

Indiana University Football Media Conference

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Coach Tom Allen

Signing Day Press Conference



TOM ALLEN: Good afternoon. Appreciate everybody being here. Really excited about today.

Obviously the early signing period, which has kind of become the signing day of the cycle with the new structure that we're in, and so the staff has been working extremely hard really for a long time to put this class together. Really excited about the group that we have.

It is a signing period, and I think that's kind of going to be something that will be growing into a little bit of the normalcy of it all, so we do have some more individuals that we expect to sign as it unfolds, but at the same time, really, really good foundation here that we have, and excited about the group that we put together as a staff and guys that believed in us and stuck with us through some challenges this season.

Most of these guys were committed to us for a long time and stayed the course, which I really appreciate, and it means a lot to us, and just shows you kind of what they feel about our program and where we're at.

I know as things are -- giving out different systems or rankings or whatever they choose to say, that this is one -- some say it's the best class we've ever had, whatever that means. I do know that we're excited about it for sure, and they've got to come here and they've got to work, and they've got to be developed into a team on the field that plays well together, and that's the goal.

Really excited about the quality of the young men. The goal in this class was really to increase our length and our speed. Those will be two key things that we really tried to emphasize, the overall mass of our team and body types, so really trying to be a focus for that.

I'm just going to go through and talk about our guys that we have. Really want to make sure that individually each guy is mentioned. So we'll go through the group here.

Cam Camper, wide receiver, 6'2", 190. Lancaster, Texas, was his high school. Trinity Valley Community College.

Really excited about Cam. Love his length, love his athleticism. Goes and gets the football, and just looking for guys with a big catch radius and ability to stretch the field and get open and make plays, so really excited about Cam and really feel that he fits with us.

So much of a big thing for me is fit with this team and with our guys and the ability for them to have the character we're looking for, the leadership we're looking for and the focuses in their lives, the things -- that they care about the things that we care about, and obviously being really good football players that want to be developed is huge.

Ladarius Cox, defensive lineman, 6'4", 315. Originally from Mobile, coming to us from Ole Miss. We obviously had made it a priority to get some mass on the defensive line from some older guys, and so he obviously fits that bill. Has played both sides of the ball actually. But really excited about him and what he brings to our program. Obviously we've had a couple other of his teammates here this past year, so that really gave us an insight into him as a person, and obviously having the connections we have down there helped us, as well.

Phillip Dunnam, safety 6'1", 180. Miami, Florida, North Miami Beach High School. Phillip is a guy for us that we found going down there recruiting. Really felt like he had all the qualities we're looking for with length and athleticism, plays on both sides of the football, makes plays at receiver, makes plays in the return game, makes plays at safety, can play corner. But we definitely are signing him as a safety. Just a toughness to him, ability to make plays in space is a huge deal for us. So really feel very excited about him.

Also Brody Foley, tight end, 6'6", 235, out of Cincinnati, Anderson High School there in Ohio. Really excited about Brody. This is an area, position that we've excelled at here in the last few years in our offense, guys being able to make plays, and see him as a future big guy that's athletic enough to make plays in space and get the ball to him but also big and physical enough to be in the box, as well. I love his frame. He's going to get a whole lot bigger, but really excited to have Brody as part of our family.

Also Josh Henderson, running back, 5'11", 215, originally from Pennington, New Jersey, came from the University of North Carolina. Really excited about this young man and really wanted to rebuild our running back room, and Coach McCullough has done a tremendous job with that, and just Josh's family, spending time with them, just our kind of guy. Cares about school, high academic focus, tremendous character, leadership, toughness, fight, just the things we're looking for, guys that we know well that have coached him and worked with him and know what he brings to our football team, so I'm really excited about adding Josh to our family.

Also you see Nick James there, defensive lineman, 6'2", 295, from IMG Academy there in Florida, originally from Alabama. Really excited about Nick. Gives us a big-body guy, good athlete that can play in the interior of our defense, close to 300 pounds already out of high school, and that's a huge area of need for us is to get bigger in the core there, and gives us -- we were able to do it with some young guys as well as with some older guys, so really excited about Nick, and once again, kind of fits that same bill of comes from a really good family, people that fit with us and have done a great job of raising him and allowed him to be in position to come here and be very, very successful.

