

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 9, 2023

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Pat Narduzzi

### Press Conference

Cincinnati 27, Pitt 21

PAT NARDUZZI: Obviously not happy with the performance out there today. I thought we played a better second half. But we didn't make enough plays. The game of football is opportunities, and we had opportunities out there. We didn't make a play.

I thought we started off defensively, just couldn't make a play. Didn't stop their run. If you don't stop their run and you don't run the football, it's hard to win the game. Didn't get any turnovers in the first half.

Again, I give Cincinnati credit. They're a good football team, as we know. They were in the playoff a year ago, so it's a good football team. They'll win a lot of games in the Big 12.

Again, it's a non-conference game is the way I look at it, and then we've got West Virginia this week, so that's where our focus will go.

Questions?

**Q. Was there any consideration in the second half to make a change at quarterback?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No.

**Q. What did you see from Phil and the struggles that he had getting in rhythm?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think first thing, it starts with the offensive line. It takes 11. Everybody is going to point at the quarterback. He'll get all the glory when you win football games. He's a great quarterback, got a lot of faith in him.

And we'll check out the videotape. Again, I told our guys, this is the opener. The opener wasn't last week; today was the opener, and you find out where you are and where your weaknesses are. We didn't see any weaknesses. You guys didn't see any weaknesses. We made some



improvements in special teams, I think.

But again, it's a good football team. They know how to win, and Coach Satterfield does a nice job.

Again, the big thing is our guys didn't quit. When everybody would have thought, okay, it's not looking good, our guys are coming back and we've got a chance to win the game. If we don't miss a field goal early in the game, we're in field goal range, we're tying it up and we're going to overtime and you guys are working overtime. But we didn't make enough plays.

But there was too much pressure. Phil got sacked five times. That can't happen. When was the last time we won a game with five sacks on the quarterback.

We've got to shore up the protection. We've got an idea where we are now, what we have to do to protect the quarterback, and that was one of our goals going in is to make sure we protected the quarterback, and we did not do that.

**Q. Williams got the start today for you guys. What led to that decision?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Just the week of practice he had. He's been good all camp. He came here mid-year. We had a lot of faith in him. I think we can keep getting better with him. He doesn't play like a freshman. We'll look at the tape. Maybe he played like a freshman. I don't know. But we gave up five sacks. We'll find out where those came from, and we'll fix it.

**Q. Was it something Cincinnati was showing you defensively on the first drive of the game that led to three passes and no runs?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You said three passes? I don't know. We didn't stop the run. I don't remember the three passes. Seemed like it was three days ago, the first half.

But we didn't make any plays on defense. There was times where our safeties were getting cracked and our corners were going to replace. We'll look at the tape. There will be a lot to look at, and I'll have a little bit more answers for you on Monday.



**Q. Bub was targeted 11 times and didn't have a catch. Why was there such a big disconnect or where do you think that disconnect came in between him and Phil?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We'll see the tape and look at it. Bub was definitely targeted, and from my old receiver days, you expect those guys, whether it's an underthrown ball or not a great ball, doesn't matter. You get a chance to make a catch, you've got to make a catch, and there were some drops out there. There was drops, period, and again, it's not on one guy ever. It's 11 on offense, 11 on defense, and again, it starts with the head coach. I guess I didn't have them ready to play, and we'll be ready for this week.

**Q. Are you disappointed in your run defense as much as anything?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No question about it. You know that. We like to stop the run. We didn't do that. They do a nice job on offense with unbalance and some of the different things that they do.

We didn't react, and we didn't do a good enough job coaching to get it stopped. We did a better job in the second half.

**Q. What was the second half adjustment? In the first half they averaged nine yards per carry and in the second half they couldn't get --**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, it was some big runs, obviously. Those averages, there was some big runs that popped through there. We'll look at the tape and find out exactly what, but we made adjustments. We talk about being one of the best adjustment defenses in the country, and we did second half. They had seven points in the second half off of a 39-yard drive off of a turnover. Otherwise they're shut out in the second half. They had a short field in a sudden change situation, and it's hard to win like that. We should have shut them out in the second half, and we'd be winning, period.

**Q. One sack and one QB hit for Corleone tonight. Based on stats alone, some might not think that's an effective game, but how effective was he tonight against the middle of your linemen?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I saw one great play where he put pressure on the quarterback. Maybe it was -- he was in the backfield way too much. He's a good player. He's an All-American, and we didn't do a good job enough.

Again, it starts with that guy up front, the nose tackle, and that's what they do.

**Q. You were held to 83 rushing yards on offense. Is that also because of Corleone?**

PAT NARDUZZI: A little bit. I don't know if it's a three-man front, we've got to still block them, but we had 83 yards, and again, in the second half you're playing catch-up so you're throwing the ball every down. It's never good for a quarterback or for the offensive line when you're throwing it and trying to play catch-up. Because we didn't stop anybody in the first half, we were playing catch-up, and you're throwing it more than you'd like to. You'd like to be more balanced, but that's the name of the game. We had to play catch-up. Maybe we could have rushed for another 100 in the second half, but we didn't have an opportunity to.

**Q. Rodney has had 11 carries now in two games. Do you feel like you need to get him a little more involved?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Maybe. We'll look at the tape and find out who was being effective back there, but again, it comes down to you get behind and you're throwing the ball, there's no guys getting hand-offs, period.

**Q. You started calling time-outs with about six minutes left. Did the new rules dictate why you started calling them early?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No, no, we used two of them to stop the clock and get the ball back. I think that was really, really good decisions. We talked about it on the headphones, and that's when you need to -- you just don't want to have the clock drained where you have nothing. You have to use the clock. Had nothing to do with the new rules and the clock stoppage, nothing at all.

**Q. Some key money downs throughout the game where Jones was able to go to the perimeter and use outside routes. There was a couple times you guys defended it but a few other times you didn't. What do you have to do to be better at those situations?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We've got to cover them. We'll look at the defenses, what coverage we were in, what blitz we were in, whatever it was, but we've got to do a better job, period.

**Q. With West Virginia next week, what are you going to work on to make sure Bub Means --**

PAT NARDUZZI: Everything. Everything. We have a lot to work on. Like I told the guys afterwards, last week there was no weaknesses. Maybe they thought they were too good; maybe they thought they were just going to show up

today. But now you find out where your weaknesses are. I think coaches know on both sides of the ball. We played a few guys on offense and defense, and we're going to find out who can make plays.

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