

Indiana University Football Media Conference

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Head Coach Tom Allen

Chad Wilt

Paul Randolph

Press Conference



TOM ALLEN: Appreciate everybody being here this afternoon. And I do want to say this. I want to congratulate Coach Woodson for the win on Thursday. I was down in the south recruiting. I was in my hotel room and my signal went out on the television. So I was like, what? And so I called my wife. So she's giving me the play by play for the finish. But I was just screaming and yelling and cheering them on. So just support our basketball team in every way, men and women, appreciate the job they do. Proud of them.

And so excited to be here today. Got a couple new staff hires to introduce. Chad Wilt here to my left and Paul Randolph here to my right. And just really very, very excited about adding them to our football program. As is always the case, it's about adding men that fit with us, that align with us. And a long history with Chad and his dad, who was his college coach as well. And Taylor University. And I've actually been trying to get Chad here for several years, ever since I got here, matter of fact. So the timing finally worked out. So thrilled to have him and just what he brings to our staff and -- not only just tremendous leadership in terms of football but as a high character individual that is a great husband and father. And that's important to him. And it's important to us. And the way he leads them and the way he's going to lead his room of linebackers as well as our defense.

So he will be our defensive coordinator. But I will be calling the defense. It's something that we're going to be doing a little bit different. But he and I have talked that through. And he'll be organizing our staff and all the things that we do. Just the things I've learned the last few years will be able to help us to be able to function that way at a high level. And I'm excited about it. And I'm excited to be working with him as he leads our linebacker room and leads our entire defense. So he's going to do a tremendous job.

And then with Paul, I'll tell you, a guy I have not worked with and did not know as well. But Jason Jones has coached with him on two different staffs and then some guys that I know and highly respect have been with him for many, many years. And just the short time we've been able to spend together, just so impressed with his energy, tremendously high character individual that I can't wait for our defense line to be led by as men first and as players second.

But just, to me, the passion for capturing the hearts of his players is going to be, I think, one of his major strengths and to be able to get them to be able to play so -- such a high level together and for each other, which is LEO all wrapped up into one. He may have not called it that in the past. But he's lived that out without question. And that was the prevailing theme that I got through this whole process. It was a very thorough process for me to go through and find the best fit for us at that position.

And so just couldn't be more excited about adding these two individuals to our program. And I know they're going to make us better.

So at this time, we're going to have them give their opening statements. And then we'll take questions after that.

Chad.

CHAD WILT: Great to meet you guys. Great to be here back in the state of Indiana. As a person that finished high school here in Indiana, as Coach alluded to, as a coach's son, grew up a little bit but I did finish high school here. Played for my father at Taylor University. My wife is from Indianapolis herself, went to Roncalli High School. So we really consider ourselves Indiana people, an Indiana family.

So to be able to be here in this state, sitting there looking at Sibley Hall and what this university means to this state, to represent this state is a tremendous honor for us and our family. To be here with Coach Allen and our relationship and how we match and align our character, the values, the belief system that Coach has for his program is something that I'm humbled to be a part of. Truly humbled to be a part of, this staff, this university, this football



program, working for Coach Allen and who he is. I could not have asked for a better fit for me as a person and as a man.

PAUL RANDOLPH: Paul Randolph. Excited to be here. Had an opportunity to talk with Jason about Coach Allen. And then I met Coach Allen, and he was everything Jason Jones said about him and more. And right off the bat, I know we meshed. I knew it immediately. What he believes in, young men, developing them, growing them as men, capturing their heart and their minds. And then that's what I'm about is developing and pouring into the young men that I coach with everything that I have, helping them accomplish their goals and their dreams. And that's what coaching is about for me.

My wife, Mia, we're empty nesters, so she'll be joining me shortly. And we're excited about being back in the Midwest. I spent a little time at Toledo, Illinois State, a few years ago, but really excited to be back here. And I had an opportunity to watch IU football a couple years ago when Coach Allen and the team were rolling from afar. And it was really exciting to me to see the passion, the purpose with which they played. And now that I've met Coach I know why. And so we're really excited to get started, boots on the ground and get this thing started this year.

