

Day, Stover Praise Keenan Bailey At Big Ten Media Days



Since being hired by Ohio State as an offensive intern to work with the running backs in 2016, Keenan Bailey has worked his way up the coaching ranks, earning the admiration of his staff and players along each step of his journey.

Fresh off his latest promotion to tight ends coach for the 2023 season, Bailey continues to impress those within the program due to his unique leadership skills and fiery personality.

“Keenan has been with us really since I’ve been at Ohio State (in 2017), and he’s been in different rooms,” head coach Ryan Day said during Big Ten Media Days Wednesday. “He’s learned. He’s taken on a lot of roles. He’s got a lot of respect from so many people in that building because of his work ethic, because of the relationships he has with his players.”

Bailey, who earned his promotion in January 2023 after serving as a senior advisor to head coach Ryan Day in 2022, has been touted for his ability to connect with his players on a daily basis. According to Day, Bailey’s efforts to cultivate these relationships have stretched beyond the tight end room so far this season.

“It’s not just the tight ends,” Day said. “I mean, you go in for a workout at 6:00 in the morning, he’s right there with his players. You go out for a team run at 4:00, he’s out there running with them. Players like that. How do you create relationships and connections with players? You spend time with them, and he does that.”

Bailey’s positive influence on the program has especially been felt by those within the tight end room. Ohio State junior tight end Cade Stover, who returned to the program after receiving NFL Draft interest last offseason, lauded his coach’s character and ability to get the best out of his players.

“He’s unbelievable,” Stover said at Big Ten Media Days. “I’ll go to war with him. And he’s done a lot for me, fundamentally wise. He is so detailed, and even if you want to take a deep breath, he’s right there and he’s rolling with you.”

Stover said his mentor’s impact has been most felt on the field this offseason, where he has challenged him to identify his weaknesses and work through them during practice. This was something he and

Bailey tried to accomplish during team drills this spring.

"I don't do well when I do stuff that I know I'm going to be uncomfortable at," Stover said. "I get a little angry at times. So he does it on purpose a lot, just trying to piss me off, and basically help with my understanding of new things. So that is really helping me, as far as growing as a player, doing different things that you necessarily wouldn't do, and that you're uncomfortable with, and becoming comfortable with it."

Playing alongside a deep position group that includes redshirt junior Joe Royer, senior Gee Scott, and freshman Jelani Thurman, among others, Stover said the 2023 tight end room can pose a threat for opposing defenses all year by matching the intense and focused identity that Bailey has instilled in them before the start of fall camp.

"We're nasty," Stover said. "We're good. We're complete players that you can put in the box, out of the box, and anywhere you go you will have a mismatch on somebody."