

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Pat Narduzzi

### Press Conference

PAT NARDUZZI: Wow, first thing I've got to say, what a great crowd out there. Panther Nation showed up there today. I appreciate all the efforts that the Panther Pitt and everybody gave out there. We showed them a ball game.

Not always the way we wanted it to go as far as just the details, but you couldn't ask anything more from our guys in the locker room.

Some big plays in the game. Kenny Pickett -- he's pretty good too -- Kenny Johnson had two big-time passes. The big one early. Then he had another tipped ball. Just great eye control on the ball.

Des Reid had a nice touchdown catch. Brookins with the third down pick. Maverick Gracio, I don't know if you guys even know who he is. Put him out there for punt safe, makes a big block. Brandon George takes it to the house, huge third quarter play.

Daejon Reynolds hadn't been getting the ball. Just by whatever, luck, but threw it up to him, gets pass interfered with and he still comes down with the ball. That was a big-time play by him.

Jimmy Scott with a huge third down sock, and Davis obviously with the touchdown run at the end, with Nate Yarnell, after they ripped the quarterback's helmet off. Supposed to be able to stay when they rip it off.

Eli had to come out. Nate came in and got it done there, too. Just a gutsy win by our kids. Shows the character we have in that locker room.

I love that locker room to death. Our players never gave up. I'm sure some of the fans kind of gave up, and I thought, oh, there's no way. But our guys didn't give up. And if you didn't learn that from last week, then hopefully you learned it from this week. And we'll move on to the next.

**Q. (Inaudible) lock in, the way he does of late. What adjustments do you guys you make, four yards going**



**into the last five minutes in the second half, all of a sudden two touchdown drives?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We didn't protect the quarterback very well, as you know. I think Ryan Jacoby tried his tail off to go out there and still play banged up a lot.

We put Jason Collier in there. We had to make a move. He was giving up some pressures, we think. Again, I don't watch the iPad with the offense, but there wasn't many plays to watch in the third quarter to begin with. Loss of time of possession by over 13 minutes.

But the offense made that decision, which is, I think, really helped us. Jason Collier had a great game a week ago and was healthy. So I think that's one of the adjustments of just giving us a chance to operate. And so Eli's done an incredible job. When he needs to make a play, he makes a play with his feet or his arm.

**Q. You scored a decisive touchdown without Desmond in the lineup, with him on the bench. What was going on there?**

PAT NARDUZZI: He's banged up a little bit, I guess. He'll be fine, but he played a hell of a ball game again.

**Q. You talked about (indiscernible) the officials as well as West Virginia. Can you expand about it?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I'll not going to get into it. Big 12 officials. I thought there were some calls that I can't wait to watch the videotape. But after the game, it's over with. But we had two large victories today.

**Q. Talk about the resiliency of your squad. Both the offense and defense kind of struggled and offense scores and defense three-and-out and offense scores again?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Our defense made plays when they needed to, just like the offense. Defense was on the field the whole time, the whole third quarter. 11 minutes they were on the field.

I told Cabe, try to get a first down down here. We went three-and-out, they fake a punt, which was our fault they faked a punt. I don't think they planned on it. They saw



the edge.

We had 10 guys on the field. That's a problem. And then what's the defense do? They go three-and-out again after the momentum changed with that.

So it's a great job by the defense. I thought the defense -- when you look at they had 45 rushing attempts. We only had 29. It was because of time of possession. So defense played their tails off.

**Q. What are some of the issues with run defense?**

PAT NARDUZZI: It's a little bit of everything. It's run fits at times, quarterback draws, running with that 13th player.

There was one quarterback draw, I forget what quarter it was, I get to watch some of that video, and we've got a backer that blitzes a long gap, runs up the middle for 23 yards. Just those details.

It's 60 minutes of focus and details, and it's going to happen. Let's not id ourselves. Everybody does it. But I don't want to do it at all. But it's just some of the details aren't there. And again, give them credit, too. They've got guys on scholarship too.

