

Coaches Update: B1G Media Days



CHICAGO — The 2018 Big Ten Football Media Days continued Tuesday with the remaining seven head coaches taking the podium in the morning for roughly 15 minutes each.

In addition to the coaches, Big Ten coordinator of football officials Bill Carollo and FOX Sports National Networks and Big Ten Network President Mark Silverman spoke as well.

What follows are updates from the coaches' pressers - excluding Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer's - followed by remarks from Carollo and Silverman. Meyer's comments can be found [here](#).

Kirk Ferentz, Iowa

- Ferentz, who is entering his 20th season as the head coach of Iowa, said one of the main goals for the 2018 season is playing with more consistency after an 8-5 campaign in which the Hawkeyes nearly upset Penn State and Michigan State before their 55-24 beatdown of Ohio State.
- The coach noted the loss of four players at linebacker from last season, saying building depth at that position will be critical this fall. He also pointed out the departure of cornerback Josh Jackson, who was selected by the Green Bay Packers in the second round of the 2018 NFL draft. Jackson had three interceptions against Ohio State last season.
- When asked about the competitive balance between the East and West Divisions in the conference, Ferentz said, "I'm just really focused on the 12 games on our schedule. Anybody can beat anybody."
- Ferentz said former center James Daniels, a second-round pick by the Chicago Bears in this year's NFL draft, is the type of player the Hawkeyes usually aren't able to recruit. Daniels' father, LeShun, played for Ohio State, but James followed his brother to Iowa over an offer from the Buckeyes.

Tom Allen, Indiana

- Allen started by paying tribute to the late former Indiana head coach Bill Mallory, who passed away earlier this year, and said the team will wear a decal on their helmets this season to honor him. Mallory also was an assistant coach for Ohio State from 1966-68.
- Allen said the Hoosiers need to improve their mental toughness and their physical toughness so they can finish games. For a number of years, IU has been known to give teams fits before fading

late. He said depth and fatigue were factors in such games last season, particularly the Ohio State contest when Indiana led, 14-13, at halftime but lost, 49-21.

Mark Dantonio, Michigan State

- Michigan State will field an experienced team in 2018, as Dantonio said his squad returns 10 starters on offense and nine on defense.
- Dantonio said linebacker Jon Reschke is working toward reinstatement after the player announced in February 2017 that he was leaving the MSU program and hoping to transfer for his final season of eligibility in the wake of making what he called “an insensitive and totally regrettable comment involving a former teammate.” Dantonio said he has instituted a step-by-step process that includes receiving insight from the current players’ on whether or not to bring back Reschke, who never announced where he would transfer and did not play in 2017.
- Following up a 3-9 campaign in 2016 with an 10-3 record last season, Dantonio said, “We were able to get up off the mat (in 2017). That’s what I’m most proud of. The 10 wins last year is just an indication of that response” to the challenge he put to his players to bounce back from the slump in 2016.
- Dantonio on whether the Spartans are flying under the radar despite their success and number of returning starters: “I think we get more than our share of publicity — good and bad.”

Lovie Smith, Illinois

- After going 5-19 through his first two seasons as Illinois’ head coach, Smith said, “Year three will produce results. We realize we haven’t won enough football games, but they’ll come. (There are) a lot of good things going on in Champaign.” The Fighting Illini started 15 true freshmen and one redshirt freshman last year.
- Smith added that year three of his rebuild with Illinois, record aside, is right about where he thought it would be: “People kind of see what’s coming with the facilities and everything else. ... This is when we expect to see results.”

Paul Chryst, Wisconsin

- With Wisconsin returning 16 starters from a 2017 team that went 12-0 in the regular season, won the Big Ten West Division and defeated Miami (Fla.) in the Orange Bowl, there are discussions about the Badgers being national championship contenders. To that, Chryst said, “Our expectations and goals inside the room have always been really high. There is nothing that is said outside that is going to impact more than what is said on the inside.”
- Chryst, who’s entering his fourth year at Wisconsin, on the balance or lack thereof between the two divisions in the conference: “I don’t spend a lot of time trying to figure out narratives. Ever since I’ve been a part of the Big Ten, each week is going to be a heck of a battle. That’s the beauty of the Big Ten — you’ve got to be ready every week.”

DJ Durkin, Maryland

- Durkin on the high school prospects in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia: “I think we’re in the center of one of the best football talent areas in the country.” Ohio State currently has six players on its roster from the DMV area.

Mark Silverman, FOX Sports National Networks and BTN President

- Silverman announced that BTN's deal with Comcast is expiring at the end of August. He said Comcast is the leading cable provider for 10 of the conference's 14 markets. The conference is urging Big Ten fans to go to keepbigten.com in order to get/keep BTN on Comcast.
- Silverman said that Comcast won't even negotiate with the network to put it back on its system. "We believe we should be in every single cable lineup in the country, including Comcast."

Bill Carollo, Big Ten Coordinator of Football Officials

- Carollo said if players' uniforms don't comply to the rules, players will not be allowed to play. The knees, midsection and all pads must be covered.
- After a kickoff, the play clock will be set at 40 seconds and will start immediately in an attempt to expedite the pace of play, Carollo said.
- To further help increase player safety, low blocks by an offensive player more than 5 yards down the field are now illegal.
- Carollo acknowledged that replay reviews are on the rise but said that is largely because officials are reviewing potential targeting fouls.
- In regard to regulating the criteria for targeting, Carollo said, "We are very inconsistent across the country."
- Carollo said there was a little bit of momentum from the coaches to lessen the severity of the targeting penalty, which currently results in the ejection of the player and potentially makes him unavailable for the first half of the next game if the foul occurs in the second half of a contest, but no changes will be made at this time.

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