



Penn State
Post-Game Quotes
Memphis vs. Penn State
Saturday, December 28, 2019
AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas



**QUESTIONS FOR COACH JAMES FRANKLIN, OLB MICAH PARSONS,
RB JOURNEY BROWN**

***Q.** This question is for all three of you. Congratulations on the win. When people look back on this Penn State team in five, 10, 15, 20 years, what do you hope that they think of? What do you hope is the first thing that comes to mind for them?*

RB JOURNEY BROWN: I would say personally for me, how the seniors, when they first came in and how they stayed consistent and just wanted to win football. They set a standard for us, and they showed us the way, and we will mentor to that standard, what they did for us. And we look forward to passing it down to the young guys when the freshmen come in and maintain that Penn State football standard.

OLB MICAH PARSONS: I would say, like, the grit of this team, there was a lot of times when we gave up touchdowns and we were going back and forth all season, turnovers, things like that and you know every time we faced adversity, we -- most of the time we overcame it. So I would say that's what I hope we remember, that team that always battled no matter what was thrown at them.

***Q.** Journey, this question is for you. You had some pretty prolific performances when you were in high school. Where does this one rank among your all-time best? And why were you and your teammates able to have such ease when it came to running the ball?*

RB JOURNEY BROWN: I would say this is in the top three. I love high school and stuff. My other top two are from this year. I feel like just the line up front, those big boys, they really set the tone. We said coming into this game, we want to control the pace. We want to go fast, we'll go fast. If we want to go slow, we'll go slow. With the wide receivers and tight ends blocking, the edges opened up for what I could do. So kudos goes to them for sure.

***Q.** This is for Micah. Had you ever been in a game anything like this in high school? And the pace of it was pretty withering. You guys defended almost 90 plays. What was that like?*

OLB MICAH PARSONS: No, I'm from a small city. Maybe state championship, but this atmosphere, this was ridiculous. And, obviously, the team that we played was much better.

And, yeah, we played a lot of snaps out there today. It was pretty hectic. I thought they came out with a great game plan. We didn't really practice their tempo. We really didn't see a lot on film.



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And I think the tempo was pretty effective. But I think that we held our own and we were able to get a stop when we needed one. So kudos to the whole defense.

Q. Micah, I wanted to ask you about your individual performance today. You had a lot of tackles, a couple of sacks, a lot of pressure as well. Specifically, when you were blitzing, it looked like you were able to get through untouched a couple of times. What was happening there? And why were you able to have that success and get to the quarterback?

OLB MICAH PARSONS: First Coach [Brent] Pry's defensive scheme, we were practicing setting pressures on our men, throwing different looks at this quarterback. We wanted to just challenge them up top with some pressure, obviously with them chipping our defensive ends. Obviously, I was able to get my opportunity and make the most of it and I'm grateful for it. When you get your opportunity, your moment, you just got to take advantage of it, I believe. And I was able to take advantage of it today.

RB JOURNEY BROWN: On that too, we go against him all the time. The running backs go against him all the time. But nobody prepares and prepares for those opportunities and those moments more than this guy does. This dude, one of the best blitzers I've ever gone against just in general. So it's just proof in the pudding, how much work he puts in and what he does and how much he works on his craft. And just -- it shows obviously.

OLB MICAH PARSONS: And you look at Journey's performance and we go back to camp, we go back and forth. And I swear, Thursday -- was it Thursday? Yeah, yesterday, or Thursday, I was like Journey, we're going to take this MVP. And we were battling back and forth. We were arguing back and forth.

He actually came over and was like, Will you guys shut up. You know, we're going back and forth. And I believe when you speak it into existence and he put in so much work, battled through adversity this season, I just tell him all the time how proud I am of him.

Q. James, same question for the players for you. When people look back on this team in five 5, 10, 15 years, this specific 2019 team, if that wasn't clear, what do you hope that people think of first?

