

# Indiana University Football Media Conference

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## Coach Tom Allen

### Press Conference



TOM ALLEN: Defensively, Andrew Turvy and Lincoln Murff, both from Indianapolis -- Andrew from Carmel; Lincoln from Ben Davis, working really hard. Excited to have those guys continue to help us each week.

Offensive scouts, Derin McCulley, Eli Jochem, guys continue to work hard and make us better each day, and Clay Connor as well, special teams scout. So appreciate the effort the guys give each and every week to help get us where we need to be as a program.

Just excited about this week. Great opportunity for us with homecoming. A really good football team coming to Bloomington. Coach has done a great job there, Coach Schiano, and systematically building that team, playing with a lot of confidence. Got a big win this past week coming from behind, shown a lot of toughness and grit as a team, and just being able to play really good defense and run the football well and throw the football effectively and been on special teams. Good football team here for homecoming.

Expecting a great crowd and just a great weekend for our university and a lot of things going on, and beautiful weather as well. Should be a great opportunity for our guys as we enter the second half of our season, very important part, to allow us to reach the goals we have for our team. So questions.

**Q. You said last Monday Tayven was a starter. Going back evaluating film, is this job opening up? What did you see on film for each guy?**

COACH ALLEN: We'll make a decision, and just bottom line is, as you go through and you look at the changes we wanted to make on offense -- obviously made a major change a week ago with our staff -- and just want to be able to do a great job of moving us down the field, scoring points. And that continues to be the goal. Obviously did some good things. Both of them did good things on Saturday. Both of them made some mistakes. But it's about protecting the football. It's about running the offense and being able to be effective with that.

So we'll make a decision. When we make this decision this week, that person will be the guy. So I'm not going to rotate back and forth.

**Q. When you made the decision last week about rotating and you've kind of gone back and forth with the quarterbacks, is it something you talk with the whole team or the whole offense about? How informed do you keep them while you're making the steps you're making to kind of give them an understanding of why you're doing what you're doing?**

COACH ALLEN: I would say definitely meet with those guys together. I've always done it that way. And so I don't call a team meeting for that, for sure, but at the same time just want the guys to know that whoever is in that huddle running the offense has the same expectations.

Bottom line is we definitely want to be able to have some continuity there. I know we've obviously had some back and forth with that throughout the course of the season as we have two young guys that we know are trying to grow and develop. And as we figure out what their strengths are as well. We just want to see them play consistently and build it around them.

So obviously with Coach Carey in that role now and his ability to be able to have his thoughts on what we want to be able to do offensively that will drive some of this as well.

But to me it's about communicating with those guys, being open and honest, which we have, and keeping them on the page together because it's very, very important and be able to help our offense continue to grow. So definitely saw some positive signs offensively. We have to build off that.

**Q. You mentioned you made an offensive change, naming Rod Carey your offensive coordinator. How would you assess how he did?**

COACH ALLEN: Got off to a good start, which was definitely a positive. We made a big emphasis about trying to start fast as a football team. We were able to do that in the first quarter.



We were not able to sustain that. But obviously a tough task offensively against such a good defense. But at the same time saw some good things. Had the ability from our offensive line as some individuals played really well. Want to see that group collectively improve and get more production out of our throw game so we can continue to put more pressure on the defense.

So I thought we made some positive strides. Obviously not good enough. Obviously not the standard. We've got to be able to be better. I've got to coach better. [Audio stopped]. Have a great strong finish. That's the expectation.

**Q. I know you're not satisfied with how either of them have played, Tayven or Brendan, but are there positive traits you've seen with them, whether there's things or practices that you can build off? And then I guess, like you've mentioned, Dexter getting closer, how does he factor into that?**

COACH ALLEN: I think there's no question. Both have positive traits and you just want to see more consistency. I think that's the key, for us to be able to do that as a staff to help them with that in both the game plan and the calls and the way they're going to operate.

That's going to be the real goal this week is that consistency and to begin to narrow things down to the areas where they can -- they've shown, we've got enough on film now to know that we can do well. Just gotta continue to improve, gotta throw the football better, continue to run the football better.

Did a little bit of both of those things on Saturday. Not consistently enough to be able to get where we want to be.

And then you think about Dexter. To me, he's progressing, and he'll be a guy that's, each week has grown in his ability to be ready. So that's even more so this past weekend. He obviously dressed was ready to be in emergency situation if need be. So yeah, he's getting closer and closer.

