

Competition Emphasized With “Winner-Loser” Situations At Ohio State Spring Scrimmage



Throughout the 2022 season, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day emphasized the importance of building competitive callouses at numerous junctures of the campaign.

The Buckeyes have reaffirmed that commitment to gaining competitive habits in the lead-up to the 2023 campaign by placing players in “winner-loser” situations throughout spring practices in order to put them in high-stakes scenarios. As Ohio State opened up practice to media members on Saturday, Day said he was pleased with how his team has embraced competition just six practices into the spring.

“It was practice six, and one of the things we’ve been talking a lot about is competing,” Day said. “You heard it over and over again, that’s what we’re trying to do with the winner-loser (situations). Whether it was the individual drills, team drills, 7-on-7, red zone pass, or goal-line tackle, it’s something we’ve really wanted to do.

“The guys were into it and we’ll look at the film and see about the execution,” he said. “I thought overall the effort was there and the competitive nature was there.”

The offense and defense were pitted against one another in a variety of drills throughout practice, with the defense holding the edge most of the way — boosted by a strong performance in a red zone passing drill in which it bested the offense 11-1 — but the offense was able to stage a late comeback to take the day, 102-100.

Not only did both units need to overcome each other, but also the host of family and media walked the sidelines of the indoor field at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. Day emphasized that he was hoping to foster more of a game-like environment for the team’s newcomers at the scrimmage, rather than experience the quietness of a typical closed-door practice.

“We’re trying to create somewhat of an atmosphere that is competitive,” Day said. “When you’re in here and there’s nobody inside, it’s quiet. That’s a whole different experience than being in the Shoe on gameday. Not that this is the Shoe, obviously, but having so many people in here today and having music on is very chaotic, and what we’re trying to create to see how they respond at that moment.”

While the offense and defense battled throughout the day, positional battles also continued to heat up.

Quarterbacks Kyle McCord and Devin Brown each shared snaps with the starting offense and provided glimpses into the battle for the starting spot. Both signal callers flashed and struggled at times, with Brown taking several costly sacks in various drills and McCord misfiring on a few passes in drills, but both also bounced back with solid connections on deep balls during a scrimmage.

As the quarterback battle was on display on Saturday, Day said the duo is continuing to compete hard and stack reps with the starting job up for grabs.

"If you just look at one drive, you can come to a conclusion real easily," Day said. "In the meeting room, we've talked about, 'Where are the quarterbacks at?' It's hard to tell until you stack these days and so we'll grade every single snap today and see how everybody graded out.

"But at the end of the day, we have to move the offense into the end zone. That's our job as quarterbacks, however, we do that," he continued.

While the Buckeyes continued to push toward the spring game on April 15, Day emphasized that the focus remains on individual growth and building strong competitive habits.

"One practice is one practice. Can you learn and grow from it? I learned just the other day in a book that the brain doesn't grow from success, it grows from failure. There was a lot of failure on this field today, so who can grow from that and build? And we'll see."