

# Purdue University Football Media Conference

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## Jeff Brohm

### Press Conference



JEFF BROHM: We definitely were happy with the outcome of our game last week. I thought our guys once again played hard. They were into it. They performed well. Those are all good things that you love to see happen. Very proud of the football team and the staff. It was a big win for us.

We've got to build on it. Now we're onto the meat of the schedule. It starts off against a dog-gone very good opponent that is very talented. There's a lot of speed. We've got our hands full.

The great thing is we get to come back home in front of our fans, play in homecoming weekend. We've got to have a great week of practice, get some guys healthy, we have to make sure we give it our best effort because this is a great football team we're playing.

**Q. You talked after the Louisville game how important balance would be to your offense moving forward. I think a lot of people thought you'd come in here and throw it 60 times a game. How have you seen this balance develop?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, our balance has definitely helped us. I'd love to be able to come in here and throw it every play. We're just not ready for that. That's not our team right now. I think we're going to continue to get better passing the football, pass protecting, finding some go-to players.

Right now in order to succeed and win, we've got to have balance. We can't rely on our passing game to win us games. Probably not going to happen. We have to be able to run the football, play-action, be able to move in the pocket, misdirection, take a few shots here and there, be smart with it, not lose the game for us.

Right now this past week our defense played at a high level. We had a very good first half on offense. I got conservative in the second half. I didn't want to give the game away by trying to get greedy and try to make a bunch of plays when we had control of the football game. We controlled the clock. We had the ball for close to 45 minutes of the game, which is a lot. We ran the ball. We were a little more boring in the second half.

But our guys took care of the football and we kept the lead, won the football game. So that's all good. It helped us try to get better running the ball. We definitely were stagnant there for a little bit.

I think in order to win, you've got to find a way to utilize your guys to the best of your ability, be smart with it. Right now we're going to try to be as smart as we can while we get better in the passing game.

**Q. Had I told you after the Louisville game that you would have significantly more rushing yards than your opponent at this stage, would you have thought I was crazy?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I actually would not have. I think most of you guys have heard me talk in the spring and summer and fall. I had a lot find confidence in our defense. Thought we had some experience, some players I thought were pretty good. On offense, receivers hadn't played a whole lot. We had a lot of new guys out there. So I wasn't extremely confident that we would be able to do what we'd like to do.

Our runners, we had a lot of them. Markell has been out. The others have had to step up. The tight ends have done a decent job in the passing game, good in the running game. Found a way to get some extra linemen to help the running game.

No, actually I would not have. But I would love to throw it for 500 yards every game. But I don't see us doing that.

**Q. You mentioned Markell. Might conventional wisdom say with the bye week coming up that you might look at Minnesota?**

JEFF BROHM: If you know me, we're not looking down the road. We're looking at this game fully. If Markell is going to play, he'll play. I don't know if he's going to be able to. If he's not right, we won't play him. That will give him a week or two to get ready for the next opponent.

We have to try to go all out and win this game for us. It's a huge opportunity to play against an outstanding team that's very talented and playing at a high level, do it in front of our fans. I want to try to do the best job we can to try to win, see how it goes.

But we'll make sure to be smart with Markell and make sure we do our best for him.

**Q. I know he doesn't have a lot of huge numbers yet, but how have you seen Robinson improve? Seems really dialed into what you want to do.**

JEFF BROHM: I really think he's a very, very good football player. He's solid. He's strong. He's athletic. He kind of can play multiple positions. In my opinion, he's been outstanding this year to this point. He's stayed healthy. He gives us a strong guy in the middle. He's agile and athletic enough to make some moves and make plays. Been very pleased with his performance.

**Q. You mentioned how good Michigan is. In certain facets they're really good. Their game against Air Force, special teams and defense are terrific. They're struggling in the red zone right now. 1 for 10, unusual for a Michigan team. Is their offense literally a work in progress, especially the closer they get to the goal line?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, Coach Harbaugh is as good as it gets when it comes to knowing football and how to coach. He's got a great defense. He's got some dynamic players on special teams. While he wants to score points on offense, I'm sure he doesn't want to screw it up either.

I think they're going to control the ball. They're going to try to continue to pound the ball at you, not do things to beat themselves. So while they may not be scoring, I don't know if they're beating themselves. That's kind of the key to winning.

I think he's smart enough to realize, We'll keep working with our offense, get them better each week, allow our defense and special teams to try to continue to dominate. He's been around football. He knows how to win. The formula has worked.

