

# Ohio State Defensive Coordinator Kerry Coombs Discusses Return



Ohio State defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs coached cornerbacks for the Buckeyes from 2012-17 before joining former Buckeye Mike Vrabel as the Tennessee Titans defensive backs coach.

After two years in the NFL with Vrabel, Coombs was offered the Ohio State defensive coordinator job by Ryan Day. And the fiery secondary coach, who has spent the past 37 years coaching football, accepted graciously.

Coombs spoke to members of the media on Feb. 5, following Day's press conference:

- A lot of the things that happen in these transitions are private and they should be. But Mike Vrabel understood; he was fantastic. I went to Tennessee because I love Mike Vrabel.
- I couldn't be more excited. After watching how well the Buckeye defense played last year, there isn't much to change. There is no reason to make massive changes to the defense. We have great players and we have great coaches. Greg Mattison, Larry Johnson, Al Washington, and Matt Barnes are phenomenal coaches.
- I've known Greg Mattison for a long time, since I was coaching high school and he was coaching at that school up north.
- Why defensive coordinator? I don't make conditions. Ryan Day is the head coach, and I don't get bogged down in that kind of stuff.
- Defensive football is best played when everybody has a voice and it is a collective process.
- I am infinitely better than I was two years ago. The experience was phenomenal. The volume of defense in the NFL is huge. Mike Vrabel and Titans defensive coordinator Dean Pees are two of the great defensive minds in the history of the sport.
- I learned another leadership style from Mike Vrabel. What I didn't expect is that you have to coach differently in the NFL. In high school and college, you tell the players what to do and they do it. In the NFL, the guys will ask why? And when you have to contemplate why.
- The great thing about spending two seasons with the Titans is that we played every defense there is. I love what they're doing here. You can bet your bottom dollar that we're going to play press man coverage. We will also play three-deep, single-high coverage, because that's what we do.
- These guys got to play a lot of ball last year. Even the guys who weren't starters still took a lot of snaps.
- I love Ohio State and I missed it. I missed the development of the player. We still developed

players at Tennessee, but I love recruiting and I love going into high schools and meeting players and coaches. I love being behind the stage on draft night and seeing a young man reach his dreams. I love walking out of the tunnel on Saturdays.

- You always make career decisions based on what's best for your family, and I love my family. Some are moving to Detroit, but they are nearby.
- I didn't leave Tennessee; I came back to Ohio State.
- There's some newer, fancier things since I left, but it felt like home.
- Mike Vrabel sat on the same side of the table together for two years. And when we were drawing up players, he'd elbow me and go, 'If I become a head coach, I'm going to hire you.' And I said, 'If I'm ever a head coach, I'm going to hire you.' He asked me, so I went to Tennessee to coach with him.
- Future aspirations? I don't think there is another thing outside of Ohio State. This is it.
- I just show up to work and work as hard as I can. I didn't think I've got to go somewhere else to advance my career.
- I appreciate your professionalism and the way you do your work. You guys were very professional throughout the whole process, so thank you.

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