

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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## Coach Pat Narduzzi

### Press Conference

PAT NARDUZZI: Not a fun day in the office on Sunday after getting beat by a really good Florida State team. But the one thing, I look at the tape, and I thought this after the game and you feel better, is just the effort that our kids played with.

I think they played with a lot of passion, a lot of effort, and you kind of go back and watch the way they play, how hard they play. Did we do everything right? Not as coaches or players.

But they played hard. There was not one loaf on special teams, and we were at 98 percent effort on both offense and defense, 97.9 I believe to be exact. Not many loafs. The kids are playing their tails off. I think we had 32 guys with over 18-mile-an-hour GPSes so that tells you we had 28 the week before, and 28 was pretty good.

Not that the speed will tell you what's going on in the game, but as always, there's things that we need to fix, and we're continually trying to fix them and plug in the holes. It's a team loss. It's everybody. It starts with me. As I tell you every week, you're probably sick of hearing it, but it does.

I look at one of the critical errors I made late in the game -- I shouldn't say late in the game, but end of the third quarter, fourth quarter, just to give you an example of things, you want to always save your time-outs in a close game, and it was a close game at the time, and you want to save those time-outs, and it was stupid where I saved a time-out and I could have called -- on the one touchdown pass they threw to the tight end, they had asked me kind of late, they knew what it was and they didn't see our guys covering it properly because it was a trick play. We call it a fight song play, where the tight end is lined up offensive tackle. I don't know if you guys saw it or didn't even notice it, but they kind of knew it. I didn't know why they wanted a time-out, but I was like, we can't just use time-outs for defense to get lined up. Then it ends up being a touchdown.

So regret. I should have called a time-out there.



But there's those things all over the place coaching-wise, and it really gets you when it's a good football team. I think offensively they did a great job with some of their unbalanced stuff and the motions and some of the things to get what they wanted. Our defensive coaches did a good job adjusting as the game went on, but it's just like you're one step behind someone that's doing something you've never seen them do before on tape.

As I told our guys, it's a game of inches. We talked about it last week; we've got to win the inches. It is a game of inches. You just look, we watched special teams in here last night, and you watch, Biles got his hand on another punt, right. Official gives you one of those.

But he gets a little bit more of an inch on that ball, it's a block in the end zone; it may be six points, seven points. They muff a punt, we're running down on the punt, we've got great coverage, Gandy makes a big hit, the ball comes out, but the ball happens to just roll right out of bounds, right on the sideline. Can't the ball bounce into the middle of the field so we can get it?

Then you look at the offensive side of the ball. When we do fumble, we don't fumble out of bounds, we fumble inbounds so they can recover it twice.

It's just little things like that.

Then the big run in the second half, and we gave up just two big plays in the second half. You look at defensively, played a pretty unbelievable first half, and then the second half was pretty good except for two plays. That one I should have called a time-out and banged a time-out and one big run where we just lose a gap. There's 77 plays where you're trying not to lose a gap, and we did a pretty solid job versus the run except for that one big run, but it cost you, and that's why it takes 11 guys and someone hopefully would have been able to cover it, but we just didn't get it done.

With that, we're moving on to New York City and Yankee Stadium and Syracuse which is always a close game, and Dino Babers, good friend of mine that we always look forward to playing each other, and again, a good football team. They started off 4-0 and they've had straight losses here in the ACC and it's not easy.



It'll be a battle, period. It'll be a battle. I think it'll be a heck of a game in New York City.

**Q. What are some things on the offense --**

PAT NARDUZZI: It's a little bit of everything. There's times -- we spent three hours yesterday watching the tape with the offense and just looking at little detail things, but it's the details. It's some young guys.

Again, we talk about it's a little bit of everything. There's things we could do better coaching-wise and there's things we could do better as far as just fundamentally and structurally. There's some 3rd downs, I can look at the 3rd down and analyze the heck out of every 3rd down and sometimes they got a good call, sometimes we don't execute.

We've got to get the ball to the right guy at the right time, and again, it's always something you can do better. When you watch the tape, you look back, hindsight, man, I wish we would have tried that. You don't get a second chance.

**Q. How did you feel Christian dealt with pressure, especially on 3rd downs?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't know which one you want me to tell you. You wish he would throw great under pressure, but he's a young guy, he's got to figure it out. He's got to read the progression -- he's got to get through his progression and make the throw.

But I would say 3rd down was probably no different than 1st or 2nd down. We've just got to get the ball to the right guy and look to the right side and know where you're going, and I think it's just being young.

