

Indiana University Football

Media Conference

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Coach Tom Allen

Press Conference



TOM ALLEN: Well, good morning. Let me check something first here. Yeah. Make sure Indiana is spelled right on my hat before we get started. But appreciate you guys being here. Watched the film. And just as disappointed as I was after the game. So that doesn't change.

But we had a good day yesterday with our guys. And had some open, honest conversations and just heart to hearts about where we are and what we've got to do to get where we want to be. So thought the guys responded well in regards to our meetings yesterday and lifting and moving on to our next opponent.

So bottom line for me is it's how you respond to this kind of situation. So that's going to be the focus. And love our guys, believe in them. And excited to see them learn from the things that happened on Saturday and press on and move forward.

So excited about Saturday's opportunity, first home game for us and our program. And just really excited to get our fans back into our stadium. And it's going to be 7:30 kickoff so want our fans to be able to enjoy the tailgating piece and getting here early and being able to enjoy the atmosphere.

I know our guys can't wait to be able to perform in front of them. So that really is a big deal. Obviously everything we've all been through with last year and not being able to be part of it and getting our fans back in the stadium is going to be huge for our guys. So really looking forward to that.

And do want to recognize some guys. We do not give out players of the week when we don't win games. But we do still recognize our scouts and the work that they do for our team. And so our defensive scout team player of the week was Maurice Freeman. He's a young man that's really just practices so hard. Does a great job of giving our offense a great look.

And then as offensive scouts, we had David Holloman and

Nick Marozas. David is a guy I mentioned before. He's a freshman running back and continues to practice really hard. And I appreciate Nick's leadership and what he's doing for our team.

And then special teams scout of the week was Andrew Turvy, a young man from Carmel High School here in state. Just practices really, really hard.

So appreciate these guys and what they do for us every single day as they develop as players and as we continue to move forward. So at this time, I'll take questions.

Q. Tom, I know you always preach one game at a time and such. And we transition forward now. But if you could, what was the plane ride home like? And what were the meetings like and the conversations like yesterday so that you can sort of gain something from all that went wrong?

TOM ALLEN: Well, I mean, the ride, the locker room was pretty somber. You know, there's a group of guys that have invested a lot. And they were just really -- you wake up the next day -- and we talked that through too, you know, just got this sick feeling in your stomach and you wake up feeling awful. And you do.

And it's just how you -- it's how you respond when you care a whole bunch and things don't go the way you want them to. And for a variety of reasons. So I thought yesterday -- but to me, it's more about once you have a chance to address it and watch the film and talk about it openly and honestly. I think it's really critical the way they leave. And that, to me, is what I was focusing on is how they walked out of the facility at the end of the day.

And we do a lot with them on Sundays. And when they leave the building that night, I want to make sure that that experience is flushed, good or bad, and we're now ready to move on to our next opponent. And that's what we did.

So now even with -- in the past, we've actually had -- Sundays was our off day last couple of years. We moved to it Monday is our off day and so -- for the players. And so we were with them yesterday, which I think is a good thing.



And be able to go through and actually get on the field again. That's the last thing we do, about a 40-minute practice with our guys, to be able to even introduce, do some corrections from the game and then introduce our next opponent. Just to be able to get their mind -- prior to getting on the field, we have a 20-minute meeting about the next opponent. So you just really have a chance to kind of work through the previous game, good or bad, and then get your mind right and get your focus on the next opponent, which is really most important at this point.

Q. You mentioned having to watch film of this one. What did you see from Mike Penix in particular on the rewatch? What sort of things did you notice about why he might have been off? What was them; what was him? What kind of get on a second look?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. I think going through and just getting him -- as you watch, you see a lot of high throws and just getting comfortable in the pocket. Just being very transparent, I think you've got to go through and he's got to work through the process of being live, you know.

And I just think in practice, you can say what it is, and you're not live, obviously, at that point. And you're not going to make it live. I don't think -- there's no way you can go back and ever do that. But until it is, it's really not the same probably.

So I just think that there's -- just wasn't obviously himself. You guys can all see that. I saw that. You saw that. But no wavering whatsoever within him. Just got to continue to work through that process, the confidence in that. He's definitely 100 percent in regards to the knee and just being able to play that way.

