

# Indiana University Football

## Media Conference

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## Curt Cignetti

### Press Conference



CURT CIGNETTI: Excited to get back at it. Bye week came at a good time. Very physical game against Michigan, good football team, a lot of good players.

Excited about this week's opportunity against Ohio State. Obviously an excellent football team. One of the favorites to win the National Championship. A lot of great players, extremely well-coached. Their tradition speaks for itself, so it's a big game for us because it's this game coming up.

We treat them all alike. If there was a better way to prepare for a certain team, we'd do that for every team.

We have to stack moments, meetings, practices and days to give ourselves the best chance to be successful on Saturday. I'm confident in our team that we'll prep well this week, play well, go in there, play with poise and play our game. Excited about the opportunity.

**Q. This is the first time we've had a chance to talk to you since the contract was announced. From your perspective, what about kind of maybe not just the top-line stuff that fans are going to see, but the assurances, the support, the structure, the added structure the contract provides?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, I'd like to keep it to the game, but brief comment on that. The university has made a very significant financial commitment to football in a lot of areas, and I'm appreciative of the opportunity and to lead the program and continue to develop the program moving forward. I'm excited about our future.

We've done a lot of good things. We've got a lot of people behind us. This is where I wanted to be. I played the what-if game with my wife and my agent three weeks ago, four weeks ago, and it all pointed to where I'm at right now.

I'm glad we have that behind us and now we can focus on what we should be focused on this time of year.

**Q. With Ohio State, their offense, you've made a habit of studying offenses of Ryan Day, Chip Kelly. What**

**are your expectations from that group and what have you seen on film from them this season?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, very skilled at the skill positions, and the offensive line is good. Obviously everybody knows about the running backs, receivers, quarterback, tight ends. Chip Kelly has done a great job offensively everywhere he's been. They've got an excellent scheme. It puts defenses in conflict.

They have it all. They really do.

**Q. You guys have been relatively or actually really healthy all year, lost Drew Evans before Michigan, put Tyler Stevens in, a guy you know. What did you think of his performance and the offensive line in general? Seemed like the second half might have been the first time they struggled all year. What are your thoughts on how they played?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, I thought Tyler did a good job. I'm proud of him going in and playing the way he did.

Second half we did not play well offensively, aside from FIU the last quarter and a half. That came -- I give Michigan credit; they've got a lot of good players on defense. They bowed up. We didn't make the plays we normally make when we had the opportunity to make them, and there were too many pressures on the quarterback. We got behind the sticks and chains and open the second half with an interception. Certainly didn't help things. Fortunately our defense and special teams saved the day.

But if you're going to win a championship, championship teams find a way to win those kind of games. That's the one thing about this team. This is a team. Everybody thinks alike. Everybody is focused on the same thing. We've been fairly consistent from beginning to end.

It's not always perfect. There's always improvements. But we certainly had some issues in the second half against Michigan.

We've got to protect the quarterback better, and we've got to make the plays that we've been making all year long on



a consistent basis.

**Q. Talking about those issues, how important was it having the bye week when you did to be able to shore those issues up and how confident are you that those have been taken care of?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, to me what happened in the second half was more of an execution thing, and sometimes you get the momentum and you ride the wave. Then sometimes you're struggling and you just continue to struggle.

I think the off week came at a great time because it was a physical football game. We've played a number of games in a row. It was good for everybody to catch a breather and get refreshed and recharged and gave us a little extra time on the next opponent.

**Q. When you were hired you talked about no self-imposed limitations. As the season has gone on have you seen the ceiling for what's possible at Indiana expand as the wins have piled up?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, I think it's all out there. I think any P4 school with the proper commitment is capable of being successful and being ultimately successful because really the difference between victory and defeat in most of these games is very slight, slim. It's all attainable.

We've put ourselves in a position right now to be talked about quite a bit. That's nice. It doesn't help us prepare, doesn't help us play any better. But we've got some great opportunities ahead of us.

This is a team that's capable, and the only limitations on this football team would be those we put on ourselves, between our ears. But this is a group of guys that do not think that way. We're going to go into this next game confident, believing, and we're going to go out there and we're going to play well.

