

Day Discusses Plan For Bowl Prep



Ohio State's regular season ended in one of the more embarrassing fashions imaginable.

Archrival Michigan not only beat the Buckeyes on their home field Nov. 26, they won by three touchdowns for a second season in a row. Touchdown runs of 75 and 85 yards by Donovan Edwards, the Wolverines' second-year running back, served as exclamation points to a 45-23 beating.

Now OSU has a second chance on its 2022 season. Thanks to a loss by USC in the PAC-12 Championship game, the Buckeyes backdoored into the No. 4 seed in the College Football Playoff. Thus, head coach Ryan Day and his staff are assembling a plan to try and take advantage of the opportunity.

"We've been in this, the CFP, three of the last four years," Day said. "So we have a pretty good plan, I think, for this month."

Preparation started in earnest the week after Ohio State's loss to Michigan. The Buckeyes may not have known they were advancing to the playoffs yet, but that didn't stop them from preparing accordingly.

"We start off, really, working on fundamentals," Day said. "We put two practices in last week talking about being in this very situation. Don't wake up on Sunday morning and be surprised if you have an opportunity to go play for a national championship. We're not going to feel sorry for ourselves but we needed help. And we got help."

As Day pointed out above, this isn't the team's first rodeo gearing up for a playoff game. He's done it twice before, both times with Clemson on the other end of the month-long layoff.

His first year as head coach in 2019 Ohio State fell just short against the Tigers, dropping a 29-23 contest with a couple controversial calls from officials. Clemson sealed the win with an interception on OSU's final drive.

In 2020 quarterback Justin Fields had one of the more memorable performances from a signal caller in school history, going 22-of-28 for 385 yards and six touchdowns and adding 42 rushing yards despite

getting his ribs bruised midway through the second quarter.

Ohio State won that game 49-28. Day, obviously, will be looking to that year as an example more so than the one prior.

“I think we did a really good job in 2020 of getting ready to play in that Clemson game,” Day said. “We’ll use that same formula to prepare for this game. But I think the fundamentals is the first part, we’ve got to really hammer that.”

The next step, then, will be to install as much of the game plan as possible in Columbus before the team arrives in Atlanta Dec. 26.

“We try to do as much as we can here on campus, then we get on site down in Atlanta and go through a game week preparation,” Day said.

Moving through the 27 days of preparation that remain, it will be important for Ohio State to prevent the type of explosive runs and passes that gashed them in The Game. The Buckeyes face No. 1 Georgia, the defending national champions, Dec. 31 in the Peach Bowl.

“Certainly looking back on the last game, we just had too many explosive plays (against us),” Day said. “As coaches you’ve got to make sure you’re looking at (that), and putting your players in the best position to be successful. That’s it. And then if not, then why isn’t that getting done.”