

Day Provides Final Updates Entering Wisconsin Game



The stage is set for the start of conference play.

Wisconsin, a foe which met Ohio State in the Big Ten championship game in 2019, comes into Ohio Stadium for a night game against a crowd and team that will be dressed all in black.

With expectations of a conference title and playoff run entering this season, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day previewed the first obstacle his team will face on its road to Indianapolis.

"Wisconsin epitomizes Big Ten football," Day said. "They're well-coached, they have good players. They play with a physical nature. They have a great identity, and have for a long time."

That physical nature has been mimicked in the Buckeyes' practices.

Fourth-year linebacker Steele Chambers stated at media availability Wednesday that there's been extra padded sessions with more contact for the team. When fellow fourth-year linebacker Tommy Eichenberg spoke with reporters at the same set of interviews, hundreds of turf pellets coated both sides of his body, glued there by sweat.

Day says it's not the structure of training that has changed for the team, however, it's the mindset of its players.

"We really haven't changed much in terms of what we've done (in practice) scheduling-wise," Day said. "It's always been this way. I just think that our guys have been practicing with a little more edge, a little more physicality. I think they understand what it needs to be."

While third-year wide receivers Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Julian Fleming played against Toledo Sept. 17, both were in a limited capacity after missing previous games. Third-year quarterback C.J. Stroud still threw for 367 yards in less than three quarters, however.

There could be even more reps to be had for the duo this week.

"We'll keep taking it day-by-day and see how they do," Day said. "But so far, so good."

Day also made note of the fact that Ohio State has yet to put all the pieces together and play a "complete game." The Buckeyes' offense had some struggles early in its 21-10 win over Notre Dame, and the defense has allowed some big plays in each of its three games thus far.

He's looking for another step forward with another opponent.

"This is our first conference game, so here we go," Day said. "We know that we're trying to play a maximum capacity every week. Whatever that is this week, it'll be different the week after. But those challenges are real, and that's the standard that we hold ourselves to."

The Buckeyes and Badgers meet at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

"We know that this is what we have to do if we want to make a run at the Big Ten championship," Day said. "We have to beat Wisconsin."