

Big Ten Football Media Days

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Purdue Boilermakers

Coach Ryan Walters

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Coach Walters, we'll begin with your opening statement.

RYAN WALTERS: Man, it's good to be back here at the Big Ten Media Days. It's good to see familiar faces. What a difference a year makes.

A lot has changed throughout the course of this past year. Our building looks different. We've made upgrades aesthetically to the weight room. We've got a dining hall that will be a lot more convenient for our student-athletes. That's right outside the building right there attached to the stadium.

We've got new uniforms that represents a new era in Purdue football that hopefully pays homage to some things in the past and gives a modern look on the future.

We also have 37 new players added to the roster. 27 of those were enrolled in January, which I thought was very important and strategic from the staff's standpoint to get them integrated with the culture, with the camaraderie of the locker room and getting to know each other, and hopefully that will pay dividends this fall.

We've also learned a lot as a program in a year. We've learned our strengths and weaknesses as a staff, learned our strengths and weaknesses as a roster and tried to address those. We also know now what the standards and expectations are on how we operate on a day-to-day basis.

We also learned as a program how we respond to adversity. When we hit adverse moments a year ago, nobody blinked. They dove into the process and worked hard.

I've also learned a great deal individually going through my first year as a head coach. I understand now how to better serve the team in the use of my time. Obviously my expertise is on the defensive side of the ball. As a head coach, you wear a lot of hats, but going through last season knowing how much I can dive into the Xs and Os and how much I need to be head coach, that balance is

something that I've learned.

I've learned how much I love this university and the West Lafayette community. This is a fan base and a support system that is unmatched. We have great leadership in our president and our athletic director.

This community of West Lafayette, they show up and show out unconditionally. What that looks like is having the highest season ticket sales since 2007 up to this point already.

I've also learned that everyone in the building has a chip on their shoulder that grows by the day. Because of that, I can't wait for this fall.

With that, I'll open the floor up for questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. I just wanted to ask about expansion. First, just your thoughts on the four new teams and then also, with it being announced that Indianapolis is going to be the site of the Big Ten Championship through 2028, about the Big Ten's commitment to stay in Indiana for the foreseeable future as well.

RYAN WALTERS: I think the -- to answer your first question, anytime you add four teams, like an Oregon, a USC, a UCLA, and a Washington, to the Big Ten Conference, it's just going to add to the prestige, add to the strength of the Big Ten Conference.

Those are great storied programs with great coaching staffs and great players, and I'm looking forward to competing against them year in and year out.

As far as playing the Big Ten Championship game staying here in Indy, I think it adds to the tradition of the Big Ten Conference. Obviously I'm a little biased, but this is a great venue and a great location for a championship game.

Q. So as you know, the Big Ten preseason media polls was released the other days and had the Boilermakers dead last. How are you going to use that as fuel for



motivation for the team? Post it up in the locker room? What do you plan on using that as this fall?

RYAN WALTERS: Obviously as much as you try not to read things and the opinions of your program or yourself or your players, you still hear it, right? If you're not reading it, your folks are or your friends are or it gets back to you.

I would be naive not to address it with the team and not talk about the elephant in the room. I did mention a large chip on the shoulder of everybody in that building. 18 out of 18 is a large reason why.

Q. A two-part question for you, Ryan. You talked a lot about the things you learned in your first season. What was the biggest lesson that you learned in that first year? Then I've given you a year since I asked this question last year. Have you gotten to Triple XXX and tried the peanut butter burger yet?

RYAN WALTERS: As far as lessons I learned in that first season, I would be up here all day talking about them. There are things that you anticipate and that you plan for, but nothing can prepare you for real-time problems that occur and how fast and how urgently you need to come up with solutions.

As far as the Triple XXX, I have been there. I have not done the peanut butter burger yet. It's just I can't -- it just doesn't add up in my mind on how that works together. But I have been there for breakfast on a couple of occasions, and they do a great job.

Q. Hudson Card last year just under 59% completion for your offense. Is that a number that you are comfortable with as the head coach, and if you want it to go higher, how do you accomplish that this season?

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, obviously we want that number to be higher and fully anticipate that it will be. You know, if you look at Hudson's career and where he's headed, last season was his first time being a full-time starter at the collegiate level at quarterback.

You couple that with being in a brand-new system for the first time with a brand-new environment and all the things that go into it, you know, year two you generally see a big jump from an experience standpoint.

We've seen that in terms of his command of the offense and what we're trying to get accomplished there schematically. We've seen him embrace his role as a leader on the team, and we've added some pieces around him to protect him and guys to throw the ball to.

I fully anticipate him having a big jump from year one to year two in the program.

Q. Purdue in the last couple of years has had somewhat of an explosive offense. They've sent guys to the league. When you think about that standard from what past players have done, how are you kind of incorporating that into what you want to see from your offense? But also you said you're a defensive-minded head coach. How do you shift that perspective within the program?

RYAN WALTERS: I am like the head coach though, right, so I understand that the quarterback position is the most important position in sports, period.

On offense we try to protect that guy and allow him to have success. Then defensively we try to destruct him, right? As far as having explosive offenses, I think we have the makings of that at Purdue.

We did send a running back to the NFL in the draft this past season. We had two guys that had over 500 yards rushing, which hadn't been done at Purdue in a long time. In Big Ten Conference games we're an air raid offense that led Big Ten Conference games in rushing.

I think that speaks to our staff's creativity and the compromise that you sort of have with identifying and adhering to your philosophy, but also meeting the roster in the middle and trying to do things that sets them up for success.

Again, I'm excited about where we're at, where we're headed, and I can't wait for this fall.

Q. Talk about the big run that Purdue had, Coach Painter and the fans, and how that carries over to you with all the enthusiasm that Coach Painter and his team brought, and now here we are football season ready for you.

RYAN WALTERS: Yeah, it was awesome to see in real time. I think it gives a tangible example of what is attainable and what is possible at Purdue from an athletic standpoint.

We got to see firsthand the run that they made and the type of production and success they have year in and year out. So I think for our players and for our staff and for our community it shows you what is possible from an athletic standpoint in West Lafayette at Purdue University.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports