

Ryan Day, Ohio State Preaching Physicality Against Wisconsin



Ohio State head coach Ryan Day is well aware of Wisconsin's program staple of dominating the trenches and overwhelming opponents with physicality.

Entering Saturday's contest against the Badgers, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day made it clear that his squad will have to match Wisconsin's physicality if they are to be successful.

"Wisconsin epitomizes Big Ten football. They're well-coached and have good players. They play with a physical nature and have a great identity and have for a long time," Day said on Thursday. "This team that we're playing on Saturday night is very similar to the ones (our players) probably grew up watching. It's been that way for a while, there's really good tradition there and they're a very good team.

"We know this is what we have to do if we're going to make a run at the Big Ten Championship, we have to beat Wisconsin," he continued. "They have one of the better teams in the country year-in and year-out."

Not only have the Buckeyes shifted their mindset to be more physical, but they've committed to it in their practice habits.

Although Ohio State has kept the same number of padded practices from previous seasons, Day noted that the attention to physicality has increased during practice sessions.

"Our guys have been practicing with a little more of an edge, with a little more physicality," Day said. "I expect us to be fast, physical and playing with a ton of energy, and well rested. But, in order to get prepared to play in these physical games, one way to do that is to practice like that and we've done that. Now, we have to build toward it."

For Ohio State third-year tackle Paris Johnson Jr., this is a game that he's waited a long time to play — just based on the challenges that Wisconsin's physical nature brings against the Buckeyes.

"The reason I came to the Big Ten was to play these types of games. I feel like this is one of those

games that I knew when I committed here would be a big one because they're known for having bigger, stronger guys. I feel like this is always a game that I've looked forward to since high school," Johnson said. "It was usually the Big Ten Championship game when I was in high school."

As the Buckeyes are aware of the distinct challenges posed by the Badgers, Stover echoed Johnson's sentiment and expressed excitement for Saturday's contest.

"You can't not be excited for this game," Stover said. "That's a great program with a tough team and tough kids on it. It will be a great test for us to see what we're really made of. This is another tough Big Ten ballclub that we're excited to play."