

Penn State Head Coach James Franklin

Opening statement: “Like always, and I know I say this and you guys probably ignore the first statement, but I do appreciate you guys coming out and covering Penn State football. I also appreciate the people that you work for allowing it because the industry obviously has changed a lot. So, we appreciate you guys coming out and covering Penn State football, and the support that we get. We talk about the stats that we talk about each week. We lost the field position battle, and we’re not punting great, we gotta get that cleaned up. The turnover battle we won, which we understand how important that is. The penalty battle we lost by some yards, not total penalties, and the explosive play battle we won. So, those things are positive. Most importantly, we played complimentary football, offense, defense and special teams were all doing what we had to do to win. I must admit that kickoff return was a thing of beauty. We've just invested so much time on special teams, so I was really happy for Stacey (Collins) and Eric (Raisbeck), as well as our players obviously. To have some success on that, we hadn't had a whole lot of success on it yet. So that was big for us. But we're playing good complementary football. You know, I think we scored three non-offensive touchdowns which is special. We're playing really good on defense. We've done it for multiple weeks. It didn't feel like that early in the game because of the field position. Our defense was in tough spots from a field position perspective, but overall, we're playing really well. Defensively, we got 16 different players with a sack. I don't know if I've ever heard that stat before. That's an impressive stat, we got a lot of guys that are able to contribute, so that's been awesome. Offensively, early on, if you look at this team from a statistical standpoint, you know, they're a pretty good defensive team. (Greg) Schiano has done a really good job his entire career with that. Once we were able to make some adjustments in the run game, you know, they outnumbered us in the run game, but we were able to make some adjustments there with our Mike IDs, and then some of the things from a protection standpoint. Once we were able to get those things resolved and I thought we did a pretty good job offensively and moved the ball. We got two running backs that are our racers for us, that make big plays. There's a really cool stat if I can find it. Kaytron Allen and Nicholas Singleton are the first freshmen duo in Big Ten history with 700 plus yards in the same season which is a great stat. So, lots of good things.

Probably the thing I'm most proud of, with the staff and the players is, as you guys know, we don't report injuries, but we've had a lot of moving parts. The coaches have handled it the right way, and not allowed it to become an excuse. The players have handled it the right way. I also think we have some depth, and we got some young talented players that have been able to come in and step in and allow that to not be an issue for us as well. So you know, I'm proud of them, but overall good when on the road. You look at college football, and you know, winning is hard to do. We're fortunate to be one of those this week.”

On the status of sophomore wide receiver Parker Washington and sophomore linebacker Curtis Jacobs: “I will have to wait until Tuesday to talk to you about about Parker. I want to make sure I'm clear with what's going on. I have not talked to Parker yet so I'd like to be able to do that first and then I'll make sure I answer your question on Tuesday. Curtis, you talk about an experienced linebackers who has played a ton of football for us, is athletic, is a playmaker for us and is playing with more and more confidence each week. Having a veteran guy like that back is really good. We're in a situation now where our depth at linebacker is pretty good. I wouldn't have said that at the beginning of the season. You

know right now (Tyler) Eldson and and Kobe (King) are both playing really well. And now you get Curtis back. We got pretty good depth really across the board.

On the team's killer instinct and stress-free victories: "I love I would describe it like that, stress free, but I've got a ton of respect for Coach (Greg) Schiano and Rutgers. They play hard. We're getting better. We're getting better each week. That's really your objective is to try to get better every single week - at home, on the road, conference opponents, whatever it may be. I do think we're doing that. I think we're getting better each week. We got a ton of guys playing, a ton of guys getting reps, which always makes me feel good as a head coach. I know how hard those guys in the locker room work and some of them don't have an opportunity to see the field. It's always great when we get a bunch of guys some opportunities and some reps."

On the wide receivers without Parker Washington: "I think pretty good early on. We weren't in rhythm the way I felt that we needed to be. Parker (Washington), obviously not having him for this game, that's a big loss as you guys know. A good percentage of our passing game has gone through him not just this year, but last year. He's a leader for us as well. I thought those other guys did a nice job. Obviously we're going have to build on it. We'll see how this plays out with Parker, but we're going have to build on it. Either way, their rep count is going to go up."

About getting quarterback Drew Allar a lot of snaps with the first-team line: "Every time he gets on the field, it's a positive. It's a good thing for him. It's a good thing for our program. We're creating depth, we're getting him experience, we're getting him opportunities. I wish we weren't so banged up on the offensive line so that we feel like we could make some changes, get some guys off the field. I don't really like having Juice Scruggs in there for the whole game. To be able to get some of those guys in that that you really feel like can go in and still execute the offense the way it needs to be executed. I was trying as long as we could to keep those guys in so Drew could get a true evaluation and a true opportunity. Then at some point we had that we had to sub some guys in there, but overall he's gotten a lot of reps this. He's gotten a decent amount of reps. I think about as many games that we've been able to have a point differential that's allowed us to get a lot of guys on the field. Obviously a big part of that is Drew."

On Abdul Carter: "I think the biggest thing is he's really made the splash plays from the very beginning. The thing that probably is hard for you guys to tell when you're watching the game is, his missed assignments are going down every single week. So that gives you a lot more confidence that you can put him in there, and you're not only going to get the good plays, but the plays that we have to eliminate as a young player, those are reducing. He's always been super mature, I've talked to you guys about that. He's very smart. He's taken really the right approach you know, since he stepped on campus. As you guys know, when you watch him he's got unbelievable burst and acceleration once he makes up his mind. Whether that's chasing down a ball carrier or being able to change direction and bring down a quarterback, he can burst. He can burst and change direction and run. So, not very often you have a true freshman, and also one that's 235 pounds that's doing it, but he's obviously been a major factor for us on defense. He's allowed us to, maybe kind of overcome not having Curtis (Jacobs) for a week. Those things have been really helpful."

On freshman offensive lineman Drew Shelton and freshman punter Alex Bacchetta: "We'll see how it works out with (Alex) Bacchetta. He's got a really strong leg. When he hits his 'A' ball it's as good as anybody so we'll continue to evaluate that. It was great to see Barney (Amor) handle it the right way, come back in and then I think he had a 63 yarder which was huge. Maybe that was the right thing."

Maybe I should have done that earlier, but that was a positive. With Drew (Shelton), we had a bunch of conversations. We were going to start JB (Nelson) at tackle this week, but then we still would have been in a tough spot with JB as well based on games. As a coaching staff had a conversation with Drew's mom, had a conversation with Drew. He wants to play. We feel like he gives us the best opportunity right now and playing seven games as a true freshman with a good percentage of them as the starter, that's a worthwhile burned red shirt, if that makes sense. So just had that conversation, made sure we're all on the same page and then kind of go from there.

On redshirt senior Sean Clifford's running game: "I think that's a part of Sean's (Clifford) game. It helps he even the numbers a little bit when they're dropping the safety down in the box. That factors into it as well. It's frustrating as a defense or as a defensive coordinator when you stop the traditional run and you're able to get pressured into pass and then the quarterback is able to be productive with his feet. To me that's something that always needs to be a part of our game plan with Sean. That was also pretty cool to see (Drew) Allar go in and go down the sideline for 30 yards or whatever it was at six-foot five 242 pounds. The fact that he's got enough mobility that people have to be concerned about him too. He does it a different way and kind of runs through arm tackles like they're not even there. I think that that running game and that mobility at quarterback position I think is really important for us.