

Ohio State Gaining Clarity On Starting Offensive Line As Fall Camp Rolls On



With three starters to determine on the offensive line, things are beginning to take shape for Ohio State as the season opener approaches on Sept. 2 at Indiana.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day offered an update on those battles on Wednesday at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, saying that he likes the progress he is seeing on the offensive line. Beginning with the open tackle spots, Day pointed out that Josh Fryar, Tegra Tshabola, Josh “Jimmy” Simmons and freshman Luke Montgomery are all battling to be on the outside when Ohio State opens the season.

“I think that when you look at Josh Fryar, when you look at Tegra and you look at Jimmy Simmons and you look at Luke Montgomery, all four of those guys are competing at a high level,” Day said. “Zen (Michalski)’s also in there, and George (Fitzpatrick) is getting better.

“But those four guys are competing, and we’re trying to figure out what is the best mixture of right and left, and Justin (Frye) and Mike (Sollenne) and all the guys in there are working hard to figure that part of it out, but I’m encouraged. I’m excited. I think we have a chance to be good at that position.”

Day left open the possibility that Fryar - who has primarily worked at left tackle in the spring and as fall camp has been underway - could end up starting at right tackle, but regardless of where he lines up, it’s likely at this point that one of the two open starting tackle spots will be filled by Fryar.

“Josh has been able to kind of move back and forth, which really helps his value,” Day said. “Other guys, it’s a little bit harder. But for the most part, all four of these guys are pretty athletic, and they’re not really too right-handed or left-handed, so they they can handle it a little bit better. But we want to get settled here by midweek, end of this week, so that guys can kind of settle into those positions. But if we don’t make those decisions now, it’s going to be harder to make them in two weeks down the road.”

An important determining factor in who will claim the job opposite Fryar - whether it be on the left or right side - will be Ohio State’s upcoming scrimmage on Saturday. But regardless of who winds up earning the job, Day is confident in their ability to step in and contribute for the Buckeyes.

“I can tell you that we’re very excited about Jimmy Simmons. ... He’s off to a great start, and I think Luke Montgomery has a really bright future out of him,” Day said. “So again, these are all exciting

things. Tegra does a lot of good things. I can't tell you that one's in front of the other - what we're trying to do is project out how this all shakes out down the road, and what's best in the long term. I think by this time next week, I'll have real good answers for you."

Things are more clear at center, where redshirt freshman Carson Hinzman has taken first-team reps throughout fall camp and has taken a clear lead for the job. Day said that Hinzman is battling alongside transfer Victor Cutler Jr. for the job, with Jakob James trailing behind the pair.

But with the job seemingly Hinzman's to lose, Day said - like with the tackle spots - that this next week will go a long way in determining who will line up at center.

"He's going to have to continually get better every day," Day said. "I think this is, for both of those two guys, I think this next week is going to be critical to figure out where they're at because now's where you find out - you know, you're bumped and bruised and tired, and the scheme is adding up. Who's going to now take the next step? I think it'll be clear, but we'll see. But that's a pretty good battle right now."