

WATCH: Video, Transcript From Urban Meyer's Monday Presser Recapping Michigan State, Previewing Maryland



Back on track to a degree after its 26-6 victory against Michigan State over the weekend, Ohio State enters week 12 looking for more with Saturday's noon kickoff on ABC at Maryland as the next Big Ten test. Ahead of the regular season's final road trip for the No. 10 Buckeyes (9-1, 6-1) head coach Urban Meyer met the media Monday in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center team room to recap the win over the No. 18 Spartans (6-4, 4-2) and preview the matchup with the Terrapins (5-5, 3-4).

Urban Meyer

COACH MEYER: Thanks for coming. As we do, I'll go through the champions on defense. Coop — Jonathon Cooper, B.B. Landers, these are guys that graded out champions. Tuf Borland, Malik Harrison, Pete Werner, Damon Arnette, Shaun Wade, Jordan Fuller and Brendon White. That's the way it should look. Player of the game, played outstanding, Dre'Mont Jones: Three QB hurries, two QB knockdowns, two PBUs, and a pass broken up, a fumble recovery and a touchdown.

On offense, we had three offensive linemen: Isaiah, Demetrius Knox and Thayer Munford. Tailback, J.K. Dobbins, ran really, really hard. Luke Farrell graded at champion.

Our quarterback, Dwayne Haskins, graded at champion, and Parris Campbell. We had co-players of the game: Mike Weber, probably his best game. I know he's had more yards, but as far as physical against a rush defense like that, 22 carries, 104 yards, most of it post-contact. And Terry McLaurin, who is — put a statue of him somewhere. I told him if I had another child I'd name him Terry. I don't imagine that's going to happen. So...

Special forces award: You have Drue Chrisman, 15 production points. Five punts down inside the 6. Terry McLaurin, just ridiculous what he does. Two punts down inside the 5. Special efforts: Johnnie Dixon and Justin Hilliard. Justin is a monster.

Couple interesting stats that I shared with the team yesterday: In the second half, starting field position, for Ohio State, was around the 50-yard line, 49-yard line. And Michigan State was the 9-yard

line.

Michigan started their first five drives of the second half on the 5-yard line, 6-yard line, 3-yard line and 1-yard line and 2-yard line. Total drives inside the 10, starting inside their own 10, Michigan State had six, Ohio State zero. Total drives starting outside the 30, Ohio State had 10, Michigan State, 2. And obviously turnovers, we had a critical one, but we created three. Time of possession, 37 to 22.

So with that said, I'll answer any questions for you.

Q. You mentioned three of your offensive linemen graded out as champions. Are you happy with the starting offensive line overall, especially at center left guard, any shakeup there this late in the season?

COACH MEYER: Probably not right now. I think we can play a little bit better. That was a rugged day now. That was — it's not exactly where we need to be. But I think I am satisfied with where we're at. The next guy in would be Wyatt Davis.

Q. Looking at Mike Jordan, still seems like a guy that's trying to learn the center position on the run, what have you seen out of him specifically?

COACH MEYER: At times playing good. Graded champion several times. I don't have the numbers in front of me. I see a big body that works his tail off. And it is a little bit of a transition for him.

Q. Against Nebraska, you guys seemed to feature pistol formation quite a bit and last week I think maybe only did it four times or so. Was that more of a matchup thing with Michigan State, just why did you not feel comfortable, I guess, going to that look in the run game last week?

COACH MEYER: Pistol behind the tailback behind the center. It's all game-specific. There's really not that much difference in — I guess I shouldn't — it's not that much of a difference in what we do. That's Kevin Ryan and they present to me and I listen. But that's not a huge deal.

Q. Because Tony Alford was talking last week about going against those guys downhill?

COACH MEYER: A little more momentum.

Q. If you needed that with a more drop-back passer, if that benefited Mike or and J.K. any more running out of that look?

COACH MEYER: Those are conversations we're having.

Q. Urban, Dwayne's passing numbers cooled off. Where is he — what's your assessment of where he is in his development? Is he where you would like him to be now, or what —

COACH MEYER: I think the keyword is "development." This will be his 10th game or whatever, 11th game. Also the quality of defense. We're facing — what we saw Saturday was legit, quality defense. And so I think his development has been very good to this point. We'd like to see him catch fire again. And it's not just — once again there's pressure on him. It's the receivers. Johnnie catches that ball, which he always does coming across the middle, that's a 35-or-more-yard gain. And we had another one, it's just — so I'm pleased with Dwayne. But it's just like when he has a great day, and usually he's upright, not getting hit. Guys are making great catches for him.

Q. Urban, Michael Jordan had a few issues with the snaps, including the turnover you mentioned before. Are you concerned that that's continued to be an issue over the rest of the season?

