

Defense Dominates, Tate Shines On Student Appreciation Day



As is tradition during Ohio State's spring camp, head coach Ryan Day opened the doors of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center to the OSU student body on Saturday, allowing fans to get an early glimpse of the Buckeyes as they progress through the spring.

The students were able to view several key storylines as the battle for the starting quarterback job, as well as several other positions, continued to rage on Saturday. With the WHAC packed with students, family, recruits and media, Day said he was thankful for the turnout as Ohio State completed its eighth practice of spring camp.

"It was a great day," Day said. "A lot of great recruits and families here. It was good to see the families of the players here, as well. It was great to see the students out here.

"It's good for them to just see them live and in color," he continued. "During the games, they're up in the stands and a little bit further away, and now they get to see how it goes."

While much of the offseason attention has been rightfully placed on the quarterback battle between Kyle McCord and Devin Brown, it was the defense that stole the show on Saturday.

Starting up front, the defensive line made life difficult for both McCord and Brown, as defensive ends Jack Sawyer, J.T. Tuimoloau and Kenyatta Jackson were regulars in the backfield throughout practice. Tyleik Williams also registered a sack during the 11-on-11 session, while Ty Hamilton forced a strip sack on Brown in the same session.

The secondary was also solid throughout the scrimmage, forcing several coverage sacks during the 7-on-7 and 11-on-11 scrimmages. Cornerback Davison Igbinosun was once again a standout, causing several pass breakups while continuing to battle for the starting cornerback spot opposite of Denzel Burke. Igbinosun also registered an interception of McCord during the 7-on-7 scrimmage.

While the defensive front got the better of the offensive line in passing situations, the offense got them right back on running plays. During the 11-on-11 scrimmages, the offense's first touchdown drive came on a possession in which only run plays were called, with Dallan Hayden and Chip Trayanum benefitting

from a solid push from the offensive line.

Despite finding some success in the running game, Day said he felt the day belonged to the defense.

"I think we're playing hard and guys are working at it," Day said. "Overall, I thought the defense brought it today. I thought they played really well. They pretty much dominated today's winner-or-loser (scenarios).

"I thought it was a really good job by the defense today, and in particular the defensive line."

While the defensive unit staked its claim on the day, wide receiver Carnell Tate excelled on the offensive side of the ball. Tate brought in several difficult catches, including a pair of receptions along the sideline, while showing tremendous body control when tracking down passes.

Day noted he was impressed with how Tate has carried himself since arriving on campus as an early enrollee and that Saturday's performance was another feather in the cap for the Chicago native.

"There's a lot to be impressed with when it comes to Carnell," Day said. "The first thing is just his maturity since he's been here, right from the jump. We do meetings, where we kind of have everybody in the building and we go through each guy, and the feedback we're getting from academics, nutrition, strength and conditioning, position coaches and player development, everyone has such great things to say about Carnell off of the field.

"It translates to on the field, as well," he continued. "On the field, he's making a lot of plays. He's had to pick up a lot of the offense. For a young player, he has a pretty mature route tree. He does a good job at the line of scrimmage, catches the ball strong, and makes plays. All really encouraging signs."

In regard to the quarterback competition, Day made it clear that neither McCord or Brown has been able to separate themselves at this point in camp and that he's looking for one of them to "really step out." However, he also recognized that the battle is still in its early stages with six months separating the Buckeyes from their season-opener at Indiana on Sept. 2.

"It's a day-to-day process. They're growing and learning," Day said. "There are good days and there are not-so-good days, and the whole thing is, 'Can you learn from failures?' When you do well, it's great, but we're all going to fail. That's the thing, when you look at the elite quarterbacks, whether it's in the NFL or college, they learn from their mistakes quickly. They don't make the same mistake twice.

"These guys are making mistakes, just like any quarterback would," he continued. "How quickly can they learn from those mistakes and grow? It's very hard to tell sometimes in a practice like this, and they're also not live, but it's all about decision-making."

Ohio State will continue spring camp for the next two weeks before competing in the annual spring game on April 15.