

Georgia's Coaches, Players Complimentary Of C.J. Stroud Ahead Of Peach Bowl



With all the focus on Ohio State's offense against Georgia's defense in the Peach Bowl, there's been no shortage of focus in the lead-up on Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud, perhaps the most important factor as those two sides prepare to match up.

Stroud - who enters the game with 3,340 passing yards and 37 touchdowns - has been one of the best quarterbacks in college football this season, and Georgia is preparing like a two-time Heisman finalist will be taking the field.

"I think he's an elite passer," co-defensive coordinator Will Muschamp said. "That's the first thing that jumps out. He can make all the throws. He puts the balls in catchable areas where a lot of just don't have that talent to do that, a lot of people don't have that talent to do that. And he certainly can."

Both cornerback Chris Smith and linebacker Smael Mondon Jr. agreed that Stroud is an "elite passer," with Mondon complimenting his ability to open things up for his receivers.

"Elite passer, with really good ball placement," Mondon said. "He puts the ball where his receivers can have a chance to make a play. So that's hard to defend."

Co-defensive coordinator Glenn Schumann added that there isn't one type of play or moment that Stroud specifically shines in, but that he's able to do so on a consistent basis.

"Consistency is what makes somebody different, and he's consistently accurate," Schumann said. "He has great touch. He's a good decisionmaker, and he trusts his play makers around him. So I think that all those traits sound easy, but they're tough to have on a consistent basis. So he's consistently accurate.

"He consistently has good touch and decision making, and he trusts the people around him," he continued. "And I think his consistency is what makes him different."

And for as much as has been said about his passing ability, Georgia is also aware of his ability to run the ball. Stroud has rushed for just 74 yards on 35 attempts this season, with those numbers largely impacted by sacks and tackles for loss, but he's shown the ability at times to take off.

"I think it was Michigan State (in 2020), he takes a zone read 70 yards for a touchdown. Against Northwestern this past year, with 5:30 left to go in the game, designed quarterback run out the back side," Muschamp said. "So he has legs and athleticism to evade in the rush and create off-rhythm plays which is obviously very difficult to defend, but the No. 1 thing that jumps off the film is his ability to throw the football."

Smith agreed with Muschamp, adding that Stroud's ability to compete through the air and occasionally show flashes on the ground means everything in Ohio State's offense runs through Stroud.

"Like I said, like Coach (Muschamp) said, he's got legs," Smith said. "He can pretty much do it all. He's a Heisman finalist, and that just says enough for the kind of player he is."