

# Wisconsin Football Media Conference

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## Head Coach Paul Chryst

### Postgame Press Conference



Wisconsin - 35, Northwestern - 7

PAUL CHRYST: Well, certainly appreciative of all the efforts that went into today's game and guys finding a way to win. And like I said, you never take it for granted and it's never easy to win.

And it shows, it takes a ton of work and effort. And guys put it out there. And had a lot of contributions from a lot of players. And that part was good.

And I thought, you know, once again, defense played outstanding. I thought it -- you know, offensively, did a good job. Especially, you know, defensively, had a number of takeaways and took advantage of those offensively. There's a lot of good.

**Q. Paul, it's been a long, slow climb from that difficult start. The way this team is playing right now, overall, the three units meshing, how well do you think they are in your mind playing as a team?**

PAUL CHRYST: I think they're -- you know, they've definitely -- they're playing as a team. And I think it goes back to, you know, my gut and what I believed in this team is that they do care about each other and would do anything for each other.

And I think it's a group that likes playing football. And I think that, you know, if you can play off of each other and kind of understand what's going on, that that helps.

But I think they're definitely -- you know, appreciate the way they go about each week and kind of make the most of that week. And done a good job of, I think, having the focus be, really, that day, whatever that day is that we're in.

And I think it comes from really good leadership on this team. And guys respect the process. They respect the game. And it's -- that's what makes them fun to be around. But they do enjoy each other and care a ton about each other.

**Q. Jack and Leo put together productive games yet again. How do those two guys complement each other and what do you think they've added at linebacker?**

PAUL CHRYST: Those two are playing -- they're playing really, you know, high level football. And they bring it every day. You know, and -- you know, as good as they're playing, there's others around that are also helping that.

But those two, you know, they love the game and they work at it. And they got great instincts and I think Bo does a great job of coaching them. And they love playing the game.

And I also think they -- they know they can impact it. And they take that challenge and they put that on themselves. You know, they can make an impact. And they do.

**Q. Paul, I know you talk about how many different people it takes to make one unit of your offense; running game, passing game work. What it has it been the last few weeks that have made the passing game more effective, especially on third down, being able to convert more often?**

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, I think it's that. You know, I mean, the protection was good today. And I thought guys were running good routes. And I thought, you know, for the most part, Graham, I thought he saw things well. And for the most part, made good decisions.

And so, I think when you have that and you're -- you trust each other, then that helps. Bottom line is you got to execute. And they've been doing that. And we got to continue to build on that and grow from it.

**Q. Paul, we want to know how important Braelon's health is to what you guys have left in front of you this season. How do you know when the right time is to get him out of there?**

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, it's -- you don't. I mean, you -- he's important to us. And I've loved his progression. And you saw today, you know, what he's -- and you've seen it before, but what he's capable of.



And I think that's where other guys need to be a part of it. And I think that's where -- you know, it's important to get Julius back in the game and for him to be able to finish.

I thought he ran hard, but, you know, fourth quarter, we put two on the ground and our defense pitches a shutout and give them seven points. That's not very good.

And it's not that he -- no one wants to go out there and put it on the ground. But we're going to need more than just Braelon, I believe.

And yet, you know, I think what Braelon's done and gives and brings, and yet -- Schipp, I thought, came in and has been doing a good job in different roles.

But asked him to do a little bit more. I thought he had some good runs. And so, we just got to keep going and other guys got to keep developing, growing.

**Q. Just a follow-up to that. With Chez out, Braelon on the scene, his role expandable, have you had any sort of conversation with him this week? To the rest of us, he's 17 but he doesn't act 17 at all. I didn't know if you pulled him aside at any point and just kind of see where he's at and how he's going to handle being the guy going forward?**

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah. And then, you know, this week, didn't feel the need and kind of the way that he approaches it, you know, he is kind of a guy you trust. And didn't feel like he needs that, you know?

And yet, he knows how important he is to this group. But he's got a great mix of -- he's humble and he's confident. And I think today showed, you know, he's got a chance to be special.

