

Indiana University Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 16, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Head Coach Tom Allen

Press Conference



Indiana 15, Ohio State 20

TOM ALLEN: All right. Really disappointed. Frustrated right now. Thought our kids played hard. Thought the defense played awesome and did what we asked them to do.

So kicked too many field goals in the first half and didn't finish in the fourth quarter. So disappointing without question. And ready for questions.

Q. Without being able to watch film and process things, just do what do you kind of ascribe again some of the things you've struggled with at times in the past? Finishing drives, turning 3 into 7. As much as anything to stay on schedule, I guess, offensively?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. I just feel, just, still -- I mean, just got to evaluate why we're not executing those critical situations. You know, you feel good about certain things coming off the bye week, which I did.

But continued to be same issues, you know, as far as not finishing drives in the red zone, moving the football but not getting the touchdowns. You know eventually that can be the difference in you lose a game by 5 points. And give up a pick 6, you know, which can't happen.

Protecting the football, that continues to be -- to me, that's kind of a glaring thing. Got some take-aways on defense, which were huge. But not protecting it and then not scoring. Just like a double whammy to me.

But that's what really sticks out in my mind the most. And even at the end, some dropped passes. You've got to make plays, you know, and got to put our guys in position to be able to make those places. So, yeah, frustrating.

Q. You just covered the offensive side of that pretty well. On the other side, Kenneth Walker came into this game leading the nation in rushing. You guys just really kept him bottled up. Can you tell how you guys did that and the play, especially your middle

linebacker, seemed like he was everywhere?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. Walker is a great player. I watched him on film six straight weeks, just make everybody miss. Average 150 a game. And knew he was a great player. Had some things from a technique perspective and schematically that we were trying to do. I thought Coach Warren did a great job implementing those things, being able to keep him hemmed in and not get him a chance to get out in space and make those guys miss. And you want to gang tackle him.

I mean, I thought our defense played awesome. I don't know what else to say. They did everything you asked them to do except maybe score. That's the one thing they didn't do is score a touchdown.

But just our defensive staff, just complimenting them and to be able -- it wasn't even just the run game. Their pass game has been impressive. I was kind of more worried about that because those are just big explosive plays that just gut you when you spend so much time trying to stop such a great running back and then they hit you over the head. It's just really, really challenging. But didn't give those up either and worked really hard. Didn't have -- another week we didn't have Tiawan, our All American corner. And then Reese -- we thought -- I expected him to play at least half the game. And he went the one series and just couldn't keep going. So you had your -- two of your top three corners didn't even play against really talented receivers I thought.

So just an overall -- defensively, you mentioned Micah just everywhere. It's just hard to believe they were able to complete that pass to the quarterback on a reverse, whatever, and then the quarterback makes a toe-tap catch after Micah is in the guy's face trying to make the throw. So hats off to them for making a play there. But, yeah, Micah played hard like he always does and very, very good. Led the defense. Thought our defense -- like I said, they did what they were supposed to do to help us win.

Q. Coach, you mentioned the pick 6. But overall, how did you feel about how Jack played? It seemed like he came out and was in pretty good rhythm. Maybe had

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some issues --

TOM ALLEN: There were some good things. I just still feel like -- you know, the one pick, he got hit on, you know, the pick 6 was just, you know, a bad read, you know. It was a mistake. And you can't get those back. Gosh, those are costly, especially in a game -- we knew it was going to be a one possession type game, at least I felt it was going to be. It was going to come down to the wire.

But did some good things, you know. Had some -- thought a couple times maybe he needed to run, just take it and run it. Didn't like taking that sack there at the end. And the second to last drive, in those situations, we had a little momentum got a little yards there. And don't take a sack in that situation. But he's got to learn those lessons for sure. But did some good things but still just protect the football. Got to protect the football. Got to block better for him, you know, and catch better.

Still thought we had a few drops, not a lot of them but some costly ones at the wrong time that hurt us. And that's really -- it's about making key plays at critical times. That's, to me, what this game is about at this level, both sides of the football.

