

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Pat Narduzzi

### Press Conference

PAT NARDUZZI: Happy holidays to everyone out there. I know it's about five days until Christmas and holiday celebrations, so hope everybody has a great one there and gets time to spend it with the family.

Appreciate you guys coming. Obviously get a chance to celebrate our 2024 class. We're excited about the class we have brought in. We've got 19 signees.

Before I get started, as always, want to thank a bunch of people, and you can go all over the place -- first one to thank is obviously our recruits and their families. They've hosted our coaches. Some of them like you're coming back next week. We're in there every week that we can get on the road, getting one contact a week.

Myself, I'm only allowed in the home one time, and these families, the recruits, the prospects, the signees, the Pitt players now I guess I can call them, just always make it feel at home. The meals they cook. Had some incredible meals on the road with the families, and to be able to break bread with families is the best.

I want to thank our coaching staff. They're worn out. I've actually sent them home at 1:30 today. As soon as the press conference started, all right, get out of here. The stressfulness of the season we went in -- again, we came off the season, we stayed here for four days, and they were gone. We actually went straight through the weekend.

Usually we come home for a recruiting weekend, but we went straight through the weekend. I think some of the coaches were looking at me like, we're doing what? Like we can't come home and see our families? Like go. We had no time. Short time.

But again, families, children, obviously the wives and the coaches did an unbelievable job on the road recruiting, so I thank them.

All the high school coaches, administrators, assistant coaches, all those guys, I think everybody forgets what



happens to those guys on these visits, because they're taken away from their job, their families sometimes in the late afternoons, early evenings.

Some of the coaches will come visit with you in the evenings, as well, but thank the coaches and administrators that take care of our coaches when they walk in there.

It's amazing when you walk into a high school in Pennsylvania and the security lady is hugging your assistant coach because they see him so much. That's a good thing. You build relationships with security people.

You walk in there and you're like, wow, this is great, they love us, and that's Pitt. That's who we are. I thank all those people because of them.

I don't want to say it's going to get worse for them, but in January, new rule-wise, when you think about these coaches and thanking them, our coaches are now allowed to sit down with the '25 class in January. We used to not be able to do it until next December, so what we did in December is now going to happen in January, so the recruiting process as coaches, we'd like it to slow down.

The NCAA has sped it up, and now these poor kids are going to be out of class, coaches are going to continue to pull them out of class to see more coaches, and it's going to be chaos in January, so it'll be interesting to see how that goes.

But I thank all the coaches, administrators, obviously people on our campus. The life skills, Heather Lyke and Mike Farbaugh, academics, all the support that people help us when kids come on campus. We have a breakfast at The Porch, and The Porch does an unbelievable job. Probably should thank all the restaurants in town that take care of us and cater to our needs and what Graham -- thank our recruiting Officer Graham. Graham, give them a little wave back there. Graham and Adam. I don't know if Adam is in here. There's Adam over there. Figured they'd be in here.

But those guys, they're running the show from home, but it's not easy, and I think there's a lot of places around the country that have maybe 25 guys and they're doing it, but these two guys run it -- it's not by themselves, but we thank



them, as well.

Let's give you a breakdown of what we've got in. We've got eight on offense, five linemen, a receiver, quarterback, and a running back. Still probably -- we're not done yet. We've got 11 signees on defense, five D-linemen, three linebackers, two corners, and a safety.

Again, when you look at it overall, we always talk about the big guys. We've got 10 big guys, and it starts up front with five offensive linemen, five defensive linemen. Those guys take the most development. We lost some guys at those spots, so there will be a lot of development there.

Something I'm awful proud of is we've got seven of them from the state of Pennsylvania. Again, we talk about our backyard. I think when I sat here in 2015 and said how we're going to recruit is our backyard, so with that, seven are from PA.

We've got eight other states that are included in there, and we also have one -- we've had one from Italy, we've got one from Germany now, Moritz, which we'll talk about in a second.

But it's special. So we've got seven from PA, four from Florida, two from our neighbor in Ohio, one from Georgia, one from Massachusetts, one from Maryland, one from New Jersey, one from Tennessee, and obviously the one from Germany.

I think we've done a great job there.

You guys can watch huddle and all those other things. We're looking for our future leaders of this football team, but we're looking for football players. They'd better have the academics they need, but we're looking for guys that love the game of football.

