

B1G Coaches Teleconference: OSU's Urban Meyer, IU's Tom Allen Preview Saturday



During the Big Ten coaches teleconference Tuesday, Ohio State's Urban Meyer and Indiana's Tom Allen looked ahead to their Big Ten matchup Saturday at 4 p.m. when the No. 3 Buckeyes (5-0, 2-0) host the Hoosiers (4-1, 1-1) at Ohio Stadium on FOX. As practices resume Tuesday for both sides, Meyer and Allen answered questions and broke down the latest.

Urban Meyer

- Between two big games, Sept. 15 vs. TCU and Sept. 29 at Penn State, Ohio State overcame slow starts and erased double-digit deficits for second-half comebacks. The Buckeyes beat the Horned Frogs 40-28 and downed the Nittany Lions 27-26, but Meyer shared some concerns.
 - "Two great road wins, but those are alarming and something that we just have to keep evaluating," he said. "Why? Why did that happen? It wasn't turnovers. It was an execution issue, but it was also a team we're playing is pretty good."
- Sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins continues to grow as a leader after he bounced back from his early struggles at Penn State with 270 yards and three touchdowns. Haskins went 7 for 10 (70.0 percent) with 138 yards and two touchdowns in the fourth quarter to dig out of a 12-point hole.
 - "The guys around him have belief in him," Meyer said of Haskins. "I see the same thing you see, we see it in practice and I'm on the sideline with him during the game. So very collected, very cool and our guys have a lot of confidence in him."
- Robert Landers remains probable for Indiana, but Meyer mentioned the junior defensive tackle as "a guy that we need to get healthy." Landers logged one tackle off the bench at Penn State.
 - "He didn't play very good Saturday just because he's hobbled," Meyer said of Landers. "He's going to be much better this week, but he's just an energy guy that everybody loves to death."
- As Ohio State's defense prepares for Indiana's Peyton Ramsey, a dual-threat quarterback, Meyer looked back to Penn State's Trace McSorley as "the best we've gone against."
 - "I see a lot of (McSorley) in (Ramsey)," Meyer said. "The extension of plays, the ruggedness — the get the first down, move of the chains type guy."
- After Brian Snead missed the trip to Penn State, Meyer was asked if he had an update on the

status of his freshman running back, who has not been on Ohio State's sideline since Sept. 8 against Rutgers following an unspecified violation of team rules.

- "I do not," Meyer said.

Tom Allen

- Indiana improved to 4-1 overall and 1-1 in Big Ten play Saturday after the Hoosiers survived the weekend with a 24-17 win at Rutgers, holding off 10 points in the second half from the Scarlet Knights (1-4, 0-2) and entering Ohio State with their first conference victory of the season.
 - "It was good to get an important road win last week," he said. "I thought our kids were prepared and came to play early. Not pleased with how we handled the second half. Didn't finish with the intensity and focus I want to see us have. So made it very interesting at the end, had to find a way to close it out and were able to do that. So that was positive."
- In his first year as the full-time starter, after he got the nod for four games in 2017, Ramsey comes to Ohio State completing 115 of 162 passes (71.0 percent) for 1,039 yards and eight touchdowns to five interceptions across five games. On the ground, Ramsey has added 51 attempts for 170 yards and two touchdowns.
 - "I think the improvement area has just come in his poise and confidence of knowing where to take the ball," Allen said of Ramsey. "Very patient in the pocket with his eyes downfield. Anytime you've got a guy that can run the ball a little bit, sometimes younger in his career, he runs too quickly without keeping his eyes downfield. He's doing a better job of that and being patient. When he has to run, he'll run. If not, he'll create time and space for our receivers to get open and get key first downs, which is what he did last week. So he's just gotten better. He's a year older. He's bigger, faster, stronger. He's just such a competitor and our team believes in him. So he just keeps growing, keeps leading and glad he plays for the Hoosiers."
- Indiana has played Ohio State tough in recent years, including the 2017 season opener when the Buckeyes wiped away a one-point deficit at halftime and ran away with a 49-21 rout Aug. 31. However, Allen said, Ohio State remains the challenge for the Hoosiers and the rest of the Big Ten because of the Buckeyes' depth with talent across special teams and past the starters.
 - "We just kind of ran out of gas throughout that game and just wore us down," he said. "That's about recruiting and player development, so we've been addressing those issues since last season. It's not going to be fixed overnight. I think we're getting closer in that area, but we're a very young football team overall this year. So we do have more depth, but we don't have the same kind of depth that I want us to have. So it's a process of growing that."
- After the 2017 season opener, Allen applauded Ohio State's defensive line when he said the Buckeyes were "elite" up front and in talking to their staff said "they think they got five first-round draft picks" following five sacks — all from defensive linemen. Asked about Ohio State's defensive line despite junior defensive end Nick Bosa's absence, the defensive-minded Allen praised sophomore defensive end Chase Young.
 - "He's impressive," Allen said of Young. "He's just so long and I thought that he really, as I watched him throughout the season on film, just keeps getting better and better. Obviously, losing Bosa is a tough blow for any team. But just the depth, the talent on their defensive line continues to impress me. I know it's a hard position to recruit to — to find those guys,

they're hard to get and they just have so many of them. I just look at their whole roster and there's just so many talented players. I've coached in other conferences and played a lot of good football teams. They're right there with the best of the best and it's impressive. But they're so well-coached, too, and that's the thing. I love watching them play, unless it's up close and personal when you're playing them, but I just respect the hard work that they put in, how well-coached they are, how hard they play and they're gifted. So yeah, they just keep rolling them in and there's a lot of 'next man up' it seems like there and that's what you want and that's what they're doing. The elite teams ... have great defensive lines and great D-linemen and great D-line coaches, so they have all the above."

- Taking into consideration Ohio State's big-play struggles, Allen assessed how Indiana, which ranks No. 65 in total offense with 412.2 yards per game (5.37 yards per play), might change its approach against the Buckeyes' prone but talented defense.
 - "They make it so hard on you, so if you can find a way to create a big play, that's a huge positive," Allen said. "Just going through, trying to figure out what we can do and that's obviously part of our plan is to find the advantages we can gain in certain situations to get the ball in our guys' hands to create a big play and move the chains. You want to be able to control the ball as best you can as well. You want to get first downs — that's a key thing. You don't want to give their offense the ball too much and too much time for them, so that's the balance you want to have. But every big play we can create, we're going to do everything we can to create that and try to find any matchup we can take advantage of. They're hard. The chinks in the armor are hard to find against what they do."

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