**Q. When you look at the second half struggles, I guess last Saturday but also kind of throughout the last few years, is there anything you can kind of single out maybe that -- it's not like every game is the same problem, but is there maybe one thing you can point to that maybe keeps on showing up each week for some of the second half struggles you've had?**

COACH ALLEN: Well, the ones recently I would say, just really, when you go through and watch, especially you talk

about the defense, it was some critical mistakes in critical downs to me jumped out to us on Saturday.

Then the positive things you do prior to that get negated when you make a mistake or you don't contain the quarterback on the critical third down, or the DB comes off a receiver when he's scrambling and leaves his guy open or you don't make a proper check adjustment.

When they line up for certain formation, I mean, they're going fast, I think one thing is you've got to continue -- I know we were second half of the season, but you still had -- we went through and our base package, 10, 11 guys that played on Saturday had never played at Michigan before, nine of 11 in our sub package.

So it's a lot of guys with a lot of new faces, a lot of new opportunities, a lot of new individuals in those moments. There's several in the offense as well.

I think just the consistency of that execution at critical times when teams do things that maybe it's a little different than you expect or you go through and try to make those adjustments at halftime and make sure that everybody that's -- the 1s and 2s -- all get those same adjustments and are able to execute those because you never know who is going to be in those in those certain plays.

I think to continue to grow that, have to continue to adapt to that. I think as we continue to focus on what can we do to simplify and still not be too simple to where you guys can't give multiple looks to the opponent on both sides of the ball.

It comes back to us as coaches to continue to streamline what we do, I think in a lot of ways and be able to help our guys finish better. Obviously against a team like that that makes you pay right away for a mistake is costly, without question. And then they get that momentum and it works against you.

Because there's a window of time in that second quarter where things shifted against us and we weren't able to stop that.

But at the same time some of those were self-inflicted. Some of those things were just tough calls that go against you or whatever, however that works out and you have to be able to respond.

But at the same time it's learning, growing from that and being able to recognize we have a lot of football ahead of us. We absolutely do. That's the whole focus for me is to be able to adjust to things, adapt.

What we'll do, make some decisions, maybe some hard decisions, and then go with it and roll with it and let our guys go play, because I think we've show enough glimpses of things of what we can become, and it has to be consistent. And that's going to be the focus on both sides of the ball and special teams.

**Q. You mentioned mistakes defensively. Some of those mistakes seem like they might be -- do you believe there's a trust issue with the defense because it seems oftentimes those mistakes are coming when guys are trying to do other people's jobs than worrying about themselves?**

COACH ALLEN: I think we targeted three or four guys that we felt like had not been in that kind of maybe big-moment, stadium situation and try to do way too much. Just do your job. I think there's no question.

I don't know if it's so much necessarily the trust of guy around you or I'm trying to make more plays myself. And you trust the system -- if I just do my job, those plays with will come to me. That's a real challenge.

You've got a mindset of I want to do this to be able to create future things for myself. And that's great. But when you play within the system and you do your job, those plays come to you, I believe.

And so convincing a young guy of that is part of our responsibility and also convincing new guys of that, that haven't been here for a long time to understand that and to trust that part of the system.

Because I think the guys have done a good job. We prepared well last week. I thought we practiced well. Had good walk-throughs, good focus. But you're right, when you get in that moment can I trust the system enough to say if I do my job I'll make the plays I'm supposed to make. Then the team will have great success. I think that's a good way to phrase that.

**Q. It seemed like the first few weeks of the season the offensive line made some positive steps coming out of last season. At the midpoint of this year now, I guess, what do you feel you and Coach Bostad are getting out of that group?**

COACH ALLEN: I want to see it continue to elevate, for sure. I do think that Matt Bedford played his best game this past weekend, so seeing growth there and getting him healthier all the time.

As a group they continue to mesh and gel and work together. Obviously going against really good fronts and

going to go against another good front this week. Just have to continue to develop. And even kind of made some adjustments and try to add some things to what we want to become up front even in the run game. And saw some positive returns on that; want to keep building off of that.

And obviously the second half of the season needs to be their best. And so we've had a chance to kind of get those guys solidified in where they're at and where they're playing in those consistent spots. And I want to see them take these next six games and allow us to really be a unit that's on the rise, because that's really going to be the key for us on both sides of the ball -- D line, O line -- continue as we have a lot of new faces on D line this year, and O line has had a chance to be together for several games and have that continuity. So I expect them to continue to play better and better.

So obviously who you play has a big say so on that. And bottom line we have to do a continuously good job as a staff of just fundamentals and techniques, things we do well, keep building off that. To me that's going to be the focus this whole week and the last half of our season.

