

Practice Report: Offensive Line Continues To Take Shape, Pecking Order Filling Out At Receiver



Ohio State's second spring practice was held on Thursday, one of 15 sessions that will conclude with the annual Spring Game on April 13. But with the exhibition over a month away, here are our observations from the Buckeyes' most recent spring outing.

Starting with the offensive line, Ohio State gave first-team reps at center to redshirt sophomore Carson Hinzman for the second straight practice. Hinzman started every game at center for the Buckeyes during the regular season but was held out of the Cotton Bowl for undisclosed reasons, a series of events that may have led Ryan Day and his staff to seek an upgrade at the position, bringing in former Alabama center Seth McLaughlin through the transfer portal.

But - at least through the first two practices - it appears as if the veteran McLaughlin will have to earn his stripes with his new team before taking over the starting role. He appeared to take second-team reps behind Hinzman, who Day praised on Tuesday for his focused mentality and overall improvement this offseason, with redshirt freshman Joshua Padilla trailing behind. Outside of the center position, there were no real surprises, with left tackle Josh Simmons, left guard Donovan Jackson and right tackle Josh Fryar all taking first-team reps, and Luke Montgomery repping at right guard.

A pecking order has emerged among Ohio State's wide receivers, with Jayden Ballard and Carnell Tate taking reps at outside receiver and Emeka Egbuka going first in slot drills. Behind Ballard and Tate (who ran in pairs) were Kyion Grayes and Kojo Antwi, and then David Adolph and Jeremiah Smith, though Smith is expected to rise up the depth chart. Egbuka was followed in the slot by Brandon Inniss, Bryson Rodgers and Reis Stocksdaile.

Quinshon Judkins continued to trail TreVeyon Henderson in running back drills, which were led during practice by running backs coach Tony Alford and head coach Ryan Day, who has been spreading the wealth throughout the team so far this spring. The running backs also got a chance to run some option drills with the quarterbacks led by new offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Chip Kelly.

Things were less interesting on defense with almost the entire side of the ball returning, and many of last year's starters were still getting the first reps in practice with Sonny Styles an exception since he

has made the move to linebacker.

Cody Simon and C.J. Hicks were taking reps with the ones at linebacker, meaning Styles will need to earn his spot at the position. Caleb Downs was taking early reps with Lathan Ransom in the safeties group, and Ty Hamilton - who got significant playing time on the interior defensive line last season - was with the starting group of Tyleik Williams, J.T. Tuimoloau and Jack Sawyer.

Patrick Engels and Greg Wilson also contributed to this report.