

# Purdue University Football Media Conference

Monday October 23, 2017

## Jeff Brohm

### Press Conference



JEFF BROHM: Well, we're on to the next game. I think everyone knows it was a disappointing loss for us, but it happened, and that's something we've got to learn from. I think our guys hopefully understand throughout the course of the rest of the season when you're in conference play on any given day, anybody can win, and it's going to be the same way the rest of the year. So we've got to just learn from it, go back to work, try to get our confidence back up so that when we take the field, we can go out and try to execute and play at a higher level. But we're looking forward to getting back to work this week and trying to improve.

**Q. I know you had pretty high hopes for the three transfers at wide receiver you brought in. Where do you see those guys right now in terms of maybe becoming a bigger part of things moving forward?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think that because two of them did not get here until the summer and the other one didn't get here until right before fall camp, they're behind. College football nowadays, you've got to work at it, and you've got to study it and you've got to know it, and there can't be a whole lot of margin for error. Those guys were behind. I do think both Isaac and Terry are getting better, and they're working hard and they've worked through some things, and we've got to utilize them and try to get some more productivity and target those guys a little bit more. Corey is a little bit farther behind.

But we've got to get better at that position in general, and we've got a ways to go. But we've just got to continue to work at it.

**Q. Over the years coaches have often said it's typically with transfers you get the best of them in year two. Do you still see enough from them right now to think they're going to be pretty good for you long-range?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, without question. I don't like to look down the road, but yes, I do think once they know what's going on, how we work, all the small details that are going to be involved in becoming a success at this level, they should get it. But right now they've got to work through it and try to find a way to get better now, and that's what we're working hard at doing is finding a way to make it work for the next game.

**Q. I know you've said all the play calling stuff, you've got to call better plays, that kind of thing, to get more efficiency, but you guys are 12 for 51 in 3rd down conversions in the Big Ten. Is that sort of a byproduct of both quarterbacks have done some good things, both have done some struggling things; would you like to have a guy really step forward and have one guy, and do you think that would help the 3rd down conversion?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think that would help. I think when you get in 3rd down situations, unless it's four or less, most of the time it's a passing situation, and we have not been able to produce in the passing game. That's just the fact of it, and we have not been able to find a way to get that done, and I think that lately it's probably gotten a little bit worse. Some people kind of are catching on to maybe what our strengths are and what our weaknesses are, and are exposing us a little bit, and we've got to find a way to answer the bell a little bit and regroup and figure out a way to move the chains on 3rd down, and sometimes, like we've said before, that's getting in more manageable situations. But we were in some this past game and didn't convert a few, so we've got to get better at that situation. We've got to make plays.

**Q. David led a nice touchdown drive there at the end of the game, made a nice run to create a 1st down, I believe. Are you still in that game 8 we'll see who's going to emerge, or do you still plan to play them both?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think internally right now, we know who's going to start the next game. You know what, if that person does well, we're fine with riding that out, but the other guy is going to be ready. We're not going to hand over the position to anybody quite yet. We want to make sure they earn it. Without question, David at the end of the game had some moxie and found a way to create some plays, and sometimes it wasn't because the design and the execution was perfect. It was just him making some plays. But that's part of it. That's football. A lot of times your quarterback has to be a guy that when things are covered or if a team is playing you man a lot and things are covered, normally the quarterback is not covered, and he has to run and make some plays. That's at every level.

So we have to understand that. We talk about it a lot.

He was able to make some plays with his feet and he kept the drive going, and that's going to be important that whoever is in there continues to do that.

**Q. You're 3-4 and I know you'd love to get to bowl eligibility in your first year here at Purdue. You talk about one-game seasons, and I know you're not looking down the road. Even with this loss, you've got three home games left and two games on the road that maybe are winnable; is that still a goal for this team, to be bowl eligible?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, if you want to go back to our preseason speech we just have once a year, that was a goal to get to a bowl game. Ever since, I don't really want to talk about it. Really, we've got to find a way to win this football game and find a way to get better, and right now we've had two losses in a row. After the last game, I'm sure some of our players' confidence was shot a little bit, and we've got to get that back up and really get back to where we were at before we took the field the first game, and that is believing that you can get it done when you take the field. If you have any type of doubt or just like the last game, a few things happen bad and you start to really doubt yourself, that can snowball, and that's what happened the last game. We've got to make sure that we all believe we're the best at what we do when we take the field, and we've got to work through anything that happens along the game, and we've got to just keep firing bullets.

