

# Big Ten Football Media Days

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Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

## Ohio State Buckeyes

### Coach Ryan Day

#### Press Conference



RYAN DAY: I want to start off by recognizing Commissioner Petitti's work and what he's doing in terms of the new landscape here in college football and making sure that the Big Ten are leaders. I think it's a challenge that he's taking on and doing a great job of, so I want to thank him for all his hard work there.

I want to thank Buckeye Nation for all their support currently, but even over the last year. I've said it before. It takes everybody. We have some of the best fans in the world. I certainly don't take that lightly, all the support that we have and the support that they give to our team.

I want to thank our families, families of coaches, families of players, wives, all of our support staff who work so hard behind the scenes to give us an opportunity to go do what we love. They're a big part of what we are, and they're the rock and foundation of our program.

Last year the national championship was certainly the cherry on top, but to think back on our team and this past year, we had 1000 APR score. We had over 95 guys with 3.0 GPA. So we are proud of continuing to make sure that guys understand that when they come to Ohio State, they're there to win championships, but they're also there to be students and to be well-rounded in everything that they do.

But Texas game is 39 days away from right now, and the team that we have currently wants to leave their own legacy behind, and they made that clear a week after the national championship game in some of the comments that they made.

We've said it before, we're not defending national champions because we're not defending anything. They can't take the trophy away. We're looking to attack and win a championship with this team. That started in the offseason, and it's continuing in through July. I think we've had a great offseason, but now we need to have a great August as we head into this first game against Texas.

The three guys that we have here are tremendous young

men. I told somebody before. We were checking into the hotel, and as we were checking in, the woman behind the desk said, Is there someone 21 that can check these three guys in? I said, Yeah, I'll do it, because Caleb, Sonny are both 20, and Jeremiah is 19.

When you get around our guys, and especially these three, you just realize not only how talented and special they are, but what great young men. I think all three guys are a great representation of what it means to be a Buckeye. They've shown great leadership.

As we change and shift the landscape moving forward, I can't say enough about our AD Ross Bjork, our President Ted Carter and how their alignment with the football program has been very important to our progress as we move forward, and we look to find out and move where the next step is going to be. Every year it's different.

I think it was four years ago that I was here when I said, I think in about five years we won't recognize what college football looks like. I think that I was right off the feel. I think I was wrong on the field. I think the product is as good as it's ever been. I think the athletes are better than they've ever been. Teams are great, certainly here in the Big Ten and across the country.

But off the field it's just very, very different. It's constantly changing, and so that's where great alignment will be very, very important. I think we're very well-positioned here at Ohio State moving forward, and I want to thank them for all their hard work.

It's an honor to be the head coach at Ohio State. I don't take that lightly. My family, my children really don't know any different. This will be my ninth year at Ohio State and the seventh as the head coach. You know, it's something that I appreciate and my family appreciates, and so don't take that very lightly.

Certainly here to take any questions you guys may have, and Go Bucs.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.



**Q. It's rare for a sophomore to be here. Obviously Jeremiah Smith is not a typical sophomore. As great a year as he had last year, what's the next step for him?**

RYAN DAY: If you look at him, you've seen him where he's gotten bigger and stronger and faster than he was last year. He was at workouts the other day, and Mick constantly says during our warmups, he's the first guy every time we run through and we're warming up. The first guy every single time. He just sets such a standard. You don't need to motivate Jeremiah.

What he did as a freshman speaks for itself, and like you said, he may not be an older guy, he may not be really vocal in terms of his leadership, but what he does on the field speaks for itself, and the work ethic he's brought into this year has been exceptional. I think that deserves an opportunity to be here today, and that's why he's here.

I think Caleb and Sonny also have really taken big steps as leaders because we know guys are in different roles this year. I think all three of them have done a good job.

We also have some guys back in Columbus that have stepped up into big roles. You have to pick three. I asked if I could bring more. They wouldn't let me. I would have if we could. These guys are very deserving.

**Q. Defensively you had one of the top teams in the country last year. You kind of turned the page now with Matt Patricia coming in and eight new starters on that side of the ball. Just what is your degree of comfort going into the start of preseason camp about where that's at? Obviously a lot of work still to do, but -- and Matt Patricia, just how he's embraced that role.**

RYAN DAY: A lot of work, but I'm very excited about our defense and what we're doing. We wanted to keep continuity there, and that was one of the reasons it took us a long time and had a thorough process in hiring Matt.

