

*July 24, 2008*



An Interview With:

## **COACH BILL LYNCH**

COACH LYNCH: Thank you. Like the rest of the guys I'm excited to be here and ready to get going again. Summer goes quick but I think all of us as coaches, once we get to this point of the summer, we're ready for our guys to come in where we can work with them. So many of them are there all summer but we can't work with them. So freshmen come in August 2nd and the older guys the next day.

So we're coming off our first winning season, first bowl experience in a number of years so we feel like we have some confidence on campus. I think our guys are really looking forward to the season.

We have some points of emphasis in the spring that we felt like we accomplished. Number one, we wanted to solidify where we were with our offensive line. Although a few of them were held out because of injuries we feel like we have a group of kids and some depth there that fit what we're trying to do offensively.

The second thing is to continue our improvement defensively and I think overall we have more team speed on defense. We have more depth in key positions. We lost a couple very, very good four-year starters at corner. But we have some young guys we think that can play. They need some experience.

And the last thing is we wanted to be able to play with the tempo of the game offensively. I've listened to a lot of the guys in conversation with the 40-second rule and so many spread offenses, it does give us an opportunity to control tempo a little bit so we certainly worked on that in the spring.

We felt like we came out of it a better football team and looking forward to improving once we get going on August 30th.

**Q. Now that Kellen Lewis has been reinstated with your football team, what is his ceiling on how good he can be as a playmaker for your football team?**

COACH LYNCH: He's an outstanding football player, there's no question about it. And one of the things I think he does so well, he can play within the framework of the offense, and what I mean by that is let's say in the passing game, he'll take the open receiver; he doesn't force the ball. He does a great job there. But if things break down, that's when he's really effective. He has such an ability to make plays when there's nothing there because he's an outstanding athlete. Obviously he had a lot to do with the success we had last year offensively.

But I do think one of the things that we've worked very hard to develop, I think any really good football team or good program has to be solid up front offensively. I think the offensive line controls so many things of what you can or can't do offensively, so that was why it was such a point of emphasis in the spring.

And the other point is to be good defensively, and I really do think that's something we've tried to work very hard on and try to create the depth and the team speed that it takes to play defense in this conference. I say that with the sense that we aren't so reliant on one guy like Kellen so you can win a football game.

**Q. You mentioned your defense. Who are those players in the secondary that you are looking forward to starting up?**

COACH LYNCH: We have what I think are really good safeties, some guys who have played. Nick Polk, who moved over from wide receiver a year ago; Austin Thomas, who has been a two-year starter at safety; Joe Kleinsmith has played a lot of safety. We have a fifth-year senior in Brandon Mosley that has been a special teams guy. We've got good depth at safety.

The corners are where we lost Tracy Porter and Leslie Majors. Chris Phillips is a fifth-year senior who has played a lot of football and

made some plays for us. He made some plays on a couple different occasions last year in critical situations so we feel really good about it even though he hadn't been a starter. When you're a fifth-year senior, that's a lot of practices, whether it's in the fall or spring or with our bowl practices last year.

The other side is where we're going to have some great competition, Richard Council. We have a red-shirt freshman by the name of Donnell Jones from Florida that we thought just had an outstanding spring; Adrian Burks. We've got some guys, it's just a matter of we have to settle in on somebody in camp so they can get some quality reps.

I think the other thing about it is we've got an outstanding group of wide receivers and we have had for the last couple of years. Those kids have this great competition in practice and that's made it better as well.

**Q. Coach, talk about your running game the last two years. What do you expect from your running back corps this year?**

COACH LYNCH: I think that we'll continue to play a number of guys there. Marcus Thigpen is our number one guy. Marcus is such a good football player, and again, he's a fifth-year senior so you're talking about a guy who played a lot. He started one full season at wide receiver, then the last two at running back. He gives us flexibility particularly in the spread where he lines up at running back. He'll be able to line up at wide receiver. If we can get the ball to him in space, he's got great speed.

Really he missed the spring practice because we let him run track. He had an outstanding spring with our track team and very competitive in the Big Ten and really at a national level. We felt like going into his fifth year he kind of earned that opportunity. So he's going to be very, very important. But Demetrius McCray, Bryan Payton, Trea Burgess are all guys that have played and have contributed.

Again, when I start out with offensive line, I really do think we're better there. I think we have more depth there, and your running game has to start up front, and I'm hoping that those guys will certainly set the tone for what we do with the running game. And then of course with Kellen as the quarterback, and he's certainly a part of it as well.

**Q. Coach, two-parter here. First, how quickly do you think since he missed spring practice Kellen can adapt to the new style of offense, the up tempo? And secondly, what do you hope that your guys who were on the Bowl team last year and returned this year learned about that whole experience and what we can use going forward?**

COACH LYNCH: Well, the first part with Kellen, it's going to be a competitive camp because one of the things that happens, if you miss spring practice, you miss all those opportunities to get better, but it also gives somebody else a chance to prove they can play. Ben Chappell is a guy who can play very, very good. He's a different kind of quarterback. He's a big strong thrower. He doesn't have the same ability to make plays with his feet like Kellen, but they're going to compete when they get there.

I'm not concerned about the offense because we're running the same offense. We may be using a little different tempo but that won't be hard. The plays are the same and the terminology and all those things. Kids work together all summer now. But I'm looking forward to the competition. I think that's something that we need that will make us better.

