

Linebacker Gabe Powers Gaining Confidence Heading Into Second Season



As former five-star linebacker C.J. Hicks enters his second year at Ohio State prepared to take the lead on the team's "Jack" position, his classmate is still making strides behind the scenes.

Gabe Powers, a former blue-chipper in his own right, is settling into his role providing depth at the team's two regular linebacker spots.

"Second year, you're used to things a lot now," Powers said. "It's going great, I'm getting better. I used this whole spring to get better."

While he won't compete for a starting spot in 2023, Powers' growth is one that will help provide depth to the team's linebacking core, and if nothing else prepare him for a bigger job with the team in the future.

"He's establishing that respect from his teammates," Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles said of Powers in March. "We're encouraging him to compete. He's getting better with his hands and his feet. He's improving — and expectations are high for him, so I'm staying after him."

While it's possible the duo doesn't play much together this season, Powers and Hicks have developed a strong bond as the team's second-year linebackers looking to break out. Powers has been taking more reps at middle linebacker, taking advantage of his instincts and football IQ.

"We're roommates, so we know each other really well," Powers said. "Being out there and being together, I have confidence in him that he's going to make the play and he has confidence in me."

One benefit of sitting the sidelines for a year is learning from the veterans on the team. One of Ohio State's biggest stars on defense is senior linebacker Tommy Eichenberg, who plays the above-mentioned middle linebacker position.

"It helped me, learning behind Tommy," Powers said. "Tommy is a great linebacker. Watching him has

really improved my game.”

Overall, this offseason has been about making every improvement possible for Powers. The refinement of his game has made him a more assertive player, and he hopes to be ready if his number is called in 2023.

“I think the confidence is probably the biggest (improvement),” Powers said. “Confidence is a big part of a lot of peoples’ game. I have a lot more confidence now, so I feel good.”