

Ohio State Head Coach Ryan Day Says Julian Sayin Is “In The Mix” For Starting Quarterback Role



Ohio State freshman quarterback Julian Sayin has turned heads with his performance on the practice field during his first month as a Buckeye, and that solid play may have earned him an outside shot at winning the starting job.

Speaking with the media on Wednesday, Day said Sayin — who transferred to Ohio State from Alabama in January following the retirement of longtime Crimson Tide head coach Nick Saban — has inserted himself into the running for the starting quarterback position with his play this spring, joining a competition that will likely include veteran Will Howard and the redshirt sophomore Devin Brown.

“He’s in the mix. He is,” Day said when asked about Sayin’s status in the quarterback competition. “It doesn’t matter if (he’s going up against) the ones, twos or threes, you get an opportunity to see what guys look like...So this has been a really good sample size to figure out where guys are at. But Julian’s been competing his tail off, and he’ll continue to do that. He has a very bright future, and he’s going to have a really good summer.”

Sayin has spent just over a month on the practice field with Ohio State, but that has not stopped him from displaying what his coach called some “unbelievable” qualities. Day said Sayin’s approach to the game and position this spring has been most impressive, where he has shown a desire to compete amongst his peers as opposed to easing into the college game and accepting a role towards the bottom of the quarterback depth chart.

This mentality, along with his raw abilities as a thrower, are what Day said allowed Sayin to shed his black stripe after just nine spring practices — becoming the second-fastest freshman to do so behind only fellow first-year wideout Jeremiah Smith — a decision that the coach said was primarily player-driven.

“He’s been in there, competing, and he’s making plays,” Day said. “And the guys know. A lot of times with the black stripe, it’s the players (who lead the decision). They know, they see it. A guy makes a play, or shows up over an extended period of time. Nine practices in, you can see that he was making a lot of throws, and in big spots, even against the ones. So the play speaks for itself.

“Again, usually when you get your black stripe off, it’s because you’ve earned the respect of the team. And I think he’s done that.”

While Day offered a plethora of praise to Sayin throughout his 27-minute press conference, he did say that the freshman — like many first-years — still needs to show some signs of improvement heading into the summer if he wants to win the starting job, with his strength and overall maturity being at the top of that list.

But Day is confident Sayin can make these necessary adjustments as he gains experience in offensive coordinator Chip Kelly’s system, putting him in prime position to surge up the depth chart as the offseason trudges on.

“(He needs to show) overall experience and then just maturity — physically mentally and emotionally, all those things,” Day said. “But he’s shown great signs. I think he’s put on maybe 15 pounds since he’s gotten here — that’s great. The overall strength and size (needs to improve), then it’s just a matter of experience. But I like his approach. I see things in him that lead us to believe that he has a really bright future. And it’s very, very encouraging.”

“We need depth in that room. So (Sayin’s) mindset is going to be, ‘I’m playing next year.’ And if he’s the best available at the time, he’s going to play.”

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