

Ohio State Left Tackle Josh Simmons Looking To Continue To Improve All Aspects Of His Game



When Josh Simmons transferred to Ohio State after spring practices in 2023, he said he did so because he wanted to improve his game, and he felt he could do that best with Ohio State's coaching staff.

Coming from San Diego State, there were a lot of changes Simmons had to deal with, moving across the country, coming to a program with much higher expectations and that faces more scrutiny, and having to learn the new offense without being with the Buckeyes for the spring practice.

To go along with that, he also moved to the left side of the line, now tasked with protecting Kyle McCord's blind side. Simmons said he struggled with that switch early on.

"You think it's just kind of flip your mindset, but there's a lot more that goes into it," he said. "Towards the back end of that, I think I started to figure it out a little bit."

At the beginning the season with the Buckeyes, a trend he had started at San Diego State continued, one Ohio State didn't want him to bring to Columbus with him. He finished the 2022 season with the Aztecs with 17 penalties, and was getting flags thrown at a high rate early in the 2023 season as well.

However, that was something he was able to clean up through the season. He finished with just eight penalties, cutting that number in more than half, and didn't commit a single penalty in the month of November. He credits that to the improvement of the mental side of his game.

"Physically, obviously you have to be ready, but mentally that's where you have to start tightening up a little bit," Simmons said. "You start playing in those Notre Dame games, those Penn State games and you realize a penalty can literally destroy the whole game. Once you look at it through that lens, you know those are a no-no. That can't happen."

He thinks the chemistry with his offensive line was also a big part of why he was able to improve his game so quickly, and the fact that he was able to go up against Ohio State's strong defensive line in practice.

"Knowing how (Donovan Jackson) plays and the communications and how everything works," Simmons

said. "And really just understanding football. Once you understand how defensive linemen work - you're going against the best of the best in Coach (Larry Johnson) and the rushmen."

Now Simmons will be able to go through an entire spring with Ohio State, and can learn what his new offensive coordinator, Chip Kelly, plans to implement. He is looking to get even better for the Buckeyes in 2024.

"In terms of physical attributes, I can move and I'm strong, but there's a lot more to it that I need to work on to come close to me being able to help the team," Simmons said. "Technique, awareness, communication. That's the biggest thing when you're in those big games, you have to be able to call out if a pressure might come. Just awareness of ball."