

Ohio State Preparing As If Michigan Running Back Blake Corum Will Play



While much of Ohio State's concern has been on the health of its own running backs, injury developments out of the Michigan football program have also caught the Buckeyes' attention.

Michigan star running back Blake Corum, who has largely carried the Wolverine offense this season, sustained a lower-body injury in U-M's 19-17 win over Illinois on Saturday and played sparingly in the game's second half. Despite his injury, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said the Buckeyes are preparing as if Corum will play against OSU, while also looking at the rest of the options that the Wolverines have in the running game.

"He's a great player and we're going to prepare for him to play," Day said. "We expect him to play and we'll do the best we can. They're a very, very good offense, they have plenty of running backs and plenty of good players. While he is very, very good, we'll just continue to prepare for all of them."

Through 11 games this season, Corum has racked up 1,457 rushing yards, which ranks fourth in the nation, while picking up 5.95 yards per attempt, and 18 touchdowns. Corum's efforts have aided the Michigan rushing attack to the fourth-best mark in the country, picking up 243.8 yards per game.

If Corum can't go, Donovan Edwards would be the logical solution to take over as the bell cow of the Michigan rushing attack. However, Edwards was also unavailable against the Fighting Illini after sustaining an injury against Nebraska on Nov. 12. Edwards has racked up 471 yards on 70 carries and four touchdowns.

The attention turns to freshman C.J. Stokes, who struggled against Illinois in relief of Corum, if Edwards and Corum are held out. Stokes toted the ball 11 times for just 36 yards in the Wolverines' victory over the Illini. Overall, Stokes has carried the ball 53 times this season, picking up 268 yards and a touchdown.

Although the Wolverines have several options to turn to at running back, defensive coordinator Jim Knowles said the Buckeyes are still keyed in on Corum in terms of preparation.

"We're not spending any time investigating whether he's playing or not, we're assuming he's going to play," Knowles said. "He's an exceptional back, very talented."