

University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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Head Coach Pat Narduzzi

Press Conference

PITTSBURG-45, WOFORD-7

PAT NARDUZZI: Game one under our belt. You know, we talked earlier in the week, I think it was Wednesday morning, just about what kind of team we were, what kind of material do we have.

We were able to come out here and play an FCS team and play the way we're supposed to. Not play down; play up.

I don't know if it could have been a better first half the way our guys played and came out and played a solid second half. We got a lot of guys to play today.

So really we talked about are we just going to outscore them, or are we going to beat them down? I thought it was a beatdown really. We could have kind of done whatever we wanted to.

The defense played well. The offense played well. Special teams were solid. We didn't get to punt enough. I wish we would have had some more punt work, but overall happy with the performance by our guys.

I'll open it up for questions.

Q. About Phil's performance, the first drive there were a little bit of jitters, but after that he looked really efficient.

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, there was no question. The first drive, I told him that one doesn't count. We just came out and whatever, but that happens sometimes.

I thought Phil was really good. I thought executed the game plan. I wish they were out a couple of times late instead of trying to throw. You know, grass in front of him. He is such a good runner, let him run.

There's nothing that defense hates more than scrambling



out of the pocket, decent coverage, and then you throw an incomplete pass.

So that's something we'll clean up. He is smart, and he just hadn't had an opportunity to run very much in practice. That's something that comes with going out there and taking your first hit as a quarterback.

But I was really, really happy with where he was after game one.

Q. You talked about it a little bit just there, but can you talk a little bit more about the value that Phil's mobility brings to your offense.

PAT NARDUZZI: He has got mobility. Did you see how calm he is in the pocket? He just sits back there. Stuff is flying by him and stuff. I would be a little skittish back there, but he is just so smooth in the pocket. It's like he doesn't care.

That's what you like is just the moxie he has. A Pine-Richland guy. We're happy he is playing for Pitt.

Q. Daniel Carter said the other day that he had lost about 20 pounds. He was hoping that slimming down would lead to him carrying the ball more. What can you say about his performance?

PAT NARDUZZI: Daniel had a great camp. As we talked usually after practice in August every day. He is consistent. He stayed healthy the whole time.

So Rodney is really good, too, as you know, and C'Bo is really good. I think we have three guys. We're going to keep them fresh and see who breaks away.

I'm happy with what Daniel -- really all three of those backs did today. Wizz got out there. His nickname is Wizz, Montravius Lloyd. He had a big old Wizz thing on his chain there. I'm, like, Wizz? Wizz went out there and played hard too, so I think he is going to be a good back for the future.

Q. What do you like about Phil's ability to spread the ball around? I think he had nine different receivers.

PAT NARDUZZI: Every tight end got a catch, which was



nice. Everybody got a catch. I started counting. Everybody got involved.

That's obviously a tribute to Coach Cignetti and the game plan and talking and who are they -- who are we throwing the ball to? We're throwing it to anybody.

So we got a lot of playmakers, I think. We thought we had that at the tight end position. That was a heck of a grab by Carter Johnson in the end zone, that one. We've got weapons out there, and you have to cover them all.

Q. How do you feel about your explosive plays on the day because you guys did have good chunks here, but only one touched in by the first team offense went for more than 20 yards. That was Phil's run. Did you want to see some more longer touchdowns, or were you happy --

PAT NARDUZZI: A touchdown is a touchdown. It doesn't matter how you get it. They were playing deep, and they played a little different than we thought they would. We could have just kept running it every down if we wanted to.

They were playing deep and played a lot of cover one with a guy in the middle field, and we took a couple of shots, but they were playing so soft.

Even Christian, we tried to take a shot at the end, and the guy was playing, like, 20 yards off. So, you know, those will come.

Q. How do you go from doing whatever you wanted to do today to getting them grounded for much tougher competition coming up?

PAT NARDUZZI: Have some good practices. There will be so much we have to -- there will be so much that could have been better. Don't get me wrong. When we watch the tape, we're going to nitpick, and we'll get better from game one to game two, I guarantee you that. There's a lot of things we can clean up, for sure.

Q. How cool is it for you to see Jake McConnachie score that touchdown at the end just of a couple of weeks after earning a scholarship?

