

Indiana University Football Media Conference

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Head Coach Tom Allen

Signing Day Press Conference



TOM ALLEN: Just appreciate you guys joining us today. First day or I guess the early signing period has begun. Very unique calendar we're on now. A little different than we've had in the past in regards to the way that we approach the signing.

To me it's very exciting to be able to bring in 16 guys today that signed with us from all across the country, both sides of the football. We have eight on offense, seven on defense, and one specialist.

Just going to go through these guys. Really want to be able to talk about each one of them. I'm really excited about the group. When I think about this class and what they bring to us, just trying to emphasize length, athleticism.

You know, obviously speed is always going to be a variable we're trying to improve here, but really trying to get bigger, longer guys. It always is about fit for me. That will never change no matter where they come from.

So this class is just full of that. A lot of good balance here. Just addressing needs that you always do and then to be able to maximize the current landscape that we're dealing with here with recruiting right now.

So starting out with... and this is alphabetical order. Austin Barrett, offensive lineman. Just so excited about him from St. Charles, Illinois. St. Charles East High School.

Big, long athlete that plays offensive tackle. I love that he is a wrestler. I love his toughness, love his attitude. Just really, really been well, and he has a tremendously high ceiling that he is going to be able to attain to when he comes. Excited about getting Austin here and getting him going.

Next is Derrick Bohler, wide receiver from Miami Palmetto High School. 6'1", 195, right out of high school good size. Very mature. Physically runs well. Really, really good ball skills. Just love getting to meet him through this process, and he came up and saw us over the summertime and had

a chance to have a visit then and came back on his official visit with his mom, Bonnie. Just a great young man that fits with us, and so excited about him being here.

TaDerius Collins, also out of high school defensive lineman. So excited about TaDerius. He has length, 6'4". He is a basketball player as well as football. You know I love multi-sport guys. I already mentioned that one of them is a wrestler. Now TaDerius is a basketball player and just guys that compete in other sports.

He is an edge guy that you are looking for and guys that can rush the passer. And he can actually play either position, the end or the bowl spot. Excited about him out of Northwood High School in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Andre Carter, the first transfer that I'm going to mention here. Coming to us from Western Michigan University. He's a big man. Really excited about him. 6'4"-plus and 265 pounds. He just graduated.

He is not just physically a big man. He is mature, and he has just done so many great things for them there. And the job that those coaches did at that program, especially on defense, is impressive. Their defensive line was impressive.

A chance to get him to come here and an opportunity to play in the Big Ten, so just love Andre. Got a chance to get to know his mother. The relationship that they have is really special. Just excited about bringing him here, and he will be in here midyear, and have a chance to truly dive right into this and get a chance to really plug in and earn a spot.

He knows that, and that's what this is all about for everybody that we brought in. But just excited about the maturity he brings to us and the opportunity to be able to elevate his game and play in the Big Ten and to be able to reach his goals. So excited to have Andre with us.

Amare Ferrell. Tell you what, Amare is a really, really talented safety that we brought to us here from Lake City, Florida, Columbia High School. Got a chance to watch him play in person in the state semifinals. Just so impressed



with his athleticism.

He is a big guy that can move, and really, really good tackler. He has really good feet and can run. So Amare has been with us. Came and visited over the summer. Committed to us and stayed true to us the whole time. A lot of people tried to come in on him because he is a really talented player, but just really appreciate him staying with us. Excited about his future. It's going to be very, very bright, and he is a guy that will be here midyear as well and have a chance to come in and compete to play right away. I know that's his goal.

Orlando Greenlow, big old athlete. He is listed as a wide receiver. 6'5", 210 pounds. But I put him as an athlete. He is out of California. He is out of California, Lawndale, California. Just can play receiver, can rush the quarterback, could be a tight end. Not totally sure he knows that.

We've talked about that, but you find long athletes that can run. Fits with us. Came with his mom over the summer. Just fell in love with him and his attitude.

He is one that when the Big Ten kind of moved out west there and included USC and UCLA, adding them allowed us to really expand a little bit out there. He was a beneficiary of that, and excited to have Orlando with us as a part of our program now.

