

Day, Buckeyes Ready For Strong Start In Indiana



When Ohio State matches up with Indiana on Saturday afternoon, it will mark the third time in seven seasons in which the program opens their season on the road against a Big Ten opponent. The Buckeyes began their 2017 and 2021 campaigns in Indiana’s Memorial Stadium and Minnesota’s Huntington Bank Stadium respectively — two matchups that saw them get off to slow starts and face surprising deficits at halftime.

This season, however, head coach Ryan Day and his staff are ready to face any early challenge that the new-look Hoosiers may throw at them.

“This is a team that when we go in to play them early in the season, we’ve been in dogfights,” Day said on Aug. 31. “Going on the road with you know, a new quarterback as a first time starter, it’s gonna be a challenge. And our guys know that. It’s not like you are just going to show up and last year is going to happen the way it did.”

Ohio State has dominated the Hoosiers in their 96 total meetings, owning a 78-12-5 record in the series as well as an active 27-game win streak. Despite the historical dominance, Day said this year’s Indiana team — which welcomes over 30 transfers to the roster — presents a more unique challenge.

“I think I’ve heard over 30 transfers coming in, so what does that mean,” Day said. “You look to see the film from where they play. But the personality of the team will be a little bit of an unknown and, you know, what the coaches decide that they want to focus on, in terms of the schematics of it all. So, anytime you deal with a first game, you have to have contingency plans in place. But as we all know, it all ultimately comes down to the fundamentals: tackling, blocking, taking care of the football. But we’ll have to kind of sort that out early on in the game.”

Although the Hoosiers present an almost entirely-new roster on both sides of the ball, Day said he has still based a considerable amount of his preparation on reviewing the film from the Buckeyes’ last three matchups against Indiana — a 56-14 win in 2022, a 54-6 victory in 2021 and a back-and-forth 42-35 triumph in 2020. This, in addition to watching film on the new roster additions, has consumed most of he and his team’s game preparation.

“I mean, you look at everything,” Day said. “But you have to be smart not to overdo things in certain

areas. Because it's a new year, a new team, new emphasis in all different areas. But yeah, we watch everything. We watch the last three years (against Indiana). We'll watch all the games."

Despite the recent road struggles in season-openers, Day said that his team has welcomed the opportunity to begin their 2023 campaign on another campus. This, according to the Buckeyes' leader, can allow the team to ignore the noise come together as a collective unit as they begin their 12-game slate.

"There's less distractions when you go on the road," Day said. "When you're (at home), there's family coming into town. There's tickets, there's so many things, you're staying over at the Blackwell (Inn)...You know, once you get on that bus, and you head over to the plane and take off and then you get to the hotel, it's kind of just the team together. There's only the travel squad too, we're only allowed 74 on the road. So just again, probably the biggest thing you notice is less distractions."