PAT NARDUZZI: That's cool. He has done that it seems like every scrimmage. He would catch one somewhere, somehow. It was cool after earning a scholarship. You can see he can run. He found a way to get open, and Christian delivered ball to him.

Q. That was a good start by the defense. What did you like overall about their performance?

PAT NARDUZZI: There was a lot of three-and-outs. That's what you love. I don't know what the time position was today, but it was pretty large, I think. I don't even see it on the sheet.

When your defense is going three-and-out and your offense is driving the football and converting fourth downs, I think it's going to be a good day for you.

Just the third downs, the pressure in the backfield. You saw Jules making some plays in the backfield. Dayon had a good day.

Again, just like the receivers and the tight ends, there's a lot of guys that made plays on defense as well. Up front, whether it's Bangally with a sack, and Sam O had one. So there was a lot of good things out there.

Q. Some of the newer guys that were on the defensive front, guys like Sammy O that were able to get in there, it seemed like they were also making a difference.

PAT NARDUZZI: We'll go back and watch the tape and see. There was a couple of times the ball got onto the edge that we don't want to see, but we'll evaluate it.

They'll get better. These young guys will get better from watching the tape again. That's the beautiful thing.

Again, when you talk about getting better from game one to game two, those young guys will get a lot better. Some of the older guys get a little bit better, but those young guys will get a lot better from watching some of that tape.

Q. What did you think of your offensive line today?

PAT NARDUZZI: We'll watch the tape, but we rushed for 217 yards, and our goal is always to go in and rush for at least 150, and they did that.

We'll look at the tape, and I'm sure there will be some stuff that Coach Borbely is not going to be real happy with. We'll watch the tape tomorrow morning and can probably tell you a little bit more Monday about how I thought they played, but I thought they played solid.

Q. You guys had a pretty even distribution across all your running backs. Daniel had 11. C'Bo had nine. Rodney had five. Is that going to be you guys' approach this season is more of that kind of a distribution, or is this more a testing out of different things?

PAT NARDUZZI: I think it was just rotating them through,



hot day. We expected to play all those three early and just kind of rotate them through and see who has got what.

I think they all made some plays. I think it's just a matter of seeing what they have and keeping them fresh.

Q. Your defense had negative-one yard rushing. Have you ever been part of a team where they allowed that?

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah. Is Heather still here? We played Heather's alma mater, Michigan. They had minus-48. Sorry, Heather. Just one of those, he asked. I just had to tell him the truth.

They had minus-48 yards rushing one time. Probably that was the best, and we've had a few kind of minuses through the years, but it was a great performance in the run defense.

Q. You held them to 1 for 9 on third down. How impressed were you with just the young guys on the defense stepping up in those kind of situations and playing really good situational football?

PAT NARDUZZI: That's what we talk about winning money down. Whether it was on offense. Again, we had some third down and fourth down conversions, and defensively I know those money downs that we had opportunities to. And again, there will be some stuff that we're going to clean up, and it will get much better. I can tell you that.

Q. This team showed its depth, I think, a lot today just with all the contributors on defensive line, the tight end room. Where are you at with this team's depth? Are you really happy with what you saw as far as how many different guys contributed today in so many areas?

PAT NARDUZZI: There's no question. There's competition now. Some of the young guys come out there and do something better than maybe one of the older guys, like, hey, watch out. We're going to keep getting them reps.

The depth is huge. It gives you competition at every position. I think we talked all through August we were happy with the depth. Primarily we stayed pretty healthy as well. So we have to keep that going.

Q. Coach, your receivers, any thoughts on their performance, especially Bub Means? He was able to get a lot of separation.

PAT NARDUZZI: Bub can run. I don't care who the DBs

are. He can run by our guys sometimes. He can really get up and go.

Again, we just have to put it on him. Maybe he was running faster. Maybe there's adrenaline. We had the one that he ran through the split coverage there.

We have to hit a couple of those, which will be the explosive plays that you want to get, but we're happy with that depth in that room.

And Kenny came out and got a catch. I think that was good, and saw Jake go make a play.

So good day overall. Of course, Konata, he has his eye black on. Good to go.

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