Tyler Jeffries, known as Bubba. Man, what a tough guy. Love him. Love his mindset. Loves to work. Plays mean and nasty. Big guy. Alcoa, Tennessee. All they do is win. He has won, like, eight or nine straight state championships in a row, which is unbelievable.

Just love his family. A guy that we really just as a program fell in love with all of them because they love what we're all about, love football. He is going to come in here and work and train and embrace everything about this program and make us better. Really excited about having Bubba with us on the offensive line.

Also, Jamier Johnson, another transfer that we got from University of Texas as a DB. Lost some DBs to graduation this year and the NFL. So really important to be able to get some older guys in here and gives us great length and athleticism to come to us here.

He is another California high school player that comes via the transfer situation. So got a chance to spend time with him, get to know him here and bring him into the fold. So excited about him.

His parents came with him on his visit, and Mom and Dad

really fell in love with our culture and our environment he is going to be in, and excited about developing him here and helping us do great things defensively here with him in the secondary.

Jamison Kelly, another safety coming to us from Columbia, Mississippi. Went to Jones Community College. Man, tell you what, what a physical football player. I love how he can run and tackle.

He has great length. 6'1"-plus, close to 6'2", 205, 210 pounds. Just bringing the guy that has -- he is a guy we recruited out of high school. To be able to continue to stay recruiting him and get to know him and got a lot of connections down there, so just really love Jamison's attitude.

Man, he loves, loves football. Loves to practice. Loves to train. Loves to work. Brings that physical mindset to everything he does. Really excited about bringing Jamison here and expect him to come in here and compete this spring. He will be here -- Jamier as well as Jamison will be here midyear.

Also, Will Larkins, big offensive linemen. The third one we've already mentioned is out of high school O-line. Big 6'4", 300 pounds. Played very good high school football in Hollywood, Florida. Chaminade-Madonna Prep is where he has been going to school and playing a lot of football. Won another state championship. Won multiple ones with that great program there with Coach Jones.

Just going to come up here and develop. He will be here midyear as well. Just a chance to come up here and compete in our program. He has been here a couple of different times. Came once on his official visit and then came up here on his own to just continue to be around our players and be with our program, and just love his passion for Indiana football and his passion for what we're building here and the culture we've created. So really excited to get Will up here. He will be up here in a few weeks getting ready to get in that weight room and get stronger.

Max Longman, another transfer that we had here today that I'm so so excited about Max. Getting to know his mom when she came on his visit and just a guy that fits with us. You know, tough, hard-nosed. Coming from University of Massachusetts and been a starter there for the last several years. Just brings that maturity and that experience and the grown-man strength and the ability to come in here and play.

So just really excited about him. Just the more time I spend with him even as recently as of last night talking to him and continuing to get to know him and just really

knowing how much he really fits here and has been a dream to be able to play in the Big Ten. Midwest guy from Michigan originally. Just excited about Max and what he is going to bring to our program.

Also brought Broc Lowry as quarterback of this class. Coming out of high school, I tell you, what a career. Just led his team to a state championship there in Canfield, Ohio.

Just a tough, hard-nosed competitor. That's how I would best describe Broc. He is going to be midyear, so he will be here in a couple of weeks. But he is just a winner and plays the game with a chip on his shoulder. Runs the football. Throws the football. Pretty much ran for 2,000, threw for 2,000. And even in the state championship game threw a touchdown pass, a couple of those. Ran for a few. Caught one. Just plays defense, plays safety, makes tackles.

As a matter of fact that's what really caught my eye. I joked with him when we first started recruiting him is I loved his defensive film. He was coming down smoking folks and just loves to hit and just has that tough mentality to him that he is going to bring.

And just really love his family. They came several times. Got to come to several games and been able to get around our guys and just really respect him for what he has done as a high school player, and now is he going to be here soon and being developed as a college athlete. So excited about bringing Broc to our program.

Tyrik McDaniel, I tell you what, another junior college transfer that I just really was drawn to. There's just something about his mindset that he brings to us, and he is coming to us from Independence Community College there in Kansas and from the state of South Carolina originally out of high school.

