

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Pitt vs Michigan State

Monday, December 27, 2021

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Michigan State Spartans

Darius Snow

Press Conference

Q. Darius, I'm just curious how you guys are game planning and the challenges and the difficulty of it when you're facing a quarterback you haven't seen a whole lot of this year. He's played in the past but there's not a ton of tape from this year? Is that a challenge for you guys defensively?

DARIUS SNOW: Film-wise, obviously we don't have as much film as we do with Kenny Pickett. But we're going to treat him like he's a great quarterback. Nick Patti, redshirt junior, is from the same state as Mr. Pickett. And we're going to assume that he's the best quarterback we've ever played. That's just how we approach every single game.

Q. I'm wondering, as you guys dissected things and try to have a good showing to end the season here as a defense and secondary, what you found that you needed to improve on and what you think you've actually been able to accomplish in the last few weeks to shore up some things.

DARIUS SNOW: I think the biggest thing is just communication, being able to be cohesively communicating across the entire board, limiting the mistakes on our end. I think that's one thing that's hurt us when we're hurting ourselves or when they're actually hurting us.

And then just playing together, playing hard every single play, running to the ball, hitting hard, wrapping up and being physical at the point of attack. Attacking the ball is definitely an emphasis for us on the back end at least. A lot of things we've been working over the past couple of weeks, I think we'll be able to showcase in the game.

Q. I'm wondering, the final maybe four or five weeks of the season you guys were playing with a lot of guys banged up in the back end. How much did that maybe affect the overall coverage and cohesiveness maybe in the last month of the season?



DARIUS SNOW: It's always tough when you have players go down. Obviously it's hard to develop a chemistry when you have different guys playing. But at the end of the day, like I said, when guys run to the ball, are playing hard, being physical, doing everything they can in their power to do what they need to do and then just working hard and playing together, it really doesn't matter who is out there.

Actually the number one thing we need to do is play physical, run to the ball, attack the ball when you get there. If we keep doing that, I think we'll be in a great spot.

Q. When guys are playing hurt, and I think we heard that about a few of those guys on the edge, particularly, what is the cost/benefit to the toughness versus maybe being limited a little bit in that sort of respect?

DARIUS SNOW: When you play this game, obviously it's hard to be at 100 percent near the end, but that's why I think this break has helped a lot. It's helped us get healthier as a group, not just in the secondary, just entirely as a team.

But at the end of the day, like I said, even when you're hurt and you're limited and things like that, it's all about theamentals, it's all about theamentals. Things can physically hurt but if you force yourself with will power, and you play as hard as you can, you can work through stuff.

Q. You come from a long line of Michigan State Spartans in your family. When you look back, do you have any early memories of first learning about Michigan State or that Spartan Head that was all around?

DARIUS SNOW: I learned the fight song when I was 5. I don't know why I remember that. I remember the exact story. We were living in Ohio. It was my dad's last year with the Cavaliers. I believe we were watching, I forget who was playing, but our basketball team was playing. They won the game. My dad was starting to sing the fight song and he said, you all gotta to hear this.



He taught me and my two brothers at the time the fight song. So I remember that specifically. I mean, growing up I've always been around Michigan State. I've always said when I was picking schools, I could definitely see them as a top school, just because I'm so familiar with the school. But it's definitely something that's been prominent in my life for a long time.

Q. I wanted to ask you, I guess obviously a bowl game signifies the finality of a season. But for young players like yourself, how can you use it as a catapult for next year?

DARIUS SNOW: Like you said, it's the finale of this season. You can either end on a good note or bad note. I use it as a chance to really jump into next year, go out there, like I said, play hard, physical, attack the ball. We play well this week, it really gave us a lot of confidence going into next year, and I think it's something we've all really been looking forward to do, to get a chance to do this Saturday, or Thursday, I should say.

Q. Talk to me a little bit about growing up and what you learned from your family in terms of being able to transition from a guy who gets in some plays to a guy who gets himself to this point where he's basically a starter.

DARIUS SNOW: It's just about playing -- I've said it the entire thing -- it's about taking advantage of the opportunities you're given. Whenever I was out there on the field, whether it was half the game, part of the game or the entire game, just always playing hard. Having a next-play mindset.

Obviously things are going to go your way sometimes, and obviously things aren't going to go your way sometimes. But at the end of the day, if you play just as hard as you can and you just always work with your teammates, you know we're all prepared. We all know what we need to do. Go out and do what we're supposed to do.

At the end of the day, God's in control of everything. I'm just going to go out there, be myself and play hard.

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