

# Indiana University Football Media Conference

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## Coach Tom Allen

### Press Conference



**Q. Coach, obviously the last couple years you haven't been as involved in the defense. I guess today for a second. Obviously in the spring probably be a little different. What's changed for you when you guys are doing team stuff? Is it kind of back to being more of a DC type of role?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, it's a little bit of a balance between the way it would've been the last few years and the way it was before that. We script everything in these situations, so that makes it easier. When it comes to scrimmages I'll be calling it, so that'll be a little different right now. Because we script everything for this part of the practice, it's easier. It's a little bit more like spring, so I'm able to -- I know what the call is.

What I do though just so I can watch everything is guys stands next to me and tells me what the call is going to be and I can get my eyes where I want to be.

Yeah, I'm a little more I would say -- in the last couple years I would've been more focused on the defense during those reps. But at the same time, I'm not -- it wouldn't be like I was if I was just a DC and just focused completely on them. Offense makes a big play, offense does something positive, offense does something that needs to be addresses, I just need to know where I need to get my eyes for the call.

Everything is so well-planned ahead of time, even the walk-throughs are all scripted out, to where I'm able to just still have a head coach feel to it. Whereas in the past I was more zeroed in on just the defense when I was the head coach the first couple years and just calling.

I thought we got a better flow from that, and I like the way we do our walk-throughs where we do two separate groups and it's all scripted. I was just more involved in that before.

And so as far as like me just telling guys this there on the field, and so now I think it allows me to be more of a head coach. So feels a little different, but at the same time, I really love it. I really enjoy this opportunity for myself.

This is really where my heart is in regards to the actual game itself as the defensive side of the football in regards to scheming.

I think it's just, it's good. We got a great staff. Chad does a great job. He runs all the meetings. That's really important. Allows me to be on both sides, be in the quarterback meetings, be in full team meetings at times. I think that's really key. He'll address the guys as well afterwards, so it's kind of a combination of both.

**Q. I know it's only a couple days since guys reported, but outside the group you would expect to be leaders, more vocal, that kind of thing, are there maybe two or three guys coming out of the summer you've sort of noticed just something different in their attitude, the way they're carrying themselves, the way they're talking to teammates, et cetera?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I think that, you know -- there are several guys. For me, I feel like Aaron Casey is a guy that's really -- has been kind of quiet in the past just verbally, but has really stepped up. I think just his confidence is at an all-time high, and excited to see. His work ethic has always been strong. I think that's a guy that I see being elevated; he's elevated himself. He sticks out to me quite a bit I think.

James Head is another one that sticks out to me. A guy that has been here, yes, but hasn't really been a verbal guy. With that defensive line and his experience, just excited about him.

I think DJ, he's a guy that got here and got injured early last year. It was great having him back. Just his confidence level, also his desire to be a football leader, especially within his group and for the offense.

I know Jack is really challenging himself to do that. Connor, same thing; just trying to build and maximize those opportunities.

I know Shaun Shivers hasn't been here before in terms of the season, but he's, through his preparation, his work



ethic, I think he's really -- so there are some guys in the past that haven't been our team leaders, but I just think with their work, we had really, really good summer I felt like. The guys worked extremely hard.

Probably name some more guys, but I just think there is just a sense of urgency with that group that you have to have. You know, I think the (indiscernible) season has been part of that. Guys got a lot of pride in what they're part of and want to create change.

**Q. Coach, along the lines of Zach's question, the accountability part that several coaches call players back out of the huddle that didn't huddle well enough, how would you grade that today both on the players' side and your assistant coaches holding those players accountable?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I just think it has been to be -- I mean, you got -- you can go through and count the new faces. There is quite a few. Some of these guys were not here in the Springtime, so this is their first time practicing with us today.

You know, you could do some things over the summer that gave us a little more freedom this year, this summer than ever before, but still not the same as a practice.

And so, big emphasis obviously starts with the coaches. We talk about you never walk by anything that you don't address. You never let any little thing slide. I don't want that to just be the coaches to walk by a mistake.

So to me, that's the challenge of our guys last night in the team meeting, and we want the players to do that, coaches to do that. To me, I think it's just the higher sense of urgency on those things, even how we warmup, everything coach meeting, everything we do we're trying to have the sense urgency in every little minor detail. They can have their opinions about what it means by little things, because those little things are -- it's everything that you do, right?