Q. I wanted to ask Coach Allen first, the big piece of news that you put in there is that you're going to be calling the defense. Tell us more about that. Tell us how you came to the decision to do that again and how exactly that is going to work.

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. So something I've been thinking about for a little bit and just as these things transpire, just felt like it's what -- it was time. And I'm excited about it. There's just a certain, you know, product I want on the field for that side of the football. And the system hasn't changed.

But I just feel like that having the last three years to be able to be in the role as head coach only, I've been able to grow tremendously, and I feel really good.

So my goal was to be able to find a person that could be my right-hand man in the meetings because what I've found the biggest issue is when you're -- whether it's scheming during the week or you're working on things and things happen, you get pulled out of a meeting, to be able to continue to flow. And that's what I want to get with Chad.

And to be able to have him be that person that's going to be the go-to guy for organizational purposes and even during the game. You know, to me it was to be able to

have the adjustments, to have his expertise, to be able to grow him through our system and to be able to do what I need to do on game day when the offense is on the field and defense is back there making adjustments. Obviously, still have the headset to communicate, but he'll be in charge of those. And to be able to handle that.

And that, to me, was probably the biggest thing that I had to kind of grow through the last few years. And even just the game day management part of it, which I feel comfortable at this time and how we -- as I work with our clock management guy that's in the box. And that won't change.

So I feel like that just, you know, for somebody to just kind of follow your gut on what you feel like is best for what your team needs. And -- but I've missed that part of it. And I just feel like that that's definitely one of my strengths as a coach. And it's the reason why I'm sitting here in this position.

So, but, yeah, that's where I feel like -- but it just was to be able to have the -- and I know we've got a staff now as well that's been together for a long time and a lot of guys that know exactly what needs to be done. And I feel very comfortable with those guys and their ability to lead in that group. So especially with the back end and being there with Casey and with Jason and Brandon, so those guys.

And then obviously, you know, linebackers really -- I've always been involved in pretty much every linebacker meeting. That won't change. And as Chad runs that group, I'll be with him directly. So I feel really good about the staff structure and the organizational part of that to be able to make it very effective and help us get to be the Top 10 defense like I know we should be.

Q. Tom, in making that move, though, to be more involved with the defense and such, obviously, you have a new offensive coordinator too. And I think you enjoyed that part of making sure you were all in on the offensive side of things too the last several years. Taking on this added role of calling plays on defense then, how are you restructuring that a little bit on the offensive side to make all of that move smoothly as well?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. I think that's a great question. Bottom line for me is I'll still continue -- that's one thing, by not coaching a position defensively, I'll still be able to be involved when they have -- I'll be in all the quarterback meetings, like I have been at that time that I've done that with those guys. And that will help me be able to do that and to be able to structurally manage what they're doing.

But, obviously, also, you know -- which I've never done, I've never sat in there when they're scheming, you know. That part of it has been done separate, even the last couple years. So that will remain the same. But obviously Coach Bell will be the offensive coordinator and be calling the plays and has his staff that he'll be utilizing.

So the good news for me is I feel like that I have a pretty clear understanding of what I want on that side of the football. And it's his responsibility to articulate that and to be able to manifest on that on a daily basis to our team. And so -- like I said, I don't think behind the scenes it will feel a lot different. Like I say, I still -- I spent predominantly most of my time with the defense the last couple years, last three years but would obviously maybe spend a little bit more time with them than I will now. But trust those guys and excited about the changes we're going to make on offense.

Q. Question is for Chad. Talk a little bit about your coaching defensive philosophy. I assume, since you're with Tom, you're going to be an aggressive type coach? How did you kind of assess your approach to defense?

CHAD WILT: As you look at how we're going to be structured and how we're built, this is the Indiana way, right? The Indiana system. When you talk about the take-aways, the tackling, the effort, that defensive DNA, that's not going to change. The things that we're going to value, as you said, you know, of being aggressive and really wanting our kids to feel comfortable and confident in the system, to know their system, to feel comfortable and confident in their fundamentals and their technique, all, right. Because when you can put those two things together, you know what to do and how to do it, build that through spring ball, preseason camp, then as you get into the season, it's going to allow them to really learn and study and know their opponent.