Tyrik will play safety for us, and he brings a physicality to that position. Some more maturity and some experience that we need losing three seniors back there in that rotation that we have. So just want to be able to get Tyrik in here. He will be in here in the spring semester here in a few weeks and get a chance to get him rolling right away.

Big, over 6-foot tall and 190 pounds and really can run and physical guy. Just a tremendous drive, passion to be able to play in the Big Ten Conference and be able to show and prove who he is as a player and as a man. I'm excited about that. I love just hearing his story and getting to know him.

And having his dad here with us and just being able to

connect with them and just kind of see his heart and what he wants to do when he comes here. So just expect him to come here and compete to get on that field right away and make a difference on you are on team defensively.

Nicolas Radicic is our kicker. An All-American. Just one of the best kickers in the country. We have a pretty comprehensive way of going about finding our kickers, and Charles has been a great -- it's the same process we went through to find Charles. We went through the same process with Nick. He goes by Nico, but one of the best in America.

He is an Army All-American and just has that kind of leg talent. He has to come do it, got to prove it here, but that's what he is going to be here to do is kick for us.

He brings a lot of confidence coming out of Coppell High School there in Texas. Very strong program out of that state with a lot of history. So has come from a very well-prepared and has a really big and extensive soccer background as well. Even internationally.

So very good athlete, and I like that in our specialist guys that have been multi-sport guys that understand how to compete and do a great job of having that mindset, bringing that to our kicking game and our specialist game. I'm really excited about having Nico with us. He is going to do a tremendous job here for us.

Also Jordan Shaw, really was a tremendous addition to our program out of the state of California. Really had a great opportunity to get to know his family. His dad played at Michigan. Kind of gave us that Midwest connection even though they're all from California originally. Another opportunity because of us going out there to play with our conference expansion, it's given us a chance to be able to attract him.

He has length. He runs really well. He watches film. He has tremendous ball skills. He is a great receiver in high school. Made a ton of plays with the ball in his hand. A punt returner. That's what I look for when you look at DBs. You love them to be punt returners. It shows athleticism with the ball in their hand. So real excited about bringing him from St. Pius X High School out there in Downey, California.

Just a guy that fits with us. Excited about him being here. He wasn't afraid to come across country here and be a Hoosier, which is pretty cool.

We have a national brand, and you see that by this group of guys here. All the different states represented. We got alumni across this country. I think that's a huge benefit.

There's no doubt about it, as we continue to build our football program.

We have Sam West, a tight end. Once again, another multi-sport guy. Was an SEC baseball commit prior to deciding he wanted to make his future in football. Was a high school quarterback, played multiple positions.

We're projecting him as a tight end. He is a big athlete. That's how I view him. Just a guy from Greensburg, Indiana here in our home state.

From a great family. Sister already goes to school here. Just got a chance to be with him. He got to come to many of our games this year, pretty much all of them, and just a chance to connect with him and his family. Allowed him to be able to truly get engrained with our guys from the very beginning and get connected with our commits that were already joining us after the summer visits.

Sam is going to bring good athleticism to that tight end position, and he is another midyear guy. Many guys here, as I mentioned, are going to be with us midyear, which is very important for their development, but the guys that aren't are going to be training at home and competing and finishing out their high school careers, and they're going to be joining us in June.

Love this group, but it's just phase one of this recruiting cycle, and now ready to move on to phase two.

So questions?

Q. Obviously you mentioned you guys signed Broc Lowry. You got Brendan coming back, and obviously Dexter unknown for a while with a knee injury. Kind of what's the plan at quarterback going forward? I mean, are you going to try to add somebody, an experienced guy? I guess if you are, where are you at in that process?

TOM ALLEN: Yes, so in regards to Dexter, you know, he had surgery and very successful surgery. He is now in the rehab process. So really prayers for that. He is working really hard to get himself back to full health.

Yeah, the goal right now, you know, as you say, you have the numbers. We have three scholarship quarterbacks right now, and the goal is to add an additional one, an older one would be ideal.

