

Indiana University Football Media Conference

Monday, September 9, 2024

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Curt Cignetti

Press Conference



CURT CIGNETTI: Haven't seen the guys in a few days playing on Friday night. They've had a couple days off. Back at it for our prep for UCLA, first conference game.

Last week felt good about the way we played, from the first play to the last with intensity. Got a lot of guys involved, which was a positive. Cut down the penalties overall and won on offense and protected the quarterback better.

Defense, result was good but not totally clean. We had some things on the back end that against a good team get exposed. So got to clean that up. Ready for a tough contest Saturday.

Q. Curt, in terms of UCLA and scouting them, Malloe, their defensive coordinator, said he was going to keep the same system they used last year. Is that what you saw kind of on the film against Hawaii, and how have you gone about scouting Bieniemy? He hasn't been in college in over a decade?

CURT CIGNETTI: UCLA, a lot of tradition there. Three straight years of bowl games, 25 wins the last three years. You look at us, nine wins the last three years going on the road. Somehow we're favored, which doesn't mean anything.

I'm sure that coming off their opener they were happy they won but probably not pleased with the way they played overall. They did go in shorthanded, minus two offensive tackles. But good program like that, I'm sure they have something to prove.

In terms of your question more specifically, the new defensive coordinator was on staff last year. The package is the same with some tweaks. Little more pressure perhaps.

It's really hard to gauge because Hawaii did not use a tight end in the game. It was all spread out, four wide receiver sets. So we don't have a lot to go on there.

Obviously an opponent like this, you have all their games

from last year, which we've watched during the cut-ups. So the faces have changed. Schematically expect it to be more similar than different.

Offensively, new offensive coordinator, came from the NFL obviously. So you've got one game to go on there.

But what I would say about them overall is a lot of really good athletes, a lot of pretty guys, really good team speed. They've got a couple guys up front on the D-line, 93 in particular. He's a big guy with explosion and backers are very athletic. Offensively the receiving group is highly skilled. The Notre Dame kid had ten catches.

Of course it all starts with the quarterback. He can really wing it, and he's mobile, and he's a very talented guy. So this is a talented football team.

Q. Kind of following on the question of preparing for a team, what are the advantages and disadvantages in your mind of having played two games as opposed to one at this point early in the season, a little bit more on film of you, but also more time on task for you compared to a team like UCLA that's only played one game and then had the week off?

CURT CIGNETTI: I think you hit it on the head. Having two games under your belt is beneficial in terms of your team development. In terms of the tape, maybe they've got some more relevant stuff to look at from us than we have of them.

Q. Again, obviously the opponent, but after going back and watching Kurtis and even Tayven, I know he didn't get a ton of snaps, but overall how did you feel about the way those two guys played after watching them on film and grading them?

CURT CIGNETTI: I think Kurtis had the opportunity to make his drops, make his reads, and deliver the ball, which he didn't always have that opportunity in the first game. I thought our protection, we cleaned that up significantly. If you want a good quarterback, you've got to have protection. We separated on the outside, and he delivered the ball, and he played well. Wasn't perfect, but he played



well.

What I really liked was you could see kind of the cohesiveness of the team on both sides, guys cheering each other on, congratulating each other, him taking charge. It was great to get a lot of guys involved.

Tayven came in, I thought he played nicely, delivered the ball, ran it too. So he should feel good about his outing coming out of that game.

Q. You've coached in the Rose Bowl, I believe once with Alabama.

CURT CIGNETTI: Right.

Q. What does it mean for you to go to that building and for a place that's kind of hallowed ground for fans of the traditional Big Ten schools, how do you kind of enjoy going to these iconic college football arenas?

CURT CIGNETTI: Rose Bowl has a lot of tradition for people that follow football. For me and the team, it's more of a business trip, whether we're playing in the Rose Bowl or in a parking lot. It's all the same.

Our preparation has to be excellent starting today, string together a good sequence of nows and prepare to the best of our ability to give ourselves the best chance.

It's going to be a little longer trip out there, bus to Indianapolis, fly out of there into L.A., about an hour to the hotel, little bit of a time change, but it's no big deal.

The venue, it's never really played a big part in it from a coaching standpoint, and we're looking forward to playing.

Q. How would you assess the way your offensive line has played for the first two weeks overall as you head into your first Big Ten game, especially in your run game where you've had so much success on the ground so far?

