

# Indiana University Football Media Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Head Coach Tom Allen

### Press Conference



Penn State 45, Indiana 14

**Q. Tom, forgive me. This is probably going to be sort of a multi-part question in way. What's the process from Connor -- is Connor injured? What's the process that leads from Connor to Jack? And then when Jack goes down, what is your thought process with Brendan versus Dexter?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, Connor is dinged up, so obviously he wasn't dressed. But felt like Jack is our next guy. Did some good things. Obviously got injured, so trying to figure out the final diagnosis for him.

But we have two young quarterbacks in Dexter and Brendan, so to me those guys are very, very similar. So didn't really have a plan to use a lot of those guys today. Obviously with Jack going down, that created that.

They're very equal. I think they both have a lot of talent. I think Dexter did some really good things. There's no doubt about it.

But both good quarterbacks and guys that I think will be a big part of our future. That's kind of where we're at, and we should get Connor back next week.

**Q. Defensively especially in the first half it seemed like a lot of times you had guys right there when they had the ball, got arms on them, and then also when they threw it, there were guys 50/50 balls. How surprising is it that this is a recurring thing and guys that were making plays a year or two ago just don't seem to be making the same kind of plays this year?**

TOM ALLEN: There's a couple of those catches where you're right there. We have to get the ball out, you know? And the guys are fitting where they're supposed to be. And got to finish tackles.

That's frustrating to me. Obviously, you know, this late in the season, we've been working on tackling like crazy, and the guys are getting put in spots to make plays. They have

to make them.

Just frustrating. To me it's very, very frustrating to have guys in those spots and not be able to come up with a play that can change the game because it really does. In those early parts of the game it's a critical part where you've got to make those key third down stops and you've got to be able to get those, whether it's take-away or whatever it happens to be. Just really, really frustrating.

**Q. Coach, the veterans on defense are making -- you call them crimes against the team. But Devon Matthews with a hit on a tight end, and Tiawan getting into a little shoving match there. Is there any way that you think of maybe using the bench as motivation to help that?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I think the thing for me with Devon, you know, that was the third one he has had that are on that edge of not using the best judgment. Obviously it's a close situation there. I think at first we thought he was being called for targeting, which obviously he wasn't.

But, you know, Tiawan to me they're going at it, he and No. 1. You can kind of have your own levels of evaluation of that. The guy is standing up for whatever, himself, and they can choose to call what they want to call on that.

I'm not going to make an issue of what he did in that situation. To me that's just two guys getting at each other, and that's competitive football.

But, yeah, disappointed with just the judgment with Devon because to me he is a leader on our team, and it's just not the way you expect those guys to play. Obviously, you know, you've got to use -- I know it's split seconds of that. It's not like it was some -- whatever. And it's hurting us. That to me is where you have to be able to address it.

Obviously we have some beat-up guys back there, but at the same time that's frustrating as well. So, yeah, definitely a consideration for sure.

**Q. Tom, obviously, the defense took a fall off last year. You came back and you were going to start making**

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**the calls. There still seems to be that lag. It's still not coming up. I look at the numbers today. 91 tackles for Indiana. 56 for Penn State. Obviously Indiana had a lot more opportunities, but Penn State had five times the amount of tackles for loss than -- only 3 out of 91 tackles were tackles for loss. Not getting to the quarterback, not getting in there? What is the reason, do you think?**

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, you know, I think it's about us trying to -- those negative plays, the tackles for loss, the penetration. You have to have that up front. It starts with our defensive line, just trying to manufacture those as best we can.

I know that it's something that we focus on a lot and something we've always been really good at. It's been a trademark for what we do here. So trying to create negative plays, whether it's sacks, tackles for loss, and those lead to take-aways too. So I think it all kind of goes together and fits together.

So still continuing to try to find answers for that. It is something that we spend a lot of time working on and taking a lot of pride in. Yeah, you're right. It wasn't quite what it needed to be a year ago, and this year we haven't done a good job of getting it fixed.

That has to be a big part of who we are because you get people on the negative side of their drives and the first downs, negative plays. Those TFLs you are talking about affects third down and gets us in better situations for that whether it's third and five or third and eight and nine.

Even some of the third downs were very close. Just try to get balls out. I thought, like, one of our pressures, you know, our husky got blocked off the edge and didn't keep the edge. And Lance Bryant is chasing from the inside-out, and it would have been a sack if he stays on the outside. That situation there is executing the call properly and staying outside and leveraging the quarterback.

We just have to continue to develop our guys and recruit players that can be explosive and violent and create those negative plays because obviously it's a big part of it.

**Q. I wanted to go back to Brendan and Dexter. Obviously it seemed like at least from what we could see that Dexter throughout the season was kind of a functioning as QB3. Obviously Brendan is a true freshman. I guess wasn't here in the spring. When and how did he play himself into that discussion, and what kind of reps has he had before or even going into this week with first and second team guys?**

TOM ALLEN: So I would say this. Those guys are very, very -- they're both young. They're both talented guys.

We probably see more of Dexter than we have of Brendan for sure. I think both of them have bright, bright futures.

So to me it's just -- there's really not a -- I think they're very close. There's no doubt about it. I actually thought today Dexter played better, so made more plays. You don't know until you play them, right?

To me they're both very equal. There's no doubt Dexter has been here longer. At the same time moving forward to me it's just those guys are going to be battling it out without a question. I liked what I saw from Dexter, to be quite frank with you.

I think just the consistency of making throws. Obviously the pick was not a good decision. So we have to eliminate those.

Obviously, Brendan threw a pick. A little bit different, but at the same time you would like to be able to have both those guys be developed in our program and continue to compete because I think they have both really have a bright future.

**Q. Tom, you had offensively I think it was eight straight drives without a first down. Obviously Jack's injury kind of impacted that, and I know a lot of the bye week is spent self-scouting and all of that. With the extra time to lock in on the game, I guess, what do you feel went wrong with the offensive game plan tonight? I guess, big picture, is it more the offensive game plans, or is it kind of just things happening in individual games that the other teams are throwing at you?**

TOM ALLEN: Well, I think the bottom line is no matter how much time you have or don't have, you have to execute. I feel like it's really difficult up front not being able to give our backs a chance to get seams to run through and the quarterbacks time to throw.

That to me is really the bottom line. I think we have to really focus on getting ourselves continuing to work to get better there because it's not good enough, and it's killing us right now. It's making it very, very difficult for our offense.

I don't care who the quarterback is or who the running back is. There's no doubt. We played a team I think that has a lot of good players, and they do a lot of good things defensively, so you knew it was going to be a challenge without question. Especially if you get behind the sticks and behind your schedule on offense, which happens too

many times.

I felt like it was first downs that really kind of hurt us more than anything tonight. But yeah, to me it's a frustrating thing. In order to move the football, just have to start up front. And we have to do a better job in that area for sure, and I don't feel making changes as much as possible and got to keep working on that.

That to me, like I said, there's no magic scheme. You have to block them up front. When you block them up front, then everything works a whole lot better. It's about getting our playmakers the football and letting us have a chance on offense.

I'm excited about these young quarterbacks, but at the same time we have to get better up front so we can highlight those guys and let them do what they do.

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