

B1G Coaches Teleconference: Urban Meyer Updates Thayer Munford, Calls Ohio State 'Healthy As We've Been' For Michigan



In his final media availability with reporters for the week, head coach Urban Meyer fielded questions Tuesday on the Big Ten coaches teleconference to preview Ohio State against Michigan.

As the No. 10 Buckeyes (10-1, 7-1) returned to practice at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center four days away from The Game, a noon kickoff Saturday at Ohio Stadium to be televised on FOX, how has Meyer's team started to prepare for the No. 4 Wolverines (10-1, 8-0) with the Big Ten East Division on the line?

He shared status updates for several OSU players, discussed his experience against U-M in the rivalry and more on the call.

Urban Meyer

- Among other areas, Ohio State enters Michigan with its health largely replenished. The Buckeyes saw several players leave Nov. 17's 52-51 overtime win at Maryland, emerging from the close call over the Terrapins (5-6, 3-5) with sophomore linebacker Baron Browning headlining the key players back in the fold.
 - "Baron Browning's back and we're, really, as healthy as we've been," Meyer said of Browning, who sat out the past two weeks with an undisclosed injury. "We're working hard at it."
- Meyer confirmed Browning's status — as he did for junior running back Mike Weber and fifth-year senior Terry McLaurin in his game-week press conference Monday. Meyer added an update Tuesday on sophomore left tackle Thayer Munford, who was labeled "probable" Monday.
 - "I think we're good to go," Meyer said. "Mike Weber will be good to go. Baron Browning's good to go. Thayer Munford should be good to go. (Terry McLaurin), oh, he's good, he's cleared."
- Ohio State allowed a season-high 51 points at Maryland, and with Michigan peaking at the right time, the Wolverines' offense poses a threat to run all over the Buckeyes' defense. OSU's offense

has the capability to come out of a shootout on top, but Meyer doesn't look at it that way.

- "You never really take that (mentality)," Meyer said. "We have to (win), but you never go into a game (thinking that). It's offense, defense and kicking game. You work together and do the best you can to win the game. But there's never been a mind-set of that we're not going to play well on one side of the ball or the other."

- Part of the season for the resurgence of Michigan's offense starts with its offensive line, which retooled under first-year position coach Ed Warinner. The former Ohio State assistant's success doesn't surprise Meyer, who said Warinner has "outstanding" football acumen.
 - "They have (improved)," Meyer said. "That's a great coach and you can see his personality and a lot of his schemes, that he believes in, in that offensive line."
- Since he started his Ohio State tenure in 2012, Meyer is 6-0 against Michigan. Despite his success in The Game, Meyer said he doesn't have time to think about how that track record plays into this year.
 - "With all due respect, I just don't have time (to reflect)," Meyer said. "The next one's the most important and that's the focus I ask of our players. It's a great rivalry ... I have a great respect for this rivalry and how you show your respect is prepare the very best you can for it."
- Three days removed from the Ohio State defense's poor performance against Maryland, which rolled for 535 total yards of offense and 339 rushing yards, Meyer continues to examine potential personnel and scheme changes ahead of Michigan. At this point in the season, though, those wouldn't expect to be drastic.
 - "We're still in the early stages," Meyer said. "We have practice today, obviously. And I spend most of my time, obviously, with the offense. I have spent some time (with the defense). We are looking at quite a variety of things that we think will give us our best opportunity to slow down and stop the team up north."
- As far as total yards allowed (234.8 per game), Michigan boasts the best defense in the country. Ohio State's offense ranks second in the nation behind Oklahoma (576.1 per game) in total yards with 541.8 per game, but Meyer knows what the Buckeyes are up against when he studies his tape of the Wolverines.
 - "They're that good," Meyer said. "They're very good. The job of the offensive coach is to find weaknesses, expose it. This is going to be 1-on-1 battles as far as blocking, as far as receivers against. They're a man-free team. Sometimes you face trick-style defenses. This is not it at all. This is just a very good group of players that plays hard."

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