

Indiana University Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 28, 2024

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Curt Cignetti

Press Conference



Indiana 42, Maryland 28

CURT CIGNETTI: Okay, good win. Far from perfect, trust me. 4-0 in the turnover ratio against us, had not turned it over going into the game one time and still won by two scores. But defense really responded to every one of those turnovers.

There's a lot of corrections to make, but it was a good effort, a gutty effort.

You could feel the fans out there. I'm glad that they keep improving in the attendance area. I thought that was a good turnout, and good is the enemy of great, so let's have a great turnout. Let's sell it out next week or next time we're at home and figure out how to make it even louder because that's what we want to do; we want to be the best in everything we do.

Even when we're good, even when we perform good, we're not satisfied. But it was a good turnout.

We're 5-0, and in 57 years -- I'm older than that, by the way. But this isn't the end for us. I'm proud of the team and everything they've accomplished.

I felt like we've made good progress in the off-season, in the winter, spring, summer, but we had to put it on film. We can play better than we played today.

Q. You talked last week that adversity was coming. You mentioned the four turnovers, gave up a long touchdown run. Talk about your team's ability to overcome that and how beneficial can this be going forward?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, there were a lot of good responses in that game. The defense responded to offensive turnovers. The offense responded to touchdowns given up by the defense. We responded more than they did.

So there was really a lot that went on in that game.

There's no doubt about it. Winning is good because it deepens belief in confidence and success, which leads to confidence and belief, which leads to success. You've still got to put the work in, but strengthens that confidence and belief.

Q. In the same vein, talk about your team's energy. How impressive was it no matter what the setback was, whether it was some Maryland success offensively, a turnover, whatever, they kept the energy up, kept coming after Maryland on both sides of the ball?

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, that's us. We want to play every play like it's 0-0. Never too high, never too low. Something bad happens, okay, we're going to play this play. You get 11 guys playing that way consistently, then you've got a chance.

Q. Without watching the film, the defensive line in terms of getting a consistent rush on Billy Edwards and being disruptive, how important was that to the overall effectiveness of that group today? You didn't rotate a lot with those starters. They played more so than they have all season. How impressed were you with their sustained effort today?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, I don't know how many sacks we had total. Five? Okay. He seemed like he was on the ground on awful lot early in the game, which is what we wanted to do.

We just have to -- when we have a chance to kind of go for the jugular, we've got to get a little better at that. But they've got some playmakers. They've got some guys that get on top of you. They got us in a defense we didn't want to be in on the long run.

But that's where it all starts, up front. We're experienced up front. We think it's one of our strengths, and it was definitely one of the areas that they weren't feeling too great about coming into the game, and we needed a big win there, and I think we got it.

Q. Coach, on the last punt you put in a lot of

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

second-teamers in there and got the punt block. Can you speak to their effort on that play in the last minute and a half of the game?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, that was awesome. I have no idea what happened. I was taking my headset off and giving it to somebody behind me and I completely missed it. I just wish we would have picked it up and scored.

Q. Ty Felton only had five catches; I think he only broke free once. What was the defensive plan on him, and how satisfied were you?

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, I think he went out, didn't he? And didn't return, right? It's hard for him to have a big day when he's not on the field.

Q. Up until that point, though, you kept him --

CURT CIGNETTI: What did he have? He had five for 38, yeah. But Hemby made some.

We did a pretty good job, and it started up front with the pressure. They got on top of us a couple times, though.

Q. When you talk about the way your team responded to the adversity with Curtis specifically, obviously he had the couple interceptions at the beginning of the game and the three turnovers overall, but how proud are you of the way that he constantly responded to every setback?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, I mean, he responded like I kind of felt like he would. I didn't think he'd be flustered by the two interceptions, and he wasn't.

When we had our one-on-one opportunities, we were winning, and we played well when we played with tempo, the two-minute drive and some of the other times. He's a grisly old vet. He's got to hold on to that ball a little better in the pocket when he runs it.

Q. Omar and Sarratt had a number of clutch catches. Can you talk about their play?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah. They were winning their one-on-ones when it was press coverage, and we were getting them the ball, and I was glad to see Donaven won his one-on-one in the red area. That was a play we were hoping to be able to get called against zero blitz coverage.

We felt like that was a match-up that was in our favor going into the game, and it turned out to be that way.

Q. You mentioned the fans. I want to ask you how

valuable you felt like the noise that they made and just their overall impact was.

CURT CIGNETTI: Oh, it's extremely valuable. Players feed off of that energy. Look, it's all about energy, right? You've got to have energy to do anything, and the fans are supplying the energy and the players are feeding off of that energy.

I don't know how many points it's worth, but it's really important, and I think we got everything moving in the right direction here.

Q. I know you have confidence in your team on both sides of the ball, but both sides did a lot of things today, positives, in responding on the offensive end and defense stepping up when they needed to. Did you learn anything about your team today?

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, I think you learn about your team every week. You play 12 regular season games, you learn about them in the off week, too. I thought this was a good challenge for us, and we outlasted them. We did a lot of good things. But there's a lot of things we can do better.

Q. There's been a lot made about this being a, quote-unquote, new Indiana team this year. From an atmospheric standpoint and from a result standpoint on the field, do you think you guys are showing that so far this season?

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, I don't know what the old Indiana was other than what I watched on tape or maybe looked in a record book.

We are what we are, and we have a blueprint and a plan and a philosophy how to play the game. It's all about people and processes. I think we've got a chance to be a good football team. Todd Blackledge said at the end of the UCLA game that this is a good football team, Indiana. You've got to prove it every day, every play.

Q. With Zach Horton, I know he only had one catch today; it was a pretty good one. He may not show up in the stat sheet a lot, but his blocking and the toughness, how important is that for the offense in terms of --

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, well, I'm glad other coaches point that out, too, when they watch us on tape or scout us, how valuable he is. It's not all about his touches. He does a lot of great things for us offensively. He's really a blood-and-guts hard-nosed tough guy with talent.

He's a tremendous football player.



Q. 150 yards on the ground; obviously it was tough at some points in this game, but how important is it to have that versatility with a couple guys getting in the mix?

CURT CIGNETTI: We play those three backs every game, and they've been really consistent. If we didn't turn it over four times, maybe we would have had 200.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports