

Carter Embracing Competitive Opportunity With Buckeyes



When Ja'Had Carter entered the transfer portal, he wasn't concerned with taking the easiest road to the field.

Carter, a two-year starter at Syracuse, could have transferred to a variety of schools with a guaranteed starting job, but ultimately decided to take his talents to Ohio State, where he would have to compete for a spot on the field.

"I feel like (Ohio State) was a good fit," Carter said. "Coach (Jim) Knowles, I like how he operates the defense. I just felt like it was the best fit. I'm down to compete wherever, no matter what school."

Across three seasons with the Orange, Carter amassed 97 tackles, 3 1/2 tackles for loss, five interceptions and 12 pass breakups. He posted another strong season during his final campaign with Syracuse, hauling in a trio of interceptions while also taking a fumble recovery 90 yards to the house for his first-career touchdown in an Oct. 22 loss to Clemson. Carter posted 36 tackles during the 2022 season.

Carter is expected to factor into the competition for the starting nickel spot in Knowles' defense, but he noted that he's spent time at each of the three safety positions to get a better feel for the defense.

"They've had me around everything so I can learn all of the positions," Carter said. "I just don't want to be singling out one position. If you're playing one position, it's good to know everything because you never know if there are different adjustments when you have to go into the game. You have to be ready at all times."

With competition at the forefront in the safeties room right now, with a pair of vacancies in the starting rotation to fill, Carter knew he would have to battle his way to the field for the Scarlet and Gray.

When it comes to competition, Carter pointed to the fearless attitude that he has cultivated since his childhood, growing up in Richmond, Va.

"My mother she instilled that in my two brothers and I, since we were little," Carter said. "Just being fearless is just keeping my head on straight and knowing that I can do anything no matter what it is."

That fearlessness and work ethic has jumped out to safeties coach Perry Eliano, who said Carter has come into Columbus with a "workmanlike" approach.

"He's got his head down and he's working," Eliano said. "He came here because he wanted to be developed and be the very best. He understands the task that's ahead of him."

Although Carter recognized that he could've taken an easy path to the field elsewhere, he said he's up to the challenge of competing for playing time for the Buckeyes.

"Competing is something I've done my whole life," Carter said. "Coming here, I just felt like it was a good opportunity. I'm willing to do whatever I've got to do to excel and get to that next level."