

Drue Chrisman, Terry McLaurin Shine For Special Teams As No. 10 Ohio State Wears Down No. 18 Michigan State



EAST LANSING, Mich. — Before Ohio State pulled away for its 26-6 win over Michigan State, a Big Ten battle raged in Saturday's frigid game at Spartan Stadium as the No. 10 Buckeyes (9-1, 6-1) slugged with the No. 18 Spartans (6-4, 4-3) for field position.

Courtesy of sophomore punter Drue Chrisman and fifth-year senior wide receiver Terry McLaurin, OSU's coverage team made the difference. Cornered deep in its own territory after Chrisman and McLaurin did the bulk of the damage on seven punts inside the 20-yard line, MSU unraveled in the second half.

Ohio State's 7-6 edge through the first 44:18 of action turned into 19 unanswered points for the Buckeyes, who started the scoring on Michigan State's safety with 42 seconds left in the third quarter and piled up 17 more in the fourth quarter to bury the Spartans.

After they were recognized publicly by head coach Urban Meyer in his postgame press conference, Chrisman and McLaurin met the media moments later to discuss their pivotal roles on special teams in OSU's 20-point victory against MSU.

Drue Chrisman

On what happened when he shanked his first punt short out of bounds...

"I think I didn't realize how strong the wind was, just pushed it out of my hand right of the drop. Came off the side of the foot about 10 rows deep into the bleachers. I think after you have a punt like that — I don't know where it ranks in Ohio State's worst punts in history, but it's definitely my worst punt and I

was just like, 'Man, I've just got to ball out after this one.'"

On getting into a groove as he took more of his punts...

"It's definitely a different punt than your spiral punt. I like to draw a parallel to a lot like the Penn State game. When you're going and getting punts on almost every drive, which is not what we want, when you're out there a lot you just get comfortable and in a groove and you're just able to do whatever the team needs of you."

On having McLaurin and sophomore cornerback Jeffrey Okudah as gunners...

"They make my job easy. All credit to them. They just tell me, 'Just put it around me and I'll get it down.' That's what we just did and they've been solid all year. I couldn't ask for anybody better."

Terry McLaurin

On if catching a touchdown compared to downing a punt...

"To be honest, I don't really care. When you've got a fifth-year guy, a senior, you want him to be able to do everything. So I've made some plays on the perimeter blocking, I've made some plays through the air and I've made some plays on special teams, so I pride myself on being a leader for this team and making plays when we need it no matter how tired I am."

On if he practices his coverage with the same focus...

"Coach Meyer does a pretty good job of keeping me fresh during practice, so I don't really cover a lot of punts in practice. But we practice in on Thursday, downing the punt every Thursday before our games, so I know where Drue is going to kick it, it's very exact where Coach Meyer wants the ball, and Drue does a really good job of putting it either on my head or (fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon's) head and it's our job as athletes to run it down. Either catch it, depending on where the ball is, or knock it back in."

On if the punt team feels more pressure when the offense struggles...

"Well, I don't necessarily feel that pressure, per se, but it credits to our defense. That's why it's an offense, defense, special teams game. Sometimes the offense isn't clicking and the defense picked us up a lot and our special teams really allowed us to gain an advantage. I feel like that was the difference in the game — the defense played great, but we were really playing downhill football. Downing punts inside the 5, Drue just did a great job today and there's other ways to impact the game. Obviously we want to get better on the offensive side going into next week, but special teams has always been a big part of our team."

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