But the mindset has to get back to being very confident every time you step on the game field.

**Q. In terms of the offense, have you ever as a coach or a player been a part of a team that was in a funk like this, and what did you do to get out of that funk?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think everywhere I've coached, normally you have one game a year that really doesn't go the way you'd like for it to go, and I think this was that one game to this point for us. We should have played better, and we needed to play better, and it didn't happen. So you try to learn from it and make sure it doesn't happen again. So we've got to make sure that we step up and make sure it doesn't happen again.

Now, with that said, we've got to make more plays, and we have to have better execution, and we've got to try to score more points. But I think a combination of all of us working a little bit harder from coaches and players and figuring out a way to get some scores, especially when we've moved the ball at certain times, is going to be important. We have not been good inside the 10-yard line lately. We have not been very good inside the 20, and I need to get that fixed.

**Q. Speaking about some of the struggles in the red zone, you guys were the best Big Ten red zone team through the first three games of the season. I think it was 10 touchdowns in 13 trips. Now it's five touchdowns in the last 14 trips. Are there consistent themes or trends that are emerging that are causing some of those problems?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, to be honest with you, if you look at the first part of the season, we actually have quite a few touchdown passes in that area, and we were able to have some aggressiveness and it opened some things up. Lately the passing game has not worked in that area, and we've got to probably pound it a little bit more and make sure that we're not taking too many shots because at times they haven't worked, at times we've had penalties. A combination of a lot of things.

You learn as you get through the season what you're good at and what you're not, and then you learn who do we need to get the ball to, maybe more so than someone else. So we've got to combine all those things and be a little bit smarter inside that area so that touchdowns are what we're getting. If we're getting touchdowns, it makes the game go a lot better. If you're settling for field goals, it's going to be a long day.

**Q. It seemed that you kind of questioned who the playmakers were after the game and were looking for some playmakers to emerge; at this point seven weeks through the season, is it too late to find those playmakers? Is there still time for those guys to emerge, or is that something that needs to be addressed next year or something in recruiting?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, you know, it is what it is. I think if you look at us, we haven't been able to produce a lot of passing plays up the field, other than some tricks. So we've got to be smart with what we're doing. I do think this past game our runners ran hard. Our offensive line did a good job run blocking for the most part. We were able to gain some success with that. And I think we've got to just make sure we're smart and we're making sure that the guys that are producing for us are getting the most touches.

**Q. A lot of the players talked about Da'Wan Hunte after the game kind of stepping up and being kind of passionate. What is the role of some of these senior leaders right now after a game that didn't go your way?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think our guys want to win. It's important to them. It means something to them. I mean, we've got some very good senior football players on our team, quite a few of them on defense, that have played quite a bit, and they've been very productive to this point, and they want to win. They see what's going on. They know where the struggles are happening. We probably knew where the struggles

were going to happen back in spring and summer and fall, but I think as seniors they understand that we've just got to stick together, got to ground this thing out.

If you look around the Big Ten every week, other than a few teams, there's a lot of ugly wins every single week, and we've got to learn how to win ugly at times, which means just hanging in there and playing tough and playing hard and playing smart and winning that battle because if you win that battle, you might have the edge when it's all said and done, and those are things that I think that Da'Wan made sure that our team understood, and I think we've got some other senior leaders, too, that played a lot of football that want to win. And we want to win for them. This is their last year. They've worked their tail off, and we want to try to end this thing the way that they deserve, but it's going to take a lot of hard work, and we've got to find a way to win the next football game.

**Q. How was the response on Sunday when you guys got back together?**

JEFF BROHM: You know what, sometimes when things aren't going your way, you've got to find a way to speak the truth but in a positive tone. I think our guys understood that, and they realized where we made mistakes, and they realized that due to a few mistakes happening early, the confidence was shot, and the energy and enthusiasm was not there. We can't be that team. We won't win that way. I think that we've got to get back up. I think we've got to help them get back up. We've got to go to work.

