

Ohio State Head Coach Ryan Day Takes Responsibility For Michigan Loss, Says He Was “Shocked” At Result



Ohio State's 13-10 loss to unranked Michigan on Saturday was one of the more shocking defeats of both the college football season and the illustrious history of Buckeye football, and it appeared no one was as surprised at the result than the Buckeyes' head coach.

"I was in shock after the game, I really was," Day said Wednesday afternoon at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center in his first public appearance since the fourth-straight loss to the rival Wolverines. "I never expected that to happen. There were some things that happened in the game that I'm responsible for that can never happen again, I don't know how else to say it."

Day's words match up with how he appeared in the moments after the game, when the sixth-year coach had somewhat of a blank, shell-shocked stare during the team's "Carmen Ohio," tradition, a look that only continued in the ensuing minutes while the team engaged in a full-out brawl with Michigan at midfield.

Day no longer had that blank look four days after the defeat, which allowed him to dive into some of the areas where the Buckeyes fell flat against the Wolverines. When asked to provide his thoughts on the game, Day immediately pointed out that while the defense mostly did its job, holding Michigan to just 13 points and 234 total yards, the offense ultimately fell flat, a development that he took the blame for.

"I feel like the defense played excellent," Day said. "I thought that really from the Oregon game on, some of those adjustments that were made have been excellent. And I thought they played really, really hard in this game. Was everything perfect? No. But I thought they played really well."

"When you look at the offensive side of the ball, it was not a good day," Day said. "It wasn't a good day across the board on offense. Some of that had to do with the coaching and some of the game planning that went on. There's no question that we could have done a better job getting the ball at the perimeter."

Day said the most glaring weaknesses of the offense on Saturday was the team's inability to get the ball

to their offensive playmakers on the outside and their over-reliance on the inside run game.

After having a successful game through the air against Indiana a week prior, the Buckeyes' passing offense fell flat against Michigan, with Will Howard completing a season-low 19 of his 33 passes for just 175 yards and two interceptions. The rushing game was even more poor, with the team squandering up just 77 yards on 26 carries (3.0 average), many of those attempts being up the middle right into the teeth of a formidable Michigan defensive front.

"There's no question that the ball was run on the interior too much in the game, I think that's clear to see," Day said. "Again, we did throw (33) times, and there were some plays to the outside. But overall, just the percentage was too high of running the ball inside."

Day also made note of his team's inability to punch the ball into the end zone when they had the opportunities, with the Buckeyes finding their way to the red zone on multiple occasions but only scoring one touchdown and a field goal. This issue was perhaps most glaring after Caleb Downs' third-quarter interception, which put the Buckeyes in sound field position at the Michigan 16-yard-line, only for them to run gain zero yards in three plays and miss a 34-yard-field goal.

"I think one of the key points of the game, though, is when you have five trips to the red zone and you only get 10 points," Day said. "In those moments there, we had a couple missed field goals, we had an interception, we had a field goal and we had a touchdown. We hadn't done that up to that point, and that was a big deal.

"And then on special teams, we added some other things that we didn't execute very well. A couple kicks that weren't fielded great — down at the 7-yard-line — which created coming out situations, and then we had the two missed field goals."

Among the other mistakes that Day said cost his team on Saturday was the defense's 12-men-on-the-field penalty on Michigan's final drive, which he said again was a miscommunication that was caused by the crowd noise.

Each of these issues that plagued the Buckeyes against the Wolverines are ultimately on the leader of the program, according to Day, who admitted that he needs to put his team in a better position to succeed on game days and everything in between.

"Ultimately, that comes back on me as the head coach," he said. "Whether it's the right guys being in the right spot, the recruiting part of it, the scheme, the coaching. That's on me."

Day did not say much about if the team needs to revisit their mentality heading into the rivalry game, but he did say that this latest loss to the Wolverines — the Buckeyes' fourth in as many years — can act as a major motivator for his team as they begin their College Football Playoff push and hope to salvage one of their three goals for the season with a national championship.

"When you come up short in The Game, it's devastating. But we still have a great opportunity in front of us," Day said. "I think we've had some good meetings. We've talked about it. We've come to some common ground in certain areas. We're getting back on the field today and getting moving forward.

"As bad as this feels, we have an opportunity to go win a championship in four games. So we can use that frustration and anger and things that have come with this loss to catapult us into these playoffs, to

motivate us, and that's what we have to do. Because at this point, you only can control what you can control, so that's kind of where our focus will be."