

Coordinator Corner: Ryan Day, Greg Schiano Recap Ohio State's 'Execution' Vs. Michigan, Preview 'Tough' Northwestern



With momentum from perhaps the season's best performance yet on both sides of the ball, Ohio State enters Saturday in the Big Ten Championship Game against Northwestern clicking after the Buckeyes (11-1, 8-1) bullied Michigan for a 62-39 rout Nov. 24 at Ohio Stadium.

Ahead of No. 6 OSU's matchup with the No. 21 Wildcats (8-4, 8-1), an 8 p.m. kickoff on FOX at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, what does head coach Urban Meyer's staff take from the team picking apart the No. 7 Wolverines (10-2, 8-1)?

After practice Tuesday at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center's indoor field, offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Ryan Day and defensive coordinator Greg Schiano shared their thoughts as they moved on from The Game and prepared for the postseason.

Ryan Day

On if sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins is a candidate for the Heisman Trophy...

"Especially when you're in the season and you're kind of where we're at right now, it's not appropriate to come up for air and kind of look at those type of things. None of that stuff matters if we don't play well again this week. So am I proud of what he's done? Yeah. Do I think he should be in consideration for the Heisman? Absolutely. But to sit here and tell you I know where he ranks and all that, and that I've thought all about it, I haven't."

On how much more the playbook has up its sleeve after putting up 62 points vs. Michigan's defense...

"We always have new wrinkles. I think that we were able to execute them. I thought the scheme was good and we were able to put it on the field. But at the end of the day, it comes down to execution. They're all good plays when they work. But the guys did a good job. ... Every week, we go in there and try to be a step ahead of the defense and try to be creative. There's the fine line there of being too over the top where the guys are doing new things, they don't have confidence in what they do. I think when you do some of the same things but give the defense a different look, the guys plays with confidence and speed."

On what stands out about Northwestern's defense...

"They're tough. They've been in that system for a long time, the coaches and the players. They understand how you're trying to attack them. They don't try to give you as many looks or anything like that, but they understand what you're doing. They really study everything about you and really good (at being) quick to react. You can probably get a player or two on them, but then the minute you run that play, they're going to be on it and get that thing fixed and adjust quick on the move, really smart and can diagnose plays."

Greg Schiano

On what changed for the defense against Michigan's offense with limited big plays...

"I think the guys really owned every part of their job and they did a heck of a job executing the plan. We changed a few things that I think may have benefited, but it really comes down to them doing their job and doing it at a high level. They tackled well. We've still got a long ways to go, but it was against a very good opponent. They were able to make a lot of plays and that's the key. ... I don't think it was schematic changes. It was probably just a little different distribution of the calls. We were a little more aggressive, probably, but they gave us an opportunity to be aggressive. They went with a lot of two-tight-end sets, which allows you to do some different things. But again, it wasn't scheme. It was guys playing hard and doing their job, and really focusing against a good football team. There's a ways to go, but that was a step in the right direction."

On if the past week was tough after giving up 51 points at Maryland on Nov. 17...

"No disrespect to the experts, but I really don't (pay attention). After — what is this, 31 years? — of doing this, some years you're a genius, some years you're a doofus, right? I don't believe either of them. I believe you work hard and do you're job. God's got a plan for all of us and that's what we do around here. We work hard and we have great kids, and we try to put them in position to do their best. ... We try to play our best game every week. I know that sound cliché, but we really do. We spend so much time, coaches and players alike, in each game. You only have 12 of them and now we're getting our 13th. You think about it, really, what's talked about a lot is 364 days of preparation for that team up north game. In some way, shape or form, more some days than others. You're in the building. You see the countdown clocks. You see everything. It is a constant on your mind. That's a special situation. But every week, you pour 100 hours of preparation into the game. The players pour a ton of time into it. We always try to go out and play our best game. We're going to do that regardless of if experts think or the committees think. But it's a team that's very successful and we have to find a way to stop them."

On how much of a challenge Northwestern's offense is to prepare for...

"I think everything starts and ends with their quarterback (Clayton Thorson). Guy's got 51 straight starts. He's an NFL quarterback. So we need to make sure that we understand how that all fits into their entire offense. He's a very accurate passer. He understands scheme very well. You're not going to trick him with coverages and things like that. Although he's thrown 12 interceptions, he's very, very smart with the football. So some — not all — of them are, oh, he got tricked and threw a pick. Some of them are tipped balls. It's not all what you would think. I think he's a fine player. I thought he was a fine player two years ago when we played them here. He's had a knee surgery since and a bunch of wins since. He's a good player."

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