

# University of Notre Dame Football Media Conference

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South Bend, Indiana, USA



## Dick Corbett Head Coach

## Brian Kelly

### Press Conference

BRIAN KELLY: We'll get rolling here. I think the thoughts that I had with our team were about to play a good opponent, you have to match your play with a high level of competency in terms of the mundane things. We didn't take care of the basics today, and all we needed to do was be efficient at the basics today, and we weren't efficient at the basics. We turned the football over on offense, special teams, didn't cover very well.

So we didn't coach very well today, and we didn't play very well. That's the long and that's the short of it, and Cincinnati was the better football team today.

#### **Q. Brian, going into the game, what was your thought process with the quarterbacks, and how did you envision it unfolding?**

BRIAN KELLY: Jack progressed to the point where we felt that he was at 100 percent, and he didn't do anything to lose his job in the Wisconsin game. He got hurt. So we felt like he got the first shot at it. Tyler, as I had mentioned, was going to be part of the rotation.

Then, obviously, we got behind and felt like we needed to make a change and a spark there, and that's why we went with Drew in the second half.

#### **Q. When you reflect on the rotation of the quarterbacks in the first half, what other possibilities did you consider? Did you consider putting Pyne in the first half?**

BRIAN KELLY: No, there wasn't a conversation about Pyne at that point as much as what was the -- was there going to be more Buchner in terms of the run and the offense that we had put together with him, or were we going to stick with Jack and give him enough of an opportunity to lead the offense? Because he led it very effectively when he was in there, in particular the first drive. He made a bad decision obviously. So I don't think there was much consideration.

But as we got to the half, clearly we thought, I thought, Tommy thought that we needed to shift course quickly, and we did.

#### **Q. Has Pyne done enough in the last two games to alter the way you look at the rotation?**

BRIAN KELLY: It's a good question. It's a fair question. Clearly, we can't continue down this road of who's the flavor of the week here. We're going to have to sit down and figure this out and decide which direction we want to go because it doesn't give us the kind of continuity and consistency in offense that we need.

#### **Q. When you look at your defensive performance today, how do you feel about it overall between them being put in tough spots early but then a couple of late drives?**

BRIAN KELLY: There were some good things, but when we needed those big stops -- you know, obviously, didn't feel good about the touchdown we let off right before the half. We had them in the black zone, and we were in some zone coverages and just didn't find the ball. Our coverage wasn't tight enough. We missed a couple of curls, and they were able to get the ball down the field.

The matchup obviously wasn't very good on the outside with Pierce. He beat us in man coverage. So you're in zone. You're trying to protect. They're hitting some intermediate routes, keeping things alive. We got into cover two. They hit us in the seam.

Look, there's a litany of things relative to pass coverage. The fact of the matter is it wasn't good enough. So if you want to take bits and pieces, I could take bits and pieces for each unit and say, well, that was pretty good for them. It wasn't good enough across the board. We didn't coach well enough, and we didn't play well enough.

#### **Q. Then on the offensive line, with Alt and then Kristofic going in at left tackle and right guard, were those injury-related things or just wanting to give those guys a chance?**

BRIAN KELLY: We were trying to give ourselves a chance. We were trying to do anything we could to protect.



It seemed that we did a better job in the second half, but we clearly struggled. It's something that we're well aware of, we're working on.

But like I said, there's no waiver wire. There's nobody getting traded. We're working, and we've got to coach the guys that we have and we've got to get them coached better and put them in better positions to succeed.

**Q. It seemed, other than Lenzy winning the jump ball, their cornerbacks had a big day against your receivers. Is there a way of getting them free, or is that just an advantage they had going into this game?**

BRIAN KELLY: We didn't think it was going to be an advantage, but it certainly seemed to be an advantage in the sense of -- you know, I think that's something I need to look at as a coach. Did we do all the things necessary to put our kids in a position to succeed?

When we do a press conference like this, it's easy to look the game and go whose fault was that? Why didn't he get open? Why didn't he get him the ball? Some of them might be exactly Cincinnati did a really good job, but we watched a lot of film on Cincinnati, and we thought we had some matchups.

It could be that we did a poor job of getting our kids in the right position to succeed. Mike Mayer did a great job of getting himself open and leveraging himself into some catches. Avery made some nice catches for us, but we've got to get more production from all the guys.

**Q. Michael Mayer, just the injury came back in the game. Do you know his status?**

BRIAN KELLY: He's got a groin, and he's been battling through a groin strain. He's just a warrior. He's out there competing with a groin strain.

**Q. That wasn't new. It's just an aggravation?**

BRIAN KELLY: No, it's been something he's been dealing with the last month or so.

**Q. I asked you this question on Thursday and I want to ask it again because we saw more of Drew Pyne.**

BRIAN KELLY: You didn't like my first answer?

**Q. No, it was good. But what does he do for you that the other quarterbacks can't?**

BRIAN KELLY: Well, escapability certainly. He sees the field very well, and he just has a confidence, a bit of a

swagger to him. There's no stat for that. It's just a sense and a feel.

Look, he didn't start, so he didn't impress me that much or he would have been the starter. We're trying to figure it out, and we've got a guy that we really like in Jack in terms of what he did. He looked really good at times. It's hard to put much on Jack other than the interception. He's dealing with pressure in the pocket too.

You know what we like about Buchner. I think there was some times there today that, some new looks for him that were first-timers. I don't know how else to answer the question but what I said about Drew in terms of some of those characteristics.

**Q. With the package for Buchner after today, do you sort of evaluate where you are, like if that could work? Or does he need to show you something different during the week to go back to it?**

BRIAN KELLY: I think it's all on the table. I'll be as transparent as I can with you guys about the quarterback situation. We're trying to figure it out too, and we know we can't continuously go into the game and just say, all right, who's up next? We've got to figure this thing out and build some continuity into it.

**Q. From a receivers standpoint, how difficult is it for the receivers to go from maybe a more mobile quarterback to more of a pocket passer and adjusting on the fly like that? Is that something that they've improved on throughout the year? Is that something that's kind of been a struggle for them?**

BRIAN KELLY: I don't think it's much of a struggle. I think, obviously, they understand that there are scramble rules that they have to apply to maybe a Buchner or even Drew that they don't necessarily apply to Coan because he's not a big scrambler.

I don't know that that's a difficult proposition for a receiver. They're pretty standard rules. If the quarterback scrambles to you, the guy on the sideline goes deep, intermediary, he comes across, back side goes to the post. It's pretty standard stuff, so I don't think it affects them that much.

**Q. How about the performance of Ridder, what you saw from him today?**

BRIAN KELLY: It's kind of what we expected. I think I said this earlier in the week, we were more concerned with the deep ball, and the deep ball he threw, I thought, exceedingly well. That's what hurt us today.

He made a couple of nice throws. We were in two man.  
We should have been in the best coverage when he hit the  
tight end in the seam there late. We just didn't execute  
very well in that situation. But I thought he threw the ball  
down the field very well.

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