

Ohio State Assistant Coaches Tony Alford, Brian Hartline Discuss Cancellations, Recruiting



Tony Alford, who is Ohio State's assistant head coach for offense and running backs coach, and Brian Hartline, the wide receivers coach, spoke on a conference call with members of the media, discussing an array of topics from COVID-19 cancellations to recruiting.

What follows is a question-by-question breakdown of what Alford and Hartline had to say:

Tony Alford

- Trey Sermon? I recruited him and watched him from afar. When he entered the portal, we had a need, and we reached out to him. I think the relationship I had built with him in recruiting helped bring him in.
- Committee? We don't have any preconceived ideas of, 'We're just going to run one guy.' Not sure if it's going to be a committee, but we're going to play it by ear.
- Miyan Williams? He wasn't going to be here anyway. The guys that are here know the offense, so Miyan is still going to have to learn it. We're continuing to help him remotely. He was able to come watch some things because he lives so close (Cincinnati).

Brian Hartline

- Maturity of freshman WR? We definitely are missing out. They've been recruited because of how they carry themselves, and they have great families, so a lot goes into this. Our goal is to improve each day, and we can't do a lot right now, and they have finals. But we're just trying to adjust to the circumstances, and we think who adjusts the best will have the most success.
- What is missed without practices and in-person training? Being able to take meetings to the fields. How quickly can we fix mistakes? To get things installed and learn the verbiage? I really wanted to have the room begin forming a bond. We miss those things.

Alford

- How can you build the toolbox without players? It's a challenge for everyone across the country.

Our guys are smart. Master Teague, Marcus Crowley and Steele Chambers - those guys have been here. They're developing on their own in workouts.

- Success in recruiting? We have a great staff. We have a great product to showcase in the Ohio State University and our football program. We have great mentors and teachers.

Hartline

- Impressions of early enrollee WR? How competitive they are. How much it matters to them. They have an uncanny ability to make plays. And they want to help their teammates, uplifting.

Hartline

- Chris Olave? Chris is a coach's dream. I'm not sure if anyone cares as much as him. I think the Clemson game has the ability to have a ripple effect on his career. I don't know if it's coming off the Fiesta Bowl loss or just the next progression in his development.

Alford

- Steele Chambers seems like the overlooked RB? He wasn't overlooked from within our walls. He was anticipating getting a ton of reps. In those reps, I think he's growing up. He's always been very attentive. He's very hard on himself, like a perfectionist. His voice has been growing in the room.

Hartline

- What do early enrollees need to do? It's about what they're doing now. When they show up, we need to be able to see that they maximize their time away from us. That's what is going to set them up to compete for playing time. We don't have a ton of guys who have played a lot, so it's about all of them. If you get on the field at Ohio State, you're one of the best in the country.
- Jaelen Gill? Jaylen Harris? The whole group is making progressions. Jaylen Harris was making progress since December. He's been a leader. He's on the leadership council. The rest of the group is progressing. It's not about individuals but the whole group improving.

Alford

- Health of Teague and Crowley? From all indications, they are both doing well in rehab, They are attacking this thing the way we expect them to. They are on-schedule.
- Return to play? First, we love football, but there are important things at stake. We appreciate all the first responders. We're sensitive to the health of our players, staff and families.

Hartline

- Return to play? The biggest thing is to be where your feet are. I'm not looking ahead. I'm not worried about game day yet. We're focused on academics. We're focused on now. At the end of the day, you can only control the now.
- Garrett Wilson in the slot? Frankly, I was already having visions of that last year. As a coaching staff, we try to put the guys in the best positions to succeed. That's probably the route we'll go with, but we change a lot of things.

Alford

- Recruiting impacted by cancellations? It didn't change our approach one bit. Go after the guys you want. It hasn't changed my philosophy. All great players want to be around other great players. Our players here have been great about recruiting other players.

Hartline

- Difficult to figure out roles for incoming freshmen due to cancellations? We got a little snapshot in the spring. It's all about having a fresh perspective each spring to see how guys have improved. I don't know what the future will hold, but I know what I've seen.
- Develop chemistry with QB from afar? I just emphasize that it's a good time to get in your playbook. The best way to develop chemistry with a QB is that if that QB is confident you know what you're doing.
- How much do you bring an NFL future into recruiting? The conversation about the NFL is a quick conversation. It's a good experience, but I don't talk about it a lot. At the end of the day, it just comes down to developing real relationships. I enjoy getting to know young men that want to reach their dreams. Ohio State is a part of the NFL process because it's the best place to play football. The draft takes care of itself, there's not much to say.

Alford

- How much do you bring an NFL future into recruiting? Our track record speaks for itself. This place is much, much, much bigger than the NFL. Does the NFL come up? Of course it does, because that's part of it. But that's not the selling point. It's about relationship-building.

Hartline

- Real Life Wednesday this week is Anthony Gonzalez He came in from Cleveland and became a first-round draft pick, and now he's a senator. The NFL was a part of his journey, but he'll tell you, it's a lot more than that.

Alford

- What's changed in recruiting from last year to this one? I get tired of talking about last year. Miyan Williams is a really good player and I am really excited to have him a part of our group and our football team.
- Is opportunity a big part of recruiting? That's a part of it. Every recruiting situation is different, every recruit is different. There is going to be competition in every single room. Every time you walk into a room in the NFL, there are some dudes in that room. You have to want to compete each and every day. For the guys who want to embrace that, they'll flourish.

Hartline

- Building chemistry while away? You get creative. Trying to get guys to reach out to one another. I try to get guys that maybe I played with or NFL guys. We love our families. A lot of time pushing the guy next you can build motivation.

Alford

- Building chemistry while away? We've relied on Master a lot for leadership because he's the only

one who has played a lot of football. Our guys have been very positive in their approach, and we're anxious to get them back.

Updates from Kevin Wilson, who is the offensive coordinator and tight ends coach Kevin Wilson, offensive line coach Greg Studrawa and linebackers coach Al Washington will follow at 4 p.m. ET.

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