

Top Takeaways From Urban Meyer's Texts



Ohio State released an overwhelming 225 pages of text messages and 1,840 pages of emails which were reviewed in the 2018 investigation into Urban Meyer and Zach Smith, and very few of the documents had anything to do with Smith and what was actually investigated.

Due to FERPA, HIPAA and attorney-client privileges, many fragments or entire messages were redacted throughout the documents, but Buckeye Sports Bulletin pieced together some top takeaways from everything that was released.

Other than premier programs like Alabama and NFL teams trying to hire Ohio State assistant coaches, the biggest takeaways include Meyer reaching out to Ohio State director of player personnel Mark Pantoni about Smith's job performance and messaging Smith directly, as well as the final push to sign 2019 five-star wide receiver Garrett Wilson, and the refusal to break recruiting rules.

Meyer's Concerns About Smith's Performance

Three days after Ohio State lost to Oklahoma, 31-16,, Meyer sent a text to Pantoni asking him to check assistant coaches' phones, including Smith, "to make sure he is talking to (redacted) etc. weekly checks and address it."

Three days later, Meyer reached out to Smith, writing "Need to clean up all issues with routes."

"It will be cleaned up," Smith responded. "We will get it done."

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Read: 9/3/2017 23:52(UTC+0)
9/15/2017 15:05(UTC+0)Direction:Outgoing, [REDACTED] (Urban Meyer)
Need to clean up all issues with routes
Status: Sent
Delivered: 9/15/2017 15:05(UTC+0)
9/15/2017 15:06(UTC+0)Direction:Incoming, [REDACTED] (Zach/courtney Smith)
It will be cleaned up. We will get it done.
Status: Read
Read: 9/15/2017 15:32(UTC+0)
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Three days after the 2017 Big Ten Championship Game, which represented a critical time in recruiting while finalizing the 2018 class, Meyer reached out to Pantoni about Smith performance again.

"Just checkin on zach smith. Make sure he is working," Meyer wrote.

Pantoni apparently had to already get on the wide receivers coach's case.

"I ripped his ass yesterday morning so he knows I'm all over him," Pantoni responded. "He texted me back right away at 6:45 am this morning and Kerry is w him today."

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12/5/2017 14:59(UTC+0)Direction:Outgoing, [REDACTED] (Urban Meyer)
Just checkin on zach smith. Make sure he is working.

Status: Sent
Delivered: 12/5/2017 14:59(UTC+0)

12/5/2017 15:03(UTC+0)Direction:Incoming, [REDACTED] (Mark/Kristen Pantoni)
I ripped his ass yesterday morning so he knows I'm all over him. He texted me back right away at 6:45 am this morning and Kerry is w him today.
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Five days prior to the Scarlet and Gray's trip to the Cotton Bowl to take on USC, Meyer texted Smith, "We r reviewing scripts. where r u?" One minute earlier, Meyer also sent a text, which was a part of a redacted chain of texts, with the message: "Keep eye on zach. He is not here. Need to make (sure) his guys play well. I will say something as well."

Final Push For 5-Star WR Garrett Wilson

Meyer sent a text to a group including Ryan Day, Smith, Pantoni and assistant director of player personnel Weston Zernechel, writing that he had a "great talk" with the father of a recruit whose name was redacted. Using context clues, one can distinguish the conversation is about 2019 five-star wide receiver Garrett Wilson.

Meyer informed the group on April 23, 2018 that Wilson's dad told him his son is a "solid buckeye" and will announce on May 1, but the Ohio State head coach implored his staff to "keep hitting him" in recruiting.. Twenty minutes later, Day responded, writing that he had "been sending stats and info all day" and had already done his due diligence, talking to Wilson's brother, offensive coordinator and head coach earlier that day.

"All say Buckeyes but we need to keep after it. This is a major blow for UT," Day wrote in reference to to the University of Texas.

Smith responded, informing the group that Wilson got "re-ranked a five star."

Meyer wrote again the next day, April 24, 2018, "B careful with 'bump.' Texas is all over." Since Wilson attended Austin (Texas) Lake Travis, Meyer's concerns made sense given the geographical advantage the Longhorns had.

Meyer began a conversation with Wilson that same day, just writing the highly touted recruit's jersey number: "5."

Adding on two minutes later, Meyer pitched Wilson about the reach of Buckeye Nation and the exposure he could have playing in Columbus: "Ohio state is The National University. Only school in America with national following. From Cali to Texas to Fla to New York Buckeye Nation everywhere. Other schools r just regional schools. Ur announcement will be a National story. Forever ur name will be discussed across America. How cool is that!"

Wilson concurred in his response, adding that an “edit” was being made, presumably for a graphic to accompany his impending commitment to the school.

Continuing to pump up the five-star playmaker, Meyer told Wilson he is his “top recruit in America now.,” listing off seven attributes – ability, maturity, intelligence, competitive spirit, character, toughness and leadership – and explained that he grades each recruit on all of them.

Meyer texted: “U started in the top 5, now that I really know u.....number 1. Get ready for incredible career.”

4/24/2018 17:20(UTC+0)Direction:Outgoing, [REDACTED] (Urban Meyer)
Remember “I personally got u!” U r officially my top recruit in America now. I am constantly redoing my list of:
-Ability
-maturity
-intelligence
-competitive spirit
-character
-toughness
-leadership
I give a number grade to each. U started in top 5, now that I really know u.....number 1. Get ready for incredible career.

Ahead of his previously set commitment date of May 1, Wilson committed to Ohio State on April 29.

A day after his commitment, Meyer texted Wilson, writing, “U r officially in the line up! Let’s do this.” Four days later, he texted Wilson, “Eyes from the league will be on u the minute u step foot on campus 5. U will blow them away!”

On July 20, 2018, Wilson texted Meyer asking him about Smith’s situation regarding the alleged domestic violence. Meyer responded: “Yes. They r divorced and don’t get along sometimes. It will b fine.” Wilson’s response indicated he became nervous since he hadn’t had recent communication with Smith but appreciated Meyer’s response.

Meyer Refuses To Extend Impermissible Benefits

Meyer refused to offer a recruit impermissible benefits to ensure a commitment, or at least it appeared that way, in a text conversation with Smith. The venerable Ohio State head coach made it clear the program would look elsewhere if this recruit insisted he get his hands dirty.

“I think we need to b clear with this guy that we r straight as an arrow and move on if he is looking for something,” Meyer wrote to Smith.

“I agree and have been clear with him,” Smith responded. “I don’t think he’s asking for anything but I will make it crystal clear!”

The conversation happened on July 15, 2018, and the player’s name was redacted from the texts.

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