

Ryan Day Discusses Ohio State's Win Over Northwestern, Previews Wisconsin



Ohio State head coach Ryan Day met with the media for about a half hour on Tuesday afternoon, at which time he discussed the Buckeyes' Friday night win over Northwestern and upcoming matchup with Wisconsin (12 p.m. on FOX)

Here's a brief recap of what he had to say:

- Day has been impressed with his team's ability to remain focused from week to week. "Their buy-in right now is pretty high."
- "There's a great culture here right now," Day said, noting the players enjoy practicing and being around each other.
- Day confirms linebacker Baron Browning, who missed the Northwestern game, is out with an injury. Still expects him to be back for Wisconsin. "He looks good so far."
- "We know how good they are in all three phases," Day said of Wisconsin. "This has to be our best game of the year."
- Ohio State has allowed 14 sacks this season, but Day cites quarterback Justin Fields looking to create something out of nothing in certain situations — and he's OK with that. "I think it's a little bit of that, but there are some things in protections we need to clean up, as well."
- Day said it appears freshman offensive tackle Dawand Jones will play in more than four games and not redshirt this year because of what he can bring to the current team. "We're going to play them if it makes sense, but we're not going to be foolish."
- Day said offensive tackle Thayer Munford, who did not start but finished the game against Northwestern, should be good to play this week. Added his willingness to play showed his dedication to the game and his teammates.
- "They have weapons, and they have a really good scheme, as well," Day said of Wisconsin, citing quarterback Jack Coan and running back Jonathan Taylor. On Coan specifically, he's "done a really excellent job of managing that offense."
- "He has a lot of tools and a lot of talent," Day said of quarterback Justin Fields when asked about the staff's evaluation of him during his initial recruitment in high school.
- "A lot of things have happened since then," Day said of his self-evaluation since the TCU game last fall, when he was Ohio State's interim head coach in the wake of Urban Meyer's three-game suspension. Said he's become much better in his own leadership during that time.
- "These guys are tough, physically and we're going to have to be focused in every single way," Day

said of the Badgers. "It's going to take everything we have to win this thing."

- Day said passing game coordinator and quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich gives the Buckeyes a new set of eyes as they evaluate Wisconsin.
- Day said he can't pinpoint the most-significant adversity Ohio State has faced this season.
- "We consider ourselves to be one of the top offenses in the country," Day said, noting how the Badgers pose a challenge as the No. 1-ranked defense in the country. "We have to answer the bell."
- When asked about the Buckeyes' somewhat slow start in the first quarter, Day points out they still scored 52 points. "I'm glad the expectations are around here."
- Day said he did watch Wisconsin's loss to Illinois, but had no rooting interest. Thought both teams looked good at times.
- Day on Ohio State starting its fourth offensive tackle (Nicholas Petit-Frere) this season: "He didn't grade a champion, but he competed the best he could. It's good to see Nick step up. Like we said from Day 1, building depth along the offensive line was going to be critical."
- "The bigger the game, the more emphasis on playing to win," Day said, noting field position, turnovers and kicking game will be key for the Buckeyes against the Badgers.
- Day said he's unsure whether running back J.K. Dobbins is looking forward to competing against Taylor, but did say "he's very competitive."
- "By the time you get to Saturday, the hay is in the barn," Day said of his team's preparation, training and game-planning, while ultimately, the game itself comes down to execution. "When you're in it, you can't worry about that. You trust everything you're doing is going to work."
- "It's all about what your expectations are and every place has its own expectations," Day said in response to questions about seemingly inevitable first loss as a head coach. "The expectations here are as high as they can be, and you have to accept that."
- Day on Taylor: "He's strong, fast and can change direction. Guys bounce right off of him."
- Day on backup running back Master Teague: "He is a good change of pace, and he does a good job of running with his pads down. He's put in a lot of work with (running backs coach) Tony (Alford)."