

WATCH: Video, Transcript In Full From Urban Meyer's Monday Press Conference Previewing Ohio State At Penn State



With the 49-6 victory against Tulane in the past, Ohio State turns its attention entirely to Saturday at Penn State.

From the Woody Hayes Athletic Center team room, head coach Urban Meyer provided several key updates in his game-week press conference Monday as he set the stage for the top-10 showdown between the Big Ten's top two teams.

Before the No. 4 Buckeyes (4-0, 1-0) battle the No. 9 Nittany Lions (4-0, 1-0) five days from now at Beaver Stadium in University Park, Pa., get caught up with what Meyer said in the full video and transcript below.

Urban Meyer

COACH MEYER: As we do, just review champions from the Tulane game: On defense, we had Tyler Friday, graded out as champion, Kendall Sheffield, Isaiah Pryor and Jordan Fuller. Player of the game was Dante Booker. Great to see him. Three tackles for loss, two sacks, two assists.

And then a bunch of honorable mentions because we played so many people, especially the second half was a lot of guys.

On offense you had the entire offensive line again, which is essential: You had Isaiah, Michael Jordan, Thayer Munford, Demetrius Knox and Malcolm. Luke Farrell graded out at champion. J.K. Dobbins graded out champion and a handful of receivers. You had K.J. Hill playing at a high level. Terry McLaurin and Johnnie Dixon and Austin Mack. And Binjimen Victor, his last two games have been really, really good.

Dwayne Haskins, 21 of 24 for 304 yards in the first half. And then the player of the game, player of the game was Parris Campbell, eight receptions for 147 yards, two touchdowns. Played well.

Our punter was Drue Chrisman, who, by the way, is a great young man. Had a really good day. I guess

only punted twice, but he's been real solid throughout. Obviously a huge game this week. And Nick Bosa is still not ready. It's going to be a few more weeks, but we expect him back. And then BB Landers will play this week. So that's good news.

Q. You talked after the game about getting the rushing production up, and I know you've harped on balance. In a game like this coming up, how important is that, and what do you guys do to get that balance back to where you want it?

COACH MEYER: Teams are still defending us a lot of single coverage. That's what Tulane did. And we're at the point where we can execute the passing game pretty high. It's a lot how — after watching the videotape, you know, the offensive line played pretty well. But then there's a safety hitting you up for a 4- or 5-yard gain. And when that happens they're leaving you up for single coverage. A lot of it is how they determine to play us.

Q. If you're throwing the way you guys have been is it okay if it's a little bit less balanced than it has been in the past?

COACH MEYER: Everyone knows my feeling on that — balance where you can. But there's time where the dual-threat quarterback you equate numbers; A throwing quarterback, you throw to equate numbers. So that's the difference.

Q. Dwayne's getting a lot of attention and will continue to get a lot of attention with the prime time game this week. Can you talk about the qualities that you see in this kid that gives you confidence that, you know, he can stay focused on what he's got to do and not be distracted by —

COACH MEYER: I called him Saturday night. I was driving home after the game. I called him just with that message to stay focused. And we've had some pretty high-profile guys around here and I've seen it. I've seen it, you know, go both ways where — one thing about Columbus, Ohio is this is the show, and they become bigger than life and we've got to really — but he's a very humble guy. He's a very conscientious guy, comes from a great family. He's been great so far.

Q. Brian Snead didn't make the trip to the TCU game. I believe he was not even on the sideline for this past game. Can you give an update on what's going on with Brian Snead?

COACH MEYER: Violation of team rules that we're monitoring.

Q. Do you expect will he make the trip for Penn State?

COACH MEYER: We don't know yet.

Q. And one more real quick, Mike Weber, will he play this week?

COACH MEYER: I just saw him this week. Yeah, he'll play this week.

Q. There's a report that came out over the weekend, Ryan Day, coach in waiting, I don't know if you know about that. Gene kind of shot it down in a sense. What are your general thoughts on that whole concept of a coach in waiting, it doesn't —

COACH MEYER: I haven't given any thought to it. Ryan is an exceptional coach, but I haven't given any thought to that.

