

Marvin Harrison Jr. Looking To Make Noise In First College Football Playoff Appearance



During his first two seasons at the college level, Ohio State wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. has dazzled Buckeye fans and national audiences alike.

Whether he's snagging acrobatic catches or creating separation with sharp route running, Harrison has emerged as one of the nation's top receiving targets. Now, he'll get his first opportunity to compete in the College Football Playoff, as the Buckeyes kick off their national title pursuits on Saturday against No. 1 Georgia in the Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl.

While the Buckeyes enter Saturday's contest as a 6.5-point underdog, Harrison noted that his focus is on aiding his team to a win over Georgia and an appearance in the CFP National Championship.

"For me personally, I don't really care too much about being underdogs," Harrison said. "At the end of the day, whatever team is going to go out there and play the hardest and execute the best is going to win the game. It's football, and there's only one game that counts, and that's the game that you're playing."

Harrison's emergence began during the Buckeyes' postseason appearance in the Rose Bowl at the conclusion of the 2021 campaign. The Philadelphia native torched Utah's secondary en route to six receptions for 71 yards and three touchdowns, stepping up in the absence of star wideouts Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave.

He followed a similar path in his first season as a starter. Harrison was tasked with elevating his game due to a season-long injury to star wideout Jaxon Smith-Njigba. As he did in the Rose Bowl, Harrison stepped up and produced 72 receptions for 1,157 yards and 12 touchdowns, leading the Buckeyes in all three categories.

Although Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud had forged a connection with Smith-Njigba during the 2021 campaign, he noted that Harrison's ability to track the ball and his catch radius greatly alleviated any concerns left by Smith-Njigba.

"He has a great catch radius," Stroud said. "He's very tall, very long, but his routes are amazing. So I think that's what makes him so great. Of course he can really catch any ball that you give to him."

“For me, I just say give the guy a chance. Even like sometimes when I take a hit and I can’t really step into my throw, if I just give him a shot, he’ll usually either come up with it or bat it down for me so it doesn’t get intercepted. As a quarterback, it means a lot to have a receiver like that, that knows football where, if he can’t get to it or he can’t catch it, he’ll make sure he knocks it down for the sake of the team. That speaks volumes about what type of receiver he is.”

While Harrison has stepped into the role of wide receiver No. 1 for the Buckeyes, he’s also taken the label to heart by putting in overtime work at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. Head coach Ryan Day said Harrison is “one of the hardest workers” for the Buckeyes.

“I think when you find special players, you have talent,” Day said. “But I think what makes Marvin special is his discipline and his skill. He’s built a tremendous amount of discipline in his life, takes care of his body, prepares at a high level, just unbelievable amount of discipline, the way that he runs his routes. His work ethic is unbelievable. Then the skill.

“I mean, the amount of work that he puts in I think you could say that he’s one of the hardest workers on the entire team, the work he puts in. You can ask anybody on their team, they would say he’s ranked number one or two top hardest working guys on our team. So when you combine all that together, you get a special player.”

While the semifinal battle with Georgia creeps closer, Harrison noted that while the Buckeyes are slightly on edge, all they need to do is keep a level head and play their brand of football.

“I think everyone’s a little bit more on edge obviously,” Harrison said. “I think we’re cool, calm, and collected at the same time. Not going to get too high, not going to get too low. Just play the game and play as hard as we can.”