



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 27, 2019

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Penn State Head Coach James Franklin

Penn State 59, Maryland 0

Opening statement:

“Like always, I want to thank you guys for coming, covering Penn State football and coming out and supporting us. Beautiful night for football, our fans were phenomenal. They really were. Can't tell you how much we appreciate the type of support that we get from our fans and how they travel. I thought that was, you know, significant in the game.

“Thought it was probably one of the more complete games that we have played in our six years really kind of in all three phases. We played at a high level. Defensively, that team has been putting up a bunch of points against a bunch of different people. Challenging schemes, challenging personnel and our defense played lights out. Offensively, I thought Sean [Clifford] was on fire. Really handled being on the road for the first time, and a Big Ten environment. Thought the environment there to start the game was challenging as well and I thought we handled it really well. Just some things that jump out at you, PSU has not allowed point in the first quarter this season. We're one of eight schools to have done that in the country. Thirteen different receivers caught balls, which is great spread and spread the love around. Sean Clifford broke the Penn State record for passing yards in the first half with 287 yards. Clifford had a 300 yards passing game with 398 yards. It's the 43th yard passing game and third highest in PSU history. We converted seven. Seven, excuse me, we converted our first seven third downs and finished nine of 13. I actually think we were probably better than that, because late in the game, when we had the twos in and they were pretty much go and cover zero and blitzing every single play, I thought played well on third down on offense and defense. I thought was a big improvement and probably one of the biggest differences in the game. First shutout since 2017 and haven't given up a touchdown to Maryland through 12 quarters. So, a lot of positive things.

“A lot of things to build on I thought we handled the bye week, extremely well. It's very important that we take advantage of this extra day that we have from a recovery standpoint as well as we got some guys banged up. We do get an extra day, the staff will get some time with their families. I'll be on the road recruiting. And in our players, you know, obviously, we'll get some downtime. Field position we won the field position battle, turnover battle, we won the turnover battle. I thought that was the one thing that I'd be critical of the interception was not a good interception. The guy made a heck of a play but it was not a good play on our back. That'd be the one probably critique I would give Sean in the game. Penalty battle, we won. You know some of those those those penalties. It'll be interesting to watch on tape, but we won that battle. And then the explosive play battle we were at 17% they were at 5%, so you know really did some good things. I'm proud of the progress that we've made. We're 1-0 this week. And we're

going to have to do everything in our power to find a way to be 1-0 next week. I thought I thought our guys did a really good job of preparation, we need to build on that. Our culture's really good right now. Our chemistry in our locker room is really good. The developmental squad, all the guys that are back at home, really helped us get ready for this game and we thank them. It was great for a bunch of guys. We got a bunch of guys in the game today. A bunch of local guys were able to get into the game in their first in time, so that's excellent too. I know I've been talking for a while. But, you know, very pleased. Very pleased with the progress that we're making."

On interceptions taking command of the game:

"Huge, obviously, when you can do that on the road and take the crowd out of the game like that, keeping points off the board, create more possessions and more opportunities for your offense, it's significant. The challenge was we still weren't doing great with time of possession. If you look at the first half, because we had some one play drives and things like that. But our defense, I think, is playing with a lot of confidence right now. I think the thing that probably goes unnoticed, is this talk about us not having a whole lot of shutouts. Well, some of the time we give up shutouts because we play so many guys, so what I thought was so impressive tonight is we played seconds and we played thirds and we played fourths, and they went in and executed the defense at a really high level. That's really good progress. That was the one critique I said in the locker room after the game. Our twos and threes on offense have got to play up to the standard. I thought the turnovers were significant early in the game got the crowd out of it allowed us to swing the momentum, and go from there."

On their offensive line after the bye week:

"Obviously, we were able to run the ball. We were able to protect. Sean was able to make plays with his feet, was able to make plays with his arm, was able to make plays in his mind. He did a really good job with protections and communication, even with the noise we had. The one play, obviously, on the first play on offense that I had to burn the time out, which did not make me very happy, but it's because we're trying to get into the right call and then we were able to get in the right call and scored on the first play. But I thought the offensive line played really well and as you guys know, it's about matchups and some weeks are really challenging matchups and others you feel like you got a chance. We had a lot of respect for their outside linebackers. But I thought our guys played at a really high level."