If you can build them to the point where they know their opponent -- I used to work with somebody who used to say think players first, plays second. And making sure our guys, again, understand their system, have a confidence and belief in that, have a confidence and belief in their fundamentals and technique. Then to be able to match that, how do we go attack an opponent. And then finally, the great defenses, they do those three things, and then they play with phenomenal effort passion. They play with passion. They play with physicality. I don't think that's going to really be a whole lot different --

TOM ALLEN: No.

CHAD WILT: -- that what we're looking for here.

I think you find that a lot of -- as I said, great defenses, they do those four things and they do those four things very, very well. And that's what we're going to be building here.

Q. Coach Wilt, you've coached mainly your career on the defensive line. Switching to linebackers, what is the adjustment there? Is that something you and Coach Allen are both going to work on together and things like that?

CHAD WILT: Sure. Coach Allen and I had those conversations. Being a coach's kid, I've grown up -- my dad has coached offense, defense, and special teams. And really good coaches are coaches. They're teachers. They're motivators. They're developers. They're instructors.

And it is not really a major departure when you look at the front seven and run fits and understanding those things. I've never considered myself a guy -- you know, when we got to pass skeleton film, I was taking off to go watch 1 on 1s. No. I was sitting in there, preparing, watching, studying, learning to become the best coach that I could be, not just defensive line coach, become the best coach I could be.

Will there be adjustments and new things to learn? Yes, there will be. And I've already been spending time this past week working on some of those things.

One of the great challenges for me is also great opportunity. You know, I got my master's degree from University of Virginia. And they talk about there all the time about being a life-long learner. They don't talk about at Virginia having freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors. By the time you graduate, I'm a senior, I'm finished learning. They talk about first year, second year, third year, fourth year learners. When graduate, you then become a fifth year learner and a sixth year learner.

That's where I am right now. Now, in the coaching world, I'm now a 22nd year learner and continue to try to grow, learn, develop, push myself and challenge myself. And that's the beauty of this for me. It is another opportunity to accept the challenge, embrace a challenge, you know, to become a better coach. And that's what I'm really excited about.

Q. Coach Randolph, what do you look for in terms of a defensive lineman? What kind of traits do you want? Want to see physical, mental? What do you look for in a player?

PAUL RANDOLPH: I tell you what, big fast and physical.

You know, myself and Coach Wilt, we were just talking about it a few moments ago. But absolute, you want the mindset, work ethic. And then the physical tools, of course, is just you like length, especially in this league, length, size, and then the ability to whip the guy across from you.

TOM ALLEN: It's a simple game.

Q. Coach Tom, now going back to calling the defensive plays, having been the head coach for a few years, has that given you the opportunity because when the game comes down at the end, you still have game situations that you have to be aware of, whether you're on the offensive of the ball and you're planning defensively, how are you going to balance being able to stay in the game completely while still dealing with your defense?

TOM ALLEN: It's a great question too. I think, Jim, to me what I am going to do, I am going to assign one of our staff members to be able to be in charge of those situations. But I think that the last three years have been invaluable for me to grow and to learn. Matter of fact, even so -- even as some situations transpired in the playoffs, the last couple games, we were -- I sent a group text out to our staff to talk about the situations that happened with clock management, different things like that.

So we've really -- I've really grown in those areas and really I feel like my comfort level but even just understanding per our rules for college football compared to those for obviously NFL situations, but a lot of the concepts are the same. I am going to assign somebody to that responsibility to be able to do that.

We already have a separate individual that does all of our game day analytics. So that will stay consistent. And I communicate with him throughout the whole game about the uses of the clock, you know, the -- going for it on fourth downs. You know, at the end of the day, it's a gut decision you make as a head coach, but we do utilize the data to give us a baseline to go off of. So that will be consistent. I thought that's really helped me a lot. So that won't change.

But I think the biggest thing is having someone that I trust that will be with the defense on the sideline. You know, and that will be Chad's responsibility. So that's -- and, like I say, we also have from the back end perspective so much experience back there and guys that have been with us for many, many years. I mean, Brandon's been here longer than I have.

I feel good structurally in that regard. But, like I said, the biggest thing to me is having someone to take charge of

the defense and make those adjustments, which will be Chad's responsibility as I turn and go and make sure everything's being done clock management-wise the right way with time-outs and different things with the offense on the field.