So that's the plan in terms of being able to have number four guys on scholarship in that room and especially with Dexter's status. We're just working through that process every single day. It's neverending. It will continue these

next several weeks, and the goal is to have the guy in place here for second semester.

Q. Coach, you kind of mentioned there that this is really the first time we've got to speak to you since the end of the season, and you made a big significant change to your coaching staff by adding Bob Bostad. I'm curious on the selection process and how you went about hiring and deciding he was the right man for the job.

TOM ALLEN: I tell you what, so excited to have Bob join our staff. Coach Bostad is an unbelievably highly-regarded offensive line coach in this country. Many would say he is the best O-line coach in the country. I would have to tend to agree with that the short time we've been around each other.

Just a great ball coach. Been at the highest level, coached in the NFL on offensive line for several years. Produced many All-Americans at Wisconsin, a place that's kind of become an O-line factory for many, many years. So he is a big part of all that.

Just really that's what kind of drew me to him. Big Ten guy, Midwest guy. From the state of Wisconsin. Understands the conference. Understands how to recruit. Has recruited in the Indianapolis area for a long time. That's kind of how we met was in that recruiting process crossing paths there. But just from some common acquaintances that knew each other.

So when we had this position and obviously we knew as with the change was made during the season and Coach Carey took over on an interim basis, we knew we were going to have to be able to find someone. As some things unfolded there, it allowed us to get Coach Bostad here with us pretty efficiently. The goal was to get him here and get to head out to recruit.

We were probably pretty close to getting him as soon as that happened. I think there was a couple of days that he wasn't able to go out yet and recruit. We had to send out another coach in his place. To be able to have him, he was available for us with the situation there at Wisconsin.

Bottom line is we found I feel like the very, very best person for the job. So excited about having him here and the job that he is already doing with our guys in regards to recruiting and evaluation. Then when I had a chance to tell our recruits that we had hired him, man, they were so fired up. They know the track record and the history that he has been able to produce everywhere he has been.

So really excited to have him and anxious to be able to get

back in the office once we get off the road and start talking some ball with him.

Q. You talked about phase one being finished. You are moving into phase two. What does that look like? What positions are you targeting as transfers, the JUCO level, high school level? What is phase two in your mind?

TOM ALLEN: Well, I would say breaking it down, this is kind of new in a lot of ways. A little bit last year, yes, but not to this degree.

Because the way the calendar was structured, it's really -- this next phase is really a transfer phase of focus because you have a window from January 4th through the 9th where you can bring in players. It's only for transfers to be able to make visits to your campus. We can't go off campus, but they can come to us.

That's the real focus here to be able to fill some key spots, some positions of need, to be able to balance some of those off. It will be across the board both offensively and defensively.

Then after that phase is done, phase three to me is back out recruiting again. I can see us adding some more high school players. I think with the way that things have kind of evolved, you definitely have -- there's still two classes of guys that have COVID years left that are still out there in circulation, and that keeps these spots continue to be able to be used up in some ways.

It's kind of allowed some high school guys that maybe would have already been signed and been somewhere else still to be available. So definitely aware of that. That would be probably phase three as well.

Then you just have some guys that maybe won't be done or be out until the end of the semester, and they'll be here in the summertime. So the next focus is to be able to get the guys that will be available to come visit in early January to be able to be enrolled by the second semester.

Q. Just going back to the offensive line, you've got three high school kids there that have been with you now technically through three different offensive line coaches. They stuck with you through that whole time. What can you tell us about that process, kind of getting them to stay with you through all of that?

TOM ALLEN: That's a great point. A unique situation for sure. I think step one was great communication. I personally called them all as things transpired in each development along the way and had communications with

them and their families. That way they knew what was going on.

So it was tough, there's no doubt. But I think the common theme was they were committed and really connected to IU Football and our university and the culture that we have here. As long as I was here and knowing that wouldn't change, they were good to be able to stay and kind of see how things transpired to who would be in that position.

So I would continue to communicate with them throughout this process, and they stayed true to us, we stayed true to them. And we're just open and honest about it with them, and I think that was probably the key. I respect them a lot for staying with us through that, and now one of them, Will, is going to be here in January, and the other two are going to be here in June.

