

WATCH: Video, Transcript Of Urban Meyer's Game-Week Press Conference Recapping Minnesota, Previewing Purdue



Urban Meyer met with the media Monday in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center team room, moving on from Ohio State's 30-14 win over Minnesota and previewing Saturday's 7:30 p.m. ET kickoff at Purdue.

Despite room for improvement after the past two Big Ten contests, where does the head coach feel the No. 3 Buckeyes (7-0, 4-0) are ahead of week eight's matchup with the Boilermakers (3-3, 2-1).

Urban Meyer

URBAN MEYER: Thanks for coming. Start out, like we always do, with the champions on defense, Dre'Mont Jones, Pete Warner, Kendall Sheffield, and Jeff Okudah. And the players on defense was Jordan Fuller, 13 tackles.

On offense, Dwayne was the champion. The two receivers, McLaurin and Parris Campbell, Luke Farrell was the champion. And two offense linemen, Malcolm Pridgeon and Michael Jordan. And offensive player of the game was KJ Hill.

In special teams, only one kickoff that got covered and we did a good job.

The punt was okay. And then we made three field goals right before the game Sean Nuernberger strained his groin in the warmups. I think it was groin or quad. And Blake came in and really hammered the ball. Did a good job. He was special teams player of the game.

Obviously big road game, a team that is very good on film, obviously, and scoring a lot of points. We've got to get some guys healthy and get ready to go.

Q. Do you expect to have Nick back this season?

URBAN MEYER: He's going to — I believe he's flying back up there tomorrow to get rechecked, I'm hoping.

Q. Are you optimistic or how would you —

URBAN MEYER: Yes.

Q. We've talked a lot about the running game. Some of it comes down to execution from everybody. Is it possible you guys could do more, whether formationally or build a little more RPO in the running game to protect it a little bit?

URBAN MEYER: A lot of those passes are RPO's, like when you see Parris in the flat or KJ on a hitch, those are all RPO's. You're reading someone, you trigger, you throw the ball. So I'd say there's at least 10 to 12 called runs that the ball is being thrown. Does that make sense?

Q. Yeah, it does. How would you say Dwayne is doing with that? Is he always making the right decision when he pulls it?

URBAN MEYER: Pretty good. There's times it could go either way, but he's very accurate with the ball.

Q. And what's the status of Thayer Munford?

URBAN MEYER: Thayer is sore. I'd say probable for the game Saturday.

Q. When you study the defense and in the way it's been explored lately and you said you saw the runs and all that, is there something schematically that you could be doing differently? Do you think you have the right personnel to play the way you're playing right now?

URBAN MEYER: Constant evaluation of that, and it's ever changing with personnel, when the guys get dinged and hurt. And like last week we were out five starters on the majority of the game on defense. It's hard to drastically change right now.

We held them without scoring for the better part of three quarters, and had three turnovers and three sacks. I see what you see, as well. We expect them to be snuffed out. But this will be a big challenge this week with everything you just said, that's what we do all day is just constant evaluation.

Q. When you look at Purdue, how scary are they at offense?

URBAN MEYER: I haven't studied them yet. But I just talked to the defensive staff and I've seen the stats and they look really good.

Q. The very best team, do they inevitably get better week after week, or are even the best teams able to get back sometimes, not from a result standpoint but from a positive standpoint?

URBAN MEYER: At this time you just don't have time to really evaluate and look back and reflect. Every school is dealing with it. Every team is dealing with this guy is injured, how you put this one in. How do you adapt your scheme to your personnel, like I believe he just asked a minute ago. We haven't had time to think about that.

Q. Justin Hilliard stepped in, guy that was a five star prospect, had an injury, playing career. What did you see from the way that he played, what's he meant to this team, with special teams going into this? And when you see a guy overcome injuries and stuff like that, how special is it to see them perform?

URBAN MEYER: He's one of my favorite players, favorite families. He's a guy that means so much to us on the kicking game. He played pretty good. Not great, but pretty good. And you've got to remember, this is his second year of football. Because his first two years were — didn't get to practice, really didn't get to do much at all because of his bicep injuries.

Q. When you're recruiting somebody like that, with him being the most sought-after players in the country, when he has a few years like that, do you take what you can get or do you still see the potential that you saw when he was a senior? Can he reach the level that you envisioned?

URBAN MEYER: Yes. You never give up on a player, and keep working with him, and the training staff gets better.

Q. You touched on this a little bit. The rushing game, when you look at what defenses are trying to do against you, do you get the sense they would rather you try to throw? Are those the looks you're seeing?

URBAN MEYER: We went back and studied everything, and had that conversation about these are ten run calls that we're flipping the ball out there and making plays with it. And that's kind of what Dwayne gives you, maybe JT gave you something else, where it was more of a run-run option; this is a run-pass option.

Q. Are there things that you think need to be changed with the short yardage, that's the rest of the time, but the short yardage? Why do you think is happening? Is it the line, is it the scheme?

URBAN MEYER: They're loading the boxes, we're not going to run the quarterback. So those are all things we're looking at.

