

# Radio Show Recap: Urban Meyer Breaks Down Ohio State Through 3 Games, Previews Tulane



After offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Ryan Day and defensive coordinator Greg Schiano split the duties for the past three weeks, head coach Urban Meyer returned Thursday to his radio show with 97.1 The Fan as he inched one day closer to Saturday's season debut on the sideline with Ohio State vs. Tulane.

Before the No. 4 Buckeyes (3-0, 1-0 Big Ten) close out nonconference play at Ohio Stadium against the Green Wave (1-2), set for 3:30 p.m. on Big Ten Network, Meyer broke down the latest ahead of his first game back.

Below are the top takeaways from what he said on the air, followed by running backs coach Tony Alford, who appeared on the show to close out the final two segments.

## Urban Meyer

- Upon his return, Meyer said he thanks “three groups of people” between the coaching staff, the players and the fans after Ohio State’s 40-28 win over TCU capped the three-game absence.
  - “Ryan Day, I knew when we hired him, he was elite,” Meyer said Day, who served as acting head coach. “And his records shows for himself — 3-0. (Defensive coordinator) Greg Schiano, (offensive coordinator/tight ends coach) Kevin Wilson, (co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach) Alex Grinch, (offensive line coach Greg) Stud(rawa), (running backs coach Tony) Alford, everybody, (linebackers coach Billy) Davis — did such a phenomenal job. That showed. You go on the road — we knew, going into TCU game, that was going to be top-10 program, top-10 coach, top-10 players and top-10 environment. And they fell behind and came back swinging, and made the comment to our team that it seemed like the tougher it got the better we got.”
- Through three games, Dwayne Haskins’ potential has been evident to Meyer since the head coach recruited the sophomore quarterback from Potomac (Md.) Bullis.
  - “I knew, at one point, just watching high school and then I went and watched him train with his quarterback trainer,” Meyer said of Haskins. “I went and watched a workout. I remember walking away, saying, ‘That’s one of the best quarterbacks I’ve ever seen a quarterback go through.’ And he’s still only a very young guy at the time. So we knew he was very talented, but talent is only so much of being a quarterback — the leadership, the ability to execute and the pressure in the pocket in tough situations and he did.”

- With an update on Nick Bosa, Meyer said the aforementioned injury to the junior defensive end required surgery. Bosa is out for Saturday against Tulane, but his status is unknown into Sept. 29 at Penn State and beyond as he goes on without a timetable to return.
  - “He had a core-muscle injury,” Meyer said. “He had surgery. I just talked to his father, maybe 20 minutes ago. We hope to get him back as soon as possible. We’re not sure when that will be. A lot of this is obviously about the recovery. He’s obviously one of the best players in football, but even a better person and an incredible family. So prayers, hug him up and let’s go.”
- In Bosa’s absence, Meyer expects the defensive line to step up as a whole. In particular, though, he pointed to his two freshmen defensive ends in Tyreke Smith and Tyler Friday.
  - “You’ve got Tyreke Smith, who’s a very talented young player and also a great person,” Meyer said. “You’ve got Tyler Friday from Jersey. They’re just great kids from great people, and they’re working their tails off and now they’re in it.”
- With the freshmen, Meyer mentioned junior defensive tackle Dre’Mont Jones among the leaders on the defensive line paving the way and allowing better flexibility in the rotation.
  - “Dre’Mont’s just a guy that’s playing so well right now,” Meyer said. “He gives a little flexibility as well. He’s great. He’s one of our best practice players, too, and that hasn’t always been the case. Like (at practice Wednesday). He’s phenomenal. Just so proud of what he’s become.”
- Meyer mentioned the plan for Tate Martell against Tulane after the redshirt freshman quarterback did not play in Ohio State’s win over TCU.
  - “We’re going to try to get him in,” Meyer said of Martell. “It was just a hard one last week to get him in when the other guy’s playing so well. It was one of those games. He’s practiced hard, he’s a competitive dude now. We’d like to get him in this week, early.”
- Among the linebackers, Meyer broke down playing time at the rotation. He noted his assessment of junior Justin Hilliard with sophomores Tuf Borland and Baron Browning in the middle while sophomore Pete Werner, junior Malik Harrison, fifth-year senior Dante Booker and junior Keandre Jones man their respective spots on the outside.
  - “Justin Hilliard, I’m pushing that as well,” Meyer said of more playing time for Hilliard. “Right now, you have Tuf and Baron at the middle. You have Pete Werner and Book at the outside and then Malik Harrison, who is playing as well as anybody, with Keandre at the Will. So we have a little bit of depth. They played OK. We need to play better, whenever you see plays hit. We gave up too many big plays on defense. Some of those are constant dialogue.”
- Asked about the new kickoff rule, which brings fair catches out to the 25-yard line, Meyer said not much has changed for Ohio State on either side of how special teams approaches those plays.
  - “I haven’t really noticed that much of a difference,” Meyer said. “I was amazed when I saw (TCU return man KaVontae) Turpin fair catch one. I can’t believe he fair caught two. That’s because twice he got hit — one on the 16 and one on the 17. So it hasn’t made that much of an impact. We knocked a kickoff return out to the 40 (almost on fifth-year senior Johnnie Dixon’s 38-yard return in the second quarter). So I haven’t really felt it. ... Maybe some games we fair caught it every time — I want to say Rutgers or (Oregon State) — but I haven’t really felt the difference.”
- Another new rule, the four-game limit for redshirts, has been a hot topic for Ohio State through