Bradley Jennings, linebacker, 6'1", 235, originally from Jacksonville, Florida, coming to us from the University of Miami. Playing a lot of snaps there, productive down there, and really looking for him to come in here and give us tremendous leadership in that room. Obviously with the departure of Micah and being able to compete, to play, and that's what we tell those guys that come in here. They come in here to compete, to play, and they've obviously got to earn it, and we've got guys on this roster that are already going to be in that room that have got to compete alongside them and develop themselves into a great team.

But once again, really, really good family, a guy that we've enjoyed getting to know through this process, and does happen quicker with some of these guys based on the calendar and different things that you're looking for, but really excited about Bradley and what he's going to bring to our program.

Isaiah Jones, 6'2", 215, linebacker out of London, Ohio. Really excited about Isaiah. Love this young man, his family, as well. Just complete athlete, plays multiple sports, playing basketball right now, plays on both sides of the football, love that. I say that all the time, getting guys out of high school, guys that play running back, guys that play on defense. He's a linebacker for us and can play either position there or multiple positions there in the core of our defense and just shows that on film, and just love his

toughness and his fight and the way he plays in the games and be able to lead his team to a great season, and that's really, really important to me.

Also Jaylin Lucas, running back, 5'9", 185, out of Edna Carr High School in Louisiana. Man, Jaylin is dynamic. That's the best thing I can say to describe Jaylin. So excited to get him as a part of our football family. Tremendous family themselves, had him here on campus over the summertime during those visits officially, and been able to stay with him and just keep recruiting him. It was a lot of hard work to be able to get him here. Tremendously talented athlete. Talk about a guy that makes plays in space, he is dynamic in space. In the return game, as well, as well as just get that guy the football, whether we hand it to him, throw it to him, catch it in the special teams game.

But really a guy that I've had some say is maybe the most dynamic player in the country out of this class. We'll see with all that. But bottom line is I just know he's a high-character guy that's going to work. He's got a real good physical base to him even though he's not a big guy. He's extremely quick and fast, so he's got short-speed quickness and long speed, which is sometimes rare to find in that position, so it's awesome.

Patrick Lucas, PJ, defensive lineman, 6'3", 320, originally out of Prattville, Alabama, coming to us from Ole Miss, as well. Another big guy in the core, just an older player that gives us mass. It's Big Ten football; we've got to be able to -- we just need to get bigger in the interior, and addressed a huge need there with PJ and had a chance to meet his family and just I'd say an immediate connection with the culture we have built here, immediate connection with the kind of values that we have and the things that we care about, and so to me that was important. That's always important. It always will be important.

So just want to have a guy that wants to come in here and compete and help us get better on defense.

Bray Lynch. So excited about Bray. Offensive tackle, 6'5", 280, out of Austin, Texas, Westlake High School. Got to see him play last week, which was a tremendous thrill for me. I only get one trip, so they had to keep winning. They're getting ready to play for a state championship this weekend, and just so impressed with that program, what Coach Dodge has done there, and this is a tremendous young man.

Came to us this summer with his dad to visit, and came back later on an official visit with his mom and his dad and his brother came, and just tremendous people. Just high character, smart, tough, dependable. Just really, really -- he's a two-year starter, over 30 games in that high-level

program, one of the best programs in the nation of high school football, and there in the state of Texas does a tremendous job. Just so well-coached. I was just so impressed. I watched the game last week and just kind of shook my head at just the level that they play at in terms of the execution on both sides of the football and how disciplined they were and how they executed.

Just a really, really high level of play he's coming from in his preparation, and he's an excellent student, so excited to have Bray as a part of our football team.

Dasan McCullough. Obviously got a perfect connection with him with father here, but Dasan has earned this. He's pretty special. 6'5", 235 pounds and only going to get bigger. He's tall and thin, even at that weight. But plays linebacker for us. I think he can play edge. He played safety in high school. He can play receiver. All different things.

But he's a defensive guy. Love his IQ, really high football IQ. You can see it on film. He's always diagnosing and reading things and reading and reacting and just really excited about the potential, the versatility, the length and just the want-to.

Loves the weight room and is just going to dive into that but be here mid -- we've got a lot of these guys going to be here mid-year and just so excited about that, and that's just really tremendously excited about him. Played here at Bloomington South High School here locally, and really, really excited to get him here as a member of our team.

Obviously he's been here a whole bunch as a coach's kid, and that's always a neat dynamic to have, but at the same time it's special to be able to now have him here as one of our players.

