

Wisconsin Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 3, 2022
Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Head Coach Paul Chryst

Postgame Press Conference



Wisconsin 38, Illinois State 0

PAUL CHRYST: Well, certainly proud of the effort the guys put in all week. And then any time we get to play this game to get a chance to win, it involves a lot of contributions. And we had that. And as a coach, you always appreciate that. And it was certainly a game where there are so many things that we look at that are positive and we can build off of. And then, you know, automatically there are things that you know during the game and I'm sure there will be when we take a look at the film areas where we've got to clean up. You know, it's one of those games.

And, you know, what's great about the game is there is no script. It's how you react to different situations. And I thought -- the one thing that the guys did do was they stayed steady through that and kept playing. And so it was good to start the season, it was good to play and, you know, wanted the guys to enjoy that tonight, the victory, and then come back and continue to get better.

Q. Paul, you've spoke in the off season a couple of times you wanted Graham to be more efficient, get guys involved and make them better. Do you feel like he was able to do that tonight?

PAUL CHRYST: There was a lot of times where I thought he did -- protection was good. We had the one in the red zone where they got us. And yet I thought the protection was good. And I thought he was -- I thought he saw things pretty well. I thought, you know, a number of guys got involved. That part was good.

Q. I was going to ask about that, the number of guys you got involved because TK is your most experienced receiver for a long time he didn't have a catch. What is that a sign of if the quarterback is spreading the ball around in your opinion?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah. I think that it's always good when you take what they're giving you. And I thought that for the

most part, you know, it felt like he was doing that. And I think, too, I do believe that he's got a real confidence in a number of guys, you know, so that that also probably is indicative of that.

And I think the same could be said for, you know, us as coaches. You've got that. So you're not having to necessarily formation guys into or out of positions. So I think that will help him. And it's going to -- if we're going to be good in that area, we've got to take what -- that's always the case; right? You've got to take what they give you. But it's going to take a bunch of guys. That's what I was looking for. And we're off to a start there. Didn't get the backs involved much. You know, I think that was the way the game was going to play out. Didn't anticipate that a ton. But I think there was -- it was good to see a lot of guys get it.

Q. The first 7 minutes or so was a little sloppy with penalties and a drop.

PAUL CHRYST: Right.

Q. A weird punt return. Do you expect that in some regards guys being a little bit antsy? Do you chalk that up to be over eager?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah. To say that I expect it, no. You know, I don't know if it was the first two, but it seemed like the first two or three punt returns we got the holding call and, you know, we're backed up. And then, like you said, we've got third down and, you know, it's a drop. And now those were the only plays for the offense -- that was your first quarter, you know, three and out. And then we had a couple of those penalties that we gave them first downs.

And I am proud of the way we kept playing. And, obviously, a big play by Torch. We've absolutely got to be cleaner in those things that you control. There's going to be others I'm anxious to see. Keanu kind of is coming through and going with it. And certainly no guy is going to go out there and think I'm going to try to drop the ball here. It's not that.

But I think there are some -- that's just -- you know, in some ways, it's what's great about this game. Guys are



excited about it. And nerves are a real thing, you know that. And to get back in and starting the season and playing. Part of you appreciate that, that they're not taking it for granted. Here we go, we get to play. But absolutely, we've got to continue to work and continue to improve, you know, individually and certainly as a team.

Q. Obviously, you didn't go in expecting what you all had the two 90-plus plays. But did you enter this season thinking you-all had the capability of maybe more splash plays, more chunk plays going into the season?

PAUL CHRYST: I think you always -- you know, you're going to need to do a lot of things. And I think when you sit there and talk about chunk plays, I wouldn't say that necessarily -- we've been fortunate we've been able to hand the ball off and have had some backs that those become chunk plays.

The other is a screen, you know, and got them in a pressure that the guys executed it well. And so any time you can get big chunks, it's good. But I don't think that you necessarily -- I think they come when you play the game and when guys execute. And it's not necessarily what type of play. I think they're all capable of being a chunk play if everyone's on point.

Q. What kind of things have you guys done conditioning-wise to have players ready to be blocking 90 yards down field on a play like that. It seemed like there was always a big group of Badgers in the end zone at the end of both of those?

