

Campbell To Deliver Pregame Speeches In 2018



Parris Campbell will assume a responsibility in 2018 that former Ohio State quarterback J.T. Barrett shouldered for the last couple of years.

Pregame speeches.

Fifth-year senior wide receivers Johnnie Dixon and Terry McLaurin told reporters at the sixth annual Ohio State Football Job Fair on June 15 that Campbell, a fellow fifth-year senior, was voted by the team to be Barrett's successor - even though Campbell wasn't present when the vote was held.

During Barrett's five years at Ohio State, his teammates lauded his leadership abilities, particularly his speeches before the team would take the field for games. After all, he is the only three-time captain in program history.

Understanding who he is replacing, Campbell said he will have his speeches ready before the team even arrives at the stadium on Saturdays for game days.

"I cannot go in there unprepared," he said. "Friday night, I've got to get my mind right. That will be a part of my routine now."

Based on the work he's put in since spring ball ended in April, Campbell is taking the necessary actions to show he's worthy of being the team's new pregame speaker. The H-back said he and the receivers have a goal of catching 10,000 balls each. As of June 15, he was closing in on 3,000.

"That number (10,000) might seem a little crazy to a lot of people, but we're making progress," Campbell said. "We catch every day. I think ball skills are something that every receiver needs to improve on. I think we're taking a huge step in doing that."

Campbell, who primarily played running back in high school at Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary, said he has made a fundamental change in how he catches a football since arriving at Ohio State in 2014.

"My biggest thing was my focus and being able to actually lock in and look the ball in using my eyes,"

he said. "One thing that I learned from the coaches here is that you never catch with your hands, you always catch with your eyes. Me playing running back (in high school), I never really knew that or understood that. I think I'm making strides."

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer had a concise description for Campbell's offseason.

"Elite," Meyer said. "He's an elite person and an elite worker and very, very talented. I expect him to be exceptional (this season)."

Before Campbell records his first catch this fall, he will deliver his first pep talk prior to the opener against Oregon State on Sept. 1. He said he won't inquire Barrett for ideas, though.

"I think I'm going to go about it my own way," Campbell said. "I don't want to be too repetitive. I want to bring my own swag, my own flavor to it. Now that I'm thinking about it, maybe it's not always a serious moment. Maybe it is just getting my guys to smile a little bit before we actually go out there. I'm going to go about it my own way for sure."

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