Ryan Miller, tight end, 6'6", 215 pounds out of Ohio there, Kenston High School. Just a really long, once again, long athlete that we know can flex out, we can put in the box, and plays multiple sports and has been a part of a really good high school football program, used to winning, and a lot of these guys on this list are used to winning, which I love, and Ryan is a guy that it's a huge need for us to be able to find tight ends that have length and athleticism and have a great frame to put weight on. So really excited about how he fits with us and our new offensive system, and he's going to really enjoy it. We had a chance to talk with him about that, and he's fired up.

Next we've got James Monds. Defensive back, 5'11" 185, out of Vero Beach High School in Vero Beach, Florida. Man, I'll tell you what; we had several guys I would say were leaders in this class in putting them together. He's

near the top. Just tremendously active on social media, tremendously active with his teammates, future teammates in the recruiting process. Loves football.

Every time I talk to him he's either studying film, he's out doing something to get better. A multisport athlete, runs track, plays soccer, an excellent soccer player. Don't have that many guys that do that, play soccer and also play football. Just shows you his athleticism, and loves the game. I'll tell you, he's always, always working to do something to get better as a player.

Great family; obviously had them down here multiple times. He actually chose to come officially, came up unofficially to watch a game with his dad, and just really appreciate his leadership, and he's going to be here mid-year as many of these guys are.

We've got a record number of guys, I think we have 16 coming here at mid-year, which we've never had this many before, including the transfers and the high school guys, so that gives us an immediate opportunity to impact this team right away, so really excited about having James Monds here as a part of our team.

DJ Moore, offensive tackle, 6'5" 315 pounds, out of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Snyder High School, one of our own in-state guys. Big, athletic. Just so excited about DJ's upside, his potential to be able to keep growing, maybe an inside guy, maybe an outside guy. We don't know. He's played both.

Just a big man that excited to get him here and get him training with our football team. Really excited about just the energy he brings.

He's had a chance to come down and watch several games and be a part of our campus here and be a part of -- he's teammates with Randy, and that's been a great connection for us, but at the same time we're excited to have him here and to be able to make his own way and be able to be a big part of our offensive future.

Trevell Mullen, DB, cornerback, 5'11", 170, out of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Coconut Creek High School, obviously Tiawan's younger brother. Known him for many years because of that connection, but he's coming here to become his own guy and to be able to establish his own identity and his own legacy. Obviously he's had two older brothers to go before him collegiately, but has a great bloodline of competition and competitive spirit and toughness and just the ability to prepare a certain way, so really excited about Trevell and really excited about what he brings to our program.

Just love his family, they're a part of ours and have been fun to recruit him, and now when I remember even years ago going back there to meet with Tiawan, he sat there in the house, and he was quite a bit younger at that point and now he's coming here as one of our players, so it's pretty exciting for sure.

Gi'Bran Payne, running back, 5'10", 190, out of Cincinnati, Ohio, LaSalle High School. Really, really talented football player. Tremendous burst, love the compactness of his build. I love the acceleration he shows on film. Needed to get more of that in our running back room, and we've done that. He's a huge part of that, huge part of our future.

I'll tell you what, one thing I really love about him, as well, is he played defense. Played outside linebacker, caused a lot of fumbles. He made a lot of plays. He tackled with great pop and intensity. I love seeing that. I like seeing guys who are just good football players.

My whole goal is when I go to watch a team play, I want to make sure we're getting the guy that's the best football player on that field both sides of the ball, and a lot of these guys have been doing that. So I know that Gi'Bran is going to come here, work his tail off and be a tremendous asset to our football team.

Jamari Sharpe, DB, 6'1", 180, out of Miami, Florida, Northwestern High School, a strong history of success at Miami Northwestern, winning multiple state championships, were deep in the playoffs again this year. A long corner that we've been looking for. Trying to find guys with length and speed. That was the big focus for this class.

He's just one of those guys where you just as soon as I first saw him on film, was like, man, this guy is different. He's a track guy, 10.6 100-meter guy. That's documented speed, and the length is what it is. He's all of 6'1" and that's a big deal. It's not easy to find guys with that kind of length and speed and coming from a program that's used to winning a lot of football games is great, and just continues that Florida pipeline up to Indiana, and that's real important to our program and the guys we're able to attract here.

Shaun Shivers, running back, 5'7", 190. Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was his home. Has been playing at Auburn university, just graduated this past week and he's going to be a Hoosier. So excited about Shaun. His nickname is "Worm" so that's what we're going to call him, and I got permission to call him that. He's been called that most of his life. Mom calls him that, so if mom calls him that I'm good with it, so that's what I'm going to call him.

