys?

PAT NARDUZZI: He had that last week.

Q. Yeah, I get that, but what's going into you guys doing that consistently?

PAT NARDUZZI: Again, it's just what we call a heavy package where we put a big tight end in there that can block, and it's like having an extra lineman in there, but he's eligible and he's got really good hands, too.

Eventually we'll get to that, too.

Q. What's your evaluation of Kedon in his first game back?

PAT NARDUZZI: I think it was okay. Again, he was efficient with the football, 20 of 27. Took what they were giving us. Didn't make bad decisions throwing the ball into coverage down the field, and I thought he was good.

Q. Is your defensive line getting enough pressure this year?

PAT NARDUZZI: Right now, no, but I think four of our top five defensive ends didn't play today, so we had a lot of guys on the D-line play. You saw a bunch of Chris Maloney and Bam Brima, John Morgan was out there, and they're getting the ball out fast, too. There's not a ton of drop back; it's a lot of run-pass option passes. Even on 3rd



down they were throwing RPOs at us, as well. You're stopping the run or trying to stop the run and trying to defend the pass at the same time.

Q. Was score what determined how much you played your starters today?

PAT NARDUZZI: Not really. We got, whatever, 14 up, we talked about at one point just getting Nate in there again and letting him go, but Coach Cignetti just wanted to stick with him and finish it the right way.

Q. What's the significance of having Daniel --

PAT NARDUZZI: We had a lot of twos in on defense, I can tell you that. Threes, maybe fours.

Q. Talk about Daniel Carter that role being able to convert those --

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, Daniel did a nice job on his carries, but he did an even nicer job in the run game. He's the best fullback we've had since George Aston as far as picking up the right guy.

A lot of those runs are springing because he's searching up there and picking up the right guy and popping as he frees, so Daniel does a nice job there, and then he does a nice job some of the carries he got today.

Q. The bulk of the yards in the first half came off of two explosives. What adjustment was made to limit those in the second half?

PAT NARDUZZI: Nothing really. Play, focus. First one was the formation in the boundary. I think we had a backup safety in there. PJ was in there, and I think PJ ran right into the back of John Morgan. He's got to find the hole, and that's not very good by our twos.

Some guys earned playing time, some guys will lose playing time based on how they performed today. You try to give guys opportunities, but you give a guy an opportunity and he gives up a big run, it's not good.

Q. What happened there with the onside kick at the end? Was that something you guys called?

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, it's something we called. Obviously you got the ball at the 50-yard line, we can kick it deep. The first time we had that earlier in the year, I forget what game it was, Tennessee or whatever, we kicked it deep, but someone has got to be aware of that kick, and you got the ball at the 50-yard line, there's not much risk after a 15-yarder for roughing our kicker on the one. Junko

hadn't gotten a lot of reps at it, either. So kudos to not Coach Junko, to Coach Junko's grandson, for executing that properly.

Q. Is that an importance of having Isy be kind of like a workhorse/bell cow running back for that offense as something you know that you possibly can depend on week in and week out?

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, Isy has been the workhorse, and Vince had some nice runs, as well, including the one at the end, which they had three time-outs and weren't using them, so we're going to run the ball, and again, really didn't try to score but just happened to score by accident, I guess.

Q. Is your team where you hoped it would be as conference play approaches?

PAT NARDUZZI: We'll find out next week. It's never where you want it to be ever.

But again, we talked about being clean going into this game, and I don't think it was as clean. We had too many penalties. Again, we'll find out who they were.

Even on special teams we had a couple penalties. Holding on a kickoff return puts us back at the 13-yard line with 50 seconds to go in the second quarter. Just little things like that, young guys. I think that was Javon McIntyre. They've got to clean that stuff up when you get into ACC play.

Q. Are your receivers doing what you're expecting of them? Jared wasn't in today so missing the top guy, but you guys, not a lot of passes downfield --

PAT NARDUZZI: Right.

Q. Are you still looking for more from them?

PAT NARDUZZI: We're looking for more, no question about it. We were a little shorthanded there at the wide out spot, but we'll continue to get better. They'll have to play better.

Q. Did Isy scare you there at the end of the first half?

PAT NARDUZZI: No, Isy don't scare me. Isy was good. He just got rolled up on a little bit. He was good. Tight end didn't go out there very fast because I knew he was good.

Q. What did you like from Carter Johnson's blocking efforts today? Looked like you guys lined up in a lot of different places?

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, Carter is a football player. It was nice to see him get a catch and run down the sideline on a kind of play action pass. He's a good football player. He's tough. He's physical. He plays hard all the time, and he does a great job on special teams, so we're fired up to have him. He's going to help us down the road here for sure.

Q. You got special teams M.J. with the punt return in the first quarter. What is it that makes him such a lethal weapon back there?

PAT NARDUZZI: He's been a punt returner. He's only had two prior to today, and he didn't catch either one of them, so you're a little afraid of putting him back there, but we made a decision to put him back there, take some off the receivers because we're shorthanded there, and he did a nice job. He's fast, and we saw that in the WVU game. If you get the ball in his hands -- again, I think it gave him a lot of confidence today, gave the coaches a lot of confidence when he goes back there, something good can happen. Great blocking, as well.

Q. How much of the kind of defensive lapses and mistakes that you mentioned on defense can you chalk up to the fact that you were rotating so many guys?

PAT NARDUZZI: Rotating, we're playing a lot of young guys. We'll look at the tape and find out what starters or backups were in there when it happened. Like I said, the one run was PJ. Again, they get some RPOs on you, but you'd better stop the run.

I think for the most part we stopped the run except for one play. What did they rush for? Looks like they net rushed 63, and I think they had 62 on one gain so it should have been zero. But one play pops on you, you've got to make a play and you've got to fit it right.

Q. Next week's game, time undecided, but primetime football. Do you prefer a late game or do you care?

PAT NARDUZZI: I love noon games, but whenever they say we're playing, we get to play, we're excited. Doesn't matter. Time doesn't matter.

Just getting the opportunity to go play No. 5 and be 1-0 next week, that's the goal.

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