

Radio Show Recap: Urban Meyer, Kevin Wilson Delve Into Ohio State Vs. Indiana



On his weekly radio show Thursday with 97.1 The Fan, head coach Urban Meyer provided several key updates and added other thoughts as he looked forward to Saturday when Ohio State hosts Indiana at Ohio Stadium.

Ahead of the Big Ten tilt at 4 p.m. on FOX, Meyer and offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson took a deep dive into the No. 3 Buckeyes (5-0, 2-0) as they prepare for their clash with the Hoosiers (4-1, 1-1).

Urban Meyer

- Meyer labeled Sept. 29 at Penn State “a physical game” and noted “everyone’s dealing with” injuries across college football into week six. He reiterated confirmed statuses, first mentioned Wednesday, for junior cornerback Damon Arnette and junior defensive tackle Dre’Mont Jones, but added an update on fifth-year senior linebacker Dante Booker.
 - “Damon Arnette’s cleared to play, Dre’Mont Jones will be cleared to play and Booker’s probable,” Meyer said.
- Junior defensive tackle Robert Landers, who missed Sept. 22 vs. Tulane but returned to action off the bench at Penn State after junior defensive tackle Davon Hamilton got the start, continues to battle an unspecified injury ahead of Indiana.
 - “Robert Landers played really injured up last week but fought through it, but he’ll be better this week as well,” Meyer said. “He’s a tough cat now and he gives us everything he’s got. Plus, he’s just a great person.”
- Upon junior defensive end Nick Bosa’s return to campus and attendance in practices Tuesday and Wednesday, Meyer elaborated on his health status as he recovers from Sept. 20 core muscle surgery.
 - “He’s rehabbing, he’s moving around on the field,” Meyer said of Bosa. “Obviously, not running and all that yet but it’s close. We’re all just — once again, you’re talking about elite people, too. Just a great young man.”
- Earlier in the week Tuesday on the Big Ten coaches teleconference, Meyer compared Indiana’s Peyton Ramsey to Penn State’s Trace McSorley. Meyer had more praise for the dual-threat Ramsey, followed by concern over the versatile Whop Philyor.

- “Offensively, it’s quarterback driven,” Meyer said. “They’ve had some injuries, but they’re very talented at skills positions.”
- Indiana’s Stevie Scott is among the weapons on offense. Freshman running back Brian Snead, who has missed the past three games after an unspecified violation of team rules, has been simulating Scott on the scout team in practices.
 - “(Freshman running back Master Teague) is with the offense right now,” Meyer said. “Snead’s been down there working with scout team and done a good job.”
- Meyer described Indiana as “very well-coached” under defensive-minded head coach Tom Allen.
 - “They have answers, really, for everything. ... The running backs can have a free hat at times you’ve got to take care of and then they’re not going to give you free passes, and that means that you have to work for every pass yardage you get and they’re very aggressive in the blitz game on third downs,” Meyer said. “So we’ve got to keep our quarterback upright and receivers got to win, and obviously the tailback’s got to at some point make people miss. They’ve done a good job of that, but this is going to be another week.”
- Meyer considered Indiana’s Marcelino Ball as one of its best players, detailing the defensive back’s role as an extra safety in the hole for a 4-2-5 scheme.
 - “He does a lot now. ... He plays man to man, but he’s also (a) very strong player. He sets the defense. He’s a little bit like their quarterback on offense. He makes that whole defense go. Coach Wilson coached him. He’s a very good player.”
- Asked about J-Shun Harris, Meyer put Indiana’s punt returner in the same conversation as TCU’s KaVontae Turpin and Penn State’s DeAndre Thompkins.
 - “TCU and that last week, our guys did a great job but he’s outstanding, and this guy’s as good as (Turpin and Thompkins),” Meyer said. “He’s got four or five career touchdowns, I think. I saw him just the other day. We were watching them all (on film). They’re a wall return unit. You’ve got to break the wall. How do you beat the wall? With speed.”
- Meyer mentioned linebackers Teradja Mitchell and K’Vaughan Pope among the top freshman contributors, before he added his thoughts on safeties Josh Proctor and Marcus Hooker. Meyer had an injury update on Hooker, who missed the first five games of the season between his suspension Sept. 1 vs. Oregon State and preseason hand/wrist injury that required surgery.
 - “Josh Proctor has got to give us more and he’s talented enough,” Meyer said. “Marcus Hooker’s been cleared to play. He’s going to play this week. There’s been some good freshman production, but we need more.”
- Meyer singled out several freshmen on the offensive line among those further along in development: Redshirt freshman guard Wyatt Davis, freshman tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere, redshirt freshman center Josh Myers and freshman center Matthew Jones.
 - “We’re trying to develop depth because the first group’s playing well,” Meyer said. “But a guy like Wyatt Davis is really coming on. He had his best week, and he’s getting ready to play and contribute. Nick Petit-(Frere), we’re really working him. ... We’re really working those guys to get ready to help us win.”
 - “He’s full pull our center,” Meyer said of Myers. “The other guy that’s getting better and better is Matt Jones from Brooklyn. He’s an interior guy. But that’s obviously the key position.”

