

Demario McCall Ready For Breakthrough Season



Season after season, there has been one player on the offense that many consistently wait for to make an impact. But season after season, it doesn't quite happen, only showing up in spurts.

That man would be redshirt junior running back Demario McCall, who has battled injuries and had to sit behind lots of star power on his way to some underwhelming statistical seasons at Ohio State.

He still won't be starting in 2019, but his opportunity to be the No. 2 running back behind J.K. Dobbins is becoming a reality.

"I'd say maybe Demario has the leg up on those other guys right now," head coach Ryan Day said Monday. "They'll continue to work today. I thought Demario ran better today. Overall he's doing a good job."

McCall will be battling for that spot with a pair of true freshman in Marcus Crowley and Steele Chambers, all of which running backs coach Tony Alford had compliments for, saying that it has been a "healthy competition" for the spot in the fall.

But it is looking like McCall is starting to gain an edge among the others.

"He's done a nice job," Alford said. "It's been a long camp, but he's done a nice job for us."

For McCall, he knows that this is his opportunity to make a difference. With only two seasons remaining of eligibility, McCall said he realizes that it's beginning to become now or never.

"I do feel that way — like now is the time," McCall said. "I'm finally going to get to show that it's time for me to show it."

That doesn't mean the redshirt junior back is going to do anything different than what he's always done. Instead, with McCall healthier than he has been in a while, and more ready than he has been for a season in a while, he's just ready to bring the talents and untapped potential that he has always had since before he was at Ohio State.

"It did feel like injuries held me back for a while," McCall said. "Now that I'm 100 percent, I get to

actually go out and play football, be me and do what I do best.”

There is no guaranteed on who will win the No. 2 spot in the backfield, but Alford said he would be comfortable if the season were to start today, and it was McCall who ended up winning the competition.

With a little bit of luck on the health side and the quickness and ability he has always had, maybe 2019 is finally the season for McCall’s breakthrough.

“About a week ago I finally said this is the guy that I would turn to,” Alford said. “He’s providing leadership, he’s making plays, he’s playing at a good rate of speed right now and doing well.”