

# Indiana University Football Media Conference

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## Coach Tom Allen

### Press Conference



Indiana 33, Western Kentucky 30 (OT)

TOM ALLEN: Where do I begin? Well, I'll tell you what, we're 3-0, and it's hard to win. As I was walking, I was getting updates from scores around the country, so it's just crazy. I actually got the stat this morning where they said there were 16 non-Power Five teams won on the road at Power Five schools, okay. That was before today. That's in the first few weeks.

Managed just to -- a lot of good players. I think the dynamics of things now is kind of spread out some of the talent a little maybe, but all I know is we played a good football team. We knew that going in. They've got a lot of weapons on offense, and we still are not playing our best football, without question, but the bottom line is you try to find a way to win.

We made a huge emphasis this whole spring and fall camp on blocking kicks, and Coach Randolph, our new D-line coach, has brought a really good attitude about that, and our guys have bought into it, and you couldn't see a bigger one than you saw right there at the end.

I told Fitzy, if he would have lateraled it to me, I would have scored. He cut it back and got tackled, so he'll learn his lesson. But I thought he might go the distance and get us a win, and it was a walk-off block.

But man, just offensively, did some good things. Still did some things we've got to get better at.

Lost our starting center during warmups, which is crazy. I don't know that we've ever had that happen in the past before. Caleb Murphy comes and plays every snap. Plays every snap and did awesome. We'll see more about Carp's situation, but hopefully get him back. Bottom line was he couldn't play, and he's got to get those type of things to you, and at the last second you just gotta go, you just don't blink.

Proud of this team. Ugly at times, but found a way to win the football game, and we've got a lot to learn from and a

lot to build off of.

Questions?

**Q. What you guys did on defense, obviously they got 545 yards, had some moments --**

TOM ALLEN: Ooh, that stinks.

**Q. When it was going wrong, what did you see that was going wrong?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, the thing that they do that really makes it hard is you try to balance the pass game fits where you're trying to help us in the pass game and also stop the run, so trying to borrow back and forth, and they do a good job of stressing you in that area. They put a lot of stress on us a year ago with that.

I thought we had some good answers. Had some bad fits on a couple of those long runs.

So yeah, just really disappointed, to be honest with you. That's probably the most disappointing thing.

But I will say this: This is what I told our guys all week long. Guys, they're going to get some yards. Just keep them from scoring touchdowns. Make them kick goals, and then we're going to block the field goal.

We're not trying to be a bend-don't-break against these kind of teams. I'm not saying that at all, but there is a level of recognizing what they can do, and you've just got to get in a that score zone and choke them out. You've got to get takeaways, which we finally got two in the second half, which were huge, and then also I thought we dropped a pick there in the fourth quarter, which would have been a huge one.

Just forced them to kick field goals. So did not do a good enough job, and they got some tempo things at times, and we got some signals -- we were trying to do some things to speed things up, and a couple times for whatever reason our guys didn't get the right signal, so we had to make an adjustment with that so they could see the right signal and



tried to even get our guys giving us signals to change some things with that. That was a little frustrating.

But give them credit. Coach Helton has done a phenomenal job with that offense. But I told our offense we're going to need to score 30 points. We scored 33.

**Q. I think they completed something like 26 of their first 32 or 28 of their first 34 passes and then they were like 4 of 10 in the fourth quarter. A little bit of it is probably them trying to bleed the clock some, but it just felt like -- did you feel that maybe pressure was getting home a little bit more --**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, it was. That was the key. Like you said, there's always this balance. Everybody says, oh, you've got to pressure the quarterback. Well, that's great, but then you're going to play man coverage all the time. So we're trying to balance that between some good solid zones, but yeah, so that was where -- they were doing a lot of quick stuff in the beginning, which is hard to get to them, and some high-completion percentage passes, which you just pointed out.

Yeah, a lot to learn from, without question, but it's a unique style of offense to defend. It's very difficult to defend. That's why No. 1 offense in the country a year ago, and they're on track to be up there again this year. They're going to give a whole bunch of people a lot of issues.

