

Ryan Day Recaps Ohio State's Win Over Miami (Ohio), Previews Nebraska



Ohio State head coach Ryan Day met with the gathered media for about 30 minutes on Tuesday afternoon as part of his weekly press obligations, at which time he discussed the Buckeyes' 76-5 win over Miami (Ohio) and the upcoming road game at Nebraska (7:30 p.m. on ABC).

Here's a bullet-point recap of what Day had to say:

- Day on the Cornhuskers: "By far the best team we've played — not only talent and coaching, but the environment." Calls Memorial Stadium one of the toughest places to play in the conference.
- Day said the win over Miami allowed the coaches to get meaningful snaps for second- and third-team players. "The more reps you get in games, the better it is."
- Day expects wide receiver Garrett Wilson will have an increased role on special teams, particularly on punt return. "The more he can take on, the better."
- Day on Nebraska quarterback Adrian Martinez. "He's a very talented player. Great kid, great competitor, great leader. He's big, strong and powerful. Very athletic." Cites his ability to make plays with his legs just as well as with his arm. "He is by far the best quarterback we've seen."
- Day on his own ability as a quarterback at New Hampshire: "My intelligence certainly helped my play more than my athleticism."
- Day said Wisconsin — which comes to Columbus in late October and is a potential opponent in the Big Ten Championship — is very talented but he hasn't had an opportunity to watch the Badgers much on film.
- Day said junior cornerback Jeff Okudah has embraced "He's flashed, but how are you going to respond to it?"
- Day said it's important that the Buckeyes haven't played a full four quarters. "We have to play a full 60 minutes and prove that we can play a full 60 minutes." Said blowouts have helped with depth, however. "We haven't had to grind and work through that adversity."
- Day said the Buckeyes will keep their pregame routine at Nebraska. "It's certainly a gradual momentum builder to kickoff."
- Day on Matt Barnes, whose special teams unit has blocked a kick or punt in three straight games. "He's doing a good job." Added it's a whole team effort, though. "That goes to show the culture of our team at Ohio State — that our best players are on the field."
- Day said the emphasis on special teams has not changed following Urban Meyer's departure. "It's critical. I'm in every special teams meeting."

- Day on safety Isaiah Pryor's decision to enter the transfer portal and depth with him sitting out the rest of the season. "We wish him nothing but the best. We're disappointed he'd leave the program four games in, but there's no ill will there." Added they'll support him in his decision to pursue his career elsewhere.
- Day still feels the four-game redshirt is still in the best interest of the players, despite this being the downside to such a rule.
- Day feels the Buckeyes still have plenty of depth with Pryor's departure, as they'll lean on Josh Proctor, Marcus Hooker and Jahsen Wint to fill Pryor's shoes.
- Day on freshman wide receiver Jameson Williams. "We knew his speed, but we didn't know his toughness." Still learning the position, but Day believes Williams has a bright future ahead of him.
- Day said the team has discussed losses to Iowa in 2017 and Purdue in 2018. Said they'll get knocked out if they let their guard down. "It's going to be an electric environment, and we have to handle that. This is our first big challenge as a team."
- Day said Martinez was very close to getting a scholarship offer from Ohio State, but that didn't happen because of the shoulder injury that forced him to miss his entire senior season. "At the end of the day, we just weren't sure (because of the lack of senior film). We had a feeling he was going to be a special player, and he's shown he can be a special player."
- Day on Nebraska freshman wide receiver Wan'Dale Robinson, who he noted reminds him of Purdue wide receiver Rondale Moore. "He's really dynamic."
- Asked if the Buckeyes are ahead of schedule this season, Day said, "I don't think you know until you get into the meat of the season. It's a solid start, but it's just a start."
- Day watched the Nebraska-Illinois game on Saturday night and felt the game wouldn't have been close had the Cornhuskers not turned the ball over so many times. "I think they dominated the whole game, they just turned the ball over."
- Day said Ohio State's new defensive scheme, particularly the one deep safety and the implementation of the Bullet position, have changed the Buckeyes' recruiting philosophy.

Barnes, Ohio State's special teams and assistant secondary coach, also spent time at the podium on Tuesday afternoon.

- Barnes said the culture established in Columbus before he arrived was exceptional. "We just want to keep on pace with the precedent that has been set here."
- Barnes on players like defensive end Chase Young contributing on special teams, particularly on punt block team. "The best players play." Key to getting playing time is contributing on special teams. "That's a rule that goes back to coach (Urban) Meyer."
- Barnes said the key to blocking kicks has to do with the trajectory of the ball and the protection formations. "It's really a week-to-week thing."
- Barnes said Nebraska's wide receivers are explosive. "They're the type of players who can take a short pass and get you with the run after catch."
- Barnes on defensive back preparation this week: "If I know our guys, I think they'll be excited to get started." The Buckeyes have team meetings and practice today.
- Barnes said Wilson is aggressive on punt return. "He's aggressive. He attacks the ball," rather than letting it hit the ground and bounce to give the opponent better field position. "The great ones have that natural ability."
- Barnes said Ohio State hasn't returned a kickoff for a touchdown since 2010 and punt since 2014. Feels like Demario McCall has been just a shoestring tackle away from breaking one this year. Added McCall almost broke one last year against Maryland — "when I was at another school."

Wide receivers coach Brian Hartline wrapped up the coaches portion of the press conference.

- Hartline on Williams' comparisons to former Buckeye wide receiver Ted Ginn Jr., particularly his track background. "The sky is the limit. He'll be exciting guy to watch, now and for years to come."
- Hartline said one player, like the aforementioned Young, can make a significant impact on a single game. "Any time you have an impact player on the field, there can be ripple effects on the game plan."
- "Our job as coaches is to put our players in position to make plays," Hartline said.
- Despite loss of three players from the wide receivers room, Hartline believes there hasn't been a drop off in production. "The guys prepare every day to get better." Added the players have really bought in to blocking and having a sense of urgency. "As long as we continue to progress and get better, we'll have that same feeling again this time next year."
- Hartline said mental reps are a big part of preparation because there aren't enough reps in practice to give out to everyone in the deep wide receiver rotation. "The ownership is on the young men, and they've done a phenomenal job with that. We're either reaffirming why we're on the field or why we aren't."
- "I can tell you on Wednesday who I think is going to have a great game based on practice," Hartline said. Notes how Wilson has practiced every single day.
- Hartline said he uses clips of how former wide receiver Terry McLaurin, Johnnie Dixon and Parris Campbell performed as the standard for Ohio State's receivers.
- Hartline said there's no such thing as too many good wide receivers. "If you're having heart surgery, do you want one really good doctor or five?"