

Former Ohio State Linebacker Tommy Eichenberg Played Through Dislocated Elbow Against Michigan



Former Ohio State linebacker Tommy Eichenberg was lauded by many throughout his fifth-year Buckeye career for his toughness and leadership, and those traits were reportedly on full display during the biggest game of the 2023 season.

Speaking with the media at the NFL Scouting Combine in Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium on Wednesday, the two-time team captain revealed that he played through a dislocated elbow in Ohio State's regular-season finale against Michigan on Nov. 25, an injury which he suffered during the fourth quarter of the Buckeyes' Nov. 3 contest against Rutgers, forcing him to miss the next two games on the schedule.

"I hurt my elbow," Eichenberg said. "Missed the end of the Rutgers game, missed the next two games too. I came back, was wearing a brace on it, but it's all good now. It's fully healed."

"I didn't think twice about it," he added. "I came back to play this game, so I'm playing, and that's how it went."

Eichenberg, who recorded seven tackles while wearing his brace in his return against the Wolverines, said that it was difficult for him to sit out the two games against Michigan State on Nov. 11 and Nov. 18, as he felt he let his teammates down by staying on the sidelines. These types of feelings from Eichenberg were also brought to light during the season by head coach Ryan Day, who said after the Minnesota game that he had to "pull him back" and try hard to convince him not to play throughout that entire week.

"I just wanted to be out there," Eichenberg said. "I hated sitting. I hated missing games. I was a captain, I didn't want guys to see me not playing, not practicing. So that was very tough...But I thank Coach Day because I literally could not play."

Despite making a valiant return to the field against the Wolverines just three weeks after dislocating his elbow, Eichenberg said he was not contempt with his overall performance this year in The Game — a 30-24 loss for the Buckeyes — and felt he had an obligation as captain to finish out his career with a defining rivalry win.

“I just know I definitely could have played a lot better,” he said. “Eichenberg said. “I felt like I let down so many people, really. Especially being captain, too. That’s the standard (Ohio State), winning that game. It was hard for me. But you have to keep moving forward.

Eichenberg did not play in Ohio State’s loss to Missouri in the Cotton Bowl due to his injury, but it did not put a damper on his strong individual senior season and overall Buckeye career. The Cleveland native, despite missing two games, won the 2023 Big Ten Butkus-Fitzgerald Linebacker of the Year award after recording 80 tackles as well as four quarterback hurries, 2.5 tackles for loss, a sack and a forced fumble. This put a cap on a five-year career for the linebacker that included 258 total tackles (20.5 for loss), three sacks, two interceptions and a forced fumble.

For Eichenberg, though, there was still more that he wanted to accomplish in his Buckeye career than the individual stats and accolades, a reality that he will keep with him throughout the rest of his football career.

“When I think back on the things that I accomplished, I would have traded any of them to just beat (The Team) Up North and win the Big Ten and keep going,” Eichenberg said. “I would have traded in everything to get those. I never really think about things that I accomplished. I always think about my teammates and the games that I thought that we should have won.”

Eichenberg is projected to be selected in the fourth round of the 2024 NFL Draft, per NFLMockDraftDatabase.