

Indiana University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 30, 2024

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Curtis Cignetti

Press Conference



Indiana 66, Purdue 0

CURTIS CIGNETTI: Good win. I thought our defense was tremendous tonight. Swarmed the ball. Stopped the run. Created a lot of turnovers. I think they got an early first down on a PI call, and I don't remember them getting another first down until the end of the half.

So offensively we had made enough plays but missed some opportunities, too, but made some big plays. So it's a tremendous win. We certainly made a statement again. Can't say enough about what this team, you know, has done between the white lines. But they are not satisfied. They are not done yet. You know, they are not -- they want more. They are going to get more.

So it's a rivalry game, and I thought we really took it to them. That's it.

Q. When you said the statement -- I know you said you weren't playing close attention to the playoff rankings, but did you feel like you needed to do more, win the game, but win and win it in a style -- get style points to make a difference to the committee?

CURTIS CIGNETTI: Well, you know, I think we had the largest margin victory of any team in the country up until last week. I'm not sure where we were coming into this game because obviously we did not beat Ohio State.

So what I would say is, most of the games we played with, we've handled the opponent pretty well where we wouldn't have the largest margin of victory in the country.

But obviously style points are important this time of year, right. Style points of earned, right. But more than anything else, we wanted to play from the first play to the last play in a rivalry game that Indiana had not won in four or five years.

I thought we had a great crowd, just about sold out to start and some of them left at half-time. I guess they got a little cold, or I don't know what, but we'll fix that again.

But I appreciate them all coming back, and yeah, sure. I mean, I thought we had to play well tonight, and I think we did.

Q. I know you said you're not paying too close of attention to the playoffs, but as other teams around the country have dealt with upsets and close calls, but what has allowed this team to just be so consistent when it's had the opportunity to really roll up big numbers and to win decisively, and to consistently not leave a doubt, I guess?

CURTIS CIGNETTI: I just think we have a lot of older guys that have made a lot of plays throughout their career consistently, and they are very consistent people, high character. We have a very consistent standard of performance.

I think our assistant coaches and players do a nice job, a good job coaching them, and we preach about playing one play at a time, first play to last, like it's 0-0 regards to the competitive circumstances, never too high, never too low, physical, relentless, smart, disciplined, poised. Our guys buy into that, and we've been fairly consistent this year.

Q. Obviously you mentioned the players are not satisfied but just this group of seniors coming from all over, some have been, the job they did buying in and the culture they helped create and the leadership they showed all year?

CURTIS CIGNETTI: It's been going on from the get-go, and like I told you guys a number of times I really felt in December, like we flipped the roster with these guys. Like I felt that then. And winter er was good. Spring was good. Summer was good. Fall camp. But you've got to put it on the field.

So you know, when you got capable people that are very motivated, right, disciplined and committed, and all think alike, like they keep their eye on the bull's eye, and there's no personal agendas, anything is possible. You know, this group has proven that.



Q. Defense played outstanding. Jailin Walker had interception, a couple pass break ups, forced fumble. Can you talk about his playoff and on the other side of the ball, Kurtis has a single-game record for touchdown passes, his bounceback performance after the last two weeks?

CURTIS CIGNETTI: Yeah, I've always considered Jailin Walker an impact player. He's a will linebacker that can play, run and hit guys from Richmond, Virginia. He made some huge plays for us at JMU, and he's got a nose for the football, and nobody likes playing football more than that guy. You know, he's a tough guy to block and he can do a lot of things. He's a great athlete.

And Kurtis, you know, he got sacked once or twice early in the game, and then we got it going. Kind of got it humming and he was right on the button and we were getting some yards after the catch and protect shored up, so it was good to see that offense scoring points in bunches again.

Q. I know you're not a guy who likes to reflect much, but we've asked your players all year about what the ride has been like for them to be with you. What's the ride been like for you to be with them, especially your James Madison guys you brought with you, how have you appreciated what they have been able to do for you?

CURTIS CIGNETTI: Truthfully I've taken kind of a businesslike approach to it, and I've been with those guys a long time. So it was kind of like business as usual, seeing them do it for such a long time.

Then you add all the other ones, Kurtis and Justice Ellisons and Myles Prices and Ke'Shawn Williamses and CJ West, and I'm going to forget somebody, Asbury and Jones and Ponds, all those guys. So it's been a great year. But it's not totally shocking to me. I've said early that we were capable of doing this, and we have.

My wife will tell you that the night I accepted the job, right, that we were laying in bed, and I said, Look at this schedule, there's ten wins on this schedule. And of course at that point I was sort of hedging whether to stay or couple.

And then Scott called ten minutes later and told me I was the next head coach at Indiana.

And I said, Okay.

And he said, We're going to shock the world.

And I said, Ehh, right, we are.

Q. Speaking of shocking the world, your next game will be most likely in the College Football Playoffs against a higher caliber of opponent --

CURTIS CIGNETTI: What do you mean a higher caliber?

Q. Another high-caliber opponent. After the Ohio State game, do you think your team showed you tonight that they are back to where you would like them to be?

CURTIS CIGNETTI: I think the Ohio State game, look, nobody is happy with what happened there, okay. But I think we come out of there stronger and learned some good lessons, and I'm talking mainly about the crowd noise and how to deal with that particular -- on the road with that kind of crowd.

So you know, the first round is played either home or at somebody else's place and then after that, it plays on a neutral site. So we are not going to get too far ahead of ourselves. We are going to enjoy this for 24 hours and move on and we'll have our routine for this week.

Q. What do the next couple weeks look like for you guys?

CURTIS CIGNETTI: Well, you know, next week, we'll sit down with the assistant coaches, the players and me for one-on-one meetings and talk about the season and talk about near and stuff like that.

Coaches will do a lot of recruiting evaluation once assigned a date and the following week will be an open bye week before your first CFP game. And then you're in game week.

But in the meantime, you've got portal guys visiting and you've got all kinds of stuff going on, trust me.

Q. I want to say, you mentioned you realized that 11-1 was actually like a real thing. Has any part of you had a chance to reflect or appreciate how much it's flipped in a year?

CURTIS CIGNETTI: I think I've answered that question a couple times. You know, in this business, you just move on to the next thing because there's always something that needs done and you're so process oriented, you know what I mean.

I'm going to enjoy it when I go up to my office with my family and go home and enjoy it a little bit. Of course the games will be over so there's not much football to be

watched. Bring coaches in a little later and we'll get a little work done and then maybe work four or five hours. That will be it.

You get it enjoy it right afterwards, when I finish this, and get to spend some time and maybe have a beverage. But at my age, it's one or two beverages.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...

