

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



As he moves his team forward from the win over Indiana and prepares for Saturday against Minnesota, a noon kickoff on Fox Sports 1 from Ohio Stadium, Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer met the media Monday in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center team room.

From his own personal health to injury updates on offense and defense — including junior offensive lineman Branden Bowen, junior defensive end Jonathon Cooper and junior linebacker Malik Harrison — Meyer broke down the No. 3 Buckeyes (6-0, 3-0 Big Ten) five days before the Golden Gophers (3-2, 0-2) come to Columbus.

Urban Meyer

COACH MEYER: Thanks for coming. I'll give you, as we do, the player of the game was Tuf Borland.

On offense, the receivers were outstanding. We had six guys grade champions. Parris, nine catches for 142 yards. Johnnie had five catches, 74 yards. Terry, four catches, 60 yards. K.J. Hill, four catches. Bin Victor, just keeps coming on, just had a great catch. And Austin Mack had five catches, 50 yards. Tight ends both graded champion — Rashod Berry and Luke Farrell.

And player of the game was our quarterback who had a really good day, 502 total yards, Dwayne Haskins.

Special teams, we didn't decide — it just wasn't — had two punts, they fair caught every kickoff we had. Kickoff return was nonfactor. So we went without a special teams, not because they didn't give good effort just didn't do one.

Comments about the game coming up. The best thing about 6-0 is a chance to go 7-0 against a team that has a top 20 defense. They're young on offense. And it's just great to be back home.

Q. Halfway through the regular season, how do you feel about your offensive line? What do you like about the offensive? What needs to improve with the offensive line?

COACH MEYER: We had five champions for several weeks right in a row. This week we didn't play

particularly well. So we gotta get back to — I think protection was very good. We've got to get back to the word "balance." We've been saying that and we're going to work again this week at that.

Q. Branden Bowen, we haven't asked you about him in a while?

COACH MEYER: He's close.

Q. So a chance he could come back?

COACH MEYER: There's a chance.

Q. As you guys are trying to get more things going in the run game, has there been any consideration to playing Tate in short yardage or red zone to bring that element back to the offense?

COACH MEYER: There has been. There continues to be that conversation.

Q. What goes into that? What's the balance you talked before about the lack of depth at quarterback, too. And how much is that a factor and offensive rhythm when you're bringing in a new guy like that?

COACH MEYER: Yes, yes, yes, yes, those are all conversations that we have. Tate's a very dynamic player. Those are questions we have every two hours.

Q. With the offensive line, you mentioned, it seems like they're holding up very well against the blitz and pass protection, but when teams are loading up against the run, it's inconsistent. What's the difference there when teams are loading up against the run and the pass, and what have you seen out of your guys handling both?

COACH MEYER: You're correct about the pressures. And a lot of those are five-man pressures that Dwayne has time and gets the ball out. The run game, it's a little more complicated than that.

We gotta do a better job as coaches and better job, obviously, with players, just executing the run game. Because it's not always that. It's not always a loaded box.

Once again, that's — the weakness of our team right now is balance on offense and obviously pass defense.

Q. You've been back for a few weeks since the tough month that you've had. I was wondering how has it been as a recruiter? How — I can imagine you always talk about being on top of it, making calls every day. It's always changing. What was it like to have an absence like that and to come back? Can you take me through what it was like for you?

COACH MEYER: With all due respect, I'd just like to move forward and it's been great. We're working our tails off recruiting. We had a big visit weekend this weekend.

The team's playing very well. So recruiting is going very good.

Q. The headache episode on Saturday, it looked to me like you had a similar situation come at Penn State. And seems like they come and go quickly. Is it an issue, Coach?

COACH MEYER: I've been dealing with that cyst for many years, and we had the surgery several years ago. And when it does take place, it's just, you know, they give me some medicine and I feel fine now. Just something I've got to monitor.

Q. A couple years ago you said, when there were things going wrong on defense, that you

would get more involved, trying to find out what the solutions could be. Are you at that point now? Are you getting in the mix with what's happening with those breakdowns?

COACH MEYER: I have conversations. I have so much confidence in the people doing it that we're going to get that fixed.

Q. Has there been a common theme that you've seen with those — when those plays get loose?

COACH MEYER: Yeah, there is. And I don't want to get in too much detail other than it's a variety of things. But getting second level, when someone gets a second level, get them on the ground and then some coverage issues we've had.

Q. Those guys, starters that left the game on Saturday, Cooper and Harrison, any injury update?

COACH MEYER: Much better today. Probably know more today or later tomorrow, but much better.

Q. Being six games into the regular season now, kind of the halfway point, what's kind of impressed you most about this team so far and what do you see as areas that maybe haven't quite lived up to your expectations?

