



Ohio State
Post-Game Quotes
USC vs. Ohio State
Friday, December 29, 2017
AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas



**QUESTIONS FOR COACH URBAN MEYER, QB J.T. BARRETT, AND
S DAMON WEBB**

COACH MEYER: Thank you and thanks to the Cotton Bowl. The Texas hospitality is what it is. This is my third time here, twice in the last few years: One for the national championship and then, obviously, this one. So it's fantastic.

USC is outstanding, especially their defense played so well today. And they were blitzing, and they were changing things up. And we didn't play as well offensively.

But their quarterback is as good as advertised. However, our defensive line really dominated the game with eight sacks.

So it was a great win for Ohio State. We'll be a top-five team, Big Ten champs. We just had every senior say a few words. And I can't get enough of those guys. They're everything that you want in a young person. They lead the team. They live right off the field. And, obviously, they're winners. Won a lot of games here, and they're champions. I'll answer any questions.

Q. This question is for J.T. You were a kid born in Lawton, Oklahoma. Finished school in Wichita Falls. You have played in every ball game and won a national championship. Can you reflect on what God has done for you, sir?

QB J.T. BARRETT: Yeah. God has definitely blessed me and my family for the opportunity to be at Ohio State. I'm grateful for coaches, like Coach [Urban] Meyer, really be hard on me. But at the end of the day, he's very honest. And I think that's something great about Ohio State. They're honest. I mean, not everybody wants honesty; but he's very honest with me. And at the end of the day, I knew he was going to do right by not only myself but also the guys in the locker room. So I'm very blessed and thankful for that.

Q. J.T., where you went to school, did you hear any ROHOs out there today, or did you hear mostly O-hi-o?

QB J.T. BARRETT: I'm pretty sure there was a little bit of both. I had a quite a few people from Wichita Falls. Very grateful that people was able to come to the game, being it was the last game in AT&T Stadium.



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Q. For Damon. Especially when you found out that Denzel [Ward] was not going to play, what was your guys' mindset? And what did you do to kind of get past that and play so well as a unit?

S DAMON WEBB: My mindset was just the next man up. I know we've got a lot of young guys that was ready to play. When we found out Denzel couldn't play, we were just the next man up. We lose first rounders every year, and that's just the mindset we got here. So Jeff Okudah, Damon [Arnette] and Ken [Sheffield] did a tremendous job today. So I really appreciate them.

Q. J.T., as this is kind of it, can you reflect on your four years at Ohio State?

QB J.T. BARRETT: It's been a blessing. I'm very grateful for everybody. That's been a part of my dream here at Ohio State. I can't say thank you enough as far as the mentors, the family members, people from church. I mean, everybody's been a part of my life to help me through this journey, coaches, my teammates that were here tonight and then people I played in the past. There's so many people to thank. Just very grateful for those people. They made me who I am.

Q. J.T. again, you passed Drew Brees as the all-time leading in total yards, Big Ten history. What does that record mean for you to kind of wrap up your career here?

QB J.T. BARRETT: It's pretty crazy. I mean, since I was little, I looked up to Drew Brees. To be able to pass a record like that, just very grateful the people that were around me, coaches that have been part of my journey, O-line, receivers, tight end, running backs, receivers, everybody that helped me achieve that. It's definitely an honor and a blessing.

Q. Can you reflect on what J.T. [Barrett] has meant to the program?

COACH MEYER: Yeah, I get asked that question quite often, and I never get tired of it. We just had a lot of not very many dry eyes in the locker room. And respect is not given. Respect is earned.

And at a place like Ohio State, what those kids have done not only for our football program -- just think about the way they act, the way they behave, the way they represent the great state of Ohio and Ohio State University, not just the football program, the University.

And J.T.'s one of, whatever it was, 15 guys. I love those guys. And the cool thing is that your dream is to come into a place and leave it a little bit better than when you came here and he did.

