

Ryan Day, Buckeyes Improve Situationally In Off Week



Last Saturday afternoon, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day wasn't on the sidelines of Ohio Stadium leading the Buckeyes in his headset and scarlet and gray attire, but instead in his home spending time with his family. It's a once or twice-regular-season occurrence when the Buckeyes are on an off week like they were in week 3, and Day isn't leading his team but instead watching several college football teams. Although not in full leader of the team mode, Day doesn't just turn his brain off watching other teams play but instead places himself in other coaches' shoes.

"Every time it's the end of the half, every time it's a decision you made, every time it's the end of the game, you're putting yourself in that situation," Day said during a press conference on Tuesday. "I'm actually saying it out loud sometimes, RJ (Ryan Day's son) and my wife; they'll be talking to me about it because I'm just constantly talking, 'If this thing goes down to this down and distance, would we go for it right here? Is this a timeout situation? What exactly is going on here?'"

As many other football games as Day watches during an off week, he will still take all the help he can get in making the difficult decisions given to a head coach throughout the game. With new clock rules having been implemented into college football ahead of the 2024 season, like the two-minute warning, there are even more moving parts at play for coaches to consider.

"When you're watching a game live, there's different variables that come into play. We have hired a consultant as an analytics group to give us information," Day said. "So they'll give us some of the situations on a week-to-week basis on what happened the week before, and they give us feedback on the decisions that we made, so that's been helpful."

To this point in the season, Day and the Buckeyes haven't been pressed with a critical late-game situation, and the team likely won't be in a must-have two-minute drill for a few weeks, but Day understands that, at some point, the team will likely need to rise to the occasion in a late-game situation.

"We mixed in two minute (drills in practice); we had some seven-on-seven two minute; we had some team two-minute because all of those things are coming," Day said. "First half two-minute, we haven't hit on that yet. We know we want to do a better job of that on offense but also on defense."

Day even cited a specific example that he had seen over the weekend, which the team had a conversation about. Up 18-15 over the Falcons on Monday Night Football, the Eagles had a 3rd-and-3 from the Falcons' 10-yard line. With 1:46 to go, the Eagles decided to throw the ball in an attempt to pick up the first down and effectively end the game. Instead, the pass was dropped by the Eagles' running back, Saquon Barkley, and the clock stopped. The Falcons then went down the field to score a game-winning touchdown drive to win 22-21.

"Coming up from watching some of these games, even like the game that happened last night, there was a two-minute (situation) there at the end," Day said. "Even the conversation that we had about, if we're in that situation, what would we do? We're constantly talking out those types of things and then trying to design them in practice so that we're ready when they happen because, as we all know, they're coming."