I mean, every week half the teams are going to win and lose, and you've got to go with the flow and adjust and try to do your part to get better, and I think our guys will have a good week of practice, and really we've just got to show up on game day ready to go and understand what all it's going to take in order to win, and hopefully they will do that on Saturday.

**Q. This is an interesting kind of point because you've obviously preached belief, and it seems like guys have bought in for the most part up to this. Maybe now this is the real adversity you haven't seen yet this season. You don't want it to happen, but are you eager to see how this team kind of responds, considering what just happened on Saturday?**

JEFF BROHM: Yeah, I'm looking forward to seeing how they respond. I think, like I said, in our conference when you get into conference play, anybody can win on a given day, and we're going to face teams that if we do our part and play well, we'll have a chance to win. If we don't do the small things, we won't.

You know, we've won one Big Ten game, and we had to

scratch and claw to get that, and that's how we're going to have to do to get any win that we want to get. So I think if our guys just understand that, hang in there, play tough and hang tough until the end, you hope that good things will happen. But as soon as the confidence level is shot and you start to doubt some things, it's going to be hard.

**Q. Where is your confidence level in the offense right now?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, you know what, without question I'm disappointed. We all are. You want to score points. You want to make some plays. The fact of the matter is you've got to figure out what can we do well, let's go try to do that and do a few things off of it, and I think that we're working hard now to make sure that we're going to do our part, put our players in the best position to win. I think they'll take the field and practice hard and give us their best, and we've just got to execute, understand what we're doing, and play tough the entire game. But we do want to make sure that our playmakers are going to touch the ball enough and we ride that thing out.

**Q. You've been very creative, and we kind of knew you would be, and being able to kind of scheme around some of the limitations that you guys had. Maybe it's not working as much lately, but you've also said we might not be talented enough to play real football and go head to head with somebody. Is that kind of -- you're trying to find that balance now between kind of those two things?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, we always want to have some creativity. I think lately without question we've been getting a lot more man-to-man coverage, and some of the trickery is hard to work when you have man-to-man coverage. It works a little better when you have some zone eyes and some openings. We're going to have to run the football, and we're going to have to get open occasionally against man coverage, and we're going to have to burn it sometimes. The issue is we have not burned it at all, and when you don't do that, it makes things tougher.

We've got to figure out, okay, let's figure out a few more conservative ways to beat it, but also we've just got to get positive plays against it, and we tried two double moves, we had two interceptions, that hurt us. So we've got to just be smarter at what we're doing and just move the chains.

**Q. On the 3rd and goal from the 9 that you ended up doing the fake whatever that was, the flea flicker, reverse flea flicker, was that the intended play to go to Greg in the corner, or was D'J kind of starting off to the left side maybe with some linemen there, too?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, we had a 3rd-and-4 call ready, they had a time-out, and then we had it ready again, and then we jumped offsides, so then it was longer so then we went away from that call. I didn't think we'd get a touchdown. Yeah, we tried this trick play, which it worked in practice, and it was a double option of throwing it to Greg in the corner of the end zone, and then we had a layoff over there with D'J. Normally the play goes to the first option. It wasn't open. They didn't bite on it. What we have to do sometimes in those situations is as a quarterback, if a play isn't open, you have to either find the outlet or you're going to have to run and create and make something, and we haven't got as much out of that as we need to. We've got to be a little more -- even against man coverage a few times when we're covered, we've got to run the ball at quarterback. We've got to step up and get some yards and make them pay because normally if they're in man coverage, guys' backs are to you, they're running, and you can burn them that way, and I think we went back and looked at the Minnesota game early, they tried to play us some man early and we got some runs that were successful, and they got away from it a little bit, and then they got back to it late a little bit more. So we've got to be smart and understand what we're seeing, and if things don't work as a quarterback, you have to find a way to create and try to give us more of a chance than just throwing it into coverage.

**Q. Is Garrett Hudson okay?**

JEFF BROHM: Yes, he's okay. Did you see him get hurt?

**Q. Well, I know he came out of the game and Barnes went in, so I wasn't sure if that was an injury thing.**

JEFF BROHM: You know what, Garrett has done a very good job. He had a few moments where he struggled and we replaced him, but then he snapped back into it, and that happens. But Derrick came in and did a good job for us, but no, Garrett is okay.

