

Ohio State Head Coach Urban Meyer Recaps Tulane



How did head coach Urban Meyer react to his first game back at Ohio State? After the Buckeyes' 49-6 blowout of Tulane, he put the season debut into perspective and evaluated the team's performance.

Urban Meyer

COACH MEYER: Thanks for being here, and before we start this little pin I wore for Matt, my friend. He passed away this week. He is a guy I've known for a couple of years. We go down to Nationwide Children's, and I got very close to his family, so that's what that pin is for, so please keep his family in your thoughts.

I also want to thank Buckeye Nation, incredible support down in Texas and to see the stadium packed again, I normally start every press conference with that, because you never want to take that for granted, and I certainly know our players don't take it for granted, and our staff doesn't as well.

I also thanked Ryan Day, and presented him with the game ball afterwards, 3-0, pretty good record. I'm not sure of the exact winning percentage, but it's pretty high. He's done a great job.

A lot of respect for Tulane, triple-option type offense that you have to be assignment sound for the most part. We played pretty good defense, still can get better, but overall very pleased. Then offensively, Dwayne was 21 for 24 for 300 yards, five touchdowns, and we didn't turn the ball over. Bigger games, that's going to be the key, and everybody in this room knows that. Dwayne did very good, but throwing the ball takes much more than him. The offense line protected well, I think we gave up one sack. The receivers were playing at a very high level. Couldn't get the running game going to the degree, Mike Weber has a little strain on his foot, and he should be fine for next week.

With that said, special teams were very solid, very pleased with our punt unit, and we had a couple of nice returns in the punt return game. I'll answer questions for you.

Q. Urban, Dwayne is now completing 75% of his passes, 16 touchdowns, 1 interception, and he's played one half in some of these games. I know you've had great quarterbacks, but have

you had one whose thrown the ball the way the way Dwayne is throwing it right now?

COACH MEYER: I had Alex Smith at Utah and obviously when Cardale got hot. It's so early, though, I hate to put him in those — game 5 coming up. This one is a big one coming up, so I'm pleased with his performance. I remember when I watched him throw at one of his workouts, either right before we signed him or right after, and you could see he had that part of the game.

That's just a part of it. He's getting the command of everything, and the players are just responding to him so playing very well.

Q. I know his arm is strong, but he's also accurate. How does that open things up for the offense?

COACH MEYER: Today we were challenged. It was a lot of single coverage all over the place, and that touchdown to Parris Campbell over his left shoulder, what a beautiful throw and catch, and I'm proud of Parris. That was a catch he has struggled with over the years, and he has really worked so hard at it. But it is, as a defensive coach, you know, when you are a dual threat quarterback that presents problems, if you don't have a dual threat quarterback, you better be extremely accurate and make that be legitimate, or it's going to be hard to run the ball because they'll load the box on you.

Q. Urban, his numbers are pretty amazing. What else did you want to see from him? What's left to see and maybe going into Penn State how he holds up in that hostile environment?

COACH MEYER: We all know about that environment, but he's answered the bell. Against TCU now, I think TCU is a top-10 team, and last year in the rivalry game stepped in there and did it. We're all in this together, you know that's one thing about Dwayne, Dwayne, Dwayne, what about Isaiah, what Thayer Munford, what about our center, what about Mike Jordan, what about Demetrius Knox and Malcolm Pridgeon, and I know, but the — to operate at that capacity, and those kids catching the ball. Because a lot of those are gimmie throws, too, that Parris comes out on the other end on him, so those are all — it's all together.

Q. The leadership you said you wanted to see him grow in?

COACH MEYER: He is doing a very good job with that.

Q. After the game you mentioned you gave Ryan Day the game ball. Can you put in perspective having been the head coach here for seven years how difficult that might have been for him, to go 3-0, and also lose one commitment over two classes from a recruiting standpoint, and now that you're back, being in this point where you're 4-0 now and right in the national championship race, how hard was that for Ryan, do you think?

COACH MEYER: It's a job very well done. He was the first one to thank, and Gene was down there, to thank the coaching staff. That includes guys like Coach Marotti and the support staff, guys like Mark Pantoni. It's a healthy, strong program, and Ryan was exactly the guy we needed to lead it and get us through this, and he did a hell of a job.

Q. Obviously it's your first game back. What was it like emotionally to go through the skull session, to come back, get a win, go through everything you're used to going through here?

