

Ohio State's Ryan Day and Assistants Look Back On Important Spring



On Friday April 23, Ohio State football coach Ryan Day, offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson and defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs spoke to reporters for the first time since they were able to watch film of the spring game. Their takeaways from that, as well as a number of other topics were discussed.

From Kevin Wilson

- Wilson likes the depth they have on the interior of the offensive line. “You could be the second center and the starting guard.”
- Depth is crucial for the Buckeyes. “You need about eight guys you can win with.”
- Echoing something Ryan Day has repeatedly said, Wilson talked about what a physical spring it was for the Buckeyes.
- Wilson was impressed with the way running back TreVeyon Henderson has handled responsibilities of the position that don’t involve running the ball, such as minding details of pass routes and blocking.
- “You got to get your soul right to...get your mind and body hard and ready to practice.”
- Wide receiver Gee Scott Jr. only needed to make his cheeseburger a double to reach the right size to play tight end, Wilson joked. He’s done well, but unfortunately missed some important time this spring to a hamstring injury.
- Wilson was aware that quarterback Justin Fields had epilepsy, but that wasn’t something that Wilson himself dealt with. Still, Wilson was impressed with the way Fields handled that, the way Fields became a great team leader, and Wilson noted that assistant athletic director for football sports performance Mickey Marotti would say Fields was exceptional in the weight room.
- The play calling for all three Ohio State quarterbacks in the spring game was similar. There was no tailoring of calls to each player’s skill set.

From Kerry Coombs

- Coombs says he is “much, much more comfortable” with the personnel he has in the secondary now than he did a year ago, particularly because they have more depth.
- They had ten different defensive backs receive at least 450 practice snaps this spring.
- Ohio State relied more on the bullet position this spring due to injuries at linebacker, but that gives them versatility moving forward. On top of that, Coombs liked what he saw from the relatively few linebackers who were able to get reps.
- Coombs says Ryan Watts (6-3, 203) is the tallest corner he remembers coaching, and he had a

very good spring.

- Having the hybrid “bullet” player allows Ohio State to keep their personnel the same on multiple downs. Craig Young and Ronnie Hickman have been performing well in that role. Kourt Williams is a third player who could factor into that position.
- Coombs said the base defense they used last year was geared to maximizing their strength, which was at linebacker. This year, with a different strength, you could see a different base defense.
- Defensive back Marcus Hooker remains out indefinitely following his pleading guilty to operating a vehicle under the influence.

From Ryan Day

- The next assignment for quarterbacks C.J. Stroud, Jack Miller, and Kyle McCord, says Day, is to become “obsessed with learning the offense” and perform in the weight room.
- Day has tried to use social media in a way that his players can emulate – strategically to make important statements and with the knowledge that it can attract the wrong type of attention.
- It’s important for the Buckeyes to remain driven. “I wake up scared every day. People want what we have.”
- When asked about the defensive backs, Day answered that he was very encouraged by what they did on defense in general this spring and in the secondary in particular. He’s happy that they are expected to be healthy and thinks that will lead them to having more depth there, even if they are younger than in the past.
- Will Day still push the ball down the field in the passing game with young quarterbacks? Day acknowledged that was a good question, and “we’re not there yet.” It’s too early to know the answer. Ideally, they would like to have the ability both to throw deep and to have plays where they get the ball out quickly.
- Day believes the three candidates for starting QB are fairly similar, but in some ways, that makes the ways they are different that much more important.
- Fundamentals and technique were the emphasis this spring, and in that regard, they accomplished pretty much all they wanted to accomplish. He did, however, wish they had remained a bit healthier so that certain players could have received more reps.
- The two things Day appreciates most about Justin Fields are his work ethic and the way he takes care of his body and health. Fields is durable and reliable for those reasons. Day admits getting frustrated that “some people get a pass, and some don’t” when it comes to the way pundits analyze draft picks. That just fuels Fields’ fire, though, because he doesn’t get rattled.
- The Buckeyes will always make adjustments based on what they learn from a season, but Day doesn’t want to overreact to anything from last year, specifically the loss to Alabama, because COVID-19 made it such a unique experience.
- Will Fields make himself a spokesman for people with epilepsy? Fields is a private individual, but that may be the path he chooses. Day really didn’t know.

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