I think that's the process you've got to go through. And he's going through it with us, and we're going through it with him. And, obviously, everybody is in this together. So, yeah, the first one was a tipped ball and, you know, receiver slipped and then ball was tipped. And, obviously, we saw the result of that.

And then just -- the one to me was supposed to be thrown out of bounds and just got away from him, to be honest with you. The receiver wasn't even turned around. So it wasn't even like -- it was just kind of an odd thing to happen. I've really not seen him ever do that before.

And the other one just a misread, you know, kind of a thing coverage-wise. Guy jumped it and -- just mistake. But those are costly. I mean, turn the ball over on offense -- the turnover ratio, explosive play ratio. That's really what defines games. We talk about it all the time. And everybody knows the stats. When you win those two

categories, you pretty much win close to 80 to 85 percent of your games you're going to play in. We lost the turnover battle to them. And that's how you lose games.

Q. We didn't see Luke Haggard or Zach Carpenter on the line. And you talked about after the game getting the line issues fixed. What kind of actions or options do you have to do that?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. Unfortunately, Luke got dinged up and was -- really expected him to be a starter. And so we've just got to work through that. Hopefully get him back. So that, to me, is something that -- we were hoping to get him ready for the game. And he was there on an emergency basis, but even just going through warmups just didn't feel like it is probably a good idea. But it's nothing long term or serious. But we're hoping to get him back.

And then just get Zach, just bring him along too. We're definitely looking at all options at that point. So I think those guys are definitely going to be -- got to get the best five out there. And whoever those best five are, whatever combination it is, we're going to figure it out. That's who we're going to go with.

So just watching the film, we just didn't block good enough. Just call it what you want. We didn't sustain our blocks. We were working with the right people most of the time but just not able to stay on them. To me, it was receivers, it was tight end, low line. It's everybody. Quarterback carrying out his fakes. All the little things you've got to do. To me, that wasn't to our standards. Got to get better. It's being addressed and will be addressed.

Q. Coach, not to lament Mike Penix. But on that particular play you were talking about that forced that one interception, he seemed to have a lot of room which he could have ran the ball. I know it's been talked about with him not running. But is that sitting in the back of his head, maybe too much right now? An uncomfortable penalty of him in his decision making?

TOM ALLEN: I think, just being fair, you know, I think you've got to be open and honest about things. And we've had good conversations. And, yeah, I think it's something he's got to keep working through. There's no doubt about it. We all know the history. And you've got to work through that. And that's part of this process to me. But we all know how we have to play this game. And he understands that as well.

So, to me, that's something that every day, every game, every rep, everything we do, you continue to gain confidence in that. And we've got to get to that point. Yes.

Q. In reviewing the film, the penalties, how many were self-inflicted and how much of those is going to be a point of emphasis this week in practice?

TOM ALLEN: Huge emphasis for sure. There were two personal fouls that were both -- we call them selfish penalties. We literally already -- the one issue with the quarterback, you know, had showed video from the previous week. Happened to a team that played week one -- or week zero where it's not the hit on the quarterback, it's the driving him into the ground and showed that to our team. And then we made the exact same mistake. So that's being addressed.

And the same with the one for the O-lineman, Michael Katic. Just inexcusable. So those are addressed. And then the false starts. You can't have those. And those are costly, very costly. And then the holding call, holding penalty, the one we had on the O-line, in addition to the two of those. To me -- and holdings to me are more you talk about, you know, self-inflicted. It's technique, it's positioning. Usually the holding is your feet and your hands get caught doing the holding, but your feet are the ones that get you in trouble.

So it's a lot of variables for that. But you've got to eliminate mistakes. And those just kill drives, especially on our offense. It just really, really set us back. Put us behind the chains and made it really difficult, especially in that environment against that defense. We talk about playing fundamentally sound and not making mistakes, and we didn't do either one.

Q. You mentioned in your opening statement just atmosphere and fans and what they bring. This will be the first time that the Marching Hundred is back in Memorial Stadium since 2019. What do they bring to the game day atmosphere and what will it be like to have them back?

TOM ALLEN: Love it. To me, when I hear the bands playing, that's what I think makes college different than the professional game. And it's just an awesome part of the atmosphere. Love that part of it. And excited to have them back and wanted to have them back. And want this place to be loud and rocking. So that, to me, is all part of it.