But man, I love this kid. Ever since that first conversation when he put himself out there to be able to be recruited,

got to know him, met with his mom, and had him up here for an official visit. Just great personality and just knowing -- once again, goes back to relationships, knowing his high school coach for a long, long time and that was a big part of all of this, and Coach McCullough did a tremendous job of recruiting him out of high school. Knew exactly who he was when he made a decision to go into the SEC, and just know that he's a talented young man. He played both sports and he ran track at Auburn, as well. Very, very fast football player, very, very powerful football player, and gives us something in that room, a different level of pop that we need. So he's excited to come here and be able to compete and play at the very highest level. So very excited about having Worm as a part of our program.

Emery Simmons, wide receiver, 6'1", 195 out of North Carolina. University of North Carolina is where he's been playing, just transferred from. Emery was actually committed several years ago if you guys might remember and got a chance to know him through that whole process, got a chance to -- his parents came up here with him unofficially. Really loved him at that point. Chose to stay home, being from his home state there is where he ended up going to college and then decided to come to Indiana.

So really, really excited to get him here finally. Tried to get him here the first time, but bottom line is that obviously there was an ultimate plan to get him here eventually and it's worked itself out.

Guy that can really run and be able to give us some more explosiveness in our pass game at the receiver position, which is going to be huge for us, and so really excited about him bringing production with him from the ACC, which is critical. I want to be able to see guys that have been able to produce at the levels they're coming from and to be able to become -- we already knew he was a culture fit with us just because of the first time around, but it was just great to reconnect with his parents and him, as well, during his visit, and being able to get him here officially is very, very exciting. So he'll be here mid-year as well as with Shaun Shivers, as well, he's going to be here in January.

Carter Smith, offensive tackle, 6'5", 280 pounds, out of Powell, Ohio, Olentangy Liberty High School. Really, really love this young man, as far as just so much potential, long and athletic. Played high school men's volleyball for his high school team. Another rare thing to have offensive linemen playing that sport, but his athleticism showed doing that, and he's long and lean and going to keep getting bigger. Being 280 already, as thin as he is, he's got great upside to be able to grow and develop.

He's going to be here in January, also, to get a chance to

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

really benefit from our nutrition of our program, our strength program and allow him really to develop. Tremendous family. Love his parents. I've spent a lot of time with them, and they fit with us, and they've been excited to be a part of this. He's been committed to us for a while and he's stayed true, and I really appreciate that, so really excited about having Carter Smith with us.

Vincent Sneed, defensive lineman, 6'4", 250 pounds, Winter Park, Florida, Winter Park High School. Love his length. Big ol' hands, huge feet, big man. That's what we're trying to find. Playing defensive end in our defense, we need to really find those guys, the length that we've got to have, the pop up front, the big strong hands, the ability to play the run and get some burst to be able to get some pass rush in that position, as well, but really excited about what he brings to our team.

Once again, family fit. The things that they care about, the things that they value as a family aligns with what our program is all about, and the core principles of our program. Just had a really, really good time with his parents on the visit, getting to know them, really getting a chance to really dive into who they are and who we are, and really excited about having Vincent as a part of this class and a part of our football family. He's going to do a great job here for us.

JH Tevis, defensive lineman, 6'4", 285 pounds, originally from Arizona, went to University of California where he graduated from there, is coming here as a grad transfer, going to be in our Kelley School of Business, going to be in the MBA program. Just really excited about JH, the toughness he's going to bring. He was an All-Pac-12 performer there on the defensive line. Got some position flexibility as far as playing either the strong side end, 3 technique combination.

Just love the toughness, love the ability for him to see him making plays at that level consistently, and all that he was able to do there, and then just know how academically focused he is. His dad is originally from Indianapolis and played at North Central High School. As a matter of fact, we got to talking, he played in the 1979 Indiana All-Star Game that was played out here in Memorial Stadium here at Indiana when his dad was a high school player.

But just that connection and just being able to find a young man that's not from Indiana himself but obviously has ties here with his family, and loved his visit, loved our time together with him, and really excited. Once again, another guy that's going to be here in January, getting himself working right away, and Vincent Sneed is going to be here, also, in January. He's a mid-year guy.

Richard Thomas, defensive lineman, 6'2", 250, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. American Heritage High School, one of the best high school football programs in the country. He's played to an extremely high level. He was their all-time leading tackler in the history of their program. He's played there for many years. He's been able to be raised up in that system. A lot of great players as teammates. He played around -- a lot of big high school games he's played in, and that excites me. He's just an awesome young man.

