

Tony Alford Tasked With Balancing Carries In Deep Running Back Room



During the 2022 campaign, Ohio State relied heavily on its depth at running back as injuries piled up at the position.

The Buckeyes lost Evan Pryor before the season began due to a torn ACL and saw starters TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams deal with injuries throughout the back half of the campaign. Ohio State had a pair of unlikely contributors step forward in then-freshman Dallan Hayden and linebacker-turned-running back Chip Trayanum — who had prior experience at running back for Arizona State before transferring to Ohio State.

Now, with a wealth of talent in the room, running backs coach Tony Alford is tasked with balancing out carries between five potential contributors.

“The more the merrier,” Alford said on May 30. “It’s like a kid on Christmas, the more presents you have, the better. It is what it is, we needed every bit of depth that we could have last year and hopefully, that doesn’t repeat itself.

“I think it’s a good situation to be in.”

Ohio State will likely be led by Henderson and Williams, who carried a bulk of the load early last season before succumbing to injuries. Henderson is seeking a bounce-back season after rushing for 571 yards and six touchdowns across eight games, while Williams enjoyed a solid campaign in 2022, rushing for 825 yards and 14 touchdowns until he was hobbled by injury down the stretch.

Hayden is also expected to contribute after a solid freshman campaign, in which he churned out 553 yards and five touchdowns while boasting a pair of 100+ yard performances. Trayanum played an emergency role at running back for the Buckeyes last season, flipping over to offense midseason while carrying the rock only 15 times for 93 yards.

With the room back to full strength, Alford said he’s analyzing certain situations in which each of his potential contributors could thrive if called upon.

“Everyone has different skillsets and traits that they’re better at than maybe some others,” Alford said. “That’s our job as coaches, to put them in the best situations.”

As all five running backs compete for carries this offseason, Alford noted that it will only help further their development.

“Competition breeds success and lifts everybody up and makes everybody work much harder and be that much better,” Alford said. “It’s a good situation to be in.”