

# Indiana University Football Media Conference

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## Tom Allen

### Press Conference

TOM ALLEN: Good afternoon. Just update on our team. Came out of our bye week, really thought that the guys did a really good job. Had a couple days of practice. Focused on fundamentals, just blocking and tackling, major emphasis. Technically getting better, getting some guys healthy, getting them rested, refreshed. Gave the guys Thursday, Friday, Saturday off, then back on Sunday. I thought that was good.

Coaches went out, did a lot of recruiting. Very, very important part of what we do. Got to see a lot of players practice and play. Very productive. Good bye week for us. Much needed in a lot of different ways for our guys.

From an injury update from the game, unfortunately Cam Camper has torn his ACL and will be out for the rest of the season. Will be having surgery in the near future. Did that in the first half against Rutgers.

Obviously feel terrible for him. He's part of our team. He'll be in that long road to recovery. Our staff will do a great job of getting him back and having him ready for the fall.

Cam Jones is still week to week.

Some other guys that we're trying to continue to work to get healthy and get them, as many guys as possible, ready to play.

Very excited about this weekend, any time you have a chance to play one of the best teams in the country. Awesome thing to have them here at home. Coach Franklin continues to do a tremendous job at Penn State.

Very talented football team in all three phases. Have to find a way to do our very, very best to come out with the win on Saturday. Very talented football team that's coming to Bloomington. Excited to see what they can draw out of us in a positive way.

Questions.

**Q. I recognize I'm asking for state secrets to some**



**extent. With the bye week, the chance to rest some guys, give guys more reps, now an injury or two, are there some guys that maybe weren't playing as much before the bye week that you could see these last four weeks getting on the field a little bit more?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, the thing I focused on was rehab, reps and rest. You had guys in different categories. Some guys needed to rehab injuries. Some guys needed to just flat out rest, didn't practice them at all, some of our older guys that got a lot of snaps. Some guys got reps that they haven't gotten in the past.

Guys fell in those different categories based on our analysis of where they were at, what they needed.

I think a guy like Phillip Dunnam comes to mind. Really see him get a lot of reps this past week, during the bye week. Expect him to continue to grow and develop. I think that's a huge opportunity for him.

Brylan Lanier, same thing, young guy in our program defensively.

Kaiden Turner, another guy that got a lot of reps that is continuing to elevate his preparation. Opportunity for him to be able to keep growing as a player.

I just think also our offensive line, even though those guys are playing with us now. Josh Sales and Khalil Benson, just continue to rep those guys, grow them, bring them along, allow them to develop. Our skill guys that are younger as well, continue to bring them to the point where we just keep getting better every week.

A lot of guys got a lot of good reps. Did a younger guys scrimmage on Wednesday. Some live reps, had some fun with that. Had the GAs calling the offense and defense. A chance to be able to do some positive things.

Yes, good question.

**Q. I think at the end of the game you said everybody was going to be up for evaluation. What was your evaluation of the quarterback position? Same place it**



was?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, we're definitely going to be able to do that. Already done that. We will move forward with that position. I guess we'll have to see how that plays itself out when it comes to game day.

At the same time every position, as I said, is up for evaluation. That was the case. We're just trying to find the best combination to be able to give us a spark on offense and allow our guys to be able to move the football and score points.

Didn't do that in the second half. Not done that well in the second half in several different games here recently. Definitely need to get some different product, different output of our offense in the second half for sure.

Everybody is up for evaluation, yes.

**Q. Penn State comes back in. Last time they played here, one of the hallmark moments in the recent years in the program. The goal remains the same, to upset them. What do you remember about that game in 2020? What do you look to take from that performance and hope to replicate?**

TOM ALLEN: Definitely something, a big part of our history. That moment, unique situation for sure with the way it all played itself out regarding that, leading up to that. Weren't supposed to play them, schedule changed, everything that happened with of pandemic. Limited fans were obviously in attendance.

The thing you remember is guys found a way to finish the game. Got off to a strong start, led most of the game, fell behind at the very end, and found a way to rally back, send it into overtime, have historic play.