**Q. Looking back at the two-point conversion at the end of the game, is that something you all had designed for a two-point conversion, or is that something you saw -- the play that you all ran saw specifically might work in that situation?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, we carry three or four and we practice them all. We knew they'd probably play some type of umbrella defense. We were going to have a high-low over the middle, but we said, let's move the pocket with David and give him a chance to make a throw. If you look at it and we watch the video, we have a guy in motion. He was open in the flat the first read for a touchdown, in our opinion. We didn't throw it, so we had a triangle read for him, and the other guys weren't as open, and he had to kind of create and

make some things happen, and it didn't work for us.

You know, as you look at the film, the guy we have in motion going in the flat is three yards ahead of the defender to catch the ball. We just didn't throw it.

You know, those things happen, so in my opinion I didn't coach it good enough. We've got to be more detailed in how we're coaching and make sure our guys understand that when we move the pocket, if we have a throw in the flat because we missed it early in the game, too, Elijah did, and we roll the pocket and we have Hopkins in the flat wide open and we throw it high to Cole. When we roll the pocket, I want to throw the ball in the flat until they cover it, and so obviously I'm not coaching it good enough, so we've got to get better at that.

**Q. If you look back at I guess three of the last four touchdowns, giving up one against Wisconsin, then both against Rutgers, big plays, what is it that can turn that around for your defense? Is that a mindset thing? What is it?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, we've got to be locked in, and every play matters, and without question the big plays have hurt us. You take away those, yes, our defense played very, very well. That wasn't one of the better offenses we're going to see to be honest with you, but our defense played well. The first touchdown, our free safety got hung in there a little too tight. We had man coverage, and he kind of bounced out of there, we lost vision of him, our linebackers didn't see him, and Gelen kind of -- he bounced off Gelen, and there he went. So the man coverage hurt us in that. But our free safety needs to be there to make the play. He got caught up there.

And then the second one was a 3rd and 19, which is disappointing. We did want to make sure they didn't get in field goal range. They were at that area where, okay, let's -- we don't want to give up the 1st down, but let's keep them out of field goal range. So we had a man pressure, and Danny had the back and did not take the back until late, and he went right by him. That should never be open, but it got open. Obviously we're not coaching it good enough, but it was disappointing because they had been playing so well up until that point, and that was a big play for them.

**Q. Looking ahead to Nebraska a little bit, you've played some teams recently that will just line up and run it at you. Nebraska is a little different, they'll throw it around a little bit more than probably the last four teams you've played. Just kind of early thoughts on that, your defense having to face the pass a little more?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, Nebraska is a good football team.

They beat Rutgers. They've done some good things. The quarterback is a good passer. He can stand in there and throw it, and they've got a lot of history of winning, so I'm sure they're going to come in here hungry and to try to get a victory. It'll be a challenge for us. We're going to have to -- as far as quarterbacks, other than Lamar Jackson, this is probably the best quarterback we'll play as far as he can really throw the football, and he can see the field, and it'll present more challenges for our secondary. So it'll be a tough football game against a team that needs to win as bad as we do, and there's going to be a lot riding on this game.

**Q. Just coming back here at home playing another night game, thoughts on that?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, we're definitely looking forward to that. It's been great to this point, and we appreciate all the support. We need to come out here and do our part and come ready to play. By how hard we play, hopefully that can get the fans into the game and give us an advantage, but we're looking forward to playing in front of our guys.

**Q. A follow-up on the quarterback running question, do you want more designed runs for the quarterback, or do you want their instincts to take over?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I try to tell our quarterbacks all the time, I don't know if David and Elijah are tremendous runners, but they can run when they need to and when we need them to. Even when we're not -- we had a quarterback draw in the red zone, we got about four yards. I thought we should have got more. But in the course of the game, for any quarterback, I tell them two to five times throughout the entire game on a pass play, you're going to have to run the ball. It's not going to be open. You're going to get pressure. You're going to step up. It's not there. I need you to run and get yards. And sometimes that varies a little bit, so that's why I say two to five. We haven't been seeing that as much as I would like.

