

Purdue University Football Media Conference

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Head Coach Ryan Walters

Press Conference



Q. Ryan, some different challenges going on the road at Virginia Tech and obviously a different style of team, so just what kind of challenges, I guess, are there from turning around and forgetting about Saturday and getting on to the next one?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, obviously an electric atmosphere. We showed a clip of "Enter Sandman" in our team meeting last night, the Virginia Tech intro.

So it will be the first time where all of us are traveling together as a team, and it's hard to do that on the road and all the challenges that face us from a schematic standpoint.

You know, very balanced offensively. 11 and 12 personnel. Quarterback is a big guy that's a lot more athletic than you want him to be. Very long team on both sides of the ball. Big up front, big on the perimeter.

Defensively you're going to see a 4-2 shell. Predominantly quarters and cover-3 early on downs. They have a defensive tackle, Pollard, who is an explosive player. Really long, tall in the second level that are athletic and then talented on the outside.

So our work is cut out for us for sure. Got to pay attention to the details and be confident in our technique and fundamentals, and it will be a huge challenge and an exciting one to go on the road.

Q. Do you anticipate Josh Kaltenberger being back this week?

RYAN WALTERS: If everything goes according to his rehab, if he stays on schedule, I would anticipate him being available, yes.

Q. Last thing, Caleb Krockover was doing the kickoffs for most of the game the other day. Is that the path you would like to go where you have a different kickoff specialist and a different guy for field goals and extra points?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, just whoever gives us the best chance to be successful in both of those phases.

Q. You've had a chance to look at the film. Kind of give us a sense of maybe some of your take-aways, some of the good, and some things that you need to improve at?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, after washing it, you are definitely frustrated because there were opportunities all over the place to win that football game. There were times where we played clean and were explosive on both sides of the ball.

Defensively it felt like it was feast or famine. It was either three-and-out, or they were scoring points, and a lot of that had to do with our third down efficiency.

You look at the game in its totality, and I think that kind of told the story. Obviously time of possession was very heavily favored in Fresno State's direction, and that was because they were 11 of, I believe, 17 offensively getting third downs, and we were 2 of 12.

We've got to come up with a better plan schematically, and then we've got to play with confidence and pay attention to details so that we can execute.

From a players' standpoint, have to come up with a better short yardage plan. I think we had four opportunities to extend drives that were two yards or less and came away with no yards. Definitely have to be better on third downs on both sides of the ball.

Q. Talk about the debut of Dillon Thieneman. Maybe the best defensive player on the field for you. Just your thoughts on the true freshman.

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, I was very, very pleased and excited for him, but I wasn't surprised.

We've seen that style of play and that consistency from him since the springtime. So, like I said before, the beautiful thing about football is that it doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't care about what's happened prior to the game. It's all about the guys that are on the field, and he



has deserved his spot on the roaster and his spot on the depth chart.

Q. He's talked a little too about the depth at which he plays. It seems very unique. You know, 15, 20 yards off the field. I'm sure that's always been part of your scheme, but can you talk about that a little bit?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, it just allows you to stop explosives and to be able to overlap on balls thrown down the field, which in theory, allows you to be aggressive on short to intermediate throws, and I think that's one of the areas that we need to improve and trust going into the game.

But just that depth allows him to see the quarterback, allows him to see things kind of unfolding in front of him to be able to put him in position to go make plays.

Q. How much stock do you put in a team making its most improvement from game one to game two?

RYAN WALTERS: Just typically if historical trends continue, then you do see a huge jump from game one to game two. I'm fully anticipating that to happen.

Like I said, there were times where things looked like they are supposed to look and looked like how they've looked in practice and throughout fall camp. So I'm fully confident that the consistency with which we need to play to win a game will start showing up more and more.

This team, obviously we're all new together, and we will continue to improve as the season goes.

Q. First game as a head coach. How did you think it went?

RYAN WALTERS: I mean, we lost. You know what I mean? Obviously the atmosphere of Ross–Ade is everything that you want it to be. Just the feelings of euphoria, you know, were all there. We've.

Got to come away with wins. That's why we're here. That is not the standard and not the expectation to have opportunities to win. It's to win ball games.

So very disappointed. You know, you don't play that out to go that way in your mind, but you also can't overreact and panic from one game, and that was a good opponent. You have to give Fresno State a lot of credit and that coaching staff a lot of credit. They've done a lot of things in their program to lead to success.

So when you make mistakes like we made and can't

extend drives or can't get off the field, it's hard to win.

Q. Any post-script on Hudson Card's performance now that you've had a chance to sort of digest it?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, you saw flashes of what he's capable of doing both with his arm and his legs. We've got to do a better job of protecting him and giving him an opportunity to stand in there and deliver accurate and confident throws.

I thought we did a good job of catching the ball well. Still need to be more disciplined with splits and depths of some of our route concepts, but like I said, we had opportunities to win a game and play it explosive at times, and we will definitely improve.

Q. Your pass rush was talked about a lot over the offseason. It's supposed to be one of your stronger units. Didn't look like they got a whole lot of pressure on the quarterback Saturday. What did you see there?

RYAN WALTERS: I mean, I would disagree actually. We hit him a lot. I think we hurt them a little bit before halftime. Sacked him a couple of times. We just got to cover longer.

A lot of times as soon as the ball is leaving his hands, we've got guys in his face. I thought KJ and Nic were able to get pressure. We have to keep him in the pocket as well. Got to be disciplined with our rush lanes, and I thought that also added to extended drives on third down in particular.

But early downs, like they were getting the ball out pretty quick with the quick game, so you're not going to get there on a three-step concept, but some of our third-and-mediums to third-and-longs, I felt like we got there. We just have to cover a little bit longer.

Q. It was obviously the first game you coached, but then also the first game that you were actually coaching with your staff and everyone on that sideline. How was the game day work flow there, and did it run as smoothly as you wanted it to?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, obviously you're going to improve week in and week out, and you're always going to find things to critique to get better, but I thought the communication was clear. I thought we were pretty clean from a substitution standpoint.

We had the one where we had to burn a time-out offensively, but other than that, I thought it was smooth. Nobody was panicking. Nobody was overly dramatic or

anything like that. So we'll continue to get better.

Q. What's your philosophy of this is your first road trip? Do you like to leave later? I know you are maybe leaving later in the afternoon. Do you like to do walk-throughs? What will be your stamp on how you handle road games? Is it all dependent on the start time of the game? How do you handle it?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, a lot of it will be dependent on what time the kickoff is. We'll do our walk-throughs there. We'll do meetings there.

It's good to just get out, travel, get the lay of the land and get used to your surroundings in order to put yourself in a position to win a game on the road.

Q. You kept a pretty tight rotation at wide receiver. I think only three guys played more than three snaps. Is that the trust in those three guys, or would you like more guys to establish themselves there?

RYAN WALTERS: I think it was a combination of the game getting tight and kind of going with who you trusted that you've seen the majority of throughout fall camp, but I do think we also need to rotate guys more.

That was one of the things that we discussed as a staff post-game is we've got to be more precise on our rotations and giving guys an opportunity that are fresh to go showcase what they can do and gain some more experience.

So I would anticipate the reps to be more evenly distributed, but -- not evenly distributed, but more rotations for sure.

Q. You ask a lot of Scourton and Jenkins in their roles. How did they, I guess, handle that first game in terms of all the stuff you asked them to do?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, you know, obviously there were plays that you want back, but I thought they played with speed and physicality. I think that's also another position group that we've got to rotate a little bit more.

They've got quality guys behind them that can play winning football, so to keep that group fresh, I think will be key as well in terms of getting to the quarterback and causing pressure for him.

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