

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

Monday, December 27, 2021

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Pitt Panthers

Marcus Minor

Press Conference

Q. What's it been like in the past week with, you have Tim Salem calling the plays instead of Whip, Nick in the huddle instead of Kenny. What's the whole process been like with two new faces right there?

MARCUS MINOR: It honestly feels the same, just to have the ability to work with one another still. Patti treats it just like KP has. He takes hold of the offense just like KP would.

Coach Salem is calling the plays just like Coach Whip would in the situation. We're just paying attention to what we can do while we're on the field, not really focusing on new faces just taking the opportunity to do what we need to do to go get a win.

Q. You guys have been -- we talked to you guys when you guys came out and announced that you guys were coming back. But what kind of things have you guys seen just leading into this game about like, hey, on tape these are the things that you can prove against a Big Ten team? The Big Ten as a conference, is known for being stout against the run and running the ball themselves. Have you guys taken this game as an opportunity to show like, hey, we can do this not just in the ACC but anywhere?

MARCUS MINOR: I feel like that's with any opportunity. I feel like that's the goal for any game that we have had, not just this one. Of course, this is an important game for us, but we're just trying to take steps forward in any opportunity we can actually have. We're keeping our heads down, looking at it just like we did every game of the season.

Q. With the running game specifically, how do you feel that you guys progressed throughout the season? I know the Tennessee game was big, being able to kill the clock at the end of the game and control it. But as the weeks went on, where do you feel like the running



game was really starting to click?

MARCUS MINOR: I think we were able to create a connection throughout the O line, knowing our faults and weaknesses, knowing our strengths, knowing how to communicate with one another through things that might happen on the fly.

So through that we were able to know what to do if something happened on one drive we could fix it on the next or being able to communicate or adjust whenever we needed to. So I see it as just us getting close as an O line and the running backs trusting us in that situation as well. So I see it as growth throughout the whole team.

Q. With all five of you guys coming back and everything, but there's also guys like Blake and Matt have played a lot. How much does having not just five guys coming back but seven guys coming back kind of push each other and probably make you guys better in the offseason?

MARCUS MINOR: Just having the experience in any room makes the room overall grow. Especially with another year of having a chance of a new offseason, lifting more, learning more, running more. Doing whatever you need for the upcoming season just allows everybody to grow in all aspects.

So it will allow all of us to grow in some way or form, whether it's mentally, physically, just to prepare for next season.

Q. How would you describe the progression of the offensive line since you first started to where you are now, just where you are now?

MARCUS MINOR: Honestly, I say mindset growth. I think we talk to each other a lot trying to figure out what we need to work on, mentally if we had any doubts or anything, probably like in the offseason what we did to create that confidence. Just taking the time to talk to one another, figuring out the things we need to work on, practicing it, working hard, watching extra film, taking the time to prepare for everything we need to do.



I feel like the maturity and mindset level has grown significantly.

Q. I don't think you guys at Maryland played Michigan State last year, but what do you know about their defense, specifically their run defense?

MARCUS MINOR: They always have been hard-nosed ever since I was in the Big Ten. Blitzed a lot. They were strong. They were always fast. Like I said, they always have been an aggressive team on defense, even when Coach Narduzzi was there, from then, all the way to my time when I was playing against them at Maryland. This is going to be an exciting game. I can't wait to actually be a part of it.

Q. Coach Narduzzi yesterday had mentioned that all three running backs in that running back room have very different styles of running the ball. I was curious, do you guys change the ways you run block based on who is running the football?

MARCUS MINOR: No, sometimes we don't know who is actually back there, we're just worrying about what we've got going on. But each play is its own play. So we try to be our best for every run play that's taking place at that time. So we just want to do our best to provide them the best opportunity to score, have big runs so that they have the success as well. So that's all we're looking at.

Q. How involved all year long has Kenny been in helping you identify and pick up blitzes that have been coming to you guys? Is that something that he was regularly a part of? And is that something that you guys have worked with Nick Patti to also adapt if that was part of your guys' offense?

MARCUS MINOR: There's always been communication of some sort. But really it's been us working with Borbs figuring out what's best for that play or that situation, and then from there, KP or Patti would know how to adjust. So it's really communication through coaches and players. And from there we're able to understand where weak points might be or the strongest points to get the ball off.

So it's just a communication through the whole staff, through the team, and really from there.

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