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Q. Urban, J.T. [Barrett] was not always super flashy. But if you had to describe the way he played the game, I know "toughness" is a word you use. If you kind of had to summarize it beyond toughness, how would you categorize what he's been and how he's played?

COACH MEYER: Elite leader that raises the level of those around him, raises the level of toughness, of will to win, of the practice habits, the human spirit. I know he says he doesn't want to coach, but I'm not done trying to get him to coach because he should do that.

He should be in a position someday -- I know he's going to go play in the NFL, and that might be his platform. But he should be in a position someday -- God made a special guy there, very unique guy. And he's got a skill set that I haven't come across very often.

Q. Coach, best adjective for your defense tonight and the line, "relentless." Would that be a good way?

COACH MEYER: Yeah, dominating and relentless against an excellent quarterback. We had eight sacks. Eight sacks and I believe we had four turnovers caused, I believe. And an interception. And was it three fumbles? Yeah, our defense was dominant. Offense didn't play very well, but our defense was dominant and controlled the line of scrimmage.

And we knew going into the game, obviously, he's going to be a top-five pick, the quarterback we just faced. He's every bit of it. I was watching him warm up and going "whoa." If you let that young man with those receivers just stand back and throw, you're not going to stop them. Our defensive line and Larry Johnson and his group was phenomenal.

Q. Urban, 73-8, I think it is, in six seasons so far. What would you say it's meant to you, if you can look at the entirety of the experience?

COACH MEYER: This one is very personal. I'm from Ohio. I've been a Buckeye, I think, as long as I've been able to say the word "buckeye." So when I hear "Hang On Sloopy" and see the former players and knowing that we in our own little way have done some very good things for this great university, that's one of those feel-good moments. And, like I said, this one is very personal.

Q. Urban, compared to last year going into the next season, a good taste in your mouth. It was pretty bad last year. Can this really give you a balance? That's talked about a lot. What does this do?

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COACH MEYER: Well, momentum is very, very important. We're going to find out exactly -- we had an excellent signing day. We're going to find out here shortly who's going to leave early for the draft. That's always one of those bittersweet moments.

But it's very healthy program. And I just go through that locker room. And it's probably not the politically correct way of saying it, but there's not many people I don't like. I like a lot of those guys. As a matter of fact, I love the majority of them and appreciate them. And that's a good sign.

Q. Urban, how late into today or this week were you talking with Denzel [Ward] about his decision and that dynamic of it all happening so late, seemingly. What did you think? And what kind of an impact, if any, did it have tonight?

COACH MEYER: Well, it began after the championship game. And I was out on the road recruiting and I come back and a lot of people are pulling -- you know, this is an interesting -- I don't necessarily agree with everything. But a lot of people pulling and telling stories, and everybody has opinions and all of that.

And you're talking about not a good young man but a great young man. And his mom is not a good mom, a fantastic mom. They were asking our opinion. And it went everywhere from a play to maybe third downs to maybe special teams to he was practicing.

And the decision wasn't made until, I don't know, probably yesterday. It went all the way to "I'm going to play the whole time" to "What do you think?" So that's it.

Q. Once again, playoffs should stay at four teams or would you like to see an expansion?

COACH MEYER: Has to go to eight -- I'm just kidding (laughter). We've been on the outside looking in twice, and we've been in there twice. I'm going to enjoy this win.

I don't know. I always think first of the student-athlete. And you tell me when you're going to play two more games. And you need to increase the scholarship limit by 15 or something to be able to have that. So I don't foresee that happening.

Q. You just mentioned the signing day that happened recently. What's your take on having this early signing day in December in addition to the one in February?



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COACH MEYER: I was outspoken against it, and I'm still not sure. We'll see how it goes. But I have a job to represent Ohio State, and it's been very good to us. We had an excellent signing date. It remains to be seen the next month here.

There's going to be a lot of junior recruiting. I think we have two left. There's a lot of time, but the calendar's getting moved up so much. I don't know.

It was exhausting, a lot of hard work for our staff, but it worked out very well for Ohio State.

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