

Indiana University Football

Media Conference

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Tom Allen

Press Conference



Ohio State - 23, Indiana - 3

TOM ALLEN: All right. Disappointed in the loss. Our kids fought hard. Played hard. Did have a couple guys cramping up with the heat. But I thought our defense played tough. Showed some things that we got build off of. Just not good enough. Scoring touchdowns obviously is not acceptable. Too many penalties. Disappointed that the special teams penalties really hurt our offense. Set us back inside the 10, sometimes the 15. So every time we get a decent return seemed like we had a penalty. So can't do that. But just play the game. You learn from week one and move on to week two. Questions?

Q. If you'll forgive me kind of just the obvious, what was the thought process behind essentially splitting the quarterback reps and did you feel like either guy gave you something to think about that maybe you didn't, you weren't already, maybe didn't already feel like you knew about going in?

TOM ALLEN: Just I'll be very open about the process. So went through the whole thing. When I said, when I named -- I said, we made our decision. Our decision was to play 'em both in the first two games. So Sorsby started this week. Tayven starts next week. The guys know that. They knew that ahead of time.

So, because, here's reality: You have spring ball, you have summer and you have fall camp. And they never get hit and it's not full-bore live football playing in the game. And they need to play in a game for us to truly be able to -- it was one guy would have a good practice and the other guy. And it would be back and forth. Or a good week. And it was just all kind of like, man, so similar. And so, but at the same time -- so I felt like, we felt like the best thing to do was let's let them see them play. We told 'em both they're both going to play. We didn't have a pitch count. We didn't say when they were going to go in. We just said whoever starts week one, the other is going to start week two. That's how we set it up. So it gives us a chance to be able to, after the first two games, be able to evaluate where we're at, where they're at and what we need to be able to

do moving forward.

So that's what happened today. I couldn't even tell you how many snaps each one of 'em played. But we'll watch the film and bottom line it's about being able to move the football down the field and get us in the end zone. So, we weren't able to score with either one of them. So we obviously got to get better. So we got to do a better job executing and just continue to grow our offense. Obviously they do a lot of things that make it very difficult. Just felt like that we needed game time to evaluate. And that's where we are.

We don't have pre-season games. We don't have anything against anybody else. So we obviously had to play a Big-10 opponent week one. That's something that was part of the deal. So we chose to go that direction. So I thought both guys did some good things, both guys made some mistakes. So just got to build off of it.

Q. Obviously the opponent has something to do with this, really talented defense, but you guys struggled to throw the ball and really nothing down field. Was it kind of the game plan to do that or would you have like to seen more shots down field?

TOM ALLEN: I would say it was probably a little more conservative than we, even in that game, would like for it to be. But there's certain reasons for that, without question. But, yeah, we got to be able to do that. That's going to grow, for sure. We really felt like, coming in, you're going to have to take about, you know, seven or eight shots. And a couple of those we had and then got pressured. And so, but at the same time, yeah, there's no question we got talented receivers on the perimeter and got to do a better job of getting those guys the football. But I think you're just going to see it continue to grow each week, there's no question about it. Both these guys can throw the football. But I just think, once again, some of the field position didn't help us, several times. And when you're backed up like that that's when you make big mistakes and get costly situations. You don't want to throw picks in those spots.

So once again, two young guys, probably a little more conservative than we will be moving forward -- definitely



more conservative than we will be moving forward, but at the same time just got to continue to get better.

Q. I know you can't predict the future, but you said you want to reevaluate the quarterbacks after the two games. Is your hope that one separates themselves and you could just stick to one and not keep rotating?

TOM ALLEN: Yes, I would like to be able to have that, yes. But I think it's really just fair to have them both play against the same opponent. You just play one against one team, one against another team, it really doesn't give you a pretty clear picture at all. Because obviously they're two different opponents. Our first two opponents are very different.

Q. Were you given an explanation on the incomplete pass at the end of the first half by the officials?

TOM ALLEN: Explanation for the?

Q. The incomplete pass that was reviewed.

TOM ALLEN: Oh, yeah, they said his arm was going forward. So, obviously, I didn't think it was. But it's a review that they go through and it's not like I can challenge that. So once they review it, they made that decision. But I thought it was a hit and a fumble. So obviously we would have had the ball and saved us three points. But, so...

Q. Your defense gave you a chance for most of the game today. Seemed like especially in the middle Aaron and Jacob really set the tone. How big of a catalyst is it when you get good play from your linebackers?

TOM ALLEN: It's huge. I was really proud of Jacob. Obviously, we've never seen Jacob play in a game here, just on film at Stanford. So I thought he did a really good job. I think he's played the way we expect him to play.

So we're excited about those two guys. Two big, physical guys that can both run and make plays. So we showed some signs up front, too, to be able to do some things that are going to be very important moving forward. So just got to keep getting better. And I like the look in our guys' eyes. There was no doubt a lot of disappointment in that locker room, but at the same time we got to be able to look ourselves in the eye, make corrections and get ready for a short week.

Q. Follow-up on that. The secondary of the defense. There was a lot of questions going in, coming into this game. Especially going against one of the, if not the best receiving corp in the country, and it looks like

they passed that test today.

TOM ALLEN: I believe so. Obviously, you don't know until you go do it. I was really concerned about that matchup, without question. It is, we know -- I know for a fact those receivers are special. And the one is probably the best we've ever gone against since I've been coaching, in my entire career. So to believe able to keep those guys in check was very critical. It was a combination of some pressure up front, as well as the guys coming around the back end and just trying to do a good job of disguising things. You saw how we're going to play. That's the system. That's who we are. That's what we want to be able to do. Mix things up. Confuse people. Got some length in the back end. Got some playmakers. I thought -- we dropped two picks. It would have been tough catches. We dropped two picks that they ended up getting six points off of two field goals that we got to make plays on. But I was very encouraged by our secondary.