**Q. Aaron Casey, going into the season, there was a lot of expectations on his performance. He certainly has played well. Can you just talk about the way he's played and what you're getting from him?**

COACH ALLEN: Yeah, he continues to be one of our leaders that we need to continue to step up and play well, lead well. He continues to make plays at critical times for us, get a key tackle for loss, had a couple of sacks, caused a fumble we didn't get. We had two fumbles, didn't get either one of those.

Just has a great passion for what he does. I love his consistency. Love how he practices, the way he handles himself. He's a guy I can pull aside, talk to about, when the guys come off the field or even during the week. And just a guy that knows who we are, believes in who we are.

And has just been here as we've known, we've talked about his growth and what he's become. So, once again, just I'm challenging our guys -- we want to continue to be a unit. Want the linebackers to be a unit that's on the rise. Want our defense to be able to make some adjustments here.

And when you play against an offense of that caliber with that elite of a quarterback, you've got to be darned near perfect or else they'll make you pay. Those linebackers, they've got to own that, getting everybody lined up right and the checks and adjustments.

And he's doing a lot of good things with that. We've just gotta continue to get the whole group to play at his level of consistency and his level of execution each and every week.

You've got to have great linebackers. And I think he's a very special one for sure. And I want to see him have his best next six games as he finishes out the final phase of a regular season of his career here.

**Q. This might be a question more about Tayven than Brendan. Do you worry about kind of the last seven games kind of impacting his confidence or development kind of going forward, with having gone back and forth and maybe having him look over his shoulder? Do you worry about that lingering going forward? How has the psyche in that room been the last few weeks in particular?**

COACH ALLEN: I think the goal would be, obviously, you pick a guy and every game he just continues to improve and grow. So obviously at every position if you have a guy that is continuing to do that, then that progresses the way you would like for it to be. If it's not, you make a change.

So bottom line is, that position, I get that there's a little more to it. There's a lot of pressure on it, a lot of expectations. And that person is different than every other spot, I understand.

But everybody has to perform as well. So whoever that is, I want those guys to know that, there's no doubt they feel that pressure. And you don't want any guy in a position to look over your shoulder. But you also have to look forward and make plays and be a guy that's doing the things you need to do, for whatever the position is.

So bottom line is that I want those guys to feel that. They have to embrace that and want that, and be able to do everything they can to play their best on game day.

At the end of the day, it's performance-based assessment. So try and do a great job with that and allowing them to be able to grow and develop. But we have to evaluate it and make decisions from there.

Whoever the guy is and however that moves itself forward is the fact we want to make sure those guys understand the game plan, execute the game plan and put the team, as a coach does and as a player does, in that position that has to be able to rise up and take on that responsibility.

So obviously it's a tough position to play. And you get a lot of scrutiny good and bad. And you have to be able to handle all that and the ebbs and flows of that position and

what it demands.

I think it's something -- they're both young. It's not easy to do, without question. But at the same time we spend a lot of time with those guys and I feel like they're mentally in a good place, but at the same time you want to make sure that they continue to play better each week and that's the goal for that position and all positions.

**Q. I know you've said that you'll use the availability report in the past to kind of prevent disclosing too much about injuries. But Chris Turner's had some injury history this season already. Did you avoid anything serious for him with the remainder of the season on Saturday?**

COACH ALLEN: He's expected to practice this week as well, as Josh Henderson is expected to practice this week. This is a guy, I've commented on guys that may be coming back from being out as far as with Josh. He's expected to practice. We'll see how that goes as well. And Chris is expected to practice as well.

**Q. Last week, with more 1s in practice, I recall last week there was a lot of talk about how you could start faster and obviously you achieved that mission. The more you kind of look and watch that process play out, is there anything that maybe surprised you with how quick that worked? And I guess is there anything more as far as elongating that same level of intensity that you feel like you can kind of improve on?**

COACH ALLEN: No question it had a positive impact on our preparation. I think the balance is how much do you do with that? And I think that that's -- I've known some places where -- I've not been a part of them, but I've talked with coaches and they do that predominantly for their work.

And I really think there's also a time for us to be against the scouts for a variety of reasons.

But I think it has a place without question it's proven to be something that our guys responded to well this week. We're going to continue to do that this week as well as we prepare to play our very best.

And obviously now the next step is, okay, start strong and be able to consistently play well as a football team on both sides of the ball, at all positions because every position is being evaluated and being able to be in the spot where you've got to perform and do a great job of continuing to be on the rise. If you're not, then we have to figure out why.

If it's something we're doing as coaches we have to make adjustments. If it's something they're doing they have to

make adjustments. But we do it together.

Even as a staff, talking with our players as well. I think that's something we'll continue to do and to allow us to be able to keep getting better as a football team.

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