

Urban Meyer Is Back - Kind Of



Ohio State's Urban Meyer was placed on paid administrative leave Aug. 1, and from that day through the season opener, he was restricted from his role as the Buckeyes' head coach.

In that season opener Sept. 1, the Buckeyes, led by acting head coach Ryan Day, shellacked Oregon State, 77-31, led by a standout starting debut from quarterback Dwayne Haskins and a four-touchdown day from running back Mike Weber.

The following Monday, Meyer returned early in the morning to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center as his suspension came to a close. Well, for a few days at least.

"Coach (Meyer) came back today, we had a meeting earlier this morning, and he's been meeting with some of the players, so things are back to normal," Day said Monday.

"Normal" might be a bit of a stretch, though. Meyer is back to all his duties as head coach this week, but his suspension will be back in place for 24 hours surrounding Ohio State's week-two matchup with Rutgers on Saturday. Then, he'll be back to work on Sunday for a week before being suspended once again for Ohio State's game against TCU in Arlington, Texas, on Sept. 15.

Only after that contest will Meyer and the Buckeyes be fully back to their normal routine. For now, he's restricted to running practice and handling his duties for a few days, but he won't be on the sidelines or even in the stadium for the next two games.

Day made it clear, though, that Meyer was trying to keep things as normal as possible.

"Coach is Coach, you know? Talked to the staff about moving forward, going to the game," Day said. "We debriefed on Saturday's game and now we're working at game planning today."

Defensive coordinator Greg Schiano had a similar sentiment.

"It was good. Excited to have him back, everybody is," Schiano said of Meyer's return. "Coach is a very focused guy, as you know, and we hit it running, got back to it."

When it comes to game day, though, it won't be Meyer calling the shots. But that might not matter.

Day noted that game planning is done and certain decisions are made long before the Buckeyes take the

field. Before the team goes to the stadium, even.

“So much of coaching is done during the week,” he said. “Today the game planning, the decisions that are made up to the game is really where most of the coaching is done, and then once we get on the field the game plan is in and now it’s just a matter of calling the plays and going from there.

“So yeah, it’s kind of Coach is back, and we’re going with Coach, and once we get to the game the decisions are almost made before we get there.”

Not every decision can be made ahead of time, though, and Day will still be the shot caller on Saturday. For example, facing a fourth down, it will be Day’s decision as to whether or not the Buckeyes punt.

Against Oregon State, he had to make that choice just once - something Meyer was quick to point out.

“I think the comment he made was, ‘You only had to punt once, huh? That’s a pretty good day,’ ” Day said. “I said, ‘Yeah.’ ”

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