

Radio Show Recap: Urban Meyer Updates Ohio State's Injuries Into Off Week, Nebraska Game



While the lone media opportunity for head coach Urban Meyer in Ohio State's off week was limited to the Big Ten coaches teleconference Tuesday, he made his weekly radio show appearance Thursday with 97.1 The Fan.

As the No. 11 Buckeyes (7-1, 4-1) have recuperated from their Big Ten blowout loss last Saturday at Purdue (4-3, 3-1), they continued to work Tuesday and Wednesday toward the Oct. 27 open date and prepared for Nov. 3 vs. Nebraska (1-6, 1-4).

Highlighted by notes and quotes from the segment, the recap below includes Meyer's take on the week so far with injury updates and personnel thoughts ahead of OSU's practice Thursday at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

Urban Meyer

- Injuries are widespread for Ohio State, which is without junior defensive end Nick Bosa for the rest of the season. Against the Boilermakers, the Buckeyes missed junior cornerback Damon Arnette, who did not travel due to an undisclosed ailment. Junior wide receiver Austin Mack, meanwhile, exited Ross-Ade Stadium with a walking boot on his left foot after he left the game in the third quarter and is out indefinitely following Monday's surgery. Others, as Meyer said, are "banged up" into OSU's off week.
 - "We're beat up right now, but the good sign is that a good chunk of those guys will be back and really fresh if we do a good job next week getting them ready to go," Meyer said.
- With the balance between in-game issues and off-week recruiting, Ohio State's position coaches have been in and out on the road. As a result, the Buckeyes' offensive and defensive coordinators with Meyer have mostly overseen the past few days of practice. Meyer broke down OSU's Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday focal points.
 - "It's more team because you don't have the (position) coaches there to run the individual (drills), so we'll go in there (Thursday) and do a few minutes of getting warmed up and they do some scout work where Ryan (Day) and Kevin (Wilson) will run (the offense), then Greg Schiano and Alex Grinch will run (the defense). We do a couple kicking games, which I run it and then we go to all at once two twos ones, that means first-team offense against the

second-team defense, and try to get — I think it's 30 plays — (Thursday). Not a lot of contact. We had a lot of contact Tuesday and Wednesday, but (Thursday) is more of just assignments and running plays and playing defense."

- Right now on defense, as Schiano said Wednesday, Ohio State's biggest emphasis out of Purdue is wrapping up after the Buckeyes missed 20 tackles and the Boilermakers exploded for 28 points in the fourth quarter. As a result, OSU's practices have been conducted accordingly.
 - "We tackle, people have told me, more than anyone," Meyer said. "We've been a very good tackling team over the years. Last week was one of our worst performances. So how do you do that? How do you look at that? Well, you roll your sleeves up and go back to work and work on tackling."
- While the off week has allowed Ohio State to look itself in the mirror, the Buckeyes have already begun to prepare for week 10 against the Cornhuskers. Ahead of the noon kickoff next Saturday on FOX, Meyer has emphasized balance for both the open date and the upcoming matchup.
 - "We've already started," Meyer said. "That's what you try to do, get a little leg up on that, but it depends on what's going on with your team. We are banged up. We have glaring issues that we have to get fixed right away. So you focus on those, get guys healthy and game plan. So really doing all three."
- On offense, Ohio State's "glaring issues" range from the Buckeyes' run game to the red zone. Meyer has expressed his frustrated thoughts before, mentioning Tuesday how OSU spent 12 hours devoted to it Monday, but he underlined those sentiments once again.
 - "The obvious is when you drive the ball up the field and you have four red-zone opportunities and score two field goals," Meyer said. "That's a different ballgame if you get in the end zone. That's always been a strength here. We've got to get that fixed. That's a different approach we've done in the past. I can't tell you the amount of hours we've spent on that."
- In a three-way tie for 123rd in the nation with 66 penalties for 607 yards, an average of 9.2 flags for 75.88 yards per game, Ohio State's lack of discipline killed the Buckeyes at Purdue. OSU logged 86 yards on 10 fouls, which proved costly as the Boilermakers capitalized on those mistakes and eventually pulled away.
 - "If you're a veteran player, those kind of things cannot happen," Meyer said. "We had some false starts on offense, a couple of holding calls on offense and those are our discipline issues. That's within the unit. We spend a lot of time called power of the unit around here: 'Don't go worry about the corners. Worry about your position. Don't worry about the tight ends. Worry about your position and do your job.' That's discipline within a unit."
- Mack's absence, on what Meyer called a "fluke" injury in the sense that it was a non-contact twist on the grass, leaves Ohio State without its starting "X" receiver until at least the Buckeyes' bowl game. Junior wide receiver Binjimen Victor will start, but the door is open for further competition in OSU's rotation there.
 - "That's him, (freshman) Chris Olave and (sophomore) Jaylen Harris," Meyer said of Victor. "Those are the candidates to come in and help us out, but Ben Vic is the starter at X right now."
- Further on injuries, fifth-year senior Sean Nuernberger is still not medically cleared to play after he tweaked his groin/quad strain in pregame warmups Oct. 13 vs. Minnesota. As a result, sophomore Blake Haubeil started at kickoff specialist and placekicker for the second straight

week, going 2 for 3 with a pair of chip-shot makes and a 33-yard miss. Haubeil remains the starter at placekicker into the weekend, but the competition will be re-evaluated upon Nuernberger's health.

- "Sean is still not cleared," Meyer said. "He should be cleared next week, they're telling me. As of now, Blake's the starter and we re-evaluate that every week."
- Beyond the starters, several Ohio State freshmen have battled back from injuries throughout the first couple of months. Among those rookies, Meyer mentioned quarterback Matthew Baldwin and defensive end Alex Williams.
 - "You're always pushing for playing time," Meyer said. "Matt had a tough injury the last game of the (high school) year last year, ACL injury. He's coming back. He's about full speed now. Then you have Alex Williams, a local player, who really had a tough training camp but he's really come on. Dealt with injuries and he's worked his tail off. He'll be talented. He's a talented guy as well."
- Arnette's absence bumped freshmen Tyreke Johnson and Sezyn Banks up the food chain at cornerback against the Boilermakers, but another first-year player might have been involved for the Buckeyes if not for Cameron Brown's own injury. With an unspecified ailment for Brown, another freshman, Meyer broke down the depth and included the plan for redshirt freshman Shaun Wade.
 - "Cam Brown is a player that's been hurt as well," Meyer said. "He was a guy that we wanted to get ready because he's very talented. Then I think Sezyn Banks and Tyreke (Johnson) are the next group. Shaun Wade has got corner skill set, but we're trying to get him ready to play safety."

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