

Ryan Day Says Safety Caleb Downs Could Play At Running Back This Season



Caleb Downs transferred to Ohio State over the offseason as a safety, and projects to be one of the best defenders on the team and possibly the country, but Ryan Day said on Tuesday that he could be seen on the other side of the ball at some point this season if the Buckeyes need him there.

“We started having conversations with Caleb during the recruiting process of him doing a little bit of running back as well,” Day said. “It’s something he wanted to do. We’ve been having him in the meetings and some of the individual drills as a possibility there if he’s needed down the road to continue to build depth at the position.”

It’s not something he plans on doing if the running back room can make it through the season healthy, but with seasons like 2022 in mind when injuries forced the Buckeyes to bring Chip Trayanum – who transferred to Ohio State as a linebacker – into the backfield, Day knows he needs to be prepared for anything.

With freshmen running backs James People and Sam Williams-Dixon coming in, if they play well then Downs won’t be needed since the Buckeyes have the 1-2 punch of TreVeyon Henderson and Quinshon Judkins ready to take on the season.

“We feel like if you have four strong running backs going into it, then that’s going to be enough to carry this season,” Day said. “The quarterbacks are going to run the ball more this season, so that should take some carries away from them. James and Sam are going to have to step up.

But especially with the newly expanded 12-team College Football Playoff, it will be extremely important to have players who can provide more depth than is usually needed during a season, and could be able to play for spells to keep the starters fresh for late in the year.

“We’ll see where that goes. We don’t have a specific plan now, but we want to introduce him to (the position),” Day said. “It’s healthy. You’re seeing it from the other side of the ball. This time of the year you can get away with that a little bit and a little bit in the preseason. Where it goes, we’ll see, but you just never know. We’re trying to put some contingency plans in place because it could be a long season.”