**Q. Having had a chance to watch the game back and see all the penalties and everything, what do you think is the issue with some of the penalties like the false starts on offense and just those self-imposed -- why do you think those are happening so late in the season?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know, it's beyond me. We had three defensive penalties. The targeting at the end, we had two -- really all three were aggressive penalties on defense. The rest were on offense and one on special teams where we had No. 5 on there. It got declined anyway. A late, late adjustment to putting a guy on the field, so I don't even count that one.

But we have a delay of game early, substitution error on the sideline where it's a delay of game but the guy not hearing it and him getting out on the sideline late. Making sure those guys are right behind you when you call that

personnel grouping they're in.

We had four false starts, and two of them were on C'Bo, Captain C'Bo, which you don't expect to see that in your senior tailback. Defense looks like he's blitzing and he just kind of gets anxious, and sometimes it happens. You hope it doesn't happen ever, and you especially don't want it to happen in a big game. You wish those kinks would be out early.

You've got another one on Zubovic. It looks like two of them are on Zubovic, but one is on Zubovic, one is on Terrence Moore because Terrence doesn't snap the ball. It looks like it's Blake, but it's not. Visually -- I don't know who the officials might have called it on Blake, but they're not right there, either, because they don't know when the ball was supposed to be snapped. We do.

That sideline penalty, I can't tell you about that one. Then Branson had two holding penalties. Those two defensive ends are about as athletic as you get. One he grabs and pulls the guy down, and again, it doesn't look like a holding, but it is. You can't throw a guy down; it looks like you're grabbing him. But their tight end on one of their screens grabs and throws a guy down, and there's no call. Just want it to be consistent.

But it had no factor in the play. But we've got to clean it up. It's a penalty, and we've got to clean them up, and that's pretty much the gist of what those are. They've got to get cleaned up. We were good a week ago, I believe, and you go up and down.

**Q. On Gavin's penalty, do you know what they were reviewing after the call?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't know. I have no idea. I have no idea.

**Q. Just looking at the last couple of weeks, 3rd down has obviously been rough. Do you feel like you're putting your guys in the best situation possible on 3rd down?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You never do. That's why I say it's coaches and players. Obviously if we're not converting on 3rd down, we're not putting them in position. Again, whether it's making us think too much and the quarterback has got too many options, whatever it is, we've got to do a better job as coaches, and then they've got to do a better job executing. It's a team deal.

Again, it's coaches and players, just like everything is. So yeah, we've got to do a better job putting them in position.

**Q. Rodney took the majority of the carries on Saturday. What did you like about what he did?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Rodney was running -- it's kind of one of those things. We've got two starting tailbacks; that's why they both get announced. Love Rodney, love C'Bo. Rodney was hitting it hard. Not that C'Bo wasn't, it was just we felt good with C'Bo and we ran with it.

**Q. Another good game for Bub. Seems to be productive. Is he getting more consistent, though, or do you feel like there's still plays that he's leaving out there?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No, I think Bub is being real consistent. I really do. He may have started off a little bit inconsistent with the season, but he's been pretty detailed. He's catching the ball well. You wish he would have finished that last one; who knows, maybe would have had another touchdown in that last drive. You can't score when you don't have the ball. But I think there was 3:50 to go in the game.

But he's doing a great job catching the ball. He's doing a great job running routes, and we're real happy with Bub right now.

**Q. Brandon is playing very well. Are there different situations that he might play more?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, maybe, but I think he's suited for everything. It's like the last couple weeks he's started to come on, and Coach Manalac has done a good job with just continuing to develop him and talk to him about what he needs to do, and Brandon has done it.

We went into that game saying, based on the last two weeks, practice-wise, you're playing physical. He's just getting downhill. He's not thinking too much. I think he's thinking too much sometimes, so we've gotten the thinking out of it, and he's started to use his physical ability.

We're not worried about his mind right now. Read your keys; it ain't that hard. Get downhill and smack someone in the mouth. That's what we want to do, and that's what he's been doing, and I think with his 10 tackles and two and a half TFLs and all that stuff, I think it's starting to pay off for him where he's going, hey, it's working. Just play football; it ain't that hard.

**Q. What's your impression of your safeties? You've got guys came into the season looking for new blood there with the guys you sent to the NFL. How have you seen them grow this year?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think little by little we're gaining experience back there, playing more and more guys. You saw Cruce back there. I think I told you he was going to get in the game, and Steph Hall has gotten in and gotten some valuable reps, as well, so it's good to see those guys grow.

