

Coordinator Corner: Kevin Wilson, Alex Grinch Assess Ups, Downs On Both Sides For Ohio State Against Minnesota



Despite the final result of Ohio State's 30-14 victory against Minnesota, glaring issues resurfaced once again for the Buckeyes (7-0, 4-0 Big Ten) as the offense struggled to run the ball and the defense surrendered several big plays.

What did OSU's coaching staff make of each unit's latest outing?

Offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson and co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Alex Grinch provide their perspectives from both sides of the ball as they recap the win over the Golden Gophers (3-3, 0-3).

Kevin Wilson

On what is wrong with the run game after another inept performance...

"Staying on blocks. You can scheme it up. You can talk about pressures, movements. You can talk about being outnumbered, but still running the ball is a little bit of an attitude. I think, again, to be as good as we need to be, we've got to find what we're going to hang our hat on. We keep doing a lot of formations so we're getting a lot of plays and you get a little bit of you're popping here and there versus getting some rhythm, getting some consistency. So it's a talented group of linemen, we've got some backs and we've got to tighten it up to be the team we want to be."

On if pass-block mentality alters run-block ability and the run game as a result...

"I don't know if that's the mentality but the concern always is ... the really good teams — no matter if

you run the ball or throw the ball — are physical. And if you're going to be a throw team — and I know from years and years and years ago, when we'd go against Texas Tech each year and everybody thought (then-head coach) Mike Leach threw the ball a lot, and he did. But his really, really good teams were very, very, very physical. As we go through, whether we're running versus whatever, we have to maintain a physical presence as an offense to be a high-end championship type team."

On if sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins' immobility hinders the run game...

"But then when that happens you either equate it with some numbers, what you're throwing — because some of those are RPOs that are thrown — or you have to incorporate and get the tight end involved because that tight end now has to take that read player out of the game. So when you say, 'You're not running the ball,' sometimes you say, 'Well, that's the O-line.' No, it's not. Sometimes it's the tight ends. Sometimes it's the perimeter guys. So when you're running the ball well, it takes 11. When you're throwing the ball well, it takes 11. We're throwing it pretty good with 11. We've got to get the run game going with 11."

Alex Grinch

On the defense against the run-pass option...

"Is there a magic answer? Some of the things in college football in 2018 with the RPO game — how many guys can you commit to the run? So the guy that you commit to the run is one less guy that you can commit to the pass and it singles you up in coverage. It also creates windows, which creates opportunities offensively. And there's certain instances, too, where you have an individual — whatever you call it, man- or zone- matchup principle — that if you don't make that play early in the game, you buy that play for the rest of the day.

"Whether it's an inside breaking route or an outside breaking route, what you try to do is — best you can is — mix coverage it. But again, college football with the run-pass option — which is the bulk of what they did offensively — it's very difficult to take one man off the run game to ensure that you have multiple bodies in throwing lanes and some of those things."

On how the defense performed given the circumstances...

"We did mix coverage at times. There's a couple of instances where if you knew they were going to run that play, you'd make that call. There's other times you'd say the man caught us on one. Ultimately, you have guys, individuals, in place to make a play. Some are harder than others, but that's football. So you're expected to make the bulk of it, which we're excited we did in the second half.

"It is a chess match. So what does that mean? That means that you've got to make sure that you're gap sound to take a linebacker out of the fit to play coverage. You leave yourself susceptible (to the run) that way. So again, it's a back and forth. Like I said, when you mix things, when you run that — called it an adjusted coverage — to get a more advantageous situation for a defensive back, that's the time that you have to make that play. And if you don't, again, you can buy it for the bulk of the day. We did that at times today."

On the impact of the defense without several starters...

"I think we're finding that to be the case. You're seven games into this thing. We're not in the business of making excuses, but I think (there are freshmen) on kickoff. There's three defensive starters (junior defensive ends Nick Bosa and Jonathon Cooper, plus junior linebacker Malik Harrison) out and we lost (junior cornerback) Damon (Arnette) early in the game and at some point I think B.B. (junior defensive tackle Robert Landers) went out for a bit, so that's opportunities for other guys and as you go into week eight, I'd make the comment that we're running out of time, in terms of being young. We've got to (adapt).

"Is it a work in progress? I think it always is, but it's time now for us to get our feet underneath us and perform better. Again, what you don't want to discount again is shutting a team out in the second half, which is difficult to do, and three takeaways, which was exciting. We had some guys that may have missed a play earlier in the game or at some point over the course of the season make a play today, so some obvious positives."

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