

Michigan Reportedly Hiring Ohio State's Tony Alford As Running Backs Coach



According to several reports, Ohio State running backs coach Tony Alford is leaving to take the same position at Michigan. The news of Michigan targeting Alford was first reported by Football Scoop, and a later report from ESPN's Pete Thamel said that Alford has informed Ohio State of his departure.

Sources: Ohio State RB coach Tony Alford is expected to be the next running backs coach at Michigan. He's informed OSU officials that he's leaving. Football Scoop first reported him as a target.

— Pete Thamel (@PeteThamel) March 13, 2024

Alford has been at Ohio State since 2015, originally hired by Urban Meyer but retained by Ryan Day, who he has coached under for the past five seasons while also serving as an assistant head coach for offense. Prior to his time in Columbus, Alford - a running back at Colorado State under Earle Bruce - was also at Notre Dame from 2009-14 and had stints at Kent State, Iowa State, Washington and Louisville.

The position opened up for Michigan after former running backs coach Mike Hart was not retained by new head coach Sherrone Moore. Alford was the second-longest tenured assistant on Ohio State's staff behind defensive line coach Larry Johnson, who has been with the Buckeyes since 2014.

During his time with the Buckeyes, Alford has helped lead the team to five top-25 rushing attacks, including the nation's fifth-best rushing offense in 2019 at 266.8 yards per game on the ground. But Ohio State fell to 87th this past season at 138.8 yards per game, the worst mark under Alford.

He has coached several high-profile running backs at Ohio State, including Ezekiel Elliot, J.K. Dobbins, Trey Sermon and TreVeyon Henderson, was set for a talented rushing attack this season with Henderson set to split carries with Ole Miss transfer tailback Quinshon Judkins.

Despite the talent that has come through Ohio State, Alford has taken criticism in the past for his recruiting, especially as of late. The Buckeyes signed two running backs this past cycle but did not sign a single running back in 2023, and also suffered late flips in each of the last two classes.

With the departure of Alford - whose contract expired at the end of this past season - the Buckeyes will have to conduct a search for his replacement, even with most teams having finalized their coaching staffs. Ohio State is in the midst of spring practice, having already practiced twice last week.