



Ohio State Head Coach Ryan Day Discusses Upcoming Tilt With Nebraska

With just two days before Ohio State's season opener against Nebraska (12 p.m. on FOX), head coach Ryan Day made his final media appearances of the week on Thursday afternoon.

Here's a brief recap of what he had to say on his weekly radio show on 97.1 The Fan and in his brief lightning-round availability with the media:

- On his radio show, Day said they had really physical practices on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. "As you get closer, you find out how tough your team is."
- Day said he had many conversations with Nebraska head coach Scott Frost following the Big Ten's decision to postpone the season and as they pushed for the conference to reconsider.
- Day called the Woody Hayes Athletic Center the safest building on campus. Noted how they know just 15 minutes after tests are taken at 7 a.m. that everyone has tested negative for the virus.
- Day noted how much more the team will appreciate this season because it was almost taken away from them.
- "You can't go win championships in the first game."
- Day said third downs will be critical this season, keeping drives going on offense while getting off the field on defense.
- Day said he's going to miss Skull Session before the game and signing Carmen Ohio afterward with the student section. Said they'll sing, but it won't be the same.
- "There's a huge excitement about this thing, though."
- Day said the team's GPA has been over a 3.0 the last two semesters.
- Day noted the backup quarterback battle is ongoing and that it will continue throughout the season, even with freshmen Jack Miller and C.J. Stroud shedding their black stripes on Wednesday night. "I don't think it's fair right now to put one in front of the other."
- Day said the familiarity on both sides makes the matchup with the Cornhuskers intriguing. Noted how Nebraska is returning all five starters along the offensive line, so they'll be able to run downhill.

- Day credited Nicholas Petit-Frere for his work this offseason. “He worked really hard in the offseason to change his body. I’ve been very, very impressed with him. He’s on pace for a great season.”
- Day called walk-on Xavier Johnson valuable with his ability to play a number of positions and on special teams. “We’re very, very fortunate to have him on the team.”
- Day said running backs Trey Sermon and Master Teague have a lot in common. “Big, strong, powerful running backs. Good vision. Versatile.”
- Day added Marcus Crowley is still on the mend from his ACL injury, but his return will create even more depth on a loaded running backs unit.
- Day noted they have flexibility at the center position, with left guard Harry Miller able to move over to spell Josh Myers if needed.
- Day confirmed safety Kourt Williams’ knee injury, but that he was playing well beforehand.
- Day said he’s glad Shaun Wade is back. “That was a big deal.”
- Day said the Buckeyes are fired up and ready to play. “Just get rid of all the expectations and play as hard as we possibly can.”
- Day was pleased with Justin Fields’ continued growth and grasp of the offense. “He’s got such a great body of work already under his belt.”
- Day also credited Fields’ leadership qualities. “It’s been excellent.” Mentioned the team has rallied around one another.
- During the lighting round, Day said co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison and safeties coach Matt Barnes will be in the press box during the game to help Kerry Coombs (who will be on the field) recognize what’s going on across the front and back end of the defense. “I think the communication will be really good.”
- Even though Nebraska has seen an uptick in cases, Day said they feel comfortable with the Cornhuskers coming to Columbus because the Big Ten’s protocols will make sure they’re clean upon arrival. It gives them a “peace of mind.”
- Day recommends that parents of the players keep their distance if they come for games. “I know it’s very difficult,” but that leads to potential exposure.
- Day on left tackle Thayer Munford: “He didn’t really have much of an offseason because of that back injury.” Said his play was “pretty remarkable” in spite of the injury but that he’ll be a “different player” this season.
- Day said having linebacker Pete Werner inside will help the defense as a whole. That he can “see things fast and communicate well.”
- Day reiterated that the freshmen quarterbacks are even and that they still have to learn what it’s like to be a quarterback at Ohio State. “You don’t have the luxury of having a bad game or a bad snap.”
- Day said it’s not ideal to wear masks on the sidelines because communication is important, but the staff will do their best to keep them on and their faces properly covered.
- Day mentioned defensive tackle Antwuan Jackson as someone who provides a veteran presence, but notes he will have to be “durable and a staple inside.”
- Day on slot cornerback Marcus Williamson. “He finished how we started, which is strong.” Expects him to be a “big part” of the defense.

For four free issues of the now-weekly print edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, sign up at the link below. No credit card required: <http://www.buckeyesports.com/subscribe-4issue-trial/>