

# University of Pittsburgh Football Media Conference

Monday, September 30, 2024

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Pat Narduzzi

### Press Conference

PAT NARDUZZI: All right. You guys ready to roll? You good? I can just take your thing and give it to you from now on, good to see you again. Missed having you guys in here last Monday.

#### Q. Sure you did.

PAT NARDUZZI: I did. We were out on the road but had a great, productive week coming off the open week, again, kids get a chance to get fresh, coaches get a chance to get fresh as well even though we're on the road. Boss gave me all kinds of homework to do on open week. There's no open week, there's no off week. We work as many hours we do in normal weeks maybe just a different spot or different focus.

I think one of the things just going back to the last game, we had 26 guys get in on the offensive side of the ball, which is a lot. 31 on defense. You're almost talking about three deep in both those -- you're getting your three deeps in there, and that's huge. We had 52 guys play on special teams. We had different guys all over the place, which is good. It gives those kids experience, stuff to work on because you never know when you're going to need them. And you look at should Shadaron Drip (?), Harrison comes down off on the kickoff team. I think it might be his first snap of the year and he gets a big hit inside the 20-yard line, things like that you go oh, he's a gamer, but it was good to see and get those guys out there but now we're getting ready for UNC and last game is way, way, way behind us, two weeks ago. I'm sure you don't have any questions on that one but Mack Brown, obviously a talented football team across the board from the D-line back to the back evened offensively. Skill, Mack, got a ton of respect for him not only as a football coach, as a person.

One of my favorite guys as a person as we go down and just talk and meet with throughout the year, so Mack is an incredible guy.

On offense, Chip Lindsey, their offensive coordinator, I think he does a heck of a job on offense. I don't know him personally like their defense coordinator, but I think Chip does a great job. I think they're good. Everybody wants to



talk about two weeks ago and their loss, but I think everybody forgets they put 50 up on them too. James Madison is a talented football team as we all know. It's not like (indiscernible) that they were playing against. Any given week, you guys know with the transfer portal you can have a football team that goes out there and gets it done. But they're talented on offense. The Jacolby -- let me get out right here. Criswell, number 12, is talented. He's been to North Carolina, transferred to Arkansas, came back again. He's got a cannon arm. We're going to have to change things up on him. He can put it in small windows. I think he's really, really good. He does a nice job. Omarion Hampton their tailback in the backfield, he's a beast. He's 220 pounds, someone we'll have to focus on as you try to stop the run as far as he goes. Their tight ends Nesbit and Copenhaver are both talented. Number 18 and 81. You'll see them all over the place. You can get their numbers mixed up, 18, 81, either way, but those two guys, we'll probably see more personnel, two tight ends in a game which is smart on their part. I think they had a heavy, heavy dose of it last week, like 35 snaps of it. Offensively they do a great job, J.J. Jones, one of the receivers is a good dude as well, so they're talented defensively, same thing.

If you just look at their defensive line, they are talented up front for sure. Ritzie their D tackle, Power Echols at line backer, Antavious Lane is their best safety but they make a lot of plays and Geoff Collins obviously is their defensive coordinator, former head coach at Georgia Tech but they do some great stuff, change it up and it's not easy depending people nowadays, tell you that, so open it up for questions.

#### Q. As you watched the Duke-Carolina game, what went great from the first half --

PAT NARDUZZI: This is a great question for the radio show later on in the week. It's a game of football. I would like to give you a detailed question but I'm probably not going to share that with you. It's a game of football. 60 minutes, whatever change where you can look at the coverage, maybe that Duke was seeing that they didn't see in the first half or in the first part of the season, they played against, there's all kinds of things, how did you come out? I feel like sometimes we come out in the third quarter flat, North Carolina, I'm not going to say what it is, who knows. What about when we have issues? You never know, you



can't put your finger on it. If you could, you would fix it real quick and be done with it. It's a 60-minute game. You have to come out and play for four quarters and that's what happened.

**Q. (Inaudible) better defense.**

PAT NARDUZZI: We played better on defense? That's your opinion? Just ask Jerry. He's talking to me.

**Q. 70 points one week and 21 the next. I'm talking about what they did against Duke.**

PAT NARDUZZI: You're asking me that question? You already know.

**Q. Points I know, what about schematically.**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, like I said, North Carolina is talent ended football team but the other teams do too. James Madison is talented, Duke is undefeated so it's not like they got beat by a poor Duke team and it was a football game. Just like you go to the Miami game, there's talent all over the place. Every week it's a battle and you never know who is going to win it and you have to play 60 minutes. It's about the inches, the details of the game and, again, whether it's tackling or coverage or whatever it is, you know, you have to get it down.

