

Indiana University Football Media Conference

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Coach Curt Cignetti

Press Conference



Indiana 52, Charlotte 14

CURT CIGNETTI: They had us on our heels, our defense, with some shifting motioning, running the ball right at us, I know defensive coaches aren't particularly pleased. We weren't really crisp and sharp offensively early, either. We missed some opportunities, but we did score a lot of points, had another dominant win. I thought special teams overall was solid and we'll enjoy this one for 24 hours and get ready for conference play.

Q. Curt, you talk about not being sharp in some phases early, but how important is it for maybe a team to learn how to play through that and to almost kind of fix its mistakes as a game goes along rather than needing a halftime or certainly a week?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, and I noticed that in August camp, too. The highs, we didn't have those high highs and low lows. The practices were more consistent. The lows weren't as low. I think while we weren't totally on point when the game started, like you said, we didn't turn the ball over. We didn't do things that could really change the momentum of the football game, and eventually we seized the momentum and dominated the game. So I think this team has learned a lot and I think they've developed some pretty strong intangibles. We certainly have strong character on this football team and a lot of really good guys as well as good players. We're looking forward to what's ahead. I think the whole key right now is maintaining our focus. We can't have any distractions and we got to stay focused, humble, and hungry.

Q. Can you expand on that a little bit? You mentioned on Thursday on the radio show you were a little concerned during the week you thought he was half -- asleep is I think the word you used.

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, sometimes there's a fine line between reality and creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. They had a big win last week. I hope they don't have a letdown. And then you're looking for the letdown. Pretty soon you're finding oh, we're having a letdown, you know,

during the week. I thought we had a solid week of practice and while we've started games better, it was a solid win.

Q. Curt, your running backs continue to be basically interchangeable and equally productive, can you comment on their performance today?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, that's been pretty much the plan the that's five years, six years since I have been a head coach, but of course it all starts up front with the O-line and tight ends and we have quality running backs, too. The fact that we're balanced, we can run well and that helps the passing game and the running game.

Q. Hey, Coach. Seems like I ask you this every week about Kurtis Rourke. Once again really sharp today. You've had some really good quarterbacks in the past. How well is he playing this position for you guys?

CURT CIGNETTI: I think he's playing pretty well. He will be the first to tell you it wasn't perfect and he came back from what I thought was a really outstanding performance against UCLA with a pretty solid performance today but that's why we recruited him, too, he had already proven himself on tape. I am extremely pleased to see the progress he's made since he started playing games. The games are different from practice and the last three or four quarterbacks we have taken have been players of the year in the conference and one-year starters but like him, they played somewhere else. They all struggle in the spring and then really start to get it in fall camp, so I like where he's at. We got to continue to protect him.

Q. Coach, you mentioned the running back but it seems like there's somebody in the wide receiver room that steps up differently. There's somebody on defense, Jamari Sharpe with four pass breakups today filling in for D'Angelo and then Quitero, the kicker, does that speak to the character and uniqueness of this team that it seems when somebody goes down or something is needed, somebody else steps up?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, a little bit but we're deeper at some positions than others. We're deep at running back, we're really deep at receiver, not quite as deep at Jamari's



position. Glad to see him have some success. There were a lot of guys on the team last year who have bought in. We have great unity and character on this football team. That's easier to have when you're having success. We haven't really had a whole lot of adversity since the season started, but when you do, it should make it stronger, but we've got depth at some spots, not so much in others. I was glad to see Sharpe because he's a young guy. He's progressing.

Q. Maybe more from a processing standpoint week-to-week with -- and in-game adjustments, I guess. What's working so well with Mike Shanahan's system and game plans that have allowed offense to put up the numbers they have so.

CURT CIGNETTI: That one, well, you know that's my system, don't you? (Laughter) No, Mike calls them all and Tino and Bob and all those guys and I'll interject once in a while. I just think it's a real group effort and we're not afraid to throw something up there and our guys are quick learners, we have a lot of experienced players who understand football and can handle a pretty heavy plate and if I can execute it, you're just going to put the defense in more conflict.

Q. Coach, your team has only given up six points in the second half this season. I'm curious today after the 14 points Charlotte scored what was the message from you or Bryant Haines or even somebody like Aiden Fisher from the locker room?

CURT CIGNETTI: After halftime? When we go in at halftime, I always do a little interview on the field. The coaches are huddled up in the coach's room and I will make my quick two or three points about big picture stuff and then coaches make their adjustments and then they grab their guys and I'm not with them when they do that, so, but, you know, we did come out and dominate the second half and going in, one of the messages to the team was, look, they got players. They're going to come out ready the play, but they do wear down and I thought there was a point where there where they wore down.

Q. Curt, your offense has scored of 29 of your 38 drives, you're averaging 50 points a game. The defense has only allowed 37 total points and I know you have high expectations and still have those and satisfaction is not in a coach's vernacular and you just became the first coach ever at IU to start 4-0, would you consider that a good start at the beginning of the season?

CURT CIGNETTI: I think it's a pretty decent start.

Q. Yeah, I wanted to ask you if you remember after week one the way the second half went offensively, I don't recall you being overly thrilled with that, you scored like 77 after that. Last week and now, when you are in that process of reflecting on week one to now, where do you feel like offensively you have evolved the most?

CURT CIGNETTI: We weren't pleased with that last quarter and a half of offense and penalties and pressures on the quarterback. We're really behind the sticks. Some bad dine and distances. The second game of the year, the opponent wasn't very good, but we played well and I think that was good for our guys offensively and we played real well against UCLA. We have a lot of guys on offense that have played successful winning football and now they're taking it to the Big 10.

MODERATOR: All right thanks, coach.

CURT CIGNETTI: Thank you.