We're all in this together. And that's why I've tried to do everything I can the last few years here to encourage that and just be able to thank them publicly and appreciate them because I do. And I know the role that they play and how important it is in just getting the people, the fans, the players, everybody engaged and feeling the energy and electricity of the stadium.

Q. I have an injury update question. Where is Monster at? Is there any update on his status coming into this week?

TOM ALLEN: They did keep him, but he's been released. Been able to get his mom up there with him. So they're on their way back actually this morning. So got a lot of good news from that.

So it's just an upper body injury. But I don't know the short term as far as return to play status yet. But I do know we've got a lot of good test results back, which was very, very positive. And I've spoken to him already several different times and messaging him and his mom. So encouraged by his progress.

Q. (No microphone.)

TOM ALLEN: Correct. Yeah. I thought Josh stepped in. He played over 50 snaps. And we challenged our guys in that very possibility. You never know who it's going to be. I gave them a story, you know, last week about one of the players I used to coach at a previous place that was a third string guy in the opening game of a top 25 match-up. And third string guy had to play the entire second half because of just -- the two guys in front of him ended up getting knocked out of the game.

And so never knowing if that's going to be you and be ready for that. Obviously, Josh was the number two. And he ended up playing 50 snaps. And that wasn't what he was expecting to play. But I thought he was really solid. I thought he did a really good job. I want to continue for him to develop and communicate at a higher level, but he made some plays for sure.

I thought Raheem Layne played pretty well. But he's rusty. He hadn't played in over a year. And he was so excited, he made some mistakes. Without question, a lot of them were over-aggression and just energy. I think once he calmed down, he made fewer of those. But still wasn't as good as he's going to be.

Marcelino Ball, same thing. It's his first game in over a year. But at the same time, the secondary did a lot of good things, a lot of areas to work on for sure. Not 100 percent pleased with everything there but did some good things, enough to build off of without question.

So I thought our defense was very solid, as I said, even after the game, watching the film. Just got to eliminate some of those major mistakes. But the effort I thought on defense was what you want. I thought our defensive line was very productive.

But secondary played well. But we could play better. And we're going to play better.

Q. I want to go back to what you said about the offensive line, I guess. Did you have a set five when Luke was healthy? How sort of open is the competition for those spots right now?

TOM ALLEN: We did. That was kind of what we thought it was going to be for most of fall camp. And then just one of those things. It happened in practice. And so -- but that changed all that.

But at the same time, yeah, we're going to definitely have competition there. I don't know if it's open for every position but we're always trying to find the best combination. So to me, it's find the best five guys. And the combination that that includes will be looked at this week, various things, to be able to have different options for sure. But I want guys that are going to play physical and they're going to execute and they're going to finish.

Q. After the game, you mentioned special teams briefly. But I guess looking back on the film, what do you see you can improve on special teams? And especially James Evans and playing his first game, how do you kind of maybe settle him down after that first game so he can move forward?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. I thought James, he punted very poorly. His first three punts weren't very good. It was his first game of his entire life. But others have had that same situation. So he just didn't respond very well initially. I thought the more he kicked, the better he got and -- which is what you want to see. So there's no question that he needed all those reps for sure and was encouraged by how he responded.

So I feel really good about where he's at at this point. And he needed those reps. We tried everything we could to simulate the game situation, live situation, both the crowd noise and pressure and hitting him with shields and just trying to rough him up a little bit to feel the pressure.

He's the third one we've had in this situation. And they all -- it's pretty new for all of them. So just trying to create that environment. But he didn't respond as well initially but then calmed down and did a better job. And we were two for two on field goals.

And the two other things that stuck out to me negatively were the first kickoff coverage wasn't -- guys didn't execute the call. They jumped things. They assumed some things and didn't read react. And then the kick out of bounds just

inexcusable. It's -- that's their job, so do your job. So that cannot happen.

Q. I don't mean to at all dismiss Tyler Goodson's 56-yard run because the breakdowns in that play were real obvious. But after that, he had only 39 yards and 17 carries, 2.3 yards per game. It seemed like you guys handled their running game pretty well after that. When you watched film and such, were you pleased with that aspect of it after? Outside of that one?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. I would agree with that. That's what the video showed, and that's what I felt I saw during the game. But you can't -- you know, you can't erase the play. It's obviously a huge part of the game. It was momentum. It was a lot of things, you know.

