

# University of Notre Dame Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 10, 2018

## Brian Kelly

Postgame



BRIAN KELLY: (In progress.) ...as we laid out our goals, it was to beat Michigan, to win all of our home games, and to win in November. We've clicked off two of those goals. We're halfway there on the third.

I talked about how important it was to run the football in November when teams know that you're going to run the football and exert your will, and I thought we were able to do that today. That had a lot to do with the final score. We rushed for 365, so a lot of good things. A lot of positive things. Also things we can take from the game that we can build on going into next week's game against Syracuse.

With that, open up to questions.

**Q. Coach, obviously Brandon starting for the first time in six weeks. You could see they emotions out there on Senior Night. What did the victory and the game he had, what does that mean to him?**

BRIAN KELLY: What does it mean to him? You know, he's a competitor. I mean, first and foremost, he wants to win for his teammates; he wants to win for Notre Dame. He's a great teammate. He's been that way all year, whether he's in a starting role or backup role.

So that's why I took the time out to take him out of the game, because he deserves that kind of recognition for him to step in, and he led our football team when we needed him.

So he should feel great. Look, it's not an individual game. There are 22 players out there, but he had a big hand in it tonight.

**Q. He came out throwing a lot early it seemed. Was the game plan there just to get him comfortable with some throws?**

BRIAN KELLY: Yeah, you know, we're trying to attack a defense, but we're also trying to be smart and utilize the strengths of a quarterback we feel can accurately do the things we want him to do. The game plan was solid. We wanted to get off to a great start. We did.

Our defense helped us get off to a great start. With early interception we were able to get 7 on the board and get a great throw and we were able to get off to a great start.

**Q. Brian, what's the most significant thing about tonight? Just the ability to run the ball against a good run defense in a way that maybe you hadn't done this year, certainly not about the current configuration of the offensive line?**

BRIAN KELLY: I think there were two things. One, the ability to go and have Brandon Wimbush come in and start and start well, get off to a good start and gain momentum. I don't think if you get off to a good start and you don't get that momentum it kind of gets lost in what happens in the game.

I think that that then kind of would be the second thing, is the ability to run the football when they knew we were going to run the football against a group that's been stingy against everybody all year.

**Q. You get a sense of why that clicked tonight at a little bit higher level?**

BRIAN KELLY: You know, there is a number of factors. I think there was an emphasis that was placed on some things that put us in a better position. Look, I think when you talk about running the football it's time and place. You know, our running game is tied into so many different RPOs that if you drop down, you know, two extra defenders we're throwing it out and it's not a run anymore, it's a pass. It get lost in it.

Tonight there were fair numbers, and in those fair numbers we were able to run the football. So I don't want to get into a long conversation here, but when it was fair we were able to run the football. That's what we're going to have to do when we get teams that want to play two high safeties against us.

**Q. What's the plan for Ian this week? What are the points in the week where you need to know can you go, can you not, and what are the expectations?**

BRIAN KELLY: Well, who says Ian is the starter? I thought Wimbush was great today. I think we start a controversy right now and get this thing rolling so you guys get plenty of stuff to write about for the week, because you guys will be bored just talking about one guy.

Yeah, I don't know about that. We'll see. I mean, I think -- I like Wimbush right now. We'll see.

**Q. Coming off a two-game road trip, you come home today for a quick stay, and then your next two weeks are on the road. How do you keep the guys fresh and focused on the end game here?**

BRIAN KELLY: Look, they've known the schedule. We have been preparing for November since October -- and I don't mean that in a smart way. It's just that they know that this has been coming. Our practices have reflected that. I think our kids are in a good place physically.

Knock on wood, I think we got out of today without any major issues. I feel good about where we were physically and mentally. We can handle a road trip to New York. I don't think that's going to be much of an issue.

So we know where we were going to be at this time. I think we've taken the right steps along the way. Our guys are mentally prepared for it. But we had to plan for it. This wasn't something we just said, All right, let's get ready for a road trip this week. We've planned the month of November out so we're ready for it.

**Q. I was going to asked, sounds like Julian Love is probably all right.**

BRIAN KELLY: Cleared to have gone back in the game. It was a coach's decision not to put him back in.

**Q. Then kind of a quick sidenote, Coney came out as a game day captain today. When did you decide that, and what's it kind of mean he's come to the point that you're bringing him out on Senior Day in that role?**

BRIAN KELLY: Yeah, that decision had been made with my captains about six weeks ago. We had decided who those game day captains were for each game.