I think as you talk to a lot of these guys, and some will all say an A+ as far as loving football -- when I say a guy loves football, when I talk about him, it's like on the extreme, and you need those guys. Everybody loves it to a different degree, but I think overall these 19 guys love the game of football, and it's important to them.

You can be a great athlete and a great player, but if you don't love it, you love something else -- there's a lot of things to love in this world, but if you love something else better or you like what you get out of football and not the game of football, I think we've got problems there.

So I really like our kids' love for the game.

In this class, we've got five state champions, Zach

Crothers, Allen Bryant, Jahsear Whittington, Davin Brewton, and Cam Lindsey. Congrats to those. We had a couple that were a game away.

Of the 19, 14 of them are team captains, which I expect them to be in our Eagles, and just kind of build that. We'll find out who they are there.

Overall 3.0 in core GPA, which with the NCAA, if we average a 3.0, which I think is pretty strong, I'm not sure if I've given you that stat in the past, but it's a pretty good one.

I'll start off with the offensive guys. The first one -- again, five offensive linemen, is Adham, Abouraya. Adham is from Darlington East High School. He's a tough dude. He's a wrestler. Big offensive lineman that was on our campus several times. Just a super, super kid. He's detailed. He's focused on what he wants to do.

I can't wait -- I told him this morning I wanted to see people forfeit when he's wrestling in his senior year. I think that's how tough he is. I wanted to see that.

I've also got video in my phone. He's a big dude. There's not many big guys -- I don't know how many -- can you do a cartwheel? This guy did a cartwheel in the hallway of his academic counselor's office there. Really athletic.

We're happy to have him and his family.

Jiavani Cooley, Cathedral Prep up in Erie, played both ways for them up there. Obviously he's an offensive lineman, offensive tackle, an all-state guy that again is just a big rangy guy. After we offered him it didn't take long for him to say I'm coming to Pittsburgh. He came with his mom and some other family members, as well, but he's laid back, and again, like most offensive linemen, but he's all Pitt, and we're excited to have him.

The third guy I'll talk about is Moritz, Schmoranzer. Did I say that -- spell it -- he goes by the nickname of Schmo. I got that one down. Schmo is obviously from North Cross High School down in Virginia. Again, from Germany. FaceTimed him in Germany at 1:44 this morning. I got the first text message, Coach, I'm all in. It's official.

Then he was eating salmon lunch today because he was having a lunch there in Germany. I think they're six hours behind. But he was having lunch today, a salmon special there in Germany, mom and dad on the phone.

They are excited. He came over here in 10th grade because he loved football, and he's done a great job down there in Virginia at that private high school, North Cross.



The thing I love about this guy is he's a team guy. He watches D-linemen -- he comes off the ball. He can play on defense, too. He's an offensive lineman, can play defense. We talked when he came up for a game with his family. Mom and dad came for a game, as well, talked about how, Coach, I'll be on the punt team. He sees David Greene out there on the punt team, he wants to be on the punt team, as well, so he's one of those guys that you love that he wants to do everything.

Fourth offensive lineman, Mason Lindsay from DeMatha Catholic. Again, great high school, and again, another athletic, long, offensive tackle. He got to DeMatha like a lot of guys do, transferred in there, and has been starting ever since he got there.

Had a little injury as a junior, which I think hampered maybe his recruiting a little bit, but we saw through that. He's a big, athletic -- he's tough. He's mean. He's got a real strong mom and dad there in the home.

We feel good about Mason.

The last offensive lineman is Caleb Holmes, a kid from Creekside High School, home of BJ Williams, as well, and Rashad Battle, so a lot of familiarity down there and great football. And again, this is one of those guys that you sat with him and you're like, this dude loves football.

You hear about it all season where we try to get a hold of him, we're allowed to talk to him on the phone and all that, but you can't ever get a hold of him because he's in practice, he's watching tape, he's with his team, he's always doing something for football. When you talk to him, it's all about football. He doesn't want to talk about anything else except football, so we appreciate that, his love for the sport.

The other thing that hit me when I was on his home visit is when I said, okay, football, I get it. What else do you love? He goes, Coach, I love to go out and help other people. And I'm like, is he -- I was like, Celeste is going to love this guy.

Caleb Holmes, you may text him to say and say I heard Coach's presser. That's the first thing he said. This is the kind of guy we want here in Pittsburgh, that's not just worried about himself but he's worried about others.