COACH MEYER: Yes.

Q. What do you do to try to work him — if you're not going to make any changes to the offensive line, what are you working with him on to —

COACH MEYER: I think you know the answer to that. Work really hard at it. He was out there yesterday working on his, how he holds the ball, and we're studying and working extremely hard on it.

Q. Urban, you guys are 9-1 and still have a shot at the Big Ten, still a shot at the playoff. Yet there's a sense out there, and probably in here, that as Ohio State teams go, this is a little bit better than average. Is that a product of your success? Is that a product of the expectations that have been set here, or do you think it's legitimate to where you are right now that this team has a long way to go?

COACH MEYER: First of all, it's a product of Ohio State. You know, it's a product of the top programs in America. You go on the road and win by 20 points against a ranked team. Someone said it's our eighth ranked win on the road. And what happened? What's the problem? What about this? What about that? I could stand up and say what are you guys talking about? But I get it. I don't think we played great either at times.

But then other times, to finish the game we did, against that defense, no one's done that to them. No one's done it against a team that — you know how much respect I have for that coach, that staff and that place. That was awful. That was a tough environment.

So once again, I'm not saying — because I don't want to come across saying, well, we're 9- — no, we're not playing great at times. But then our defense came out and played the way they did. And our special teams played the way they did. It was a great team win. But we're not where I would like us to be. Is that fair?

Q. Urban, you have to go through this every single year where the game sits there on the last week of the regular season and you have one more to get through. It's human nature, I think, for players to want to start look ahead to the rivalry. How do you avoid that? It's probably going to come up as a discussion at some point amongst them?

COACH MEYER: It did already. It did already. I mean, I had a chat with them. I think this is one of the more talented teams in the Big Ten. They beat Texas early on. They are extremely good skill. They just had a guy rush for 200 yards. Their defense is a top 20 defense. Our guys watched film.

There's not — our guys are very intelligent players here. I do worry about staring at phones all day long. But they know what's in store. And I can assure you this is focus on going to win that game at noon.

Q. You reference the way you guys played defensively on Saturday. Specifically with the linebackers that's been a unit that's had ups and downs throughout the year. What was the evaluation there from Coach Davis or Coach Schiano for how those guys played on Saturday?

COACH MEYER: Tuf had a great day. Graded almost 90 percent. Malik Harrison, 90 percent. Pete Werner, 90 percent. One of their best days.

Q. Baron Browning picked up an injury. What's he dealing with? Will he be back?

COACH MEYER: I don't want to get deep into injuries, but he's probable for this week.

Q. Couple of your players last week, Coach, said that they've found some additional spirit or

energy that either wasn't there or hadn't been there recently. And I'm wondering how you inject that as a coach, because that seems like something you can't order, or is it a force that it might make things worse?

COACH MEYER: So the question is?

Q. They said you were stressing having fun. How do you do that without ordering them "Have fun"?

COACH MEYER: Start yelling at them have fun. Just kidding (laughter).

Q. I'm being serious.

COACH MEYER: I know you are. I am being very, serious too. That's a fine line. Every team is different. You have Sam Hubbard, Tyquan Lewis and Jalyn Holmes sitting right there. And you have Tyreek Smith who is going to be a fine, fine player. So it's a very different recipe. It's so different. And that's my job and our staff's job and our leaders on our team job. First of all, it's a great question. It's a very deep question that is the essence of what we do.

There's not something I'm going to go pull up and say coach's manual page 226 and say now have fun, smile. You've got to feel — especially during practice — the positive is that a lot of the maybe not fun was the fact that we had so many guys hurt. And you're just — we don't know on Thursday who is going to be playing. It's a little more consistent now.

Q. When you tell your guys to have fun, celebrating with chest bumps, when you encourage that, do they seem a little bit surprised, because that doesn't seem like something you would expect to hear from a player?

COACH MEYER: Do they act surprised?

Q. Yeah.

COACH MEYER: Believe it or not I'm a halfway fun guy sometimes. (Laughter). It's been a while. But, yeah. I've just been doing this a long time. And, once again, it's the formula of what you're facing and what you're dealing with.

Q. When you guys were trying to get the run game going, you mentioned a couple times the tailbacks breaking tackles, running. J.K. had the breakout against Nebraska, Mike last week. What did you maybe think they were maybe missing a little bit early on?

COACH MEYER: Just emphasis. And, man, I love those two guys. They've done it in practice. That's the only thing I'll say about our offensive line now is that: Are we where we need to be? No. Do they grind and work and fight and spit and everything they can? You know we made a big point of the last, the fourth quarter in that game now. And against that once again — and great respect. I talk about that program all the time, because I do. And that defense, that's as good a rush defense as I've seen.