**Q. You talked about it a little bit, but the last six possessions they go interception, field goal, fumble, field goal, and then the two missed field goals. Obviously they got some yards; three times inside your 10 and they only get six points. I know you're not pleased with everything, but how great was it to see your defense on a hot day, a lot of plays really bowing up there at the end when they had to make plays and get?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, it's character. It's grit. It's LEO. It's fighting for the guys around you, playing for the people that you work so much -- spend so much time with and care about and execute with. So obviously we've got to get things cleaned up to get down there, but we do spend a lot of time on that part of the field to be great in that area because we know if we can force field goals in those situations, we have a chance to win a lot of ballgames.

But it's a mindset. The guys got an edge about them. They worked hard. It was hot. It was our first day game, as you know, and it does feel different playing at noon when it's about 85 degrees, so played a lot of snaps, but that's why we play a lot of guys.

I will say I think playing a lot of guys is a great thing, but we've still got some younger guys that are still making some mistakes in those second reps, and we've got to get better at that, and we will.

But at the same time, that to me kind of showed up a little bit, but the bowing up in the score zone, which is inside the 12, and then the red zone is from the 25 to the 12 for us, the way we define it, but our guys did a great job playing great football in that part of the field. You listen to all the stats.

That's what you've got to do. Like I said, we've got to prevent them from scoring touchdowns, make them kick field goals, then when they do that, go try and block it.

**Q. Connor was obviously in a much better rhythm today early than waiting to come on late, which proved to be very beneficial. The running game still is lagging behind a little bit, but 12 guys you throw to. Are you going to try to integrate the lack of a running game more into that and use more guys in that type of a running chute style?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, we rushed for 120 yards, so would like to get a little bit more than that. 150 would be a good place to be.

I would say there's no doubt, you kind of mix things up to kind of take some pressure off there with that, without a doubt, but to me it's just whatever they're giving us, we want to try and take it.

To me, I felt like we just dropped some balls that were key that hurt us, and I felt like we just didn't finish drives.

But how we were moving the ball down the field, I'm not going to get caught up in what kind of yardage it is, what area it comes from. We definitely need to run the football. I get that. We did have some good runs, but they were doing some things at times, and we've got to have some good answers for that and not get caught in some bad calls, and we know that. We've already talked about that since -- during the game here quickly at the end.

It's just continuing to grow as a team, and to me it's about finding a way to be the best team, and the best team is all three phases coming together, and that's what you saw with getting that big stop there at the end, forced the field goal, forcing the block, and then being able to get a 51-yarder as time ran out.

Yeah, to me it's definitely, no doubt, we say that we're pleased in some ways with some things we're doing right now. We've got to get better, but you've just got to

continue to fight. I love the grit of this football team. I love the perseverance and the way they fight and the way they find a way.

It's hard to win. I said that already once before. But proud of these guys for, once again, trying to be really good. I see down near the red zone scores we're 6 for 7 as a team, and that's what it comes down to. We've got to find a way to finish drives out, and whether we're running the football, throwing the football, we'll take whatever strategy they give us.

**Q. On Charles' game-winning field goal, what's everything you remember from watching that and kind of the ensuing celebration?**

TOM ALLEN: I don't remember much about it. I remember that he crushed it. It was going to be good from about 60.

I will say this: You do play the way you practice. I don't know if I said this in this group before, but last Thursday, Charles missed two field goals on our Thursday practice, which he never does, and he missed two in the game and only one didn't count because of a penalty.

So we used that to talk about, and I got on Charles about that, how it just sets the tone even in that practice. So everything that we do matters.

I was hard on him, but that's why he got the game ball, because today when this team needed him the most -- that's what we talk about in special teams. You be at your best when it counts the most. That's one of our DNAs for special teams. Here he is, did he kick four field goals today; is that right? He kicked three? So he kicked three field goals. Obviously the last one was the biggest one.

