

Jim Knowles “Pleased” With How Ohio State’s Defense Adjusted To Triple Option



Ohio State’s defense showed flashes of the Silver Bullets against Indiana on Saturday, only allowing three points from a field goal in the second quarter on a drive started by the Kyle McCord interception. Defensive coordinator Jim Knowles was happy with how the defense performed, especially since they didn’t prepare for the triple-option look Indiana ran all game.

“I think we practiced it five plays or less,” Knowles said. “And that’s stretching it.”

When Knowles saw the formation from the box, he said he did a lot of scribbling to try to adjust the game plan. He said it was good to see the players were able to adjust to something they weren’t ready for.

“When you’re sitting up there in the box and you see that, you’re like, ‘OK, I know what to do, but I haven’t made a legal tackle since 1986. I know what to do, but do (the players) know what to do?’” Knowles said. “It’s an indicator that we can handle the controlled chaos that happens during a game.

“I was pleased we were able to make the adjustments quickly and the communication was good. Guys were really locked in and helping each other and talking it out and they understand the system. When I said something, they got it and I was happy with the way it went.”

He said the triple option is a complicated offense if you haven’t practiced against it, so he wanted to keep some players in the game so they could get the feel of it. Knowles said he wishes he could have played linebacker Cody Simon more, but Indiana’s offense prevented him from doing so.

Even though it was encouraging the defense was able to adjust to something new, the Buckeyes also weren’t able to fully figure out how their defense is going to perform against other offenses they are going to see this season. There are more things Knowles wanted to see in his defense but didn’t get the chance to.

“That first game was really kind of an anomaly because they came out with triple option,” he said. “I think we still have to perform against conventional offense. Rushing the passer - we didn’t get much of a chance to do that - compete and contest against regular drop back passes. We just need to grow more against a conventional offensive system.”

There are some things Knowles said they would like to improve on after a strong overall performance. In a couple of third-down situations where the Hoosiers were able to earn a new set of downs, he would have liked to see a few more stops.

“There were a couple third downs where we gave up a completion or they start doing all the triple option stuff, and spinning the backs and they start combining it with an inside run power play,” he said. “You get slightly off a gap, and I think one slipped through where we should have been and could have stopped.”