

Day Encouraged By Early Returns From Secondary In Spring



After an up-and-down campaign for the Ohio State secondary in 2022, head coach Ryan Day has been encouraged by what he's seen from the unit through three practices of spring camp.

As the Buckeyes look to improve off of a season that showed gradual improvement from prior campaigns, but still fell short of expectations — especially in the final two games — Day emphasized the secondary has gotten off to a strong start to the spring.

"They've got their hands on balls," Day said on Tuesday. "As a group, right now they're competing, they're challenging. I don't think we could ask for a better start to spring practice, coming off of the first three days."

At cornerback, the Buckeyes will benefit from returning incumbent starter Denzel Burke while Jordan Hancock, Jyaire Brown and Ole Miss transfer Davison Igbinosun compete to fill the void left by Cameron Brown — who is working through the NFL Draft process — and J.K. Johnson, who transferred to LSU during the offseason.

Ohio State will need to fill more holes at safety with incumbent starters Ronnie Hickman and Tanner McCalister off to the NFL. The Buckeyes will retain a starter in Lathan Ransom, who will likely shift to the adjuster position, while OSU will dip into its deep wealth of talent at the position with Sonny Styles, Kye Stokes, Kourt Williams, Cameron Martinez and Syracuse transfer Ja'Had Carter all vying for playing time at one of the three safety spots in Jim Knowles' defense.

As the Buckeyes have plenty of holes to fill in the defensive backend, Day said the secondary is one of the primary areas of chief concern for Ohio State heading into next season. With so many moving pieces in the secondary, Day opted to promote cornerbacks coach Tim Walton to Defensive Pass-Game Coordinator in order to bridge the gap between the corners and safeties and get them in better harmony with one another.

"We just wanted to try to find as many ways to have the secondary to meet together and tie in the safeties and the corners," Day said. "Not much is going to change, but they're going to do some more meetings together as a group."

As the Ohio State secondary continues to push through the spring with the goal of improving on last season, Day emphasized the unit is being pushed to compete at every opportunity. With the challenge of competition weighing heavily on the secondary, Day said the backend has answered the call to this point in camp.

"I just like their attitude, I like their competitiveness," Day said. "It's a bunch of guys working on the perimeter every day and that's what we want. We want to be really competitive this spring in everything we do."