

Simon Filled Injured Eichenberg's Role Well, Knowles Comfortable If They Need To Start Him Again



Ohio State has been dealing with injuries on the defensive side of the ball for the past few weeks, which previously would have been something they wouldn't have dealt with well, but this year still look like a top defense with backups getting time.

Linebacker Tommy Eichenberg injured his arm late in the game against Rutgers, and even though Jim Knowles said he fought to be able to play, the Buckeyes thought it was in both his best interest and the teams for him to sit out against Michigan State.

Cody Simon, who has been rotating in the entire year, started in his place, and Knowles said if they need to send him out there against Minnesota for the start again, he still feels very comfortable.

"I'm very comfortable with Cody," Knowles said. "Cody not only plays well, but he manages the game like Tommy does. He's got that kind of brain and that kind of football intelligence. We need them both as we come down the stretch here, the ability to put them in different places."

Knowles has called Eichenberg the quarterback of the defense with how he can spot things and call them out to whoever is on the field with him. He said Simon is the same way and takes that role over whenever Eichenberg can't be on the field, which is what he meant when he was referring to their football intelligence.

"Cody has paid attention from the time I've arrived here and asks questions all the time. He actually speaks while Tommy groans," Knowles joked about Eichenberg, who isn't very talkative off the field. "But he's got the same kind of mind, the same football vision."

Even though Simon did well with Eichenberg out of the lineup, he still said the team is waiting for the game they can get Eichenberg back onto the field since he is such a big part of that defense's success.

"Missing out on Tommy is a big hole in our defense," Simon said. "Our job is just to step in and fill that hole. He's getting healthy right now, and we're just hoping to have him back as soon as possible."

“Tommy is an all-time leader. It doesn’t matter what his role is on the field or practice or anything. he’s going to be vocal and makes sure that we’re all on our stuff. He’s always helping us out. He is another eye for us to make changes and everything. But I’m so happy to have him on our side. He’s such a great leader.”