

Ryan Day, Greg Studrawa and Larry Johnson Preview Ohio State's Game Against Cincinnati



Ohio State head coach Ryan Day met with the media for about 30 minutes on Tuesday afternoon, recapping the Buckeyes' 45-21 win over Florida Atlantic and answering questions about his team's preparations for Cincinnati.

Here's a brief recap of what Day had to say:

- Day said the Buckeyes have their hands full with the Bearcats this weekend. "I have a lot of respect for coach (Luke) Fickell and what he's built down there."
- Day on first-year starting quarterback Justin Fields. "He played well in terms of game management. A few reads, protection things we need to clean up, but the more experience he gets the better he's going to be."
- Day said the first quarter "was exactly what I envisioned" on defense. Said they have to sustain it for 60 minutes, though."
- "That cannot happen," Day said of running back J.K. Dobbins' fumble. "Any time you spin, you're exposed." Added Dobbins was crushed when it happened.
- Day said he was impressed with Fields' pocket presence, particularly on a couple downfield throws to wide receiver Chris Olave and tight end Jeremy Ruckert. Added quarterbacks get used to playing in 7-on-7 in high school, but the pocket and lack of an offensive line make it "unrealistic" in terms of how it translates to actual football.
- Day said he was pleased with the offensive line and how the unit blocked throughout the day. Mentioned offensive guard Jonah Jackson had nine knockdowns, "which is significant."
- Day said they won't talk to the team about what Luke Fickell meant to the program. "They already know."
- Day thought backup Master Teague ran well. "When he was in the game, I think he ran hard. He took care of the ball, he was physical and he carried some defenders with him. I thought that was a good start."
- Day said the Buckeyes "don't have room" to add a running back in the current recruiting cycle unless someone goes pro after the season. Names the five running backs on the roster.
- Day said he's talked to Fickell and former Ohio State linebacker and current assistant Marcus Freeman a little bit but not a ton. "Tremendous coach, and what he has done here speaks for itself."
- Added Cincinnati is a well-coached, disciplined and veteran group that plays hard. "You have to

talk it from them.”

- “I thought he did a good job getting down,” Day said of Fields’ scrambles on Saturday. Added he was concerned with the number of hits he took. “He’s gotta learn this is a long season.”
- Day on Fickell’s storied history at Ohio State. “A lot of people talk about him when they talk about Ohio State greats.”
- “We have to play for a full 60 minutes,” Day said. “The first six, seven minutes were completely dominant, but the rest was just OK.”
- Day heaps more praise upon Cincinnati. “Although they’re not a Power 5 team, their talent level is up there.”
- Day on under-center packages, which they’d been trying to keep under the vest throughout fall camp: “It gives us some versatility and flexibility in terms of what we’re doing.” Mentions you can hand it off, go play-action pass, etc.
- Day on defensive end Chase Young: “Strong presence, strong personality, strong before the game and then he backed it up.” Called him a great leader.
- Day mentioned one specific series — no-call on a late hit on running back Demario McCall, offensive pass interference on wide receiver Chris Olave and then fumble on a backward pass to wide receiver Garrett Wilson — that halted the Buckeyes’ offensive momentum.
- Day said a throwaway from Justin Fields on 3rd-and-8 was his “favorite play of the day.” Rather than force it, the Buckeyes punted and pinned FAU inside the 10-yard line on the next play.”
- Day said Gunnar Hook and Chris Chugunov will continue to battle for the backup quarterback spot, though the latter saw action late in the game on Saturday.
- Day said he talked with his former coach at New Hampshire, Chip Kelly, who is now the coach at UCLA. The Bruins lost to Cincinnati last week. Didn’t discuss the Bearcats much, though.
- Day said transfer quarterbacks are something we “unfortunately” have to get used to.

Ohio State offensive line coach Greg Studrawa also spent time at the podium on Tuesday afternoon.

- Studrawa said left tackle Thayer Munford did not see more than 22 reps in practice this fall as he worked his way back from injury, but played 50 on Saturday. Added Munford is “lighter than he’s ever been.”
- Studrawa on Jonah Jackson: “It was hard for him to leave his friends and guys (at Rutgers) but he wanted to have a chance to be successful. He wanted to have a chance to win everything.” Adds his maturity level is through the roof. “He goes just past the echo of the whistle.”
- Studrawa said FAU’s lateral moves and stunts gave the young linemen issues, but was happy adjustments they made in the second half. Said they have to be “more sound with their footwork and a little less aggressive.”
- Studrawa said Branden Bowen barely edged out Nicholas Petit-Frere for the right tackle spot. It was “very close.” Mentioned Bowen’s maturity and ability to call out plays gave him the edge.
- Studrawa said the starters got about 75 snaps on Saturday, while the backup tackles got 25. Interior backups got about 12.
- Despite the success on Saturday, Studrawa said the offensive line has a long way to go. “They have to get used to playing together.”

Additionally, defensive line coach Larry Johnson discussed his unit’s performance against the Owls and upcoming matchup with the Bearcats.

- Johnson on defensive tackle Antwan Jackson “He’s quietly come along as a player and he’ll be able to help us down the stretch.”

- Johnson said they didn't want a freshman to start at defensive end with Jonathon Cooper out with an undisclosed injury and Tyreke Smith and Tyler Friday both game-time decisions, so that's why they called upon Jason Cornell to move back to end from three-technique defensive tackle.
- Cornell will move back to three-tech when others are healthy. "Jashon brings a different level at the position." Added his performance in the win over the Owls may have been the best of his career.
- No word on whether or not Smith and Friday will be ready to go for Cincinnati.
- Johnson on Young: "I thought he played really fast on Saturday, but there's always room for improvement." Said he's shown outstanding leadership and can be a special player this season.
- Johnson reiterates the key to the season is keeping defensive linemen fresh. Buckeyes rotated and dug deep down into the depth against FAU. "It's kind of cool watching these (young) guys play."
- Johnson said Cincinnati is "really a Big Ten team" thanks to their physical style of running.
- "We've gotta stop the run first, but we have an opportunity to chase the passer," Johnson said of Buckeyes' game plan.
- Johnson on Cincinnati running back Michael Warren. "He's really an outstanding back."
- Cooper is "living in the training room" as he works to return from injury.