**Q. What stands out about that defense?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, always early in the week you watch. You're like, Holy cow, how are we going to score a point? I'm at that stage right now. They're fast, athletic. This year they're giving you more multiple looks, a 3-3 stack, bringing guys from all over, aggressive, press you on the outside, don't give up easy completions, haven't seen many people run the ball on them.

We're going to have to continue to study hard all week, try to figure something out. They're very good. You've got to win some one-on-one matchups. That's not only getting open, but in pass protection. They're bringing a lot of guys, bringing them from all over. They're making it a little more confusing than in the past because

they're more multiple in their looks. You got to hit some of them. You have to find a way to make some plays.

Those defenses, you're probably not going to be able to work the ball down the field. You're going to have to find a way to make a big play here and there to spark you, get something going, otherwise you're going to be punting real fast.

Right now I have to let the optimism build, watch some more, figure out a few more things. But they're talented. They're just a talented team on defense, outstanding defensive coordinator.

**Q. Back to injury updates with T.J. and Da'Wan Hunte, McCollum.**

JEFF BROHM: We actually had more guys nicked up than I thought after the game. We're going to try to get them back for this week. May be a hodgepodge practice week as far as how many guys can really participate the whole week. We've got to be smart with it, but also we've got to get them to practice and get in the flow again. That's going to be a challenge.

But McCollum, he's played a lot, got experience. Of all the people, we can make sure we're very conservative and get him healthy, just try to get him whatever reps he needs.

Da'Wan, we got to get him healthy as well. He's played a lot of games for us, done a good job.

We've got some other guys, as well. It's going to be important that they utilize the entire week to get healthy, we take care of them during practice.

**Q. Based on what David has done the last two weeks, are you ready to go with him full-time, or still the same situation at the quarterback position?**

JEFF BROHM: I think David did a very good job. He was much better this week at running and getting a few first downs, not turning the ball over, which is huge. Then he was efficient when he threw the football. That's kind of what he is. I think he played within himself. He did a very good job. I like the way he performed.

We brought in Elijah. I like the way he performed. He did a very good job. He moved us down the field. He threw a touchdown, had us moving again until we had kind of a little bit of a high pass. Still hit our receiver in the hand, popped up in the air, stopped the drive. He's had some bad luck with some drops. But he's improved. Got a big arm.

At certain times you may have to have both. But I like

the progress of both. As you guys know, we are not afraid to play two. Wouldn't be surprised if we still do.

But David earned the start last week. I thought he did a good job this past week in the game, too.

**Q. When you first got here, trying to put together that recruiting class, what about Derrick Barnes stood out? That was a guy you wanted as part of this group.**

JEFF BROHM: Well, Derrick is a big, strong physical freshman. Normally that's what you have to get him to be, when they get here and it takes a year or two. He's already at that part. He likes football. He's probably exceeded our expectations a little bit as far as in fall camp, making tackles, being physical, being a little bit farther ahead than we thought he would.

We've had some injuries. Luckily after week one, we decided to go ahead and play Derrick Barnes, Tobias and Cornel Jones because physically and athletically they give us some size and speed. While they're not already there yet, getting them on the field, getting them ready, giving them some reps. It's like when someone goes down, we thought it was going to be beneficial. Luckily it played out. I thought Derrick came in and did a good job.

He likes football. He is a guy, if you look at high school video, he played runningback, he returned kicks. He has more athleticism than you think for a guy who is 6'2", 255 pounds, pretty solid. He's done a very good job. To come in as a true freshman and play against some very good teams is not easy to do. I think to this point he's exceeded our expectations.

**Q. Speaking of expectations, when this season began, the outside world had zero expectations for this team. Inside you have your own expectations. Now that you're ready to hit the Big Ten season, based on how you performed these first three games, the expectations from the outside world are starting to rise for this program. How do you manage that with your team who haven't had a lot of success the last four years?**

JEFF BROHM: We don't talk specifically a whole lot about that. With us, we try to simplify it down. Every week it's about trying to raise your level of play. If you played good the week before, that's great. But now you've set the bar a little bit higher. You have to go out and try to improve upon that.

We try not to worry about the score. We kind of let our actions and play take care of itself, then look at the score at the end and see if we won or lost.

Like I said, for three weeks the effort we want to see,

the desire, the competitive spirit, we've won that battle. That's the most important thing. But because of it, our guys have realized if do you those small things, you can be in games and have a chance to win.

