



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 27, 2019

Contact: Ben Kessler (bkessler@umd.edu)

Maryland Head Coach Michael Locksley

Maryland 0, Penn State 59

Opening statement:

“I’m obviously disappointed. Disappointed in our effort, disappointed in the discipline we played with tonight. We were out-coached, we were out-played, and that’s on me as the head coach and the leader of this football family, to have our guys prepared to go out and play the type of game we need to play. Our fans came out and created a hell of an environment for us today, and we went out and didn’t do our job as a team, and that’s disappointing. As I said last week, we’re not going to overreact to one game. Give credit to Penn State. They were well-prepared, they played at a high level, and for us, what we’ve got to do is figure out what we need to do on the offensive side of the ball. That’s my side of the ball, that’s the expertise I bring, and we’ve got to figure out what our quarterback’s capable of getting executed, we’ve got to make sure that our best players are touching the football. We’ll get in here, watch this tape. We still have a lot of football left to be played, and we won’t overreact to this game. Credit to Penn State for the way they played tonight.

“As you noticed, DJ Turner didn’t play today. It was my decision to not play DJ. DJ has to focus on the non-football things right now. I won’t get into or comment on anything further on that until I have more information, but it was a coaches’ decision not to play DJ today, and we want him to focus on the non-football things.”

On if the team lost motivation after Josh Jackson’s first-quarter interception in the red zone and ensuing Penn State touchdown:

“I hope not. I think the air came out of us. We put together a good drive and it was not a great decision obviously – the interception down there in the red zone – we wanted to at least come away with some points in there. I don’t think we gave up. Our defense continued to play. What I’m most disappointed in is I’ve got to figure out a way to get our quarterbacks having confidence and playing the way we played the first two weeks. We’ll watch the tape and figure out the things that they can execute, and go back to the drawing board and get them ready to play and get them prepared to play against Rutgers next week.”

On Penn State QB Sean Clifford:

“The big thing – and we said this going into the game – is that we needed to affect the quarterback. We’re a pressure defense and for whatever reason we didn’t necessarily affect him. He made some quick decisions, got the ball to [KJ Hamler], who’s a big-time player and we knew that he had the capability. Again, when you let a guy that you know is a gameplan wrecker effect your gameplan, that’s why I said we were out-coached. We have to figure a way to stop their players that are good players with the way we defend, just like on offense. You have to figure out how to do the things that take advantage of the things they are really strong with on the defensive side of the ball.”

On if he’s concerned that this loss will leave any lingering uncertainty among the team moving forward:

“We’ve got the 24 hour rule. For us, win or lose, it takes 24 hours. We’ve got to get it digested out of our system. As a coaching staff, we’ve got to get on top of the tape, figure out what went wrong. Obviously when you look at the stat sheet... I want to say our first 15 to 20 plays we had four or five penalties, we had two

turnovers, we gave up two big, explosive plays. Right from the start, we didn't give ourselves a chance. For us, that was the disappointing part. As the leader of this thing, I've got to figure out how to make sure that my team is prepared when we go into games like this and to play with the discipline we need to play with."

On the approach to close the gap against the top Big Ten opponents:

"It starts with playing with discipline and not beating yourself. I'll give credit to Penn State, but if you look at the way the game started, we didn't do a great job of playing with discipline, we had a lot of penalties early in the game, the turnover down in the red zone. Those are all things that we self-inflicted. To close the gap, good teams don't beat themselves. Right now, we're not playing that type of football and it's up to me to figure out how to get us to play that way."

On what the difference in the offense has been since the first two games:

"It's definitely execution. I thought we played and executed at a really high level the first couple of games in the season, and now my job is to figure out the things that will allow us to play with confidence on the offensive side of the ball. It starts with our quarterback. This offense is quarterback-driven. To comment and say how Josh [Jackson] played other than I was disappointed and obviously the turnovers, but we've got to protect Josh, we've got to do a good job of mixing it up and making sure our best players are touching the ball, our running backs – which I feel is the strength of our offense – we need to make sure those guys are heavily involved in the game plan. We'll go watch the tape, as a staff we'll come together and put together a plan that will allow us to at least get back to playing with some confidence on that side of the ball."

On if he's still committed to Josh Jackson as the starting quarterback:

"We're committed to Josh. He's our quarterback. But just like any position, as we evaluate the position, we all have to do our job. Josh is our quarterback but we also feel like if a guy isn't productive, we've got to figure out a way to get productive players on the field. Josh is our quarterback. I've got to do a better job of getting him playing back with the confidence that he played with earlier. Again, it's easy to just point fingers at the quarterback. That happens a lot. For us, up front, the protection, the running backs hitting their landmarks, the receivers on the perimeter blocking, it's all of us. It's not just on the quarterback, but it's my job and I've got to make sure that guy has the confidence in what we're calling so we can get it executed."