And to be able to do that, Mike Weber's last touchdown. There was a guy in the hole, he hit, spun off and got in the end zone. And he's been working on that. And notice he was also very tight with the ball.

So I think Coach Alford has done a very good job with them. And to be honest with you, this is going to be very same. This is an odd four I defense that negates double teams and it's a rugged group.

Q. You guys also had talked about missed tackles after the Purdue and Nebraska games. Do you have a number on that?

COACH MEYER: I don't have one. I'm sure Coach Schiano — that was one of our better days. I do not

have that in front of me.

Q. Seemed like you emphasized that during the week in practice and you felt like you saw that on the field Saturday, then?

COACH MEYER: I did. And this will be a bigger challenge just because of the skills. They're skilled. This team we're playing is outstanding.

Q. Tate Martell got into the game in crunch time, three times, one of which was negated by a penalty. Do you see that expanding as this season matures?

COACH MEYER: I do.

Q. And why?

COACH MEYER: I think he gives you — first of all, he's a good player. Give him a 5 on the competitor scale. He's an elite competitor. He's worked his you know what off. And I do see that.

Q. But to have the confidence to put him into a game when he does —

COACH MEYER: He does it out here.

Q. But you saw that in practice and that's why you —

COACH MEYER: Sure.

Q. Right now, do you see a spark that has come from putting Brendon White into the game on defense? Have you seen anything that he's brought to the table that was missing?

COACH MEYER: I believe so. Once again, I personally have, I believe, but I just see he's playing well. And we're tackling. He's done a nice job with that. Like I said, this is the challenge. The challenge is coming up.

Q. I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but a former coach here, Zach Smith, is making some allegations out there about a former coach you used to work with, Tom Herman, on Twitter and stuff. Are you aware of that? Do you just move from that? What's sort of your approach to that?

COACH MEYER: Move on.

Q. The win over Michigan State, your respect for Michigan State, you go back to 2012, 2014, those are galvanizing wins for the program, for the team that year, have you sensed any of that coming off this win on Saturday?

COACH MEYER: It's just so much to work on right now. I believe so. I know they enjoyed yesterday, which is — we always talk about elite warriors. They celebrated mission accomplished within reason and within time. And then they wait for the next assignment. And they received their next assignment. And it's moved on. But don't kid yourself: Food tastes better and it's not quite as cold outside when you play and win on the road.

Q. Luke Farrell championed last two weeks, running game better the last two weeks, is that a coincidence?

COACH MEYER: No, he's playing pretty good.

Q. Did you believe Drue Chrisman wasn't the Big Ten special teams player of the week?

(Laughter) Is that a move on?

(Laughter). I like the synergy there. (Laughter). On a more serious note, any reaction to D.J.

Durkin's ouster there, and the responsibility of head coach Bears when he may or may not be in the presence of this incident?

COACH MEYER: Move on.

Q. He was on your staff a couple times, right?

COACH MEYER: He was my GA. He was my — very close with him and his family. Like very close.

Q. Have you talked with him?

COACH MEYER: Sure.

Q. Have you ever had a punter affect a game as much as Drue did Saturday?

COACH MEYER: When I read those stats, I don't believe I have. I've had — because we try to play the game like this. And I'm not sure five straight like that.

Q. Two weeks ago you got the run game fixed. Last week your defense played much better. Do you feel like at least the pieces are there to make the run that you want to run, want to make?

COACH MEYER: We're not — I mean, we've been asked many questions about the weaknesses. And we're just still not there yet, where we need to be. And this is a huge challenge for us.

Q. What have you really liked about this team right now?

COACH MEYER: I like the people. No. I'm sorry, I love the people.

Q. Asked about Brendon White. How difficult is it — we're week 10, and he got the opportunity couple games ago because of what happened to Jordan — how difficult is it to make a personnel change this late in the season and what he's done and how he's responded, how rare is it for you to have a guy come in this late and play as —

COACH MEYER: It's rare. But you've been dealing with injuries. And when injury opportunity arises, and he answered the bell. We've had sometimes that not happen. But there's a great history of guys that step up and go play. And Brendon's had two very good games. Three now.

Q. What makes a good gunner? You were talking what Terry McLaurin does, and you were talking about Devin Smith?

COACH MEYER: Unselfish, number one. Understanding of the plan to win and appreciation of it. So you have to be intelligent. You have to be unselfish. You have to be tough. And obviously you have to have the God-given skill set to be extremely fast and get down the field.

And I should have a gunner wall somewhere around here, because those are my guys. And don't mess with them. They're my peoples. And Evan Spencer is famous around here because of what he's done. Devin Smith cut his teeth on that, was as good as there was. I could talk about those guys all day if you want.

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