

Coaches Corner: Larry Johnson, Tony Alford Assess Depth At DL, RB



One month into the season, Ohio State enters Saturday against Indiana at 5-0 overall and 2-0 in Big Ten play. Beyond the numbers, though, how have the No. 3 Buckeyes developed players at key positions? Ahead of the next conference clash with the Hoosiers (4-1, 1-1), defensive line coach Larry Johnson and running backs coach Tony Alford comment on several questions about depth and personnel at each group.

Larry Johnson

On going into Penn State without junior defensive end Nick Bosa...

"We didn't approach it that way. Our approach was next man up. There were some things we had to do as a unit to make sure it happened. So I was really pleased, we played well as a unit and (now) continue to do that. Nick is a great player to miss, but the rest of the players have just got to step up."

On having sophomore defensive end Chase Young embrace replacing Bosa...

"He wants the role. He understands that. He and Nick are real close, so they talk a lot, and Chase, he's a competitor, so he wants to do that."

On shortening the rotation at Penn State...

"We played three guys — we played (junior defensive end) Jashon Cornell. When you get in a game like that, as tight as it was, you don't want to put any freshmen in harm's way. I'm really a big believer in that. You don't put a freshman in a game where he has a chance to make a mistake and cost a big play. That lives with him. That's kind of my philosophy. I don't want to do that. So I wanted to make sure we controlled the game. I make sure we rotate them out and stay fresh and let the guys in the game that needed to play."

Tony Alford

On if freshman running back Brian Snead will return...

"I hope so. I hope so. Time will tell."

On how freshman running back Master Teague is developing...

"He's coming along well. He is, he's coming along well and he's a young guy, still learning. It's a continual learning process, as we all know, but the good thing is he's got two older guys in front of him. ... He's getting better every week."

On if one running back between sophomore J.K. Dobbins and junior Mike Weber could handle all reps...

"I think they could. When you say an entire load, we're talking — what are we averaging, 85 plays, give or take? No, a guy can't play that often, can't play that many reps. He's got about one or two games to do that. So you need other guys. Could they handle more than 40 reps? Absolutely, they can handle that. They're trained to do that. But at the same time, we've got two really dynamic players — I believe are dynamic players — so why not put them both out there and let them play?"

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