Q. Could that be a permanent change at kicker?

URBAN MEYER: It's open for discussion. I don't know with Sean yet. He was doing pretty good.

Q. What you just talked about, like the RPO's, do you all consider that part of your run game?

URBAN MEYER: Ryan, I sat in there with him. I don't want to give you a number, but there's some pass yards that are run plays.

Q. Rondale Moore from Purdue, second in the Big Ten, just a little fast guy that's hard to cover. Parris is a big fast guy. A couple of little guys in this conference. Lately you had Dontre here, but lately, your H backs are bigger. Is it harder to get a five-nine guy here and put him on the field at H consistently, because you're asking him to do blocking or is it coincidental?

URBAN MEYER: You get the best players possible and you adjust and he's certainly a guy that can play.

Q. If you like the five-eight or five-nine, you recruit that?

URBAN MEYER: Sure.

Q. And defensively, I think you're 24th in the country in points given up. You only gave up 14 against Minnesota, you got some key turnovers. Is there part of you that thinks you can rely on turnovers, that maybe you'll give up yardage, but if you had big play defenders, we'll get turnovers when you need them, or can you not rely on turnovers?

URBAN MEYER: I think I understand your question. To say you rely on it, that's part of the game. And we're very aggressive on defense. And once again, do we have the right personnel to run our scheme. And then when you start — we've dealt with a safety suspended for a half because of the targeting. We've dealt with multiple injuries. And it's at times you're in survival mode. So say you rely on it, that's the game of football.

Q. Isaiah Pryor, how did he play Saturday? And did you see progress in that safety spot? What was the take on the safety spot halfway through the season?

URBAN MEYER: I did see progress. I know at times it didn't look great. But he actually played okay. Once again that position is for the whole world to see, it's right out there for you. Shaun Wade came in and did some good things.

That position is not finalized, we're constantly evaluating that, as well. But injuries kind of limit you.

Q. Is Wade going to see more time there, the way you're looking at it?

URBAN MEYER: We will have that conversation today and tomorrow.

Q. Your tight ends, Farrell and Rashod Berry especially, how can they factor in to map the running game even better? You're always floating one of them, trying to get man advantage and things like that. But what do you see coming from that particular group down the road?

URBAN MEYER: That's a very healthy position. You've got a really good young player coming up, Jeremy Ruckert, and Jake healthy again now, so four guys that are helping us in other areas of the game, too. Luke and Rashod have been playing pretty good.

Q. And Jeff Brohm, what's the first thing that comes to mind? A schemer, what are your thoughts about him from an offensive standpoint?

URBAN MEYER: I didn't study him, but I've been listening, and I watched on Wednesday, but I know of the coach, an excellent coach and very aggressive.

Q. Kevin Wilson said he thinks that maybe you're doing too many formational things, and you don't have anything to hang your hat on right now in the run game is how he termed it. Would you agree with that? How do you then find something to hang your hat on in the running game?

URBAN MEYER: That's what they're doing now. Like I said, I think that's an interesting point of reference is that a lot of what we're hanging our hat on is the running game. If there's a certain play that triggers, ball comes out, we throw it.

We have two very good tailbacks, and we're making concerted effort to put the ball in their hands.

Q. And he also mentioned the running game is also about attitude. You always talk about the apex of the offensive line being the center. How much does Michael Jordan bring that attitude to the entire offensive line?

URBAN MEYER: That's the apex of the offensive line. He's done a pretty good job. He's a very serious guy. Very good player. And actually had a very good year.

Q. When you said last year that you had talked to the Big Ten about how many road night games you've had to play. This is the third one you've had to play at night this year. How do you feel about that?

URBAN MEYER: We're going to go back in there and talk about all the things you guys brought up (laughter). Not that one.

Q. Did you have any conversations with the Big Ten in the off-season on that?

URBAN MEYER: I think so.

Q. This is the 8th straight game you've played without a week off. Have you sensed any fatigue with your team, and how are you working to combat that?

URBAN MEYER: We're cautious. And we've ran a tough road. But it is what it is, and this is a big one. This is a big one.

Q. I'm just wondering, in our world, fans and everything, you don't run the ball well, you struggle on defense, everybody freaks out. What is your level of concern when you have a

game where things don't go exactly right? What are your conversations like?

URBAN MEYER: When you have 500-plus yards, you don't score for almost three quarters, but we can play much better. I'm not disagreeing with anything. And as I made comment to you many times, and this is probably, go back 17 years, you enhance your strengths and work on your weaknesses, every team has weaknesses, and there are some things we have to work on.

Q. When you look at them, do you feel like you're close?

URBAN MEYER: I do. I feel — and I think that's a good thing to talk to the coordinators about. But I do feel like we're getting better, and I see some young — Josh Proctor is now contributing on special teams. And Marcus played his first game after his injury. So I try to build on those positives. I'm seeing some young progress.

Some of those are just things that I look at, that we're making progress. Davis is getting close to playing time. Josh did a pretty good job. So those are all good.

Q. You want to be in prime time, right, on a national game?

A. You know me pretty good. We're going to go in and work on some things that we have to work on.

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