

Ohio State Quarterback Justin Fields, Wide Receiver Austin Mack, Defensive Tackle DaVon Hamilton And Cornerback Jeff Okudah Preview Big Ten Championship Game Against Wisconsin



Ohio State made quarterback Justin Fields, wide receiver Austin Mack, defensive tackle DaVon Hamilton available to the media for roughly five minutes apiece on Tuesday afternoon, wrapping up the Buckeyes' weekly press conference that included head coach Ryan Day and co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley.

Here's a bullet-point recap of what they had to say:

Justin Fields

- Asked why he doesn't play with a chip on his shoulder despite doubters, Fields said he's "not really focused on what other people say. I just go out there and try to get better each and every day."
- Fields said he's doing exercises to strengthen the muscles around his knee and icing it this week. Doesn't think much about it when he's playing, though.
- Fields said he wasn't concerned about seriousness of his injury when he was laying on the field against Michigan. "As the time went on, the pain got less and less, so I knew I just had to throw on the bigger knee brace and finish the game. It was going to need to be a big injury for me to not go back out there."
- Fields said the bulkier knee brace limits him from running, but he'd rather be safe. "You have to know what's more important."
- Fields said the knee still hurts, but he's going to be in the training room as much as possible this week. "I don't care how much it hurts, I'm playing this week."
- Fields said he didn't think about the impact of his 30-yard touchdown pass to freshman wide receiver Garrett Wilson on the first play back from injury until after the game. "Looking back on it, it was a remarkable play."

Austin Mack

- Mack said he is looking forward to playing indoors at Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium as opposed to the cold rain the teams dealt with in their last meeting. "Without any elements, it gives us a chance to hold onto the ball and be a lot more dynamic."
- Mack joked that he's not sure which is better, "getting to play for rings or getting to play inside."
- Mack said he loves playing for Day, whose office is always open for players to come in and hang out or talk. "He's a great dude, just personally, and a great coach."
- Mack on what it's like to finish his career against Michigan undefeated. "I don't even know what to say. Even if it gets to a time where it's switched, it's bragging rights. I love it. It's dope."

DaVon Hamilton

- Hamilton on head coach Ryan Day's first year as head coach: "Having him step in there and do the things that he's done so far this season is pretty spectacular." Added the relationships Day already had with players as offensive coordinator made for a smooth transition.
- "Our coaches have really prepared us for the type of season we're having right now," Hamilton said.
- Hamilton said there's always room to improve as a defense, even from the last time they played Wisconsin and held running back Jonathan Taylor to a season low in yardage.
- On having five sacks this season, Hamilton said he didn't try to set a goal. "I'm just trying to be as good a player for my team as possible."

Jeff Okudah

- Okudah said he "definitely" expects cornerback Shaun Wade to be back this week after missing the Michigan game with an undisclosed injury. Added he knows Wade didn't like sitting out against the Wolverines.
- "Without him, I think we'd be a completely different team," Okudah said of fifth-year senior cornerback Damon Arnette. Added Arnette is the best trash-talker he's ever heard.
- Okudah said backup cornerbacks Seevyn Banks, Cam Brown and Amir Riep did a great job stepping up against Michigan. "I think they showed and put on film what they're capable of."
- Okudah said "it means a lot" to have Hafley speak so highly of his ability, knowing the number of talented cornerbacks he's coached in the NFL.
- "It would be big just to be recognized among the best defensive backs who have come through here." Named past Ohio State winners Antione Winfield and Malcolm Jenkins.
- On leaving Texas to play his college ball in Columbus, Okudah said, "It feels really good. I'm really glad I made the decision to come to Ohio State."