He's a guy that we connected with, with his family, as well, right away, because it's pretty obvious that the things that they cared about we cared about, and you can tell pretty quickly when you just -- who you are, you just present yourself to them and you don't try to tell them what they want to hear, you just tell them who you are, and those that align with you and fit with you, it becomes pretty obvious pretty quickly. Richard Thomas to me is just a great fit with us. Excited to see him grow and develop in our program and to see him blossom when he comes to Indiana here this summer.

Kaiden Turner, linebacker, 6'2", 225, Fayetteville, Arkansas, Fayetteville High School. Led his team to the state championship game and had a tremendous senior season. Love this kid. He's just a tough, tough guy, and when you go there and you meet and you talk to his coaches and the people that are around him his whole life, it's just -- it's one great thing after the next about his leadership and his toughness and just making everybody around him better, and the way he loves to work and how hard he plays and he can just loves to play the game, got energy. He plays the game the way I want to play the game, the way I want to coach the game, and that just stuck out to me on film. He can run and he's a tough guy and he's smart. That smart, tough, dependable piece is such a huge thing for me.

Really excited; we've obviously had some really good linebackers here in this program, and we've got some young ones coming in that I think are going to have a chance to come in and be the next wave of great Indiana football linebackers as a part of our team.

I believe I got everybody. Is that right? I know that's a lot of guys, but you know what, it's a special class, so I wanted to talk about every single one of them. We've been recruiting our tails off to get these guys here. It's a critical part of us being able to continue to build this program and the direction that I want it to go and our staff wants it to go, so I'm very, very excited about this group to present these guys to you, so I'll take questions at this time.

Q. No quarterback; I know you guys lost yours here at the end. What's the plan going forward? Could you



take two, a high school kid and a transfer, or is it one or the other?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I'll tell you exactly what the plan is. Obviously we're in the process of executing that plan. Definitely took a detour within the last week, and so bottom line is we plan to sign a transfer quarterback as well as a high school quarterback. That is the plan. I'm working on that just relentlessly, and that's a big part of everything we're doing, and even this morning, this afternoon, rest of the day, into the weekend and the next week and the week after that.

Got a little window of time when you can bring guys back on campus in the early part of January, which is built in for this very purpose, so we'll take full advantage of that. There's a five-day window there where you can bring guys on campus before the second semester begins, and we're already in the process of lining up those visits at this point.

Feel good about the plan. Got to execute it to the highest level. It's very critical. So yes, we will sign two quarterbacks here before this process is done.

Q. Kind of to clarify that, as far as making all these numbers work, obviously you said you were going to have to talk to a lot of guys about who's staying, who's going, what everybody is doing with their COVID year. We've obviously seen some of the names come out in the portal. Do you know at this point for sure who's all staying and coming back, and is Jack Tuttle one of those guys who's definitely staying?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I expect Jack to be here. Yes, I do, and we've actually met as recent as yesterday to talk about that, and what the second semester is going to look like.

But I would say, to answer your question, I feel good about the majority that I know what they're planning to do, and so that can always change. You never know if certain things can come up, but I would feel very secure about the majority of our guys that -- and this is a whole new dynamic of things that we've not really dealt with before. Very unique in that regard, but I think that's really the direction it's going. Consistently I think it'll be this way moving forward.

But at the same time we had a lot of extra guys here because of the COVID situation and what that creates, and yeah, we had conversations with all those guys, and some have chosen to move on, and that's mutually talked about and discussed, and I understand that.

Just wish those guys nothing but great things in their future. But at the same time, yeah, it's a full I would say

daily conversation about the numbers and where those all stand. Feel really good about where we're at with that process. Very understanding of where we are with that and what we want to be at.

So we do expect to add some more guys, even in this three-day window, and then also moving forward.

So yeah, it's definitely going to be an ongoing process. Obviously added a lot of guys, so those guys are going to be -- the majority of our class is already going to be here as of today and then a few more here in the next couple days, but at the same time, we'll still continue to move forward into January and then you have the February signing, which we'll see at that point.

We'll know more after when the mid-year begins and we have the quarterback situation figured out for that. That will kind of clarify quite a bit, and then we'll go from there for what happens in February.

Q. Given the number of chances you gave Micah over the years with the injuries, were you surprised how that went down with him transferring, and did you have a conversation with him before he left?

