

Radio Show Recap: Urban Meyer, Larry Johnson Break DL Down Before Ohio State Hosts Minnesota



In the final media appearance before Minnesota, Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer appeared Thursday on his radio show with 97.1 The Fan, followed by defensive line coach Larry Johnson.

Ahead of Saturday's noon kickoff on Fox Sports 1 from Ohio Stadium, the two coaches covered a variety of topics as the No. 3 Buckeyes (6-0, 3-0) prepare for week seven's Big Ten clash with the Golden Gophers (3-2, 0-2).

Urban Meyer

- Among the wide receivers, Meyer mentioned freshman L'Christian "Blue" Smith and sophomore Jaylen Harris as two notable names coming along.
 - "Even Blue Smith might get some activity pretty soon," Meyer said. "He's really starting to come on. Jaylen Harris has been improving as well."
- Asked about the single-game record-tying six touchdowns Dwayne Haskins threw in last Saturday's 49-26 win over Indiana, Meyer was not aware of the sophomore quarterback being one score away from sole possession of the program mark.
 - "You never want to disrespect your opponent, but these guys work so hard, I might have (let Haskins go)," Meyer said. "I don't know exactly the scenario of the game, but if someone would've said something to me. I've asked before, when I know something's close — 1,000 yards to a record, we've done that. Once again, never at the expense of disrespecting the opponent."
- While junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones has been battling a sprained ankle injured in the 27-26 triumph at Penn State on Sept. 29, Meyer said Jones has been competing at a high level since the start of the year.
 - "In spring practice, I had a hard time saying he wasn't as good as any player we had on the team, including (junior defensive end) Nick (Bosa)," Meyer said of Jones. "He was right

there with Nick and I can see it continue, and he's battling through a little bit of an injuries — just like everyone is at this time of year — but I can't say enough good things about him."

- Although injuries have slowed Jones and others on the defensive line, Meyer pointed to freshman defensive end Tyreke Smith among several newcomers showing strides and stepping up while also calling on freshman defensive tackle Taron Vincent.
 - "Tyreke Smith is very exciting," Meyer said. "He's just getting better along the journey when Larry Johnson's, obviously, coaching him and just getting better and better. He's got a great future here. Taron's got to keep pushing because Taron Vincent, he's a very talent guy."
- Stemming from questions about the black-stripe concept for freshmen, Meyer called player development "one of his favorites" in coaching. He referred to moments with junior wide receiver Binjimen Victor, redshirt freshman defensive back Shaun Wade, sophomore tight end Luke Farrell, sophomore left tackle Thayer Munford and redshirt freshman right guard Wyatt Davis.
 - "That's when you see Ben Victor do what he's doing now," Meyer said. "With Shaun Wade, he's really starting to come on. You see these players that — Luke Farrell's another one, Thayer Munford and those type of guys that you just see. Wyatt Davis is getting so close. That's one of the great thrills of coaching."

Larry Johnson

- Minnesota's offensive line features the 6-9, 400-pound Daniel Faalele. The freshman right tackle presents an interesting foe for Ohio State's defensive ends, leading Johnson to prepare accordingly.
 - "You can't get locked up with him because he's so strong," Johnson said. "I saw a couple of video clips where he just grabbed guys, tossed them inside. I said, 'We've got to make sure we stay loose.' He is a big guy, so we're going to make him move his feet, see how athletic he be and move him in space, a guy that big. So that's one thing we're going to try and do. We've got to make sure we disengage pretty quickly because we want him to grab the holes that we can get off the block."
- Despite Robert Landers being slowed by an undisclosed injury in recent weeks, missing the Tulane game Sept. 22 before playing increasingly Sept. 29 at Penn State and last Saturday vs. Indiana, Johnson applauded Landers and pointed to an example of how much the junior defensive tackle does.
 - "B.B. really doesn't know how much B.B. does," Johnson said of Landers. "Last week, they ran what we call a crunch play and we had an issue because we couldn't get an end down fast enough, closer to the A gap and it kind of split on us. So we went to the sideline and talked about it, and I said, 'B.B., you're going to have to cut it off.' And that was it, he cut off the next three because he got vertical. He's a great, quick guy to get off the ball. He's challenged vertically, so his ability to stay under big guys is really his thing and he does a great job of doing that."
- As Chase Young continues to emerge, Johnson made note of where the sophomore defensive end stepped up in the past year and where there is still room for improvement.
 - "One thing is he's gotten stronger and he's a much stronger player than he was last year as a freshman," Johnson said of Young. "He's done a great job in the weight room in the

summer of really getting strong. (Strength and conditioning coach Mickey Marotti) and his guys did a great job with him. Then, really, from that point on, it's just trying to develop his technique, really make him a complete football player. Not just a pass rusher, but he's got to play well in the run game to be on the field and those are the things he's really starting adhere to, playing the run and being a pass rusher. So his ceiling is very high. He's had some great success early on at this point of the stage, but he'll get challenged down the road as we go forward because then teams will start to turn the protection, get the ball out faster. So those things we'll have to adjust to, but he's on the right track to be a really outstanding player."

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