

# Big Ten Football Media Days

Thursday, July 24, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

## Purdue Boilermakers

## Coach Barry Odom

### Press Conference



BARRY ODOM: Great to see everyone. I hope you've had a great summer, a wonderful summer. I appreciate all the work and would like to start with saying how much I appreciate all the work that you guys do covering the game of college football.

I know it's tireless work, but the things that you do not only covering college football but the Big Ten Conference, Purdue University, thankful of that. We've got so many stories to be able to tell, and you guys have the voice. You have the opportunity to tell those stories, and I'm thankful for that.

I know this now after being in Vegas for the last two years. I know that those that are still standing on day three of Big Ten Media Days, you're the real tested ones. Maybe you can make it through the rest of the day.

I look at the opportunities that come with media days, and I believe as I look at it, as really the unofficial start to our season. I look at the calendar, and we look at it together as a staff. In 37 short days we will have the opportunity for our first game in the 2025 Purdue football campaign.

It's a sprint to get our team ready for Game 1. We'll open up camp next week, and then as you guys know, the days fly by, and Game 1 will be on us.

I've been in the conference now for seven months, and I have forever in my coaching career -- this is year 26 for me. I've always had great respect for the Big Ten Conference, and even more so now seven months into our league. It's got great coaches, unbelievable players, student-athletes. Then you look at the leadership of our Commissioner, Tony Petitti, on the things that he's been able to do for us, as head coaches, to be able to navigate us through this time, to lead and communicate during the changes that continue to go on. It's been amazing, and I'm thankful for him and his leadership group.

As we all know, the Big Ten Conference and the footprint covers the entire country, but you look at tradition, the championships, the game day atmosphere. I believe it

creates the best conference in college sport today.

I look at the opportunity over the last seven months of being at Purdue, and it would not have been possible without the leadership of our president, Mung Chiang, and without the leadership of every single day of our director of athletics, Mike Bobinski, and his assistant in the role of sport administrator for us, Tiffini Grimes. They have been at every single workout. They've been more invested than I could ever dream about, and I'm thankful for that and for their vision.

You look at what our team is starting to take shape. We've had a seven-month workout area and span on the calendar of building our team and building our program and establishing our culture. I've always been able to break down what the phases of the year look like, and for us in January it was our winter conditioning program. Then we moved into a segment, the Winning Edge program. That led into spring practices and then led into our summer ball program and then now upon us in fall camp.

We're evolving every single day as a team, and I believe that we're making great progress. We established 16 core values of our team and our program, and we call it the Purdue Way. And the way that we're building our program through toughness and consistency and togetherness and teamwork and those values, it is a natural fit for Purdue football and all the great fans and donors that we have that support our great university.

I'm really thankful for our coaching staff. We're able to assemble a group of guys that have been able to work together and a support staff in my opinion that is unmatched for what our student-athletes need in today's world. But there's strong alignment, tremendous vision, and work ethic every single day to create habits for our team.

Our staff has blended really, really well together, and I believe that will prove a huge advantage for this team. Hope, vision, and belief, and soon enough we'll have validation on the things that we've started building this program. We're always judged by our moments and our experiences, and I look at the opportunity at Purdue.



I didn't have anything to do with last year. I also didn't have anything to do with three years ago when Purdue was in the Big Ten championship. We'll be defined by what we do. If we take the approach from the day that we got the job, every single day our approach is you get up and make Purdue football better and you find a way to consistently instill those habits in everyone around in the organization, then by the time that the season rolls around, we'll be ready to be the best versions of ourselves.

As I watch our team continue to build, we're showing the characteristics of a winning team. They have a high level of commitment. They've been very enthusiastic, and they've been hungry to thrive in the process of what it takes to play winning football. We're going to continue to work on creating the mindset, the attitude, the toughness, and the extra effort that is needed to be in place to play successful football in the Big Ten Conference.

We're always searching for more, finding ways to give our teams the advantage. The competitive spirit, the details, the habits, the consistency is so important to galvanizing the team and collectively focusing on the opportunities and the consistency to play your best ball.

We believe in the process of playing winning football at every position, and it's our coaching jobs in their role as a coaching staff to get each position group and individual prepared to play their absolute very best early and often.

It's very process-oriented opportunities that we have, and when you approach it that way, you get absorbed in the process. Then the results take care of themselves.

We certainly have very high expectations for us to be the very best that we can. We'll continue to create an identity on our team, for our team, all based on the habits, alignments, and being together. We have measurable goals that we set out, and we did when we started in January. We look at academic progress. We look at grade point average. We look at strength gains in the weight room, quickness, explosive, and speed numbers, and our players have done a terrific job in all areas.

We had a 3.24 cumulative GPA the last semester of Purdue football. I'm excited about that. The responsibilities that come with that at Purdue, one of the most prestigious degrees you can get in all of America. Our guys are embracing that.

