

Radio Show Recap: Ohio State's Ryan Day, Greg Schiano Fill In For Urban Meyer



The first Urban Meyer Radio Show with 97.1 The Fan went a slightly different route without Ohio State's head coach, who is away from the Buckeyes until he can return to practice Sept. 3 in the midst of his three-game suspension without pay.

In Meyer's place, acting head coach Ryan Day and defensive coordinator Greg Schiano shared insight as Ohio State continues to prepare for its season opener Saturday against Oregon State at noon on ABC inside Ohio Stadium.

Below is a bullet-point breakdown of takeaways from Day and Schiano.

Ryan Day

- Day said co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Alex Grinch and special teams coordinator/cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson have rounded out a "really talented group" of Ohio State assistants, especially without Meyer.
 - In particular, Johnson's role has taken on further importance without Meyer or former six-year assistant Kerry Coombs: "One of the jobs of the corner/special teams coach here at Ohio State is they have to bring energy to the table. ... (Johnson) brings energy to the table every day."
- Day noted how Ohio State has "quite a few first-time starters" with sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins among them as he makes his first career start.
 - "You control how hard you play," Day said. "There's a lot of things you can control. ... Don't ride the emotional roller coaster. Just play one play at a time and don't let the other one affect the next."
- Day described a "veteran group" on Ohio State's offensive line, highlighted by senior right tackle Isaiah Prince.

- “In terms of some of the strides he’s taken in the last six months, from where he was to where he is now, not only as a leader but as a player, some of the most progress I’ve ever seen,” Day said. “I’m really proud of him.”
- The duo of sophomore J.K. Dobbins and junior Mike Weber boasts Ohio State’s first time in program history with two running backs having gone for 1,000 yards or more in their past seasons, which gives Day a good problem when it comes to how and when to play them.
 - “The thing about those guys — they pull for each other, they need each other,” Day said. “This isn’t something where they go in and they’re being selfish about the carries. They both understand that they’re both going to split a bunch of carries.”
- Two-back sets remain in question because of how many weapons Ohio State boasts on the perimeter with “eight to almost 10 wide receivers” in contention for time on the field.
 - “As you move along, you try to figure out, personnel-wise, where we go, but we do have some weapons to work with, which is nice.”
- Day said Haskins “looks like an NFL quarterback right now” in terms of size and weight, with credit to strength coach Mickey Marotti.
 - “His body’s changed a little bit,” Day said. “He was a little bit doughy when he first got here, but now he’s a little harder, so that’s been big.”
- At tight end, Ohio State listed co-starters Tuesday between sophomore Luke Farrell and junior Rashod Berry. Day, however, said Farrell in fact remains the starter and reiterated how much deeper the position is with Berry, freshman Jeremy Ruckert and sophomore Jake Hausmann.
 - “But when you look at those guys, they haven’t had a lot of snaps,” Day said. “So they’re going to have to play as well. This is all going to be new to them as well.”
- Haskins gets the start at quarterback, but redshirt freshman Tate Martell is the next man up. Day said Martell would not have special packages.
 - “The plan is to get him on the field and play,” Day said. “He’s had a nice preseason. He brings a different skill set to the table, really dynamic with his feet but he’s also improved throwing the ball. So we’re not going to put him in right now for packages or things like that. We’re just going to let him go play the offense and let him go.”
- Day said Ohio State has “had a lot of conversation” and “made the adjustments going into the season” after the new kickoff rule, which grants the ball at the 25-yard line on fair catches, was implemented.
 - “Does it change a little bit? Yeah, I think it does based on where the kick is and how the kick is and I think it may change things in terms of thinking about sky kicks and squib kicks along the way but also schematically it changes some things as well,” Day said.
- With the new redshirt rule, which allows four games, Day said Ohio State has mulled the idea but ultimately refrained from any decisions right now because “it’s tricky.”
 - “Our goal is to play as many guys as we can,” Day said. “We’re young and have an opportunity to do that based on the depth chart, but I don’t think a lot of those discussions are going to start until we start getting down the season to see who’s been put into the game.”
- Day noted running backs Master Teague and Brian Snead, wide receiver Chris Olave, H-back Jaelen Gill, quarterback Matthew Baldwin and Ruckert among the impressive freshmen on offense.
 - Day on Olave: “I think he’s a guy who has some big-play ability down the road. ... He’ll be helping out on special teams.”
 - Day on Baldwin: “He’s still coming off that ACL, so he’s still a week or two away from actually being able to practice 100 percent, being live.”
 - “It’s one of those deals where you hope your system is flexible enough where, depending on