Q. Coach Wilt, curious what you thought being on the opposing sideline from Indiana, kind of your impressions of Indiana the last couple of years being a Big 10 foe and then also your reaction when you heard from Coach Allen, what was your gut feel?

CHAD WILT: Sure. You know, one of the things I think -- we've obviously studied Indiana's defense more than offense. You would think otherwise. But when you talk about scouting opponents within the Big Ten, we're typically watching the defense more than their offense. You play their offense once a year. You watch their defense three, four, five times a year. One of the things that you see from the defense perspective is a group that they play hard. They play with a passion.

And I still want to challenge that group to continue to grow in that and take that next step. But you also see a group that doesn't play scared. Right? Talked earlier about, you know, the take-aways and creating havoc. Talk about creating havoc. And you see that within even the play calling structure.

This is not a group that's going to just be a bend and don't break mentality. We want to attack. We want to pin our ears back. We want to again create our havoc. That's your TSLs, your sacks, your pass breakups, your interceptions, your forced fumbles. And then within that, then now that allows you to get people off schedule, get them into the second and longs, get them into the third and longs, which you're going to be a way better defense on third and 8 than you are on third and 2, just statistically, no doubt about it. And you see that in the structure of the defense.

Then offensively, obviously, going through a change and adjustment here. But there is talent. There's no doubt. When you look at Fryfogle and look at the guys that have been here. There's talent on this roster. Hendershot was a talented player. Then you look at the recruiting from this year of one of the best recruiting classes ever, if not the best recruiting class. Again, rankings are rankings. But there's talent and there's ability here. And we've just got to take that and continue to build it, shape it, refine it, develop it, and help them play at or above their God-given abilities.

So I think that's really -- hopefully, that answered your question of what I've seen from them, both offensively and defensively.

Q. First for Coach Randolph. In a statement you mentioned the opportunity to continue your career your passion not just as a coach but as a mentor and builder of men. What does that really mean to you, being a coach beyond just the Xs and Os, just beyond the football of football?

PAUL RANDOLPH: Truthfully, one word, serving. Serving the young men that I have opportunity to coach. And not just my position but across the whole team. And just being an example of what we ask them to be. But to me, just serving them. And I call it T-I-M-E, got to spend time developing relationships, developing trust. And once they know that they have my heart, they'll give me theirs, and then we can do great things.

Q. And then for Coach Allen, how do you feel about the back end returning?

TOM ALLEN: The players or the coaches?

Q. Both.

TOM ALLEN: Okay. Well, a lot of stability there with our coaching staff as well as some key players. You know, some of the best players that I've coached here, you know. Taiwan Mullen is a returning first team All American and was injured most of last season. Didn't get to play very much healthy. And then Jaylin Williams, another all Big 10 returning guy. And Monster, an all Big 10 safety that's returned. And then you've got Fitzzy that's played so much football for us, just a really, really good football player.

So excited about that group and the guys working with them as well. So just want to make sure they're put in the best position possible to make the most amount of plays. So we've got to get back to creating take-aways, which we have to have. That's been a staple for who we are and what we do. And so that's really probably priority number one. And those guys are a huge part of that.

The guys up front are the catalyst for that with creating those negative plays, those havoc plays, those disruptive plays that force offenses to make those type of mistakes. But I think that group of players -- got some young guys that we've recruited and guys that are here and the next opportunity to step up. But Jonathan Haynes to me is a young man that didn't get to play much last year due to injury. Josh Sanguinetti, same thing. Missed a lot of games with an injury. But he's got a great opportunity to grow. Bryson Bonds, same thing. I could go on and on. I think even Dasan McCullough, Junior. Just really saw a lot of things the last few weeks of the season to be able to -- a group of guys -- and there's several others. Maurice

Freeman is another one that came here as a true freshman, played a little bit, got some special teams time and expect him to step up and elevate himself. You know, Noah Pierre is a guy that proved his value last year, such a versatile player. And he's returning. Just a lot of experience. We've got a combination of both experience and some young guys to be able to put together an excellent secondary, in my opinion.

Q. Coach Wilt, first of all, welcome to Indiana.

CHAD WILT: Thank you.

