

WATCH: Video, Transcript Of Urban Meyer's Game-Week Press Conference Recapping Off Week, Previewing Nebraska



Back from Ohio State's off week, head coach Urban Meyer met with the media Monday in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center team room and looked forward to Saturday vs. Nebraska. Ahead of the return to Big Ten action against the Cornhuskers (2-6, 2-4), he addressed questions about his future and more as the No. 8 Buckeyes (7-1, 4-1) prepare for Saturday's noon kickoff on FOX from Ohio Stadium.

Urban Meyer

Q. What player on the roster would you say is the most improved from summertime until now? Somebody that jumps out at you?

URBAN MEYER: I'd have to say Bin Victor might be in that category.

Q. Why?

URBAN MEYER: Well, in spring, he didn't have a great spring, and he's playing at a pretty high level. He's still a little bit up-and-down, but when he goes, he's a really talented guy. Probably put Thayer Munford in that category. And then on defense, most improved players from spring or from the summer until now, probably Pete Werner would be a guy.

Q. Couple of the assistants and yourself and the players were saying that the week of practice leading up to the Purdue game were really good?

URBAN MEYER: Yeah.

Q. When you have something working in practice and it's not translating into a game, what is generally the cause of that?

URBAN MEYER: Well, we had, you know, you replay that thing over and over again. We've got to move on to the next game, but you just had penalties, extend three drives. We were off the field, we had three times we were off the field and could have — like a turnover. When you extend the — whether it be roughing punter, roughing the quarterback, a hold. But that's a frustrating thing, because it's one thing if we're not practicing well.

You know, you do see some new things in the game, but very uncharacteristic double digit, missed

tackles too. So those are the kind of things that we've been working so darn hard at that effects.

Q. How valuable were these past week practices for you personally, being that you missed some valuable time early in the season? **URBAN MEYER:** Oh, very good. We're in the grind though. This is all about getting ready for Nebraska, and moving forward. Then, as I've said, to enhance your strengths and fix your weaknesses, we've got to do a better job of that.

Q. I've seen some people in the media implying that you could retire after this season. I'm sure if that's not true you would like to respond to that. What is your response when you hear things like that?

URBAN MEYER: I plan on coaching.

Q. You plan on coaching?

URBAN MEYER: Yes.

Q. Can you say for sure you'll be back next year at Ohio State?

URBAN MEYER: Yes.

Q. Just one more question. Last week, was kind of like a mini training camp for you guys. I know you can only get so much done in a week. But how would you describe last week's practices?

URBAN MEYER: Good, it was, we had a team meeting on Tuesday, you know, and the whole, clear the air, clear the bad taste from your mouth and move forward, and that was what was the objective of last week, and then as fast as you can, get involved with a Nebraska team that's hitting the stride pretty good. They've good players, they're a defense team, that's a really unique scheme, and then they've got the Q-run, we're going into the this Q-run stuff, a dual-threat guy. So it was eliminate. Get rid of that. Get rid of the bad taste, move forward and get going.

Q. I know you were recruiting Adrian Martinez a little bit coming out of high school. What are your impressions of what he's been able to do so far at Nebraska?

URBAN MEYER: Yeah, elite guy. He's a dual guy that can run and pass. He's doing a very good job. The last two games he's done a great job.

Q. Overall, that offense, just what are the biggest challenges you see for your defense going into this game?

URBAN MEYER: That was the J.T. Barrett era where you had the dual-threat responsibility. You know, he does a lot of the, I'm reading the backer, if not throwing the ball or a Q-run, those are tough things to defend.

Q. It doesn't seem like we've talked about leadership as much this year. How is the leadership compared to maybe last year? You lost a Billy Price, a J.T., you're a guy that's had Tebow, you've had some great leaders. Do you have the right guys at the right positions?

URBAN MEYER: Sure, we do. I mean, that's an obligation of the coach, unit leader to develop that. And it's something we work on very hard around here. So we're not where we need to be, obviously, but we're working really hard at it.