**Q. Did though know six weeks ago or learned week by week?**

BRIAN KELLY: They learned week by week. Yeah, I let them know on Monday of the week.

**Q. What was Te'von's response on Monday?**

BRIAN KELLY: No, I don't tell them until a little bit later in the week. I'm sorry. I talk to our captains on Monday. We make that decision, and then I let them...

**Q. How did Te'von respond Thursday, Friday, this morning?**

BRIAN KELLY: He was beaming. He was excited. This was really important to him. He actually almost ate a real meal other than Hardee's and McDonald's, which is big for Te'von. He's not a very good eater, as you can tell.

But he was excited. He was proud of the opportunity that he was given as a game day captain; he took it serious. You could tell by the way he practiced all week. Not that he hasn't practiced at that level, but it was very important to him.

**Q. Coach, in the third quarter you guys had a goal line (indiscernible). How critical was that during the game?**

BRIAN KELLY: You know, we've been like that all year. You know, we kind of give up some yardage and bend a little bit. That's been our -- that's who we are a little bit. Our DNA has been kind of like that this year. We've given up some soft yards here and there. You know, in the red zone we tighten up, and we did again today. I thought there were some misfits, and I'll talk it Clark about it.

Probably misfit a couple plays here and there. We were in probably nickel a little bit more than we have been, so those fits came a little bit harder for us. Florida State ran the ball a little bit more than they had because we were. We'll have to go back and tighten those up.

But to answer your question, I thought we bowed up when we needed to to keep the points down.

**Q. What areas of improvement do you guys see that you need going forward into playing the Syracuse game?**

BRIAN KELLY: You know, certainly from a defense standpoint some execution things we want to do in our nickel. We were in a lot of the nickel today. Going to see that again next week obviously with Syracuse. So it gives us a good opportunity to really evaluate our subpersonnel groupings and look at our subpersonnel groupings and really kind of hone in on some of those things.

**Q. Follow up with the offensive line, Tommy Kraemer Kramer back in the start are lineup. Was that a size/physicality decision?**

BRIAN KELLY: Some big fellas over there. Some big, big fellas.

**Q. I don't know if he went the whole way. It's kind of hard for us to see...**

BRIAN KELLY: He went the whole way.

**Q. It's hard for is to see the numbers from upstairs.?**

BRIAN KELLY: Yeah.

**Q. If I can follow up on Ian Book, because I believe you told the student newspaper that you thought he would be back next week.**

BRIAN KELLY: Yeah, I didn't mean to say that he wouldn't be back. I said that he may not be the starter. Wimbush might beat him out. We still have competition. I mean, let's get this thing going. I mean, I want front page news. Let's get this -- we want controversy. We want a full-blown quarterback controversy. Front page news.

**Q. You'll have a hard time selling that.**

BRIAN KELLY: Thought it was going to be front page of the illustrated -- what do we call your -- Times Illustrated.

**Q. So physically you expect him to be ready to go next week?**

BRIAN KELLY: All the signs are pointing towards that, yes.

**Q. Coach, do you really want a quarterback controversy?**

BRIAN KELLY: What is a quarterback controversy? Define what that means.

**Q. I don't know. You wanted it. Coach, what would it take for Book to get back into the starting lineup since we're starting this controversy?**

BRIAN KELLY: When the doctor says he's cleared to go.

**Q. (Laughter.) Talk to us about Dexter Williams and what he's been able to do all season. Every week he gets better and better. Tonight he had over 200 yards rushing but seemed fluid every time he touched ball of. Talk to us about his ability to just get better.**

BRIAN KELLY: You know, he doesn't have a lot of miles on him, and I think that that helps as we go through later in the year. Hasn't played a lot. Backs that have a lot of carries that are banged up, especially here in the month of November, they have a tendency to wear down a little bit. He's got fresh legs and he's still learning.

So I think we're seeing the effects of a back that is coming into his own and getting an opportunity now later in his career certainly, but seeing things, learning thing, and tapping into his potential. Notre Dame is the beneficiary, and he will be, too. So it's a win/win situation.

**Q. Being able to run the football in November is huge, especially finishing the season off right now.**

BRIAN KELLY: Especially against a front that's pretty stout. Certainly with their two safeties that are in flat foot, hit positions. They're playing with nine guys there. Harlon Barnett knows what he's doing. That's a group that they were at Michigan State last year. They take

great pride in stopping the run.

Yeah, we had to figure out some things. We used some things that we felt would be advantageous to us playing Michigan State over the last few years. We went back to them and they were effective for us.