

Purdue University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 17, 2022

West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

Coach Jeff Brohm

Press Conference



JEFF BROHM: Ready to put the last game behind us and move forward to the next one. We know it's going to be a great challenge. We've had a hard time competing with Wisconsin since I've been here, and then really we haven't beat them in a good long while in general here at Purdue.

Once again, we have to have another good week of practice, get guys back as healthy as we can, improve upon the mistakes that we made last week and the weeks before, and try to go out there and execute and play at a high level.

This team presents challenges for us. They're very good on defense. They always have been. They have a great scheme. They are coached very well. They play hard and make you earn it.

On offense, historically they've always been great at running the football. Big up front, not beating themselves, controlling the clock, and that will be a challenge.

Q. Can you just recollect for us the discovery of Devin Mockobee and how he got here?

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think that we were aware of Devin for a little while, and then we knew he had committed I believe to Army or Navy. We were still watching film and evaluating and trying to improve the roster, we just kept looking at him. He was very intriguing because he had some really good film.

You know, sometimes you already have running backs committed and not a lot of room and you got to figure out ways, okay, do we want to investigate and see if we can interest this young man to coming and walking on. I believe that we did. There was mutual interest. Brought him and his father up I believe before -- I don't remember when it was. Maybe before or after signing day and convinced him to walk on.

Really he wanted to be here. He's a competitor. He felt he could come in here and compete and do a good job in a very humble and modest way, so we're excited about it.

We got him here.

We liked what we saw, but still didn't know for sure that he would be capable of this. I just think he has proven everybody how good of a running back he can be, especially that he continues to work and get better and bigger and stronger.

Q. At what point did you say, this guy can play for us? Was there a moment in practice or scrimmage where you said, hey, this guy can really help us?

JEFF BROHM: Well, from day one when we got here, when we got in game -- in scrimmages situations he always excelled. It was a matter of, hey, is this because we're not going against our best guys or sometimes it's not full speed live tackle. But he always had a little bit of something, like hmm, where you raise your eyebrows and say, well, this young man may have a chance.

I just think as we continued to practice more and have live scrimmages, he always did a very good job and ran hard and was productive.

So he's earned it from day one, and I just think he's worked really hard and we're fortunate to have him on our team.

Q. Is he your starter from here on out?

JEFF BROHM: Really right now he's going to start the next game. King has been banged up who kind of sucked it up and made himself available this past game.

Kobe Lewis is available as well. We got to continue to work with him and get him better. He's working very, very hard.

Tyrone Tracy has to continue to be somebody who can do dual things for us.

Q. I know it's a mouthful, but do you think that was maybe the best Aidan O'Connell has played for you on Saturday night?

JEFF BROHM: It was a very good game by him without question. End of last year he had some elite games and



put up some gigantic numbers. We definitely thought he played very, very well. Executed the offense. Threw accurate throws. Had great anticipation. Was able to move around a little bit and buy some time a couple times. Of course the fourth down conversion was huge where they kind of peeled a linebacker off with one of our backs and the rest of the line went the other way and had a little lane there and they kind of collided some of our crossers.

Luckily he was smart enough to know it's time to go. I think he was able to make one guy miss and go get some yards. Very efficient. Yes, he played very well, and then of course at the end there were some anticipation throws and some accuracy throws that I don't think many guys can make.

Q. You've had a chance to watch the film, evaluate, talk to people. Is there anything you can do to clean up the play in the secondary?

JEFF BROHM: Well, we think so. We hope so. I think they're all correctable things. It was kind of a multitude of things. I do think our secondary didn't respect the deep ball as much as they should. We were playing a little bit too tight, a little bit too flat footed. Didn't give the proper cushion on numerous routes, not only at corner, but safety as well.

And then there was just a couple busts as well in the back end that hurt us.

So I would hope we can correct that, yes. I think we have experience back there at those positions. Cam Allen, it was not his best game by any meanings. Week before he played very well. He can play much better.

