

Outback Bowl: Indiana vs Ole Miss

Saturday, January 2, 2021

Tampa, Florida, USA

Raymond James Stadium

Tom Allen

Indiana Hoosiers

Ole Miss 26, Indiana 20

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement.

TOM ALLEN: Just want to start by congratulating Ole Miss and Coach Kiffin, all his team, the way they played, made enough plays to come out with a win.

Just really disappointed for our players. They've been through so much. Golly, just been an amazing season for so many different reasons. They've been through so much, given so much, worked so hard, sacrificed so much to come to a bowl game. Just heartbroken for them they weren't able to finish with a win.

Very proud of our guys, but this one is going to hurt for a while.

Questions.

Q. What do you possibly tell your players after a game like this? Such a great season, then to end this way for a second year in a row. How do you try to lift their spirits? What message do you give them?

TOM ALLEN: Well, I mean, right when you get done playing a game like this, I don't know if it's really about lifting their spirits. I love them regardless of the outcome of the game. They have to check in their own heart how they prepared. Only they really know that.

I thought they did a lot of good things for sure in this preparation process, even though it's been an unusual last few weeks and challenging, to get them physically ready with all the things we're going through.

At the same time you got to take it like a man when you fall short. Didn't make enough plays. Talked to them about the turnovers that we had, the two that we had on offense,

none that we got on defense, minus two. That's how you win football games, creating those takeaways, being plus in that category.

At the same time you don't dwell on the fact that it's going to hurt and it should hurt if you're invested a whole lot like these guys have, sacrificed a whole bunch to be in this position.

It's a tough one, for sure. Like everything else, everything you go through helps create the person that you are, the positives and the negatives, the opportunities that you have that you don't take advantage of.

At the end of the day I'm the head coach, this loss falls on me. That's the way it works. I accept that. That's what makes it sting so much because I wanted it for these kids so bad.

Q. The last drive you started moving the ball again, then you had the sack. Was that the killer do you think?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, really put us in a bad spot. Tough to overcome that. Got to try, do what you can. Had been running the ball well, being able to create those plays. That to me is where it kind of got off schedule, the first snap of the last series, then the sack. Not going the right direction.

Fourth and 18 is tough. They're playing two man with that, tough windows to throw in, a long ways to go for a quarterback run or a checkdown throw.

Makes it challenging, but we got way behind the chains in that last drive and that's what killed us.

Q. You feasted all year on the blitzing, the turnover creation. They were going with the quick, short passing game the whole time. Was it difficult to try to adjust around that, force them into anything different?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I think that and the tempo. To me the tempo is really the hardest part. We rely so much on disguising things. It's hard to do that because you're just trying to get lined up to play a snap. You have to give them different looks, different things to be able to match up with them.

Yeah, I just thought they were finding holes, going fast, and they do. Takeaways... They were trying to keep us from having chances to do that. There wasn't a lot of those. We had more opportunities in the first half I thought to get some of those. Some RPOs early on, hard to play the way we play.

But in some ways I know we still -- that last drive is kind of the one. Gosh, can't give that long pass play up. Just had a mistake there from one of our better players. At the same time I thought the guys competed. There was no question. Tempo with the heat, a tough combination. You got to play a lot of guys, got to fight through it.

But we just needed one more takeaway, needed a takeaway. Not having any, it's just not how we've been successful. Whether it's a bowl game or regular season game, you got a formula for success. When you don't stick with that formula, oftentimes you don't get what you want.

Q. This isn't the first time this season where the offense has started slow. There were some dropped passes, a few penalties. How much do you think the rust played into it, hadn't played for a month?

TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I mean, you're worried about that. I was worried about that. We haven't played for four weeks. It's hard. That's long. Sometimes you see in bowl games of the normal system where you would sometimes have that much time off. It really truly was a window of time there where we did not practice at all, didn't do anything with our guys when it first occurred.

Yeah, I think it always seems to hurt the timing of the offense. Still, no excuses. You got to catch balls. You got to execute.

Yeah, I think it kind of showed up more early, then got into a rhythm, did some better things. Chuck did a great job kicking big field goals, but we want touchdowns. You just need one more.

Q. On the final drive, you were moving the ball, running the ball. You got away from that on the first down play. Was there a reason to move away from the run? Did you feel like the pass might be there?