Q. So you weren't around preseason in camp and you talked about how much you missed that. How does it work the other way? The team, you like to keep people on edge a little bit, right? Uncomfortable. That is one of the things. You not being in there those three weeks, do you think that had an effect on this team maybe losing some edge, and were you able to get it back during the bye week?

URBAN MEYER: We've got to move. We're moving. I'm not really worried about that. I appreciate the

question, but we've got Monday practice of a plus one day so we're moving forward.

Q. Moving Michael Jordan to center obviously has a ripple effect on the rest of the line as you move pieces around, how do you think that's gone for you guys through eight games?

URBAN MEYER: At times outstanding, and other times it has not been great. But that was kind of a no — Brady Taylor was hurt, and we didn't feel Josh was quite ready, so we had to get our five most effective players on the field, and at times he's been great. He's been playing pretty good. But there is a little bit of a ripple effect. But you've got to get your five best on the field. But when Bowen got hurt, that was an issue, and then obviously Brady Taylor had that injury, and had it scoped just recently. So to get the best five on the line and playing, that's what you have to do.

Q. The decision to play Mike at center, was because Brady was hurt? Because you seemed very high on Brady coming into the preseason? I didn't know if Brady had gotten beat or he was hurt so you had to put Mike at center?

URBAN MEYER: You just get the best five. When exactly that happened, and I know injuries are part of it, that was — that took place during training camp.

Q. And what's Brady's status now, and is Branden Bowen any closer to possibly playing?

URBAN MEYER: They're both getting pretty close. They should be practicing today against scouts. Not quite full speed, but getting closer.

Q. So no chance either could play this week?

URBAN MEYER: There is a chance. We'll know more today.

Q. From the off week, with all of the time that you had to work on things, how do you think schematically or in terms of game planning you are going to — this team's going to look different, especially, I guess, in the run game?

URBAN MEYER: Oh, we worked and are continuing working very hard. There's two areas, the run game and the red zone, and that was basically the whole devotion of the bye week last week on offense. On defense, it's missed tackles and, you know, getting people on the ground when they get in space. So we just worked — that was a whole bye week as far as what we spent time on.

Q. How much better do you feel about the run game now?

URBAN MEYER: We'll know more today and tomorrow. A lot of the coaches were out on the road last week, so it was kind of a little bit of a scramble. But we'll know more today.

Q. I'm assuming that's been kind of the biggest mystery to you, with the run game?

URBAN MEYER: Well, the time spent has been phenomenal. The effort now is time to see some rewards.

Q. When you were looking at that, especially in the run game, in what you were watching, was it more — you know what, if we fix this little thing or that little thing, it will be fine? Or were you watching it thinking, man, we've got to completely change how we're attacking this?

URBAN MEYER: It's too late to do that. And schematically we've adapted some things, but, it's a matter of, you know, two things in my mind, and that's, first of all, getting the players in the right position. Number two, being more physical, and, you know, breaking tackles, and that's the — so those three things, one is getting them in the right position, making sure we have structurally the right play call. Number two, is to get more movement, and number three is running through tackles.

Q. And I understand you maybe don't want to go into this, but I think we're asking this on behalf of Ohio State fans who are curious about you. People are trying to watch you on the sideline, how you react to plays, they're trying to be a psychologist and a doctor on their couch at home and trying to decide how Urban Meyer is feeling right now. When you got hired here we talked a lot about life balance and all that stuff. With everything that's gone on with you this season, where are you mentally, emotionally, are you enjoying yourself? Where is Urban Meyer as a person coaching this team right now? Because, and I understand you want to move forward, but this is a big thing for fans, Urban.

URBAN MEYER: I appreciate it, and I'm fine. I want Ohio State to be successful in the worst way. Working extremely hard to make sure that's happening. I love Ohio State, I love our players, so the issue, I don't want people to worry about me. I want to make sure we're getting some things right around here, and that is what the effort is. That is 100% of what my focus is on.

Q. During games can you — are you too — Kirk Herbstreit said you looked anguished on the sideline. People who know you are talking about this. Are you were the games getting to you?