I think he was peeking in the backfield and a little too flat footed. And of course we can always tackle better. There is a multitude of things. Yes, when it happens more than once or twice, there is concerns. We got to fix it.

I think our guys can. They got to believe they can get it done. We got to give them a better chance as coaches and need to be better versus the pass.

Q. Any timetable on Chris Jefferson's return and update on Tee Denson?

JEFF BROHM: Chris' timetable is going to be when he's ready, so I'm not for sure.

Tee, you know, we haven't seen make a whole lot measurable progress, so I wouldn't at this point count on him for the rest of the year unless we start to see

something.

Q. Will Dylan be out another week?

JEFF BROHM: Yes.

Q. How do you go about fixing what happened in the secondary this week?

JEFF BROHM: Well, you got to man up. Got to watch it and analyze it and identify what our players did wrong. Then you got to identify what we coached wrong possibly or what did we put in their head that made them think a certain thing that maybe wasn't proper. Then you look at the calls and make sure are these the best calls.

So I think it was a magnitude of all of those things, which it normally is. You know, it's got to be a continued evaluation. We thought we put a better plan together for the end of the game, end of the half. Unfortunately we gave up a draw for a huge gain. Gave up a quarterback scramble for a huge gain. With that, we need a better second layer of defense at linebacker to not allow that to happen.

That was very disappointing once again to allow them this get a field goal with, I don't know, 35 seconds on the clock. Can't happen. Has to be fixed. We cannot allow that to happen anymore.

Q. Was there anything about Nebraska's passing scheme that caused you problems, or as you said is it just a multitude of problems from your end?

JEFF BROHM: I think if you look at Nebraska this year, they've been more of a passing team, which is not common for them. With their new offensive coordinator they got a couple transfer receivers, got a transfer quarterback. The running game was not as strong.

Even though they had the one good running back who had some yards, they like to throw the ball and that's Coach Whipple's personality. I think they kind of knew, hey, let's try it chuck this ball over their head. Not only did they hit a few, but they had some other guys open as well that they didn't hit, which was disappointing, and it was all for the reasons I mentioned.

So we've got to do a better job of all those things, and I just think that they did have a couple good receivers and quarterback made some accurate throws.

But our D-line got some pressure and got in there a little bit. Need to be better on the back end and linebacker in coverage. That was not good enough as well.

Q. Although the teams that are coming up on your schedule would not be known for putting the ball deep in the secondary, all sports are copycat. They see what happened. Are you on even higher alert this week to protect against that knowing teams will try to expose that again?

JEFF BROHM: Without question when you face a team that can run the ball very well the play-action pass is a concern, so I would think anybody would look at our film and run the ball and then throw it over our head.

So yes, that's a concern. We have got to put a stop to it and make sure that -- like I said, not only are we teaching technique in that correctly, but the calls are putting our guys in the best position to make those plays. Some calls maybe we need to protect the middle of the field with the middle safety. Couple of those calls they were running by our two-high quarter safeties, which shouldn't happen, but it was happening.

And then when we had an inside blitz on our free safety didn't get enough depth on an easy post play that shouldn't even be there.

So it was just a whole handful of small things. Whether it's being lazy or eyes are cheating, not getting enough depth, not coaching correctly, not the proper call, we did it all.

Q. At what point did you know that King would be able to play?

JEFF BROHM: Well, he practiced a little bit. We did not think he was at full speed, but last week he was able to practice some. We knew we were going to have him available in an emergency situation if felt like he could go.

To his credit he said if we needed him he was going to be able to go.

Q. What was it like to call 101 plays in a game?

JEFF BROHM: It was a long night. You know, it was a long night and there were some good moments of course, and then some moments that were a little more tense.

But just kind of what we tell our players you kind of have to do as a coach. You got to stay in the moment. You can't look beyond the next play. You've got to just function at your very best as a player, as play caller, a coach. You have to hang in there and hope at the end that you score more than the other team.

I just think we were able to do some good things, and

without question we couldn't finish. Had to hang on. But to our guy's credit, they did play hard. They did give good effort. They do want to win. It meant something to them.