Even look at special teams. We had -- the ball hits off James Miller's leg, which is kind of a -- that's hard to prevent. And then we don't down them inside the 5. And then they get the ball on the 20. That was the drive where they actually went down and scored off of. It's different when you start on the 5 or inside the 5 yard line. Even special teams, we've got to execute that. We've got to down that ball inside the 5 yard line.

That changes a lot of things. Changes play calling. Had a couple punts that weren't good enough. So those things hurt you. It's being able to execute at a high level, critical times. And we just don't have a lot of margin for error. In certain situations right now. We've lost some play-makers on offense. But guys have got to step up. We've got to coach them better. We've got to make better play calls. We've got to do a better job of getting our guys. And when we do that, they've got to make plays.

At the end of the day, buck stops with me. I'm responsible. Kids played hard. And they were -- from that perspective, I can't fault them on that. But they've just got to execute. That's the bottom line.

Q. You did mention play calls, especially about the first round obviously guys were able to move the ball pretty well throwing the ball. Started running within the 10. Obviously there's the direct snap to Stephen. What did you think about the play calling there? What

were you trying to get out of that? What do you feel like went wrong?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. Just trying to -- you shift to us. You've got to make him adjust. We felt good about that call. They had a certain blitz on and they looped the end on the outside. I thought it would hit more off the hip of the tackle, between the tackle and the tight end was kind of where I envisioned that one going per the movement and the alignment. So obviously didn't give us a touchdown like we wanted it do.

But just trying to find creative ways to run the football and take some stress off in that area. But thought -- the running back group, those guys ran hard and made some plays for us. And guys that are trying to step up and do things. But also had some costly drops too.

So just bottom line is we've got to -- I've got to sit back and I'll evaluate the play calling and see where that's all at and just be able to -- it's part of the evaluation. We've got to look at everything. We've got to find ways to win games, bottom line.

Q. What's your sense on team morale at this point?

TOM ALLEN: You know, they're hurting. They're hurting right now. And I understand why. I am too.

But at the same time, there's a lot of character in that room. And just by the look in their eye, I can tell they're going to stay together. They're going to keep fighting. I don't question that. There is no doubt this is going to hurt for a while, but we can't sit here and feel sorry for ourselves because nobody else is going to.

And we've got another one coming up. So, yeah, got to stay together. When things aren't going your way and life is hard and things that you work so hard for don't materialize, you really find out who you are and you find out who is in with you and who's got your back.

And I want to make sure these guys understand that and stay together and they keep fighting. That's what grit is all about is the perseverance and passion towards a long-term goal. And it's the number one quality you have to develop in this life to be successful, I believe.

But the negative thing about grit is you have to learn to have it at hard times. That's when it's really grown the most. It's not a whole lot of fun sometimes developing it, but it's what we have to have. We're going to stay together. We're going to fight together, get some things fixed and just keep moving forward.

Q. Coach, last season the wide receivers came up with a lot of those 50/50 balls. This season it seems more often than not they're not coming up with them. What has been the difference? Is it an effort thing? Is it the defense are focusing a little more on breaking the passes up? What is it that's causing that differential?

TOM ALLEN: That's a great question. I think it's a legitimate question. And I say, Guys, someone has got to step up and make a play. Somebody's got to step up and make a play in those situations and come down with the ball. So we work on that and have contested plays in practice and try to simulate that. Go 1s versus 1s in Skelly for that purpose, to be able to go against speed on speed and good on good, at least throughout the weeks. Some reps have done that consistently.

But, yeah, I'm frustrated by that, to be honest with you. And it needs to get fixed, like today. Because that's how you create explosive plays. That's how you make game-changing opportunities for yourself and for your team.

But, yeah, to me, that's one of those things where guys just got to dig deep. We've got to work harder on it. We've got to do a better job of finishing those plays.

Sometimes it's ball placement, making sure the guy has a chance. We play against a lot of really good defensive backs and a lot of good defenses in this league. But we've got to come up with those plays because that, to me, is how you win games like that. Have a great day. LEO.

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