its first few weeks of the season. With how many true freshmen have played, however, Meyer mentioned some of the names expected to continue their play on the field throughout the fall.

- “We keep having conversations,” Meyer said. “But right now, we’ve had some injuries and you just play them all. You just play them all and do the best you can. You can’t worry about that. (Wide receiver Chris) Olave’s going to play. (Tight end) Jeremy Ruckert’s going to play. Those are done. Tyler Friday and Tyreke Smith, those are (done). There’s some other ones you have to make decisions on here pretty soon, but we’re going to err on the side of playing them.”
- As he returns to his role on the sideline Saturday against Tulane, Meyer expects the first game back at Ohio Stadium to much more.
  - “It will,” Meyer said. “My love for this university is unwavering and so real. My love for the fans is unwavering and so real. I’ve been a Buckeye since as far back as I could stand. I’ll forever love to be on that sideline. ... I’ll be very grateful to be a part of that.”

## Tony Alford

- Alford previewed Tulane’s defense, which mixes its fronts and brings heavy blitzes.
  - “They’re going to play some four-down, they’re going to play some three-down (fronts) and some movement stuff and they blitz a lot,” Alford said. “So, again, a lot of different blitz patterns and where it’s all coming from. So it’ll present some issues, but at the end, that’s why we’ve practiced them. We’ve told our guys to just go do your job and concentrate on your job and not all the other stuff around you. Don’t worry about the guy next to do, do your job. So we’ll see how we do.”
- Alford considered Ohio State’s offense the fastest he has been around since he arrived for his first year in 2015.
  - “This is faster than we’ve been in previous years that I’ve been here,” Alford said. “But also helps that we have some phenomenal players because we’re big — they’re big, fast strong guys and powerful men. When you can add that element to the tempo, up speed and things that we’re doing, it’s worked out pretty well for us.”
- Alford called J.K. Dobbins’ performance against TCU the sophomore running back’s best game yet.
  - “I think this was probably the best game he’s played as a Buckeye,” Alford said of Dobbins. “... In all reality, this game, he had to work for every yard and broke a lot of tackles, a lot of yards after contact. He’s matured, as he should. It’s the second year in the program. He’s matured in his game, his knowledge of the game, how everything’s working and where the pieces go and how he fits into the system with blocking schemes and things like that. So he’s a smart football player. So he just keeps getting better and better. He’s got an infectious attitude about it. He wants to be great. He’s not OK with the things he’s done in the past. He really wants to excel, be one of the best ever.”
- Alford credited Mike Weber’s development in addition to how the junior running back has handled reps with Dobbins in the rotation at running back.
  - “Another one, he’s done some really good things for us as well and continues to get better,” Alford said. “The one really neat thing, and I’ve talked about it is people want to think about it as if (Dobbins and Weber) compete with each other and just want to compete with each other. Really, what they’re doing is pushing each other. They’re pushing each other to be

better and be great players. They're phenomenal teammates. They get along great. They're roommates on the road. They push each other. They have great communication, on and off the field, and it's fun to watch. When one of them's having success, scores a touchdown, the first one to go over and congratulate them is the other guy. It just speaks to the unselfishness of the room and the culture of us in that room."

- Alford assessed freshmen Master Teague and Brian Snead throughout the first few weeks of the season.
  - "I think both those guys have bright futures here," Alford said of Teague and Snead. "They've just got to learn this game and how the game goes and everything that comes along with playing college football. The off-the-field academics and the time and the lifting. How do you take of your body? That's so important in today's game of just taking care of yourself — getting enough sleep, getting enough hydration. Like I said, taking care of your legs. There's so many things that are involved that they didn't have to do in high school, but they're really dynamic players and they've got great skill sets about them. I'm anxious where they're headed right now, too, and the good thing is they aren't forced to play. They're not forced to happen to be at the top of the shelf, if you will, right now because they've got two older guys in front of them that they're teaching them how to do things."

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