

# Ohio State Planning To Rotate At Left Guard, Right Guard Against Tennessee



Ohio State head coach Ryan Day has suggested throughout the past few weeks that changes could be coming to the offensive line for the Buckeyes' first-round College Football Playoff matchup against Tennessee on Saturday, and with just three days left until kickoff, that still appears to be the case.

In his final formal press conference before the Tennessee game held on Wednesday at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, Day said that he expects some rotation in the trenches, with Austin Siereveld sharing reps with both Luke Montgomery at left guard and Tegra Tshabola at right guard, respectively, that is if they can each put together strong outings in practice.

"I think you're going to see Austin kind of going back and forth," Day said. "Luke has been at left guard during these last couple weeks of practice. Tegra stayed at right. Austin will be the swing man because he's done both. I think you're going to see a rotation at both spots."

"I think coming off (of) Wednesday's practice, the last opportunity in pads this week, we'll get a feel for exactly what that rotation looks like. There's been some good, positive mojo up there. Guys are getting after it."

Ohio State's likely decision to rotate at the guard positions marks yet another change on the offensive line this season, this one coming in a single-game elimination game against a formidable Volunteers' defensive line that has helped the unit rank among the best in the nation in multiple categories.

Since losing both Josh Simmons and Seth McLaughlin to season-ending injuries, the Buckeyes have had to shift some personnel around on the front five, most recently putting Carson Hinzman back at center, Austin Siereveld at left guard and Donovan Jackson at left tackle. This combination was somewhat successful against Indiana, but in the 13-10 loss to Michigan it had a much poorer performance, giving the Buckeyes' runners little space to rush for just 77 yards on 26 carries, just 2.9 yards per attempt.

That outing has compelled Day and Ohio State to reevaluate their options on the offensive line, where they have most notably given another look at the sophomore Montgomery after he has flashed in recent

practices. Day said on Wednesday that the former four-star lineman has been steadily increasing this season during practice and he is excited to see those improvements play out on the field on Saturday.

While the Buckeyes' new-look offensive line is in for a challenging night with projected first-round NFL draft selection James Pearce Jr. and the Vols' several other productive defensive linemen ready to excel, Day is confident the group can come out on Saturday with the right aggression and mentality needed to excel.

"They know how they need to play in this game," Day said. "Not that everything has to be perfect, but we have to rock off the ball and knock people back. They have a good front. Might we swing and miss every once in a while? OK. But we're not going to swing and miss by not being aggressive. We're going to be aggressive. We're going to go after these guys and make sure we're moving back the line of scrimmage. We have to make sure we do that again (Wednesday) in practice."