

Ohio State Trying To “Be Creative” In Finding Better Ways To Involve Marvin Harrison Jr.



At times in which Ohio State’s offense struggled last season, it was usually able to rely on Marvin Harrison Jr. to offer a spark and get things in rhythm for the Buckeyes.

But in the season opener at Indiana, as Ohio State struggled to move the ball, Harrison – and Emeka Egbuka, for that matter – was nowhere to be seen, with Harrison finishing with just two catches for 18 yards, all coming in the first half. Harrison had not finished two just two receptions since his freshman season, and following his least productive performance in nearly two years, head coach Ryan Day said the team will be looking for more ways to get him involved.

“I think it was eight targets, and there was a couple other things that we had designed where maybe they took him away, which is going to happen,” Day said. “But we’re going to continually find ways to be creative and try to get him the ball.”

That isn’t to say that Ohio State got no production for the receivers and tight ends. Wideout Julian Fleming hauled in a career-high six receptions for 58 yards, while tight end Cade Stover had five catches for a career-high 98 yards, including a 49-yard gain in the second half, the largest play of the day for either Ohio State or Indiana. Day said those sorts of contributions are important for the team, but still emphasized that he would’ve liked more opportunities to get the ball to Harrison.

“We targeted him, some. If we connect on a few of those – a touchdown and a few of those – you probably feel a little bit different coming out of the game,” Day said. “But again, with the number of plays – I think we threw it maybe 36 times in the game, he wasn’t in the last drive. – we’re just got to really be on point. That’s probably the overall sentiment right now is that you’ve just got to make sure everything’s really efficient, everything’s really thought out.”

There was also a brief scare when Harrison took a hit near the sideline that kept him down briefly after a play, but he shot back up and returned to the sideline, though he played sparingly in the second half as Ohio State began to pull away from Indiana. But Day said those moments – whether Harrison isn’t seeing the ball or isn’t in the game at all – are when his teammates need to step up.

“Teams are going to take him away, too, so when that happens, that’s part of where other guys got to step up,” Day said. “And when we’ve been at our best, we have weapons all over the place. Other guys

have stepped up so that they can't just take one guy away."