

Ohio State Head Coach Jake Diebler Excited To Work With Experienced, Battle-Tested Staff In 2024-25



In a wide-ranging press conference held Monday at Value City Arena, Diebler was asked numerous questions about the coaching staff he put together for the 2024-25 season, a new-look group of coaches that includes multiple experienced and well-versed assistants, many who have close ties to either Ohio State or Diebler.

While the first-year coach was previously complimentary of his former staff last season for the cohesiveness and chemistry they showed when he took over as interim leader, he also offered significant praise for the five assistants he hand-picked during the offseason — those being associate head coach Dave Dickerson from USC Upstate and assistants Talor Battle (Northwestern), Joel Justus (NC State), Luke Simons (Baylor) and Jamall Walker (Grand Canyon).

Diebler claimed that, similarly to his transfers, he brought on this new collection of assistants because each of them possess a winning mentality, one which he thinks can become contagious amongst his team as they prepare for the upcoming season.

“If you look at our staff, much like the guys we brought in through the portal, they’re all coming from winning programs, and they’ve won at a high level,” he said. “And I think that’s really valuable. Joel coming from NC State and the run that they went on (to the 2024 Final Four), his experience will be valuable for us. Jamall coming off really the best three-year stretch in the history of the school, and certainly, his experience in the Big Ten (at Illinois from 2012-20) was important. Talor, at Northwestern, had unbelievable success, both in our league and in the NCAA tournament, best (period of play) in the history of the school as well.

“And then, Luke being at Baylor and working for (head coach) Scott Drew, who’s someone I know and trust, and seeing how that program is run, that’s certainly going to be valuable for us. And then Dave Dickerson, who’s certainly a familiar name around here, he was on the last staff that went to a Final Four here and won a Big Ten championship. I love that about him.”

Aside from the winning aspect, Diebler also expressed excitement about the experience his five

assistants are bringing to this program. With the quintet of coaches entering Columbus with over eight decades of combined experience in collegiate coaching and basketball operations, including 11 seasons served as head coach — all by Dickerson — and 26 seasons spent as a coach in the Big Ten, the Buckeyes leader said those years spent in the coaching chair has helped create a knowledge and well versed six-man staff that could work to the program's benefit.

"What (Dickerson) has seen throughout his career, is really, really important for us," Diebler said. "He can lean back on different experiences he's had and that can certainly serve our players well, but also our staff well. I think anytime you hire, you're also, to some degree, hiring guys who are bringing the knowledge from their respective programs. And I think we hit it out of the park in regards to that. So I think it's great."

While the five assistants have impressed Diebler with their experience and winning mentality, the coach also thinks his staff also possesses an ability to both challenge his players to compete at a championship level and help them develop as both athletes and people, a unique combination that he said was a requirement, among many other things, during the hiring process this spring.

"When I was going through the hiring process, there were a couple of things that I was just trying to stay committed to making decisions based upon. Do I think it's helping us move towards winning the championship? And then are these guys committed to helping young men grow? Which is something I'm really passionate about. That had to be aligned for this to work."

"Putting a staff together is much like building a team. You're looking for strengths, weaknesses, how they complement each other. Chemistry is really, really important. So there was a lot that went into it, certainly."