But it's in the past. New team. New guys. New faces on both teams. Great opportunity for our team. Any time you have a chance to play a top team in the country, that's what you want to be able to do. Our guys have a big week ahead of us to prepare for that.

Just got to find a way to continue to get better and finish games.

**Q. The continued development of Jaylin Lucas, what have you seen from him? How much more impact can he have this season?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I think he's another one, as the bye week unfolded, continuing to find ways to get him the football. That's my charge to the offense, has been for a

while, since the first game.

Since he's been here, thought he's different. Trying to bring him along in his understanding of what we're doing. Obviously you saw what he can do in the return game. Now he's leading the country in kickoff returns.

Once again, you want to find ways to get him the football. His quickness, burst, speed is elite. A hard-nosed, tough competitor. He needs to be a huge part of our offense moving forward, yes.

**Q. 3-5 now, four tough games remaining. You take each game one at a time. These four last games, what do you need to see from your team to look back and say there was progress in the last quarter of the season?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I think step one is to be able to consistently execute our fundamentals and our techniques. That includes schematic execution, the consistency there. Continuing to see the growth of our younger players that we're playing, to our older guys that are still having to make plays for us. That consistency is never going to cease to be a priority for us. It was last week. It's got to be this week.

I think to me it's about coming out of the second half and finishing. I think that's something that we didn't do in our last couple games that we had opportunities to do. Even though our conference games have come down to the fourth quarter, we haven't found enough ways to make plays to finish those games the way we want to.

Just want to see that fight, that finish, the execution at those critical times. That's never going to cease to be a priority.

Continue to make changes. We have to make change, whatever we've got to do schematically, personal-wise, to get ourselves in that position.

Just want to see younger guys develop as well. Some guys will get opportunities because of some guys being dinged up. Already have had those. I want to see them rise up and have a great finish to the 2022 season.

**Q. What as a coaching staff have you emphasized maybe just to make sure that guys aren't mentally checking out, staying locked in and focused on the rest of the season?**

TOM ALLEN: There's no question. I think it's a huge priority, something you talk about, don't shy away from, don't fail to address.

I think that has been the focus, without question, just using various videos, various information that I utilize. I think it's powerful for your mind. I know our minds are very, very powerful. I know seasons can get hard and frustrating when you play the schedule we play. You got to find a way to win those close games and we haven't recently.

It is frustrating. You find out who you can really count on, who you can depend on. He's one of those guys. Guys just keep fighting. We got a whole bunch of those guys on this team. You rely on that leadership. Challenge the coaches to identify guys in their position rooms. We're going to be able to do that here this week and rely on that component of our leadership which is all in place here which allowed us to practice really, really well. The two bye week practices, which can sometimes be challenging especially in that situation, coming off another tough loss.

I think our culture kind of rose up and showed what really we have here. We just got to continue to build off that. This is the fourth quarter of the season, our final four regular-season games. Our guys have got to respond to that. I expect them to.

But, yeah, the mind is a powerful thing. Right now it can be lying to you and telling you things, then you believe things that can alter the way you make decisions on a daily basis. We're really attacking that head on.

**Q. When Cam went out, you talked about how high of a level he was playing at. Not that Aaron was unimportant before that. The way he kind of went into a new position, didn't miss a beat. How has he been able to handle that transition? What has he meant to your defense?**

TOM ALLEN: I mean, a great example of when you lose somebody so talented and so valuable as Cam Jones, you want somebody else to step up. Aaron Casey has been here. Had a really disappointing season last year. He knew that. We met and challenged him. He really attacked this whole off-season.

But I think with Cam's absence, it's forced him to be more of a leader, to be more of a dominant play-maker, to fill that void of the pure production piece of it all.

I'm just so proud of him for how he's responded. Not really surprised. I've always believed in the kid. I thought he was a really talented player. We took him as a high school safety to grow into a linebacker. He brings athleticism to that position. Length, strong, tough, he can run. He just lacked confidence I thought after last season.