COACH FRANKLIN: I think when you go all the way back to before the season started, nobody was really talking about Penn State, Even within our own conference. Those other teams were getting most of the publicity. And here we are in another New Year's Six game and had an opportunity to win.



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And then also kind of laying the foundation with two young players that are going to be returning next year, we think kind of laying the foundation for our future. This is a young football team. Again wasn't a whole lot of expectations coming into the season.

And I think this is a team that kind of lays the foundation for the future. Three New Year's Six bowls in four years. Some great stats that I'm kind of looking here and reading for the first time. It was interesting, we rushed for 396 yards. They threw for 479 yards back and forth.

Dave Jones asked about the pace of play. And it was both. We got away from the run a few drives and weren't as successful. So that was kind of me on the headset making sure we got back to that.

And, obviously, defensively we had to get off the field. They had a good plan. They were going to spread it around. They were going to dink and dunk us to death. And their guys are explosive. Once they were able to get their hands on the ball, they were able to make some plays after the catch against us. With our defensive line and our defensive ends, it was a really good plan to spread us out and get the ball out of the quarterback's hand. But at the end of the day, we were able to score enough points to win the game.

Q. Just looking at the numbers, they speak for themselves. But Tyler's [Bowen] performance today calling plays in an interim role, how would you evaluate that? The numbers do speak for themselves. What did you see that you liked?

COACH FRANKLIN: I thought he did a great job. I was very pleased, kind of more than just today. It's interesting for me, I'm very proud of Tyler. Tyler played for me as an offensive coordinator, was a graduate assistant for me and kind of worked his way up the ladder. He's got a very, very bright future. And I'm very, very happy and glad that he's with us. He's part of my family, and I think he's got a bright future. So I hope he stays in Happy Valley and with us and with me for a very, very long time.

His presence, I thought he did a great job all week of really leading the group. His presence to get up in front of the group and talk about our plan and do it with conviction to get great ideas from everybody in the room and come up with a plan that we had a lot of confidence in.



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And I thought he called a good game. No different than I do every single game. I make suggestions when I think we need to be a little bit more aggressive or need to run the ball or take shots or things like that. Hadn't really stopped their run. A few drives, I thought we got away from the run.

But besides that, I thought he did an excellent job. And I'm very, very proud of him. We put up big numbers in the run game. I thought we could be a little more efficient in the pass game, but that wasn't necessarily the way we called the game.

Early on we missed some easy throws, and then we also had some drops. So it was hard to get the passing game going the way we wanted it to. And then it was also hard not to keep calling the run as much success as we were having with it.

Q. Coach, everybody's going to talk about the offensive numbers. But how big was that pick six for your team there in the second half that got you another big double-digit lead in the half?

COACH FRANKLIN: Yeah, we like pick sixes. They're good. They're good. Obviously, it was at a huge time in the game. If I remember correctly, it was right after we had gone for it on fourth and one. We had been running the ball all night long. We make the decision to go for it. Felt like it was the right decision at that point in the game. Didn't obviously play out that way.

But then for our defense to come back and what you probably consider sudden-change situation and be able to get that play, I think it was a huge momentum play in the game, especially because early on, we threw a pick. And if I remember correctly, we held them to a field goal. So that was I think really, really important and a huge momentum play in the game.

Q. Before the season, some members of the media pegged you as an 8-4, maybe 9-3 team, instead getting 11 wins, finishing with a New Year's Six bowl win. What does that mean for this program moving forward in the 2020 campaign?

COACH FRANKLIN: I think it's obviously important. Obviously, whenever you can meet and exceed expectations, that's always a good thing, especially at a place like Penn State where the expectations and standards are so high.

So, yeah, I think as young as we are, what people were expecting for this year, we've got a lot of work to do in a lot of different areas. But I think most people would agree that the program is headed in the right direction. We're developing well. We're game planning well. We're recruiting well.



