

Ohio State Running Backs Surprised By Tony Alford's Departure, Excited For Fresh Start With Carlos Locklyn



Former Ohio State running backs coach Tony Alford sent shockwaves through the program when he left to assume the same role at archrival Michigan on March 13 after nine years with the team, and that feeling of shock was especially felt by those within his running backs room.

Speaking with the media at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on Wednesday Buckeye backers Quinshon Judkins and Dallan Hayden both said they were surprised by the news and timing of Alford's move to Ann Arbor, which came just after he had already coached the group for two spring practices.

Judkins, who transferred to Ohio State from Ole Miss in January with the intention of joining an Alford-led position group, said he did not anticipate his coach leaving in the middle of spring practice, but it was a move that he later came to grips with once he took into consideration the changing landscape of the game and understood why he joined Ohio State in the first place.

"With the (landscape) of college football, where it is too, I understood Coach Alford had to do what was best for him," Judkins said. "I'm just focusing on the bigger picture, the Brotherhood that's here and what's important to me, that's what I was focusing on more than anything.

"I was pretty surprised. I just got here, not too long ago. But like I said, I understood it. I came here and continued to work."

Redshirt sophomore tailback Dallan Hayden expressed a similar sentiment to Judkins that same day. He said that while news of Alford leaving was especially difficult for him because being able to learn under his tutelage was one of the main reasons why he came to Ohio State, he also learned to accept the reality of the situation.

"I mean, it was tough," Hayden said. "Coach Alford was a big part of why I came to Ohio State. So to see him leave was sad. But he has a family to take care of. So I completely understand."

While news of Alford's departure may have been a hard pill to swallow for those within the running

backs room, they also expressed excitement over their new position coach Carlos Locklyn, who joined the program on Monday from Oregon.

Judkins, Hayden and T.C. Caffey all said Locklyn made a strong first impression on the group during his first practice on Wednesday due to his authenticity and high intensity-approach, traits that they think can make for an exciting season for the room.

"In this practice alone, he took people aside, told them exactly what they needed to do right then, right there," Caffey said. "You can tell he's a real straightforward guy. But he still loves his players and loves to be a coach."

"You can see where he's coached and how he is as a person, he's very high-energy, very intense and I think he's very hands-on," Judkins added. "So I think it'll be awesome to be working with Coach Locklyn."