Even way back when I got here, I looked at the teams we were going to play, I looked at the Big Ten. Me being an outsider brand-new to the conference, there was about four teams in the Big Ten, Whew, these guys are really good. All the others, we're somewhere similar. It was a matter of who was going to play hard and who was going to play till the end, finish for 60 minutes, really want to win. I thought we could be in most games. You never know.

I think week one, probably played a little bit closer than a lot of people thought. I think our guys gained some confidence. Came out in the second week, had a good showing. Then the third week against a good opponent on the road, we raised up to the challenge and did a very good job.

Our guys are feeling it right now. They've worked hard. They put in the time. But they've played hard and done the small things to this point. We try to improve every week. So that has been good because we're going to need it because now we face one of those four teams that I mentioned that's very good.

We've got our hands full. In these type of games, you have to go in internally believing that you can get it done. You've got to be willing to fight the entire game. You have to be able to do the small things and not beat yourself so that you can get in the second half and be close. Then if you can do that, a few things go your way, you never know.

That's kind of what we have to make sure we do, is do all the small things in this game to keep it close until the second half.

**Q. Any overlap in careers with Harbaugh, connection there? Two quarterbacks. His dad coached at Western Kentucky not the same time you were there, but what is the connection?**

JEFF BROHM: You know what, other than meeting him, I really don't know him well. He was a little bit older than me. When I was younger, I was a big fan of his. Captain Comeback. Played the game he was supposed to. Tough. Found a way to win. He made plays.

I think now as a coach, he's got the same mentality. He's tough. He likes the old-fashioned football of being more physical, pounding the football, wearing you down, winning it in that way.

His father was the head coach at WKU, had a great

career there. They know the game of football, the whole family. They study it, live it, breathe it. I have a lot of respect for him. He knows how to coach the quarterback position as he played it. He's taken Michigan to a higher level than they had been just recently, even though they've had ton of success. He has the place rolling now. They've got great talent, they're well-coached.

**Q. With Michigan's defense, all the things you said about them, as an offensive guy, as the play-caller, do you enjoy this week? Do you get up for a challenge like this?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, we're going to have to. Like I said, normally towards the end of the week you start to feel a little bit better. Right now, shoot, we're trying to figure out what we can do to find a way to get an edge. We may have to be a little different. We may have to change things up a little bit, give them something they haven't seen, because they're really good.

With this defense, they're attacking. They play downhill. The looks they give you, it's a young offensive line, can get confusing. We're trying to figure out how to simplify it, make it where they don't have to think as much. They don't give you easy completions. They're going to press you every snap, challenge you. That's not our strength right now, but we're going to find a way to create some plays in the passing game.

Yes, it's a challenge. With myself and the rest of the staff, we're working hard at it. We got a lot of work to do.

**Q. Non-conference season is now over. Can you look back at that and evaluate what you liked, what you still need to do better going into Big Ten.**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I liked the first three games. Our players have done everything we've asked. They worked hard, competed during game day. They showed a competitive spirit throughout the game. We've played hard and played tough. For the most part we played smart. Those are key things that you try to win and build on.

Like I said, like you know, we're onto the meat of the schedule, games that really matter against very good football teams. So we're going to have to build on it.

I think to this point, they've been very, very good. I'm proud of the effort and where we're at. I think they are hungry for more. That's all you can ask for.

Really don't look down the road. It's a one-game season. Yeah, we got a tough one. We have to find a way to get it done. So it will be a challenge. It will test

us as coaches at every position. But these are the games you live for. It will be exciting because it's such a good opponent. I know we'll have a great atmosphere.

**Q. From a position group standpoint, is there one that's been better than you thought it would have been through three games?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think our quarterback position has gotten better. I feel more confident that we have two guys that can play for us. The runningback position has been solid. Got to continue to improve and get there.

Receivers are improving. We've played a lot of guys, and we want certain guys to emerge. But it's good to be able to rotate guys in there. Hopefully by continuing to work and compete, guys just start to emerge.

No, I don't think I've seen a lot of performances a lot better than I was thinking we were going to have. But I think we've been solid and we've played up to our potential. We've just got to push the envelope even farther.

**Q. On four first downs, you ran different groupings out there. A couple two backs, no tight end formations. Trying to mix it up a little bit?**

JEFF BROHM: As a coach, you try to put your guys in a position to win and succeed. I think you can't be vanilla. While some things may look the same, you're obviously on top of it as much as anybody as far as exactly who's going in there.

