

Day To Evaluate Play Calling Plan In Spring



With wide receivers coach Brian Hartline being promoted to offensive coordinator, the exact plan for Ohio State's offensive play calling in 2023 is still to be determined.

ESPN broadcaster Kirk Herbstreit reported that OSU head coach Ryan Day might be looking to step back from calling plays next year, a report Day addressed in his first meeting with the media since the conclusion of the 2022 football season Wednesday.

"What we're going to do is go through the spring — I talked to Brian about that — and create some environments where we can call it, have (defensive coordinator) Jim (Knowles) call it, have an opportunity for Brian to call it," Day said. "Then we'll come up for air at the end of the spring and figure out what that dynamic looks like."

Day's decision to consider stepping back from play calling comes after a period of evaluation to start the offseason.

Constraints on his time grew stricter and stricter as the year wore on, taking away from his ability to both game plan effectively and be there in other areas where the team needed its head coach.

"You have to look at time management," Day said. "I think that during the offseason, no problem at all (balancing those responsibilities). Beginning of the season, pretty good. As we get to the middle of the season, end of the season, I feel like there's times I have to manage my time a little bit better and make sure that, as the head coach, there's enough presence going around the building late in the season."

Hartline, for his part, stated that he'd feel comfortable calling a game right now if given the opportunity. Mostly because of Day and the other coaches around him.

"Pretty comfortable, just because of the surrounding party I have," Hartline said. "I think that Coach Day has always done it at an elite level. We've always produced, from a production standpoint offensively, at an elite level. But the support staff I have around me really empowers me. My confidence

comes from having them. So I'd be very confident."

In Day's eyes, Hartline's proven in his five years as Ohio State's wide receivers coach that he was ready for the expanded responsibility. Having produced two first-round NFL Draft picks in 2022 with Jaxon Smith-Njigba projected in the first round in 2023, Hartline's been the most consistent recruiter and producer of talent among the Buckeyes' assistant coaches.

"He's now, really, done a good enough job, in my opinion, to solidify himself as the best wide receivers coach in the country," Day said. "I think that's important as a coach, to get really good at something, be an expert."

Thus, Day and Hartline will continue picking apart who will hold the reins and to what extent as spring rolls into summer which rolls into fall. For now, it's all about getting reps — not just for Hartline but for the pieces he'd potentially be calling plays for.

"The more opportunities we get to play it as real as possible, for myself and the young quarterbacks and for everyone else, it serves everybody well," Hartline said.