

Ohio State Offensive Lineman Tegra Tshabola In Line For Significant Playing Time At Right Guard For Season Opener



Ohio State junior offensive lineman Tegra Tshabola has received considerable praise from coaches and teammates throughout fall camp, with many noting the marked improvements he has made to his game and body over the offseason.

These types of comments had many who follow the program believing Tshabola could insert himself as a starter on Ohio State's offensive line this season, and that appears to be trending more and more towards a reality as the Buckeyes' season opener against Akron approaches, at least according to head coach Ryan Day.

Speaking with the media on Thursday, Day indicated that Tshabola will likely receive significant reps at right guard Saturday afternoon against the Zips, an opportunity for the junior that the coach said was earned.

"I think he's definitely going to play at guard," Day said. "Whether he starts, we'll probably decide here coming off of (this past) Saturday. But he's definitely going to play unless something drastic were to happen. I think he's earned that opportunity.

"How much and if it's the whole game, again, we'll probably decide that as we get through the weekend. But for sure, he's earned the right to play in this game."

While a decision on who will start at right guard has yet to be officially announced — Day could reveal it during his press conference on Tuesday — all signs point towards the 6-6, 237-pound lineman earning the starting right guard role for the 2024 season, winning the job over sophomore Carson Hinzman, who was Ohio State's starting center last year.

This would mark the first time Tshabola has earned a starting role on Ohio State's offensive line in his three-year career with the program, as the former four-star played in all 13 games last season but mostly appeared on special teams. He did earn offensive snaps in five games, however, including a career-high 10 against Western Kentucky early in the season.

Despite the limited reps, those within the program seem confident the junior can thrive on Ohio State's front five this season. Tshabola has impressed his teammates and coaches over spring with his athleticism and strength, traits of which offensive coordinator Chip Kelly said should be an important addition to an Ohio State offensive line that faced significant criticism last season for its up-and-down play.

"Tegra's really athletic and can really sink his hips, and he's long," Ohio State offensive coordinator Chip Kelly said last week. "He's really long, and when you can play long on the offensive line and keep defensive linemen away from people because of your length, that's a really big deal for us.

"We like offensive linemen that are big, because big people beat up little people. So we like Tegra a lot."

As for Tshabola himself, he declined to comment on if he had won the starting job when speaking with the media at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on Thursday, saying that is up to the coaching staff to decide. But he did say that the competition he has had over the offseason with Hinzman and the rest of the offensive line has made him a better all-around player, an improvement that should do wonders for the lineman as he prepares to make his first significant impact for the Buckeyes in his career.

"I feel good about the competition because I know that it made me better," Tshabola said. "It made me a better football player. Competing against a guy as talented as Carson pushed me to be as good as I am right now."

"Whatever the team needs, I mean you got to go do it. If you haven't gotten any snaps at all, if you ask me to do something to win a game, I'd go do it for the team."