Quarterback Julian Dugger. Obviously we took one from Penn Hills High School. He's a mid-year guy. Moritz is a mid-year guy, also, if I didn't already tell you that.

But Julian is a mid-year quarterback that we're really, really

excited about. Things happen for a reason.

We kind of waited, thought we had somebody, didn't have somebody, all those things that happen in recruiting, but we saw Julian in a 7-on-7 a year ago coming out of his junior year, I guess, but saw him two years ago, and he looked really good.

But we were like, hmm, we'd like to get better.

When he came out in summer camp here 7-on-7 and Chris Peak was like, this guy is on fire. This guy can throw the ball, he can run, he makes great decisions, he's smart, and we're excited to get a Pittsburgh guy in our quarterback room.

He's made some major improvements throughout his season, and I think that's some things that don't happen in college football anymore is those guys that develop in their senior year, sometimes you miss on them.

Luckily, we were not going to miss on Julian Dugger, so we're happy to have him and his family here in Pittsburgh.

Jewels Goff, running back from Central York High School. Again, outstanding football player. At one point we had two, but there's no question this was the guy. His dad will tell you, he'll tell you, and I'll tell you, if we were going to lose one, this is one we did not want to lose. He's a 10.8, 100-meter guy. He's the all-time leading rusher in that school district there. He's got that breakaway speed. You talk 10.8, and he's only a senior in high school.

He's explosive, and it's one of those guys if you give a crack, he's going to take more than you block for him, and that's what we need is another one of those guys in that backfield.

Then the last guy on offense is Cameron Monteiro, a kid from Brockton High School. I've recruited two other guys through my years. It's a tough high school up in Massachusetts, South Boston area, and again, a mid-year wide out.

Played quarterback a lot of his career, and there's nothing better than having an athletic quarterback in your program that's smart enough to do that stuff. So he'll be a really smart receiver for us. He's athletic. He's tough. Again, he can't wait to just focus on the wide receiver position.

Defensively we've got 11 signees, as I said earlier. Five of them are on the defensive line. It starts there. The first one is a guy that's been committed to us -- he was the very first commitment, Jahsear Whittington from Imhotep Charter High School there in downtown Philly.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Again, this is one of those guys that loves football, as well. Always got a smile on his face. He's tough. He's physical. He led his team to a state championship. We wish he was mid-year. Every time I see him, I'm like, are you sure you're not mid-year? I wish I was mid-year.

Again, just one of those guys that led his team to a championship. He's explosive. He causes havoc inside, whoever he plays against, and I know Coach Partridge can't wait to get his hands on all these guys.

Next one, Ty Yuhas, Pittsburgh Central Catholic, local boy. Again, family is all Pitt. One thing I'll tell you about Ty is when he first got his offer coming out of camp, it was like, Coach, I'm committing.

Some guys are going to go home, take 24 hours when it's real early. But there was no question right now, this guy is a Pitt guy. He wants to be at Pitt. To me, that's important to me. There was no hesitation at all for a local guy. He's seen Pitt enough. He's been to every home game this season.

I told him when he committed, I said, you know you've got season tickets. It's like I gave him something. Every prospect gets three tickets to every home game, so he used those season tickets to his fullest, and I think he was in the locker room after every ballgame, win or lose. Ty is with us, and we're excited about having him.

Next one is Francis Brewu from Thomas Worthington High School over in Columbus area, Westerville, Ohio, area. Again, a mid-year defensive tackle. This is one of those guys in the last 48 hours, maybe 72 hours, I don't know how long it's been, I think it's publicized out there on Twitter that he was visiting Michigan State, but it's a guy that went down to the wire. We didn't know until sitting in the lobby here as a staff that he was with us. We had some ideas, but you talk about an hour and 40-minute conversations with me, then he'd go 1:50 with Coach Partridge, then it was 65 minutes with Coach Manalac.

But the three of us really tag teamed him for the last three days, really, and secured his commitment, and I can't tell you how thankful I am to have him. I think he's -- again, the mid-year is the key, and we've got three mid-year D-linemen coming in, but with some of the voids we have in there, being able to come in mid-year is critical, so we're excited to have him.

He's strong. He sent me about a week ago him benching 415 pounds in high school. You're going to need that coming in here.