**Q. The way this week started with the athletic director stuff, does this feel any more satisfying, does the football team feel a responsibility to go out, do something special?**

PAT NARDUZZI: There's not one player on our team who said, Coach, what's going on. We're focused on West Virginia. We're down in the drats -- we're down in our little bubble down there. Probably a good thing we're not sitting on campus. But our guys focused on what they had to do. We had one job. Go beat West Virginia. And mission accomplished.

**Q. What the redshirt transfer quarterback do in his first three games what Eli has done the last two weeks, how does that happen?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Number one, he's got talent. Number two, give the credit to the offensive coaches and the other ten players on the field that are making plays for him.

That Daejon Reynolds catch down in the end zone was a big time. It's a team game. Eli s trying to do his job. He needs help by ten other guys to get it done.

But it takes a unit to get it done. It's not just one player. But Eli has done an unbelievable job in the three games and he's 3-0 as a starter. He goes from playing his first

home game as a starter to being on the road in a different environment, and coming home, playing in a backyard brawl, which is not an easy one to play in, and finds a way to get it done.

**Q. You guys have worn down quarterbacks with your pressure, accumulating sacks over game and it impacts their style of play. Eli got sacked five times and yet still throwing 40-yard touchdowns, leading two touchdown drives. What's it say about him to keep his focus and composure despite getting hit all those times?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I mean, it tells you he's tough. He's got a lot of toughness to him. He's got moxie. He's a football player. That's what quarterbacks are supposed to be.

We've seen quarterbacks like that here at Pitt before. He finds a way to get it done. He doesn't care. He doesn't come off, he's not whining and crying, like, what's going on, protect me, protect me. He don't care. He just goes out and plays, and we made enough plays to get it done.

**Q. With your backs against the wall, do you see Eli taking it to another level?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Honestly, he did, right? I don't see it. He just turned a switch on. Wish he would turn it on for four quarters.

We'll look at the videotape and constantly see what happened and really break it down as we get ready for Youngstown State.

**Q. Fourth and one right before halftime, a little flip to Kenny, was that a miscommunication?**

PAT NARDUZZI: It wasn't a mixed communication. It was misexecution. It wasn't close to the play we wanted. It's disappointing. We'll get it cleaned up. But it was not even close to the play. I don't know what play it was.

We take a chance to go down fourth down, we're taking a gamble there. We expect to get one yard. We'll figure that out.

**Q. Ideally you don't want to be in comeback scenarios, but the fact that your team has been able to string a couple of them together, what's the confidence and cohesion like this do for them?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think it does everything for them. When you can go out there and get those wins in the fourth quarter and find a way to win a football game, every week it's something a little bit different. It's somebody else,

whether it's Daejon and Derrick Davis.

I mean, it's finding a way to win. We talk about the blue vase, our guys are finding a way, they're blue vasing it. And getting it done. Defense is outstanding, getting stops, getting the ball back to our offense.

Think about how important it was to get the ball with 2:07 -- the punt, all of a sudden get the two-minute timeout or two-minute warning, whatever you want to call it. It was a great stop, getting off the field, stopping the run when we had to stop the run.

**Q. What was the thought process behind calling timeout with two minutes and nine seconds left with the two-minute warning there?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Because we knew we were going to get -- we knew we would get another timeout after that. It's like back to back. It's strategic. CIA. It's analytics. We did it the right way.

**Q. Is the rivalry game on your schedule, is this something that you want to keep doing?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We want to continue to do this. It's a brawl. It's good for the fans. It's good for our football team. We love it and we love winning it. 2-1 in the backyard brawl and waiting on the next.

**Q. What are you the most proud about this team?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Most proud of this team, just finding a way to get it done. They stick together. That's the most important thing is they stick together and they finish together. And that was a happy locker room in there after the ball game.

And again, each play, each play, each game there's different guys making plays. We spread it around. Whether Des Reid is not in the game, it's Derrick Davis. He had some great pass pro on that drive as well. Derrick is a really good back as well.

So it's everybody together. And when we win, we win as a team. And that was a team win. Coaches, players, our scout team, our rocks, we call them, it's a team win across the board.

I went up to Caleb Holmes afterwards, played some of the two tight end stuff, he did an outstanding job of being a scout tight end just to give us more beef behind it for number 81. He was number 81.

All those guys. It's a team. It just takes so much to get a

win like that and prepare during the week on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.

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