

Practice Report: Devin Brown Earns First-Team Reps, C.J. Hicks Starts At Linebacker Over Sonny Styles



Ohio State is one day away from its annual spring game, but before the Buckeyes take the field in front of a national audience Saturday, the team had one final tune up Friday morning at Ohio Stadium.

With local media and a number of high school coaches allowed to watch practice from the stands, Buckeye Sports Bulletin got a chance to see how the team is shaping out as they prepare for the spring game. Here are our observations from the Buckeyes' 14th spring practice at a rainy Ohio Stadium:

Starting with the offense, the main takeaway from Friday comes from the quarterback room, where Devin Brown assumed first-team reps for the majority of the practice. Brown had a solid outing as QB1, which was highlighted by his impressive back-shoulder touchdown pass to tight end Jelani Thurman during the team's 11-on-11 drills.

Backing up Brown was Will Howard - who threw a touchdown pass to Emeka Egbuka - followed by Julian Sayin, Lincoln Kienholz and Air Noland. Sayin had arguably the best outing of those three, making a number of accurate throws to the Buckeyes' second-and-third string pass-catchers. Noland struggled on the day, throwing the practice's lone interception to nickel Jordan Hancock.

As for the offensive line, Carson Hinzman once again earned starting reps over Alabama transfer Seth McLaughlin, while Josh Fryar started at right tackle. While it was not clear who assumed most of the first-team reps at right guard, Luke Montgomery and Tegra Tshabola were both seen at the position, with Josh Simmons and Donovan Jackson reclaiming their roles at left tackle and left guard, respectively.

Freshman wide receiver Jeremiah Smith continued to shine, hauling in an impressive one-handed catch in the back of the end zone for a touchdown, one of several catches he made on the day.

Not much changed on the defensive end with C.J. Hicks still taking first team reps as the Will linebacker and Sonny Styles splitting some of them with him. Cody Simon took all of the first team reps as the Mike linebacker.

Jermaine Mathews Jr. worked in at the nickel position behind Hancock - who, as mentioned before, picked off Noland. The depth Ohio State has in the secondary was shown with many different players working through, down to freshman cornerback Aaron Scott. As Lathan Ransom continues to work back from his injury, he participated in some drills, but not when they did any 11-on-11 drills as redshirt freshman Jayden Bonsu filled in for him again.

Greg Wilson also contributed to this report.

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