PAUL CHRYST: They better. I mean, you've got to play the play out. And certainly guys were working. But I think you've got to play and you play to the whistle. And there's an excitement too. I mean, guys -- I think it shows, too, that they've got -- you know, they understand that you don't know what play is going to be the big one.

I thought we saw it on the -- I thought Max made a heck of a block on the interception return. There was a lot of guys there and they played and played through the play. And that you always appreciate. But you should do it that way.

Q. Paul, you talk about Torch's big play. One, from your perspective, what did you see in that play in terms of what was key for him to get the pick? And was there any carryover do you think from that moment for the rest of the half?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah. I think, you know, certainly was a play that I think sparked everyone, especially the way that drive had been going. It's a credit to certainly Torch who

made the play and yet every play is -- it takes everyone to make those happen.

And I think Jimmy does a great job of coaching. And those guys understand to find -- it enables them to play in play situations. But you know what, he made a play. And, you know, he's been doing that. Right? And that was fun to see him continue it and start it off this year and yet it's a combination of everything. When something happens well, it's -- credit goes to the players first and foremost, but I think the coaches are putting them in position and teaching them how to play in those moments.

Q. Paul, you were noncommittal on whom the backup was going to be on Thursday. What was it that gave Myles the edge that made you feel comfortable with him going in as the number two tonight?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah. Just thought it would be good for him to get that work that we had tonight.

Q. Paul, kind of back to Torch a little bit. He's your experienced safety. Does Torch's role change or does your depth change if Wohler who kind of had to come out is going to be out for any length of time?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah. It will be interesting. I'm kind of anxious to see kind of what exactly happens and how Hunter is and what it will be. And, you know, Torch's role will be big; right? And it has been. And I think for a number of -- you know, one, the way he plays but, two, his understanding of everything. He's a good one to play with. There's a piece of it that I think that part as far as understanding.

Like I said, it was good to see Preston get in there and do that. You talk about experience and understanding, you know, Torch obviously has that. Kamo'i certainly does some things and goes in, but I think that's where it's -- Torch has a role in so many different ways and hopefully Hunter's not too bad.

Q. Coach, is the energy to start a season for the players a little bit different coming into a night game, packed stadium at Camp Randall rather than a mid day start?

PAUL CHRYST: You know, I know guys were excited to play tonight. And it was a good atmosphere. I don't know that -- I'd like to think any time you get to play this game, it's pretty exciting. And yet certainly today, tonight, it was good. We were all anxious to get going and to be able to play. Seemed like a long day today. But once we got over here and got going, it was -- it felt good to be back and get the season underway.

Q. I know I'm asking this before you've had a chance to watch the film. From your vantage point, could you tell if Graham's footwork had carried over from the improvements you'd seen this off season?

PAUL CHRYST: Yeah. Sure hope so.

Q. Paul, you know, Riley didn't finish the game. Logan came in for him. Can you talk a little bit about maybe what Logan brings to the table and how do you feel about him if Riley isn't able to play?

PAUL CHRYST: Right. I mean, one, it was good, you know, to -- whenever you get a chance to go in. And so you appreciate him being ready to roll. Again, anxious to find out what all it is with Riley and where that goes. But, you know, they've all come off of camp. And everyone's gotten a lot of work. And I'm anxious to see kind of how everyone did but certainly Logan. And it was -- you know, we're going to -- everyone knows we're going to need a lot of guys this season. And the more that you can count on to play, that's good for this team.

Q. You talked before about how Braelon has had a full off season to train to be able to watch his own film from last year. What else is notably different from him this season and what stood out from your vantage point about the way he ran tonight?

PAUL CHRYST: You know, I think -- I've always been impressed with him kind of how he approaches every day. He's a worker. And that hasn't changed. And what hasn't changed is that he expects a lot of himself and yet goes about it by working. What stood out, what's different, you hope it's just a better version of himself, you know, and continue to keep growing.

He's still relatively young at that position. But it's -- I think he did some good things obviously. And I'm not just talking about the big run. I thought the backs ran hard. It was great to see Chez get in there and run. And I thought Isaac -- one, the kickoff return, the one, and it was good to see him get and kind of had some tough runs I thought. And even Julius at the end getting some -- that was good. But I appreciate Braelon I know because he's going to continue to work and we need that.

All right. Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports