

Denzel Burke Feeling More Confident Heading Into Year Two



Ohio State cornerback Denzel Burke had only been on campus for a handful of months when the Buckeyes' season began against Minnesota last year, but you wouldn't know it watching him play.

Burke, in his first career start in a hostile Gopher environment, finished with four tackles and three pass breakups, two more than anyone else on Ohio State's roster. He would ultimately start every game last season for the Buckeyes, finishing with 35 tackles, 12 passes defended - by far the most on the team - and a pick six, returning an interception 23 yards for a touchdown.

□ First INT

□ First Pick-6 @King10Burke adds on to No. 11 @OhioStateFB's early lead at Rutgers.
pic.twitter.com/PijWjGyTRg

— Ohio State on BTN (@OhioStateOnBTN) October 2, 2021

For as comfortable as Burke looked during his freshman season, he's feeling even more confident heading into his sophomore campaign.

"I'm a lot more confident," he said on Tuesday. "(I've) got my feet under me, got a year under me. My job is to be specific with my details in the game and just take care of the little things out there and then everything will take care of itself."

Burke made a strong impression on Ohio State last season, but he had to deal with several new faces with the overhauling of the defensive coaching staff. Out were defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs and secondary coach Matt Barnes. Instead, Burke will be under the tutelage of defensive coordinator Jim Knowles and cornerbacks coach Tim Walton, who brings 25 years of coaching experience to Ohio State.

Walton said that Burke's preparation has stood out as he gets ready for the upcoming season and a matchup with Notre Dame on Sept. 3.

"(He's) very competitive and he tries to detail his body of work," Walton said. "He tries to fix issues, he takes coaching really well. He's serious about the game. Practice is serious for him. He's dialed in and in tune to all the little things, so when you get that elbow point, it becomes natural for you. He's a guy that's a great competitor and he's really dialed in to play in this football game."

Burke confirmed the focus that he puts into his practice and preparation, saying that he takes it very seriously. It also helps, according to Burke, to go up against Ohio State's offense.

"I just revert back to my training and all the training I do," he said. "I trust my training and all the techniques that I learned and I just apply it to my game. I take practice really seriously. When I'm practicing with these guys, the best receivers in the nation, it kind of makes the game a lot easier."

Burke has not only noticed that his confidence is growing entering this season, but he's noticed a change throughout Ohio State's roster. While the concept of the brotherhood has always existed among the Buckeyes, he said he feels it stronger than ever with this current group at Ohio State.

"I just feel like our bond together is stronger," Burke said. "I feel like this whole offseason, we did a lot of bonding. I just feel like this group together, we really love each other and we really live for each other."