So I tell guys we're really trying as coaches, and players respond to that. So I would say it's a higher sense of urgency in that area. We're not going to leave no stone unturned. You always want to be that way, but to me you just intensify, and that's what we're going to focus on.

**Q. Walt's offensive, he's generally playing with a lot of tempo. How are you seeing guys handle that so far, number one? Number two, what kind of rotations or how big of the rotations you want to have I guess at the skilled positions and...**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I just think you got to play a lot of

guys. For me, yeah, we've always had -- tempo has always been a part of us here, so it is different times and different things with all that.

So I would just say that the key is I believe you got to get a lot of guys involved. That's going to be just a philosophy of playing lots of players on both sides of the football for multiple reasons. So you can obviously be able to keep guys fresher for end of the game, keep guys fresh for the end of the season. I also think there is just an ability to alter how you do things as an offense in regards to all those things.

So to me it's about us as an offense figuring out what we can do really well and maximizing that and being able to minimize the things that can hurt us.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about the 2023 recruiting class. I know we're a long way from the December signing period, but what's the right way to look at with where you are with that class and how big you want it to be?**

TOM ALLEN: I will say this: It's not going to be a big class, you know. So I think right where we are is kind of where we thought we would be. We got several positions where we're taking one, and you want to be really, really selective with that process.

Yeah, it's not going to be a big class. Because of that, the charge has been let's be very deliberate, very slow with this, and let's make sure we get the ones that we want for sure.

Like I said, you're taking three or four it's one thing. You're taking one, that becomes really, really critical. So I know the way it's evaluated and the way it's graded is based on numbers, numbers, rewards, so it's not going to be -- just being very blunt with you, it's probably not going to be what it's been this last year numerically because of that variable right there.

But that's okay. We got a lot of positions where we got a lot of guys coming back. I think that the ones where you have the higher numbers, you can just do the math with the guys that will be graduating and those areas that have to be replaced.

It is going to be a small class. I'm thinking 12 to 15 at the most. That's definitely small.

**Q. Coach, was there a tone that needed to be set today on day one on how every day has to be in this season for it to play out how you and the team needs and wants it to be?**

TOM ALLEN: Yes, absolutely, and that's why my voice was pretty affected with it about 15 minutes being out there. The urgency, the attention to detail, how we walk -- because you got -- like I said, you got guys -- and that's one thing. Player practices over the summer are good, but they're also -- we're not there, you know.

And so I promise you, it's not the same. Especially in regards to urgency in between the reps, transition from one thing to the next, and how you walk-through. To me, I just want to set that tone for everything we do. The tempo, hustle, the execution, the attention to detail. Yes, it's heightened for sure.

Going to be the same way tomorrow until we get it just totally engrained in them. We got a lot of guys back, yes, but we got enough new guys. It's amazing, especially ones coming from high school. I mean, it's really different, especially if they just got here in June, than anything they ever been a part of before.

It's a little bit after culture shock today. I can see it in some of their eyes, but that's okay. That's part of it and they'll figure it out.

Part of that is also the players leading those guys, pulling them aside in between practices and talking to them, hey, this is how we do this. This is what you got to make sure you do.

So yeah, I thought the meetings yesterday set that tone and the meetings this morning, and that will continue. Yes, absolutely.

**Q. Going off what you just said about some of the guys, is there anyone that is far ahead of that or further ahead than you would expect for someone new?**

TOM ALLEN: I would say I thought Kam Perry really didn't look as new as he might have, as some of the other guys did. And I am talking about the guys that got here this summer and never been a part of a practice with us other than player practice over the summer, and the OTAs, which were coaches involved in some parts but not completely.

I think he jumped out to me. He made some plays today, made some catches today. Has really good burst to him and really has great acceleration.

I would say defensively -- I'm trying to think of a guy. I thought some guys on defense looked like deer in headlights. Going to be good players, but definitely not used to this, which is okay. But I would say probably -- I'm

not going to miss anybody on defense. I don't think anybody of them really were just like -- you know, today.

