

Ohio State Associate Head Coach And Defensive Line Coach Larry Johnson Talks Development In Friday Zoom



Ohio State associate head coach and defensive line coach Larry Johnson spoke to the media over Zoom Friday to talk about what he has seen from his position group throughout spring practice, and which players have impressed him early on.

- On Taron Vincent, Johnson said that he was not healthy last year, and that led to him not having as large of an impact as expected last season. But Johnson said that he is healthy, having a great spring and is playing how he was expected to play when recruited.
- Johnson said that the local players like Zach Harrison and Jack Sawyer get an advantage because they go to more in-person camps where the coaches can work with them and help them develop.
- “I’m really excited about this group, I really am ... So far, it’s been really great to see those guys work.”
- On the pass rush, Johnson said he thought the group was “so close so many times” to making big plays. He also said he sometimes believes that a pressure can be better than a sack because it can lead to a bad pass and a turnover.
- When looking at Tyreke Smith, Johnson said he’s done a great job and does not want him to panic and try to overwork to force a sack after only having one sack last season. Also said that Smith has a “great first step” and that he’s expecting a different, improved guy on the field this season.
- Johnson emphasized the importance of grinding about the first few seasons in order to get to the places of some of the veterans in the room. He used Haskell Garrett as an example of someone who it didn’t happen for overnight.
- Johnson highlighted the development of Zach Harrison this offseason, and is impressed with how hard he has worked in his first three years.
- On Jack Sawyer, Johnson said he is “a fierce competitor” who doesn’t like to lose any rep, and expects him to be a “special player” for this team.
- Johnson also said there can certainly find a role for Sawyer in his freshman season, as long as he earns it. “We’re going to find a role for him ... I’ve never been afraid to play freshman players.”
- He said that the biggest thing he has learned in the past year is perseverance. Said the COVID-19 pandemic has “forced all of us to change.”
- On recruiting especially: “I think it has forced you to adapt ... I am an on-hand guy. It’s tough, but we adapted and moved forward in it.”

- Looking at the NFL Draft, Johnson said Jonathon Cooper's "work ethic is off the charts." Also said he thinks Cooper "deserves a chance" at the professional level.

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