

Ohio State Head Coach Ryan Day Discusses Cancellation Of Michigan Game, Looming Big Ten Championship



Ohio State head coach Ryan Day took part in his weekly radio on Thursday afternoon, his first public appearance since the annual rivalry game against Michigan was cancelled and the Big Ten did away with the six-game requirement for eligibility in the conference championship game.

Here's a bullet-point recap of what Day had to say:

- Day said he's tired of giving the team bad news and that the players were disappointed with the news. "We've been really looking forward to playing these guys. All of them. I've been looking forward to it for a while and wanted it in the worst way."
- Day said it's hard to move on after having the game cancelled, but that they have to get ready for Northwestern. "You don't just get that kind of news and move on. We play that game all the time. Every day. We honor that game."
- Day said he was relieved that the Big Ten changed its six-game rule. "That was good, to be able to give them some good news."
- "We've got an opportunity to go for (our fourth Big Ten title in a row) here," Day said.
- Day was happy to see how the team rebounded from the positive tests and how they played shorthanded against Michigan State. "I think the way we won that game had people on notice around the country."
- Day said the defensive backfield wasn't really challenged against the Spartans. "They really weren't challenged all that much in the back end in that game, to be honest. Those guys really want to get out there and get that bad taste out of their mouth."
- Day credited defensive line coach Larry Johnson for coaching in his place. "Really gotta credit our leaders, our coaching staff, Larry Johnson."
- Day on defensive end Tyreke Smith: "He's always had the ability to make plays, and now you're seeing him make some plays. Now that we're getting into this championship season, we're going to need him to make some plays."
- Day mentioned Baron Browning and Justin Hilliard as two players who stepped up in Tuf Borland's absence.
- Day said they're in a good place with the coronavirus outbreak that hit the program. "The good news is, the guys who were affected with it the past week or so are getting back."

- Day said he was happy to have kicker Blake Haubeil back following a groin injury.
- Day said walk-on linebacker Cade Kacherski will probably have to have knee surgery following his injury in the win over Michigan State.
- Day said the team will have a mock game tomorrow followed by a team dinner with Northwestern-Illinois on the big screen in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. "We've been focusing on Northwestern since we got the news."
- Day credited Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald for getting his team back to the Big Ten title game. "Fitz does a great job year in and year out of making it hard to beat them."
- Day was happy to see the three backup offensive linemen step up last weekend, as well as Harry Miller moving from left guard to center. "It's hard when you've never played together as a line like that."
- Day said the tight ends are playing at a high level, even if they haven't gotten the passing targets. "They deserve a lot of credit for the success of the run game the past couple of weeks. They're close to having a big game catching the ball as well."
- Day said quarterback Justin Fields is a great competitor and is taking care of himself on and off the field. "That's what being a leader is all about."
- Day on Oklahoma transfer running back Trey Sermon's first 100-yard game at Ohio State. "It was good to see him pop a couple of those. It didn't come all at once early in the season for him, but he's worked through a little adversity and it was great to see it come through for him."
- Day said they're excited about the 2021 recruiting class they're going to sign next week, but acknowledges how odd this cycle has been. "There are going to be some guys that sign here that have never stepped foot on our campus, which is really bizarre."
- Day noted the fact that other schools around the country have allowed fans (which includes recruits who attend the games on their own) puts Ohio State at a disadvantage. "It's been hard, but you have to adapt."
- "I think we're going to sign one of the best recruiting classes in the country," Day said.
- Day said wide receiver Chris Olave was the first guy he saw once The Game got cancelled. "'I know you're missing this game,' cause he loves playing in that game." Added that careers are made and legends are born against Michigan. "That's really what this game means to a lot of people."
- Day hopes Fields gets invited to the Heisman Trophy ceremony. "I would hope so. His body of work is amazing, just what he's done. His numbers maybe don't compare, but he just hasn't had the opportunity."

Day acknowledged the lack of games means Fields won't win, however. "This year hasn't been easy for him, but I think he's the best quarterback in the country."
- Day said he was happy to see Johnson get a Gatorade bath after the win over the Spartans and to see him dancing in the locker room. "It was really good for Larry. I'm really happy he had that opportunity with the team."

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