So sometimes when things are covered or it's breaking down, you've got to go try to get something. You obviously want to be looking to make the pass as we're moving it first, but we need to get some yards, and I think some of the games that we've had to keep drives going, we had some decent runs against Michigan where it helped us. We had some decent runs against Minnesota when things were covered and it helped us.

If you watch any video of any teams across the country, the quarterback has got to be an active player and help you out in that situation. I think nowadays, defenses do a very good job, and sometimes things are going to be covered, and you've got to be able to make them pay.

Really, especially in any type of man coverage, you have to have that in your head that, hey, okay, let's say they do cover us this time or two, I've got to attempt to make them pay because normally there's either no one left or maybe just one linebacker left in the box with a lot of open space, and everyone else is running covering their guy. We've got to get some yards in that manner.

**Q. Any idea why they're hesitating in those situations?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I don't think Elijah is a natural runner. He's a -- to be honest with you, he's a quarterback that if you had tremendous talent around them, I think he would pick you apart. The fact that he's got to be a little more creative in his play and make sure that he's a little more active, that's not probably his game, but we've got to get it to where it's his game and we've got to make sure he's doing it a little bit more. David, he is a little bit more of a scrambler and a runner, and can kind of create, has a little more moxie, so that comes a little more natural to him. But it's not easy.

You want to go back there and you want to try to make the play work, and for a quarterback, in your mindset, unless you're thinking of it, that's to complete the ball and find a way to get it in there, and sometimes you're stubborn with it and you've got to make sure that, hey, some plays are going to be covered, some guys maybe are going to run another route or some guys are going to fall. You've got to find a way to get some yards with your feet, and it's just something you've just got to keep working on with them.

**Q. You said after Saturday's game you had to go back to the drawing board. Was going back to the drawing board going into the eighth game of the season?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think it just means we're very disappointed we couldn't score points. We haven't been able to score lately. You know, when you lose a game in that manner, you're not happy. Really it just means let's figure out what we do well, and that's what we're going to have to do. You know, while you want to be aggressive and attack things and attack one-on-one match-ups, guess what, sometimes we're not going to win those match-ups, so let's be smart and make sure we're having positive plays and we're getting the ball to people that are making the most plays for us. To me that's what going back to the drawing board is making sure we study that and that we're not stubborn and that we get it to our best players, which to me on any team, whatever you have, that's what you need to make sure you do, you're getting the ball to your best players.

**Q. When you went back and watched the film, by your count, how many drops did you come up with?**

JEFF BROHM: Well, we had multiple drops, and some of them were very easy catches, and key critical 3rd-down catches that could keep it going, and then it kind of snowballed from there. Then we had a few errant throws, as well. But we had multiple ones that if you want to win a football game, you can't have that many. That's just the bottom line. I know you're going to have a few every now and then, but you can't have that many and expect to win. Sometimes you have those type of games, sometimes you have four turnovers in the first half against Minnesota but we were able to overcome it. We were not able to overcome this.

The execution has to be better in general for us to win.

**Q. The way you rotated backs and the amount of carries that the three got Saturday, is that kind of the picture perfect how you'd like to see the running game distributed between -- with the depth that you have at that position?**

JEFF BROHM: Yeah, I do think that position played well for us. All three guys, I think, if you really asked them, they would get gassed, and they got spilled, and you could see them tired, and I think having those three guys in there helped them play better and they were fresher, and they gave us a little bit different element, and they both -- excuse me, all three of them really did a very good job for us, took care of the ball, made some guys miss, had yards after contact. All were positive things that I was very happy with.

**Q. I saw Tario dressed for the game; does that mean he's closer to getting back, and could he possibly play that week?**

JEFF BROHM: Yeah, I think he's getting closer, and yeah, I think it would be a possibility.

**Q. T.J. McCollum, his status going into the week?**

JEFF BROHM: T.J.'s injury is taking a little longer than we thought. He's getting some more looks at it as we're speaking today probably, but he did not practice at all the last couple weeks, so until he practices, I'm not going to anticipate him playing.

**Q. What about Grant Hermanns going into this week?**

JEFF BROHM: Grant is probably going to be out for quite a while.