

Hartline Using Day, Experienced Offensive Staff To Gain Comfort In New Role



During the past four seasons, Brian Hartline has carved out a significant role for himself on Ohio State's offensive staff, successfully guiding a talented crop of Buckeye receivers among the likes of Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson to the next level of their respective careers.

This season, however, Hartline is tasked with a new set of responsibilities that stretch beyond the wide receiver room, as he has been assigned by head coach Ryan Day to oversee the entire side of the ball as offensive coordinator. Although Day will still call the "majority" of plays on offense, Hartline still has a lot on his plate, an expanded role that he is beginning to embrace.

Speaking with the media at the Woody Hayes Center on Tuesday, the six-year NFL wide receiver acknowledged that his responsibilities have greatly increased this season, saying that it has been a "challenge" to serve as the leader of the entire offense, not just the wide receiver room. Despite the adjustment, Hartline said he has gained comfort in the new position by leaning on the tutelage of Day and other experienced offensive assistants.

"It's an all-new perspective, really," Hartline said. "I mean, people do this for years and years and years, and they would think they would continue to learn every year. So I'm learning from the best, from Coach Day and (assistant offensive head coach/running backs coach) Justin Frye and (senior offensive advisor/analysts) Todd Fitch and Joe Philbin and the rest of the staff. I mean, I'm surrounded by elite people and elite coaches. So every day is an opportunity to learn something new. And that's definitely how I have felt from the jump."

Hartline added that learning from his offensive colleagues this offseason has increased his level of confidence heading into year one as coordinator, something he also attributes to the daily back-and-forth conversations he has with his players.

"Yeah, I have a lot of confidence," Hartline said. "The guys around me, the players around me, have given me a lot of confidence. But gosh, I mean, I literally walk into the (Woody Hayes Athletic Center)

every single day, learning from some of the best. Like, I can't minimize that. And it's easy to minimize that. So, whether I'm learning from the receivers, or they're learning from me, or a coach is learning from me, and I'm learning from them. I just feel like it's an opportunity every day, to get mad at myself about not doing something I wish I could have done better."

"It's just the truth," he added. "Every day, I tried to go home disappointed, but it's never good enough. And I just try to make sure I keep that at bay. You know, all kidding aside, it's just, I'm really just trying to learn as much as possible. And every time I get an opportunity to do so, I feel like I have."

Hartline's daily interactions with his fellow coaches and players have allowed him to feel the full support of the program as he embarks on his new role. This type of guidance, according to the offensive coordinator, has created a unique culture within the offensive staff room where each coach, led by Hartline, can play a role in helping the offense thrive.

"It's always a joint effort, everywhere," Hartline said. "And, you know, obviously, we have great guys in multiple categories and we kind of let them specialize, if you will. And (we) let people be experts in their particular area, and we'll lean on that...But that being said, it's a joint effort. I want to make sure that I have an opinion, a strong opinion, in every area. So obviously, I probably didn't have that last year. So with that, with more responsibility, becomes more requirements. So I just have to make sure I'm ready to give insightful information and not just fill the air."

Hartline will begin his first year as offensive coordinator with Day still handling most of the play-calling duties, but he is still willing to help the team succeed in any way possible — no matter what role he is assigned.

"I just want to win," Hartline said. "How it gets done and how we do it, like, I want to win. And we all feel the same way...I'm on board for everything. I want to win. I love developing these young men. The rest, we'll figure it out."