But I appreciate his loyalty in staying with us, with all the temptations -- as we know, there's a ton of temptations out there. He ignored all that noise and did it the right way and stayed with Pitt.

The next guy, sincere Edwards. Again, with a key with a high school, home of Brandon Hill, an outstanding athlete. Some of our coaches, it was the first time they had pineapple and chicken pizza. Everybody has heard of Hawaiian, but that's his favorite pizza if you guys are trying to get him to do an extra interview, you might have to ask him about -- you might have to get him a pizza.

Sincere, it says 265 pounds, but he's actually 241 pounds. He's a guy who can play a little bit -- he played some linebacker in high school. I would imagine at 240 he's going to start at defensive end. We'll see what he looks like. But he'll be here.

But he does an outstanding job, and we're excited about where Sincere will be in this program.

Last but not least on the D-line, state champion, mid-year defensive end, again, Zach Crothers from Chaminade-Madonna High School, a prep school down in Florida.

Again, just an outstanding football player, defensive end, can do it all, and probably the best compliment you can get, and I told him this on the phone today, I saved it for today, is I'm at Burton Catholic High School, who they beat earlier in the year, and I would imagine Chaminade has maybe 10 guys signed today, and the coach is like, Coach, that guy you got out of there is the best football player on the team and best player we saw all year.

Again, getting a compliment like that from another team that you played is critical.

Not only did they win a state championship, they finished No. 2 in the country, I guess, in the USA Today as far as just top teams in the country.

Linebackers start off right at home here, Aliquippa, Cam Lindsey. A really athletic guy. Plays in all three phases for them. You watch his game, I had the opportunity to watch one live game this year. I believe it's the only game I had a chance to go to at new Heinz Field, not Acrisure Heinz Field, their Heinz Field.

But a football player, an athlete. I think he can play all three positions. I think he's kind of like a SirVocea Dennis. I think he's one of the guys you could put at star, you could put at money, you could put at Mike. I think he can do it all.

He runs down on kickoffs and knocks people's heads off. You're going to watch him do that for four years. You know, he plays downhill and aggressive like we need our guys to play here.

The next guy, again, a guy that loves football from Red Bank Catholic High School down in South Jersey, Davin Brewton. Again, a 235-pound guy, I don't know, but just a big, physical -- again, loves the game. Loves the game of football. Parents own a restaurant if you're ever in that neck of the woods, that Kenny Pickett neck of the woods over in he called it Central Jersey when I recruited there for years. There was never a Central Jersey. It's either North or South, but I guess they created something the last few years.

But a Central Jersey type guy. But they've got a soul food restaurant, outstanding, highly recommend the catfish when you go in there, fried catfish, and for the first time ever I had fried lobster at their restaurant.

That is a first, and again, I had some unbelievable meals throughout the deal, but that was incredible, cooked by his dad, as well.

But loves the game of football, and can't wait to get him in there. I think he can be a Mike. Probably until we get him here, I think he can play them all, as well, but he's a bigger guy that's maybe going to be at the Mike or the money position and cycle him to the quarterback.

Last year, a mid-year guy from Miami, Norland, Jeremiah Marcellin, a big, physical guy. He was one game, maybe a couple plays away from winning a state championship. I think everybody in the state thought they were going to win it. They didn't get it done. I know he was crushed.

He played the entire season with a broken pinky. Had surgery after the year, so he's in a little finger cast now or whatever, but had some pins put in there.

But you talk about tough, he is a tough, physical guy that I can't wait to watch come in here and practice this spring and see what he's all got.

He's a detailed guy, and like I said, he's got great size. He's got instincts and he's got toughness.

Moving into the back end, safety, we've got one safety now in Bryant. The thing I'll say about Bryant, from St. Thomas Aquinas High School, again, when you look at some of these high schools, when you're talking DeMatha, Red Bank Catholic, Norland, St. Thomas Aquinas, these are some of the top high schools in the country that we're

pulling guys out of that love the game of football and have been coached well.

But Bryant, big ol' safety. He's detailed. He's laser focused on what he's doing. He's really smart. He's going to be one of those guys back there for a few years here that we expect to make a lot of plays. He had three interceptions this season, and again, a state champion, as well, for his high school. So that's our safety signee for the year.

Then we've got two cornerbacks, Nigel Maynard, a kid from Stewarts Creek High School in Tennessee. You sit there and say, what are we doing down in Tennessee? I think it's our first player that we have from Tennessee. We almost had a quarterback a couple years ago.