I think it helps them during the week practice wise because they got some -- and then they go out and they're a little bit more bright-eyed and ready to practice and be ready for the next week.

But I think when you look at Donovan, PJ and Javon, the three guys that are playing a ton of football back there, I think they've little by little gotten better. I know Donovan kicks himself in the head with a couple missed tackles, that one on 84 over the middle, and he's been our best most consistent tackler. So you don't see that very often. He's got to take one more step a few times and come across the thigh boards, even in an early tackle, so he had a couple missed tackles, which is uncharacteristic of him. But I think overall, little by little, to get better.

I'd like to see Javon have a couple interceptions. I think he's had an opportunity for at least three interceptions. That's the game of inches. There's another inch. You could change the game with a pick right there at the 50-yard line, whatever it was. But we've got to take advantage of that.

**Q. Ryland Gandy played the last two weeks, played a decent amount of snaps late in the game. Will you try and keep doing that next three weeks to get him more work?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, we will. First of all, he's done one unbelievable job on special teams. You saw the big hit. The things that people don't notice is sometimes him running down on punt team, and the other thing they don't notice is what he's doing to their gunners on our rangers unit, our punt block team, whatever you want to call it. Nobody, nobody shut down their gunners all year of running down the field. No one touched them. They just kind of ran by whoever was out there covering them every snap, and if you go back and watch the videotape and you talk about effort, he's wiring them up at the line of scrimmage. It's like, whoa. No one blocked them all year, and he did.

Obviously that was pointed out last night in front of the entire team on how he's playing.

**Q. Is it encouraging to see stuff like that from Ryland?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, and it's probably long awaited. I

think we should have gotten him started as coaches probably a little bit earlier. Again, we mentioned it like three weeks ago, like we've got to get him going because he's -- you're always scared as a coach. We're all trying to win football games, and you go back to the opener. You remember the opener; he got pushed over and you're like, oh, gosh. You get afraid, and we've got to -- coaches can't be afraid.

He's a really good player. He's athletic. He's tough. He's reliable. I love Ryland Gandy, and he's just going to continue to get better I think the more we get to play him.

**Q. Will you try to get Nate into the game a little bit at quarterback the next --**

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't know. I haven't thought about it. Good question for Coach Cignetti.

**Q. You've obviously been at Yankee Stadium before back in 2016 at the Pinstripe Bowl. What are the logistics or maybe the interesting positives about coaching in a baseball stadium?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know, I think they've measured properly. It's a 100-yard field, and some of the end zones get a little tight if you're throwing a 7 route into the pylon.

But I don't know if it'll be a big difference. It's a historic site. It's Yankee Stadium. It's in the middle of the Bronx.

It's just a great place to play. We're excited to go.

**Q. Does it change you guys' preparation process at all being an in-season neutral site game? You haven't really done that before since you've been here.**

PAT NARDUZZI: No, it really doesn't. It's their home game, so we'll wear the white jerseys, and there's nothing that really changes there.

**Q. Do you think just playing in an atmosphere like that gives you guys an extra little bit of juice? Do you think they'll appreciate the opportunity to play at Yankee Stadium?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think anybody from New York will appreciate it. I think baseball fans will appreciate it. I don't know if guys that don't watch baseball will appreciate it. I don't know. I know my mom loves the Yankees, so I'm kind of excited to go back for her.

**Q. Are you a baseball fan?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Um, not really.

**Q. In a different environment, different type of environment, will that create a different kind of energy or jump to the team?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I hope they have energy because they get to play another Saturday. If we need a new environment to play good, then we've got problems.

**Q. We talked about this last week with practices, but what are you seeing from guys in the film room? You guys are 2-7, it's now a losing season, you can't get to the .500 mark. What have you seen from your guys coming in, staying focused, and maybe some of the leaders saying, hey, we've got to finish strong this year?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know, hopefully they're doing that in the locker room, but when you walk through these meeting rooms, if you walk down the back -- I was in a defensive staff meeting, I walked out and hear all this noise next door, the O-line is in there watching tape together, all of them. The D-line is over here watching tape. I didn't hit every room. Some guys are studying down these other hallways.

But they all have their times that they come in, whether it's before brunch or after brunch or in the afternoon, depending on classes that they get in to watch tape. Nothing will change there. Our guys are going to continue to compete and try and win a football game.

**Q. If Carter (indiscernible) you win the last time in Yankee Stadium, right?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I don't know. I don't have a magic crystal ball. I would hope so, but I don't know. I can't say that. They won. You would hope if he would have played and James played, that would have been nice. That's a long time ago.

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