We had just enough to barely squeak by with a win.

Q. Over the last two games you've produced a handful or probably more than that of double digit scoring drives. Speak to the efficiency of your offense to be able to piece together long drives like that without turnovers or huge mistakes that stop you.

JEFF BROHM: Well, of course big plays always help your offense and help you score quicker. We like to be good at that. We have not had as much success. Now teams are trying to take that away, which I would as well.

You have to be efficient. I think the combination of the ability to have a sound run game that's efficient and productive and the ability to have a quick, controlled passing game with an accurate passer allows you to move the ball down the field.

I just think if you can prevent sacks, which the quick passing game helps do that, which to throw that much and not give up sacks is a credit to our offensive line and quarterbacks and everybody. You can prevent negative plays and interceptions, you should be in a game and you have a chance.

I just think we were pretty efficient doing that and that helped us.

Q. Another interim coach this week. I would imagine there is really no changes that Wisconsin has made defensively, but have you the last couple games noticed any tweaks they've made offensively to help themselves?

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think you're correct, defensively Coach Leonhard does a great job, always has. Their scheme is tough to go against. They are going to load the box, play combo coverages and mix things up a little bit to bring some linebackers and drop some ends out and do things to mess up your protection, but also get guys in passing lanes, and they're very good at it. They've done it for years and it's a challenge.

Offensively I think they've tried to slightly open up things a little bit and have a little more balance and allow their quarterback to make a few more passes on first and second down. Of course against Northwestern it worked for them. They did a very good job. Had more explosive plays, got the ball in the receiver's hand, as well as being sound running the ball.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Not a drastic change, but maybe a little more aggressiveness on offense that helped them have a dominate win. I'm sure they'll build on that.

Q. Just wanted to go back to King Doerue for a little bit. Obviously still banged up. What are you expecting from him I guess in this week of preparation for Wisconsin? And with Devin Mockobee as the starter, what can we expect to see from King in a game day situation?

JEFF BROHM: Well, King had a pretty severe calf strain that I didn't know calf strains could be that severe, but as I asked, it's a real calf strain, an injury. It just has taken a while.

You know, it's still lingering a little bit and not 100%. Whatever he can give us we'll use. He was not at full strength.

You know what? I think our guys understand practice does matter, and for those guys that aren't able to practice a whole lot, playing in the game is more of a challenge. Yes, we have to balance doing that for some of our guys.

In the end, a perfect world is they're out there practicing because the game speed is unlike anything you'll go against, the pressure to perform, the magnitude of making great plays every time you're out there, because it all matters is bigger.

So we would like for King to practice as much as he could, but whatever he can give us we'll use.

Devin, is a little nicked up himself. Have to manage him a little bit. He ran a lot of plays, and to his credit he was out there yesterday doing the small things we need him to do. We are going to have to manage that.

Just that time of the year. You got to have the perfect balance, have some type of common sense along with football sense to get your guys to the game as healthy as you can with as much practice as they can have.

Q. After the game you mentioned Andrew Sowinski has been stepping in up the receiver room. It's been a group that's had its fair share of injuries throughout the year. What have you seen from him in practice that's allowed him to make his way to the field and be able to make some plays for this offense in the past couple weeks?

JEFF BROHM: Andrew has done a really good job. He's been here for quite a while. He understands our scheme

and system as good as anybody. You can count on him to run the right route at the right depth every single time and give you great effort. He has got good hands.

You know, don't want to compare him to Jackson Anthrop, but he's a dependable guy at the receiver position that can do dependable things. We kind of know what his strengths and his weaknesses are, but he's been reliable.

I think he's just a guy we trust. We have a lot of the young receivers that have some talent. There is probably one or two we've been unfair to by making them play multiple positions because we didn't know where they would play, and because of it, sometimes there is some mental busts that while they may seem small, during the course of a game they can be costly.

We've had that happen a few times. It's probably half our fault for not isolating them in one position and asking them to do too much; yet we would like for them to learn the whole package as much as they can.