what they do, you can adjust,” Schiano said.

- Day said he “couldn’t say enough” about Marotti’s impact: “I could probably talk about him for six hours. Mick is the heart and soul of this program.”

Greg Schiano

- Oregon State possesses a blend of schemes with head coach Jonathan Smith from Washington and offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren from Colorado. Schiano said Ohio State had to “be ready for everything.”
 - “It’s one of those deals where you hope your system is flexible enough where, depending on what they do, you can adjust,” Schiano said.
- While the defensive line returns depth, Schiano said several new names have cracked the rotation in freshmen defensive ends Tyler Friday and Tyreke Smith, freshman defensive tackle Tommy Togiai and sophomore defensive tackle Haskell Garrett.
 - Schiano credited defensive line coach Larry Johnson for their development and potential implementation into the rotation: “The more we can roll our guys through, the better we’ll be for the fourth quarter.”
- Schiano said Ohio State wants to let junior defensive end Nick Bosa get more snaps after he split time a lot in 2017.
 - “Nick, certainly, is at another level,” Schiano said. “But at the same time, you don’t want to put him out there when he gets tired and risk of injury and those things go up.”
 - “A lot of guys with his level of achievement, his level of ability might just rest and get ready for the year and kind of do the same — he hasn’t done that,” Schiano said. “He’s worked incredibly hard with Coach Johnson to hone his skills. He is an even better player than last year, which is hard to imagine, but he’s a dominant football player.”
- Schiano called Ohio State’s linebackers “a deep group” despite some of their inexperience. As sophomore Tuf Borland recovered from an Achilles injury, others stepped up.
 - On sophomore Pete Werner: “Pete came here as a tremendous athlete. He actually played safety some in high school, so that’s the kind of athlete he was and he runs. Now, all of a sudden, he’s put that weight on and hasn’t lost a step. If anything, he’s gotten faster.”
 - On junior Malik Harrison: “Malik Harrison is just a gigantic man. I mean, he’s a 6-5, 250-pound linebacker who’s very athletic and can run. He played some. I think everybody got to see him in the back half of the season and he’s only gotten better, so that’s exciting.”
 - On sophomore Baron Browning: “And then Baron Browning, who’s probably as highly recruited of a guy as we’ve had around here. He’s going to get his chance to play now and I’m anxious to see that. I think he can be a really, really good player.”
- Schiano said fifth-year senior linebacker Dante Booker “is available” and “getting healthy” as he recovers from his offseason shoulder surgery.
 - “We, for the first time, might try to rotate some linebackers in there,” Schiano said. “Not at the end of the game, but during the middle of the game, try to rotate guys in and we’ll see.”
- Schiano said he was surprised, from his viewpoint of the week zero games around college football, with how teams adapted to the new kickoff rule.
 - “There was only one kickoff that was fair-caught,” Schiano said. “Now, I thought there would be more. ... We don’t know what to expect, but the one thing you can’t do is ever assume one or the other. You’re going to have to cover every single time as if they’re returning it. And if they’re fair-catching it, you have to abide by the rules and pull off.”
- At safety next to junior starter Jordan Fuller, Schiano said sophomores Jahsen Wint and Isaiah

Pryor remain in contention as co-starters for the other spot with both having “played very well this preseason” and could make for “a really strong group.”

- Schiano added that sophomores Amir Riep and Brendon White were “coming on” as “young guys that are just starting to feel comfortable with the little things that go into playing the position.”

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