

Ohio State Head Coach Ryan Day Letting Players Decide If They Want To Play In Cotton Bowl



Despite there being just four days until the Buckeyes square off with Missouri in the Cotton Bowl on Friday, many of Ohio State's most productive players from the 2023 season are still uncertain if they want to participate in the contest. While there were many key contributors, such as cornerback Denzel Burke, wide receiver Emeka Egbuka and defensive end Jack Sawyer, among others, that did proclaim their desire to play last week, head coach Ryan Day told the media on Saturday that he is still unsure how the roster will shape out come Friday.

"As of now, I don't have any updates in that area," Day said. "There's nobody that will be out that would be new to you right now."

Ohio State's roster uncertainty at the Cotton Bowl starts with wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr., who, despite all signs pointing to him being a top-three NFL Draft pick in April if he chooses to leave, has still yet to proclaim whether or not he is playing in the contest. While Harrison is the biggest name still in question, the Buckeyes are also unsure of the participation of other impact players such as running back TreVeyon Henderson and defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau. Both players have yet to make a formal announcement on their futures, but Henderson was seen practicing with the team on Saturday.

Day, who is also dealing with a new starting quarterback in the Cotton Bowl in Devin Brown, said that he will leave it up to the players to decide their future with the program in the next couple of days. The coach admitted that while these are difficult decisions for his players, he believes they will each make the right decision for them and their families after some extensive conversations with the people closest to them.

"It's hard for me to say because that's kind of their own deal, and we'll communicate that as time goes on," Day said. "I know that there are some guys who are going through it and making sure they're making the right decision for not only them, but also for the team. (Xavier Johnson) doesn't have to make a decision, he knows he's going. Some guys know they're going. The guys that do have to make that decision, they're being really thorough, asking the right questions and doing it the right way."

With Day and the program's Cotton Bowl roster still in limbo, the coach said he feels his team still

recognizes the importance of this game and is motivated to finish the season on a winning note, something that will drive them to have a productive week of practice and preparation leading up to Friday night's contest against the Tigers.

"This game, winning the Cotton Bowl means a lot to the people in Ohio," Day said. "It means a lot to Ohio State, it means a lot to our team to win this game and do it the right way. And so that's what we're going to do this week."

"We're in the Cotton Bowl and it's a New Year's Six game, so we'd expect nothing less (than to be prepared for the game)," he added. "We're preparing to play the best football in America, that's what we're going to do. We know it's going to be a challenge, we'd expect nothing less coming to the Cotton Bowl. So we're going to continue to prepare for this game the way we've prepared for other games in the past and use the same model that we've used for bowl games in the past...have a great week of practice over at (AT&T) Stadium and then go follow our plan to win."