On Jackson's discomfort in the pocket:

"Until I watch it, it's hard to say for this game. It goes back to what I talked about earlier, we've got to do a better job of making sure we stay protected and that he makes decisions in the offense that allows him to get the ball out quick. We're not an offense that is gonna drop back and throw it 50 times a game. We're a run-pass option type of offense where the ball usually comes out quick and so what we have to do is get Josh, our offensive line, our receivers, everybody back on the same page of executing the system at a high level. What comes out of it right now, the biggest thing for me is that we're playing with confidence on that side of the ball. Whether it's our quarterback, whether it's our left tackle, whether it's the tailback, whether it's the tight end, we got to get the confidence back. To me, you've got to go back to the drawing board, look at the things we do well, make sure we're getting that game plan in cold so we can go back and have some confidence."

On how to prevent big plays from happening:

"It starts with tackling. I thought today we didn't tackle as well as we've tackled most of the year and up through the Temple game. We've put some pressure on the guy, we brought some extra pressure and we're able to get some slants completed which were typically catch tackles for us in the first three games and today I thought our tackling was awful. We'll watch the tape and then figure out what we need to do. Obviously it starts with tackling, getting the ball down on the ground which are things we did really well the first three games."

On the game atmosphere and student presence:

“I think our fans have been very supportive and like I told our team, we created this environment with how we played. Now obviously today we were very disappointed with the discipline we played with, the effort, all those things, but those things are all correctable. For me, I've got to make sure we concentrate on the football part. Our administration has done a great job of creating this environment of putting us out in front to create this environment today. This is the environment I witnessed as a coach earlier in my career so it's definitely a repeatable thing but the football part, it's my job to make sure that we're prepared when we go out in environments like this that we don't go out and play the way we played today.”

On offensive struggles in the last two games:

“It just comes from not executing. When you call the plays and they're not being executed obviously that creates doubt. That creates a lack of confidence. I know from a quarterback position when you don't feel comfortable and you don't feel confident whether it's the protection, whether it's the receivers getting open quick enough. That's the stuff that I said when I go watch the film and we figure out the things we have to get called to help our offense plays with the confidence played with earlier in the year. We'll get it done. I'm not going to overreact to it, again this wasn't a great effort on our part, obviously. Penn State is very deserving of their No. 12 ranking. We've got a lot of football left to be played. There's nobody in that locker room that's quitting, nobody in that locker room that's giving up. Again, it's my job to make sure we're prepared for those opportunities.”

On the play of Nick Cross and the loss of Marcus Lewis and Marcus Minor:

“It's early. I haven't even gotten the injury report. The initial thing with Marcus Lewis was a knee. I don't know the severity of it. With Marcus Minor, it was a dislocated toe. He went out pretty early. We lost Lolo (Lorenzo Harrison) early in the game. Injuries are going to a part of the game and we've got to work to create the depth we gonna need to play in this league. It's a tough league of really good teams and again, it's my job to make sure that we're prepared. We'll get this game behind us pretty quickly and then put out focus on putting together a good plan to go up to Rutgers.”



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Maryland Players

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Graduate Offensive Lineman Ellis McKennie

On Josh Jackson the last two games:

"I can't comment on the quarterback position, but this is definitely a team loss today. We weren't firing on any cylinders. We need to work together on better complementary football."

On the team's performance in front of a sellout crowd:

"It is difficult. Through all of our training, we know what it feels like to get punched in the face. We face adversity and try to come back. I mean today we just weren't able to rebound. The crowd today was incredible. To the 11,000 students that came out today, we appreciate the support and that was incredible. We love the support they have shown for this team. We apologize for our performance today."

On if Penn State surprised them:

"No, we just didn't execute."

On the injuries to the offensive line:

"We did have a few inexperienced guys, a few guys running around. With the way we practice and the amount of reps we get, when we go in, we expect to execute. There are no excuses for what. We're going to work on it. We're going to get better, especially on the offensive line, I can promise that. We're going to work and get ready for next week."

Graduate Linebacker Keandre Jones

On playing from behind from the start:

"It's frustrating, but I give all the credit to Penn State, they came out and they were the better team today."

On better preparation for big games:

"It's all on us, we have to come out and prepare better and keep moving on. We have a long season ahead of us. I believe eight more games, so still a long season."

On the difficulty of defensive execution:

"We treat our wins just like we treat our losses. We just have to do better, it's in our preparation, we have to prepare better and like I said, it's a long season."

On difference in Penn State on film vs. on the field:

"Not at all, Penn State made some great plays, like I said it's a long season. Tough loss, but we're going right back to the drawing board in practice."

On the difficulty of the 24-hour rule after a loss as opposed to a win...

"I think it goes back to what I said, we treat our wins just like we treat our losses. We just have to better prepare and come back stronger."

