

Brown, McCord “Starting To Take Shape” In Midst Of Quarterback Battle



When evaluating quarterbacks, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day searches for the “extraordinary traits” that sets a signal caller apart from his peers.

Day found those defining traits in his previous quarterbacks, as Justin Fields and C.J. Stroud thrived as Ohio State’s starting signal-callers in their times with the program. Now, Day searches for them in Ohio State’s pair of competitors vying for the starting job, with Kyle McCord and Devin Brown looking to get a leg up on one another as spring practices heat up.

Although Day refused to disclose what he’s seen from Brown and McCord in regard to those “extraordinary traits,” he noted that he has been encouraged by the duo of quarterbacks through the first three practices of spring camp.

“The first thing is they have to be able to compete, they have to be high competitors because of it what it takes to be the quarterback at Ohio State,” Day said on Tuesday. “The other thing is you’re looking for some extraordinary trait. When you think about the different quarterbacks we’ve had, even just going back to Braxton (Miller), Cardale (Jones), J.T. (Barrett), Dwayne (Haskins), Justin, C.J., even when Joe (Burrow) was here, they all had extraordinary traits and I think that’s important.

“(Brown and McCord) are starting to take shape,” he continued. “They’re doing a good job. The one thing that I can appreciate about both of them is their work ethic and their intelligence level. It’s been fun to get out there and see them now take the reps with the ones.”

Ohio State competed in just its third practice of its 15-practice spring camp on Tuesday, but took a major step in its development by holding its first padded practice. However, the evaluation process at quarterback, as well as several other positions, is still in its infancy.

As the Buckeyes continue to install the offense and put more on the quarterbacks’ plates, there will still be a distinct lack of in-game experience that either quarterback will have to deal with. McCord has registered a career start — throwing for 319 yards and two touchdowns against Akron during his

freshman season — but didn't see valuable playing time last season, while Brown is yet to register his first collegiate passing attempt.

While the quarterbacks will be evaluated as the spring continues, Day emphasized that game experience is the biggest aspect that he's worried about when it comes to McCord and Brown.

"(It's) just based on experience, trying to compare and contrast based on quarterbacks we've had in the past and what it has looked like, the decision-making process, trying to put them in as many game-like situations as possible," Day said. "To be honest, you really don't know until you get into a game. You don't.

"You want to identify the things they do well and then really emphasize those," he continued. "Then you have to recognize the areas that need to be improved and try to make sure that we're addressing those, and just try to get the guys better every day. Over time, it seems to always kind of shake itself out, but we're into Day 3 and we saw some good things out there today."

Day acknowledged that this season's starter doesn't need to be a world-beater due to the talent the team has around them, but also recognized that the evaluation process hasn't changed all that much despite the overwhelming changes to the game.

"The game is changing, but I don't think that what you look for in a quarterback really has," Day said. "You have to be able to do stuff with your feet. You have to be able to create a little bit in and out of the pocket. You have to at least be a threat in the run game, that has to be part of what you do. You also have to be able to throw the football in the pocket, on third down and in the red zone. You have to be able to push the ball downfield."

As spring camp presses on, Day also recognized that the duo has built up a rapport with their teammates and both have emerged as voices on the team.

"So far, I like their mentality and I think that team believes in them and I think that's important."