TOM ALLEN: Oh, we did, there's no question. Sometimes you just feel like you just need a fresh start, and we talked about that. I think that's a fair assessment. Wish him nothing but great things. He did a great job for us and gave us some really great memories, and I appreciate him, love him, always will, love his family, respect him. Wish him nothing but great things.

But I think sometimes when you have it happen four years in a row, you just need a new scenery, and I agreed with him, and we talked it through man-to-man, face to face, and that's what we came to that conclusion together.

Q. With the transfer portal changing everything now as far as recruiting, what are you happiest about after -- I know this is not finished, but where you are right now, what are you happiest about? I know you're not going to pick out a particular player or two, but is there a position room or anything that made you happier than you expected?

TOM ALLEN: Well, I would say defensive line, running back and receiver. I feel like we've been able to make some real positive changes there in that area, what you said, to be able to attract guys that fit what we're looking for in terms of speed, size, mass and ability to make plays.

So yeah, those to me is really what we tried to address, and then obviously we're still going to be continuing to

address a couple other areas moving forward. But yeah, those to me are the ones that stuck out.

Q. After all your evaluations at this point, have you decided to not make any other changes with your staff or that type of thing?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I think at this point we made a significant change in leadership on the offensive side of the football, and that's where we expect to be able to stay at this point, and so obviously everything will continue to go forward and we'll continue to evaluate things, but at the same time that's the most significant change I expect to make.

Q. You talked about Jaylin Lucas's dynamic ability. Do you see him as just a running back, or could he shift into a DJ Matthews kind of --

TOM ALLEN: I think he's a get-the-ball-in-space kind of guy. So however that looks, we're going to be very creative with that. That's one reason why it appealed to me, with what Coach Bell does and has the ability to do with those guys of that type of stature and play making ability in space.

So yeah, we wanted to be very creative with that. I think he's a guy that will be in the running back room initially for sure, but the way we use him throughout our offense will be in ways, just get that guy the ball in space so he can utilize his quickness and his speed, and obviously the return game will be huge, as well.

Q. I know D-line was obviously a huge priority. You got the transfers. I wanted to ask about Dominic. You've been doing this a whole. Indiana doesn't usually get these kind of guys. A guy with his size who can move like he can, he's playing D-end at IMG. How big is it to get him but also get him mid-year? Is he the kind of guy that even though it's tough to play D-line as a freshman, could he do that?

TOM ALLEN: Well, I'll know more after spring ball for sure and after the spring semester, but yeah, he has the size coming in here right out of high school, and like you said, the mid-year -- he's been in a very collegiate atmosphere. When you go down to visit, their schedule is pretty much the same as ours that they're on for their day and how that looks and works and stuff.

To me it's exciting to get a big guy that can move as well and play, and yeah, we expect big things from him. There's no doubt about it, and I expect him to come in here and compete to be able to get on that field, but he's obviously going to earn that, as well. But getting here early

gives you that chance.

Q. You mentioned Walt Bell had to really kind of hit the ground running. What did he bring for this class? I know there were already people who committed prior to his hiring, but what did he bring to this class, and what do you think he brings moving forward as a recruiter?

TOM ALLEN: Well, like you said, he wasn't on the road very long, only a couple days, and at that time it was focused really on quarterback position. But I think what he gave us immediately was and why it was so important to get that decision made was just for the offensive guys to feel like, hey, this is who's going to be the coordinator. I get a chance to meet him, get a chance to talk to him, reassure them of what they fit. Guys would say, hey, do I fit in what you're going to do kind of thing.

So I think it was important that they felt that way before they signed, and I think that's really critical, to be able to even continue that process, getting to know those guys but just knowing who it is, this is what we're going to do, and get a chance to talk to our players about this is the system we're going to be doing and how it's going to look, and so yeah, that's what I think was probably the biggest and most important thing to be able to have that so we can keep these guys with us and together but at the same time I felt like you get the best person that fits what we want to do both schematically in terms of that portion as well as fitting with us as a staff and the kind of person that he is.

To me that was really key things for me, but yeah, that's where he helped the recruiting class was for these guys to be able to see that before they made their final decision.

Q. While we're on Walt, what did you like so much about what he does schematically? What do you like that he does?

TOM ALLEN: Well, first of all, went against him for two straight years and was a challenge every time. Even when I felt like even their quarterback position one year was really depleted, and then the other year was not necessarily probably the level of passion that he would even want to have, but was extremely difficult to defend. So it was personal experience with that.

