

Observations From Ohio State's 11th Spring Practice Session



Ohio State's 11th practice session of the spring was held on Friday, and Buckeye Sports Bulletin was in attendance for the nearly hour-long viewing session to the media. Here are our observations from all three phases of the game:

Offense/Defense

The offensive line had a rough go of it at Ohio State's practice Friday. Whether it was Kyle McCord or Devin Brown under center, there was unrelenting pressure from the Buckeyes' defensive line whenever the team met up for 11-on-11 reps.

As it has been all spring, it appeared neither quarterback had separated themselves all that much on Friday. One aspect that did stand out, however, was a reluctance to throw down field by Brown, who relied heavily on his checkdown targets in 7-on-7 and 11-on-11 situational drills.

McCord was much more willing to sling the ball, but that came with mixed results. He made several solid completions to Marvin Harrison Jr. and Jayden Ballard, as well as a touchdown to Cade Stover in red zone drills, but also threw the day's lone interception during 7-on-7, trying to fit a ball into a tight window to Kyion Grayes but instead finding safety Cameron Martinez.

UL-Monroe transfer Victor Cutler Jr. rotated fairly evenly with sophomore Carson Hinzman at center, after Hinzman had previously been eating the vast majority of first-team reps. Redshirt junior offensive tackle Josh Fryar showed some gains in the pass protection category during pass rush one-on-ones, holding his own against junior defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau before getting beat by fellow junior defensive end Jack Sawyer.

Speaking of individual pass rush, junior defensive tackle Mike Hall Jr. looked almost unblockable Friday. He got past junior offensive guard Donovan Jackson, arguably the team's best offensive lineman, with a spin move his first rep, then later executed a perfect dip-and-rip to bend around an interior lineman for a quick win. Kenyatta Jackson Jr. also stood out, getting past freshman offensive tackle Miles Walker and showing some impressive get-off throughout practice.

Also on defense, linebacker C.J. Hicks got a taste of first-team action — filling in for the injured Steele Chambers — and showcased a similar ability to work sideline-to-sideline as Chambers. The secondary also appeared to have another solid day, helping the defensive line register some coverage sacks.

The offense struggled as a whole throughout practice, but there were a handful of highlights. During red zone drills, Brown delivered a pass in the corner of the end zone to wide receiver Kojo Antwi for a touchdown. It was an impressive catch by Antwi, who had to go up to get the pass and then come down in bounds. On the ground, Chip Trayanum provided one of the biggest hits of practice by trucking safety Lathan Ransom en route to a rushing touchdown, which got a big cheer from Ohio State's offense.

Special Teams

The punt and return games haven't offered quite as much intrigue as the offense and defense, but it will be interesting to see who shapes up at returner this season.

Tate took several reps at both spots during Friday's session, and given the way he has developed this spring, it would not be surprising to see him at that spot in an attempt to just get him on the field. It's a work in progress, though, as Tate did muff one of his kickoff return attempts while trying to come upfield on a short kick.

Andy Anders and Jack Emerson also contributed to this report.