But, yeah, we're going to change up some things, give different wrinkles, try to give the defense something they haven't seen before to gain an edge. Unless you're a dominant team, you can't run the same thing every week and say we're going to beat you at what we do. That's how we win.

While there has to be something sound that you build upon, we've got to change things up and have different wrinkles, add a little fun and flavor and excitement to it, hope that it works. A few of those things we did worked. It helped us get some yards and touchdowns. I think we have to continue to have that.

We try to be as multiple as we can throughout the spring, fall camp so that we can have the arsenal where we can just adjust it every week.

**Q. What about the four receiver formation?**

JEFF BROHM: A lot of times when you give it an unbalanced look, as we call it, it screws up the balance of the dynamic. They like normal formations, splits, they can have their rules and alignments. When you

change it up, things get out of kilter a little bit, you gain an advantage. It's something you don't practice a whole lot. So if we can gain a slight advantage, just like we did on the one run we popped, that's kind of why we do it, just to give them a different wrinkle.

**Q. You called the offense a work in progress. Some teams might look at 34 points in the first half against Ohio, 28 last week, think that's pretty good. Why do you still consider it a work in progress?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think we have done a very good job of getting better. I think we have found a way to score and put points on the board in the first half. So that's been very positive.

I think we'd like to find a way to create a few more big plays. We'd like to find a way for a few dominant play-makers to emerge. We'd like to maybe even hit a few more explosive plays.

We're probably picky on it. But the bottom line is scoring points, moving the chains, getting touchdowns. I thought this past game in the first half we did that. Second half, that one's on me. We got conservative. I wanted to control the clock, not give them anything. I didn't really give our guys an opportunity. I didn't want to take a sack, we didn't take a lot of deep throws up the field, I didn't want to get an interception. I didn't really give us a chance.

But we've improved every week in practice. I think our guys are understanding what to do more. I think if we can get our guys to all know exactly what to do, to be able to have quick recall when they think of a play that's called, better react, we'll have a better chance.

Right now we're still doing some small things here and there. If we can try to eliminate them, it will help us be more consistent.

**Q. Where is the potential for the offense this season? How close can it get to what you eventually expect it to be?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I don't know if it can get to what I want it to be. But we can make progress. I think our offensive line is playing hard. I'd like to see them play even better, find a way. We're giving up a few too many sacks. When you look at it, we're giving them up early as well. Sometimes it's coverage sacks, which I get that. Last game, it was early and quick. Like to be able to hit a few more deep shots up the field.

I probably didn't call as many as I should have this past week. Really, it's a bunch of small things. We'd like to be more dominant in the running game at times when we have a play called that we think works good versus the look.

But we've gone against our defense all fall. We had a hard time against them. I was hopeful our defense was really good, not that we were really bad. I think the defense has done a good job.

I think our offense, because we go against such multiple looks by our defense, have gotten better. They give us great work ethic. They want to win. They want to improve. They're into it. We are fairly young, so they're gaining experience. I think they'll continue to improve.

**Q. Seems like the new receivers you brought in had a bigger role in this game. Do you expect that to continue to happen?**

JEFF BROHM: It was good to see Terry Wright make some explosive plays. One got called back, which was a great play by him. Corey Holmes got in there.

Yes, we want to play more. Some of those young guys have some ability. They're green as far as knowing this level of competition, exactly what to do. But they're getting better. They've had a good attitude.

So, yes, we want to continue to rotate those guys in there and hope that more play-makers emerge. Sometimes when you get really good, you have play-makers, one guy emerges one game, one the next. You're more multiple, they can't just take away one. That's what we're trying to create. I think that has helped.

Then our starters that were being pushed by them have improved because of it. For the most part they've done exactly what we asked to the best of their ability. They give us everything they have. When they do everything right, it looks good. So I like the ability that we've added some depth there. We've got more guys to utilize.

**Q. On Wright, is he starting to get it a little bit more? Does he bring you something offensively that you otherwise don't have?**

JEFF BROHM: He's by far our fastest guy. He's not only fast, but he's quick. When it comes to speed, he's up here. So we want to find ways to get him the ball, let him get in space a little bit.

His understanding of what we're doing, defenses in college football, is getting better. He's got a great personality. He loves football, loves to compete. Even on his penalty, I don't think he was trying to really get that. He was just excited to get there. I didn't think it was that much of a taunting, but I knew they would call it. He knew what he did. He understood it quickly. Wasn't like he tried to fight it.

