

Indiana University Football Media Conference

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Coach Curt Cignetti

Press Conference



CURT CIGNETTI: Regardless of the final score, there's always things that show up on tape that have got to get corrected. Believe me, there's plenty there.

So really more interested in moving on to our next opponent, which will be a real challenge at Iowa. Got a lot of respect for Coach Ferentz, everything he's accomplished throughout his career as a head coach and as an assistant, too.

He was a great line coach before he became a head coach. And he was a graduate assistant at Pitt in 1980. I was a graduate assistant at Pitt in '83 and '84. He used to come by the offices now and then. Had a chance to -- met him a couple of times out and around. Got to know him during the Big Ten meetings. Congratulate him on the big win a couple weeks ago to make him the winningest coach in the Big Ten.

And Iowa, it's a tough place to play, Kinnick Stadium. They sell out almost every Saturday. It's loud. So we're going to have to play well. This will be a challenge, a more difficult challenge than the last one, for sure. And the sooner our guys realize that, the better.

Q. You talk about your history with Coach Ferentz, but I'm curious if you have any history with Kinnick. It's obviously a place very difficult to go, one of the tougher environments in the conference and has been, I think, particularly for sort of teams that, as you talk about, need that refocusing quickly after a big win.

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, I do not.

Q. Bryant Haines seems to be really mixing up his personnel with the front seven. Do you feel like you guys are more versatile there this year? And seemed to make a difference on Saturday in terms of Illinois didn't know what you were doing, couldn't diagnose things --

CURT CIGNETTI: Bryant always mixes things up pretty good, finds ways to get to the quarterback, create TFLs. I

don't think anything has changed in that regard. That was probably more about the one-on-one match-ups.

But, look, we have some egregious mistakes on the back end, particularly at safety. We have about five of them in that game. And we only got exposed once because of them. If we don't clean those up, we're going to get fractured. And you can't put that stuff on tape.

Q. Two questions, one with, I think his name is Wetjen, the returner, I think he's averaging 35 a kickoff, 33 for punt return, how big a concern is he?

CURT CIGNETTI: A great returner, great returner. And they've always done a good job on kickoff return. And he took that first swing against Rutgers, he was about five yards deep and was really untouched. He's an excellent punt returner.

He's in the 30s on kickoff return and punt return. So we're going to have to do a great job there, be prepared and give great effort and tackle in space, defeat blocks.

Q. What are you getting from Amare? And what do you need to get from him, Ferrell, Amare Ferrell?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, all three of those guys, we just need them to do what they're supposed to do consistently -- prepare a little better, see what's going on, make the proper adjustments, communicate quicker and be where they're supposed to be.

You can't play Tampa 2 coverage with a safety that's supposed to be on the right and he's on the left and no one is on No. 2 to the field. That's not necessarily him, okay? So all three of those guys are older guys. They're all capable of playing great football, and they have in spurts, but we need more consistency.

Q. Obviously towards the end of last year you had some issues going on the road and dealing with the loud environments with the silent counts. How much time do you spend in the offseason trying to fix those issues, and what did that process look like?

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CURT CIGNETTI: We went to something different last year in the College Football Playoff. We didn't use a silent. We didn't have a problem hearing. In the offseason you spend time on it, and obviously it will be a big point of emphasis this week in practice. I'm not going to tell you what we're going to do.

Q. Isaiah Jones is having a really strong year. Where have you kind of seen him evolve from last year to now and just what's kind of allowed him to play at that higher level more often this year?

CURT CIGNETTI: I think what you're seeing there is just another year of maturity. He was on the team before I got hired. Had a back issue, so missed a lot of the season before. Got to play last year quite a bit. And he's just, the natural progression of reps accumulating, bigger, stronger, faster, older, wiser, that kind of thing.

Q. Iowa brought a guy in from the portal, a quarterback from South Dakota, Gronowski. He struggled early on, but it looks like he's a pretty good athlete, can make plays with his legs and arms. What have you seen from him especially he played better against Rutgers?

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, won a lot of football games, that guy has. He's a great competitor. He's a big guy. He's got good mobility. They'll run him, design runs. And then there's somewhere he could give it or run it. And they've got good play-action, out-of-pocket game. And in the pocket he can make the throws. He's got a strong arm. They built the offense around the quarterback. There's some new design there.

One thing I'm going to say about Iowa, and you guys all know this that have been in the Big Ten a while, is, I mean, they've been running basically the same defense for a long time. Now, there's tweaks. And they've always played great defense and they've got great special teams.

They've always been able to run the ball really well. And this quarterback has been a guy that finds a way to get it done. But the thing about Iowa in general, they will not beat themselves. You will have to beat them. They're not going to beat themselves and they play really well at home.

Q. You talked about the secondary. I'm curious, you called him day to day a few weeks ago, where is Byron Baldwin at in his return timetable for you guys?

CURT CIGNETTI: I'll know more today.

Q. On the topic of just getting off to good starts, you got off to a decent start last week. How do you get off

to that good start to silence that crowd?

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, that always helps, but you've got to play the first play to the last play. I was proud of the way we approached every play last week, the mental intensity and the urgency we had, regardless of the score.

We've traditionally gotten off to good starts. You never are really 100 percent. So it's a reflection of preparation, I think. And so hopefully get off to a good start and then play well throughout and finish good. That's always the goal.

Q. The receivers and playmakers, especially against Illinois, were getting the ball from Fernando and moving it in big chunks after the catch. How beneficial is not just to get the 10, 15, 20 extra yards after the catch?

CURT CIGNETTI: It's huge. And a lot of those were on RPOs where he's not holding the ball very long. And you're only throwing it if you get the right look. And those guys broke tackles. They had an injury or two in the back. They had one guy ejected and had an injury coming in. Our guys did a nice job out there.

Now, I would like to see them block every play, too, because we played the second half. And our Hs, I don't think they blocked anybody the whole second half.

Q. On Saturday, you had writing on your left hand. It said "attack" in green and then three names in red what's the significance of that?

CURT CIGNETTI: It's a secret.

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