

Ohio State Quarterback Justin Fields Ready To Roll In Big Ten Championship



For the second time in the last three seasons, Ohio State will enter Saturday evening's Big Ten Championship Game against Wisconsin with a quarterback nursing a knee injury.

But while there were concerns about J.T. Barrett's status heading into the 2017 matchup after he underwent arthroscopic knee surgery to repair an injury that occurred when a photographer collided with his knee before the win over Michigan one week prior, there's no doubt quarterback Justin Fields will play against the Badgers this weekend.

"I think he's done a great job this week preparing and it's something he's been kind of dealing with but he's done a great job and training staff's been doing a great job of getting him ready," head coach Ryan Day said at the Big Ten Championship Game press conference in Indianapolis on Friday afternoon. "He's had a good, strong week of practice. We've talked to the training staff, talked to our people and just asked all those questions, what the risks are and what they aren't, and everything we've heard back is that it's 100 percent go and he's ready to roll.

"If there was any question on that, then we'd certainly take precautions, but we feel great. He's had a good week of practice, we're ready to roll."

Fields — who has thrown for 2,654 yards and 37 touchdowns to compared to just one interception while rushing for 470 yards and 10 more scores in 12 games this season — suffered a sprained MCL late in the 28-17 win over Penn State on Nov. 23. He then aggravated the injury in the third quarter of the 56-27 victory over Michigan one week later, but returned after only a few plays with a bulky brace on his knee and threw a 30-yard touchdown pass to freshman wide receiver Garrett Wilson, which drew praise from Day after the game.

"He has a tremendous approach and he's humble, but deep inside, there's a fiery, competitive dude who just tries to take your heart out when he's in the game," Day said. "He's just very smooth and you don't see much on the surface, but he's very, very competitive. That's something I didn't know about him until he started playing in these big games."

While the brace — which Fields compared to those worn by offensive linemen — may limit his running ability, Day doesn't expect it to change the Buckeyes' offensive philosophy.

"I think when you start to be hesitant or overcautious, then you just set yourself up for failure," Day said, "so we'll be aggressive and we'll go."