

Harrison Jr. Talks Tempering Expectations, Emerging As Team Leader At Big Ten Media Days



As Ohio State junior wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. stepped up to the podium at Big Ten Media Days Wednesday afternoon, he was met by a swarm of cameras and reporters who were eager to hear from the 2022 unanimous All-American.

While all eyes are on Harrison Jr. as he begins his third, and presumably final, season with the Buckeyes, the projected top-five NFL Draft pick has decided to ignore the attention that follows him and focus on fine-tuning his craft.

"No, I don't enjoy (the spotlight)," Harrison Jr. said. "I kind of just want to go out there and play football and just let my game speak for itself."

"I'm not really trying to become the No. 1 draft pick or anything like that," Harrison Jr. continued. "I'm just trying to focus on this year and get better from what I did last year."

Harrison Jr., who was named the preseason Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year Tuesday, told the media that he has dedicated most of his offseason training to improving his durability and flexibility. This is something he said he worked on with his coaches and trainers off the field.

"Just taking care of my body, getting treatment," Harrison Jr. said. "Going into this year, I just want to stay as healthy as possible, whether that be extra stretching at night, dealing with the trainers, eating better, things like that. Just doing as much as I can to keep my body right."

While the Buckeye wideout centered his offseason training around his health, he also focused on taking the extra steps on the field to improve as an overall player. Harrison Jr. said one of the ways he is accomplishing that is by reviewing his film from seasons prior.

"I watch myself a lot," Harrison Jr. said. "Just to find ways I can get better at. And also understand where my weaknesses would be at, how the defense is trying to take me away from the game, just being versatile. Just being able to move all around and be able to run every route in the route tree."

Harrison Jr. pointed to increasing his role in the slot as an avenue he can take to elevate his level of

play in 2023. This was a change Day and his offense flirted with in the past, but have installed more frequently in the offseason.

"We geared this towards more preparing for Georgia," Harrison Jr. said. "We didn't really want me to just be a boundary receiver. The more we can move me around a lot, the more I can be involved in the game. With Emeka (Egbuka) being out with injury in spring ball, that slot position was kind of wide open, and I was like, 'I'll take it.' I'm just going to learn as much as I can from that slot and get used to it."

In addition to his on-field adjustments, the Buckeyes wideout said he has also committed himself to improving as a vocal team leader, especially in a young receiver room.

"From a receiver standpoint, I just want to emphasize the work ethic that needs to happen for you to be successful. I want the Ohio State wide receiver room to be the hardest working room in the country. That's my standard for that room and that's what I try to do."

Harrison Jr. told reporters he learned the importance of this role while learning under the tutelage of former Buckeyes and current NFL wide receivers Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave in 2021.

"I think learning from a great group of guys like how I learned from Chris and Garrett sitting that one year, that did wonders for my career. I think learning from a group of guys ahead of you that are experienced and had a lot of success in college football, I think it really helped me out."

Although Harrison Jr. articulated all the ways in which he can improve as a player and leader for the Buckeyes before embarking on his third year with the program, it has not diverted his focus away from accomplishing the ultimate team goals that evaded the Buckeyes in 2023.

"It starts with (Michigan) and the Big Ten Championship," Harrison Jr. said. "I feel like I've accomplished a lot, from an individual standpoint. I've played in big night games. I've played in national championship games. I've played in the (Michigan) game. But the one thing I haven't done is beat (Michigan) and play in the Big Ten Championship. For me, that's my main focus going into the season."