

Kevin Wilson, Kerry Coombs Discuss Ohio State's First Spring Practice



After coming off the field from Ohio State's first practice of the spring, offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson and defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs met with the media for about an hour on Friday morning.

Here's a bullet-point recap of what they had to say:

- Wilson said the Buckeyes need time to evaluate quarterbacks Jack Miller, C.J. Stroud and Kyle McCord before choosing a starter. "We've had one practice with a few throws."
- Wilson noted that they've seen more from Miller and Stroud than McCord, but also acknowledge former quarterback Justin Fields took about "80 percent of the snaps" in practice last season.
- Wilson said scouts have told him that Jeremy Ruckert is the best blocking tight end in the country. "He can maybe be as complete of a tight end as there is in college football. He's setting up to have a super year."
- Wilson said Ruckert has added muscle this offseason. "His strength level with Coach Mick(ey Marotti) has improved. His trying to be a little leaner and get a little quicker coming out of his breaks."
- Wilson said finding a second tight end will be important, especially with how much the Buckeyes want to use 12 personnel.
- Wilson mentioned converted tight end Cade Stover as someone who was a top performer in winter workouts. "It was a big spring for Cade."
- Wilson said they must have more than five great offensive linemen for depth purposes. "You need seven or eight." Noted it might be the most-competitive unit so far in practice.
- Wilson said Paris Johnson could play both guard and tackle this season, though he's projected to start at guard this fall.
- Coombs on Lathan Ransom's role in the defense: "He's going to play in that cover safety spot, the guy in the slot where he played last year on third down.. He will play some other roles for us back there, as well."
- Coombs said defensive end Zach Harrison has set himself up for a big season. "He's been very impressive with his leadership. He's excited to play and I'm excited to see him this season."
- Asked about how Alabama dominated Ohio State's defense in the national championship, Coombs said it was incredibly painful but credited the team for getting to that point regardless. "The journey that our kids were on to get to that game was phenomenal. I feel very responsible that we

didn't play our very best in that environment. That's on me. That's my job."

- Coombs did not answer a question about how Ohio State may change defensive schemes after that loss.
- Coombs said the unusual offseason didn't allow the Buckeyes to install their defensive scheme properly last season. "For me, being able to look them in the eye and see them do it on the field, that's what I miss. Being able to have that this spring makes a significant difference. For us to have this opportunity to install what we wanna install is significantly important."
- Coombs said they're not going to get away from man-to-man coverages. "That's our fastball. That's what we have to be able to do. Everything else bleeds off of that."
- Coombs said Josh Proctor lined up at free safety on Friday and played well. Noted Bryson Shaw and Jantzen Dunn also saw time at that spot.

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