Those young guys in junior college and transfers have all had a great attitude. They know it maybe hasn't happened as fast for them as they would like, but that's common. I think every week I hope that they get better and can give us more and more, and it can help the team win.

**Q. Eddy Wilson made a conscious effort to let off guys after the whistle, he jokingly tweeted about it after the game. How do you feel like he's playing?**

JEFF BROHM: Eddy has a ton of ability and potential. We discussed with him, Hey, you've gotten some penalties, whether they're completely your fault or not, because of it referees are going to be watching you. You have to watch what you do. Try to keep it as hard as you can between the whistles. I thought he did a good job.

Along with him, we are developing some more depth up front, playing a few more guys, which helps. This past week, because we controlled the ball so much, that offense was only on the field for 54 plays from Missouri. Our defense didn't have a play a lot of snaps. We were able to rotate some guys in there.

Eddy is going to continue to improve. He has some strength and athleticism that if he works his tail off, sticks to the grind, he can be as good as he wants to be.

**Q. How do you feel like your offensive tackles are doing? Seems like they'll be tested good on Saturday against Michigan.**

JEFF BROHM: Grant Hermanns is a redshirt freshman. He hasn't played a lot. He's going to be a good player when it's all said and done. He's going to make some mistakes. He occasionally does. He did a good job.

Steinmetz had a few more mistakes in this game than he has in the past. Had some athletic D-linemen, they made some good moves on him. It wasn't one of his better games. But he played every snap. He gave us great effort. That's all we can ask.

We probably had a little bit longer of a correction session yesterday than we normally do just to go over the small things because they're all correctable. But, yeah, we had a few more mistakes up there than we've had the first two games. But it wasn't because of effort. We just got beat some.

**Q. It strikes me that it pains you when you have to call running plays or get conservative in the second half. How much do you hurt having to do those two things?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, yeah, it's not the most fun. It was a little painful over there having to run the ball so much.

But as the head coach, you kind of have to do what you think is going to help your team win. At the time our defense was playing well. We scored a lot of points in the first half. I wasn't about to get all aggressive and all of a sudden here comes some interceptions, a pick for a touchdown, a sack because we're trying to chuck it up the field, be stupid.

Because of that, we kept the lead, we were in control the whole time. Would I like to be a little more aggressive? Yes. But we worked on the running game. We had some moments where it was good, had some moments where it was not. But, yeah, it was a little dull over there the second half.

**Q. Jallow, a chance he might get back in this week?**

JEFF BROHM: We're hopeful he'll be ready to play this week. We'll see tomorrow. I think Blackman did a good job in the game. Our secondary stepped up and played at a higher level than we've had. But we would like to get Jallow back.

**Q. Michigan's run game looked pretty good against Air Force, didn't look very good against Florida. What are your early thoughts on Michigan's run game?**

JEFF BROHM: That's what they build their offense on. They're a physical team. They utilize the talent they have to come off the ball, knock you back, hand it to some big, athletic runners.

Fortunately for us, even with my history and the defense we've run in the past, that's what we try to build ourselves on, is stopping the running game. We've traditionally been pretty good at that. We're going to have to be really good at it this week. Probably a little more aggressive at stopping the run than other defenses in our structure.

But it's worked good. We want to make teams beat us passing the ball. Without question, we would prefer Michigan to beat us passing the ball, taking away the run. They're very good up front, be a little tougher. We're still going to have to try to do that, make them throw the ball more than they would like, see if we can be sound in the secondary when we're doing that.

When you try to take the run away as much as we do, there's a few more openings in the secondary, guys have to be a little more perfect in their technique and alignment, cover better. We ask those guys to do that so we can be better against the run. We're going to try to do that this week.

But Michigan does a lot of things with shifts, tight splits, some things to get them advantages as well. We've got our hands full.

**Q. Michigan has done a good job of turning teams over. They had a return touchdown this past week. You talked about not losing the game. Is there going to be even more of an emphasis on it this week?**

JEFF BROHM: You better believe there is. If we turn it over, it's not going to be a pretty day.

Their returners are good. Special teams, good athletes. Not just the returners, they got good athletes that can run and tackle. They got speed.

It's a concern. We've already talked about it. We are going to have to be very sound in what we're doing, find a way to make plays, not allow them to get some touchdowns in special teams, which they have done.

In all aspects, we got our hands full because it's a good football team and they're well-coached. We're going to have to come ready to play, do the small things, play hard, try to get the game in the second half with a chance.

Thank you.