

Ohio State Head Coach Ryan Day, Wide Receiver Xavier Johnson Praise Devin Brown's Confidence, Leadership Ability Ahead Of Cotton Bowl



Ohio State quarterback Devin Brown has been thrust into the starting role for just three weeks, but he has already turned the heads of his coaches and teammates with his play in practice.

Upon arrival at the team hotel in Texas on Saturday, head coach Ryan Day was quick to point out the strengths his new starting quarterback possesses, specifically with his ability to lead the offense both with his voice and his athleticism. These are two separate traits Day said have allowed Brown to have success and gain the respect of his teammates during the team's Cotton Bowl preparation this month.

"The first thing you notice is his command of the huddle, his command of the offense," Day said. "I think he's done a nice job of that. He has a charisma about him that I think the guys appreciate. He has a chance to extend plays with his feet. He has a strong arm. He's very intelligent. He has a lot of skills, a lot of traits that you look for in a quarterback."

Brown's ability to impress with both his off-field intangibles and on-field play have also been felt by his teammates, many of whom are getting the chance to see him operate the first-team offense for the first time since early September, when the quarterback competition between Brown and now-Syracuse quarterback Kyle McCord was still undergoing. Graduate wide receiver Xavier Johnson told the media on Saturday that while Brown's confidence and professionalism have caught his attention during practice this month, they are intangibles that have not surprised him, as he has seen Brown put them in action even as a backup throughout the season.

"Like Coach Day said, I think he has a charisma, a confidence to him that he's exuded even throughout the process of when he and Kyle were battling," Johnson said. "For a player like myself, to go out there and play for someone who was a pro the whole time, he didn't hang his head, he didn't jump into the portal...he stuck around the team. Every day, he was in Kyle's ear, trying to figure out exactly what Kyle was seeing, just being a grown man about his business."

"So for me to see that, even as an older guy, I think that allows me to be confident in the player that

Devin is and just just the personality that we're going to have leading us on offense."

Regardless of the praise he has received from coaches and teammates, Day said that Brown will have to translate these abilities from the practice field to AT&T Stadium in order for Ohio State to emerge from the Cotton Bowl victorious on Dec. 29. This is a challenge the coach said he is excited to see the sophomore attack as he continues to make his case to become the Buckeyes' full-time starting quarterback in 2024.

"Now he just has to play the game," Day said. "And what are we looking for (from Brown) in the game? We're looking for him to take care of the football and ultimately lead the team to win. And what a great opportunity it is for his first start to be in the Cotton Bowl."