

Harbaugh Previews Matchup With Ohio State



Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh took to the podium Monday to preview the upcoming matchup with Ohio State in the 117th edition of The Game. The contest will also decide which team will represent in the conference championship game, along with a likely shot at the College Football Playoffs.

During his preview, Harbaugh, who has yet to pick up a win against the Buckeyes, took time to compliment Ohio State's team this season.

"Really athletic," Harbaugh said of the defense. "The defensive front is long, athletic. Very physical. Really good at taking on blocks, defeating blocks, taking on blocks, condensing holes with their athleticism and length and their physicality. Blocking is gonna be at a paramount. Again, it will be channeling Bo and Woody, blocking and tackling. The game will in large part come down to it."

He also noted how impactful the receiving trio of Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba have been for Ohio State.

"Their route-running ability, their catching ability. Their speed to all parts of the field, horizontally, vertically. Really outstanding."

Harbaugh also complimented the play of quarterback C.J. Stroud.

"Phenomenal," Harbaugh said of the redshirt freshman's play. "C.J. is a fantastic player. We saw it in high school when he played. Knew he was gonna be really good and he's bringing it all to life. Playing great."

On Michigan's side, Harbaugh said preparation has been important for everyone, from the coaches to the players.

"It's about having good days, even great days," he said. "You want these to be the best days we've had all season. The best meetings, best practices, great days. And then go play the game. The individual role, understanding your role, preparing for what your role is gonna be, stay in that role and even star in that role is what our guys are preparing for."

Much like Ohio State's Michigan-based practice periods throughout the season, Harbaugh spoke of a "Beat Ohio" drill the Wolverines have run since spring practice.

"It's a run drill," he explained. "Run drill and a run-stopping drill. All runs are between the tackles. Physicality and emphasis on Ohio State and keeping them on our minds every day of practice.

"Like I explained a couple times, this is a game you've gotta channel Bo, you've gotta channel the blocking and the tackling, sustaining blocks, getting off blocks and making tackles," he continued.

Harbaugh said this week is when the mantra of "beat Ohio State or die trying" comes to life, and the preparation for this game is as though it's a playoff game.

"We prepare for it like it's The Game," he said.