Because I get it. Not sitting here criticizing them. It's just being -- I think that those things take time. That's okay. As long as they respond, which I believe they will, then they'll figure it out.

**Q. When you watch Trevell Mullen, what similarities and differences do you think he shares with his older brother Tiawan, and how many do you think he can contribute as a freshman like Tiawan did?**

TOM ALLEN: You know, I would say he's taller. He's got the twitchiness that Tiawan has. I just think he has a little slighter build, so that to me is -- even though Tiawan wasn't big when he was here by any means, but he was a little thicker, a little broader shouldered.

But I think just you have a little bit of -- quite a bit of swagger to him that it's really hard to teach and coach. It's funny because that kind of came up. We had the players over the house and they were playing basketball against each other. That's when I first noticed it. Even though he can't shoot. I'm not saying he's a good basketball player.

Just talking about the competitiveness, the fire inside, just to be able to just play defense and fight. Sometimes the other guys would run off. No injuries here. We're just here to have some fun. But you can see they got something to them when we do stuff like that. He definitely got that little Mullen mindset to him, which is pretty cool.

**Q. Following up on a question you kind of demurred from answering a little bit, but you got a long look at a number of freshmen in the spring. Are there any guys, that whether it's something you've seen now or even what you kind of expected of them when you were recruiting them, when you signed them that you didn't get to see in the spring with the freshmen class that you feel like you're going to have to keep a close on here in the fall?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I do think there are several players. A lot of the guys, it's amazing how much of a difference that spring makes for a young man.

I get it. It's the second time doing something. But Venson Sneed, Nick James, those two guys to me as true freshmen, defensive linemen, that they don't look like freshmen the way they move and the way they do things. Yeah, they still got to figure stuff out. I think Dasan is another one that has a chance to be able to continue to grow with that.

That is really exciting to me. I know I didn't mention Jordan Grier. I know he's not a freshman, but just kind of he comes to mind. He's really flash to me from a year ago to now. I think guys that have been here.

There is really -- Jamari Sharpe is another one. He definitely has a little bit of the-- he's new, but physically he doesn't look like a freshman.

So I think guys like that that have length and athleticism and support. And then Jay Lucas. There is another one. His confidence continues to grow through the summer every day.

Just really excited about what he brings and what he's going to be able to bring.

Carter Smith is another one. Those guys have been here. They're true freshman guys. Bray Lynch. I didn't mention Bray, but Bray is going to be a really good football player.

He did just get here this summer, but came from a program that played at such a high level high school wise that I don't think any of this stuff a fazing him in regards to the environment and the way we do things.

He's probably been prepared the closest collegiately than any of the other guys out of high school with where he's coming from.

But I think it's a really good group of guys. Got all different positions, both sides of football, and I'm excited to see them grow and develop.

It's going to be important. These next several weeks are big for them. That's why we went fours today. We want to see the threes and fours in our rotation. I think it's very important to get those guys reps, even though they'll make a lot mistakes, that's how you develop them. Give us a great chance to evaluate them and see who's going to be ready to play and contribute as a freshman and who's not, and who will be used in those four games and who may just have the redshirt pulled based on their ability to compete and play.

As we said last night, freshman or not, I don't care what grade you're in, it's your responsibility to prove to your coach you deserve to play. That's in practice, in meetings, in walk-through, and everything we do. I want those freshmen to figure that out and respond.

I'm sure I forgot some guys, but we got a lot of guys here that need to step up and contribute and help this team, especially in 2022.

**Q. We saw James Evans and Alejandro punt today a lot. Is that a competition that's getting closer, or is Alejandro there to push James, put a little pressure...**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, we shared that with Alex when he got here, is to push him. Obviously best punter is going to punt, so if he beats him out, he beats him out. Everything is up for competition. Nobody's job is secured. I don't care who you are.

James knows that. I think James has worked really hard, and I think we all need to have somebody behind us pushing us. I think that's healthy, I think that's human nature, and I think it will make him better.

We went out and found somebody we thought had leg talent, somebody that could be a kicker and a punter because of just the numbers that you have trying to trying to travel and everything.

Alex fit the bill on that. Excited to have him. He's got a string leg and a chance to help us as well. Excited to have him here. Thought those guys had a good first day.

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