

Day: Ohio State Not Looking Ahead



Three teams with a combined record of 10-14 don't inspire the same fear or attention from fans as the undefeated arch rival that awaits at the end of Ohio State's regular season schedule.

Fresh off the No. 2 Buckeyes' clash with then-No. 13 Penn State, minds have started wandering to Nov. 26 and No. 5 Michigan. A road trip to Northwestern, a home clash with Indiana and an additional road trip to Maryland, all unranked teams, await between now and then.

One person whose mind isn't wandering to the Wolverines is Ohio State head coach Ryan Day, however. And he hopes his players are staying focused on the task at hand too.

"We've always said, 'It's about us,'" Day said. "So why does that change this week? It doesn't matter. Last week going into Penn State, it was about us, it was about our preparation. I think that's the first thing."

Looking ahead multiple weeks can also create a cascading effect where teams get a few steps behind over time, Day said. If a team loses focus because its opponent one week isn't of a certain caliber, the progress it didn't make in practice snowballs through to the next time it does play somebody challenging.

"You have to continue to do what you're doing and get better every week," Day said. "If you don't, not only do you show weakness but you set yourself up for problems down the road. And I think that when you have a problem or you lose a game, maybe it's something you did that week but maybe it's something you did (in) the weeks leading up to it."

Along those same lines, Day stated that he didn't hold back anything against Penn State with Michigan, or any other future opponent, in mind.

Getting sudden-change possessions assisted in beating the Nittany Lions, he added.

"When you go to Penn State, the No. 1 goal is to win the game," Day said. "That's it, period. I'm very impressed with just how well we took care of the ball in that game. When you win the turnover battle 4-0 in a game like that, your chances of winning schematically go through the roof."

Thus, Day and his team are entering their week 10 matchup at Northwestern with the same mentality, even if the Wildcats boast an abysmal 1-7 record. He and his staff want to maximize every minute of time with their team.

“Listen, it’s a Big Ten matchup, it’s on the road. (Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald) does an unbelievable job,” Day said. “I know they don’t have the record that they want to, but we’ve got to go play football and we want to play at a high level. That’s the goal here. So it, again, really shouldn’t matter who we’re playing against.”