

# Jack Sawyer's "Best Is Ahead Of Him" This Fall



Ohio State junior defensive end Jack Sawyer will be one of the first people to tell you his production wasn't quite where he wanted it this past fall.

Transitioning to a new position, the hybrid defensive end/linebacker "Jack" role in the scheme of defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, Sawyer posted just 24 tackles.

"I'd probably be lying if I told you it was what I expected," Sawyer said during spring practice in March. "I think a lot of us would say that, really, when you look at the season. When you look at how many plays we missed, and how many opportunities we had to get a sack or to get a tackle for loss. So I think collectively, we're looking forward to finishing those plays off this year. And getting the sack number up as a whole way through the roof than it was last year."

Moved back to a true defensive end spot full-time, however, defensive line coach Larry Johnson saw Sawyer play with more speed and confidence during the months of March and April. In his eyes, Sawyer's peak performances are still in front of him for Ohio State.

"I think you saw a different Jack (in the spring)," Johnson said May 30. "He wasn't thinking as much, he played more freely. He's continuing to build his skill set going forward and I think you'll see a really good player on the field this fall. His best is ahead of him."

It's been a concerted effort to get Sawyer to the level of production expected by a former five-star prospect.

In addition to his move back to his most familiar role on a defense, Sawyer has continued drilling the fundamentals of the game. He's bulked up a touch in the team's strength and conditioning program this offseason in preparation for the move back as well.

"You never stop getting better," Johnson said. "His hand placement, his pass rush skills, all those things still play a part. You never finish growing. He's just getting the chance to do it more now because he's

only doing one position.”

Generally, Ohio State’s defensive linemen will be looking for an uptick in production. Sawyer’s 4.5 sacks in 2022 were nothing to write home about, but it still managed to tie for the team lead in quarterback takedowns with defensive tackle Mike Hall Jr.

For now, though, the goal is to complete summer training and lay the groundwork for a successful fall camp as the ramp-up to Ohio State’s season continues.

“Get stronger, get physical, everything (strength) Coach Mick (Marotti) and his staff are doing, that’s what they need to be doing,” Johnson said. “We’ll start some OTA stuff, some positional meetings, some positional drills just to work on their fundamental skill sets. But that room right there (the weight room) is the most important thing that’s going on right now.”