

C.J. Stroud Reflects On Pro Day, Draft Status



When the Carolina Panthers dealt a glut of picks and star wide receiver DJ Moore to the Chicago Bears to acquire the No. 1 pick in the 2023 NFL Draft, it was clear they had a franchise quarterback in mind.

Ohio State's C.J. Stroud is among the names that have been linked to that spot. And with a strong showing at Ohio State's Pro Day Wednesday, he may have taken one step closer.

"That was as good a workout as I've seen (from a quarterback)," Ohio State head coach Ryan Day, who at one time scouted quarterbacks for NFL teams, said. "I thought the ball came out of his hand great. He seemed relaxed. He was on the money. He did a great job today."

Stroud also took the time to give reporters his thoughts on the draft process in general. He's trying not to stress about whether he's going to be the No. 1 pick, although it is a goal he'd like to obtain.

"That's not my job," Stroud said. "My job is to go out here and do the best I can against myself. I'm competing against myself every day to be the best version of myself, like Coach Day always taught us to do. Whatever happens happens, it's not in my control, so there's no reason to stress."

When it came to his pro-day workout, Stroud said that there weren't any nerves going in, as he drew confidence from his faith and hours put into his craft.

"You don't have to have any nerves when you've got God on your side," Stroud said. "God gave me a natural-born talent, and I put in the work to be the best I can."

Every young football player dreams of one day being the first player selected in the NFL draft, though it is, of course, an occurrence few get to experience. Stroud's not excluded from that group, with his father having instilled that ambition in him from a young age.

Overall, though, Stroud just wants to go where he is wanted.

"It's been a dream of mine for a very, very long time," Stroud said. "My dad used to wear a first-round draft pick, first pick in the draft shirt during either football or basketball, one of the two. But he set that foundation early on, definitely want to accomplish that, of course. But if not, I just want to go to whoever loves me, not just as a football player but as a man of God and man of the community."

The 2023 NFL Draft opens in just over a month, on April 27. Stroud will look to make the most of his opportunities in the meantime, and sit back to enjoy the process a little more than his recruitment out of high school.

“I’m going to try to do really well in these private workouts I have and these interviews leading up to the draft,” Stroud said. “I think, especially with this, I’ve got to control what I can control, and I don’t have to make the decision right now. It’s not like me coming to Ohio State. It’s not on me, so I get to chill and do what I love to do.”