But Nigel is a really good player. He's got family in Youngstown. Long story short, his mother and my little sister, okay, and she's got a twin, were in elementary school together, okay? So it goes way back.

That's not why we got him, but you find these connections as you're talking. Probably got to go back in St. Ed's middle school and find their picture, okay, to find out what they looked like back then.

So he's got connections in Youngstown, and the connection was he came down to camp this summer, hey, let's go to Pittsburgh's camp, just out of the blue. He came to Pitt's camp, we loved him, we offered him, and we've kind of stayed on him since then, and now he's a Pitt Panther as of 7:22 this morning. We're excited to have him.

Then the last guy on defense is Davion Pritchard, another Youngstown, Ohio, native, Austintown Fitch, another guy that was here in 7-on-7. He was already committed to us by the time he game to 7-on-7, but again, impressed us even after being committed. An athletic guy who brings some of that Youngstown toughness down into Pittsburgh with the Pitt toughness.

But a guy that will excel at the corner position like so many have here at Pitt.

That's what I've got. With that, that was too long, I'll open it up for questions.

**Q. (Indiscernible) a little over a year and eight months ago. How have you seen him grow as you've stayed in touch with him?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I'd say the first thing he grew is he just got more maturity on the outside. Football-wise, I think

he's been a great football player, and I'm sure his high school coach could tell you more about the day-to-day maturity that he's had, but the one thing I noticed is at first it was like, hey, I'm committed, and then I'm going to go visit here. That all went away in the last year.

That might have been the first two months of maybe enjoying recruiting, but Jahsear just kind of grew up as far as just knowing what's important, where I belong, what a commitment and loyalty really means. That's what I see from him. I'm sure we'll see a lot more improvement on the field.

But he obviously got stronger, and he's more physical when you talk about the athletic attributes, but he's a really good football player.

**Q. How many mid-years do you have right now?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Gosh, I think eight or nine. Let me look back here. Nine of them. Nine mid-years. Again, I'll throw those mid-years at you again here just so you know who they are. Moritz is, Julian is, Julez is, Francis is, Sincere, Zach, Jeremiah, and Allen Bryant. Good question.

**Q. Have you spoken to the importance of finding some of these guys right in your backyard; what is it about specifically some of the players you've brought in that is so important to you.**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, obviously if a guy leaves this area, and sometimes they do, sometimes we want them, sometimes we don't, the first thing I'll say is it's the quality of football in this area that's still there.

I think sometimes people think it's gone, it's down. The Rust Belt State, which we know Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania, state of Pennsylvania are still in that category, but the quality of football that we have in this state is still high.

The quality of coaching -- again, thanking all those coaches for all the hard work they've put in. But it's the coaching, the development, and obviously the love of football and obviously the love of Pittsburgh that brought all those guys here.

That just tells you that Pennsylvania is still playing a lot of really, really good football.

I go out to where Juelz is from, ^ you took whip hue, Harris, but you look at Kenny Johnson and what he did last year. I didn't know there was any football out there supposedly. That's what other coaches around the country will say. I've heard them talk about like, hey, there is other

coaches in Power Fives saying, yeah, there's not many football players in the state of Pennsylvania. Okay, well, I think we've got seven pretty darned good ones.

**Q. You mentioned Cam Lindsey reminds you of SirVocea. In what ways?**

PAT NARDUZZI: He's really smart. He's athletic, and like I said, SirVocea could play anything. People would say he's a Mike and a middle linebacker, but he played everywhere for us, and he was an outside linebacker playing inside. We think he's got great speed. He's got great athleticism. We think he's got a great mind for the game. And he's focused on what he wants to do.

The focus part is important.

**Q. You guys obviously recruited Julian to play a different offense, but do you think his skill set actually will be even better for this new offense?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I do think it'll be better. Coach Bell is left-handed. When he jumped up on the board, I'm like, hey, Julian is left-handed, too. A lot of people don't like left-handed quarterbacks. I think that's maybe one of the reasons he was still waiting for us in the summer.

As a matter of fact, one of my first -- I guess my second full-time job, I won't mention his name, but he called me last week talking about recruiting, and he said, just talking about different positions, what we want as an offensive line and what kind of running back do we want, quarterback, don't bring me a left-handed quarterback was the comment.