TOM ALLEN: It's a read. So the quarterback has that read. Actually, after the play I was like, Why didn't he hand it off? You've agreed to give a read. You don't criticize and second-guess. He thought it was there. To me, that's what we probably should have done. Should have done that.

That's what the read is there on that. He thought he had the leverage to get the ball out on the perimeter to try to get four yards or five yards.

But, yeah, I actually agree with that, should have.

Q. Specifically about Jack, his performance, how much do you think the shoulder bothered him? How much did that take him and Nick away from what they wanted the game plan to be?

TOM ALLEN: It definitely affected him. I thought he was a warrior today. He played through some serious pain. Since it's the end of the season, want to be honest about that, he had a shoulder separation in his throwing shoulder. Did an x-ray on it. Thought he might have broken the collarbone at first. That was not the case. So basically he just had to kind of suck it up. It was very painful.

But it was his throwing shoulder, so I think it affected some of our throws, some of the things we thought he could do with that situation. Even though when he had it, he's still running, diving. He competed his tail off. But there's no question, he was dinged up pretty good, just trying to fight through it. He's a tough, tough kid.

Q. Do you have any regrets about the way the whole uniform situation was perceived as a slight against the Big Ten?

TOM ALLEN: I wrote a statement about that. That's pretty much it. The statement is what I wanted to say. That's how I'm going to end it.

Q. Bigger picture here, what are you going to say to your seniors as you watch them leave? What do you want the rest of the locker room to take away from this entire season?

TOM ALLEN: Well, I mean, this has been a season for the ages. I mean, all we've been through, it's been so hard. Everybody has been through this. All the teams that decided not to play in bowl games because they knew their guys had been through so much already. Our guys chose to play, wanted to play.

But that was the process we had to work through because there were just some tough things there with all that. They had been here for a long, long time, hadn't been with their families, knew they weren't going to be able to go home for Christmas, all those things. Been a challenging year.

Even though we've done some amazing things, got chances to win a lot of great games that this group will always be remembered for. They are a special group. To lay a tremendous foundation for next year, I'm excited about next year.

A lot of those seniors are going to make a decision, give them an opportunity to come back. Some will, some won't. We'll know for sure here in the next couple weeks. Either way we're going to love and support them, whatever they feel is best for them and their future, we'll talk that through with them.

Bottom line, a special group of guys. Love each and every one of them, respect them, love what they've given to the program. Unfortunate, they didn't get to have a Senior Day. Nothing has felt normal at all. First time we had fans other than parents at a game. Great to hear the crowd cheering. They missed all that. All these big wins we've gotten at home or on the road, to have nobody there for a lot of those, it's tough.

But this is a special group. I'm proud of these guys. Just want them to know that. The guys that choose to move on, we'll wish them nothing but great things in the future.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Tom.

TOM ALLEN: Have a great day.

Micah McFadden

Indiana Hoosiers

Ole Miss 26, Indiana 20

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Micah.

Q. Tom Allen mentioned the tempo, to deal with that. From a player's perspective being on the field, what was it like to deal with that, with the heat added onto it?

MICAH McFADDEN: I think that definitely played a factor in the game. I saw a lot of guys tightening up towards the end of the game. Some even towards the middle of the game. Yeah, it was tough to get subs in.

Yeah, they were definitely moving in on us, going fast. We kind of knew they were going to do that. We practiced to prepare, but there wasn't really much we could do to prepare for the heat, the exhaustion and fatigue at the end.

Q. On the blocked field goal, did you realize you might have been able to return it or were you just trying to take a knee?

MICAH McFADDEN: At first I was kind of thinking I couldn't return it so I took a quick knee just to end the half. I knew there was one second left on the clock, we weren't going to have another play. I really thought if I returned it, there would be some penalty or something. But it wasn't.

Q. What is so difficult about defending Matt Corral? What makes him so difficult to contain?

MICAH McFADDEN: He's definitely elusive. He creates plays with his feet, can get the ball down the field, just keep plays alive, which played a factor in this game, helped them win the game.

Q. The last drive, how difficult is it for you as a defensive player to see that happen? What do you remember of some of the mistakes that might have happened?

MICAH McFADDEN: Yeah, I mean, you want to motivate as much as you can. That's exactly what we did. But it's also difficult to watch. Wish you could be out there. You're not on the field the last important plays of the game.