Excited to have all three of them. I think it's a really good group of guys that will bring some definite talent and depth to that offensive line, and they're obviously young. They're freshmen out of high school. Can't wait to get each one of them here.

Q. Tom, you referenced this earlier, but what is your process for recruiting a kicker? How do you evaluate them, and how did you end up getting connected with Nico?

TOM ALLEN: Well, first of all, you know, it's unique for specialists because you don't sign one every single year. The kicking services, and Kohl's is one of those, and Sailer is another one. There's some others as well, but those are probably the top two in the country.

They know who is looking for a scholarship kicker in a given year and who is not. So once the word gets out that you are looking for a scholarship kicker, then you do a really good job of through those services and all of our connections, I got a lot of connections, and Coach Teegardin and Coach McInerney, and those guys do a tremendous job. And all the guys that run those services, we have a good relationship with them.

So they know that we have that, so we bring him, and we have camps. We have him come and kick for us. We have a systematic way of doing that. Bringing him here. We have a whole evaluation process we go through once we get him here.

So it's, first of all, identifying who you want to invite. Bring all the best kickers in America to our campus. I want to see them kick. We video everything and go through everything and have it all done the way it's supposed to be. It's pretty lengthy, and then we go through and just narrow

it down from there.

Then you say, okay, you kind of rank them, and then you start going through and then you have to try to convince him to come and start recruiting him. So it's a very, very lengthy process that you go through.

Then Nico is a guy that came and kicked for us, and then you kind of go through and you just continue to evaluate. We watched all these different competitions he was involved in and several kickers as well and try to see how they handle pressure and how they're able to respond to adversity.

They start going to these camps. They go and kick quite a bit for you, and then they have to go to another camp and kick some more and kick some more. So you just try and see who is the most consistent, who can handle the difficulties of that situation and the pressures that it puts on them because at the end of the day they have to be able to kick in front of thousands of people when it counts the most.

So it's a pretty I would say thorough process we go through. I feel good about it, and we think we've got our guy.

Q. My question was pretty much already answered before, but I'm trying to think of as this group of 16 people, how would you describe -- like, what makes you so excited about these guys? What is the mentality about all of that?

TOM ALLEN: They fit with us, and they're excited about being here. They got a chip on their shoulder, something to prove kind of guys. Guys that you go through and you really try to find who has got the talent to play in this conference, but there's so much more to it than that.

It's the guys that will come here and do the little things the right way. They'll all have to grow and mature as all guys do when at the come out of high school. You know, just the ones that want the things that we want for them and care about school and want to do things the right way are going to be on time to everything and showing up to workouts with the right mindset and just able to work through tough times and things don't go your way.

I feel like we've got a lot of guys that really fit those kind of things. Obviously, you have to get him here, and they have to show that we were right in our evaluation of them. They excited me because I feel like we got a broad group of guys in different positions that we needed that have a high level of talent, but they also have tremendous work ethic to them and want to come here and want to compete

and get better every day.

Obviously, like every other signing class, there's a lot of optimism. Nobody ever stands up here and says that they don't like their class, but at the same time they have to prove that we're right, and they have to prove that we made the right evaluation and that they were the right guys to come here and want to be able to help us continue to build our program.

Q. Ever since they switched to the early signing day however many years ago usually the majority of the class is wrapped up by this time. Sometimes there's a few spots. This year you guys still have by my count, you know, maybe 15. I know it's a moving target, but more than ten open spots left on the roster. Is that just the norm going forward because of with the portal and all the basically free agency that's going on, or is this a one-year blip? It seems like it might be the norm. I was just curious your thoughts on that and if you are going to have to recruit almost as many guys after the signing day as you did before?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, there's no question. I think I was one that mentioned that a couple of years ago that not knowing this was going to happen that I felt like that we would have the majority of our class in place after the first signing. But now with the new rules with the portal and when they couldn't go in until that Monday that we were out recruiting, which created a flood of just -- that was a crazy several days now for everybody trying to evaluate and figure things out.