I think there's a lot of great ones throughout the country right now, but I think that was maybe 30 years ago, 25 years ago, but it was like, no left-handed quarterback, wow. That makes it easy. I can go out there, and if he's left-handed I can just walk out of the school and go the other way. I'm not going to bring a quarterback coach a left-handed quarterback.

But I don't think it matters which way that ball comes out. He's talented. He's athletic. Again, he fit our offense.

Again, you talk about dual threat and drop-back, last season we were 75 percent 11 personnel and in the gun most of the time anyway. We dabbled in a lot more things that maybe we didn't need to, but probably our best personnel grouping is 11 personnel in the gun.

To me, he's a drop-back guy. He's also a dual threat guy. He's got the capabilities of doing both. It's not like this athletic quarterback that we're just going to make all these

quarterback runs up now because he's got a great arm, and I don't want to put him in that box of he's a dual threat. I think he's a drop-back quarterback that's athletic enough to get out of trouble, use his feet, make plays with his feet.

But he can throw the ball. He can pass the ball. He's got great touch, and he's really, really intelligent.

When he came on the visit just this past weekend, because we didn't visit him in June, first thing I said was draw up your favorite play, and the drawing he drew up, I've seen a lot of coaches around the country can't draw it as detailed and as well as what he did.

I'm like, whoa. Then okay, tell me what you're reading here, and he went through the progression, and I was like, whoa, it was different. So we're excited to have him.

**Q. Could you envision Monteiro make an instant impact with this offense?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We want to play as many people as we can. We're going to change the tempo up a little bit. We're not getting into philosophies and offense of what we're going to do, and I'm saving Coach Bell -- just so you know, I sent Coach Bell home, too.

As a matter of fact, he left about a half hour earlier than everybody else to take a flight home. It's his daughter Palmer's birthday today, second birthday, so I'm like, get out of here. He's like, I'm coming home tomorrow. I'm like, you're going to be home for your daughter's birthday.

He got here on Tuesday, I offered him a job on Sunday. I haven't ever seen a guy get here so fast and on the road and get working, and he did a heck of a job for us in four or five days.

I got a ton of text messages, new guy is here, got some things going here, he's a grinder that way. But I'm not sure where that question went, but I just went off. (Laughter.)

**Q. I asked if Goff or Monteiro are guys that can immediately play, that are immediately ready to play or if you think those guys with this new offense might need a little more seasoning, so to speak?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think everybody on this list has a chance to come in and play. I'm not going to tell you that someone can't. I can tell you this: Whoever comes in mid year with the offense has got a chance to learn it right next to everybody else. It's not like everybody has got a year on them or two years or a spring under their belt. Even the guys that come in in the fall are coming in -- I should say coming in in the summer, so they're coming in nine months

or three months later, nine weeks later, whatever it may be, and they're coming in to learn it, and they're one semester behind.

The learning curve won't be as great for any of these guys, but I'm never going to put a bar up saying you guys can't do it, you're freshmen. As you know, we had at least eight guys play last year. I think a bunch of guys start. At least five got four games plus as far as playing experience.

Any of these guys can play. We're looking for difference makers in the backfield, and we're going to go faster than what we have. You probably won't see a huddle out there much, so when you're going fast, you're going to use more guys in there.

If it's six or seven plays fast, run the skill guys out, stick another six in there and let's go.

So I would say anybody on this list, and we'll find out this spring.

**Q. You followed a lot of these guys for a number of years. How did they respond, and what was the reaction that you were getting?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Really good reaction. Had people calling from outside saying we want to come, and we didn't have any spots. So the guys that were committed to other schools calling and asking we want to be a part of it, so I think it spiked recruiting a little bit, the freshness, newness of what we were going to do. Again, I guess read about what we got, so we'll talk about that later.

**Q. You mentioned that you FaceTimed with Moritz at 1:44 this morning --**

PAT NARDUZZI: Not a FaceTime, no. I was sleeping. When I heard a buzz I rolled over, and he just said, "it's official."

**Q. I was wondering how much sleep you got in the last 24 hours.**

PAT NARDUZZI: I got sleep in the last 24 hours. I would say a week ago I didn't get much sleep. We talked about that at the end.

But no, December was not an easy month for any coach, but it was especially hard on someone that was trying to do all this recruiting and then it was -- in the wee hours of the night or early, early morning, trying to find an offensive coordinator.