CURT CIGNETTI: I think those guys are working hard, and they're developing. I don't know that we were really tested last week, and against Florida International, we ran the ball well. Wasn't real pleased with some of the protection issues we had. We'll be tested this week like we have not been tested.

Q. What do you feel has allowed, defensively, Coach Haines to kind of translate a lot of the identity he had at James Madison in terms of the strong run defense and tackles for loss, things like that, translate that to Indiana.

CURT CIGNETTI: I think it's a culture, a mindset, an identity, and a philosophy. The program culture and mindset that we're an attacking type of team, relentless competitor, playing fast and physical, one play at a time.

Then his style, our style of defense is we want to turn those guys loose up front and wreak havoc and disruption. We've got pretty good speed at linebacker, where guys can fit the gaps and cover.

His defense keeps you off balance. He's going to find ways to create TFLs and sacks and free guys up or get them good matchups. We've got some good players over there.

Q. What are you seeing from Andison Coby? Obviously had a nice touchdown reception there. And what do you need to see from him?

CURT CIGNETTI: He's a speed guy. Had a couple of opportunities in the opener. One time we didn't throw it to him. One time the ball was just slightly underthrown. Had our first touchdown. He definitely has a role, improving every day. It's a deep receiving corps, and we try to use those guys in a way that helps us reach optimum success.

Q. There's probably only so much you can glean from spring, summer, fall from an ethos point. I'm wondering what you've learned, what you like and maybe haven't liked so far, again, ethos so far here.

CURT CIGNETTI: I think we've come a long way. I felt that way before the opener, but we had to put it on tape. And I've said that numerous times in these conferences.

So I like the way we started in the opener. I didn't like the way we finished offensively. I thought defense we were pretty solid other than the last drive of the first half.

Last week I like the fact that we played a team that we were obviously better than, a team that was struggling, but we took it to them from the get go and kept the pedal to the metal to the end. When I say pedal to the metal, we weren't laying it on. We weren't throwing the ball all over the place. We ran it over 70 percent of the time. But we played with intensity throughout the game and energy.

Q. You mentioned that you personally, the venue doesn't necessarily matter for you and your team, but when you're dealing with guys that are 18, 19, 20, 21 years old, how do you keep them in check -- keep them when you get there, to the venue, to the site. How do you keep them mentally engaged on the game itself?

CURT CIGNETTI: That's a big part of my job to make sure we eliminate the noise and the clutter and everybody understand why we're there. The guys that make that trip will understand that.

Q. I know that you don't put a lot of importance on venues and stuff like that, but this is the first conference game, first conference game against one of the new opponents, also in this historic venue, there has to be some importance for you and your team to go out and play well this week.

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, because it's next game up. Every game is the most important game. You guys can write your stories and your angles on how important X game is relative to Y game, but they all count as one game.

It's the first conference game, so we're excited about that, and we want to get off to a good start.

Q. Broadly speaking at least, in what we've seen on game days, it seems like the first couple weeks you've gotten through fairly healthy. Kind of where's Donaven? Has anybody else picked up something that's a medium or long term concern for you injury-wise?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, every game you get guys nicked up a little bit. Right now it's too early to say where we're at. I don't make a habit talking about injuries. We do have to turn in an injury report to the Big Ten office before the game, which we will. So we'll see who's out there today and how we look.

Q. Coach, Ethan Garbers of UCLA, pretty dual threat guy, pretty mobile with his legs. What are your expectations for Aiden and really the defensive unit as a whole to kind of contain him?

CURT CIGNETTI: The defense, because Aiden is just one of 11 guys on the defense. Number one, you've always got to stop the run and you've got to pressure the quarterback. With this guy, we've got to keep in the pocket, can't let him get out of the pocket and extend plays because he's extremely capable with his arm and his legs, and he's got weapons on the outside. So we've got to do a good job of coverage.

So it all starts up front with the run game and then putting the pressure on the quarterback in the pass game and disrupting his rhythm.

Q. With the secondary, you kind of mentioned cleaning up some stuff on the back end. Is it

communication? You've got to play that first team group together throughout when the game has been competitive. What have you seen, what do you need to see from that group in the secondary?

CURT CIGNETTI: Again, we got away with most of the things except one time or twice in this past game, but there were four or five other things that could potentially have been a real problem.

It starts with recognition, communication, and then assignment. Playing your assignment and doing your job. The situations that I mentioned were sort of a combination of all those.

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