

University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 8, 2022

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach Pat Narduzzi

Press Conference

Pitt 45, Virginia Tech 29

PAT NARDUZZI: All right, guys, really fired up for our football team. Probably the best 60 minutes we've put together as a team. Obviously there's things we can still clean up, but when I look just at the whole picture of it, you came in with adversity, as well. It's a tight game going into the fourth.

I just love the way our kids hang in there, continue to fight and believe. We talked about feeding off each other, and the offense is scoring, the defensive is going three-and-out in that second half. There was just some great things going on.

Again, it wasn't just a total blowout, but the score looks like it at the end, but our kids just kept playing and fighting, and I was excited about just the way they responded to adversity in the game.

Questions?

Q. What happened to the receiver Konata Mumpfield? Was he hurt today?

PAT NARDUZZI: I would guess so, right? He was not ready to go. We've got a lot of that going on. Again, we're six games in. We've got a halftime. We get a week off, which is much needed.

I think we'll have some guys back. Rodney Hamilton will be back. Pregame, I'm like, Dude, you ready to go? He went through pregame. He looks like he's ready to go. Hopefully we'll get two starting offensive linemen back. Hopefully Konata will be back. Konata has been good the last two weeks.

But hey, that's the way it goes. That's the thing, we don't have a bunch of starters out there. Second half you've got Baldonado and SirVocea. I was worried about not having No. 7 in there in the middle just controlling things. But Shayne Simon did an outstanding job moving from the money position to the Mike and just gives you more



combinations.

I told SirVocea maybe you just got beat out by Shayne today in the second half. Looked like we stopped the run better.

Just joking. 7 will be on the field.

Q. How would you describe what Isy did today?

PAT NARDUZZI: I mean, breaking a record, Tony Dorsett record that's been there for a long, long time, I've told you for a long time, just in the right style of offense, I think someone asked the question, EJ told me, that we run first, probably should be. He's got breakaway speed. If he pops through there, good luck to you. There's not many guys that can catch him. Over 300 yards rushing, and we didn't -- he only had 36 carries. Probably could have gave it to him another 10 times.

He cramped up a little bit. I was like, get him out.

But Isy is a football player. Isy is really good.

Q. Among memorable backs, what makes Isy special?

PAT NARDUZZI: His speed. Even that one run he had down inside the 25-yard line that looked like he was stopped on a 3rd down and whatever it was, and he pops out of there and goes.

He's just strong. He's physical, and he's really fast.

That's a good combination to have as a tailback.

Q. Have you seen guys build chemistry and trust each other, like Isy can trust his linemen to hit certain plays at certain times a lot faster?

PAT NARDUZZI: Our guys got -- when we go two tight ends, even in the third quarter, went some two-tight-end stuff and kind of picked up the tempo a little bit, which was our plan going in, we thought it would be good. We thought it would shock them a little bit, and it did. We got two touchdowns off that personnel grouping alone. I think we started off with a lot more three wide outs. It was okay.

But we put the big boys in there and run it. That's what



we're going at right now. Last year we could throw it pretty good; this year we're better off pounding it down your throat a little bit.

We'll just continue to see what we are personnel-wise and get some guys back healthy.

Q. Last year you saw your quarterback kind of burst onto the national scene and get some national attention. Do you feel like that's happening with your running back right now after today?

PAT NARDUZZI: I think so, but we're just worried about winning football games. Six games in, we'll find out how he finishes. We've got more ACC games to go, and we've got to take them one at a time. We get to go to Louisville next, after a much needed open week, I guarantee you that.

Q. How would you assess how the defense has played so far this year?

PAT NARDUZZI: Just average at times. We'll look at the tape. That first half, I've just never been around where we get the ball run on us. I'm not used to it. So we'll reevaluate where we are.

I think we made some great halftime adjustments. We sat in there and looked at what we were doing, what they were doing. Again, they do a good job in their run game. Coach Rudolph I think is probably the run game coordinator and does a nice job, but there's just no -- I don't like that. I don't like anybody running the football on us. If you want to throw it, throw it, but don't let them be two-dimensional.

We let them run it in the first half. Second half, I don't know what they had yardage-wise, but we pretty much shut it down in the second half, but they can't do it in the first half.

Q. How do you assess Keaton's day? Seemed like he had a hard time seeing the field. A couple open guys that he was passing up and still checking down. How do you get him back going?

PAT NARDUZZI: We'll figure it out. We've got to get him -- make him better. We've got to make him better as coaches, so we'll look into that. I've got some ideas, and we'll figure that thing out.

Q. Isy going for as many yards as touchdowns as he did with essentially four offensive linemen either out of place or reserves, what's the say about the depth at that position?