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And really at this point of where we are as a program, you've got to do it all at a very, very high level. We've got great support from President [Eric] Barron and Sandy Barbour and administration and the board, which I think is really important for us to continue doing that and kind of be in alignment, all of us, always putting Penn State first.

It's always about the university first and what's in the university's best interest and also the athletic department. But we think we can have a big impact in that.

So I'm going to enjoy this win tonight, but I do think this game and this win and these 11 wins and these young players that are going to be returning is going to give us a lot of momentum going into next season, which we're going to need -- which we're going to need.

And I want to take a minute to thank our fans because if you look across the country, attendance at college football games, in live sporting events in general, is going down. And Penn State, since we've arrived, has gone up every single year. And that's important. That creates a great game-day environment. That helps us build for the future and recruiting. And, obviously, it allows us to continue building the program from a financial perspective.

So we are unbelievably appreciative of the support that we get from the state of Pennsylvania, from the region, from our lettermen, from our alumni. It's special.

Q. I suspect you addressed this in your opening comments but you've seen Memphis on film, and now you've seen them on the field. What were your impressions?

COACH FRANKLIN: Very impressed. I think not only the last year but really the last four to five years, the way Memphis has been playing. Obviously, there's been a lot of support given to the program. And I think, obviously, they're reaping the rewards of that type of support.

Coach [Mike] Norvell has done a great job here building the program successfully. Being able to overcome some real adversity with the amount of turnover he's had on his staff in the last four years is impressive. And then obviously with Coach (Ryan Silverfield) being promoted from within, I think that's a great decision so they can continue building what they're doing.

But we looked at them on film. This was a team that we knew was going to come into this game confident and expecting to win. That's their mentality. I've read a lot Memphis against the world and all those guys coming in with a chip on their shoulder, expecting to win the game, and they played like that tonight.



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Obviously, a veteran quarterback that understands the offense really well. Even with the staff turnover they've had, he knows how to operate the offense. And I thought they had a good plan. Weren't going to hold on to the ball. They were going to get the ball out quick. They had a bunch of playmakers, not only at the running back position but also on the perimeter. And they were able to get the ball out of his hand quickly, so we had a difficult time getting to him early.

And I thought when we made some adjustments and went to more of our odd spacing or three down so we could have more guys in coverage, I thought that was helpful for us. We just had a little bit more diversity in our package.

Q. Coach, it's the first time in the New Year's Six bowl history that a Power Five team beats a Group of Five team by more than 10 points. What does it mean to you, and how much do you care?

COACH FRANKLIN: I didn't know that. It's a great stat. I love your accent (laughter). Love your accent. We've got some guys in the locker room that would love to talk to you as well.

But, yeah, I'm just proud of our guys. I'm proud of the program that we have built. And this is something that's very important. I think a lot of programs, a lot of universities talk about it, but I know at Penn State it's not just winning, it's how you win.

It's how you win the games. It's how you represent the university and the program. It's how you represent all of our fans. It's how we do in the classroom. We had 51 guys this past semester with a 3.0 or higher, a bunch of guys that have graduated, a bunch of guys in graduate school.

So at Penn State for us, we want to win it all in football. We want to win national championships. We want to win Big Ten championships. We want to be one of those programs that are the elite of college football that people are talking about year in and year out and weekly as part of those conversations.

But it will never come at the expense of doing all the other things right, which makes it that much more difficult. There's no shortcuts. It's being great in the classroom. It's being great in the community. It's treating people how you would want to be treated. And then it's also getting on the football field and competing in New Year's Six bowl games against the very best competition and talent in the country.



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And that's why I'm here. That's how I'm wired. That's how Sandy Barbour is wired. That's how President Barron is wired. And those expectations will never change. But it also makes it that much more challenging. It really does. So I could not be more proud of what we have built at Penn State and what we are building for our future.

Thank you. Appreciate all the support and everybody coming out and covering Penn State football.