Q. This sounds crazy given the way your offense has worked since you've been here and the running backs you have, but have you been completely satisfied with the way you guys have run the ball the last couple of weeks?

COACH MEYER: When you watch the film, it's like I said, it's not the same — it's a very different

offense right now. One was a run first, pass second. This is a do what they give you.

So it's a very different — I don't think we've ever had a team average over 300 yards passing in a game either. So it's different. But the one thing that Ryan and Kevin have done is utilize the skill set we have of the offensive personnel.

Q. The way it's changed, did you always envision that you might be able to do this offensively? Do you like this sort of — feels like a philosophy change?

COACH MEYER: Sure, when it works. Yeah, once again, you don't go out and recruit just cookie-cutter players. You're going to go out and recruit the best player you can.

When we recruited Dwayne he had a very good skill set. So it's our job as coaches to adapt. I think we have over the years pretty good. We had Alex Smith and he had a unique skill set. And Cardale Jones, a different player than J.T. Then you had J.T. and Tebow, you had Braxton Miller.

So we've tried to have a — very good offensive coaches obviously, and they take what people can do and do what they do best.

Q. Do you have to run the ball any differently without the read option that you had with J.T.?

COACH MEYER: Completely different.

Q. How so? What's changed for you in the calls you have to make?

COACH MEYER: Well, it's not double option football anymore. That was double — the double options are, sometimes you'll see it looks like a called pass, but that's a run where we're reading the second level defenders. So it's completely different.

Q. Did you have to put in any new running concepts this year knowing that you were facing that?

COACH MEYER: Sure.

Q. Can you give me an idea of just how much of a change is it? Like how much "new" is in this offense?

COACH MEYER: It's significant. I mean, you just — a guy like Tate, now you can go — he's a little bit more of the J.T. Barrett package. And Dwayne's not. So it's all about equating numbers, like I said. You equate numbers a handful of different ways. And in the pro-style traditional guy like Dwayne, you equate it by throwing.

And spread-style football you equate it with the added element of a Q run.

Q. You mentioned this a little different the way you guys are operating on offense. I'm wondering if you heard any feedback from quarterbacks you're recruiting about how that position is performing for you guys. I know you're locked up for the next two classes but down the road have you heard anything about —

COACH MEYER: Very positive. A lot of them what to do what we're doing right now.

Q. You have some players or a good portion of your roster that's pretty big on faith. There's an organization called Athletes in Action that I think you've had fundraisers for at your home. What do those fundraisers do and how important is it to you to support that organization so that your players could have more opportunities?

COACH MEYER: Well, I've always been a huge fan of Athletes in Action. Its headquarters are not too far from here, about 45 minutes away. And we've had two gentlemen named Jim Schmidtke and Tom Rode that are incredible. Faith is a big part of this program. Obviously we don't make anything mandatory. But our guys have been awesome with that.

We've had fundraisers every year, whatever, seven years. And that was a big part when we came here that we wanted to make sure that our players have access. And whatever they need the answer is yes.

Q. There's a few players that you've been recruiting that are very complex in just kind of the way they view the world. I was wondering when they are in a situation where they're trying to get a perfect score on an ACT or they're very smart in faith, do you think Ohio State puts — with all these different programs that you have — you put yourself in a position to beat out a school like Stanford because you have so many options between Real Life Wednesdays and it's not so much about the classes and the rank of the school so much as it is about the opportunities. Do you see where I'm getting at? Do you feel that's what you guys have done to put yourself at that level?

COACH MEYER: I couldn't have asked it better. Thanks for asking that question. (Laughter). Some of the years over — that's a good one. We're ranked No. 1 academic/athletic school in America, I can't remember, just recently. And that's a credit to obviously the administration of Ohio State over the last 30 years, 25 years of making it elite.

One of our goals when we came here in 2012 was to be the most comprehensive A through Z. And that really started when my daughter got recruited about just making sure that when this athletic gig is over you have life after the sport.

And I had a really vision of what it should be. And we've blown it away. It's Columbus, Ohio. The opportunities here and the people here and the networking that happens, I mean, I can't imagine anything better than that for a young person to get —

Q. One follow-up that's completely unrelated. With Nick Bosa, you guys have to be careful, obviously, with him because whenever somebody has a surgery in the middle of a season. Is the recovery process different? Is it more delicate to handle when the person that's injured could be the first overall pick in the NFL Draft? Do you have to have different types of discussions with that person's family? And how do you guys handle that with Nick?

