

Missouri Head Coach Eliah Drinwkitz Praises Ryan Day, Buckeyes Program For Longstanding Success



Ohio State's last game against Michigan brought up several questions surrounding the level of respect between the two longtime rivals — and more specifically between the two team's head coaches — but this time around in the Cotton Bowl, the Buckeyes' opposing coach made it known that he and his program admire their opponent.

Speaking at Thursday's joint head coaches press conference held at AT&T Stadium, Missouri head coach Eliah Drinkwitz was quick to give out his flowers to coach Day and Ohio State, where he lauded the Buckeyes' elite talent level and deep roster.

"Obviously, we have an incredibly talented opponent (in Ohio State)," Drinkwitz said. They have all the makings of a championship football team. Probably the most explosive team that we've played offensively with the combination at running back, tight end and wide receiver. Their offensive line does an incredible job of both protection and establishing lines of scrimmage.

"Defensively, their front six is as tough and as strong as anybody in the country," he continued. "I don't think their back end has a whole lot of weaknesses. Their nickel player (Jordan Hancock) is a very talented player because of his ability to play both man and disguised coverage. And then obviously, their special teams are elite. So it's a tremendous challenge for our football team."

Drinkwitz, who led Missouri to an impressive 10-2 record and ninth-place finish in the College Football Playoff rankings, continued to point out certain Ohio State players that will serve as a challenge for his team during the press conference. He listed quarterback Devin Brown as a player that could give his team fits, saying that his dual-threat ability and lack of film on tape will require his team to be prepared for a more diverse Ohio State playbook.

But Drinkwitz' largest praises went to Day and his overall program. The Tigers coach, who likened Ohio State to an SEC opponent in terms of their physicality in the trenches, said that he was most impressed by Day and his staff's ability to build and sustain a winning program, one that competes for a championship year-in-and-year-out since he took the reigns from Urban Meyer in 2019.

"I have a tremendous amount of respect for Coach Day and the job that he's done," Drinkwitz said. "When they introduced him today, the reality that in every year that he's been a head coach, he's played in a New Year's Six Bowl or the College Football Playoff is about the most impressive thing I've heard in coaching. When you get to the top, the wind is twice as strong. And so for him to be able to sustain excellence, while people just assume that (excellence) happens, it's incredibly hard to do.

"They're a blueblood for a reason, but it's not just because (they are) the Buckeyes," he continued. It takes strong leadership. And Coach Day has set the tone for leadership, not only in the Big Ten but around the college football world. And so for us to have the opportunity to match up against him, we know it's a tremendous challenge. But it's one that we're ready to embrace."