



**VRBO Citrus Bowl
December 29, 2018
Player/Coordinator press conference
Penn State defensive coordinator Brent Pry and safety Nick Scott**

THE MODERATOR: For our final section, we're joined by defensive coordinator Brent Pry, safety Nick Scott. Coach, as you get settled, if you'd like to start with an opening statement.

BRENT PRY: It's been a fantastic start to the week. The Citrus Bowl folks have been — the hospitality has been great. The players and the coaches and families have really enjoyed it. Celebration High School, our practice facility, has worked very well for us. It's just been a very good trip so far. We're excited about the opportunity. It's a reward. And our guys have worked very hard. Our coaches have worked very hard — the entire staff, trainers, managers — and to come to Orlando and have such great hosts and have a great opponent in Kentucky, it's what you hope at the end of the season, to have an opportunity to like this. So far so good. We'll see how this thing plays out.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Hey, Nick, this is going to be kind of out of the blue. Do you think you're more like your dad or your mom and what kind of role have your parents played in where you are today?

NICK SCOTT: That is a great question. I would say in terms of my personality, I'm a lot like my father. I'm extremely goofy, love to have a good time, but also can flip the switch, step into that leadership role and do what's necessary there. My mom, she used to tell me all the time, she'd be like, 'You got your athletic ability from me. You got your speed from me, your hands from me,' all that stuff. So she would argue I've got more of the physical talent (from her). My dad, I have the personality for sure.

Q. Brent, when you look at Benny Snell, what jumps out of the film at you and what's going to be the challenges in stopping him?

BRENT PRY: Yeah. He's obviously a quality back. And we've seen our fair share of those, but he's very patient. He's a four quarter back. He runs very hard. He's physical. You know, he punishes would be tacklers. I think, over the course of a game, like a lot of backs, I guess, they get better, but he particularly — he wears on your defense. As you watch games in their entirety, you see guys not defending him as well late in games. And so we know it's going to be a four quarter battle with him and we've got to be physical in game tackle and it's going to take a united effort to slow him down.

Q. This is for Brent as well. Brent, with Yetur's development the second half of the season, what happened in the second half of the season? Why did he play so well? And, secondly, how close do you think he is to his ceiling?

BRENT PRY: That's a good question. Yetur is obviously a very promising member of our defense right now. He came into our program pretty raw but with great work ethic and a good skill set. And I think Coach Spencer and Coach Galiano have done a great job with him, as well as the older kids in the room. He's very eager. He's got a great motor. And so, you know, we knew that he'd turn the corner at some point. You just don't know when that's going to occur. And the more reps he got, the more experience he got, you know, you see the improvement. And I think the production you saw was a result of him taking to coaching and having a great work ethic and getting a good opportunity. He's one we're excited about.



Q. I guess this question is for both of you guys. How critical is it to kind of limit Terry Wilson as a runner?

BRENT PRY: That's always a factor. We have the good fortune of seeing that every day in practice. So it just changes your game plan, your approach, when you have a dual threat guy and he's — you know, not only is he able to run, he's got tremendous size. And so he's certainly a factor in what we have to do to play good defense in the game.

NICK SCOTT: Yeah. For sure it's to our advantage that we sort of see that every day with our quarterbacks, who are athletic. But anytime you have a quarterback who can make plays on their feet, it sort of changes your mindset, as a DB — especially staying in coverage when he's on the move, attaching the wide receivers in scramble mode. So it's just something we got to be aware of and just be extremely disciplined in the pass game.

Q. Brent, was there a moment or sequence of events at some point in the season where you felt like things really just started to click on defense, be it Yetur's growth, Micah, the D line? Was there anything that happened that you could kind of pinpoint and say that was really a turning point to answer some questions?

BRENT PRY: I think anytime you're breaking in a bunch of new starters, which we had seven or eight guys playing a bunch of football for the first time — we had guys that had had minor roles, so there was, you know, just an experience. That curve, the learning curve there, getting the repetitions, getting the game experience. But I also think we had some highs and lows this year, obviously. And I think those guys dealing with some of that adversity and working through it, understanding where they needed to get better and really embracing that, I think that was a big piece of it.

You know, it took a couple of setbacks to really right the ship. And, you know, the guys work very hard. Got a great group of guys and leaders like Nick that have great practice habits, a lot of maturity in how they approach things. And as the younger guys and the new players kind of bought into that, I think they saw the growth and development that, you know, we were all looking for.

So we've got still got a lot of work to do. We've still got some things we want to be better at defensively but this game against Kentucky is kind of the next step for our unit, is how we see it. It's another opportunity for us to grow and develop as a unit see how good we could be.

Q. This is for both of you. I know how you try to keep your routine as normal as possible for a bowl week but you're not always going to a Universal Studios. You're three days away from game. When do you see maybe the intensity change as a coach, as a player, the switch flip, however you want to describe it, to more about the game and it's all of a sudden it's kind of go time?

NICK SCOTT: I say for myself, like any week, each day you progress with your preparations, you want to get more and more locked in for the game. So, you know, the first two days are a little bit lighter with events and things like that. But today and tomorrow, all those things — we have less and less events to go to, more time to ourselves to watch film and prepare. Everybody prepares a little bit differently, but the way I see it, as the week goes on, I always want to become more and more locked in with my preparation.

