Former UNH Football Alumni Take Over OSU Football Program

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Once a starting quarterback at the University of New Hampshire (UNH), and now a head coach at Ohio State University, Ryan Day has excelled at the sport of football his whole career. He has leveled up from his high school football days as a player, at Manchester Central in New Hampshire, to now being the head coach at a high Division one football program. Something he’s been believing his whole career, eventually helped put himself in the right spot which was possible through loads of hard work and great IQ.

Day sits now as the current head coach of the Ohio State Buckeyes headed into the 2024 season. Promptly, a new hire was made at the offensive coordinator position which could change the way fans look at Buckeyes football from here on out. This move can boost both of their careers with high rates of success during the next few seasons, but you’re probably wondering one thing. Who is the new offensive coordinator?

When Day had started his Wildcat career in 1998 as a quarterback, things didn’t go his way at first. Not until his sophomore year came around, and Day had finally gotten the chance to start at quarterback, beating out a senior for the spot.

Day was then coached by new head coach and former offensive coordinator at New Hampshire, Sean McDonnell, who would go on to coach at UNH for 21 more seasons. The biggest move though, but through the sense of a relationship forming at UNH and lasting to this day, was their new offensive coordinator (OC) signing.

The OC position was taken by Chip Kelly who had previously helped coach the running backs and offensive line for four years before taking the offensive coordinator position at UNH. This would help bring Day the connection he has today with Kelly which is only making the both of them better. This was fulfilled when Ohio State head coach Ryan Day brought in former UCLA head coach, Kelly, as the new offensive coordinator and quarterback coach at Ohio State.

Chip Kelly has been coaching since 1990 and is still steady to this day as a part of the Ohio State Buckeyes staff now.

Kelly spent 13 seasons with the Wildcats before departing all the way across the country to Oregon University. This is where he would eventually end up as the head coach for the Ducks, in 2009, after one season as the offensive coordinator at Oregon.

By 2013, Chip was able to get his first NFL coaching position as the head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles for three seasons later head coaching the San Francisco 49ers for just one season.

Kelly saw success in the NFL, but not as much as he had seen in college, after a year off from coaching, he was able to return to FBS football once again becoming the new UCLA Bruins head coach.

Chip was able to turn the losing team the Bruins had been for three years into a winning team playing in three bowl games over the past three seasons.
Some of Chip Kelly's best moments consisted of: a Rose Bowl win in 2012 over number nine seed Wisconsin Badgers, coaching in the 2011 BCS National Championship Game against the one seed Auburn Tigers, which they would end up losing in, 19-22, and leading the Eagles to a 10-6 record in 2013 and the division title in his first season as an NFL head coach. He would go on to lose, 24-26, against the New Orleans Saints in the Wild Card game in the NFC Playoffs.

Through these moments he was able to bring in several awards including two time Pac-10 Coach of the Year (2009, 2010), AP College Football Coach of the Year (2010), and the Maxwell Club NFL Coach of the Year award (2013). It is not surprising that this resume was impressive to Day.

Day has been able to make it to many College Football Playoffs (CFP), but the idea of coming up short has happened more often than he's wanted as the OSU head coach. Only making it to one championship in four appearances is something Ryan Day has been stressing about since his switch as the acting head coach in 2018 when Urban Meyer was placed on administrative leave. So their answer to these problems, Chip Kelly.

Previous seasons for the Ohio State Buckeyes include missing the College Football Playoff last season, finishing as the seven seed in the country. In 2022 Ohio State was able to make the College Football Playoff, but lost in the semifinal against Georgia, 41-42. Ohio State had finished at number six in the country following the 2021 season where they’d end up winning the Rose Bowl Game, 48-45, over the Utah Utes. 2020 was the first season under Day where they’d actually make the CFP National Championship. They’d eventually fall short to Alabama in the Championship losing, 24-52, to a very dominant Crimson Tide roster.

In 2019, the first year Day was the official head coach at OSU, he had led his team to the semifinal matchup against Clemson who put up a fight coming up short, 23-29. Ohio State has had loads of success over the years, but just never fully having the chance to raise the championship trophy feeling victorious.

Although these results may be true, Day is looking to fulfill his dreams and take home the College Football Playoff Championship soon enough. Through the additions of great minds in the program and excellent recruits, transfers, and returnees, the Buckeyes look tough to beat for the upcoming 2024 FBS, football bowl series, season.

Returning players for Ohio State include: a top cornerback in college football senior Denzel Burke, a pitbull of a running back in senior Treveyon Henderson, and even a game changer senior defensive end Jack Sawyer.

Three other returning seniors who are key to their success include wide receiver, Emeka Egbuka, defensive tackle, Tyleik Williams, and another defensive end in JT Tuimoloau. Away from seniors, the rest of the team is loaded with star playmakers, and anchors filled on the defensive side.

Recent additions of Ole Miss junior running back Quinshon Judkins as the RB2 helps the Buckeyes bring more force to opposing defenses, but also give Henderson more of a cut during games. Judkins finished his Ole Miss career after transferring with 2,725 yards and 31 touchdowns in two seasons.

Not as great as recent quarterbacks at Ohio State like CJ Stroud or Justin Fields, Kansas State (KSU) red shirt senior, Will Howard, will look to make an impact with his boost of experience, arm talent, and overall athleticism. He had led KSU to a Big 12 title in 2022 and had earned 2nd-team All-Big 12 honors in 2023, but some fear his lack in overall passing numbers at Kansas State could cause a downfall.

However, Ohio State has a true number one receiver in Egbuka, a sophomore in Carnell Tate and a true freshman wideout in Jeremiah Smith, who are both experienced receivers with high potential to come for the Buckeyes program.

The last transfer and addition that can change the way the defense looks as a whole, especially in the secondary, is previous Alabama safety and the one of the nation’s best freshman in 2023, Caleb Downs.

Downs comes in as a sophomore looking for a better opportunity with Nick Saban's recent departure from the University of Alabama. Downs has the chance to be college football's best safety in 2024. He leads as one of the strongest candidates.
Overall, the Buckeyes are loaded everywhere on the football field. Through all the additions in the coaching staff and team, Ohio State looks to come out as the Big Ten favorite to win the conference and possibly help earn Ryan Day his first championship win as head coach.

When starting his football career in Durham, Sean McDonnell had seen Day’s leadership from the start when choosing the starting quarterback position. McDonnell also mentions Day had a way of getting people to be their best selves which has been flowing through during his coaching tenure until today. This has allowed for many prospects to show improvement and gain acknowledgement year in and out, only looking to get to the next level.

When touching lastly on the relationship gained through UNH football, Kelly, like McDonnell, had high hopes for soon to be starting quarterback, Ryan Day. Their decision to make Day the quarterback only setup for this exceptional pair to be made between Kelly and Day. Kelly would have new ideas and look to strategize with Ryan Day since Day was always engaged and fully present when trying to learn and understand the process UNH was looking to play out on the field.

This gave them that true football connection between player and coach which has allowed for that strong bond to last nowadays especially in the Ohio State Football program. All in all, Chip Kelly is one person Day can put loads of trust in since they’ve been talking, living, and breathing football since 1998 together.