**Q. (Inaudible) right now --**

PAT NARDUZZI: They're getting their power back downhill. He's powerful, he's explosive. They've got a great screen game, I think. They do a great job in the screen with their tailbacks as well as getting it on the edge and I don't feel like with been great on the screen. We focused on that last night in practice and it will be a focus tomorrow as well the screen game and the run game. They're a heavy double team up front with their guys. A lot of what I would call insert plays and isos and just trying to get moving our D tackles. They're going to get Omarion downhill and let him go. We just got to stop the run like our intent is every Saturday but it will be a little harder. This guy reminds you a lot of a Kiner, we play Cincinnati, a big, physical guy and you have to get him on the ground. He breaks a lot of tackles.

**Q. Sorry, the second half (inaudible).**

PAT NARDUZZI: Chris is difficult, he will be playing for both spots in the first half. We'll see how he practices at both but we have a ton of confidence in Chris. It's just going to be the window open for him to be the next guy and he's made plays this year already. We think that better watch out. He goes out there, lights it up, he may be

seeing more and more time as the year goes on.

**Q. Physical up front, how do you feel like your defensive line has progressed?**

PAT NARDUZZI: We're okay. I would imagine they're looking at the tape going oh, we like this, we like our match-ups. We're not gigantic inside, so we have to do a good job getting our guys in the right spots and moving until right way, get some movement going up front, but probably like normal. We just got to show up and play.

**Q. You talked about how your defense -- (inaudible) penetrate anything else and the line backers -- (inaudible) are there extra checks where they catch you slipping through the line and out of position and they throw it over your head?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, that's the game of football, right? Whether it's drop back pass the game, to me, they can run the back, they can throw the ball. They've got receivers down the field, whether it's Nesbit or J.J. Jones and they can plow it out on the edge so it will limit how much pressure you can go with because they're going to -- they're dangerous on the edge. They're really good at the screen game.

**Q. (Inaudible) self-scout after every game, do you have a little extra time this week and last week and what did you find out?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, I'm not going to tell you what we found out but we do a lot of self-scout. As you're watching a team you say oh, let's go back. It's a constant every week. It's not like you have a couple extra days because you don't really have extra days, you're on the road recruiting looking for that next class and holding onto your current class, but you're constantly always looking at what has happened in the past so we're in there watching a certain style of run that they run and go hey, let's go back and look and see what we look like in this play, what have we given up? And that concept. You're constantly doing that, whether it's looking at what we do on third down, what's successful, what's not been successful, so you're constantly doing that. I can't want tell you we have done any more this week than we normally would during the week.

**Q. And in Chapel Hill, is there a different mind set going into a place that's not been -- (inaudible).**

PAT NARDUZZI: Not really. It's a one game season. We're going on the road. The field's no different. They got different colors, different logo but what's happened in the past has no effect on what will happen Saturday. Got to go

out and play. It's won between the lines, not anything that happened in the past.

**Q. (Inaudible) look more intense maybe.**

PAT NARDUZZI: I haven't seen them a lot. We had a meeting yesterday, but I would imagine they're cranked up for it but I hope they were cranked up for last week and the week before, but it's just another game, it just happens to be in the ACC, we want to get that first ACC win under our belt if we can. I hope we'll be excited going on the road playing against the ACC.

**Q. Two last week?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Two last week and one yesterday, yes. We had some time to focus on -- sometimes that's good and sometimes that's bad.

**Q. (Inaudible) one on one pressure in college football. What did you have to do to find overall protection units to protect and get better?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, there's no question. With the D-line we will face will probably be the best D-line we face to that point in ACC play. We have to play a good technique up front and get the ball out quick and change it up. Got to change the launch point as far as sprinting out, what are you going to do? A little bit of everything but change the launch point and protect the quarterback. Pretty simple every week, that's our plan.

**Q. Have you been impressed with how -- (inaudible) at quarterback.**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, I think it's been good. Has it been great? I don't know. ACC play, there's a few guys out there as well, Rashad and Gandy, I was impressed with Tamarion. That was a heck of a catch and Crumpley with a pick six late in the game. I was impressed with him as well and I was like oh, does he have to get more time? I have been good with all those guys. Am I great? Do I feel like we have it locked down? I will find out because Jacolby can throw a great deep ball.

