

Ohio State's Kicking Competition Still Undecided As Season Approaches



Ohio State's quarterback battle has received the most attention in recent weeks, but there's another position that still needs settled with the opener at Indiana just over a week away.

The Buckeyes have yet to settle on a kicker for the upcoming season, with special teams coordinator Parker Fleming looking at both sophomore Jayden Fielding and redshirt junior Parker Lewis as potential candidates to kick for Ohio State.

"We've got two guys that can get it done and have been doing a great job this camp," Fleming said Tuesday. "We're trying to make sure we finalize it the right way and we have the best guy going when it's time to kick the ball, and we've got a little time before we make that decision."

Fielding or Lewis will have significant shoes to fill replacing outgoing kicker Noah Ruggles, who holds the program record for field goal percentage (minimum of 20 attempts) at 90.2 percent, making 37 of his 41 field-goal attempts over the last two seasons.

Lewis comes in with the most experience at kicking field goals, hitting 26 of his 25 attempts at USC prior to transferring to Ohio State last offseason. Fielding has not attempted a kick for Ohio State and missed a 40-yarder in the spring game, and Lewis connected from 38 yards out. Fielding did, however, handle kickoff duties for the Buckeyes, where he averaged 61.8 yards per attempt.

"They've been very close," Fleming said. "They've both done really well this fall. When you have two really good kickers, it makes it a little harder, but that's a good thing."

The coordinator sees a scenario where both players could ultimately contribute for Ohio State, with one handling kickoff duties and the other attempting his hand at field goals. But Fleming said he will do whatever is best for the team.

"It's really what's best for the guys and the team," he said. "Two years ago, Noah kicked off and kicked field goals and that was good for him. Then last year Jayden kicked off and Noah kicked field goals. But like I said, we have two capable guys and we're going to use them both to the best of their abilities."