

'Ohio State's My Home': Hartline Not Interested In Leaving Buckeyes



Brian Hartline is in his fourth season as wide receivers coach at Ohio State. He is a rising star in the coaching profession, says his biography on the football team's website. It is high praise, but it is not unearned.

In a five-year tenure with the Buckeyes, Hartline has become one of the country's best recruiters, consistently finding the best high school wide receivers and bringing them to Columbus.

Hartline's work doesn't stop with recruiting. Once he brings talent to campus, he develops them. A former Buckeye and seven-year NFL veteran with the Dolphins and Browns, Hartline teaches Ohio State's receivers what it takes to succeed in college and the pros.

His success is noticeable, which has led some to wonder if Hartline might consider leaving Ohio State to pursue offensive coordinator and head coach openings at other schools. When asked if he would move on from the Buckeyes in the near future, Hartline made a firm stance, claiming there's a "low chance" he would look elsewhere to coach football.

"Ohio State's my home," Hartline said. "I have a strong passion here. I loved seeing all the coach conversations and how coaches answer different questions because of all the speculations."

He mentioned that he pinches himself when it settles in that he is the wide receivers coach at Ohio State and that he gets to work with some of the best athletes in college football daily.

"I think that's pretty surreal to me more times than you probably think," Hartline said with a big smile. "I don't take it for granted. It hits me a lot when I'm coming off the field. I sometimes think in the hustle and bustle, you kind of lose track of that, and you're more focused on execution and making sure everyone knows what's going on."

"But there's definitely times on game day or pre-game and opportunities on Monday and through the week all the time when it kind of hits me in the face. It makes me smile, as you can tell. So, for me, it's not even about the group necessarily. It's about the opportunity I have every day to coach them."

Hartline struggled to keep a smile from his face for the duration of his 34-minute press conference with the media on Tuesday afternoon. According to multiple players and coaches, it's a smile he frequently

wears when walking around the Woody Hayes Athletic Center throughout the week.

The reason he smiles is quite simple. He loves what he does.

"I would say that I love it here, and it's a passion here, and all I care about is this room. That's my main focus and my forever focus," Hartline said. "I'd be lying if I were thinking outside of that. But I am also not a person who's going to sit here and tell you, 'No, I'm never leaving Ohio State.' I'm not saying I ever will. You said, 'Go, up the ladder. Go where?' This is the pinnacle of the ladder.

Hartline said he doesn't need the satisfaction of a more significant title or the power of calling plays. He also explained the difficulty he would experience in sharing the news of a potential departure with his wide receiver room, especially freshmen Marvin Harrison Jr., Emeka Egbuka and Jayden Ballard.

"The conversations I have with my wife, we can't imagine leaving the guys in the room," Hartline said. "I can't even this day — it gives me chills thinking trying to walk in and tell them I'm not going to be in the room anymore. That would be really hard to do. I don't think I could do that. Never say never, but it almost chokes me up now because I couldn't even imagine going in there and looking at Marvin, Mek and Jayden, and telling them I'm not gonna be here anymore."

For now, one thing is sure. Hartline wants to be a Buckeye.

"All I know is I love Ohio State," he said. "My wife is from here. We live here. I love my house. I don't know. It'd be really hard to leave. I don't know if that's ever in the books."