Just proud of him. Like I said, that's what you need your leaders to do. He's one of the leaders on our team. When somebody goes down, you got to rise up. We need the same thing to happen in our receiver room right now, in the offense, at every other position where a guy may not be able to go for a week or so here, however long that might be.

That's a great testament to him and his work ethic and coach doing a great job getting him ready to play and elevate his game when called upon.

Yeah, he's been huge for us.

**Q. You talk a lot about just the mental aspect of the game. In a bye week, did you hunker down and watch a bunch of other games? Do you unplug? What do you do on a weekend off? What would you like your players to do?**

TOM ALLEN: Get some rest. That was for me, I tried to actually get some sleep. Then once the day started, I watched Penn State film, then watched them play. Chose to watch one of our future opponents play later that night.

In between that, I had my laptop, spent a lot of time watching cut-ups and getting ready for Penn State.

Our guys need a change of scenery. I did that from my home instead of from my office. I think that is good. I want all our guys to do something of that nature, change things up a little bit. You need a chance to unplug.

For us as coaches, we were out recruiting once we left practice each day, then we went out and recruited. Spent a lot of time getting ready in that regard. That's really important. Was up late Friday night watching games. That's really awesome. I really enjoy that part.

Saturday to me is a chance to watch college football, which is enjoyable for all of us to do. To be able to do it from a little different setting, it was good. I think both coaches and players came back refreshed and ready to attack this week.

**Q. You talked about the young guys getting the scrimmage. Who stuck out to you there that Indiana fans can be excited about?**

TOM ALLEN: I think Omar Cooper. We've made the decision with him, as you've noticed, he played in four games. Do not want to use that extra snap to cause him to lose a whole year of eligibility. He was a definite guy that jumped out.

I think Kamryn Perry is another receiver that really shows unbelievable upside and promise. He has elite burst and ball skills at a really high level. We see him every day on the offensive scout team. He has been one that on a daily basis has stuck out, but even in that setting there as well.

I think Kaiden Turner is another one. Every time we go live, he always seems to just make plays. Physical guy that is growing in his understanding of what we're doing schematically. I think that's very, very important.

Brendan Sorsby is a really talented football player that didn't get here until the summer. Really just learned our offense, got a chance to be our scout team quarterback every day. Seeing him throw, he's just a really, really, really talented football player.

Very excited about those three guys for our future. Got a lot of really good freshmen on that roster that need to be developed and need to continue to get opportunities in practice and just keep growing and getting better.

Those are the ones that kind of stick out to me.

**Q. I think one of the guys that hasn't come up in talking about receivers is Anderson Coby who has flashed but...**

TOM ALLEN: Who is that?

**Q. Anderson Coby. Is he another guy you need to keep pushing a little bit further along?**

TOM ALLEN: Absolutely, without question. And he can and I expect him to. You're right, he hasn't been quite as consistent. Has made plays for sure. Is a very explosive player. Just needs to be consistent in his performance.

That's something that we're striving for every day, is that consistency of preparation, consistency of execution, and eventually how you're going to play the game.

He's a guy that this team needs to step up and rise up. I expect him to. I want him to. I believe he will.

**Q. I'm wondering if you met with a lot of the veterans, had a group meeting with them, to finish the season strong, guide the young players?**

TOM ALLEN: Yes, there's no question. Met with those guys individually, our key guys on our team, just to be able to challenge them and understand what they need to do.

We've identified each guy. There's a certain number of guys in each position group that we've identified to meet

with and to be able to challenge and to be able to make sure that this finishes the way we all want it to.

Yeah, to me it's all leadership, leadership council that we have, those group of guys, those 30 guys, are those key ones. At the same time it's just that understanding of what is necessary in this moment to be able to finish the way we all want to.

**Q. I wanted to go back to the question on quarterbacks to put a fine point on it. Are you saying there's a chance Connor won't be the guy on Saturday?**

TOM ALLEN: I'm just saying that you'll have to wait till Saturday to see who our starting quarterback is going to be, so...

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