

B1G Coaches Teleconference: Ohio State's Urban Meyer Addresses Brett McMurphy Report On Zach Smith, Trevon Grimes



Just as Ohio State was getting ready for Tuesday's return to practice at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center in preparation for Saturday at Maryland, head coach Urban Meyer had to answer more than only football questions on the Big Ten coaches teleconference.

After a report from WatchStadium's Brett McMurphy alleged that wide receiver Trevon Grimes transferred to Florida following a "racially-charged practice altercation" with former Buckeyes wide receivers coach Zach Smith, OSU president Michael Drake and athletic director Gene Smith — as well as current and former players — shared statements vehemently denying what was published in the article.

Before the No. 10 Buckeyes (9-1, 6-1 Big Ten) head to College Park, Md., for a noon kickoff with the Terrapins (5-5, 3-4) at Maryland Stadium on ABC, Meyer shared a lengthy statement addressing McMurphy's report among several other updates in the quotes and notes below.

Urban Meyer

- When asked about his thoughts on the report, which claimed that he "helped cover up" the alleged incident between Zach Smith and Grimes, Meyer issued an in-depth answer.
 - "Last week, we were made aware," Meyer said. "I think (sports information director) Jerry (Emig) was made aware and Gene Smith made aware of that there's a story by this reporter that was going to be printed, and Gene and the administration acted.
 - "We were getting ready for the Michigan State game, I believe it was, and they acted aggressively and got very, very involved immediately with it and they interviewed I want to say up to 10 people and I was just kept abreast of it as it was going because my first reaction was, like everyone's around here was, irate. And our players were, I mean, over-the-top irate. When they came to see me, I mean, they were extremely upset that that kind of accusation would be made about something that is absolutely not tolerated and, quite

- honestly, the most preposterous thing I've ever heard in being involved in college athletics.
- "And to see a reporter going after a player's mother like that — once again, I guess I don't read enough articles, but to call out his mother and list some of the things that have happened in her past — once again, I don't, I just don't understand what that's all about.
 - "And the personal attacks is something that — because I did read it. I wasn't going to read it, but I did read it because I knew I'd get asked that question. And then we made a trip to Florida, like we would any player — we have in the past — to go visit a mom who was recently diagnosed with stage IV cancer. Her and her son were in distress. We went to go spend about five hours with them. Gene was very aware, everyone was very aware, and it was the right thing to do and we've done that kind of thing in the past and we would do that again — any player that's in distress, we show our support because we love that family so much.
 - "And how that became a story, I think they were trying to say that we made up a story about cancer or something — and once again, I've never heard of anything like this before in my life — so we've got a big game this week and move on, but I'll certainly (be) looking into legal action. I just don't know how that's allowed to (publish). I don't understand the rules of the laws of the land to say that you can just accuse people of something that did not happen."
- Between the attention around the report and its potential impact on the players with Ohio State getting ready for Maryland, Meyer looked forward to Tuesday's practice as his team resumed game prep for the Terrapins, whom he considers "talented of a team" the Buckeyes have faced to date.
 - "I'm concerned about everything, that's my job and we'll know more today," Meyer said. "But I love these players and I have great respect for these players. The one thing that the video tape doesn't lie, this is as talented of a team as we've faced this year, that we're getting ready to face and you can see that on video tape."
 - After an improved outing for Ohio State's defense Nov. 3 at Michigan State, a 26-6 win, Meyer mentioned that the emphasis on tackling needs to continue into Saturday at Maryland.
 - "The better execution was the tackling," Meyer said. "I want to say we had single (digits), below five missed tackles. A couple games before, we had 20 (Oct. 20 at Purdue). So just we worked extremely hard on tackling and our players really showed up and played great. There's a shot of confidence, which we all needed, on defense. I anticipate today will be a high-energy day of defensive practice because I said it, we've been practicing well. The other thing is we're getting fairly healthy. We were kind of — in the back of our defense, the lineup was never the same and so you're starting to see a little bit of consistency back there."
 - On the flip side, Ohio State's offense rolled as the line picked up steam throughout the Michigan State contest, but the Buckeyes' biggest asset to Meyer has been depth brought by the return of junior Branden Bowen.
 - "It's great and it's a safety valve now, now you've got that depth," Meyer said. "There was a time where (junior offensive tackle) Josh Alabi was hurt and also (sophomore left tackle) Thayer Munford and Branden Bowen, and that left you Nick Petit(-Frere) as our third tackle. As a true freshman, that's really hard. So just knowing that we now have some depth with experience is just, makes practice better and knowing that they're available gives us a great deal of confidence."

- Asked about where Bowen fits on Ohio State's offensive line after he dressed at Michigan State and took his pregame warmups as the second-team right tackle, following a first half of the 2017 season spent at starting right guard, Meyer noted that redshirt freshman Wyatt Davis is the next guard up among the backups.
 - "Wyatt would be the first inside guy in and then I don't know (the first outside), Josh or Bowen," Meyer said. "Josh has been getting much improved as well, so I think we have two legitimate backup tackles."

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