

Big Ten Football Media Days

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Ohio State Buckeyes

Coach Ryan Day

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Final head coach at the podium today is going to be Ohio State's Ryan Day, who enters his fifth season as the leader of the Buckeyes. Ohio State, very talented, returns a league-best 16 All-Conference performers from the 2022 season, highlighted by the 2022 Big Ten Richter-Howard Receiver of the Year, Marvin Harrison Jr., who I know is here and making the rounds with the media. I think his dad had a few nice games and highlights in this building, the great Marvin Harrison Sr.

I first met Ryan when he was a GA at Florida, and I was covering SEC games, and he took me down in the basement of the Florida football building, and we watched film, and he broke down some of the option things and spread offense things they were doing. It's my pleasure to bring to the stage right now Ryan Day.

RYAN DAY: Thanks, Todd. I do remember that too when it was the shovel play and we were down in the basement. Todd had a lot of great questions. Great to see Todd.

Great to be here today with three great guys, Marvin Harrison Jr., Cade Stover, and JT Tuimoloau.

I thought it was great as we came over this morning, just sort of a cross-section of our team. You take a guy who's from Philadelphia, went to the prep in Philly. Dad's hanging in the rafters here. Tremendous wide receiver. Then you have Cade Stover, who grew up in Lexington, Ohio. Family owns a farm, playing tight end at a high level. Then JT from Seattle, Polynesian background, who is here playing defense.

It's similar to our whole team this year, which we're excited about getting going here. Everybody is this time of year. We have a great off-season, we have great leadership. Just fun to be around a great team who enjoys being around each other but is also very diverse in so many different ways but has the same mindset every day of going to work. Looking forward to this season and open to whatever questions you guys have.

Q. I was just wondering who is going to be your

backup quarterback going into camp? I'm asking that the backhanded way obviously. Have you seen anything the last couple of months that's given you any definition there?

RYAN DAY: I figured you'd try it that way because the other ways haven't worked for you yet, to know the starter.

I'll start with Lincoln. Lincoln has stepped in and very surprised with just his approach. Been really impressed with doesn't seem too big for Lincoln. He's very athletic. He's learning. He's got a long way to go. He came in in the summer but excited to have him here.

Tristan has done a great job as being a coach, being a guy who wants to be a coach, but he's taken those guys under his wing, understands the offense now at a high level. He's going to help provide depth for us, and that's important because this is the most depth we've had, as you know, Tim, for a long time at the quarterback position, which will allow us to do some things maybe we haven't done in the past.

Then you have Devin and Kyle. They both had very good summers. They both have shown leadership. Mick has really put him in situations to do that. Now it's going to be time to go put it on the field. We obviously would like for someone to emerge here quickly. We'll kind of have to see once we get on the field.

Q. How do you feel about your offensive line entering camp? Is it your biggest concern? How do you feel about that group, Ryan?

RYAN DAY: Just in terms of guys going in a conference game on the road -- we did that a couple years ago against Minnesota. Last year we're playing Notre Dame at home. This year it's Indiana on the road. Your concern is guys who haven't played, guys that don't have the experience.

The two guards have played, and the two tackles and the center haven't. Now, I'm excited about some of our options there. Josh Fryar looks good, he cut weight. He's doing better. We also added Josh Simmons, who prefers to be called Jimmy, by the way. We'll have to call him Jimmy



Simmons. Luke Montgomery has been in the mix. He had a really good summer. We have Vic Cutler we've added. We have some good pieces there. They just haven't played.

That's where this off-season has been important, but in August it's going to be critical for them to build a chemistry and make sure they solidify themselves as starters. I think we have enough people there we feel good we can find that, but they have to go do it. That's obviously something that we've got to make sure we're focused on.

Then obviously the quarterback position. Those are probably the two biggest areas where we've got to make sure we're doing a great job.

Q. With Brian Hartline moving in at offensive coordinator, who does that mean for you this season in terms of play calling, where you spend your time at meetings during the week, and what is your collaborative vision with the offense right now?

RYAN DAY: Nothing has really changed from the spring. We'll see how the preseason goes and see how it all shakes out, the chemistry. It's allowed me the opportunity to bounce around a little bit more. Also with naming Quinn Tempel our chief of staff, he's kind of taken some things off of my plate. He's done a really good job there.

The way our staff is designed, I think we have a great staff, and it has allowed me to jump around a little bit more.

Once we get into the teeth of the season, I know how it's going to go probably for me. I'm going to end up being right involved with it again, but that being said, as the season wears on, I have to be conscious this year of not getting too locked into the offense and making sure that I have a handle on everything that's going on.

