

Indiana University Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 23, 2023

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Head Coach Tom Allen

Press Conference



Indiana 29, Akron 27

TOM ALLEN: Opening statement. About midnight, you guys are still here, so congratulations. Appreciate your perseverance

and grit you're showing. And as ugly as it was, we found a way to win. Really frustrating in a lot of ways. But proud of our defense to keep us in the game. Three takeaways. Defensive score, obviously, the difference in the game. Offense was really, really out of sync and really, really performed poorly, but found a way to win.

Proud of our guys. And even offensively found a way to get that final 2-point conversion there, was a great call. But just not a lot to be too fired up about on that side of the football but, obviously, when you find a way, you got a bunch of players that believe and they battle and fight and claw and scratch to find a way to win a game. So winning is hard. And just get a chance to learn from it and get ready for the next one. Questions.

Q. Coach, on Monday after this week, you mentioned you'd like to see your team come out and play with confidence for 60 minutes, come out with certain mindset. Seemed like same thing this week except it kind of carried over maybe throughout the entire game. Where is the concern level? What can you do four games into the season to change that?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. So obviously maybe look at changing some things we're doing. Our schedule, maybe change the personnel. You just find a way to make some changes to get a different result.

Obviously, didn't prepare poorly this week, but, at the same time, did have to remind them in an emotional way on Thursday about who this team is and who they can be and don't look at their record and other things and things of the past. I knew just from watching film how hard they were going to play and how much talent they had at key positions. But thought got their attention from that, but, obviously, not to the extent we needed to. So, obviously,

need to look at that and make some changes

Q. I guess, Tom, to follow up on that, did you, for lack of something more artful, sense that maybe your locker room was struggling not to look past Akron a little bit and just, I mean, how do you -- what's the battle a coach fights in a situation like that where, obviously, it's easy to sort of say it but to get a whole group of people to keep that focus?

TOM ALLEN: It's huge. I mean, I think it's -- I was looking for opportunities and did not like at all how we practiced. We actually restarted some things on Thursday. And from what you're just saying right there, I just sense the lack of understanding who we were playing and their ability to beat you and so -- which is mind blowing because we don't have any right to think that at this point.

So -- but did sense it for sure. Didn't like what I was seeing. But at the same time didn't effectively get their attention for sure, especially not on certain areas of the game.

To me, it's a matter of addressing it and, like I said, making every change we got. Feel like we got to make the -- after four games getting us playing right out of the gate at a high level

Q. Tom, third down and fourth down, three for 16 combined on both tonight. I know you need to watch the film, but what do you want to see unlocked in terms of trying to get that done because a lot of those were short yardage as well?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. You know, up front didn't block well at all. Probably our worst performance of the season on the offensive line as far as running the football. There's more than just them that were affected. There are tight ends and the quarterbacks and the reads and different things we do. But, obviously, not near good enough.

You're at the goal line, you've got to score touchdowns and not have to kick field goals. Obviously, got stopped on the 1 before. We chose to kick a football from inside the 1. But, yeah, it starts up front. Got to block better.



If we have to make changes up front, personnel-wise, we'll do what we've got to do to get that fixed. That's where it begins. Puts a lot of pressure on third downs with, you know, a young quarterback that had a tough night. Just call it what it is. But, at the same time, we've got to do some things to help him as well. But definitely got to go back and evaluate everything we're doing on offense.

Q. You mentioned Tayven, I mean, settles down with the last two-point conversion. But what did you see from him? Kind of missed some throws high. What did you get a sense of his demeanor. You talked a lot about his moxie. Where was he in that second half?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah. It was a tough night. Definitely wasn't his best. And we didn't do a good job protecting him. There was guys in his face all night long. Our running backs did not do a good job blocking at all as well as our offensive line. So both of those groups really added to some of those issues. Caused maybe some high throws. We had some open receivers we didn't hit. We had three critical drops. One where it would have been a touchdown early on.

Just lack of focus. That's really what it is. So those three drops hurt us. And then just not being able to execute. So just growing pains, without question. But got to look at it very thoroughly and figure out where we need to be and what we need to do to get those things fixed because we've got a really good team coming up here in a week.

Q. Just one offensive touchdown through four quarters against a team that gave up 35 last week. Is that play calling that needs adjusting? Is it execution? Is it both? Is it many things? What do you see and kind of how would you grade the offensive production night through four quarters?

TOM ALLEN: Not good enough. Not even close. Below the standard. Below what's acceptable, for sure. Need to go back and watch the film to be able to evaluate the execution piece. And, obviously, can see the things I mentioned as far as the drops and not doing a good job. And, obviously, just evaluate what we're calling.

I think there's no question that some of these leading up to it causes you to be a little bit little more careful in some of those situations not to create a takeaway and put you in an even worse situation because defense was playing well and doing a lot of good things.

So that's even why we chose to kick the field goal from the one yard line. Just because, hey, give us a 7-point lead. Really wanted to have a double -- you know, two score

lead, which is frustrating. But, at the same time, played that one just to be able to get enough points, which proved to be a pretty critical decision to give us a chance to go to overtime. So just looking at it live, like you all saw, you know, very frustrating, not good enough. That's all I'm going to say.

Q. Coach, you mentioned that you need to make some changes and that process, I can imagine, is extensive. But how deep is that process? What all goes into that?

TOM ALLEN: Just go through -- we'll go through and evaluate all the times we broke down. You go through, why was it? If was it technique? Was it skill? From the talent of a person being able to make that -- whatever it is we're asking them to do. Is it the call? Is it the position we're putting the guys in?

So that, to me, is the evaluation. We had some things on defense, too, that we didn't execute at critical times and hurt us. That long run at the end was inexcusable to me. So shouldn't have even been to overtime. Defense did a lot of great things, but can't give up that long run. It was a wrong fit by one of our linebackers who is one of our better players. So it just cannot happen.

But, offensively, it is a thorough process. It will start here in a few hours. It will be a short night to be able to get back to work and figure out what we've got to do because, obviously, we're playing again here real soon.

Q. Coach, the quarterback Irons had 141 yards rushing. What did you think led to his success, whether it was a design run or him scrambling?

TOM ALLEN: They do a lot of things that put you in conflict with your eyes. So man is a better answer than playing zone. The negative of that is if your front doesn't contain him, then when he does break free, there's no eyes on him, which happened on the last run I thought that was in -- they kind of put us in the second overtime there when we had them on a situation to get to the quarterback. And so I thought that was part of it. Didn't think we had good edges at times, you know, defensively.

He's a very dangerous guy, without question. But just, you know, once again, even though the defense was on the field way too much, which they were, that puts a lot of pressure on them. But, at the same time, felt like we didn't do a great job containing a really dangerous quarterback, who we knew going in was a really good athlete, could beat you with his legs.

So that fine line between getting enough pressure on him

and also having eyes on him so you can make sure when he does break free you can get him on the ground.

We were successful at it some of the time but not all of the time. Not enough.

All right. Have a great night. LEO.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

