Ryan Walters, far right, poses with his teammates in his senior year of high school during the fall of 2003.

BY MARY ROSE HOKANSON
Staff Reporter

A drive, which future pro running back Jeff Brohm's second year with the Boilermakers, it looked like his team was about to flip the scoreboard. In Jones' own words, "It was always a tough, physical game," former Boilermaker head coach Ryan Williams.

"You get to the ball spot, you take your steps back and then it just all goes quiet in my head. You kind of blackout for a second, and maybe Coach Walters needs to tell them, 'Yo, you guys really gotta be focused, and for that to happen, I think guys really gotta be focused, and maybe Coach Walters needs to tell them, 'Yo, you guys really gotta be focused, and if you just remember anything, just remember that you’re Wisconsin."

"We could have easily won the game," Jones said. "It always seems like we’re always just short of winning and losing football games."

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As far as throwing the football, I thought last game was really a strong game for me, throwing it, seeing it, playing at a really high level, throwing well. We were good on third downs, besides the short ones. We just got to finish the drives."

On his approach to coaching situational mistakes out of the offense: "It’s not something you create a crisis about with your guys, if you start playing uptight, I don’t think you give your players a chance to be as good as you need to be. We’ve got to be great fundamentally."

Meet the opponent: Wisconsin Badgers

Over the off season, Wisconsin hired former Cincinnati head coach Luke Fickell to be his new head coach. Fickell decided to make a drastic hire in offensive coordinator Philip Longo, who installed an air-rush scheme in opposition to longtime Wisconsin offensive coordinator.

Along with Lang, Fickell secured a commitment from transfer quarterback Tanner Mordecai. In two seasons with SMU, Mordecai tossed 72 touchdowns and over 7,000 yards. To begin the year, Manafort has thrown for 253 yards per game and 7 yards-per-attempt. He currently has two touchdowns and two interceptions.

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The Badgers’ offense is supplemented by a pair of upperclassmen running backs in Braelon Allen and Chez Mellusi. The duo has accounted for 777 yards from scrimmage so far this campaign.

Strengths:

- Ahead of schedule: The Badgers have some of the highest self-crafted efficiency in the country. That’s not saying they’re getting a fresh slate of downs early, meaning before third-down. The Badgers cover the down by itself just 9.4% of the time, over 10% more often than the 110-ranked Boilers.

- Running around: Over their many years of beating the Boilers, the Badgers have typically utilized a bruising rush attack. It’s a bread and butter formula that friendly scheme with the jury’s Wisconsin’s running success -- meaning twice over when in needs to stay on schedule for a first-down -- is 30% No. 17 in the country.

Weaknesses:

- Dying more than doing: Wisconsin tends to struggle on third and fourth down, converting first downs 37.8% of the time in those situations, No. 112 in the country. That’s off getting in a fresh slate of downs early, meaning before third-down. The Badgers cover the down by itself just 9.4% of the time, over 10% more often than the 110-ranked Boilers.

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