

Indiana University Football Media Conference

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Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Coach Tom Allen

Press Conference



Rutgers 31, Indiana 14

TOM ALLEN: Just a very disappointing performance today. Tough loss. Congratulate Coach Schiano. He's done a good job with his football team. They're 6-2 for a reason. Good physical football team.

Just too many mistakes. Special teams just hurt us, sadly, and inexcusable blocked punt. Obviously the points right before halftime, defense played hard up to that point there and did some good things, but obviously just were on the field too much and then gave up that long run at the end, which was really, really tough.

But just got to keep working. Got five games left. Just got to keep on finding a way to get better every week. Questions?

Q. Looking at the stats, not a lot of difference, but two things that stand out, they ran for 276 yards, and then the time of possession was really lopsided, 37 and a half to about 22 and a half. How disappointing you weren't able to get them off the field and slow down the run game?

TOM ALLEN: Very. I was concerned about that. That's what they've been able to do.

But just didn't do a good enough job on 1st downs, got too many 3rd and shorts, had a big quarterback gain that we knew they would do, and yeah, just frustrating couldn't get off.

Had a couple drives that I thought we should have, and either there was a penalty or just poor execution and just got to play better. Just really can't do that. I know we've got to be able to get off the field defensively, and cannot give that kind of run game. It just bleeds the clock and bleeds your energy and keeps our offense off the field. Just tough.

Q. With just the variety of changes you've tried to make offensively, whether it's personnel, play calling,

all those things, is there ever a concern for you that guys just become a little bit too discouraged, too consumed by the offensive struggles week to week to stay focused and keep pushing forward?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, that's a concern, there's no question. But at the same time, you just have to -- we've got many games left, and we've got to find a way to improve. Yeah, there's no doubt at this stage after playing this many games, you get guys that get down and get discouraged, and we've got to battle that, without question. That's where your leadership comes in from your players and coaches, as well.

But there's no doubt, very frustrating at the same time. But just got to keep battling, keep fighting.

Q. With morale being what it is and with the losses piling up, do you feel like your guys have an identity to fall back on to try to pull themselves out of it? What do you feel like the identity of this team is as you try to get things going forward?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I just think that you rely on the character of your guys and your coaches and just be able to stand strong in the face of adversity, self-inflicted or not, however it comes, wherever it comes from. Just to be able to continue to battle and continue to feel the accountability of just being able to come back every day and just keep working for the people around you and the people that you play for.

But yeah, it's definitely a challenging time. This was a tough loss for sure, one that we knew we needed to get. Just frustrating that we have those kind of mistakes.

It's not that they were necessarily forced, just things that we've got to be able to be better at. But once again, hats off to them. Not going to take anything away from them. They ran the ball well and made the plays on special teams they needed to make.

Q. Do you feel the season kind of starting to slip away, and what are the steps that you guys need to take to keep it from slipping away?

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TOM ALLEN: Yeah, there's no question. I don't think I feel it, I think it's a reality that you get to this stage of the year and you've got several losses now in a row. That's a tough reality. That's where you don't hide from it. You've got to address it head on, and you've got to really work hard together to help your guys.

So we've got to do a better job as coaches, make better calls and put them in better position, and those guys got to finish, as well.

It's all of us together, and we're all locked arms, and we're all in this together. It's what we are. It's what we do. You just continue to teach how to handle challenging times and how to handle a chance to put the stake in the ground and change momentum, which is what we need to do.

We've obviously got another opportunity next week, which is what is what we're facing, on the road again, but at the same time, it's about us right now being able to band together and continue to battle. That's what we're going to do. We're just going to lock arms and fight.

Q. You kind of alluded to it right there, but you guys are 2-20 in your last 22 Big Ten contests. What needs to be different to change that going forward?

TOM ALLEN: We've got to execute better in regards to scoring more points. Haven't scored enough points to win games. Keep the defense off the field. The defense has got to get key stops at key times. Special teams can't give up a blocked punt. Those are going to get you beat pretty much every time that happens statistically.

So not a good situation to be in. Not a good place to be, without question.

But it falls on me. I'm the one in charge. I'm the one responsible. This is on me.

Q. What ultimately led to your decision to go with Brendan at quarterback? What did you see out of him today? I know you said earlier in the week that whoever you go with this week was going to be your guy the rest of the season. Do you still feel that way?

TOM ALLEN: Well, I said it was going to be the guy for the rest of the game. We weren't going to rotate them back and forth in the game.

But at the same time, obviously he did some good things. Obviously got to continue to grow and develop. But they're both young, so obviously continue to allow them to play and continue to get better is the key, and I just feel like he

had earned the right to have that opportunity.

Did some things that were positive, without question, but still got to generate more in the throw game, which is what we're trying to do. Bottom line is we have ran the football better against a really good defense in the box, but not good enough in the throw game to create points, which is what we've got to do, because when you score points, that energizes the defense, as well, gives them a lot of momentum whether they're on the field or not. It has a psychological effect, without question. It's just the reality of how you've got to win. We know that.

But I do think that continue to build off of what he's doing well and continue to grow this football team.

Obviously Dexter continues to be a guy that's in the periphery as far as his development and his physical recovery from where he's at. Just want to continue to help give our team the best chance we have to have success on game day.

Q. It seemed like the blocked punt there was like some pre-snap confusion just with the team. Did Rutgers do something that was --

TOM ALLEN: It wasn't confusing, we were just checking based on what they were showing, and we have a whole check system, so we were just going through our checks.

When they line up a certain way, we leave ourselves enough time on the play clock to do that. But they out-executed us in that regard, in regards to being able to get the call they wanted and us executing what we had called.

But no, we were just checking, checking the call based on their initial alignment.

Q. Was it something unexpected that --

TOM ALLEN: No, but we had worked on it through -- just in those situations we've got to make sure everybody, every single guy, when they're bringing all those guys, everybody has got to make his block.

Obviously I'll go back and watch it on film, but we were working on them doing that. Had different things -- we could have checked to a certain part of it that we didn't which we actually did later on after that kid tipped it to Lou Moore to make sure there was no issue with it.

But at the same time, we felt good about how we had it schemed up. Wasn't good enough.