As you said, it's a whole bunch of new guys. And then you got Jamari Sharpe, who is a redshirt freshman, that didn't play much last year. He really played a lot today.

So a lot to build off of. A lot to be excited about in that area. We just got to keep battling and keep getting better.

Q. Have you evaluated what you got from the transfers up front?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I would say we got a little tired. The heat was a part of that. But obviously it's for both teams. But I thought that we did a good job of establishing the line of scrimmage defensively. Made it hard on 'em. We gave up a couple creases there, but not very many. We have struggled. You can go back and look at the stats, if I need to help you on that. But we've not done a good job stopping the run against these guys for many years now.

Even in the year we played 'em close it wasn't because we played great run defense. They ran all over us. So we made a concerted effort. Obviously, we went out and found guys that we felt like gave us some size and length and ability to help us do a better job physically. But also just made sure we just worked so hard on our run fits all fall camp, all spring long.

So I think there's a lot to build off there on that, without question. You go to the stop the run. And we got some talented DB's to help us when they do have to throw it. Some guys that can pressure 'em. So, yeah, there's no question.

They had new quarterbacks, too. So having new quarterbacks creates a difficulty for an offense, without

question. But at the same time they have been a machine on offense for a long, long time. They got some really, really talented football players in the back field, up front and on the perimeter. So I thought our guys did a lot of good things defensively.

I was more encouraged by the bows up in the red zone. That's when you got a long drive, you're tired, you're fatigued. It's a gut check. It's a character check. It's a, can you bow up when your body is really, really exhausted and fatigued and make a play against an elite team, a top-3 team in the country. So, to me, our guys showed that. Forced them to kick several field goals. And that's how you win games.

Q. Going back to the quarterbacks, is there a certain aspect of the offense or an element that you feel more comfortable with or is maybe more open with one quarterback versus the other? Or are you trying to keep kind of the same offensive scheme for both guys?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I don't know that we really look at it as that we're changing with those two guys. I think that their skill sets are similar enough. We really will -- there may be a couple of things that I wouldn't get, you know, put out that we might say we would do, per their strengths. But it's not holistically major, okay. It will be some subtle things within both the run game and throw game to favor their strengths.

But, yeah, as a system though we just got to keep growing and keep getting better at it. And I think they both showed some signs of that. And also showed that they're young. So, but I, you know, we just got to keep working. It's one of those situations where we know what's ahead of us, what we got to do, and I want to see a lot of growth between week one and week two. We say it all the time, it's very, very true. We knew we didn't have any margin for error week one because of our opponent. But at the same time the growth is still expected between week one and week two. So that's what we did. Especially with our offense and our defense as well and our special teams play. But I think that those guys showed that there's much to build off of, without question. So I'm not that going to sit here and be negative, because that's not who I am. It doesn't serve any purpose, doesn't help us get any better. It's just finding things we can do to get better from now until when we play again. There's no off day this week. Monday is usually our off day. We'll practice on Monday because of our Friday game. But you know how I feel about Friday night games. That's not a decision that we make. That comes straight from the Big Ten. Somebody wants to complain about that, don't talk to me. That's -- Friday night football, that's for high school football, bottom line. And I'll say it until I'm blue in the face, until somebody tells me to

shut up. And I'll probably say it again. Friday night football is for high school football.

Q. James Evans, like 54 and a half yard average today. What kind of weapon can he provide the rest of the season if he stays this consistent?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, my big thing for him is consistency. He was excellent today. He works his tail off. Every year he just keeps getting better. So I'm really proud of him. He's one of those guys I got to tell him, like I said this year, I got to tell him to stop kicking. He tries to kick way too much in the offseason, summer time. But he's such a hard worker, he cares so much. Not at all surprised.

As a matter of fact, Coach Guerrieri when he came and joined us, he's like, man, that's the best punter I've ever seen on any team I've ever been a part of. And I would agree, because he continues to get better. Big weapon for us. And obviously he's got to do his job consistently well. And it helps us flip the field. So we got to have everybody doing their job at a high level to win in this conference.

Q. With Jaylin, it felt like, obviously, some opportunities in special teams. He had, I think, that one punt return in particular. But couldn't really find the same room offensively. What did you like maybe especially from him in an expanded special teams role and where do you feel like you need to keep working to kind of get him the touches he needs, maybe, I guess, the spots on field he needs to have?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I would say, you know, the whole -- and I was questioned last year why he didn't return punts last year. And he wasn't ready. So he struggled in that area to catch the ball. And, I mean, he has worked as much as James. So he would tell you, James would tell you, that Jaylin would be coming to get him. Every time you're punting, I'm catching. He caught punt after punt after punt all off-season to be able to put himself in a position to be our punt returner. Because that's a very difficult skill set to be able to do. Especially at the kind of punters we're going to play against.

So that's a huge new weapon. We got to do great job of making sure we don't get any penalties on those returns, but that's a huge way for to us get him the ball in space. Even more so than kickoff returns, regarding the nature of the way punts are.

And then offensively we got to continue to find ways to get him the ball in space. That to me is going to be -- we have a pitch count for him to make sure he gets so many touches. Obviously he went out a couple different times with some cramping. Which, he's got such a lean-body

type and, you know, such a small percent of body fat and he's all muscled up. So that's a concern. We obviously worked through that as we go each week. We'll have a night game on this weekend, which may help.

So, but at the same time, we want to see him get the ball in space. That's where he's the most dangerous. So I think that that will continue to be a chance to get him the ball and I think our offense, there's no question, we understand how valuable he is. So he's a great little player we just go to keep working to try to get him the ball.

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