

Ryan Day Focused On Moving Forward After Tony Alford Left For Michigan, Taking His Time With The Hiring Process



The news that former Ohio State running backs coach Tony Alford would be leaving for archrival Michigan came out March 13 after the Buckeyes had only two spring practices, which Day said he didn't have much notice of, but he has already moved on.

"I was made aware last week, and now we're in the process of identifying replacements," Day said Tuesday. "We're excited about the group that we've already identified and it's going to be a thorough process. The good news is we're not in a situation where we have to make a quick decision based on recruiting or the portal or anything like that.

"Everybody has to make decisions for them and their family, so we try not to focus on that," Day added later. "We're going to play the schedule we play, that game is going to come and there will be a team on either side with a bunch of coaches and we'll go from there."

Day said he will ultimately make the decision on the new hire, but offensive coordinator Chip Kelly will be involved in the process as will the current running backs on the roster.

Since Alford had been with the Buckeyes since 2015 and into this spring, there was concern that he could take what he knew about Kelly's new offense to the other side of the rivalry where it could be used against Ohio State, but those concerns aren't shared by Day.

"We're nowhere near where we're going to be as we head down the road," Day said. "That was two practices in the spring and a lot of what we did was what we've done in the past, then we sprinkled in a couple of things Chip has done. But there's so much more that (Kelly) has that's out in front of us."

After Alford's departure, Day has been coaching the running backs, despite never having done so before, but he thinks being able to spend time with them will help them understand the offense more, and if nothing else, build more trust between the players and the coach.

"I think it's going to be good for them to see through the eyes of a quarterback," Day said. "It's really good for them in the passing game. It's really good for them overall to understand from a high view on

things. We've had great meetings. We have a very intelligent group in that room... I think it's the best running back room in the country."

But Day is going to take his time with the new hire because he believes there are multiple coaches who can step in for now and coach the running backs in the spring. He's focused on finding the best guy for the job as a recruiter and coach, even if that coach doesn't have the experience doing so at the level Ohio State is at, citing himself and co-offensive coordinator/wide receivers coach Brian Hartline as prime examples of that. Regardless of who it is, he feels he's ready to make the change.

"Each year a different challenge comes, but that's the job," Day said. "That's just part of the job is adapting and trying not to overthink it all. You try to do the best you can to plan ahead and have contingency plans in place and do what's right, but at the same time you have to adapt to what you've got and I think we've done that.

"It will be a very, very thorough interview process. We're going to ask a lot of questions. We're going to take as much time as we need and make sure we've got the right guy."