

Ohio State Head Coach Ryan Day Previews Spring Practice



With Ohio State set to open spring practice at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on Friday, head coach Ryan Day met with the media for more than an hour to discuss the quarterback competition, coaching staff and other topics.

What follows is a bullet-point recap of what he had to say:

- Day said new special teams coordinator Parker Fleming has impressed throughout the winter and spring. Called him a self-starter.
- Day said safety Marcus Hooker, who was cited for OVI over the weekend, is suspended indefinitely. “We’re going to let the process play out.”
- Day said he’s excited about the large roster of healthy players and overall depth of the team, which will allow the Buckeyes to get more reps than usual in the spring.
- Day on the quarterback battle between Jack Miller, C.J. Stroud and Kyle McCord: “We’ll know when the time is right.” Added he’s excited about the winner of the battle to be the starter for two or three years after having Dwayne Haskins for just one season and Justin Fields for about a season and a half.
- None of the quarterbacks have separated themselves because they haven’t been on the field yet, Day said.
- Day said he’s scheduled to get his coronavirus vaccine on Friday and that he’s “fired up” that it’s going to be readily available in Ohio here soon.
- Day said Ohio State will not require players to be vaccinated, but the staff will help the players set up appointments to get the shots if they so choose.
- Day said he’s not aware of any notable that has left the program this offseason, “at least not off-hand.”
- Day said there are players who will be limited this spring, such as cornerback Cameron Brown and safety Kourt Williams, as they come off injuries, but every player should be available otherwise.
- Day mentioned the linebackers, secondary, tight end and interior offensive line as position battles to watch this spring.
- Day on the addition of analysts Paul Rhoads and Todd Fitch: “The early returns have been a home run.”
- Day on offensive lineman Paris Johnson, who has played both tackle and guard in his one season

with the program: "He has some position flexibility. He's just so talented. Really, all of our guards and tackles are interchangeable." Noted Johnson will start this spring at guard, but the goal is to get the five-best lineman regardless of position.

- Day said the pre-draft discussion about Justin Fields has been unwarranted. "Whatever NFL team asks him to do something, he will learn it very quickly. I can promise you this, Justin Fields is going to make plays in the NFL and some team is going to get very lucky by drafting him."
- Day said junior defensive end Zach Harrison has stepped up over the last few months. "He just looks different. Hats off to him for a great offseason. He just has a different look in his eye."
- Day said the quarterbacks can't get into a daily battle with each other. "I've been in those rooms my entire life and what you find is that if there's friction there, it's not good for the group or either guy. Some of the fiercest battles I've been around, they've become really close."
- Day said being a leader is the No. 1 job of the quarterback.
- Day on the success of the men's basketball team, which starts NCAA Tournament on Friday afternoon: "Chris (Holtmann) has done an unbelievable job. I think his team players really, really hard. As long as they stay healthy, I think they're going to make a great run. It's been fun to watch them play."
- Day when asked about having to shut down team activities for a few days due to an outbreak in the Woody: "It was like taking a punch last week. It was like, 'Oh man, here we go again.'" Said they're encouraged with the news about the vaccine, though. "You can kind of see the light at the end of the tunnel. We're in a good place right now."
- Day on what he hopes to get out of spring practice: "I don't know if there's just one thing, but we have to get better fundamentally. We have to get 15 practices in, so we'll start with that right there."
- Day on retaining linebackers coach Al Washington, who turned down an offer to be Tennessee's defensive coordinator this offseason: "I love Al. He's like a brother to me. I'm glad he's back." Added Washington ultimately wants to be a defensive coordinator and head coach one day and he's excited that he has offers to do just that.
- Day was asked about the video of him playing basketball that went viral on Tuesday, but said he's always worried about playing today out of fear he might tear his Achilles.
- Day said there is a lot of talent at running back and he's excited to see that unit compete. "I don't really know how all that's going to shake out."

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