

The week started rough

BY ALEX BOONE
For SN Today

I've got to be honest, the week started kind of rough, like you'd expect. We were really down after the loss at USC. People kept reminding you that you'd lost a really big game. "You guys did this, you guys did that. You guys lost." Like you needed to be reminded, right? Finally you feel like you want to just say, "Yeah, I know we lost. I was there, remember?"

But you've got to put that behind you. Some guys are doing it better than others. We were all down early in the week. Some guys were like, "This was the biggest game of the season and we lost big. How will we ever recover?" But that's football. You've got to put the last game behind you and move on. There's no time for moping around or feeling sorry for yourself. Yeah, that was a big game we lost, and we all felt bad about the way we played. Those things happen.

You've got to have a vision for what you want to happen for the rest of the season, but you can't get ahead of yourself now. That's the seniors' biggest responsibility, and there's a bunch of us on this team, so that's good. We've got to make sure everyone knows, the young guys know, that we've got a lot of games ahead of us.

Honestly, now it almost feels like a big weight has been lifted off us because we all were so focused on that one game, now we can go out and just play and see what happens. I was talking to Coach Tress last night, and he was saying he wouldn't want it any other way. He said, "I want to measure myself



JAY BROWN/ISI

Alex Boone said Ohio State's line has to do its job, whether Todd Boeckman (17) is the QB or not.

with the best." And he's right. Things will happen now that you can't even imagine. Look at last year, after we lost to Illinois, everyone was down and saying, "Oh, man, we're finished." And then everyone else started losing and we got back into it.

It's like on the offensive line. It doesn't matter if it's Todd (Boeckman) or Terrelle (Pryor) back there at quarterback, we're out there to do one thing: protect whoever is back there. It's hard in a sense because they're completely different types of quarterbacks. You know Todd is going to sit back there in the pocket and trust you to protect him. Pryor is going to be a little quicker to run out of there, but we've just got to get him to understand to trust us and hang in there just a little longer before he takes off. We'll take care of you. In the end, though, we've just got to do our job along the line. Who's back there is Coach Tress' decision.

Just like who's next on the schedule isn't up to us. So we've just got to get ready for Troy. It's good we're playing a team like Troy, because they're a good football team. They're fast and they've won some big games through the years, and they're faster than ever this year. We've got to get ready for them and play our game and just see what happens.

—As told to Bob Hill

About the author



Alex Boone
Ohio State
LT
A preseason All-American and three-year starter, Boone anchors an offensive line that is focused on getting the Buckeyes' ground attack back in stride. He is a contender for the Outland Trophy, given annually to the nation's top interior lineman.

Missed opportunities doomed Purdue in OT loss

BY CURTIS PAINTER
For SN Today

I think we really missed an opportunity to put Oregon away when we got up on them early. Obviously the early touchdown was huge for us to get the momentum, and we were making huge plays in the kicking game. We recovered the ball on the kickoff, which was big. We did some things well, but there were a lot of situations where we could have put them away. But there were a lot of great things that happened. The defense played extremely well and made a lot of turnovers. It's tough to lose, but you have to look at the positives, and I think we played well against a very good team.

We have Central Michigan this weekend, and this is the third time we've played them in 12 months, since we played them during the regular season last year and then in the bowl game. We've certainly gotten a first-hand look at them. Even the first time we played them, we were able to get out to a big lead on them, but they were climbing back. In the second game, the bowl game, they were able to get back from the deficit they were in. You can't overlook anybody; you have to get up for each game. Certainly it makes it difficult to play a team for a third time in such a short amount of time, and we certainly know they're very capable of playing well against us.

Sometimes you look at some of the scores the Big Ten has had against the MAC schools and maybe you're surprised at first. But they're playing some great



TONY STRICKLAND/AP

Purdue QB Curtis Painter said the team missed an opportunity to put Oregon away early.

games against some very good teams in our conference. We've found that out firsthand, that they're tough. This is my last season, and I want it to go well. I don't think it's really hit me that it's the last go-around. I definitely don't think about it on the field, but maybe when I'm not on the field. During the season, you blink and it seems like it's over, but the offseason creeps by in anticipation of the next season.

I remember the first time I got on the field, it was at the end of a game handing it off a few times. There

wasn't really a chance I could lose the game. But my first two starts on the road were at Wisconsin and Penn State. Both of those places aren't easy places to play in, and I guess if you're going to have your first start, those are some tough places to do it. I just remember going into each play and my mind was going 100 miles per hour. But since then, things have gotten a lot easier.

Hopefully we will make this season an exciting one, one to remember.

—As told to Brian McLaughlin

About the author



Curtis Painter
Purdue
QB
Painter, a 6-4, 230-pound four-year starting quarterback, threw for 207 yards in an overtime loss to nationally ranked Oregon last weekend. He is preparing for Saturday's matchup at home with Central Michigan, a team Purdue is meeting for the third time in a year.