And then also just knowing some things about even where he comes from and the style that I wanted is totally aligned. To me that was big because you have a chance to -- because it's really hard to know how do they make adjustments in game. Well, I've experienced it firsthand, seeing it -- going against him as the DC, because I was a DC both the years we played against him, and being able

to maximize different position groups.

You go through and look at being able to produce a high-level tight ends production. Okay, you've got two Biletnikoff Award winners at receiver, you've got a running back that's extremely highly productive, you've got a quarterback that played extremely well, probably better than maybe their skill set and very accurate and very -- I say more productive with a guy in certain situations than maybe that you would have thought he would have been able to do.

So the ability to adapt and maximize your roster, maximize the different positions because to me, you've got to be able to show can I get the ball to the receivers, to the tight ends and the running backs and allow them to be effective.

I'm looking for balance. I want us to be -- we've got to run the football but we've got to throw the football. You've got to be able to do both. You've got to be able to be explosive. That was the thing, explosive plays. Want to be able to create explosive plays, want to be able to not have to drive the football 85 yards in a 13-play drive and 14-play drive and try to be perfect and all that.

So to create those plays in space, and that to me is really what appealed to me, and like I said, again, I had the personal experience of knowing guys I know and trust that have worked for him and that he's worked under as a coordinator and then also going against him head to head was probably the biggest thing for me.

Q. You kind of touched on this in your opening statement, but how much given the way this season unfolded, how much did you kind of sell maybe opportunity, like a chance to kind of turn this around and how much reselling did you have to do given the way --

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, there's no doubt, and that's why I said, I appreciate these guys. You look at the group, we lost one, but they stayed together, which I attribute that to some leadership of some key guys on there. I thought Dasan McCullough was a huge part of that. I think James Monds, as I mentioned, was a big part of that, Kaiden Turner, those guys that really took ownership. James was probably the one that might be the most verbal of the crew, even just being able to just stay in contact with the guys, and they just connected. They really did.

But I think it was; it took some time to be able to stay constantly involved and just say, you know what, this is -- we know what we can do. We've seen it, and that's what they saw in 2020, and even though 2021 wasn't anywhere close to what any of us expected, wanted or had

envisioned that was going to happen, they also see themselves coming here and doing the very things that they know what we can do.

You're right; I think they see some opportunity, and I think that's part of being able to -- we knew we had some older guys that were going to be able to move along and go start playing either in the NFL or just moving on in their careers as they graduate.

So that to me was a part of it, I think, as well, but I also think it was also them seeing, hey, this is what I know Indiana can become, what they've shown me they can do, and I can see myself being that next guy to help us take it to the next level.

Q. We've talked about losing one. When you don't get another player that you expect to sign and you still have to further recruit that particular player, how do you do that because that's going to be another challenge now, other teams are going to be coming back in? What's the plan for those types of players?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I think the biggest thing as we go through and look at the quarterback room, and we still have some more receivers that we want to sign, and so to me, it's about utilizing technology, now that we are in the phase that we're in as we recruit. I talked about -- even right now as we move forward with the quarterback room, we're not allowed to go out and visit schools, right.

But hey, we've just been through a whole last couple years of maximizing Zoom calls and being able to have presentations on Zoom and being able to do a great job of capturing both our university as well as our new offensive system and being able to show that to them with video and being able to do presentations and with both family members and coaches and everything else.

That's going to be the focus, and that to me is going to be huge. Really it's really the offensive side of the football that we're going to focus on in that area, and Coach Bell and him being able to utilize, hey, this is how we see you being utilized in this system. I think that's going to be the key.

We've got to do a great job of just being who we are and being true to who we are and just showing that this is a chance for you to be able to be elite at your position in this offense, and there's going to be a chance for you to see yourself making plays, whether it's as a receiver, running back, tight end, whatever that might be, and then the quarterback obviously being able to have a system that's going to prepare them to be able to be their very best in production as well as being able to be prepared for the NFL.

Q. So with that change in the transfer portal rule, just if all the quarterbacks around the market now, because there's just so many of them, do you think that could create more opportunities for high schoolers, like more high schoolers could be available that would have gone to a university that has now taken a transfer?

TOM ALLEN: Absolutely. So when I went out and recruited these last two weeks, and like I said, you play your last game and you hit the ground running, and we've just been running the whole time. So you're just going through and you meet with coaches, and I've been asked that every single stop is what do I tell my guys because they see how it's affected -- especially here's the reality. It's not so much the transfer portal. That's a vehicle to create movement.

