

Ohio State Removes Interim Tag From WRs Coach Brian Hartline



After acting as Ohio State's wide receivers coach since July 26, Brian Hartline had his interim tag removed Saturday when the Buckeyes announced he would be retained on new head coach Ryan Day's staff in 2019 and beyond.

"Brian is a terrific young coach and mentor to our players and I am thrilled he is on our staff permanently now," Day, who was promoted Tuesday upon seven-year head coach Urban Meyer's retirement effective Jan. 2, said in a statement. "Brian was displaying outstanding leadership qualities when he was a quality control coach, and his efforts coaching the wide receivers this season are a huge reason we are Big Ten champions and headed to the Rose Bowl."

Into the fall, Hartline entered his second season back with OSU as a quality control coach after he joined Meyer's staff in 2017. Ohio State fired six-year wide receivers coach Zach Smith on July 23.

As a former Ohio State wide receiver himself who played from 2005-08 with 90 receptions for 1,429 yards and 12 touchdowns, Hartline brought Buckeyes energy and enthusiasm to the interim role. Adding in his NFL experience — he played 104 games (73 starts) with 344 receptions for 4,766 yards and 14 touchdowns — Hartline received rave reviews from OSU wideouts and recruits.

"He's just very good technically, obviously, because that's how he's made a living for quite a while in the NFL," Meyer said Oct. 17. "Where he's improved is the tactical part, which is what goes on in (the meeting room). He's much improved there."

On the field and on the trail, Hartline had to earn his role. He stepped in and notched two commitments at wide receiver across both classes, securing St. Louis Cardinal Ritter College Prep 2019 four-star Jameson Williams on Sept. 28 and reeling Rockwall, Texas, 2020 four-star Jaxon Smith-Njigba on Nov. 4.

"We kind of earn our badges and earn our titles daily," Hartline said Oct. 17. "So whether you're a player or you're a coach, I think you're always trying to justify your position or trying to justify a greater position. So to me, I always had that approach as a player. I think these guys have had that approach as players and I think that that hasn't changed. I don't think that approach will ever change for me. So again, it's kind of like that same idea. When you're a player, you're trying to start more or get paid more or wherever else. And then once you get it, you're trying to justify it. So as a coach, whether you're trying to earn the opportunity or earn more or have a bigger role, once you get it, you have to maintain

that and justify it. So it's an ongoing process, day in and day out, and you earn your badges and your title daily."

Hartline stepped into a veteran room with Ohio State's wide receivers and helped take the position group's game to the next level. Led by fifth-year seniors Parris Campbell, Johnnie Dixon and Terry McLaurin, plus junior K.J. Hill, the unit caught 291 passes for 4,211 yards and 43 touchdowns in 13 games. Those marks broke the Buckeyes' single-season records of 287 receptions (2017), 3,707 yards (2014) and 42 touchdowns (2014).

The wide receivers room became OSU's first ever with four players to amass 1,000 career receiving yards. No. 6 Ohio State (12-1) enters its Rose Bowl matchup Jan. 1 at 5 p.m. ET against No. 9 Washington (10-3) with Campbell (1,697), Hill (1,642), McLaurin (1,219) and Dixon (1,119) all over the thousand-yard mark. Campbell paces the rotation with a career-best season — 79 receptions for 992 yards and 11 touchdowns.

"As receivers, I think each and every one of us has developed, just become more polished receivers," Campbell said Oct. 9. "Not that the guys weren't before, but I just think that we've added more little tweaks and techniques to our game. We think about the game really different now than we did a year ago. I just feel like when we go into a game now, it's completely different than it was in the past."

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