COACH MEYER: We've already had those discussions a little bit. But that's down the road when he becomes healthy again. You can't ask for a better family and people.

I don't want to paraphrase John and Cheryl Bosa, but as they said, we trust our children to this program. And we will continue to do so. And so those conversations will be had, but absolutely. Not that you treat anybody different than another player. I want to make sure that's clear.

But that's a real conversation that we're going to have.

Q. The box score had zero tackles for the starting linebackers this past week. What goes through your mind?

COACH MEYER: Zero tackles?

Q. What goes through your mind when you hear that?

COACH MEYER: I did not know that. That's a question to ask Coach Schiano I know they didn't play

that much probably but that's interesting. Because I know Malik's playing at a very high level. Did we not have any champions there?

Q. Last two weeks, but not this week.

COACH MEYER: Okay. That's a great question. I don't have an answer for that.

Q. When you look at Penn State defensively, what do you see that's different from a year ago? They seem to be filling in some holes and had some troubles to a certain extent. But what are you noticing about their defense?

COACH MEYER: Troubles?

Q. Yeah. I mean giving up a few yards to people, things like that.

COACH MEYER: I see a good team. I see Penn State. That's all we really got to say across the country. I see Penn State, very good players, very well coached.

Q. Trace McSorley, when I say that name what jumps to your mind?

COACH MEYER: A winner, a guy that can do it all. And a competitor.

Q. You talked a while ago when asked about Nick Bosa, have you gotten the impression that he wants to come back and play as this season goes along?

COACH MEYER: Oh sure.

Q. He's told you that?

COACH MEYER: Yes.

Q. What's the conversation been like, I guess?

COACH MEYER: That's between me and Nick and the family. But to answer your question, yes.

Q. This game has ultimately decided who won the Big Ten each of the last two years. Does that play into your motivation this week at all in terms of emphasizing how important this game is?

COACH MEYER: No, because there's so much football afterwards but this is a big game on the road. Our focus is on the most prepared team winning this game and working real hard.

Q. What is it about going to Penn State that makes it such a difficult place to play and maybe in comparison to some other environments?

COACH MEYER: That's one of the tops in the country. Very loud and the fans are very into it just like our Horseshoe. You've got to be ready for that kind of environment.

Q. This is going back a couple games, but in the opener against Oregon State, Isaiah Prince made a tackle after Dwayne threw the interception. I just thought that was, I don't know, big lineman like that running to make a tackle. Just his progress through his career and maybe can a play like that ever show you anything about a guy?

COACH MEYER: Sure. Yep. He's one of the most improved players we've ever had here. One of the most improved players I've ever been around. His leadership is incredible. He used to be kind of the guy on the outside. Now he's on the inside. As a matter of fact, he's right in the middle of everything. And I can't be more proud, and his family should be very proud, too.

Q. And in college football these days you guys did it with J.T. when Braxton got hurt, you played J.T. as a redshirt freshman quarterback. There's a lot of teams that sometimes you

have to play young quarterbacks, sometimes teams want to play young quarterbacks. Dwayne getting to watch for two years and now being this ready seems like in year three, would he have been ready earlier if you guys had needed him, or was there something, do you think the Dwayne we've seen is in part because he had those two years to practice and learn and not have to do it?

COACH MEYER: I think it's the relationship with their position coach. It's a little bit like Cardale and Tom Herman and J.T. and Tom. And then J.T. and his development with Tim Beck and then obviously Ryan Day. And I can see that with — I think he wasn't ready as a true freshman.

And last year he was getting closer and closer, but he didn't see it. You saw him throw the ball nice but that's one-third playing quarterback. It's toughness and leadership.

So I just think it's the maturation of a gifted player.

Q. You were asked this a little bit before about the Penn State environment. When you guys go on the road, a lot of times it's not very hostile because you have so many fans there. How different is Penn State? And related to that, in past years you've had established leaders, J.T., Billy Price, all those guys. How big a challenge is it going to be for Dwayne and other inexperienced players to handle that atmosphere?