BRENT PRY: And I think the other piece to that is you have several weeks of preparation. So even though you're kind of balancing some things in the actual bowl week, you've had numerous practices and meetings where you've worked on the opponent. And so that helps. I've been very impressed with our group. The practice we had yesterday was as intense and focused as we've had. We got a good group that can — they know when to have fun and they know when to work. And I think having a healthy balance there has been a key for us. Anybody that's been around Coach Franklin knows that we're going to have structure and we're going to keep it as similar to a normal game week as we can. It's been good for us.



Q. Much has been made on the Kentucky side about how your team looks like Mississippi State. Is there a team you all played in the season that reminds you of Kentucky?

BRENT PRY: You know, Maryland has some similarities. Wisconsin — you know, teams that are pretty reliant on the run, run first and find multiple ways to do it. I think it's a combination of a couple of groups, you know. And when we decide who we want to study in preparation, who we want to watch the most film on — the film we want to show to the guys when you look at similar defenses, that probably plays more into our decision making, our thought process and similar offenses. I think you want to see how they attacked folks that look like us and line up like us. And we had quite a few good examples off their season.

Q. Nick, you've joked several times with us how you're the old man of the team this year, but now that you're entering the final week and the final game of your college career, what's going through your mind? Are you trying to savor the moment a little more or business as usual?

NICK SCOTT: I would say for sure, you know, my main focus is to make sure that I go out 1-0 this week. That's something that's been preached to me my entire career, is just being focused on the moment and trying to be successful one game at a time. So the way I see it, there's no perfect way, as a leader of this team, as the older guy of this team, to uphold that standard and leave on a correct note.

You know, obviously, I'm cherishing these moments with my teammates, the guys I came in with, as well as the younger guys. I've been so blessed. One of the reasons why I love this game and this university is because of the number of opportunities that I've had through playing football here at Penn State. And I've been to Ireland. I've been to multiple bowl games, things like that, met people that I never would have met had it not been for this university. So I'm extremely blessed and I'm just going to try to soak it all in for the rest of this week and go out on top with a W.

Q. Good morning. Brent, how have you seen Lamont Wade develop over the last year, year and a half, and kind of what's at stake for him as you guys move beyond the bowl game? And, likewise, for Nick, what have you seen in Lamont, working closely with him, that maybe stood out?

BRENT PRY: I think that, a lot like Nick, you know, you see early in guys' careers, you see the traits and the qualities, reasons that you wanted him in your program. And Lamont's an explosive player. He's a physical player. His improvement and his experience he's gained on special teams has really helped him. And, you know, as your roster gets more and more competitive, it's harder and harder to play early. And there's a lot of guys that are doing a lot of good things that haven't cracked that lineup yet. And I think Lamont's one of those guys, and he's got a tremendous opportunity this winter and spring, and I look forward to seeing the role that Lamont — I know he wants to be like all these guys. They want to be in that lineup and have their name go across the jumbotron. Lamont's a competitor, and I'm excited to see what happens this spring.

NICK SCOTT: Yeah, just to go off that, one of the things I've been expressed with with Lamont is his maturity throughout this process. Like I said, or like Coach Pry said, everyone wants to be on that roster but it's very competitive to get in that lineup. So, you know, just his maturity and ability to accept his role, not be satisfied with it but accept it, and contribute on special teams and have a huge role there, and still be attentive in meetings and contribute as a player in the safety room has been really impressive and I think that's going to bode well. Guys who are good to the game, the game's good to them. So he'll have a strong career here and he's got a bright future for sure.



Q. Brent, why is your defense been so good at creating negative plays or how have they been so good at creating negative plays?

BRENT PRY: First of all, it's the mindset those guys take each and every day. Coach Franklin creates an environment at practice that's very competitive. And you want to win each and every situation. I think, you know, we're a high-pressure team. We want to give guys opportunities to make plays. And we do that through getting guys on edges. You know, we talk constantly about playing on their side of the line of scrimmage and, you know, we've got to do things systematically to give them a chance to do that as well.

But that's kind of — that's been our mindset the last few years and it's been pretty good to us most of the time. But, you know, there's some areas we still, as coaches and players — we've got to take a look at to make sure we're doing the right thing. But the guys, they understand what minus yardage plays do for our defense and getting folks behind the sticks and particularly a group like Kentucky. I mean, to get those guys in second and long and third and long, I don't think that's where they want to be and that's where we need to get them.

Q. Hey, coach, I'm curious back at Bowl Media Day in State College, you said Micah leading the team in tackles with one — just one start setting on, I'm curious maybe how close he was to maybe breaking into the starting line up and then just what that class of 2018, a very highly touted group, meant to your defense this year, it wasn't just him that made an impact.

BRENT PRY: Yeah. There's bunch of good young prospects in that group — Micah obviously being probably the most publicized guy, just coming in. But, you know, there's a certain standard that we have and Nick understands this very well. The maturity and the way you approach the game is really important to me, important to our defensive staff. And I think that there's expectations that these guys have and that we have. And you're not just going come do come in and be a one-dimensional guy. You're going to have to be, you know, at least working towards being a complete player. That's meetings. That's practice habits, that's all of that.

So for those freshmen, that's the big eye opener. There's a lot of talent there but to be good at this level and to go where we want to go, we've got some other things we've got to be good at outside of just running to the ball and making plays.

And our preparation is very important to me and our defensive staff and to guys like Nick, the leaders in our unit. So there's work to be done in those areas with all those new guys.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, Nick, thank you for your time. I appreciate it.