The biggest source of this is the fact that we had the COVID year, that every player all four classes in 2020 got an extra year. So now in 2021 you had everybody was given the super seniors, so we could go above the 85 per the NCAA rules, so it really didn't affect that class. Well, this is the first class that now has still three college classes with an extra year and now you have no bonus scholarships. You're all back to 85.

So this is probably going to be the maximum amount of time where you've got more people that people are vying to get, and that's going to push out some high school kids. So here's what it's going to do. Guys that maybe should have been Power Five players are going to get pushed down to the Group of Five level, and guys that maybe were Group of Five level players are going to get pushed down to the FCS level.

It doesn't mean that -- there are still going to be really good players, so to answer your question, yes, there are going to be more high school players available, I believe, just from a pure numbers perspective in February than there ever has been before. That's where I told our staff we've got to make sure we get the players that we want, and if we're not 100 percent sure, then you just -- there's going to be some more out there to be able to go through if you're just patient and you do a great job of evaluating and getting the guys that you want.

So yes, I think you're perceptive on that and that's the reality, and then next year will be a little bit less, and the year after that a little bit less, and we'll get back to some level of normalcy, but the movement is created because of the portal, and the COVID is what created the numbers.

Q. Donaven McCulley came in and played terrific in

the fall before you started playing games and that kind of thing, then he didn't get reps, that type of thing. How much was his struggles at the end of the season, how has that affected him mentally? How do you deal with that scenario? And then number two, will he be a primary candidate I would assume in the spring for football practice?

TOM ALLEN: Correct. Yeah, so I would say this, and we actually just sat down yesterday and talked and I was just checking in on him, and obviously we've been gone recruiting, so I had a chance to be able to spend some time with our guys yesterday as we were continuing to wrap this class up.

But just to talk and see how he's finishing up his finals and how everything is going there. He's doing a great job with all that, just talking through everything, because yeah, we kind of laughed and we're like, hey, you know what, we didn't expect you to be playing like that, and he's like, no, I sure didn't either.

He just needs time. He just needs time to be developed. We thought we would have that time. Obviously did not happen. He didn't come here mid-year, he came over the summer, and we all know what that creates, so now he has a chance to be able to be more fully developed.

I do think that there was -- you kind of get on that final line of it -- you get too much where you start losing your confidence, and so I think there was a little kind of teetering on that, because it is, it was overwhelming as it continued to build for him, but I'll tell you what, he's an awesome young man and he cares a whole lot and he's going to really benefit from this off-season.

So he's going to dive into that and have a great next several months here and get into spring football and just be developed and just fundamentals and fundamentals and fundamentals and obviously learn a new offensive system but obviously be one of the guys competing for the starting position, this is what he's going to be doing.

I think we'll know more in time, but I don't think he's been fractured. I think he definitely -- his confidence was hit and it was hurt, without question, because he was thrust into a position that he was probably not ready for yet, in fairness to him.

But I do know that he does have a lot of core confidence, and he's been awesome throughout all of it and continued to stay the course and do everything he could to get ready each week. But I do think he just needs a full off-season to really, truly be developed as a quarterback and go through all the read progressions and the fundamentals of making

those plays when the pressure is on, because he can obviously do it in a practice setting. Now we've got to get it to translate to where he can make those reads and make those high-level decision making that's going to happen on game day.

Really excited for this off-season for Donaven. He needs it.

Q. Kind of a two-part question. In the past when you guys were capped at 25 you could do the over-sign and count guys back up, go up to 28. Can you do that, or is it a hard ceiling of 32? The second part, with your last handful of scholarships in this class or spots in this class, what are your needs for February? Obviously you mentioned quarterback, but any other position?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, quarterback, receiver, got a couple -- some spots there. Just I would say at the bowl position, as well. Still looking at that spot. Then just best available based on where the numbers are at.

But to answer your question, they did give us that seven. Wiggle room there with that, and then you do have some you can count back from the past, and that's part of it, as well.

I feel pretty comfortable we're going to be able to address the needs we have based on availability of the numbers that we do have within our roster, but 85 is the cap, and that's where you're set at. They do let you go a couple over per the Big Ten rules, and then you obviously get back to 85 by the time you get to June, June 1.

But at the same time we constantly are looking at that. It's a big point of emphasis, and I feel good about where we can be.

Q. You can go to 35?

TOM ALLEN: You can go, yep, absolutely. Appreciate you guys. Have an awesome day.

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