We had it in our hands before that. We shouldn't have let them drive down the field and score their final touchdown. Can't take any of that back now.

Q. Talk about the toughness of Jack Tuttle today. Coach Allen talked about how he had a separated shoulder in his throwing shoulder. Is that something you knew?

MICAH McFADDEN: Yeah, he's a tough son of a gun, for sure. I didn't know that shoulder was popped out. I think a little bit after halftime or before, I saw him grabbing at that shoulder. I could tell there was something up. But I don't think any player knew it was out of place or anything like that.

I already knew he was tough before that. That just adds on to it. That guy's a baller.

Q. For you it's a chance to come home, play in front of some fans. How much is that something you tried to feed off of?

MICAH McFADDEN: Yeah, I mean, it was cool to be home, play in front of a semi-full crowd, hear the roar. It was really exciting. Glad we got to do it one time this year.

Q. Tackling was something you were really clean with most of the year. Do you feel you tackled up to your standards today as a group?

MICAH McFADDEN: No, definitely not. I don't know the number, but there was quite a few missed tackles. I think the grass conditions played a bit of a factor in that. It's also guys getting their cleats in the ground when they're going tempo, getting set up to make a play.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Micah.

Charles Campbell

Indiana Hoosiers

Ole Miss 26, Indiana 20

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Charles.

Q. You had two 50-yard plus kicks, Outback Bowl records, new records for longest field goals. How comfortable were you kicking on this field in these conditions today?

CHARLES CAMPBELL: So I grew up on a grass field kicking back at my high school. We got turf I think after I left. I mean, I like grass better than turf.

When you have a snapper and holder like I do, Sean and Haydon, they make it like a walk in the park.

Q. Obviously at the end of the day your job is to kick field goals. If you can get more touchdowns, you might have a better chance. How does it feel to see your teammates not quite be able to get there as a team?

CHARLES CAMPBELL: It's a heartbreaking loss, for sure. I mean, I just want to help. I did my job, but it wasn't enough in the end. I mean, I'm taking the loss pretty hard. I live over two hours away from Ole Miss, so I had some friends from my high school that went there, some buddies on the team. Just really wanted to win.

I'm kind of happy but not really. I'm just upset about this loss.

Q. Nobody is thinking too much to the future, but guys have talked about Haydon as somebody they really see as a leader. Do you feel maybe there's kind of an onus on you thinking to next year to step into that role yourself?

CHARLES CAMPBELL: Yeah, so one of the things I said I wanted to work on this year was my leadership. Haydon took our specialists group to a different level this year, I respect him so much. He was like hands down all year the leader of this. He left some big shoes to fill. I want to take on that role and I want to take our special teams group to a different level.

Q. You had the two Purdue games that came and went. How difficult was it for you guys to get through this last month with all the stops and starts?

CHARLES CAMPBELL: I think it's been pretty difficult. Everyone's fired up to go out and play Purdue, then play in the crossover game. To see our last two games not being played, it was upsetting.

But Ole Miss is a great team, we got to play in a great bowl. In the end it was good.

Q. Can you take us inside the locker room, what it's like in the last couple of minutes, the atmosphere?

CHARLES CAMPBELL: Guys are upset. Everyone's upset for the older guys. We don't know if they're coming back or not. It's just tough to see. This could be some guy's last game. Everyone is pretty down. But, I mean, I'm ready to get back to work and come back and win games.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Charles.

Stevie Scott III

Indiana Hoosiers

Ole Miss 26, Indiana 20

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Stevie.

Q. The running game got going a little bit in the second half. What were some of the keys to make some plays on the ground?

STEVIE SCOTT III: I feel like we started running a little bit tempo offense. We noticed that the defense was getting a little tired. We just tried to play to our advantage, just try to get the run game going, keep getting downhill to set up play-action.

Q. We learned from Coach Allen that Jack had a separated shoulder. Were you aware there was anything wrong with Jack? How much does that prove something about Jack in terms of his toughness?

STEVIE SCOTT III: I didn't actually really even notice till I seen one of his passes was kind of short to Whop. I asked him what was wrong. He said his shoulder was a little messed up.

For him, he just stay in, still try to get the job done, be a leader, be our starting quarterback. It just shows that he's very strong and mentally tough. I really appreciate Jack for everything

he's done this season stepping up, especially when Mike going down, him trying to be that great guy he is, being a leader.

