

# Indiana University Football

## Media Conference

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Bloomington, Indiana, USA

## Tom Allen

### Press Conference



Indiana 20, Wisconsin 14

TOM ALLEN: Just really proud of our team, just their ability to stay together, keep battling. What I saw this week in practice is what you saw today.

Obviously had some tough times. Defense had the ball up. Offense had the ball up. Wasn't always pretty. But really physical, good football team we just played that I knew was going to be a challenge.

But at the same time we knew where we are with the team earlier this week, last Sunday, that it was a four-game season. The goal is to be 1-0 after each week. That's been the focus, the playoff mentality. We know we got to win each week. We don't talk beyond whoever is next. It was about finding a way to get ready for Wisconsin.

Proud of our team, the way they stayed together today, stayed together this season. Got to keep getting a little bit better every single week. Saw some signs of that this week with our defense coming up huge. Thought our special teams was really big. That big 60-yard punt that James had really flipped the field, put us in a great position. Defense took advantage of that, offense scored just enough points. Obviously didn't get enough production in the second half. Need to get better at that.

At the same time thought that we are just trying to find a way to win a football game and our guys were able to do that.

Really appreciative, our crowd was awesome. It makes a difference in the fourth quarter, makes a difference on third downs. Beautiful day today obviously with the weather. We were fortunate with that. At the same time appreciate them coming out, supporting us.

Questions.

**Q. Aaron Casey today, kind of an obvious one, but how important is that performance, especially from a senior, a captain, a leader?**

TOM ALLEN: Well, it's massive. It's what you need in a game like this. You need those guys to step up and make those kind of plays. Just gave him the game ball in the locker room there. Without even knowing the stats, I saw it live, in person, I knew it was special. It's everything. It's leadership.

A couple weeks he didn't play very well. He took ownership for that. He came, we talked. He's just a special, special person. He's the leader of our defense, the leader of our team. Not up for giving many speeches. He doesn't need to. He just needs to play like that, let his play do the talking. He leads the defense when he's on the field.

You have to have your best players step up and play really well in games like this, a game you have know you have to win, against a really good team. Proud of him and proud of all the guys around him.

**Q. No turnovers, only a couple penalties. Other than that one missed tackle for the long pass, no mistakes really. How valid is it you can show your guys when you play like this this is what can happen?**

TOM ALLEN: Here is what we've been able to do. We've been able to show them in segments. Lock early into play. It's more than just that little segment. Those segments have been growing.

No question you can look at this, we'll go through and talk about all the things physically you have to do to win a football game. Just like last week, even though we were close, we lost.

There's four things that we say you have to do to win a football game. We lost all four of those last week. Even though the game was close, had our opportunity with two minutes to go. We didn't win because we weren't executing and getting those things done the right way.

You can take a game like this, say, Guys, this is what you do. When you do those things, you find a way to win. Protecting the football is a big deal. Got two takeaways,



plus two. That's the biggest stat in football. If you have to pick one, guys can argue different things, I am just telling you, I've been doing this a long, long time. It's about protecting the football on one side, taking it away on the other.

When you take the ball away from somebody else, your chances of winning go up. 80 plus percent. You got to continue to do that.

I challenge our guys. I got this from Coach Tomlin over the summer about challenging them to be continuously on the rise. That's the expectation that I have as your coach, that you are continually on the rise as a player, as a person and as a football team.

We've been challenging our position groups to be continually on the rise, get a little bit better every single week. We have to be playing our best football down the stretch. These last two have been good signs in the right direction. There are things to clean up, get better at. I think that's a testament to what you saw today.

**Q. Donovan McCulley made the one-handed grab and everything. The defensive pass interference calls on him. How important has his maturation process been for you, go-to guy for you?**

TOM ALLEN: There's no question, similar to what we talk about with what Aaron means to the defense in making plays. D Mac to me is a guy I've always challenged. I've always felt like that he was a guy that should have the mindset that they just can't guard me. If the ball is anywhere near me, I'll going to come down with it. They're going to have to grab me, hold me, interfere with me in order to make a play.

If that continues, it becomes very dangerous. You have the chance to come down with a ball if you seek and do that, but also a chance to create a penalty, which gives us first downs in that situation. Huge weapon for us. Continues to develop and continues to elevate his play.

Just keep making those plays because we're going to need him down the stretch here. Proud of D Mac. He's coming into his own and he's playing the way I expect he should.

**Q. Tell me about the discussion on the sideline to kick the field goal late. There was some risk in that.**

TOM ALLEN: There was some risk, yeah. I think, too, it's like, here is the deal, it became about timeouts. That became the big part of the discussion.

Obviously you can pin 'em down. You kick a long field

goal, you have a chance of getting blocked. Obviously you're up by six, they can still score, kick the extra point, beat you. They couldn't kick the field goal.

We trusted Chris. He's been kicking really well. I know he missed one earlier. Strong wind against his back. We actually chose the wind for the fourth quarter. We had to make that decision at halftime. That was part of our discussion for that situation. It worked out in our favor.