PAT NARDUZZI: We think we're pretty deep there, and

again, the schemes are good. Coach Cignetti and Coach Borbely do a great job, and Coach Powell, just with what do we want to do run wise again just bigger people in there got more explosive things. Maybe we should have started off with two tight ends and two backs earlier, but we kind of mix around, talk at halftime, what do we want to do, and we did some great things in the second half. Again, good job coaching by our coaches in the second half.

Q. You had Branson start at left tackle the last two games over Carter. Your thoughts on how he's done?

PAT NARDUZZI: I think he's been pretty good. His nickname is "Big Baby." He's a young baby in there starting at left tackle protecting the quarterback's back, and I think he did a solid job. We'll look at the tape and see, but when you run the ball the way Isy ran it today, it's about the offensive line. We talked about hog pride, and the hogs got it done today. Did we give up a sack today? I don't even know.

Q. One.

PAT NARDUZZI: We gave up a sack in yeah, on a 3rd down and long.

Q. On John Morgan's forced fumble, what did you see from him? He's been the guy that's led you guys in the jungle pregame warmup.

PAT NARDUZZI: He loves the jungle. He loves it. I told him, make sure you don't pull a hammy in the jungle. That would be our luck, getting hurt in the jungle, because he gets fired up. You should have seen him preseason. Just warming up for us, I was like, holy cow, this guy is going to get hurt.

But John Morgan, that was a great play by him. You don't usually see a 270-pound linebacker hitting a receiver down the field, but obviously it was decent coverage. Should have been a sack on the play. I think Bangally had someone grabbing him around the neck, so there was no call there. Was not happy with that, but was obviously happy with John Morgan's hit on the receiver, and that turnover was big-time.

Q. When did you realize that Isy was going to have a special day, and were you aware what the record was coming into the game?

PAT NARDUZZI: We're not looking at any records. We're just trying to win a football game. I had no idea about the record. EJ told me after the game. We're just trying to -- we know Isy is a good football player, so every week he has a chance to -- if we get him 36 carries, he's got a

chance to break the 200-yard mark. Again, he pops through there, you don't know what it's going to be.

Q. Going back to John's play on that fumble, you'd just that given up that touchdown, then drive it back down the field. How badly did you need that play?

PAT NARDUZZI: We needed it big. We gave up a blocked punt, and it was really a dropped punt. I don't know if they blocked it; we did it ourselves. Again, another self-inflicted wound out of our punt team, so we've got to evaluate what we're doing there, how we're doing it. You've got to catch the ball. It was a little high by Byron. He's got to make the catch. That'll get us beat later on.

Q. Were you aware in a certain time that Isy has this many touchdowns or he's maybe five yards away? What's the excitement level with that, being this close to a record or tying a record? Just those emotions?

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, the records are great. I want to win football games, and I think Chris LaSala kind of muttered something to me. I was kind of like, I didn't really want to hear it, but something about 16 he needs, and I kind of spun around. I didn't know what he was talking about. And then he said, he's five yards shy. I think right before he got the cramp or the play before he got a cramp of breaking some other record. I don't care about records.

After the game I do. It's awesome for him. Tony Dorsett, one of the greatest tailbacks ever to play in Pitt history, that's pretty significant.

Q. Penalties for 76 yards; you've been talking about needing to sharpen up. How do you get your players to sharpen up so that this --

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, I mean, again, they had eight, we had nine. Whatever, don't get me into the penalties. That roughing the passer, guys, roughing the passer, are you kidding me? I thought the fans might crash the field.

But whatever, I just try to -- I send the plays in, we'll get them looked at, and I can just tell you this: We've had about a 50 percent response back that we agree, it's a bad call, but we've had 50 responses on plays that don't get called. We've gotten cut, whammed and cut, this new chop rule that never gets called, and Dennis Hennigan has done an outstanding job of getting us responses saying sorry, Coach.

Some of those we'll look at. There was a push off of one of their touchdowns, and then they're calling P on us. Those are all things -- don't get me fired up. Officials are doing a great job. They're doing a great job.

Q. Your thoughts on your special teams' hustle, blocking the extra point?

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, we hustle. Our guys play with effort. I told them this: I said, hey, I ain't worried about your effort. We need -- one of the things we said, talking about your penalties, is we've got to play smart. We play with effort. That's not a question. Our guys play hard. Even with penalties we had last week, our guys, I never question their effort. They play hard. We've got to play smart, and we've got to play well.

There's a difference between playing hard and just doing reckless things, but we've got to play well. Our guys I thought did a decent job of that.

We ran into the punter the one time, a five-yard penalty. Still don't get that. But guys want to go make plays, and you've got to applaud them for that, but we have to be smart. We've got to clean that stuff up for sure.

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