I believe we got the opportunity to play great complementary football. Our offensive coordinator, Josh Henson, he and I worked together for a number of years. He was at Southern Cal before we were able to get him at

Purdue. He's done a great job on building schematically, defensively -- offensively on what we want to be and how we're going to attack things.

Defensively our coordinator is Mike Scherer, who I coached years ago. He worked with me at Arkansas and then at UNLV. He has done a great job. Then our special teams coordinator is James Shibest, and in my opinion will give us a huge advantage in the special teams play on how our team is built.

The bottom line of getting our team together in every aspect is a tremendous opportunity. We're excited about the future of Purdue football. We're able to bring three players with us today.

Devin Mockobee. They all have different stories how they ended up where they are today. But Devin Mockobee is a senior running back. Will have ended his career -- he's 1,200 yards away from being the leading rusher in Purdue football history. He's getting his mechanical engineering degree and on pace to graduate in a couple of months with that. We're so proud of him.

Tony Grimes is a senior as well. He plays in the defensive backfield. He started for me at corner at UNLV and then transferred. He's become a great leadership in our locker room. And then CJ Madden, a defensive end that will end up being one of our guys in the mix that is a leader up front.

All three of these guys have great stories on how and where they are today and how they got there, and they're a great reflection not only of our team, our program, but our university.

Thanks for your time, and would certainly be happy to answer any questions if I can.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. The time that you spent here in Las Vegas, I know you were very proud of not just turning a program around, but the community aspect of it. It was one thing that you always talked about. Coming from where you came from in SEC country to the Mountain West and UNLV, the surprise of this tight-knit community and now taking that to a college community, how much do you appreciate what you learned here in Las Vegas to bring with you to West Lafayette?**

BARRY ODOM: Thanks for the question. You look at opportunities. When we got the job here at UNLV, the way that the city embraced us, you know, we won 20 games in



two years, and it was a great experience.

We had unbelievable players. They lived the process. They were our best workers. The city got behind us and did everything they could to support us in a great way. It was interesting. I got to the hotel room last night and opened up the window, and I'm staring at Allegiant Stadium. What great memories.

I was thankful for our time here. My wife, Tia, and our three kids, at one point, we had a daughter in elementary school here. We had a son in high school here in the city, and then another son that was at UNLV. We embraced the city, and the city gave us back. We got tremendous friends here that we'll have our lifetime, and so thankful for the opportunity that we had at UNLV and living in Las Vegas.

**Q. Quick question about the changing dynamics coaching in college football. When you were at Missouri, a little bit before the portal era really kicked into gear. Since then, we saw the last two years at UNLV, especially two years ago, I mean, you rebuilt that thing on the fly. Talk about the differences now with the portal and actually sort of being forced into changing everything on the fly as opposed to years ago when it wasn't quite like that.**

BARRY ODOM: I think as you guys know, the world of college football and college athletics has changed more in the last three years than it has the last 25 probably combined. Whether I believe in it or don't like the change, it doesn't matter. It's here, and you adjust to it. You find a way to find advantages for your team and build your team.

We're going to be a high school recruiting team. I've always said that. We've always been that. We are here, and we're also very select and direct in attracting great players through junior college or transfer market. I think that's important to do.

Also, you can't lose the sight on the opportunity to build your team the right way, the right culture, the right habits, the right fit. So those things are always evolving. You've got to have a great team or a general manager in Brandon Lee and Ethan Baxter, what they do, our recruiting department and what they do, our personnel department and what they do, and then the assistant coaches, it's all together on making decisions on how you build the team.

I think the staffs have grown over the years on what that looks like, and then how you build a team every year is going to be a little bit different. We've certainly had a lot of turnover when we got the job at Purdue, and it's very similar to the turnover we had when we were at UNLV.

I think there's nobody that's immune to that, but for us we have to build structurally. The foundation of the program is not going to change in the recruiting process of how we go about our high school recruiting. Then you have to be select and direct, as I mentioned, on how you're building the rest of your roster.

**Q. In your experience, how has your understanding of NIL in the past couple of years, especially at UNLV -- how has it helped make you a better recruiter, better coach, and just how you relate to the players and your staff?**

BARRY ODOM: Yeah, it's changed everything. I mean, years ago obviously it didn't exist. Then all of a sudden it's open market. Then now there's a few more restrictions and guidelines on it, which I think is healthy for college sport. I think it's healthy for student-athletes.

I think the opportunity and learning from your experiences and also being aggressive in that world on what it looks like to build your team, it's been a process for us all to learn as you go through it.

I'm a lot better today in that world than I was two years ago. I think just like every year, you evolve as a coach, and you become a little bit better through your experiences. Some are setbacks. Some are successes of great measure.

Also, the ability to be vulnerable, to find out what you need in a support staff to help in your blind spots and to also build up the organization the way you need to so it is a smooth operating machine. I'm very, very thankful because I've got great people on our staff and organization that every single day they're thinking about how can we make this program better? That's all-encompassing for our entire team and our entire staff on how we approach things.

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