

Wisconsin Football Media Conference

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Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Head Coach Paul Chryst

Postgame Press Conference



Wisconsin - 20, Army - 14

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with some opening comments from Coach and then we can take questions.

PAUL CHRYST: Really proud of the way guys fought and battled and played. And it's certainly good to get a win. But, again, a lot of guys contributed.

I thought, defensively, really good in so many ways. And it's a good plan. The guys knew it and executed it and came up with some good plays.

And, you know, a lot of guys made plays, certainly. And it was good to see C.J. He got a lot of action, for good reason. He was good.

But I thought across the board, a lot of guys knew what to do and triggered on it. And I thought our inside backers were, right, there's coach obviously speaking there, they were sensational.

Q. You mentioned your inside backers. Leo came up with a pretty big play in the end and in the backfield as soon as they snapped the ball. What has allowed him to be as successful as he's been and what did he show you tonight?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, I think what allows him to be successful -- and he's, obviously, talented and loves the game. And I think Bo does a great job of coaching him. And, you know, I think him and Jack play off each other, too. And also what helps them be successful is the guys who are on him. I really do believe that.

But Leo is a guy every day, every day that he's at practice, every day he's all in. And certainly talented. And that's a good combination.

Q. You mentioned your backers. Sanborn, usually makes plays on defensive. But, tonight, special teams.

PAUL CHRYST: Two big ones.

Q. Can you take us through those plays what you saw and explain in particular the decision to go for that fake?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, we kind of -- you know, he's -- one, he's just -- you trust him, right? You talk about situations that are big, and he's out there.

And you kind of had a thought going into the week that, you know, as you studied them that they might be susceptible to that. And a good job, you know, Chris, having him ready for it. And gave you what you wanted and, you know, takes everyone to make that happen.

And guys are excited when it's called. And that was big. And, certainly, the end of the game, you know, he's clutch. And it's -- again, a guy that will -- he impacts this team in so many ways.

And he certainly did defensively, did in special teams, and he does every day as the leader of this team.

Q. Just with Army's tenacity, were you expecting -- what were y'all telling them at half time? You dominated the first half. Were y'all kind of expecting them to come out the way they did the second half? It seemed they were kind of able to turn things around there at the end of the third quarter.

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, I mean, every time, you know, you -- you know, at halftime, that's just one half. And you got to -- and you get to go play more. And you got to go play more.

And, you know, knew that the game wasn't over, by any stretch of imagination. And, you know, again, I thought we were good enough on third down to kind of keep some drives alive.

And we had it going and kind of stalled it a couple times. But, you know, credit to them. They made some plays. And, obviously, we didn't do anything offensively.

And, you know, they get the points now, it sort of changes



the build of the game. Again, it was such a huge play by Leo on the fumble. Huge.

Q. Paul, was there -- when you guys went up 19 to 7, was there any thought to go for two their to make it a two-touchdown lead?

PAUL CHRYST: We thought about it. But we just thought, Let's get the points. And kind of where the clock was, we wanted to make sure we were doing that. We talked about it.

Q. Paul, we asked you a couple weeks ago if you thought this team had an identity. Do you think you've found some with the running game the last couple of weeks, especially with the emergence of Braelon?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, it's -- it's been -- you know, that's a big part of it, right, if we can do that. And, again, I still think, you know, there's more to be done.

You know, certainly, I feel we got a really good defense. And, you know, I think we're starting to put together some games where you can run the ball. But you're going to need to be a little bit more consistent in throwing it.

I thought we had some opportunities and there was times where we made some plays and others that I thought we didn't take advantage of what might have been there. So we got to keep going on that.

But, you know, I appreciate the resiliency of the group. And the guys just keep playing. And we got to keep improving in certain areas, certainly.

But, you know, I think there is some stuff to build on that we got to continue. And if that can become kind of who we are the rest of the year, it would be good.

We know we're going to get challenged, you know, differently each week. And you never take any of the things you do well for granted, right?

You know, I think we've been playing well defensively. You never take that for granted. I think we've been able to do some things in the run game the last couple games, but you got to keep growing on it.