Kevin Wilson

- Wilson, who was the head coach at Indiana from 2011-16, discussed his second game against the Hoosiers after he hired and recruited most of IU's team last year.
 - "Last year was very, very difficult because, one, it was the first game," Wilson said of Ohio State's 49-21 rout of Indiana in the 2017 season opener. "Two, 90 percent of who ran through that tunnel last year were guys that we had recruited or had hired, whether it be managers or — it was your crowd. Some of that changed with the transition after I left. So now, 34 of the 44 are guys that were on our team or maybe guys that had committed to us and had another year now. So there's some guys I don't know, but the old guys I know very, very well. A lot of respect."
- Allen replaced Wilson in December 2016. Allen was originally hired by Wilson as Indiana's defensive coordinator in January 2016 based off the recommendation of then-offensive line coach Greg Frey.
 - "Greg Frey, who's now coaching down at Florida State, their line coach, is from that area," Wilson said of Allen, who was South Florida's defensive coordinator in 2015. "He said, 'Coach, there's a coach who's from Indiana originally and is doing a great job at South Florida.' Didn't know anything about him, wasn't really intrigued that he had to be from Indiana but he did do a great job there, researched him and just called him out. ... Our defense was struggling at the time. He came in with a lot of confidence and charisma, adds his philosophy, his style, but does a great job of connecting, communicating with the players and he's doing a heck of a job for them."
- At Penn State, Wilson explained how the offense was able to overcome its initial struggles of tempo in the first half and get going down the stretch.
 - "Two things — one, it's hard, when it's loud, to go fast," Wilson said of the whiteout crowd at Beaver Stadium, which hosted a venue-record crowd of 110,889. "... Sometimes when you're executing, you're searching a little bit. But what we did in the second half was we went a little faster and it got us in rhythm. So it's a little bit you're damned if you do, damned if you don't. If you go fast, you can run into some bad looks, but you can get into some rhythm. If you slow down, you can get some good looks, but when you're playing on the road, that crowd can get ramped up and that plays and helps the defense. So it's a double-edged sword. Second half we balanced it so much better than we did the first half."
- Wilson broke down the tight ends as "coming along well" despite being "a little inconsistent from playing at ... an elite championship level" that he wants from his players at the position, but the bulk of the group is "first-time players."
 - On sophomore Luke Farrell: "Luke has had, the past two weeks, a little bit of a gimpy ankle. He's more healthy this week and will play more. I think that's minimized his mobility in the passing game."
 - On junior Rashod Berry: "Rashod is 'game on' and is settling down in year four where he's just more consistent in practice. Sometimes he would go so hard he would be a little scattered and all over the place. He's maturing, He's calming down. Very, very talented. His play last week on (junior wide receiver Binjimen Victor's) touchdown, he's blocking a guy at max protection and a gap-pull-up protection, so he's pass blocking. Ben catches that ball and Rashod knocks his guy, picks up him on the 15 — a defensive player, 30 yards downfield — and blocks him into the end zone. So his effort and talent's high."

- On freshman Jeremy Ruckert: "Jeremy Ruckert is coming along very, very nicely. I think maybe he should play a little bit more. I think in some big games, a little bit early, been a little hesitant at TCU and at Penn State. He's played 20 snaps a couple of times."
- On sophomore Jake Hausmann: "Jake Hausmann has done well. He had an injury that put him a little bit farther behind. It's a minor injury, but he's back practicing."
- Asked about Dwayne Haskins, Wilson credited the sophomore quarterback's work ethic along with offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Ryan Day's guidance.
 - "Ryan does a great job as a coach and Dwayne has a lot of talent, and Dwayne had worked and trained a lot prior to this year, so it didn't just all of a sudden happen," Wilson said of Haskins. "But I think watching J.T. (Barrett) the last year, the way J.T. prepared and studied and took care of his body and the way he went about the preparation of getting ready to play a game, just not showing up for practice. 'OK, what's the plays? I got it, going home.' The next day, 'What plays you got? OK, I got these.' No, the way you work as a quarterback, with our limited amount of time that we're able to play at an elite level, I think he's done a phenomenal job of preparing. He can make a lot of throws. He can see a lot of throws. For a young man he's very, very confident. He's got three nice road wins. To play as much as he did in the rival game last year and these two road games, here's a guy who's played a lot in six games and got three tough wins on the road. That says a lot."

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