**Q. You have been scoring at a very high pace, one of the best offenses in the ACC right now as far as how you're scoring but what do you notice? We do this well, we have to --**

PAT NARDUZZI: We have to protect the quarterback, right? You answered your own question with the last question. We have to do a better job protecting our quarterback and I would say that's probably -- but there's a lot of things we want to get better at.

**Q. Working on a technique in practice versus scheming up different plays to help players not performing well --**

PAT NARDUZZI: A little bit of both. It's a little bit of both. It's schematics, moving the launch point as far as where you're going. Don't put a big red X that's where he is all the time. It calmed down to schematics and fundamentals as well. That's what we worked on last week. You're not focused on really a team at that point, but even though we were, which we had more fundamentals time last week and went against each other a little bit more.

**Q. (Inaudible) being undefeated a lot of plays in its face but is there something you can do better to help with that?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I think he's a red shirt freshman. He's still a baby and we expect a lot out of him. He's done a heck of a job so far but you don't get evaluated on what you did the last four games. You get evaluated on what he does this Saturday at noon down in Chapel Hill.

**Q. A couple freshman close to playing that fifth game, not too much but a couple. Is that something you even consider anymore? Is that off your radar altogether?**

PAT NARDUZZI: I can't say it's off your radar but kids want to play. I haven't had anyone come in and say coach, I want to red shirt after four games, that hasn't happened, whether it's Malachi, I'm trying to think of who else you're talking about. We're going to play whoever. Francis is in there doing a nice job. Sincere, two baby D tackles in there that we don't see playing any less than what we're playing. Those are three I can think of true freshman, is there anybody else I'm missing? Sincere, he's playing. There's a good reason why he's not. Nobody is coming to talk to me because they're all playing, they know that. They're in two deep and they're rolling.

**Q. I want to ask you about Daniel Carter, after the game, he's lost weight, he's quicker. What kind of impact did he make offensively for you guys?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Daniel did a nice job. If you go back and watch the video tape. He reads his blocks well. He understands what we're trying to get. Sometimes running back is not just get the handoff and make a play and find the hole, he does a good job of understanding what the whole scheme is offensively and where that ball needs to go and where he's cutting it back and how our offensive line and tight ends are blocking the run-up player there. He understands, he's really smart. That's why he's so important to us on special teams, because he's smart and

it's the same thing at running back. He's earned himself more running back for sure.

**Q. Eli -- (inaudible).**

PAT NARDUZZI: He's in there right now. I can take you for a walk, he's in there with the receivers watching all the time. He puts a lot of time in.

**Q. (Inaudible).**

PAT NARDUZZI: We made it back in pre-season camp, just didn't seem like he was a wide receiver, but obviously he's got good hands because not only did he have a nice run, he had a nice catch. I think all that time spent at receiver, he was a running back in high school as well. I think all the time spent as a receiver has helped his ball skills out of the back field, which we like to throw it to the backside of the back field as well. I have been impressed with him since he moved him to that position. The last couple of weeks he's had the best practices he's had. I think he can be a special back in this offense for us in the future and, again, he's earned himself some playing time as well, somehow some way. How to get them all out there, I don't know. Desmond will be back too. Were you going to ask that question? I told you after the game, he could have been back last week but it was kind of like he wasn't 100%, but he's 100% now.

**Q. You have a couple guys who haven't played at all this season, like Simmons, any closer on those?**

PAT NARDUZZI: Yeah, getting closer, I think Fitzy is back. Would like to see 55 out there this week. He looked pretty good last week and Jules, he's given us fits on the scout team. He's done a nice job down there too. He's fast and he's going to be a special back as well. He will be back soon too. He's dressed up and ready to roll every day and he dressed last two games as well.

MODERATOR: Final one.

**Q. (Inaudible) Georgia Tech help this week.**

PAT NARDUZZI: Not really, their defense has changed quite a bit. They're 4-3 right now playing a lot of man free, playing a little bit of two and all that stuff, so they're playing quarters, quarter, quarter half. Seemed like their (inaudible) ran three deep safeties. They're not doing that, but by year down there, they changed quite a bit which we haven't changed much in ten years, you know. They seem to change a lot down when he was at Georgia Tech, but so there's not as much that you're look at really.

**Q. He was here during camp last year, right? Was he**

**trying to learn your defense?**

PAT NARDUZZI: No, he wasn't trying to learn our defense. No, he was just coming to make it around sometimes when you have more free time, Jeff's a good man and a friend, but he just came, you know, popping around, seeing different places. Good man. All righty. Enjoy the rest of the day. We'll see you tomorrow.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