COACH MEYER: We have some established guys. It's unique, it's three receivers and it's a right tackle. Those are — I put Michael Jordan in that category too. On defense we're still trying to establish some leadership. Dre'Mont Jones has been one of our leaders and Tuf Borland, obviously.

I mean, it's essential. You don't win that game without good leadership.

Q. What makes Happy Valley different. What is different about that atmosphere than you don't see anywhere else?

COACH MEYER: It's just a difficult place. Certainly one of the top five stadiums to play in, hard to play in. Very loud and the fans are into it. And very good environment. Great environment.

Q. When you have a lot of different things that are working offensively how does one decide what to run in crucial, situation, like fourth down, game on the line? Do you have a page in your playbook that you're, like, that's where I go to?

COACH MEYER: That's what those guys are doing right now. You sit in those meetings and by Wednesday, Thursday you have that on it. You don't have it now because every defense is different, and who is the hot hand, who is healthy, who do you run behind, who do you throw behind and who do you throw to. That's all what goes on here for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday.

Q. Related note, you talked about the process you go through of making sure that you get the ball to different players. When you've got so many different playmakers, is that process of deciding who gets touches easier or harder?

COACH MEYER: No, it's much easier. Having good players is much easier than just having one or two. And we still do that, trying to get the ball to certain players. But you like to have a lot of choices.

Q. When you see the defensive line has approached an offense or seen an offense that has had a dual-threat quarterback in the last couple of games for you guys, is there a different mentality that the defensive line has to have when you face a quarterback with kind of a dual-threat option?

COACH MEYER: Completely different. Last week was more of a wishbone-style triple option. This will

be a true spread quarterback. J.T. was this guy at quarterback. It's a much different mindset. You've got to make sure you always account for it.

Q. When you have two proven runners at both quarterback and running back, especially the second level of the defense if they get past the defensive line what should the second level be looking for in that?

COACH MEYER: Getting down. That's a big part of this defense is you're playing with 12 and a half guys, excuse me, 11 and a half guys when you're playing with a quarterback that can run. That's one that manages — we've had a lot of yards around here over the last years and years and years because of having that ability to do that. So that's a real threat. And that's something that you have to game plan for.

Q. What we're seeing with this offense, and you mentioned when you have a talented quarterback like Dwayne, played to his strengths how much of his success, though, seems like a perfect marriage in this where you have this quarterback that has this skill set and this veteran receiver group that has been coming together. How much of what we're seeing with the passing offense has to do with that combination?

COACH MEYER: Throwing the ball, and I think everyone knows this. I hate to — I'm not preaching to you, but the quarterback is a production of the offensive line. They've done a very good job protecting Dwayne this year.

It's also — other than TCU, when we get our hands on the ball, we usually catch it. And they've been very good at that. So it's a cumulative effort. And Dwayne will be the first one to admit it. But having veteran receivers that have a skill set, everyone can see it on display when we play.

Q. Dwayne's demeanor, we've got a snapshot of it. He seems like a real even-keeled kid. Like J.T. was more —

COACH MEYER: Right.

Q. What's the difference?

COACH MEYER: It used to be uneven keeled. We pushed it to even and we keep trying to push it. He's done a great job. He's a wonderful guy.

Q. Obviously Penn State's got a little bit different personnel than they had last year, losing a game-changer like Saquon Barkley and Mike Gesicki, what stands out to you about Penn State's roster this year?

COACH MEYER: Offensive line is better. And that running back is really good. Big dude that our guys think — I haven't started — I watched him later in the week. But tight end is a very good player. We don't see much difference at all. Scheme's very similar to what they've done in the past and obviously the quarterback's the guy that makes it go.

Q. And obviously just two years ago your guys' personnel is a lot different, but how much have you guys been preaching what happened at Happy Valley maybe two years ago to maybe some of the younger guys and say — telling them about how tough —

COACH MEYER: It will come later in the week. Mondays are day off, getting rest. They come in and maybe look a little film on their own. But we're not even having that conversation. I'll see how practice goes that's a Wednesday/Thursday conversation that me and Mick usually have.

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