Yeah, I don't think that's going to change. If this structure continues and the calendar stays the way it is, I think you're going to continue to see this progression where you have a good chunk of them signed right away, but not nearly as many as before. And you are going to have another 10 to 12 or whatever left in regards to both transfers and even a few high school guys. They definitely will be some more high school filling some of these spots.

Yeah, I just think the calendar is different. A lot of guys couldn't even make visits, so that's why they now have those days in January which we never used to have before where transfers can take visits. That's going to be -- last year I think we had one or two. This year I could see us having a whole bunch. That's a whole new area now to expand to.

And then February is going to be way more involved in trying to find guys that maybe didn't get seen or evaluated properly the first time. You have a chance to find those and continue to look for guys that fit your needs.

So, yeah, I think you're going to see this being the norm moving forward. Could be wrong, but that would be my guess based on what I see and how I see it playing out. Every year will probably be a little different numerically, but there's definitely going to be more in the second signing than we've seen in the past couple of years.

Q. Coach, I'm curious. You mentioned earlier how in this recruiting class you really wanted to emphasize length and athleticism, just overall get bigger and stronger guys. Then also going back to the end of last season you were talking about with the quarterback prospect you really like the idea of having a dual-threat guy who can both run it with his own legs and then make plays through the air. When you look at the 2023 team that you are building, what's different about it versus the 2022 team in an ideal world?

TOM ALLEN: Well, I think for me you just continue -- you have to have depth. To me I want to have more depth on the offensive line. I want to have more depth on the defensive line and be able to with stand. We've had injuries the last couple of years, unfortunately, of some key guys, and it's hurt us.

To be able to have that, that's a huge part, but I think I do -- we have tried to emphasize the length piece, and that to me I want a big, physical football team that's able to play the style we know we've got to play. Then also be able to play with tremendous speed.

The speed part never goes away. I want to be able to have that ability to run the football on defense and make plays and recruit that speed on offense and continue to do a great job being dynamic.

We just have to be more dynamic on offense. We know that. We have to create more explosive someplace. We don't have to drive the length of the field with so many different snaps involved and then eliminating those big plays on defense. To me that's what I want to be able to do is we have to get better on both sides of the football. We have to be better on special teams, although special teams did a lot of good things in 2022. Be more consistent in some of those areas that matter most.

To me the fundamentals of being able to run the football effectively is a huge focus, being able to throw the football effectively, and to not put so much pressure on our guys that we have to be perfect on a drive. We can create those more explosive plays, and I want to be able to do that with that style of quarterback and to help us and help our football team, and it helps our defense.

Both sides play better, more complementary football. I

don't think we did a good job of that this past season at all, and it hurt us, and we have to do that. I think the last couple of years hasn't been what it needs to be. There's no question about the result. I'm talking about the complimenting of one another on offense and defense.

So we want to do a better job of that. Then to me it's just being better fundamentally and getting guys that are big and physical guys that can help us block better and tackle better.

Q. I'm curious with Jamier Johnson, is that a guy you tried to recruit out of high school, or how did that relationship come about, and what's the fit there? I mean, I know you like to put your corners in spots where they have to be able to cover kind of on an island one-on-one. Is he a good fit for that? Did he see how successful Taiwan Mullen was here, and did that influence how he viewed the opportunity?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, Jamier was a national recruit out of high school, so we actually did not get in on him. He was recruited at a very, very high level, and we did not get a chance. We didn't have a connections to get on that.

Yeah, there's no question what Taiwan has done here. Even Jalen. Those two guys are all Big Ten, All-American type guys and played at a high level for us.

I loved his length, his ability to play vision coverage, as well as some man. It's important. We wanted to try. We were trying to get bigger at that position and get some more length there, and he brings that. He has played and had experience in the Big 12, and that was big for us as well.

Just trying to comb the country to find the guy that gives us a combination of length and speed and the flexibility to do what we need to do in the back end, which is play some multiple coverages. We're not a one-coverage team. I don't plan to be, but you've got to find guys to fit with that.

So we're just trying to get some longer, bigger guys. I think he fits that. Then you always have to have the ability to play some man.

Appreciate it. Have an awesome day. Merry Christmas and happy new year.

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