

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL MEDIA CONFERENCE**

**October 2, 2023**

**Head Coach Ryan Walters**

*West Lafayette, Indiana, USA*

**Press Conference**

**Q. (In progress.)**

RYAN WALTERS: You know, you still traditionally still want to run the ball first. They play with multiple tight ends, heavy sets. They are a throw-second mentality. The backup is a big guy. He's got a big arm. Talented in that aspect. Not as mobile as the starter.

So we'll take that into consideration on the way we're game planning, but they still have the same personnel around them, so we got to be able to hold up in the run game; be able to hold up in the line of scrimmage; be able to be creative with the ways we cover the tight ends.

**Q. The defense looked like it played outstanding. Having watched it back I forgot they had a few open touchdowns that were dropped or overthrown. How do you address the secondary coverage?**

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, I mean, the two times they were open was on a double move. We also hit them on a double move, right, and then a play-action pop pass where we lost eyes.

But that is the give and take, where you are aggressive in this the way you play the game defensively, and try and get hits on a quarterback.

When the quarterback gets hit as much as he did, you tend to overthrow these type of throws.

So I wasn't as concerned. Like I said, we can teach the technique on the double move. Got to be more patient with the eyes on the tight end, but I think there is a reason they missed those plays, and it's because we were in the backfield a lot.

**Q. What is the status of OC Brothers?**

RYAN WALTERS: He should be available this week.

**Q. Plan on him getting his role back if that's the case? If not, obviously Yanni had a great game on Saturday.**

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, really happy with the way Yanni played and prepared. See how this week's practice goes. You know, Yanni played better than that position has played up to this point.

**Q. Ryan, what was the key to unlocking this run game over the past two weeks?**

RYAN WALTERS: You know, I think just combination of things. One, I think our offensive line was playing better. Obviously Gus getting inserted into the lineup and feeling comfortable helps just with his experience, his athleticism, mindset, the way he communicates.

I think our running backs are starting to hit their groove, and we as an offensive staff are finding out what they're good at and what's their comfort level and the type of runs that we're calling.

I think Hud's ability to push the ball down the field also helped to create favorable boxes to run the ball.

And I thought Graham did a nice job of sticking to what was working. Any time you can run the ball the way we did and have balance that way it bodes well offensively for sure.

**Q. Do you have an update on Max Klare's status?**

RYAN WALTERS: Still waiting on the diagnosis. Didn't look great, but we'll see.

**Q. And then obviously if he were to miss time, you got Garrett Miller. Just talk about what he brings to the table and what you saw out of him on Saturday?**

RYAN WALTERS: Garrett?

**Q. Yes.**

RYAN WALTERS: You know, we're starting to see what everybody was talking about when I got here in December. His explosiveness down the field. He's a big guy that can move very fluidly and he's strong in the run game. Got good hands. He's got a good feel for the game. Good football player.

I think as he gets more and more comfortable with the system, more and more comfortable with overcoming the mental aspect, hurdles of going through that type of injury, I think his play will only improve.

**Q. Ryan, can you talk about how you just kept Devin Mockobee engaged. I know he had the fumble again, but you guys had him right back out there a series or so later and let him carry the ball at the goal line and score as well.**

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, one, you hold him accountable, right? Like nobody is happy with -- including him -- with the ball security issues we've had. But he is hard to tackle, hard to bring down, and he runs with an edge.

So of course like he got to the sideline and we had a conversation, but at the end of the day, like you want to keep him engaged because we're going to need him. He's a good player. He runs the football very well. Like I said, going against him defensively he's hard to bring down.

So you want him to continue to maximize his potential, and we're better when he is running the ball. So you don't want to take the stinger out, his running style away from him, because that's part of who he is and why he's good.

But what he has to understand, man, when he has the ball in his hands he has a program's life in his hands and has to protect that at all costs.

**Q. Do you think it's a fair assessment to say that the offense has really developed an identity for running the football, that's become maybe the strength of the offense?**

RYAN WALTERS: It was definitely the strength on Saturday. I do think that when we are playing with balance it allows us to play with pace, which allows us to be aggressive, which opens up every aspect of the offense.

We were running the ball, so we were able to push it down the field. We're throwing quick game to open up running lanes. So I think Graham just did a really good job of understanding what the defense was trying to do to us, how to counter that, and then when they adjusted how to adjust based off what pictures they were presenting, which is why we had the sort of offensive output that we did on Saturday.

**Q. What was the defense more aggressive than the first four games this last Saturday as far as blitzes, stunts, things of that nature?**

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, I would say so.

**Q. Talk about moving the coordinators to the box a little bit, Graham and Kevin, why you decided to that. Looks like it's going to happen again this week. You had to be pleased with the results.**

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, so to answer both questions, offensively Graham has spent a lot of the time in the box. He's spent more time up than he has down. I think with Hudson's maturity and understanding of the offense now, it allowed Graham to go up top, because you can see better from up there, right? You can see the rotations defensively, see alignments. You can see what happened during the play from that bird's-eye view a lot cleaner than from the sideline.

Graham has great communication with Doege, and Doege is a former quarterback, so he can talk to the Qs in between series to relay message that Graham has. So that's why we made that move offensively.

And obviously it worked, so if it ain't broke, don't fix it, right? We'll keep him up there.

Defensively is the same thing. Kane for the last two years and even when he was at SMU, was upstairs, so I felt like the communication that he and I had the last two seasons when he was in the box was very informative and quick and concise. You know, nobody knows the defense or the signals the way I do, and so just made sense for him to go upstairs and for me to be signalling and for us to communicate that way on game day.

**Q. Just talk about Iowa and their ability to win games, special teams and defense, and you've seen them obviously over the years. Yes on paper they have some issues with injuries. What makes them especially dangerous or is that really what makes them especially dangerous to you?**

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, so to me what makes them dangerous is Iowa is going to be Iowa, and they have been since 1999. They're going to play really, really sound defense and not make mistakes, make you earn it.

Special teams is going to be a weapon for them, and then they're going to manage the game on offense and not try to do things just to do them. They're going to try to control the clock. If they can win the game 9-6, that's the style of play they like. I know people out that way are upset with that model, but it's worked since 1999.

Getting to know Coach Ferentz over the last couple years and then now as a head coach, you can just tell that program operates the way it operates, and they don't care what anybody else thinks about it because that has been a winning formula for them.

So we'll have to do a good job of not letting them dictate the pace, the tempo, or the style of play, and try to do everything we can to play our brand of ball and make them adjust to it.

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