**Q. Paul, I don't know if you and Jim were asked Monday about Caesar Williams' development over time. But safe to say that that pick he made in the end zone -- how did that -- not only stopping that drive, but just flipping the momentum for your team?**

PAUL CHRYST: I thought it was big. And that's their first drive and that was a great pick. And I thought it was a strange play.

You know, they had a big run and the strip fumble and it bounces up, and Caes comes down and makes that. I thought -- you know, one of the things I was impressed with defensively is, you know, when they got into the red zone. I mean, we boat up. You know, and guys made plays. But I thought, certainly, the first play by Caes, the

pick in the end zone was huge.

**Q. Paul, when you talk about Graham, he looked more comfortable in the pocket the past month or so. How have you worked on that in practice or what do you think he's done to get to that level where he's more comfortable?**

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, I think it's a couple things. One is he is working on that. You know, and kind of when things aren't necessarily clean in the pocket, you know, what do you do?

And it has been -- you know, I think our protection has been pretty good. And guys have been winning their share of routes. So there's more time to it.

You know, that's one thing I have appreciated from Graham, is that, you know, he's very purposeful in his work. And what he's going to do, you know, there's always a couple things each week we're going to try to focus on.

But you continually have to do everything, you know, in the sense of you can't just focus on two things. But I think that's part of the growth and he's got to continue to grow. But he comes. And it's important to him.

And, you know, what drives him -- I believe what drives him the most is how can he help this team. That really is what drives him.

**Q. You said you kind of believed in this team all along. But was there any point after the Michigan game before the start of this winning streak, anything that kind of made you realize that you were going to be able to recover from this, you guys weren't going to pull the tent and keep going with what you have?**

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, I never thought differently. You know, and -- you know, it's not like there was an aha-moment and there was -- you know, when we weren't -- it comes back to the game.

I mean, you just have to play and do certain things to give yourself a chance to win. And when you do, you got a better chance. And when you don't, it makes it harder.

But I think, you know, they were consistent in their approach. And I thought -- again, I thought we had great leadership and have had it throughout the year.

And, certainly, when was it more important, was it that time or now, to have that great leadership? I think they're both equally important for different reasons. But there wasn't -- they've been who they have been and I'm proud of that.

And that's why this group is special to me.

football. And, you know, as we keep going, we need all the guys to contribute and help us.

**Q. Caesar Williams said last week that the hiring of Hank Poteat has kind of worked out as you guys have thought. You know, it's obvious Caesar and Faion are playing well. But what about Dean Engram? He had the play against Rutgers, the play today. How far has he come since, say, the beginning of the year?**

PAUL CHRYST: I think certainly he's -- you know, there's a potential for more growth in some ways. Because Dean hadn't played a lot, you know, where Faion and Caes certainly had more experience, you know, more game experience.

And I absolutely believe that -- I'm glad that Caes agrees with it. But I'm -- you know, I -- you know, with Jimmy and Hank, they're getting a lot of really good coaching. And I think that it's been good for everyone.

I think our safeties are playing really well. And I think that helps and there's times where Jimmy can help focus on them.

And that group -- you know, we talk a lot about our front seven, and deservedly so. But I think that group's been playing really well.

Torch had a big play today. And I thought, you know, Scott is still showing up and making plays. So they're all contributing.

I think that's what's -- you know, our defense is playing really well and we're getting a lot of contribution from a lot of guys. And that's what I think is fun for me to see.

**Q. Saw Danny Davis on punt returns today. What goes into that decision to put him there? And what do you like about what he can do at that spot?**

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah, I mean, Danny has done it in the past. And you'll have, as you go through this whole thing, you got to -- you're just trying to balance it out in the workloads and the opportunities for guys.

And so, Dean has certainly done it, and Dunner has done it and Danny. So, you know, I think we'll still kind of see all of them.

But it was a chance -- you know, I thought we saw good things in that one. And we wonder if we could have fielded it the one before the first half. And that was frustrating we didn't finish with points in that drive.

But, you know, Danny's, he's been -- he's played a lot of