I think certainly Brian running the offense and being a part of that and Justin Frye with the O-line and some of the additions we've had to the staff will allow us to do that.

Q. A lot of the talk this off-season outside the program, I know, has been about the way the season ended. I'm curious just how much that conversation takes place internally about the final two games of last year.

RYAN DAY: I think it started off with the way the regular season ended, and then that whole bowl prep leading up to it. There was just a lot of focus, a lot of conversation about making sure that we finish the season the right way, and we came up a couple plays short. That was not easy to do.

As you replay a few plays here, a few plays there, really in both of those games, it's motivating. So what we did this off-season, I think you heard me talk about it, is everything we did in the off-season was about competing because, when you're in matchup games, it comes down to a handful of plays.

There are times during the season where that's not the case. We can maybe lose a few plays and still win by a few touchdowns. It's like sometimes that can get unnoticed.

Not that it does get unnoticed, but sometimes you don't feel the severity of it until you lose a game like that. We've been working hard this off-season to make sure that doesn't happen again, that in every game, no matter who we're playing, we understand that it can come down to a couple plays. Certainly in matchup games, we've got to win those games. Explosive plays certainly is what really was our Achilles heel going down to those last two games.

We know that. We've talked about it. How much do we talk about the rivalry game and winning at the end of the season? We talk about it every day. We do. We're not going to sit there and let it beat us twice, but it is a motivating factor for sure.

Q. In your working with Jim Knowles and having conversations with him in efforts of improving the defensive play this year, is it more about improving increasing technique from the players to fit what Jim Knowles likes to do or basically taking his scheme and trying to tweak it to fit the players and their skill sets?

RYAN DAY: It's a great question because it's something that comes up all the time on both sides of the ball this time of year. You have a general idea of what your offense and what your defense is, but ultimately you have to tailor it to what your guys can do.

That's something that coming off of last season number one thing we know, explosive plays. There was a lot of improvement made, but those are the things that hurt us, so how do we get that fixed? That's obviously been something we've really focused on.

Also, how do we now take a group of guys that have been in the system now for a year and take the next step and put the right people in the right spots? That's really what it comes down to and not just something that maybe has worked the past couple years. It doesn't necessarily mean it's going to work moving forward.

Or maybe it's something that you used as a change-up that

you used to use as your fastball, and that's all the art of especially college coaching, and that's all the conversation that's being had right now is putting the right guys in the right place to be successful and they get really good at it.

I think they did that in the spring, and hopefully we can build on that here in August.

Q. Is there any way you would consider possibly starting or playing both quarterbacks early on in the season in games. I know that's difficult with Indiana as the opener in a Big Ten game. Would you consider that at all? What would it take for that to happen?

RYAN DAY: In I guess the last now going on seven years, we've been in this situation quite a few times at Ohio State and just not knowing who the quarterback is going to be going into the season. You had a new one with Dwayne, had a new one with Justin, had a new one with CJ, and now here we are again.

When you go into these situations, you'd like for someone to emerge during camp, but who knows if that's going to happen or not? You'd like to see somebody emerge, and then you name them, just like we've done with CJ and Justin and Dwayne. If that doesn't happen, then maybe that is the case. We'll have to evaluate it from there.

We'll see. I know that we've got to go in and win that first game on the road, so we're going to do everything we can and do what's right for Ohio State.

Again, I'm excited to see these guys compete and go put it on the field. It's different when you're throwing routes in the air and going through workouts than when you're actually playing football. We've got to go start playing football here and figure out who the quarterback is going to be.

Q. Ryan, with the promotion for Brian Hartline and Keenan Bailey this off-season, what have you seen from them in the months since their promotion and make you confident in their ability to step up and take on these new responsibilities?

RYAN DAY: First off, they're both very bright, very energetic. They recruit at a high level. They connect with players very well, and they have credibility.

Keenan has been with us really since I've been at Ohio State, and he's been in different rooms. He's learned. He's taken on a lot of roles. He's got a lot of respect from so many people in that building because of his work ethic, because of the relationships he has with his players. It's not just the tight ends. I mean, you go in for a workout at

6:00 in the morning, he's right there with his players. You go out for a team run at 4:00, he's out there running with them.

Players like that. How do you create relationships and connection with players? You spend time with them, and he does that. He's also very, very intelligent.

Then Brian, same type of thing. His credibility that he has because he played the position of wide receiver, because he went on to play the position in the NFL, and he's brought guys along and developed guys in that room. The next logical progression for him is being a coordinator, which up until this point he's tackled everything and really succeeded. So we expect him to do the same thing.

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