

Indiana, Tom Allen Preparing For Both Ohio State Quarterbacks In Season Opener



With both Indiana and Ohio State in the midst of a quarterback competition entering the season opener on Saturday in Bloomington, Hoosier head coach Tom Allen likely won't be able to sleep in the coming days with thoughts of signal callers - both for his team and the opponent - racing through his mind.

Most of Ohio State's position battles have been decided - or are at least approaching a decision - with Josh Simmons and Josh Fryar solidified at left and right tackle, respectively, and no indication from the program as of yet that redshirt freshman Carson Hinzman has lost his hold at center. But the Buckeyes still have yet to name a starting quarterback entering this season, with the expectation that both junior Kyle McCord and redshirt freshman Devin Brown will see the field against the Hoosiers.

"You think about the tackles, the center and the quarterback, that's really kind of the triangle of how things operate for an offense," Allen said Tuesday. "Once again, talented players. We've been through this before when they have a new quarterback, and whoever it's going to be is going to be a very talented players and they're going to have new guys at other positions, but they're going to be very talented new guys even though we haven't seen them play a lot for Ohio State.

"The unknown to me, when you think quarterback-wise, there's not very many times where we've had a quarterback (at Ohio State) where we don't really know a lot about, so there's not a lot," he continued. "You have to go back to high school film for both of these guys, so that makes it unique. And they're also different quarterbacks as well, they have different skill sets. Both can throw the ball extremely well, and one's more athletic than the other one is, and from a running perspective, both can elude things. That does create challenges, without question. But we've got to have a great plan for both."

Allen said the keys for limiting Ohio State's offense - whether it is with McCord or Brown at the helm, as both are likely to see extended time on the field - is to tackle well, make plays on the ball, and above all else, "out-compete" the opposition.

"We've got to tackle extremely well," he said. "They get you in space, they've got great athletes, and that's where they really put a lot of pressure on you defensively. From a position perspective, that's going to be in-game adjustments. We'll see how it unfolds, who they're using and how they're using them and how that modifies what they do. But their system is what it is and they do a really good job, so at the end of the day you've got to stop them."

And that challenge for Indiana - which is generally viewed as at least a 30-point underdog and has lost the last 27 games in this series - will be even greater considering that Allen said this is potentially the best team that Day has had entering his fifth season at Ohio State.

"You just go through and study what they've done offensively, it's impressive," Allen said. "And the way they continue to recruit. He was given a great situation, without question, but that's hard to take it and elevate it. They were one makable field goal away from playing for a national championship. I have a ton of respect for him, I think he's done a tremendous job there, and I think he's a first-class person.

"There's a lot of pressure," he continued. "They're expected to do things every single week and some people will look at that and think that's hard to maintain that and elevate it, and obviously the expectation for them is to win a national championship. Until you do that, you get questioned. But at the same time, you can see it and they just continue to get better and better, and they may have their best team that he's had since he's been there."