

Indiana University Football

Media Conference

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Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Curt Cignetti

Press Conference

Indiana 56, UCLA 6

CURT CIGNETTI: Great team win. Proud of the coaches, proud of the team. A lot of guys contributed. Did a lot of good things. Created turnovers, third downs. Stopped them on defense, converted on offense. It was on a big platform against a team that was hot.

We wanted to be physical and dominate the line of scrimmage. I thought we did early in the game. Fisher's play early in the game was a huge play.

With that I'll open it up to questions.

Q. You talked about the line of scrimmage, in particular with the defense. The interior guys. You talked before the season about having to replace all the experience. What do you attribute the growth and development to?

CURT CIGNETTI: Well, I think a big part of running a football program is development. You do that through your strength and conditioning program, the way you coach, the way you practice and schematically.

I think Pat Kuntz does a great job with those inside guys. I think he's a terrific defensive line coach. He focuses on the inside guys. But he focuses on the outside guys. We run so many different packages, sometimes the inside guys are outside guys, and the outside guys are inside guys. They meet together, do a lot of things together. It's a blue-collar group that's gotten better every week.

Q. How is Aiden Fisher? Isaiah Jones steps into I would imagine not more snaps but more responsibility when Fisher is not on the field. How did you see him grow today?

CURT CIGNETTI: Isaiah Jones has really taken a big step this year. We've talked about that quite a bit in the past. Making a lot of plays.

Fisher made a huge play early in the game. We took him



out kind of precautionary. We'll do the x-rays, the MRIs, see what those say.

Q. You ran for I think 260-something yards. Really imposed your will on them. Your thoughts on the O-line and the job of the running backs today.

CURT CIGNETTI: Our backs run hard all the time. They really do. Hemby and Black. When you start to see a team wave the white flag, so to say, break their will, it takes a while. It usually happens sometime in the third quarter. It may have been what happened here.

Martin came in, made some good runs. Great credit to the offensive line and tight ends also. Good to see those rushing totals back up again.

Q. Both sides of the ball you were really good on third and fourth down. What do you attribute it to on offense and defense?

CURT CIGNETTI: Preparation. It's good preparation and execution.

To me it's all the same: it starts up front. You got to win the line of scrimmage, put heat on the quarterback on defense, got to protect the quarterback on offense. You got to separate, throw and catch on offense, tight coverage on defense. If the quarterback doesn't have as much time to throw it, he's not as effective. You got to hit him.

I think Bryant Haines is difficult to prepare against. Does a lot of different stuff. I thought UCLA's guy was difficult to prepare against. I don't think we separated extremely well against press coverage today. We had some extended plays in the pass game.

The credit all goes to the assistants and the players, yeah.

Q. Your thoughts on how dominant your defense has been all season? How many different guys have made impact plays...

CURT CIGNETTI: Yeah, how many touchdowns on year?



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THE MODERATOR: (Off mic.)

CURT CIGNETTI: We played eight games. Not bad, yeah. That's pretty good.

Bryant does a great job. The kids respond. They have a lot of pride. We got some DBs back there that have really good ball skills, too. Like the safeties, as much as I like to get on 'em about being late to get lined up and stuff like that, they got really good ball skills. They've made a lot of really nice interceptions. Our linebackers do, too. We do a good job of stopping the run. Philosophically, that's where it all begins, TFLs, pressuring the quarterback.

As I look at who we played, you look at Oregon, a premier offense, right? We had a dominant second half in that game. We didn't really start very well against Michigan State after that dominant performance. Probably felt pretty good about ourselves. I was worried about that with the offense today a little bit.

Got to keep it going. Got to keep 'em healthy and keep it going.

Q. No team in college football has won a conference game by more than 50 points except you guys. Now you've done it twice. UCLA was playing pretty good ball coming into this game. What about you guys has allowed you to be so methodical to break the will of the opposition?

CURT CIGNETTI: I think one of the keys is we just have everybody on the same page. I know what I want. I got a lot of assistants. We've been together a long time. We all kind of, like, speak the same lingo. We got good players with high character. They're good leaders. Some of them have been with us a pretty long time. They listen to the message.

I mean, we try to play every play like it's nothing-nothing, game on the line, regardless of the competitive circumstances.

I don't know. That's the best answer I can give you.

Q. You mentioned your assistants a few times. What would you say are some of Mike Shanahan's biggest strengths as a play-caller?

CURT CIGNETTI: I think Mike does a really nice job of preparing and collaborating, so to speak, everybody's opinions. He's got a really good connection going during the game with Chandler Whitmer and Bob Bostad.

With technology the way it is, your ability to look at iPads...

Things are changing every series. They're making good adjustments during the game.

Mike's got a great work ethic. He's a smart guy. Got great disposition. He was dialing 'em up today - when they worked (smiling).

No, I told him, every time I questioned a call the last three weeks, it's been pretty consistent, because sometimes I'm pretty rough. Every time I questioned a call the last three weeks, it's gone for a big play.

Q. E.J. had 5, 109 and 2. What drove that? How much does that help you when he is playing at that level?

CURT CIGNETTI: It's great to get big plays from E.J. He's got a lot of talent. I've always been really high on him. He has to make sure when he's running in the end zone for a touchdown that he doesn't taunt the defender. He got a Mulligan on that one from the official. When the game is on the line, that's spot foul. You have the ball on the 30 yard line and don't get the points.

Q. The TFLs, the sacks are one thing for Isaiah Jones. What has he shown you this season that's given you the trust in him?

CURT CIGNETTI: Everything's earned, not given. He's earned everything he's got. He's a real smart player, just like Fisher is. Fisher was just a year ahead of him in his development because when Isaiah came here as a freshman, he was injured.

He's really stepped up and taken a huge step this year. He's still a young guy. He knows the ins-and-outs of the defense just like Aiden does.

Q. Fernando was making some plays, extending the ball, then using his legs to get downfield. What are your thoughts on his performance?

CURT CIGNETTI: We weren't doing a great job of separating on the perimeter. Fortunately the protection was great. They lost contain.

He's a mobile guy. He can extend plays, make plays on the move. Made a couple really nice throws and runs. So he's a good player. I think we all know that. Big part of the reason why we are where we are.

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