COACH MEYER: We've overcome significant injuries. Most notable is Nick Bosa. And we're still finding ways to win games. And just really good people on this team. We go out to practice and guys want to get better.

So it's a good group to coach, good people and guys work really hard.

Q. Question about the defense. We're six games into it. At this point in the season I'm sure you would like to be further along in terms of fixing those problems. Do you think that they are kind of systemic? When you look at them do you think, okay, this is just one guy out of place, or do you think there's something serious going on here?

COACH MEYER: Well, you look at the last half of the game, they held them to 100 yards, against Indiana. Second half and also created a couple of turnovers, stopped them on fourth down. There's a lot of positives.

What happens on the negative are interference calls or jump balls type things. We look at everything, overanalyze everything. So it's not as simple as this. It's a variety of things.

But we tried to build on positives and the positives are that the second half they played outstanding. Against Penn State we gave up some yards but it was 14-13 going into the fourth quarter. So there are some positive things.

Q. About the pass interference things, I know the philosophy is we've been told by coaches and players that if you're right on the guy then you look for the ball. If you're not, if they've got a step or more on you, then you try to swat through their arms. Can you just kind of explain that philosophy and whether you think that's working well enough?

COACH MEYER: That's a pretty — that's a philosophical approach that most people who play press coverage, that's the idea. And those are up-and-run coverage, press coverage is a very hard skill. The reason we do it, we want to challenge every throw. And we've had some excellent corners around here. I believe we have excellent corners now.

It's a skill that requires an incredible amount of work. And when you're good, it's great. Press coverage, where you disrupt passes constantly.

But what you just said is true. And that takes a lot of work. It's obviously something we believe in and we will continue to believe in it as long as we can.

But that's a skill set that's very difficult that we ask them to do. And we just gotta continue to work to get better. The risk/reward on that, once you get great at that you're playing great defense now.

Q. This might be a stupid question, I know the (indiscernible), but are you right now as comfortable or maybe even more comfortable on third-and-seven as you are third-and-one?

COACH MEYER: Being respectful, that's not a stupid question. That's a great question at all.

Third and one is tough right now. That's another weakness. So a weakness right now is balance on offense and those short yardage. We had a couple of close ones Saturday.

And there's a time you're going to have to throw it and we have. But there might be more times to throw that. Third and seven, I haven't done that. I might go look at that right when we leave here, but he's a very accurate guy and we have some really good receivers. So to answer your question, that's not that far off right now.

Used to be, when the dual-threat stuff — I don't want to say it was automatic — but it was pretty good. So that's a great question.

Q. You look at Dwayne Haskins, Jr., he appears to be a prototype almost pocket-type passer kind of guy. Would that lead you down the road to getting him under center sometimes for those kind of situations?

COACH MEYER: Doesn't really give you anything. Maybe a quarterback sneak. But whether it's shotgun, they don't change their defense.

The whole idea being is that when you take the quarterback position and it's a hand-off player, they can plus you by two. Does that make sense in those situations? And that's what's happening right now.

And with that kind of play — which we've had before — is that the answer is you have to throw it a little bit more often on those short-yardage situations, and we had one last week where we were short yardage and we threw a little out cut and got the first down. We just have to be willing to do that.

Q. Minnesota, they started out pretty good —

COACH MEYER: Very good. Top 20 defense.

Q. Last two weeks, though, they've had a tough time defensively looks like. What stands out about them?

COACH MEYER: Their defense is outstanding. They're not a big pressure team, but they've got a great pass rusher No. 45. Excellent player. And they had a tough injury to one of the best players in the conference. But their defense is outstanding.

Q. They've got that freshman quarterback. Have you been able to watch video yet of him?

COACH MEYER: Not yet.

Q. Did you contemplate, have you contemplated having, whatever you want to call it another procedure with your cyst, or can you get by now with what you're doing?

COACH MEYER: I'll get by with what we're doing.

Q. You talked so much about the wide receivers and the elite level they're playing at. How is their position coach there, the new one, Brian Hartline, handled that job?

COACH MEYER: He's been great. He's learning on the run still. Doing some great things. And one thing about our job, it's very valuation-friendly. They're playing very well.

Q. You don't have to make a decision right now, I guess, but has he done enough to have that interim tag taken off? Could he be a full-time —

COACH MEYER: Oh, he sure could.

[divider line_type="Full Width Line" line_thickness="2" divider_color="default"]
[nectar_btn size="jumbo" button_style="regular" button_color_2="Accent-Color" icon_family="none" url="http://www.buckeyesports.com/boards/" text="Join The Conversation"]