So he just, in that slot position, has a great understanding of what we're trying to do. In the right spot at the right time, and that's has vaulted him up to getting quite a bit of playing time.

Q. After the last scrimmage in the pre-season you seemed like you had some concerns about red zone offense, but you're 30 of 32. One of your failures is taking a knee at the 19.

JEFF BROHM: And why does that count? (Smiling.)

Q. I can't answer for that. You have to talk to the stat people. You have an 80% touchdown rate on your scores. What kind of solutions have you found there?

JEFF BROHM: Well, you know, when you have concerns about it, it means we're going to work harder at it, and we've worked hard at it. It's always is a concern. That and third downs is a concern. We got to got this first down, we got to get points in the red zone.

So we worked hard at it. Tried to have a couple different wrinkles each and every week that we can use. I think having the ability to run it some in the red zone has definitely helped. Things get tighter down there. There is a lot of bodies, and the closer you get in there the holes to throw it are very small.

I just think studying it, putting it together, calling it and utilizing, we've all gotten a little bit better at it. It was always a concern and will continue to be a concern that we have to make sure we have our bread and butter stuff

down there.

But at the same time, wrinkles every week that are different than what the other team has seen and that gives them an element of surprise or something that they haven't practiced.

I just think we have been able to utilize that pretty good to this point.

Q. Seems like people are keeping more people back defensively against you to try to take away the deep ball. That's something coming down from the NFL. Have you had to adjust as a play caller to kind of take what they're giving you a little bit more as opposed to your natural instinct to want to push the ball vertically?

JEFF BROHM: Yeah, we have, and I think we've tried to do it a quit a bit, and even the last game I felt myself calling a ton of quick passes and quick control passes and a few shots we have. Didn't work. One of them was an interception in the end zone. It was a misread, but an interception in the end zone and they were deep.

So he should have thrown the ball to the outside. We had a stop route of 12 yards that if the corner is falling off and picking off a pass to the slot, that means probably outside route is open. He got locked on to the inside receiver.

So yes, you have to have enough different route concepts and ways to get open underneath when teams are playing deep. And that has happened. When do you get that opportunity to get one-on-one matchups, you got to make it work. You got to call it, you got to see it, and you got to execute it.

Q. Does that help the red zone offense at all trying to work with less space?

JEFF BROHM: Without question. I think being able to stretch the field horizontally, being able to run the ball at different times against those looks is beneficial to get us in that area. All those little things have helped us, yes.

Q. Do you anticipate OC Brothers returning this week? And Charlie was visibly limping late in the game. I know he's gone through a lot. How is he looking for this coming week?

JEFF BROHM: Charlie is banged up again. Try to get him healthy, see how much he can practice. I do think he'll play, but we have to take care of him more this week.

OC we're hopeful to get him back. We haven't seen him

practice so I can't tell you that, but we're hopeful we can utilize him this week.

Q. Can you speak to the number of walk-ons that are contributing? We talked about Sowinski, Mockobee; Aidan even came here as a walk-on. Even Ben Furtney. Just a remarkable number of guys. Is it coincidence, Jeff, and can you speak to the contributions these guys are making?

JEFF BROHM: Well, we're fortunate to have all of them and they've all played a vital role. Recruiting is not a perfect science. You do your best to get the best players out there, the best players available.

At the same time, you have to recruit the next best crop. I do think recruiting matters at all times. Even when you're in the recruiting the so-called five and four stars, you got to get guys you think can play that are being overlooked and give them an opportunity.

Without question we look hard at that. We look at it year-round. We are always adding guys before signing day, after signing day in, in the spring, in the summer, all the way up -- and I'm not talking transfers. Just talking general guys that are out there that want an opportunity to compete.

We been fortunate to get some guys that came in the program and worked hard and paid their dues and worked and studied and don't really care whether they're ranked. It's all about how you produce on the field, and they've done a good job. Without question without those people we wouldn't be here where we are today.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

