

Ohio State Honing Into Fundamentals Against Physical Georgia Squad



During the past two seasons, Ohio State's bitter rival Michigan has made its living on dominating the trenches while overwhelming opponents with its physicality. That blueprint has carried the Wolverines to back-to-back Big Ten titles and a pair of appearances in the College Football Playoff.

The Georgia Bulldogs, Ohio State's opponent in the Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl, placed similar attention to physical play en route to a College Football Playoff national title last year and SEC crown this season. While Ohio State has largely struggled against the Wolverines, taking a pair of losses across the last two seasons, the Buckeyes hope to find more success against Georgia on Dec. 31.

As the Buckeyes have experience playing against the grind-it-out style utilized by Georgia and Michigan, OSU head coach Ryan Day said the Buckeyes have looked back at their 45-23 loss at the hands of the Wolverines on Nov. 26 to see where they can improve ahead of the Peach Bowl.

"Georgia does a great job, and I think they have a great mix. I think, when you look at what they do on offense, they're going to try to challenge you in a lot of different areas," Day said. "Certainly, it starts with the run game, so we've got to play with great fundamentals.

"So we take a hard look at certainly what happened the last game but also the challenge coming into this game, put a good game plan together, and continue to have a good week of practice. Then we let the guys go play. In this environment, they've got to go play fast."

Alongside Ohio State's renewed attention to fundamentals, the Buckeyes have also recommitted to building physicality against the Bulldogs. Day said the team went good-on-good for much of December prior to leaving for Atlanta.

While the Buckeyes eye a return to the College Football Playoff National Championship against the Bulldogs, Day noted that it's also on the coaching staff to crack the code as to why Ohio State has struggled against the more physical teams on its schedule, while also adding that the Buckeyes' attention to fundamental will be important in the game's outcome.

"We have to learn how they're trying to attack us within the game and then obviously get our guys into the best position possible schematically," Day said. "At the end of the day, it's going to come down to fundamentals, running the football, playing really hard, pad level and tackling. Certainly like you said,

you can't overcommit because then you put yourself at risk in the back end.

"We have to do a good job of — again, the coaches' job is to make sure that we put our guys in the situation to be the most successful, and then it's our guys' job to play really hard."