

Fall Camp Observations: Simmons And Fryar Man The Tackle Spots, More Clarity Provided On Defensive Starters



Ohio State's eighth practice of fall camp took place on Friday at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, and Buckeye Sports Bulletin was in attendance to take in the latest from the football program. Here are our instant observations ahead of Ohio State's scrimmage on Saturday:

Offense

Ohio State's practice on Friday provided further clarity on the offensive line, with starters at both tackle spots beginning to emerge. From left to right, the majority of first-team reps were taken by Josh Simmons, Donovan Jackson, Carson Hinzman, Matthew Jones and Josh Fryar.

It's a shift from where Fryar has lined up for most of the spring and the start of fall camp, but with Simmons losing his black stripe on Thursday, the transfer has seemingly made his push, and the coaching staff is confident that Fryar can produce at right tackle.

"I mean, we always have to figure what the best five is and then where their best position will be," head coach Ryan Day said Wednesday. "We've had guys that have swung before, you guys know that. And for some guys, it's easier than others. Josh (Fryar) has been able to move back and forth pretty good, which really helps his value. Other guys, it's a little bit harder."

Behind the presumed starting offensive line, Ohio State lined up - from left to right - with Tegra Tshabola, Quinton Burke, Victor Cutler Jr. - who also lost his black stripe on Thursday - Toby Wilson and Luke Montgomery, though it's unlikely that Burke and Wilson will ultimately be with the second team once the season begins. The third team featured a combination of George Fitzpatrick, Trey Leroux, Zen Michalski, Jakob James and Miles Walker, though players were quickly shuffled in and out of the lineup.

As for who the eventual offensive line will block for, Kyle McCord and Devin Brown continued to split first-team reps at quarterback. While neither had a particularly noteworthy day - protection was a challenge throughout practice as Ohio State's defensive line continued to wreak havoc - McCord slightly edged out Brown with a more consistent performance, though both had their moments.

Freshman quarterback Lincoln Kienholz continues to impress in limited action, completing several impressive passes on the day.

Ohio State's group of running backs had a notable omission as Miyan Williams was unavailable for practice, but the rest of the room had a strong day. TreVeyon Henderson continues to look good in his preparation for a bounce back season, while Chip Trayanum - who repped ahead of sophomore Dallon Hayden - got plenty of work as a receiver out of the backfield. Walk-on Willtrell Hartson also had a couple of nice gains.

The wide receivers had an up-and-down day, with some impressive receptions - look no further than Noah Rogers, who collected a one-handed catch - and a few drops that led to players running laps around the practice field. Gee Scott Jr. also appears to have certified himself as the No. 2 tight end behind incumbent starter Cade Stover. In a brief special teams drill early in practice, Ohio State saw Ballard, Emeka Egbuka, Marvin Harrison Jr. and Brandon Inniss all saw work at punt returner.

Defense

The Buckeyes received a scare when junior defensive tackle Michael Hall Jr. limped to the sidelines with an apparent injury to his lower left leg. The Buckeyes' projected starting defensive lineman was tended to by trainers and given tape on his left foot, but he would soon return to the field for light team drills. Another Ohio State junior defensive tackle, Tyleik Williams, did not practice with the team after suffering a right knee injury early in the Buckeyes' first fall camp practice on Aug. 3.

Other than the injuries, the defensive starters seem to be shaping out for the season. The Buckeyes continued to run out J.T. Tuimoloau, Hall, Ty Hamilton and Jack Sawyer on the first-team front-four, while also mixing in Tywone Malone and Jaden McKenzie on the defensive line.

Steele Chambers and Tommy Eichenberg assumed first-team reps at linebacker, while Jordan Hancock, Denzel Burke and Davison Igbinosun were the first-team corners. Sonny Styles, Lathan Ransom and Ja'Had Carter had starting reps at nickel, bandit (strong safety) and adjuster (free safety), respectively.

We also observed a potential position change towards the end of practice when Arvell Reese participated in team drills with the defensive ends. The true freshman Reese is currently listed as a linebacker, but may be seeing time at this position - or could be preparing to play at the "Jack" - to compensate for the loss of defensive end Omari Abor, who will miss "a couple months" after undergoing an undisclosed surgery on Tuesday.