

Carson Hinzman Sees Joe Moore Potential For Ohio State's Offensive Line



The Joe Moore Award, given annually to the best offensive line in college football, has been won each of the past two seasons by Michigan, notable given Ohio State's consecutive losses to that program. But the Buckeyes have their eyes on retaking not only The Game, but earning some hardware in the process.

"We've had such a short period of time together, those new guys filling spots," center Carson Hinzman said Tuesday. "I think that we just needed a little bit of time, and I think that going into this offseason and what we've been able to put on the field recently, we've been more than good enough, if not great. I wouldn't be surprised if we tried to run to take a run at the Joe Moore. That's our goal."

It would be a significant undertaking considering that Ohio State and offensive line coach Justin Frye are looking to replace three NFL draft picks, including Luke Wypler at center and Paris Johnson Jr. and Dawand Jones at the tackle spots. It took time to land on a starting five - and Frye said Tuesday that nothing is set in stone yet - but Ohio State has seemingly settled, from left to right, on Josh Simmons, Donovan Jackson, Hinzman, Matthew Jones and Josh Fryar.

It's a group that will feature three new starters outside of Jackson and Jones, at least at Ohio State, and the three newcomers all have varying degrees of experience at their respective positions. Hinzman, the least experienced of the newcomers, has only starting learning center over the last year since arriving on campus, but he's felt growth in all aspects of his game.

"When you come up to a level like this in a place like this, it's an exponential gap, you know, so to be able to understand and learn what it takes to be one of the guys around here, like the real guys around here, you've really got to buckle down and learn how to be physical, how to be mentally tough, just as well as physically tough," he said.

As for Simmons and Fryar, they are lining up in different spots from what most anticipated after Fryar worked for most of the spring (and early in fall camp) at left tackle. Simmons, in fact, said Tuesday that he does not believe he has ever played at left tackle, at least until this preseason camp, but he said he's making progress at his new position.

"You've just kind of got to figure it out," Simmons said. "Like I said, like I'm going against some really

good dudes. Me and Tegra and all those guys, we'll kind of stay after practice sometimes and just kind of get it right, you know, put in that extra work so that the next day can come a little bit easier."

Fryar has more experience at his new spot given that he started a game at right tackle last season and worked there throughout the spring, and he said he feels comfortable with where he's at now.

"I think it's going good," he said of moving from left to right tackle. "I think I'm doing well. Going against J.T. (Tuimoloau), Jack (Sawyer), Kenyatta (Jackson), all those guys just getting me better every day. I think that's the main key about it."

While there is some uncertainty around how the group might perform this season, with the offensive line considered one of the team's biggest question along with quarterback, Ohio State's offensive linemen are confident about what the team will put on the field when the season kicks off at Indiana on Sept. 2.

"I think our offensive line now, in terms of camp-wise, is exceeding expectations even that we would have had last year," Hinzman said. "I think that people tend to doubt the o-line first in a lot of situations, which is normal, I understand that. However, I think the work we put in and the guys we've been able to develop in such a short period of time, I think we're going to be extremely solid."