

Ryan Day Says Brandon Inniss Could Return Kicks Against Marshall



Ohio State sophomore wide receiver Brandon Inniss has already become a special teams weapon for the Buckeyes as a punt returner, returning eight kicks for 66 yards with a long of 36, but head coach Ryan Day said on Wednesday that his talents could also be used on kickoffs.

Speaking with the media after Wednesday night's practice at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, Day said that Inniss has also taken reps as a kick returner this weekend at practice, and could see time fielding both kickoffs and punts during the Buckeyes' Week 4 contest with Marshall on Saturday.

"We got Brandon back there a little this week, so we'll look at the film today. We just did some kickoff return (and) he and (senior wide receiver Jayden Ballard) were back there," Day said. "We'll kind of evaluate it after today and see who we decide to put back there. They'll probably both still return kicks, but (as for) who takes the first one, we'll probably see tomorrow."

Ballard has been Ohio State's starting kick returner through the first two games of the season, returning two kickoffs for 23 yards. One of those kickoffs went for zero yards however, which came on the first kickoff in the second half of Ohio State's win over Western Michigan where he elected to fair catch a kickoff that bounced, putting the Buckeyes in poor field position to start that drive, beginning at the 6-yard line.

Day indicated earlier this week that that decision by Ballard prompted him and his staff to reevaluate their options on kickoff returns, and it appears that comes with moving Inniss to kick return duties, potentially putting Ballard as the backup at the position.

Day did say last week that they believe in Ballard's talents, however, but that taking care of the football is paramount on special teams, something he did not do on that one kick return against Western Michigan.

"We think that Jayden Ballard had a really good offseason," Day said. "He was recognized as a gold individual during the offseason, which is significant in our program. So we've given him the opportunity to return kicks and a couple of punts here. But the number one thing is taking care of the football. So

that has to happen.

“We believe in who Jayden is, but at the end of the day, we’ve got to take care of the football. So we are gonna evaluate it this week and make sure that we’re doing the right thing.”

As for Inniss, Day said on Wednesday that he is confident his sophomore wideout can handle both punt and kick return duties this season, something he may be tasked with doing if he has a strong performance on special teams this Saturday.

“Yes, I think he can,” Day said when asked if Inniss can handle both responsibilities on special teams.