When you look at Tim and Larry and James and Matt Guerrieri, these guys had a huge part of what we did last year on defense. We wanted to keep that continuity. We want to run the Ohio State defense. Matt was willing to embrace that.

Now, Matt has his own background and things that he likes. I think one of the things he does a great job of is putting guys in situations to be successful. You look what he did at the Patriots and his background. He'll have his little different changes, but we want to keep really the structure of what we've done in the past and keep that going.

I'm fired up. I think Matt has done a great job of building relationships already with the current players. When you ask them about that and you ask the recruits about Matt, they just have glowing responses about who he is, the way he connects, his personality. I'm fired up.

There's guys that we have to replace, but when you look at some of the guys that are coming off the edge, when you look at our back end, when you look at our linebackers, you see a lot of potential there, but we have to go do it. That's why August is very important.

**Q. Speaking of Jeremiah, he had some pretty pointed comments about losing the game last year and vowed to not let that happen again. Just to your point about the way college football has changed, some of the traditions are changing, what does it mean to have a player like Jeremiah reinforce those old customs?**

RYAN DAY: Well, he's very, very competitive, and he's not used to losing. We lost the first game against Oregon. I mean, he was angry. He wasn't the only one, and certainly for him, he expects to win every single game. He expects to win every drill that he's in. That's just the way he's wired.

When you ask a question, you're going to get a genuine, authentic response from Jeremiah, and I think the guys feed off of that. When he tells you something, you can believe it. There's no reading between the lines with him. He's going to tell you exactly. He may not be a man of many words, but when he says something, you're listening, and we're all listening, and he's the ultimate competitor.

**Q. Toward the end of spring you called the quarterback competition between Julian and Lincoln. It was pretty neck and neck after the summer. Where do you see those on two guys competing?**

RYAN DAY: Same, because it's hard to make any progress unless you're actually on the field playing football, but I think both guys have gotten stronger. It will be interesting to see once we get done with our summer program with Mick next week, you know, who our "Gold" and who's "Iron" Buckeyes. That will be big for the leadership, but guys have taken leadership roles.

They've been throwing with the wide receivers. I ask those guys all the time, and they like both of them. We're going to put them in as many competitive situations as we possibly can to figure out who handles that the best.

We've got to be on point week one. We can't be messing around. I know that we'll need all of those guys in that room this year. When you look at Will, he was a guy who

was an older guy, who was experienced, and he was able to sustain the entire season. That's not always the way it is.

We have to build depth in that room as well. I've got a feeling they'll all play throughout the season, but it will be a fierce competition to be who the starter is.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about the transition on offense from Coach Kelly to Coach Hartline, through lines versus changes. How much can we expect to see stay the same versus changing?**

RYAN DAY: It will be similar. We've tried to keep the offense the same over these nine years. We've all worked together for a while. Brian and I have worked together since the jump on this.

Chip brought in his own ideas, but we tried to keep the offense the offense. That was one of the things that he and I sat down and talked about on the front end that this is going to be the Ohio State offense.

There are certain things that you like to do that we're going to embrace. He made a few changes in the numbering system and some things like that, how he identified things, that we've carried that over into this year.

But I knew that Chip may not be here for very long, and that was part of the understanding when he came in, but that when he left, you can't just all of a sudden have a whole new offense, so that's important.

I watched from afar Coach Saban do that when he was at Alabama, just have different coordinators move around. Whether it's the offense or the defense, we want to have continuity year after year, even though a coordinator may leave, to create stability long-term.

It's the same way as we're doing on defense, but then on offense it will be the same way. Tyler Bowen brings in a different background. That was part of the hiring process too with the offensive line was to make sure that we had somebody with coordinator experience to work with Brian to help with the run game. Brian's strength is in the passing game, and I think he's really grown. He's grown from a really good player to a really good coach.

Now the next progression is to become a really good coordinator. I've said this before. I think being a coordinator, the easiest thing to do at times is call plays. The challenge is the organization of the scripts, of the staff, of the individual drills, making sure that we're putting players in a position to be successful, maximizing our personnel, making adjustments in-game. These are all the

things that are very important as a coordinator.

I think that's just a natural progression for him. Working hand-in-hand with Tyler up front I think is a good combination. I'm excited to see their work this season.

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