**Q. You brought up Coach Bell. Can you talk us**



**through a little bit of that interview process and how he's a little bit of a departure for you in terms of past offensive coordinators you've hired? What impressed you so much?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, again, I want to keep it on these guys, to be honest with you, and I'm going to answer that briefly because I'm not going to ignore your question because it's Christmas, so merry Christmas.

But again, you always got to change, and you're moving with it. We talk about evaluation of what we do, how we do it. We're spread anyway, and we're going to play good defense no matter what, and I wanted to play great offense. I wanted to get a guy that could score points, a guy that had an attitude that we're going to score, and we're going to go, and to push our guys to be the best they can be and have fun doing it.

I think part of it is having fun, and I think that's what we've got.

**Q. (Indiscernible) between snaps?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We'll find out. I don't know. Possibly. Every once in a while. Maybe seven seconds. How about that? His little term is hit the gas, so we're going to hit the gas a little bit faster.

**Q. You have three linebackers in this class. You signed three last year. All those guys played last year. Do you feel like these two classes back to back are kind of rebuilding the linebacker room to some extent?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, rebuilding -- we've lost some good players. You think about some of the guys -- that's no disrespect to our players. Don't misquote me. But we lost some good players through there.

Again, those three linebackers we got a year ago and these three right here, again, you're playing with young guys. SirVocea played young. All these guys have a chance to play. We're going to put them in there and let them go and teach them and coach them and mentor them through this process.

But we've got young guys all over the place. We played with the young guys last year. I wouldn't call it rebuild, but you can use that term if you'd like.

**Q. About Goff, you said that was the guy that if you were going to lose one, you didn't want to lose him. You mentioned explosiveness and breakaway stuff. What's the next level for him to achieve, and why was it that that was the one that of all people you did not**

**want to get away?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think it comes down to speed. There's a lot of good backs that are a little bit slower, a little bit bigger, but this dude is explosive.

As a defensive guy, the one thing you don't want is to have that guy that if you give him a crack, a five-yard run turns into 55. That's what you don't want.

If you lose a big guy and you miss him for five, he gains seven or eight or ten, you're okay. Those guys aren't going to bother you as much. Might be physical, but we're going to be physical, too.

**Q. You had a couple decommitments, but for the most part, this group has stayed intact. Were you surprised that it was able to stay this way after the season you guys had?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Not really. I mean, I think they get it. They understand. Sometimes it's like that.

It doesn't surprise me. I think it's the relationships that we've built. I think it's still -- like go back to Francis Brewu, I think sometimes as coaches you walk out in high schools and you see what's going on in the world and recruiting and you kind of wonder, where are we going with this game.

Then there's Francis Brewu comes through, and it's not about -- maybe some of the exterior things that we don't even want to talk about today, it's about the relationships.

To me, sometimes as coaches we feel like, man, they really care. Do they really care about relationships, or is that what they're not looking for?

But with Francis, it was about relationships and what he had built with us, the development he's going to get, and that's what we sell. It's the people you're going to be around every day, the relationships you're going to have, and the opportunity at every position to get developed to be the best player you can be.

Again, so that's kind of it.

**Q. Regarding energy, how do you guys do it? The season ends in November, and you've probably been gone six, seven days a week for seven weeks ago.**

PAT NARDUZZI: Seven. It's a great question, and I knew you would have a great question. Here's what it comes down to. I know it comes down for me, and I can't speak for every coach, but it comes down to passion. Like what



do you love to do. That's why I said, I love players that love the game of football.

In this game, if it was easy coaching, everybody would do it, because a lot of coaches out there -- people out there would like to be coaches. But it's not easy, and you'd better love the grind. You know what you're getting into when you get into this business. Our coaches know it, and sometimes they forget it. But you're in this business to grind, and this is what we do.

Again, regardless if it's three and a half, four hours of sleep, you wake up next day and do it again and you do it because you love it. That's what we do.

Again, that's the only reason I can give you, because if you didn't love it and didn't have passion for it, I could be sitting on a beach with a margarita right now with my feet up relaxing. That's going to come someday.