On message to Micah Parson's after ejection and guys who performed after him:

"Yeah, there wasn't a whole lot of message. I didn't think it was a it was a smart play. I mean, we all know you better tackle from the chest down in football now. And it wasn't a big hit, but he didn't even try to go down from the chest or lower. You don't really get a whole lot of time to talk to him because you're waiting to see what the call is going to be. Then all of a sudden, he's going in the locker room. So you don't get a whole lot of time to interact with them. But fortunately, it happened in the first half. So we'll have them for our next game. Then I thought those other guys went in obviously and played really well. You know, Brent Pry's (defensive coordinator) done a really good job of developing those guys in recruiting, and recruiting at the position as well. We got a lot of guys playing at a high level right now, we really do."

On Sean Clifford's improvement from the first three games:

"I think for a young quarterback, the extra time for the bye week was really valuable for him. He does it the right way. Him and Will Levis (quarterback), they're preparing at a really high level

and doing the things that they need to do to be successful. The one thing that I was concerned about was the noise. And we made the noise louder than it ever could have been in the stadium to the point where they lost their voices, the quarterbacks. But the point was made. And I thought we handled it really well. Because the other thing that happens is, if this makes sense, everything just takes longer. So I want the plays in faster, because it's going to take longer to get things communicated to get more delay of games, the communication takes two or three seconds longer on the road. So I thought he did a really nice job. I just think he was confident because of the amount of preparation he put in. And I think the way we handle practice with the noise, they were very comfortable that the noise wouldn't be an issue."

On their offensive speed:

"We think that they can really run. I thought we did a better job in this game early on and getting KJ Hamler (wide receiver) the ball. I think the more times KJ can touch the ball, we're going to like what happens. And that doesn't have to always be shots down the field. I didn't think we were as good this game with balls down the field. We haven't been for the last couple weeks, we have to get that going. We had some opportunities, Dan Chisena (wide receiver) made that one huge play. But we had some others that we got to be able to finish. I just think in general, we did a good job of getting KJ the ball early in the game. We all know he's a he's a difference maker. So I think that was probably the biggest difference with this game from the three previous."

On young team performing on the road:

"Yeah, I think you know, obviously, a young team and the maturation process is always challenging. It's one thing to do it at home, and it's a different thing to do it on the road. I actually think again, I don't want to beat this dead horse, but I really felt like the way we practice with the noise, that our guys were so comfortable that I actually think the energy in the stadium they fed off of. I think it's exciting, you know, for them, and that's kind of how we approached it all week long. I think your point is a great one. It's one thing with a young team to play well at home, but it's another thing to do it on the road. This team was ranked a few weeks ago. A lot of buzz, and I do think this is a good environment, especially early on."

On the extra day off tomorrow:

"It'll purely just be a day off. The coaches will just grade the film, on Saturday- the staff. I'll be on the road recruiting the whole time, staff will grade the film. The one thing we'll gain an advantage of is the staff will have basically the whole day off except for three hours to grade to film. The players will have the whole day off. We talked about handling the that the right way. Go enjoy yourself and have fun, but do it the right way so on Sunday, we're more recovered than we normally would be after a Saturday game. And then what it does is it saves us three hours on Sunday that we're not spending on grading the previous game. We're able to get ahead now, if that makes sense. So you get an extra day to recover and you're gaining three hours from a film perspective. Hopefully the guys will be more productive during the week because their wives and kids are happy because they spent Saturday with them. Mine won't, I'll be gone all day."

On young players performance after bye week:

"Yeah, I think it's really rewarding. I mean, I think the hard part when you're dealing with college-age guys is they think life is fair. If you work hard, you're going to be rewarded. And you're not always, but for building confidence with this team, it's great to see them rewarded

because I was very confident going to bed Friday night that the staff, players, trainers and everybody involved in the program, we maximized that bye week the way we should have and we balanced the time to work and time off the right way. I thought we were fresh. I thought we were excited. I thought that we were prepared. Fundamentally, scheme wise, all of it. We did get a few guys banged up out here. Hopefully we'll have all those guys back for next week, you know, but we'll see. I think we came into this really confident, based on our preparation. That's why I talked to them about all week long is, 'You talk about confidence. What is the key ingredient in confidence preparation? You want to do well on an exam, you study like crazy for a week and a half to two weeks before the exam. Then the exam takes care of itself. And it's the same way with football. It's the same way with life.' Guys, thanks for everybody coming in and supporting us. We appreciate it."