So that's what I remember about that kick. The bottom line was that he responded in a situation where it's hard. He's a good kicker, but there's a lot of pressure. We just had a huge play, all the momentum, one chance to finish the game, so I just threw my headset off, I threw my call sheet, and I just started running after guys. That's the only part I do remember, and I lost my shoe in the process.

But you know what? You just work so hard -- I'm completely exhausted and proud of this team. It's not 1:30 at night like it's been the last couple times we've been doing this, so I'm sure you guys are all excited about that, as well.

But I will say this, though. There is a plan here to keep our fans in the stands, and I figure if we make it come down to the final play, they've got to stay, right? So they've got to stay.

That's the ulterior -- no, the bottom line is I'm proud of our team and proud of Chuck, and he's a great, great kicker because great kickers make kicks like that when the team needs him, so proud of that guy.

**Q. Coach, three games in now, competition is about to kick up into a new gear. What for you is the biggest area that you want to see improvement from the past three games that won't cut it when you get to Big Ten play?**

TOM ALLEN: Well, I think defensively stopping the run. That to me won't cut it. I think we have to continue to tackle better. I felt like we got -- they get you in space, I get that. I talked before the game that tackling was going to be big because of the way they make you play, and then stopping the run, which we did up until halftime, and then in the second half of the game -- one of those was a complete misfit by one of our backers that has to make that play. It goes from either a one- or two-yard gain to a 50-yard run, which is inexcusable. That to me would be the big deal.

Then I think offensively we can't drop the ball. We've got a lot of talented receivers. I don't want to see those drops. They're so huge. And be able to consistently run the football when we need to, and do a great job with that.

I think those things stick out. I'm proud of our offensive line. Like you said, losing Zach to start the game was tough. Obviously you don't have Matt, so you've got two guys that are out of there that you're counting on in your five, but at the same time, we don't blink. I'm really proud of our guys that stepped up as a whole group, and Parker Hanna for sure. Man, so proud of these guys.

I just can't -- Caleb Murphy, how about that? Comes in there, plays every snap of this game, and I'm so proud of him. The kid just cried when I hugged him after the game. This means so much to him, this program, this university. He's from Indiana not that far away. First player from his high school to come play at Indiana, and just an awesome thing. It means a lot to him to be playing in these games with the Indiana Hoosiers on his chest.

Guys like that make this special, and I'm so proud of him, and he's just going to keep getting better, too. He's a young player we moved from defense to offense, so that's what I think of when I think of this team.

**Q. Big picture, you talked about it a little bit more specifically, but how do you weigh some of the mistakes your team has made the last few weeks versus just getting to 3-0 and knowing you can get**

## even better?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, and that's kind of the beauty of it. So we've talked about this week that positivity, optimism and belief give you a competitive advantage in this world and in the game of football. Because most people are pessimistic and negative. That's just the reality. So to me, it's how you want to look at it. I get it; we're going to be very critical of how we play. We're going to do a great job of holding our guys accountable for getting the little things right.

But to be able to do that with understanding that we found a way to win three football games at this level, which is not easy to do. I think we beat a really good Illinois football team. I really believe that. So obviously I know it was last weekend, and I thought we beat another really good football team this weekend. I know to me they're going to win a lot of games at their level.

Is it going to get it done as we move forward? No, we know that. But here's the deal: You play them one week at a time. We put all our energy into getting ready for Western Kentucky, and that's what we did. We found a way to win that football game. We've got to get better; I get that, and I understand that, and that's going to be the focus, all the things that the film teaches us.

The exciting thing is we're 3-0 with a lot of things to improve on. I feel we're not even close to playing our best football. We did have a better start, okay, but at the same time, we've got the middle part. We had a great finish. We're really strong in the fourth quarter. I'll tell you what; we made a big deal about that this whole off-season. We were going to dominate the fourth quarter in our conditioning, in our execution, and our guys believe in that. So we've talked about that and we've talked about that and we've talked about that.

So I'm really proud of that part of it. We've got to make sure that we understand as this season progresses it's going to take four quarters to beat really good football teams on a consistent basis. That's what we've got to do.

Appreciate you guys. Have an awesome day. LEO, 3-0!

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