

Ohio State Trying To Keep Emotions In Check Against Michigan



The game against Michigan is always an emotional one. There have been many different examples of players losing their cool because the game means so much to both the Buckeyes and the Wolverines, both programs saying they work all year to be the team that comes out of The Game with bragging rights for the next year.

Just last season in a 24-20 game midway through the third quarter, tight end Gee Scott Jr. negated what would have been a near 25-yard gain on a pass from C.J. Stroud to Chip Trayanum that would have put the Buckeyes in field position because he headbutted a Michigan player that was defending him on his route.

With that and a holding penalty on the same play, instead of gaining over 20 yards, Ohio State lost 25 and had to deal with a first-and-25 back in their own territory. While they came close to getting the first down, they were unable and elected to punt, shifting the momentum back in Michigan's favor, with which they would score 21 straight points.

Day said it's a focus this year for the team - especially with the new circumstances of Michigan's current scandal - to keep the players' emotions in check so they don't hurt the team on the field with penalties.

"You have to play with emotion, you can't let emotion play with you," Day said. "That's important. You have to have your emotions in check, which isn't easy in a game like this because we all know the magnitude of it. It's something that we identified in the offseason and we'll talk about this week."

The players echoed the same sentiment. Emeka Egbuka is in his third season with the Buckeyes, so in both of his times witnessing the game as a Buckeye, he has walked away with a loss. That is motivating him and the rest of the team this year, but he is making sure he keeps his cool when he gets onto the field.

“Stupid penalties can really hurt you in big matchup games like these ones,” Egbuka said. “You’ll have all the time in the world to let your emotions fly after all the whistles are blown and after the score settles and all that type of stuff. Keeping your emotions in check is huge.”

That doesn’t mean this game is being taken lightly in any sense. Cornerback Denzel Burke is letting his emotions fuel him for this game after losing to Michigan twice in a row.

“I’m very emotional,” he said. “I’m trying not to get out of character, but this game means a lot for us, and we’re going to get it done for the state of Ohio.”

I’m not just doing it for myself. I’m doing it for my teammates. I’m doing it from my head coach. I’m doing it for our coaches. I’m doing it for the state of Ohio, and we don’t want to let them down.”