

WATCH: Urban Meyer Previews Ohio State-Purdue At Midweek Press Conference



At the midweek mark Wednesday, Urban Meyer met with the media after practice in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center team room to discuss Ohio State's progress leading up to Saturday's Big Ten battle at Purdue. Ahead of the 7:30 p.m. ET kickoff on ABC between the No. 2 Buckeyes (7-0, 4-0) and the Boilermakers (3-3, 2-1), the head coach broke things down with freshmen in the mix for bigger roles on both sides of the ball and other takeaways.

Urban Meyer

On the development of the wide receivers...

"Those guys really have developed. You think of (fifth-year seniors) Terry McLaurin, Parris (Campbell) and Johnnie Dixon, who was — if I remember right — in January wasn't sure he was going to play anymore just because of the knee issue, the chronic knee issues that he's had. So a combination of both, but you can't look past that development."

On how the injuries have altered practice...

"Ryan Shazier rule, that's a great one. In case there's some new people in here, the Ryan Shazier rule was mental reps instead of competitive reps. We have some of that. Anytime you're in week seven or week eight, you have some value to that. So it does impact practice quite a bit, to be honest with you. That's when scout teams start to get watered down when you take your redshirt guys or potential redshirt guys and move them into those backup roles, so that's the trickle-down effect takes place this time of year."

On the growth of interim wide receivers coach Brian Hartline...

"He was here for a year before. He's very good technically, obviously, because that's how he's made his living for quite a while in the NFL. Where he's improved is the tactical part, which is this that goes on in (the meeting) room there. So he's made much improvement.

"Instant credibility, knowledge, played the game. Yeah, I love him. He's doing a great job."

On if wide receivers practice one-handed catches...

"I've never been asked that before. Guys practice it. Guys have fun with it. Guys sometimes you're caught in that situation. I've never seen a one-hand catches in recent years. Ever since then there was a great NFL player who made that, Odell (Beckham Jr.). Great player. But yeah, they practice it all the time. It's more having fun than to go out and practice one-handers, but you get caught in those situations and that's how you work on it."

On the urgency for freshman defensive end Tyreke Smith...

"Nick (Bosa) hadn't been with us since week two or — whatever it was — week three, I believe. Tyreke's just getting better and better and better. He's got a great future, great future.

"(Playing 20-25 snaps) is unusual as a true freshman. To play offensive or defensive line, that doesn't happen often. Obviously, Nick did it and we've got some guys doing it around here, but Tyreke's a very gifted guy. The thing is also (Smith is a) very mature, very intelligent guy."

On how to address the team after Bosa leaves for good...

"We have conversations. I don't know. I don't like to share things I do with the team, but we have conversations.

"(Bosa not returning) is the way we all look at it. I will say this that Nick Bosa and Joey, the Bosa family, from day one, they walked on this campus and are great people. They've done so much for us, so we all love them to death and wish them well."

On what comes to mind with Purdue head coach Jeff Brohm...

"Very aggressive, very aggressive and creative."

On the offense's run game and red zone struggles...

"That's been that way for several weeks, but that's a topic on many, many hours of conversation on how best to handle the short yardage and how best to handle the red zone. It seems to be very productive in other areas of the field. So we spend a lot of (time), obviously. The whole saying is enhance your strengths and work on your weaknesses, and that's what's been going on."

On if redshirt freshman quarterback Tate Martell is in the mix for those situations...

"Sure. Yes."

On how to approach the offense in the red zone...

"The whole field condenses. You don't have the vertical stretch down there, so it's a much different game. We work a lot of it, we work a lot of it. It's not like we're the only people that have some issues down there. The single-wing style of football is still a very productive way. That's why when you see some people do the wildcat, etcetera. But throwing, you've got to keep being creative and you've got to be very good. We at times are very good and at times are not, but just a much different (approach). You can't just say, 'Let's do the same stuff we did out on the 40-yard line,' and then put it on the 6-yard line. It's just completely different. The whole coverage scheme changes and there's no windows, really."

On the regression of senior right tackle Isaiah Prince against Minnesota...

“He arguably had one of his better games earlier in the game and then 45 had a couple of good plays against him and he struggled, but he rallied back and finished well. So yeah, that happens. You move on and you have a great week in practice and back at it.

“I think you just get frustration. He’s a much different player than he was three years ago. So it was frustration, if anything.”

On the thought process to help a struggling offensive lineman...

“On Saturday did we (move a tight end or two over for help)? We actually did it a couple of times during the course of the game. That’s always available if we get into a situation like that.”

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