

Alford: Henderson Has Been “Fantastic” Through Recovery Process



The extent of the injuries that now-junior running back TreVeyon Henderson was playing through in 2022 weren't fully realized outside Ohio State's program until well after the season concluded.

Canceling his campaign a contest early to get foot surgery following the Michigan game, Henderson had been playing with a broken bone in his foot since week three. While he'd missed some action and been limited in other contests, even in those he played following the injury he didn't have the same push behind his runs.

"I knew if I planted my foot that I would re-fracture the bone," Henderson said in April. "At the beginning of every game, as soon as I would get tackled I would re-tweak my foot."

Now that he's back to full health after participating in spring practice in a limited capacity — even if he ultimately sat out the spring game — the back is looking to regain form from his breakout freshman season in 2021. He rushed for 1,248 yards that year at a clip of 6.8 yards per carry, numbers he saw dip to 571 and 5.3, respectively, in eight games in 2022.

To hear running backs coach Tony Alford talk about it May 30, the way Henderson's attacked his recovery process bodes well.

"He's been fantastic," Alford said. "I'm sure it was challenging, like any competitive guy is challenged when you can't perform at the level that you'd like to. But he's handled it like a pro, like a man. His demeanor has been nothing short of great. I'm excited to get him back, and get him back running healthy."

Henderson's freshman production generated a lot of buzz, due in large part to his stature as a recruit. A five-star prospect out of Hopewell, Va., Henderson was the No. 1 running back in his class and No. 11 player overall per the 247Sports composite.

He set the freshman touchdown record at Ohio State during that 2021 season, running in 15 touchdowns and catching four more for 19 total scores.

In two games prior to his injury in 2022, Henderson picked up 178 yards on 25 carries for an average of 7.1 yards per tote. Even after the ailment he showed some flash of his first-year success, going for 121 yards on 21 carries against Wisconsin week five and 118 yards on 19 rushes against Michigan State the following week.

His foot injuries kept worsening, however, and he only played in three of the team's remaining seven contests from that point, totaling just 137 yards on 38 carries — an average of 3.6 yards. That's including a key 41-yard touchdown run at Penn State late in the year. Now, however, he's finally regaining some of the confidence he found in his freshman year.

"I feel like I'm back to myself," Henderson said. "I started doing some individual work, but they want to keep me out of team work just to be safe. When I come back, they want me to come back for good."

Even though he's likely to lead it, the competition for carries in Ohio State's running back room should be fierce. Redshirt junior Miyan Williams, who split carries with Henderson in 2022 when both were healthy, is back after leading the team in rushing yards (825) and yards per carry (6.4) last season. Williams was held out for spring practice while nursing his own injuries.

Healthy in the spring and making an impression were sophomore Dallan Hayden and junior Chip Trayanum, both of whom found starts and significant numbers of carries in 2022 when both Williams and Henderson went down.

That's without mentioning redshirt sophomore Evan Pryor, a former blue-chip prospect in his own right who missed last season with a torn ACL. He was projected to be the team's No. 3 running back last year and coaches seemed high on him prior to his injury in fall camp.

Henderson will look to lead the stable, and if he can take a step forward from his past, it could set the table for an accomplished Ohio State running back room in 2023.

"It's always good to have depth, and competition makes everybody rise," Alford said. "So I think it's a good situation to be in."