In terms of where we are with the bowl experience, I've said this off-season what's so fortunate in this game is it gave the kids the confidence to believe they can win and confidence that they can be a bowl team. I think that's the first thing.

I think the bowl experience itself and the bowl game we played proved that we have to get better and that's been a real motivation. When we got back from Tempe at the start of the year that was and is motivation. Through the winter program and the spring we have to get better as a football team if we want to compete at that level.

**Q. Coach, you touched on it a little bit about how the players have a little more confidence now from last year. Is there a different feel altogether that you talk about around campus and on the field and in the weight room and whatever because of last year and because of the different confidence?**

COACH LYNCH: I think. So I don't think there's any question about it. You have to win; you have to prove you can win to create that excitement, and I think that's what we did last fall.

There's some other things going on campus that really helped. We have a tremendous facility upgrade going, and anybody that comes into our stadium now, whether it's prospects, recruits all the kids we had in for summer camp and our own guys, every day they come to get dressed to go work out. I mean, we're enclosing the north end of our stadium. It's going to be a tremendous addition not only from a game-day experience but what all goes on inside it. We're going from 5,000-square foot weight room to a 25,000-square foot weight room, all the bells and whistles and technology that has certainly created excitement with our guys and I think with people that come take a look at what we have going.

We've had tremendous support from our administration and now we have to carry it on and follow up last year's success with success again this fall.

**Q. Can you talk about the play 13 mantra and if that can be expected moving forward with this program? It's constantly been winning more games each of the last several years.**

COACH LYNCH: Well, the play 13 was Terry Hoepfner, and Terry was a tremendous guy, passionate about what he did and a great motivator and that was his line, and it became so big in our football program because at the end, a little over a year ago when Terry's health really declined, really the only way he could communicate with the football team was through e-mail. And he'd e-mail them and he'd always sign it off, Play 13. It obviously became something that became very, very important to our players.

And then, unfortunately, when he passed away last summer it became bigger than just with our players, it became kind of the cry of Indiana football. So that will always be there but I do think that now we're to the point where we want to play 13, but as I said, the bowl experience has taught us we want to win the 13, as well, and not looking ahead at all. But just knowing that you have to get better and I think each coach has got up here and talked, everything is about getting better.

It's a great conference. It's hard to win any game, let alone week after week. So we've got to take the approach that we really took last year, and it's an old cliché, but one at a time. One at a time for us is one meeting, one practice, one rep. If we can take care of the little things and get better, then the big picture will take care of itself. And I think that's where we are as a program and we

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take great pride in what happened last year and it starts all over again when the guys report the first of August.

**Q. You've got eight home games this year, was there any consideration, that since you have the tremendous fan base up in Indianapolis, of playing one of the non-conference games in the stadium up there?**

COACH LYNCH: Not at this point. We want every game in Bloomington we can possibly have. There's talk about that and they have a tremendous stadium built there, but one of our other -- it's not just a marketing ploy. It's something we talk about all the time is we have to defend the rock, being our home stadium. And being able to get eight home football games is a great opportunity. And again, I think Coach Tressel just got done talking and it was brought up that USC has lost one home game in five years and the Buckeyes don't lose in Columbus. Really good football teams don't lose at home and that's something that has to be a core of your football program. So we're fortunate to have eight home football games. We've never had that in Indiana before. So now the challenge is we have to take advantage of it. Down the road you can look where you could possibly play a game, but we're proud to play in Bloomington and we want to play there as often as we can.

**Q. Coach, with the change in administration coming and some other changes inside the athletic department, are you fully confident that there will be the support for football that is needed to give you guys the opportunity to continue to improve?**

COACH LYNCH: Yeah, I'm very confident of that. Rick Greenspan has been tremendous to us and I'm very happy that he's going to be with us through the fall, but we've had great support from the upper administration all the way down and I just feel real good about that. It's unfortunate some of the things, but we got a lot of positive things going on at IU and obviously we've taken a hit a little bit with a couple situations, but we feel good about the future and we're going to stick together through all this. But I think the new facility, I think all those things are part of the support that is going to be there. So I feel good about that.

**Coach Lynch - 7.24.08**

**Q. Coach, you had so many guys out this spring. Can you give us an update personnel-wise where things stand and do you expect to have everybody back for fall camp?**

COACH LYNCH: That's a good question. I heard Coach Tiller talk about the number of guys they had miss in the spring and we had the same thing and I think what happens nowadays, you know, there's a lot of guys that need a little repair surgery. Not major stuff, but it may be shoulders or hands or that kind of thing, and we elected to have those surgeries done before spring practice because we've been in this long enough to know if you wait until spring practice is over and all of the sudden it's the first of August and the kid is not quite ready and he misses 29 opportunities in preseason. We went ahead and had those -- nothing is minor, but a lot of it was repair things and clean-up type work. They're all back. Mike Stark had some back problems, who is probably our starting offensive right tackle. He's back. Pete Saxon had shoulder work; he's back in good shape. Terrance Turner we feel like is going to be an outstanding wide receiver, was held out for recovery of his ACL; he's back. Demetrius McCray who's had a foot problem, he seems to be in good shape. James Brewer, another offensive lineman, has a foot problem. All the reports we have this summer, he's in great shape. Starting defensive tackles, one is here, Greg Brown with his shoulder; he's ready to go. Deonte Mack, the other defensive tackle, he's in good shape. Tyler Replegle, linebacker recovering from an ACL.

I'm throwing out all these names. We've had all those guys out of practice but we feel like they should be good and ready to go. Thank you.

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