Q. How much do you think that slow start had to do with missing some practice time for the whole team? Did you think the refs sometimes blew the whistle a little bit early on some of your runs?

STEVIE SCOTT III: Man, you know, especially me being a runningback, just moving the (indiscernible) forward, that's something we like to do. That's something that the O-line loves to go. Got me a little frustrated they was blowing the whistle so quick, we were still playing ball.

Q. The missed practices because of the COVID situation, might that have played a part in the first half rustiness?

STEVIE SCOTT III: Definitely, I feel like it's half and half. You can't really have excuses on why we didn't get the job done, why we didn't play. Definitely COVID played a little part. It's still our job to go out there and play no matter what the circumstances is, just try to pull out that win.

Q. I know it's probably hard to answer right after a game, but when you go back and look at everything that's gone on this season, how special is it for everything that's gone on?

STEVIE SCOTT III: I'm just so thankful and happy just to be a part of a changing program like this, to be that change. It's definitely a great feeling. We definitely sad we didn't cap off the year like we wanted to.

It's just a start. I feel like we've broken through. For this next year upcoming, we have to continue doing what we started this year. Definitely have to use this bowl game and last bowl game as double motivation as before. Two years back-to-back two years we lost the bowl game.

Q. Were you surprised it took you guys as long as it did to establish that running game today?

STEVIE SCOTT III: I wasn't really surprised. I always knew we had it. It was something that's a mental thing for the runningbacks and for the O-line just to lock in, do their assignment. I feel like we always have one, some games it just really wasn't there. I feel like today it definitely came to play in the second half. We tried to take advantage as much as we could.

Q. You mentioned Jack's toughness. How did you see him grow up in terms of his decision making, rhythm with the offense as this game wore on?

STEVIE SCOTT III: Really for Jack, Jack is the type of guy, he's excited. You know what I'm saying? You just have to tell him to calm down, just calm down and let the game flow. I feel like once Jack calmed down and let the game come to him, going out there and being a play-maker, I think the rest, he did whatever he had to do, just go out there and make plays.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Stevie.

STEVIE SCOTT III: Appreciate you guys.

Jack Tuttle

Indiana Hoosiers

Ole Miss 26, Indiana 20

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Jack.

Q. Coach Allen told us you had a separation in your shoulder. What level of pain would you say you were dealing with during the course of the game? What drives you to continue to play out there?

JACK TUTTLE: Yeah, I mean, there's no excuse, right? But, yeah, it sucks. Like I just said, it's for my team. I got to find a way to get the job done. I love 'em. We're going to come back stronger.

Q. What were you able to do between halftime and the time you could get on the sideline to mitigate some of it? How much was constant versus how much was triggered by certain throws, the pain?

JACK TUTTLE: It was just kind of there constantly. Like I said before, it sucks. I got to find a way to make it happen.

Q. The two plays that got you in the third and fourth and 18 situation on the last drive, you throw to Whop, was that a read on your part? The sack, what did you see there?

JACK TUTTLE: Yeah, I think on third down I tried to do a little too much. Should have thrown the ball away there. The fourth down, I had to give somebody a chance. I was running out of time.

Just didn't work out.

Q. When did you injure your shoulder?

JACK TUTTLE: I can't remember specifically, sir. I think it was early on.

Q. You had a great connection with Whop today. Talk about what you were seeing with him.

JACK TUTTLE: Whop is a special player. He's a really special player. I think all these guys, these receivers, are phenomenal. Getting him the ball is super important. That's really it. That's all I can say, just great player.

Q. Trying to get some shots downfield, how tough was it to be able to hook up with Ty throughout the course of game? Was it something defensively they were doing?

JACK TUTTLE: Yeah, Ty was doing a good job. I mean, he had a lot of PI calls on him, I thought. There were a couple that were on me. I just got to put it in a better spot for him.

Q. Through the course of this game, early you were hitting short stuff, some misses, then managed to get a rhythm. How did you find, develop a rhythm in the course of the game, learn more of what you were capable of against that defense?

JACK TUTTLE: Yeah so, obviously, didn't play our best at all. I feel like we could have came out stronger. Would have could have should have, right? Just got to be better, improve, grow from it, so...