

Justin Frye Talks Impact Of Josh Simmons' Addition On Starting Tackle Competition



Ohio State entered spring camp with an already heated competition for its pair of vacant starting tackle spots.

Senior Josh Fryar, junior Zen Michalski and redshirt freshman Tegra Tshabola found themselves engaged in a competition for the right to start, with one odd man to be left out. But spring camp produced unsavory results for the Ohio State offensive line, particularly on the edge, with the Buckeyes' vaunted defensive front giving the unit fits in practice.

Ohio State turned to the transfer portal for reinforcements, collecting the commitment of former San Diego State offensive tackle Josh Simmons on April 30 to add another competitor for the vacant tackle spots. With Simmons in tow, Ohio State's race for starting tackles has gained an added wrinkle.

"I can't tell you who the five guys are right now, and that's a good thing because these guys are going to fight for it," Ohio State offensive line coach Justin Frye said. "The guy that wins it is going to have to play his best ball. That's one thing that's not given to anybody, they're going to have to fight for that.

"Zen is making his way back into it. Tegra had a good spring moving out there. Josh has obviously played, both Joshes," he continued.

Simmons started all 13 games for the Aztecs last season as a redshirt freshman, and brings three years of eligibility with him to Columbus.

Prior to Simmons' arrival, Fryar largely held down the left tackle spot while Tshabola and Michalski battled at right tackle. The initial dynamics of the competition have changed with Simmons joining the Buckeyes, as Frye declared that it's a four-man race for the two spots.

"That's for both sides, that's why I said that we have to play the five best," Frye said. "Is Josh Simmons a left (tackle) or a right (tackle)? Is he staying at right (tackle)? Is it he staying only at left (tackle)? Is the other Josh hanging around? I don't have all of those answers yet.

"They need to have a good summer with (strength and conditioning coach Mickey Marotti) and put good stuff out there," he continued. "But, yes, they'll all be setting right side and left side, they'll all be doing individual drills so that we keep them fighting through that."

In regard to Simmons' acclimation to the program, Frye emphasized that he's come into the Woody Hayes Athletic Center with the right approach and has adapted well to culture at Ohio State.

"Josh is a pretty mature guy," Frye said. "So far, he's come in, he's quiet and goes to work. He wants to get better and he's adapting with (Marotti) and the training and all of that stuff. He's trying to get around (graduate assistant Mike Sollenne) and I as much as he can, just to get the playbook down for him. Everything that we legally can do, he's trying to do.

"His understanding of that learning curve is there," he continued.