

Jeremy Ruckert Shines In Ohio State's Road Win Over Indiana



Jeremy Ruckert makes a living off doing the dirty work, completing mentally and physically demanding tasks without much praise.

Ohio State football beat reporters, including those at Buckeye Sports Bulletin, love to write about quarterback C.J. Stroud, running back TreVeyon Henderson and wide receivers Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson. Meanwhile, Ruckert operates behind the scenes, striving to earn the recognition of his teammates.

Through the first six games, Ruckert only had 11 catches for 139 yards and a touchdown. Rather than feel frustrated with his lack of involvement in the offense, he put his head down and found a way to contribute in ways that show up outside the box score.

“We have so many weapons, and that’s a great thing to have,” Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said. “But at the same time, guys have to be unselfish. That’s part of the game, and he’s done a lot of the dirty work blocking inside.”

However, Ruckert’s unselfishness and willingness to defer to his teammates in the passing game paid off Saturday night. The senior tight end caught five passes for 47 yards and two touchdowns in Ohio State’s 54-7 win over Indiana, showing an added layer of versatility in the Buckeye offense.

“There are times where the ball hasn’t come his way, but when you stay positive and stay at it, things work out,” Day said. We talked this week about, ‘What are you willing to sacrifice to be great and make this run?’ Sometimes, it means sacrificing touches. But eventually, it’s going to come back to you, and it did for Jeremy tonight.”

With two touchdown catches against Indiana, Ruckert tied his career-high for single-game receiving touchdowns. The Lindenhurst, N.Y., native, previously scored twice in the 2019 season opener with Florida Atlantic, last year’s victory over Penn State and the 2020 Sugar Bowl win against Clemson.

“I’ve always said since I’ve been here, some days it’s in the run game, and some days it’s in the pass game,” Ruckert said. “Whatever it is, just being able to make plays when your name is called (is the key).”

“Some days, the game plan is different than others. I think that’s the biggest thing going forward is just being able to rely on each other and play after play, just knowing that whoever the play is going to, we have confidence that they’re going to make the play.”

Ruckert will continue to do the dirty work at Ohio State. But he reminded the Buckeyes five remaining regular-season opponents that they need to keep him in the scouting report. If a defense takes away Henderson, Olave, Wilson and Smith-Njigba, Ruckert will be ready to take over.

“He’s a great tight end,” Stroud said. “‘Ruck’ has great body language and great routes, and today was his day to ball. I’m happy for him.”