

Ohio State DL Coach Larry Johnson Discusses Depth Along Defensive Line



Ohio State defensive line coach and associate head coach Larry Johnson spoke to members of the media on a Zoom call on Wednesday, Oct. 7. What follows is a bullet-point rundown of what Johnson said:

- We'll have three guys that can play inside at nose and three guys that can play three-technique.
- Haskell Garrett is not quite cleared yet. We've been bringing Taron Vincent along slowly, so hopefully he'll be ready by game week.
- With the injury, being out of football for a long time, it's a progress getting back to it. We've just been developing him and getting him back to where he needs to be. It's tough to be out of football for that long for anyone. We have high expectations for Taron when he gets back.
- Zach Harrison has done a great job of maturing as a player. Zach does exactly what you tell him to do. The ceiling is very high for him going into his sophomore season.
- You can live up to who you can be and be the best player you can be. You've got to be your own player and not get caught up in chasing stats or anything like that.
- From a leadership standpoint, having a guy that's been there five years and knows what we do. Perseverance is Jonathon Cooper. He's a different player. He has some special things ahead of him. He sets a great example with how hard he works.
- I don't think I would be here as long as I've been here if it wasn't for the people. We've got world-class doctors here that take care of our players. I'm here because I feel very comfortable here. It makes me feel safe. What a great place, what a great community and what a great fanbase.
- We've got a plan. We are always going to have our best pass-rushers on the field in third-down situations.
- Antwan Jackson has had a really great camp. Him and Tommy Togiai have been a foundation of what we're doing right now. Antwaun brings versatility to the table with his ability to play nose tackle and three-technique.
- Ty Hamilton has been doing really well. He has put on 20 pounds since he got here. He's transitioning to the nose tackle.
- Darrion Henry is working hard at the end position and making progress.
- As a sophomore, Zach Harrison's still learning how to do this thing the right way.
- What a great guy. He's got a sense of humor and he's very bright. He's self-centered and he's a deep thinker. He cares about people; he's involved; he cares about equality; and he cares about how people feel.
- I really like Jaden McKenzie, he's coming along very well. He's at 285 and playing really well in

camp. He's come a long way and still improving.

- Jerron Cage is another guy that we can play at the three-technique.
- Tommy Togiai is the starter at nose tackle. Jerron Cage can go both sides, and Ty Hamilton can play nose too.
- We don't know yet. It was a sensitive area where he suffered his injuries. He's in meetings everyday and he's had a great attitude.
- I took the pay cut. I think it's the right thing to do. It's a great athletic department; Gene Smith is a great athletic director, and I felt like it was the right thing to do.
- The biggest thing for us is giving up big plays. When you give up big plays, the game changes. We gave up some big plays in the last game we played and that hurt us. We look back at those plays and try to fix that.
- The biggest difference is not hugging my players. I'm a hands-on guy, so it's difficult to stay far apart during this pandemic.
- We have five guys that could start anywhere in the country and they are all five-stars to me. Those guys have done a great job and I just can't speak to how hard they've been working.
- Between Javontae Jean-Baptiste, Jonathon Cooper, Tyler Friday, Zach Harrison, and Tyreke Smith, we have a lot of depth at defensive end that will be important for us. And then, Noah Potter and Darrion Henry can back up those guys at end.
- The biggest thing is you can't play 60 plays at high speed, but you can play 30-35 plays at high speed. And you put those high-speed plays on film, and it helps those guys.
- We don't look at sacks from the nose tackle because they take on so many double teams. What DaVon Hamilton did last year was really unheard of with all those sacks as a nose tackle. But Tommy has similar strength and we think he could make an impact as a pass-rusher as well.
- Very seldom do we get a guy who committed to us and decommitted and went somewhere else, and then comes back. But this is Antwaun Jackson's moment. He's done a great job and we expect big things from him this fall.

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