

Ohio State Ready For Carnell Tate To Step Into Expanded Role



Ohio State wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. said ahead of this season that freshman wide receiver Carnell Tate was already better than Harrison was heading into his sophomore season. Now six games into Tate's first-year campaign, he may just need to line up next to Harrison and show it.

The Buckeyes have been coy around the status of junior wideout Emeka Egbuka, who was injured against Maryland and missed last week's win over Purdue, with Tate helping to fill in against the Boilermakers with three catches for 79 yards. But with the way that the coaching staff and Tate's teammates have spoke about the freshman this week, even if Egbuka were to play, it appears that everyone is ready to see Tate step into an increased role.

"Carnell needs to be ready to go (against Penn State)," head coach Ryan Day said on Wednesday. "Carnell has continued to prove that he deserves to play. This goes back to the preseason, and you're seeing it. You saw him make a couple nice catches there in the game last week (at Purdue). You've seen it a couple weeks before with the touchdown catch.

"He continues to impress, so it's about that time when you think about some of the freshmen who have made it as a freshman right around the middle of the season and end of the season when they really start coming on. So that timeframe is about right here for Carnell. We have the confidence to put him in the game."

Tate has eight receptions for 162 yards this season and has lined up for just 88 offensive snaps, with the majority of snaps at receiver saved for Harrison, Egbuka and Julian Fleming, but the talent of the former five-star receiver has been evident to those watching him every day in practice.

"He's one of the best players that I've been around," Harrison said. "Just from the talent to how he takes care of his business on and off the field. I'm super excited to (watch) as he continues to grow as his role increases in the offense. I'm super proud of him for all he's done so far."

But like Harrison and Egbuka before him - and Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Garrett Wilson before them - some freshmen have a way of breaking through on the depth chart, with their first year a sign of things to come. And for Tate, that could be as early as this Saturday.

“I think there’s always a handful of guys that are ready to play, just like (Egbuka) and Marvin were and back in 2021 for the Rose Bowl,” offensive coordinator/wide receivers coach Brian Hartline said earlier this season. “So, that’s always the goal. You never know until you know, but I think the work that’s being put in throughout the week gives me lots of confidence.”