

Ohio State Head Coach Urban Meyer Recaps Maryland



COLLEGE PARK, Md. — After a back-and-forth battle Saturday at Maryland Stadium trickled into overtime, Ohio State survived Maryland as the No. 10 Buckeyes got the stop they needed to record their 52-51 edge of the Terrapins.

Improving to 10-1 overall and 7-1 in Big Ten play before next weekend against No. 4 Michigan (10-1, 8-0), how did OSU react to a narrow win over UMD (5-6, 3-5)?

In the aftermath of the emotional victory, head coach Urban Meyer broke down Ohio State's performance against Maryland and looked ahead to Saturday's de facto East Division title game with the Wolverines.

Urban Meyer

Opening statement...

"What a great win and thank Buckeye Nation for supporting us and also much respect — as I told (Terrapins interim head coach Matt) Canada that, wow, was that — just a back-and-forth, back-and-forth, you obviously saw it, and so much respect for him and his staff and his players fighting like that, what they've been through and I made that very clear. Very fortunate to get out of there with a win and just a phenomenal effort on offense, on defense. To give up those kind of yards is obviously very alarming, especially after I thought we had our — you've heard this before, a great week of practice. Regardless, we won our 10th game, get ready for our rival up next."

On the defense...

"Well, two (touchdowns) were missed tackles is what I was told. I can't see from the ground level but I'm going to watch it when I get back or maybe on the plane. Missed tackles and then they got behind us in coverage a couple times and they only threw 13 passes and they had two big hits on us. Complete six balls for 180 yards."

On the two-point play...

"I wasn't even on the headset for that one. I know they ran a shovel option, I even asked their coach afterwards, it looked like a shovel option. Their shovel pass, if it's closed then you can throw a pass and that's what they run. Very unique offense, this is."

On if he was relieved that Maryland went for two...

"Relieved? I would've probably done the same thing if I was that coach the way they were gaining yards on us. Relieved we won."

On Anthony McFarland...

"Yeah, he looked good. Not — I mean, he ran for 300 yards."

On how sophomore J.K. Dobbins stepped up for junior Mike Weber at running back...

"(Weber) practiced on Tuesday — he has a quad bruise and it got worse. And we were hopeful all the way up until today — he just couldn't go. (Sophomore H-back) Demario (McCall) gave us a few plays, gave us a dynamic kick return and he's going to be our kick returner obviously. And yeah, without Mike, J.K. — we rode him. Thirty-seven carries for 200 yards against a very good, top-20 defense."

On if the defense's performance was alarming...

"It is. You know, I thought we broke the rock a little bit the last couple weeks with the limitation on big plays. Look against Michigan State, we gave up other than the quarterback run I think 18, 20 yards rushing for the whole day other than that QB got out of there. Alarming is the right word but we won and let's go back to work and get ready for the next game."

On if he can accept winning games with the defense playing that way...

"No, no, no, no, no. No. Not going to accept that."

On junior tight end Rashod Berry's fourth-and-1 reception in overtime...

"(Offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach) Ryan (Day) called it. Obviously I had to approve it, but very stout defense and we — the thing that you saw today in that short yardage, (sophomore quarterback) Dwayne (Haskins) went in there and kept the ball a couple times — you have to. I just don't know any other way or you've got to throw it a lot. And fourth-and-1 to — I heard the call, 'What do you think? What do you think?' It was a great call."

On if the defense is a result of coaching or execution...

"Well, it's the players and coaches together. If it's a missed tackle, then we're not teaching tackling enough. If it's a scheme issue, then that's a coaching issue. I can't give you the answer right now, I'll probably have a little more answer for you on Monday, but that's very alarming."

On what that game was like for him emotionally...

"It's frustrating when you see a pick-six, when you see a tight end not release on a pass and the quarterback fumbles and you see, you know, a guy that — very good running back for Maryland. So I mean it's up and down, up and down. I look — what a chess match at the end of the game. I wonder if

they don't score there, more clock goes off and I'm not sure what happens. So, very emotional game and I've been doing this a long time but that's a very — I think it's our, I can't remember how many overtimes we've been in, but we've been pretty good in overtime games.”

On how Haskins lead the offense...

“He did. He needed to take that step. That's the next step in his career is the toughness, the leadership, and then obviously he threw the ball. You've got to remember, now, that was a top-20 defense that we went against and I thought a lot of guys made some big plays for us, obviously.”

On if this version of Ohio State is ready for Michigan...

“We'll have to play better than we did on defense or we won't win that game. So that's going to be the message all week and I anticipate we'll play much better.”

On how exasperating this team is for him...

“Exasperating? No, it's not at all. It's part of — like I said I've done this a long time and we've had situations where one side is not playing very well. Last week against Michigan State, the offense was hanging on by a thread and the defense kept us in it and so that's just part of the game. And then the kicking game saved the day — we were talking about (sophomore punter) Drue Chrisman at this time last week. So it's all part — it's up and down and is it where we need to be? It's not, but we're 10-1 and we're going to try to find a way to be 11-1.”

On how Haskins has improved in the offense...

“I think he made the point that what's missing was the toughness element and the aptitude to pull the ball down and run and go get your yards and he did that today. I thought that's the best he's done. I mean, I think he scored — yeah, he pulled it in on the read play and he dropped his pads — he has to do that. And he's been willing and we're now going to give him those opportunities. And his leadership was great — he's getting better and better at that.”

On if he has seen Haskins' toughness building...

“I have. Well, Ryan Day does such a good job with him. Him and Ryan are very close and Ryan's just — he's as good a coach as I've been around. And he's on him nonstop, now. Nonstop at practice and you can see it.”

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