Q. I'm just curious about the talent -- you alluded to it before -- how much that was maybe a draw in taking the job. The fact that Taiwan Mullen, All American. Dasan McCullough might be the best recruit that Indiana ever had. How much, you know, you're looking forward to working with them? And how would you describe yourself as a communicator with players? How do you kind of give and take with them?

CHAD WILT: Sure. I appreciate that. As I alluded to, we've seen -- I've -- being here in the Big Ten, I've seen the talent, seen what they have. You know, beauty of, you know, these little things we carry in our pockets now, it's easy to go look anybody up at the drop of a hat and go, okay, how many guys are back, how many guys are returning and to make sure, okay -- listen, this is a position that's -- continue to build, continue to grow. Like you said, whether it's the returners like Taiwan or the incoming guys like Dasan. But, you know, you knew that there was -- again, that talent was there. And as we all know. I mean, alluded to it earlier, right? Think players first, play second.

A guy that -- there's guys that can naturally rush the passer. There's guys that can naturally cover. And those guys are here in this locker room and this roster. As Coach Randolph mentioned also, then it's about motivating and developing those guys and getting the best out of them.

As a communicator, I really believe coaching is teaching. You know, I was told long ago, right, the definition -- you look at the word coach, it goes back to the 1500s and France and Hungary of, literally, the definition is to carry, to take, to transport.

You look at into the Wild West, right. The stage coach, what did they do? They helped deliver, take somebody from point A to point B where they wanted to go. Take them from where they are to where they want to go. That's all of our jobs as a coach is to help take these young men from where they are to where they want to go.

And then you've got to understand who that young man is. Everybody is different. You can't coach every young man the exact same. You have to find, as Coach alluded to and talked about those relationships, taking the time to get to know them and what is going to motivate them, what is going to push them, what is going to challenge them. Some guys are the guys you put your arm around, you whisper in their ear, and you talk to them. Hey, you know that's not what we're looking for. Hey that's really good. Some guys want to be praised verbally -- or loudly. And some guys want to be criticized, need to be criticized quietly. Other guys are the opposite.

You just have to take that time to get to know those guys and communicate with them in the ways that will connect with them.

Do I do that loudly sometimes? Absolutely. We're coaches. I'm not going to sit here and say I'm completely always passive. You know, sometimes there's an urgency about what we're doing and how we've got to get it done. You've got to put your feelings aside a little bit. I understand that.

But ultimate, at the end of the day, it is about those relationships and getting to know these young men and what motivates them, where do they come from, what is their background. And certain guys you can't talk to them a certain way, especially not in this day and age.

But at the end of the day, like I said, it is about connecting with them, getting to know them. And maybe that relationship is so strong that if I say something to you loudly that you don't like, you still know where I come and how -- how I feel about you. And it's about -- one of the things my dad taught me as a coach, it's never about the person, it's always about the action. Right? That you don't coach the -- or you coach the action negatively, not the person negatively. Praise the person. Don't coach the action -- or don't coach the person negatively. Coach the action negatively. Praise the person. So -- hopefully that answered your question.

Q. Tom, I think when we asked Coach Warren sometime last year about why take-aways were down, one thing he said was you guys were more in a man vision where prior to, especially in 2020, you were kind of in all zone vision where everybody had their eyes on the quarterback. Is that something you want to go back to, getting to the point that everybody's eyes are on the quarterback primarily going forward?

TOM ALLEN: We will do everything we have to do to make sure that the take-aways go back up because they -- in today's game, I think it's -- there's a lot of things. They're

structured in a way to help there to be points scored, you know, which is why people like watching games. 9 to 7 isn't as appealing as 47 to 45. Right? And so I know how I feel about that.

But bottom line is is that the take-aways are a big part. You know, you're going to give up some yards at times, but that's how you eliminate possessions. So, to me, playing with more vision gives you an opportunity to do that without question. So -- and I just think to be able to play fast and physical, to be able to create that disruption is the focus. And take-aways tackling and effort, that doesn't change. That's who we are. That's our DNA. Always has been, always will be. But, yeah, I think structurally, schematically, there's things you can do to help yourself with that. And that's definitely one of those things for sure.

Have a great day. LEO. Beat Michigan.

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