And, again, in the passing game and, you know, we got to be more consistent. Like I said, there was some plays, but we got to be more consistent.

Q. You mentioned Goetz. If I remember correctly, he started out as a defensive line man -- or defensive end at some point early in his career. Does that play a role

in how you guys were able to use him today? And how did that come about to figure this is the way we can use this guy in this package?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, I mean, I think our staff just kind of felt like with what we wanted to do against them, that, you know, C.J. was kind of the right mix.

I don't think it was because he had the history of it. It's a little bit different that way. But had a feeling that, you know, this was going to be kind of a game that fit him in his skill set.

He's dependable, he's tough. And I think it was -- you know, he showed up and made plays. And, again, it takes everyone. And, you know, that's been fun to see. When you do have success, you know, it's more than just a couple guys.

Q. Paul, once again, just talking about the all around victory. Seeing guys contribute in different ways on both sides, really -- I mean, special teams, too. What kind of momentum does that give the guys down the stretch?

PAUL CHRYST: I mean, it's -- you know, you have an opportunity to build off of it. But I think it's -- I'm hesitating because you're kind of all in it for each week.

So, you know, you're just grateful that what guys put in this week and put out there tonight for this opportunity, this game. And, you know, it was -- it was a challenge in many ways.

But they just -- they fought through it and certainly did enough. And that's what you're grateful for. And, you know, I think every player, has an opportunity to build off stuff they've done well. And every one of us has, you know, got to find things that we can keep working to get better at.

Q. I mean, I know it takes all 11 guys. But when you say that the passing game needs to be more consistent, there are some plays that you didn't take advantage of, are you referring to maybe some throws where Graham had guys open but maybe put the ball in a place that was a little bit lower percentage throw? Do you look to lock down on the guy a little bit?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, right now, not as much. I thought -- you know, I saw it on a few things. But until you really watch it -- I don't want to -- I just thought that there were -- bottom line is, you know, we're going to have to win the games, you know, and to move the ball efficiently.

You're going to have to -- you know, you're going to have to throw it and you're going to have to run it. And you know what, I thought -- we got to be better at that.

Q. Paul, we saw Jake Ferguson get a little bit more active in the passing game this week. Was that something that matchup-wise that you liked what he could do against the linebackers or is that just him being one of your reliable guys and him making plays?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, I think it's both. I mean, you -- you know, I've really appreciated the way Ferguson has kind of approached this whole year and the way he's been playing.

And, certainly, we felt like there was a couple things that we could -- you know, I don't want to say take advantage of, but is a favorable matchup.

And I thought he played with really good speed and I liked the way he was doing it. I thought there was a couple other opportunities we could have gone to him. You know, and that's -- again, I want to make sure I'm seeing that right, but he's been playing well.

Q. The running backs you talked about being -- them -- whoever's got the hot hand is usually going to be the guy. It seemed like Braelon was kind of rolling in the first half. I think he had 10 carries and then he didn't get the ball in the third quarter at all. Would you like to get him more involved?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah. I mean, a lot of it is, you know, if we put drives together, that changes everything, you know? And I don't know what we were. I don't feel like we were real good on third down in the third quarter.

So, now, all of sudden you're talking about fewer possessions -- fewer plays in the possessions. And so, I think it's been really good, what Chez and Braelon have given us, and Schipps giving us some stuff.

But, you know, I think to get those opportunities, offensively, we got to be more consistent. We weren't good enough on third down.

Q. Paul, punt returns: Do you guys have a hard and fast rule for your returners, Put your heels at the 10, and if it's over your head, don't catch it? Or do you leave it up to their judgment?

PAUL CHRYST: You know, it's -- you do have -- you know, here's where we're at and, you know, I think it has changed some over the years. Because the -- you know, it's -- the kickers are getting better at it. And we had a couple.

I think the one, you know, we had -- we were moving back quite a bit. You know, and you got to get a feel. And so, it's -- I hesitate because, I don't know, it's fast.

Is it at the eight, is it at the nine? You have to go back -- you want to set yourself there and if you got to go back too much, you got to gauge it. And not to say that every ball is going to kick back, you know? So that's one that I think we'd like to have over.