**Q. Over the course of your career, has there been anything that you've learned and can take into a big road environment like Saturday that you're going to pass along to your team?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, I've been to a lot of those -- I started this off at a young age. I was 23 full-time, in the Southwest Conference playing Texas, Texas A&M, out of conference, LSU, been in those games. Last time I was in this particular stadium would have been NC State, triple overtime. We fell about six inches short at the goal line. That was 2002, I think. 38-31, I believe. Had a good football team, they had a good football team. Philip Rivers

had a good game, and we came storming back and had an opportunity to win but didn't get it done.

We had a number of nice road wins, obviously -- look, we've got a group of guys and coaches that have won 24 out of their last 25 games, so we don't have a confidence problem.

I look at maybe one time at Elon we had a really good football team, we were 4-1, had lost to an FBS team, went to JMU, they had won about 25 in a row at home. Somehow we're 38-point underdogs - I have no idea how - and we walked out of there with a win. It's a football game. One play at a time, got to execute. Whoever plays the best wins.

**Q. On the notion that a team can almost adopt its head coach's personality, I guess, have you seen that happen here do you feel like?**

CURT CIGNETTI: I think we have a confident team that believes and takes care of business. They prep well. They're detailed. They played fairly consistently to a standard, not circumstances of the game, and that's what we preach.

You know, I've heard that comment that they have, and I guess that's a good thing.

**Q. You talked about the bye week in terms of being able to clean some things up from past games. Health-wise how big is it to get a bye week this late in the season to get guys some extra rest? I know Myles Price went out in the Michigan game. Wondering if there's any update there.**

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah. We'll be at full strength for the game. In terms of the bye week, I think across college football, everybody is hurting a little bit at this point. Even when you're playing every play in the game, you've got something.

I think the bye week came at a really good time to kind of get refreshed and recharged.

**Q. I'm curious, offensively and defensively your approach, how has it evolved, and are you more conservative, more aggressive, more creative? How would you assess that?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, I guess that's a good question. Offensively I got out from under center about my fifth year as a head coach at the Division II level, and I've definitely become more aggressive and attacking. I think as a young coach sometimes in big games I was a little conservative at

times. So we attack. That's just what we do.

I think defensively we've always played good defense for the most part, and our schemes have evolved depending on who's running the defense. I think Bryant Haines has done a tremendous job with our defense here. We're playing really good defense right now and have all season long.

But we attack there, too. We're normally in the top 5 in the country in TFLs, sacks. Against the run our guys may line up a little differently, play the play. We may have a few different looks than we did the year before, but we attack.

**Q. I wanted to ask about your offensive line. They've been rated really well for most of the season. What are your thoughts on how well your line has played and what are the keys to them playing as well as they have so far this season?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, I think those guys have been very consistent all year long, and I think Coach Bostad, who's a proven offensive line coach, he's an outstanding offensive line coach, has done a great job developing those guys, and for the most part it was five guys playing pretty much every snap until Drew Evans went down, now Tyler Stevens in there. So those guys have played a lot of snaps. They're all blue-collar guys, hardworking guys, don't say much. Katic and Carter Smith probably talk the most. And they give you a good day's work every day.

**Q. You mentioned how pretty much every team in the country is dealing with different things, injuries. When it gets to this point in the season, what is the stress on the recovery outside of the facility to be fresh come game day?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, it's important that you get your rest, you eat right, and especially in an off week, you've got a chance to catch up a little bit. It's critically important because it all works together, what you do inside the building and outside the building.

**Q. Obviously with the bye week, it's a chance for you staff to go out and do a little bit of recruiting. Curious how the interaction has communication has changed as the season has gone along and you guys have had the success you've had? Have you noticed a difference in the reception you're getting?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, absolutely. When you win, it opens a lot of doors in a lot of areas, and recruiting is no different. We have definitely reaped the rewards of being successful on the field.

It's an ongoing process. We've got a signing day coming up here in a couple weeks, and then the portal will hit in December. But everything is on the up-and-up.

**Q. You mentioned Bryant Haines. You pressured I think 60 percent of Michigan on their drop-backs. I know it's a new defense, but the core of it is from JMU, and having that core and having Bryant Haines together has been able to unlock this next level that that experience that they had all together, you're bearing the fruits of that now?**

CURT CIGNETTI: Oh, there's no doubt about it. That whole JMU crew that came over really facilitated the culture change here, and they're all major contributors for the most part. Between the white lines and on defense you've got some real key guys playing at a high level.

I think that familiarity with the program, the defense, the offense, the special teams has been extremely beneficial.

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