

Will Kacmerak Making Push For Playing Time In First Season As A Buckeye



A couple of seasons ago, redshirt junior tight end Will Kacmarek, was far away from the spotlight of a standard Ohio State media availability. Rather Kacmarek was attempting to make a name for himself in the tight end room of an Ohio team trying to become the best team in the Mid-American Conference. Today he's in a similar role in the tight end room of an Ohio State team trying to become the best in the country.

It wasn't the most straightforward journey for Kacmarek to go from Bobcat to Buckeye. Starting off his career as a two-star defensive end prospect, Kacmarek wasn't even a player to watch at Ohio.

It wasn't until his redshirt freshman season that he started to turn heads with an impressive 260-yard season. The 6-6 260-pound tight end backed it up with 240 more yards and his first two touchdowns as a redshirt sophomore before ultimately deciding to enter the transfer portal and ultimately go to Ohio State.

The difference between Ohio and Ohio State in name might just be a five-letter word, but the difference in quality of the two football programs was enough that Kacmarek needed a couple of practices to get used to it. But as is typically the case, playing against fierce competition like the Ohio State defense every practice only made him better.

"The spring was a transition, I got to see all that speed, but then I caught up," Kacmarek said. "And playing against (the Ohio State defense) every day, I'm excited to see how the season is going to play out because I'm training against the best every day."

The transition also had its benefits for the redshirt junior, who was welcomed into the Buckeye culture with open arms.

"I feel like the locker room, the whole environment and everyone around it, it's the same," he said. "It's

a football team, but the culture here is something else and that's something that kind of separated now vs. my former team."

With his versatility and work ethic, Kacmarek has already taken advantage of the opportunity to fill the large shoes of former All-Big Ten tight end, Cade Stover.

"Will Kacmarek has shown the ability to be durable, be accountable, play in the pass game, play in the run game," head coach Ryan Day said.

The high praise from his head coach was only echoed by his positional coach, Keenan Bailey.

"Will's doing great. He came in being a blue-collar guy," Bailey said. "We watched everyone out there that was in the portal and he was a guy who showed toughness in everything he did,. He was already a tough guy, who took pride in blocking. The biggest thing that he got better at is route running. It's been cool to watch. He put in so much work from when he got here until now."

As football shifts more toward the passing game, the blocking element of the tight end position often seems secondary to younger tight ends. This isn't at all the case for Kacmarek, who consistently makes a point to remark his affinity for blocking. The real challenge for Kacmarek has been becoming a dynamic player as a receiver.

"This offseason I've put in a lot of work in my route running, my fine techniques," Kacmarek said. "It's just something that I need to step up to the next level and it's something that I've worked on a lot."

Perhaps the most pivotal person in Kacmarek's growth as a route runner is former Bobcat teammate, and undrafted free agent for the Los Angeles Rams, Sam Wiglusz.

"We were former teammates, we were really close buddies and we just got together a couple of times," Kacmarek said, "He got some techniques from the Rams he shared with me, so we're just trying to incorporate new techniques, new routes, new things I could use on the field."

For the former two-star defensive end prospect to overtake a former four-star wide receiver prospect, Gee Scott Jr., as the team's starting tight end, it will likely take some serious work ethic. But for Kacmarek hard work is so much a staple of his game that he was quick to correct when asked about the 'extra work' he put into his game over the offseason.

"Everyone is going to have to put in extra work. Well, we don't like to call it extra work, we just like to call it work," Kacmarek said. "There's no extra work it's just work. We're just trying to get better every day."