URBAN MEYER: The games have gotten to me for 30 years?

Q. Is that anything different, or is that just how it is?

URBAN MEYER: We're not playing well, and, you know, I'm one of those guys that I want to help fix the issue, and like all coaches do. So I'm not sure what anguish means. Like pissed or upset, and you know when you see some things that we're doing, it's really uncharacteristic of our teams. So that might be what it looks like. I'm not sure what that exactly means and who said that? Kirk you said?

Q. I'm not following up on that, but, Urban, if you could fix — you probably were anguished in the fourth quarter over there at Purdue. But if you could fix something about this run game right now with a magic wand, what would it be? Would it be the play of the guards up front?

URBAN MEYER: I don't mean to ditch the question, but I'm going to kind of ditch the question because it's too complicated. It's a little bit like someone just asked a minute ago, something here, something there, and the ability to pour through and make holes when they're not there, those are things you watch, you watch a lot of college football on Saturday, and the number one thing is getting guys in space.

That's something we've been pretty good at around here is getting athletes in space, and we haven't been able to do that.

Q. I would think getting runs backs to the second level has been very frustrating right?

URBAN MEYER: Yeah, that's kind of our trademark. Get guys to the second level and let them do their deal and having a hard time doing that.

Q. Do you think it's because you've become a little predictable about who is carrying the ball? If you follow my drift there? The quarterback doesn't seem to be a major threat carrying the ball that allows the defense for, want of another term, to focus on the running back in that particular situation?

URBAN MEYER: That's been part of it. And that's why sometimes you see, like I mentioned, the one time we had at least ten where they were run calls and we threw it. That's part of the double-option spread concept.

Sometimes there's run run option and there is a run pass option. We've been in that kind of mode. So you have to take advantage of your quarterback's skill set and that's what it is.

Q. How much did you get to look at Nebraska offensively? It sound like a little bit. But the JB Spielman

kid, what jumps out at you about him?

URBAN MEYER: Oh, just playmaker, speed, he's having a great year, and he's having a good game against us last year.

Q. Is he close to Rondale Moore, the kid from Purdue, in a sense of what he can make happen?

URBAN MEYER: I think he's very close. He's a very talented guy.

Q. I think you're getting a lot of tough questions. You've asked a lot of questions about the players. I think a lot of teams would trade 7-1 going into November with a chance to win a championship. Does it feel as bad in the woody as maybe some people think? There are problems that have to be fixed.

URBAN MEYER: I think there is urgency. I'm not saying it feels bad, but there is a tremendous amount of urgency. We understand November. We understand where we're at. We understand what's at stake, and we understand our shortcomings. So urgency is probably the key word around here. Hard to say I've ever seen a group of staff work as hard as we've worked so try to fix the issues and same with our players.

Like you go out last week's practice or you go out like someone mentioned the Purdue week and they worked their tails off, and it's frustrating to not see the rewards. I know it's frustrating for the players as well.

Q. Do you feel better, worse, about the chance to compete for a championship in November to standing here today?

URBAN MEYER: Just get to Monday practice. Got to stay away from all that.

Q. You guys in your entire time here have done a really good job. You lose Le'Veon Bell, you put Hooker in there, you lose Shazier, you put Raekwon McMillan in there. It just seems like year after year you lose these guys early, particularly on defense, and you've always had the next All American lined up to do that. Is this, and not to make any kind of excuses, is this season an example of that is a hard thing to sustain over a five, six, seven-year period that you don't have those difference makers yet, but they have the promise to be those type of players maybe in the future?

URBAN MEYER: Yeah. I think that's a great question. That's an observation and something that happens when you have guys leave early. To be able to get that next guy ready to go, but I don't think that's the — that's not the glaring issue right now. We certainly have enough talent right now to play better.

Q. Do you foresee changes on defense maybe Wade at safety, or a change at linebacker?

URBAN MEYER: You said Wade?

Q. Wade possibly or Hilliard?

URBAN MEYER: Possibly. Hilliard played pretty good. So absolutely there is a chance.

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