But big picture-wise moving forward, which is the whole point here in what we're talking about here is, yeah, you definitely feel with the team that that's what they do. That's what they hang their hat on. That's where the strength of their team lies.

And to be able to -- in an area that we -- I wouldn't say that we -- you know, that our run defense last year was the strength of our defense. So, to me, it was something that we've emphasized, something we knew I needed to get better at in order to play the way we want to play in this conference and to be able to do things we want to do and I believe we can do and will do in this conference. You have to stop the run. So very encouraged by that. Like I said, it's a collective group effort with that. And that was a very positive thing for the future.

Q. What are your expectations, hopes for fan turnout these next two games coming back home? And how much do you want the crowd to kind of be a factor?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. It's a home game. And so I understand the impact that fans have on the game and the atmosphere that you have for, you know, both teams. Encouragement and energy from us. And then just to be able to deal with the noise on third downs, especially for opposing team's offense and communication and all of that affects guys jumping offsides and being slower on the snap count and getting jump on things. So those are all things that play into outcomes of games.

As we always have said, home field advantage gives you an advantage. That's why they call it that, you know, it's because there's fans. It's not just because you're playing at home. It's the fans in the stands that give you that home field advantage. So, yeah, it's important for sure. And excited for everybody to get out here and enjoy just great Indiana University football.

Q. Coach, you've talked about all the things that needed to be cleaned up, but you only have four days to do that. How much can you likely expect to get accomplished in that short of a time to get that done and to get to where you want this team and where they should be?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. I mean, I think that's where -- as we often say, game day's coming. And the clock's ticking.

So sense of urgency with that. That's why yesterday was so important to not only just to flush things out but just to be open and honest about where you are with things and address them. And that process is continuing even into today as a staff.

And then tomorrow's practice is huge, the way our guys come and approach their opportunity at 7:00, our first team meeting in the morning, and be able to have the right mindset and to have a great Tuesday morning practice and film study and walk-through and everything that goes into this to be able to give us the progression that we have to have.

There's obviously guys -- we've got some guys that didn't play that we hope to get back to play to get them healthy and get them part of what we're doing. That's part of it as well. But it's just continuing to go through the process that we've got to get where we want to be.

And there's no question. I mean, obviously, everybody knows that it wasn't what anybody wanted. And it's my responsibility. The buck stops with me. And I have to own it. And I do. It's my responsibility to get it fixed. So that's where we're at.

And excited for our guys to be able to have the opportunity -- that's one thing that is great about this awesome game. It was a game, but it was one game. So now we've got to move on to our second opportunity. And that's the beauty of this sport. You've got to be able to respond, and you've got to be able to look yourself in the mirror, and you've got to be able to make honest assessments and evaluations, and you've got to go fix them. And there's a lot of pride in this football team. A lot of guys that worked extremely hard.

So we've got a lot of work ahead of us. But we're excited about the opportunity to get back out there on Saturday and represent our university.

Q. Ryder Anderson led you in a lot of categories, sacks and TFLs and even solo tackles. Else pretty good for a debut for him, wasn't it?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. I tell you what, he -- not surprised. He was the defensive MVP of us for our defense in the spring. And we saw a lot of those same things out of him. And he also brings a lot of leadership to that room. I think I said that before when we brought him here. And expected him to do that. And he's done that. He's just such a steadying force in there. He's not just -- he's a big guy and he's physically strong and he moves well. But he's also got maturity to him. So he backed it up with his play, which is what I expected him to do. And just want other guys to follow suit.

I thought Weston Kramer -- I actually mentioned him to our whole team yesterday because of how hard he plays. I mean, just his effort. He's that way every single day. I don't know if I've ever seen a kid at this level practice as hard as he does every single day. It does not matter.

To me, that's infectious. It's contagious. And I love it. And I want it to infiltrate everybody. It's not that we didn't play hard. I'm just saying, that kid takes to it another level. He's not a massively big guy. But he has a massively big motor. And that's an awesome, awesome thing because he controls that. That's what makes that so powerful because sometimes -- he can't control how tall he is, but he can control how hard he plays and how tough he is. That's what I love about him. So thankful that we brought him here and really excited for his opportunity. So I thought Ryder did a great job and expect him to continue to be very productive for us.

Awesome. Have a great day. LEO.

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