**Q. You mentioned how the rules have changed and how it's sped up a sweet spot on a rhythm in dealing with recruits and the transfer portal and all of that stuff. Has it been easier? Have you found some area where you can try to juggle all of it?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Nothing is easier. It gets harder by the day. I can tell you that. The rules, everything that's going on out there, and I don't want to get into the weeds about all this stuff, but it gets harder every day. It's not easier. There's no loophole that we fell into and said, hey, look at this, let's try this. It just gets harder by the day.

I think there's no group in this country that was more disappointed last week hearing about a possible -- you can transfer as many times as you want. What are we talking about? Is anybody going to get a degree anymore? It's discouraging to think that in the game of college football and student-athletes, because I'm going to still call them student-athletes until I die, is that we're not talking about degrees, and if you transfer every year, you're never going to get your degree.

That's why I got into coaching, is to make sure kids get their degree and play football. But it's really, number one, to get your degree, and football is the avenue that's going to pay for you to get your degree, and it's the fun part of your job.

So it's changing, doesn't get any better, and it's where we are.

**Q. Any NIL discussions involved in recruiting this year?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know what, the great thing is I had zero discussion on NIL because I let other people take care of that. I'm a football coach. I'm like Coach Tomlin and Coach Belichick, I want to coach football and I'm not talking contracts, and our kids know that and our recruits know that, our signees know that. That's the way it is.

**Q. It's still a factor --**

PAT NARDUZZI: Oh, it's a factor. It's a major factor. It's a major factor for some. But again, I want guys that want to play football, and they love football, and if all you're talking about is that, we're moving on.

We're going that direction because if we've got to deal with it now, it would -- maybe would have made that mistake in the past. If you're talking about it so much now, guess what? In a year we're going to be talking about it again, and then after spring ball we'll talk about it again. Don't really want to talk about it.

I don't want anybody else to have to talk to them about it, either. We want guys that want to play the game of football, learn, develop, and make generational wealth in three or four years when they end up in the NFL like Brian O'Neill and Avonte Maddox and Damar Hamlin, Dane Jackson and Aaron Donald and all those guys before us.

They played football, and they've done well for themselves. Sometimes I worry about where they're going to be if they aren't hungry like all those that have come before us.

**Q. You mentioned how that's a big part of this process now. Is that just something that you go into a meeting knowing that you're going to have to address, and hear what other schools are offering them?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah. You go into -- every meeting you go in prepared knowing what you're dealing with, but that's normal. That's nothing -- it's not like I've got to go take a refresher class on, okay, he's going to -- you know it's coming.

But you know what, it doesn't come all the time. That's the beautiful thing. So you get a feel. If that's the first thing out of their mouth, what do they care about? Again, is that what you want?

I hope it's the last thing out of their mouth. Again, half this class, it didn't even come up. Maybe more, without counting numbers.

**Q. Did any of your guys that came through the transfer portal sign yet?**

PAT NARDUZZI: They have. This is high school day --

**Q. Am I getting ahead of myself?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You're getting ahead of yourself. But yeah, we've got others on the horizon. We're trying to make this about these guys. It's their first go-around. We're going to have a special -- as I told some of the transfers, we're going to have a special deal when they get here of putting them right here in front of you.

You can get them right at the podium. You can eyeball them up. You can put them up against the wall, put a height and weight chart here, do it all, do whatever you guys want to do, but those guys are going to be available.

It's special for them when that time comes, and we kind of wanted to do it this way.

**Q. Just looking at your class, the high-ranked guys are once again on the defensive front. What's it say about your defensive staff's ability to go get the big prospects?**

PAT NARDUZZI: You know what, they're all big end. I could care less about those stars. I have no idea. I've never looked, don't care to look, don't care where it's ranked. We had this discussion before. I could care less.

Those stars that they got don't mean that the guys that don't have one star, two stars -- I mentioned to a corner's parents last week about we had two first-rounders that were two stars. I thought only one of them was, but we've had first-round guys two stars. I had a tailback that played next door here for a long time, Le'Veon Bell, was a two star. We beat Bowling Green. What does it matter.

And I've seen four stars that stink. We can talk all we want about that. It doesn't matter.

**Q. You mentioned Maynard's mother and your sister went to elementary school together.**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah.

**Q. Was that in Youngstown?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah.

**Q. What's your sister's name?**

PAT NARDUZZI: It's Regina.

**Q. Is that all right if I mention her name?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah. Details. You got them.

**Q. Is St. Edwards still open?**

PAT NARDUZZI: It is. It is.

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