COACH MEYER: This community and this school and this university mean the world to you, the state, this is our home state. This is something that, you know, in 2012, when Gene made a call and asked me if I would be interested in coming back to Ohio State, and we were going through a tough time then as well, and we did.

My family is completely engrained in this community, they love this place, I love this university. Walking

into that skull session and see Buckeye Nation's support, myself and our team that was somewhat overwhelming and I appreciate that. Very appreciative of it.

Q. Parris had a decent year last year, but he seems to have taken it up a notch. From your vantage point, what do you see that's different about him?

COACH MEYER: Just his ball skills. He made a decision — he should have come back. I think he's a top first-round draft pick at some point, but he had to improve his ball skills, especially down field. He's improved the crossing routes and bubbles and those types of things. The execution today on that pause route was perfect. He's really playing well.

Q. Was there one moment today, obviously you brought the team in before warm-ups and you stood there and hugged each one as you usually do, but is there a moment that stood out to you or hit you from an emotional standpoint of being back?

COACH MEYER: It's always the same one, between the third and fourth quarter, hearing the band play, "Hang on Sloopy" it's been the same for seven years.

Q. Coach Meyer, the defensive line really stepped up this game, especially players like Chase Young and Dre'Mont Jones. Do you think their performance in tonight's game showed that they can handle Penn State next week?

COACH MEYER: It's a much different game today than it will be next week. Today was wish bone football. So you didn't have the sacks, the pass rush, which is a big part of who those guys are. I thought they played well. They played only 30 minutes of football and we got 'em out. So the challenge of challenges is coming up.

Q. Was this game kind of tricky to manage for you, in between TCU and going on the road to Penn State. You had to pull guys out, and not trying to nitpick but the second half probably wasn't — you probably just wanted to get to the finish. Is that difficult to manage?

COACH MEYER: Coach Mick and I meet hours upon hours. We got in at 4 am. I think we played 80 plus plays down at TCU against a very fast team and in a very stuffy environment, and we overanalyze everything but that's our job, about hydration. Then we show up on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and it's 90 degrees. Turned up the heat on us. So we've been very cautious about, you know, just about the burn-out of a player and the health and welfare of our guys. That's one of the reasons we decided at halftime to end it and to get ready for this one.

Q. You had only seen your team in practice. You had not seen them in a game all year. It's different when you see them in a game. What struck you about your team, watching them in a game today?

COACH MEYER: The accuracy of the passing and the skill set of our wide-outs. We have a big offensive line. We never had a chance to really get the run game going the way we wanted to. You notice every time we got through that safety was right there to get us down, but that created single coverage I was talking about. That's just — offensively the accuracy of the quarterback and the kids making catches.

Q. What about defensively?

COACH MEYER: It was a tough game. It's wish bone. It was all triple option, and that was just one of those things, getting down. I just kept worrying about a wheel route coming out of the back end, because when you play a service academy, that's basically what that was. And I didn't have a chance to watch them until Thursday on video, because I thought it was more spread, but that was wish bone football. They only threw the ball 14 times, and he's an hell of an athlete, so the biggest thing is getting

him down and not having something pop up behind you.

Q. You weren't gone long but you were gone. I noticed today you seemed to be more affectionate. You were grabbing Rashod Berry as you ran out, hand on the shoulder of Tate Martell. You seemed to be — I don't want to get into public displays of affection, but did you feel like, hey, I missed these guys. I want to show them I missed them?

COACH MEYER: Very observant, Clay! (Laughter.) I love these guys. I see Ben right there. Ben knows the relationship we have with our players, and it's very special. It's one of the great things about being a coach, coach at Ohio State and you got your family, your players and your staff.

It was — I didn't know I was doing that, but I can probably feel that I was.

Q. After Tulane's scoring drive I think you came on the field and had a talk with Okudah and Arnette and Greg. With your corners, we know they're skilled, but what you want to see from them in the game next week?

COACH MEYER: I just want to see them be — we had a penalty by Damon and Damon works so hard as practice. He's just better than that. The lack of discipline, and then I just wanted to make sure the focus is on the fundamentals of performing and not on other stuff, so that's the chat we had.

Q. And Mike Jordan had issues with low snaps last week, against TCU. Seemed fine today. What did he do, what did you guys do to straighten that out?

COACH MEYER: Just emphasis, and he came up to me every day after practice, because I got on him a little bit. We chart every snap, and he was very accurate this whole week. Thanks, guys.

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