We talked about punting it, trying to pin 'em down inside the 10. The problem is, you're only down by three. We felt like since only a minute 10 to go, no timeouts, having to score a touchdown, that's hard to do. Obviously it proved out to be a good decision.

**Q. Every season we see teams that maybe get to 1-5, 2-6, then the guys start mailing it in. Your guys stayed in the fight. Why do you think that happened?**

TOM ALLEN: I just attribute it to our culture, I really do. Our kids believe in what we're doing. They care about each other. It's way bigger than just a guy out there making plays for himself. They believe in what we're doing.

I think that just showed in the way they played the last couple weeks. That's a tough road game, a tough crowd, tough to muster after a disappointing loss. A game we all knew we needed to win. Now you got to go on the road to play a top-10 team in the country. You saw the response.

I think it's a testament to our leadership. We got you two six-year seniors, Noah and Aaron Casey, Michael on offence, been here a long time as well. Those kind of guys. Matt Bedford is a guy that has elevated in his leadership on the offensive side of the football. I think that matters.

Cam Camper, he's quiet as well. He cares a bunch. He's a guy that helps lead. I'd say it's our culture, the leadership on our team and our coaches. They're just continuing to be relentless.

It's earmuffs and blinders every single week. Come back to work, no matter what happened, good or bad, attack the next day. Easier said than done, no doubt. Definitely hard to do. To see them rewarded for that today is pretty special. We know we got to go do it again next week. We're going to enjoy this for 24 hours.

**Q. Secondary is battling some injuries. Talk about Jordan Shaw, Phillip Dunnam. How did they succeed today?**



TOM ALLEN: I'll tell you what, just really proud of them. Johnson made some plays, had a PBU. Jordan, a true freshman. Got his biggest taste last week. Made some big plays. We made the decision to have him start as our husky because of the style of offense we were going to play today. He rose up.

Freshman mistakes. He's the one that fell down on their second touchdown. He's going to have to grow through all that. At the same time to me he had a huge, which I thought was going to be a pick on their sideline, a PBU on third down.

You mentioned Phillip, another young guy. Second year, really first year playing consistently. You have to have those guys rise up.

At the end, Louis Moore, he wanted to be on their best receiver. We had it switched the other way around. No, coach, I want this guy right now to finish off the game. That's what you want. You want a guy to have that kind of confidence, swagger, edge about him. He was able to finish as well.

Proud of our secondary. Guys are stepping up. It's got to continue, there's no doubt about it. In a game like this, when it comes down to every single play matters, those guys were big.

**Q. You just mentioned every single play matters. You talk about needing more from your offense in the second half. Your defense being able to continually shut down Wisconsin, what does that do for your defense to build that momentum going forward?**

TOM ALLEN: I tell you, it gives you a lot of confidence. There's nothing like game day success. I said it for the last several weeks. We need some game day success, reinforce, give them some positive energy to say, Man, if you just stay the course, you're going to be rewarded on game day. They finally got it today.

Our offense was very, very effective in the first half. Time of possession was 33 minutes to theirs was the difference. That paid off in the second half. We weren't on the field very much at all in the first half because defense was getting three-and-outs, offense was staying on the field, even though we didn't get as many points as we should have with the drives we had.

But those lack of reps in the first half really paid dividends. Allowed us to keep coming back. We don't care. We don't blink. That is another phrase we have here. Our guys were saying in it locker room afterwards. It don't matter. I don't care what happens. I don't care if they get a first

down or not. We go back on the field. It's our expectation to get the stop or a takeaway. Three-and-out, takeaway, that's all we're talking about. Obviously we got two huge takeaways in the second half. The guys were able to bow up.

I think all those things together continue to build towards what you're trying to get, which is a very confident football team. Doesn't matter what position you get put in, you got to rise up and make a play.

**Q. Felt like there were a lot of potential turning points in the game today on both sides. How encouraging is it to see your guys come up with the responses?**

TOM ALLEN: It's huge. You think about I stand before you, you talk about a tough loss. You talk about those exact same scenarios where you didn't make a play 'cause they're game changers.

We tell our team this: Every play is the most important play in the game because you don't know which one is going to be that play that turns the momentum.

I'm always thinking about plays in games. We had the roughing the passer. That was huge. That was third down. We're off the field. They end upped driving, scoring on that drive. Those things have been just like we can't let that negatively affect what's next. Really focused on that. Been working hard on that.

Most of the time we came up with those big plays. That's what you want. You want a team that expects to make those plays. You want players that want to be put in those positions. You want that quarterback to throw the ball to the guy that you're guarding. You want to be able to be the guy that's going to get the pressure.

You talk about in the last drive. Anytime you get an inbounds tackle, that's a lot of seconds off the clock. That sack by Ace was huge, huge to get tackles, and allowed us to be able to finish it out.

Tom too many name, but that's what you try to do, put your guys in position, then they got to make plays. Proud of our players, proud of our coaching staff.

Appreciate you guys. Have a great night. LEO.

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