

True Freshman Luke Montgomery Making Push With Tackle Competition Still Open



With starters yet to be determined at center and both tackle spots for Ohio State's offensive line as fall camp approaches, head coach Ryan Day floated a possibility at Big Ten Media Days that hasn't been seen in Columbus since the 2016 season.

That year, offensive tackle Michael Jordan out of Canton, Mich., became the first true freshman to start on the offensive line for Ohio State since Orlando Pace. Entering this season, Day believes that incoming freshman Luke Montgomery out of Findlay, Ohio, could make some noise while competing with Josh Simmons, Josh Fryar and others for either of the team's open tackle spots.

"I think it's still undecided," Day said. "For Josh (Simmons), he's just getting here, so we need to see what we got on the field. We don't know. We see a lot of talent, but Ohio State's different. This is a different offense, everything about it is different. So we need to see that, although we're encouraged with what we see. Tegra (Tshabola)'s done some good things in the offseason.

"And then Luke Montgomery, I've been very impressed with him. So I think we have some good candidates there. But now they've got to go compete, and it's going to come down to what they look like in the preseason. So there's no more waiting around, they've got to go."

Montgomery, a four-star and top-100 recruit, was an early arrival on campus this past winter and immediately established himself, appearing with the second team throughout spring workouts and taking snaps during Ohio State's spring game at left tackle. While veteran options in Justin Frye's offensive line room would seemingly make it unlikely that Montgomery would push for a starting job, Day said that the freshman is "in the competition."

"I told him the other day, I said, 'I know you're a true freshman, but you came here to play. So that should be your mentality,'" Day said. "Now, whether you play in the first game or not, I don't know. Maybe you don't play this year.

"But I see things in him, we see things in him that are very encouraging," he continued. "And I think

everything you invest in Luke you're going to get back. He has all the traits that you look for in a really good offensive lineman. Maybe it's game three, maybe it's game four, I don't know when it's going to be. But he's got a huge upside as well."

Montgomery is part of a group of impressive incoming freshmen offensive line that have already left a mark on their teammates, including tight end Cade Stover, who was one of Ohio State's representatives at Big Ten Media Days. Even if Montgomery and his fellow freshmen don't see the field this season, Stover has high expectations for that group and their eventual careers at Ohio State.

"I've actually gotten very close with Luke and Austin Sieraveld. Both those guys I truly believe will be superstars here one day," Stover said. "That's your future line you're looking at in a couple years or potentially sooner, who knows? But they're both very, very good players.

"All three of those guys - Austin, Luke and (Josh Padilla) - are all tremendously talented people. So whoever it ends up getting it, I know they're all gonna compete to the best of their ability. So like I said, we're in very good hands either way."