

Day Gives Final Update Before First 2022 Road Game



Six weeks into the 2022 football season, Ohio State is only just now on tap for its first road tilt.

The Buckeyes take on Michigan State Saturday, a game in which head coach Ryan Day stated his team will have to rely on its leadership to stay poised against a hostile crowd. Ohio State's front man gave one last update to the media Thursday.

"I was hoping when I asked the question (of who played at Michigan State previously) at Tuesday's meeting, I'd see more hands raised," Day said. "I think I did, but then they said, 'Well, that was in 2020,' then I said, 'That doesn't count. No fans in the stadium.' I think our guys have played in hostile environments before, but it's been a while. We have some new faces that haven't, and any time you go on the road, the veteran guys have to play veteran."

There's still no official word on whether graduate cornerback Cam Brown or graduate safety Tanner McCalister are back this week, though Day did say they "had a good week of practice."

"I'd rather get into any injury updates right now," Day said. "Things can change so quickly and once I start commenting on one, then I've got to comment on somebody else. But even with those guys, had a very good week of practice here, so we're very positive about them."

This is Day's first trip to Spartan Stadium as Ohio State's head coach, though it's not the first time the team has played there under his regime.

The Buckeyes traveled to East Lansing with a roster depleted by COVID-19 in 2020, handing Michigan State a 52-12 defeat. Among the coronavirus casualties was Day himself, who had to watch from in Columbus as defensive line coach Larry Johnson assumed a one-game interim role as head coach.

"It was very difficult," Day said. "I sat in the basement with my son, the girls sat upstairs. A lot of

yelling at the TV, a lot of pacing around, watching the game. Then as the game got the way it did there in the second half, I got to say I enjoyed watching it. I didn't say I relaxed, because you just never relax until the game's over."

At player availability Wednesday, some of Ohio State's players, namely third-year center Luke Wypler, talked about embracing a villainesque role in front of an opposing crowd.

"I think I'm pretty excited for that — the first (road game) of the year — and to be kind of, like, the bad guy in the arena," Wypler said. "It's always nice to be the villain."

For his part, Day is looking forward to the challenge.

"This kind of seems obvious but you have to address it," Day said. "When you're home, you have a bunch of people cheering for you. When you're on the road, everyone in that stadium wants to see you lose. So it's just a different environment, a different feel. And any time Ohio State goes on the road, they are the villain."

Fourth-year defensive end Zach Harrison worked his way inside on some packages against Rutgers last week, lining up at three-technique tackle on occasion against the Scarlet Knights and forcing two turnovers from the position.

More of the same look could be deployed against the Spartans.

"I think we've been creative this year about trying to create some of those packages," Day said. "If that means Zach lines up on a guard, then that's great for us."

Michigan State and Ohio State kick off at 4 p.m. Saturday.