

Kyle McCord Commitment Helps Solidify Future Ohio State QB Depth

Before the Buckeyes made Ryan Day their head coach Jan. 2, they started a nationwide search for a quarterback in a loaded 2021 recruiting class last summer while he approached his second year as offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach.

Ohio State secured Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star Jack Miller (6-4, 210) early July 1 and moved its focus from 2020 to 2021 soon after, doling out offers across the country in the following eight months.

Along the way, six signal callers reported scholarships from OSU — Dallas Parish Episcopal's Preston Stone (6-2, 205, May 10), Charlotte (N.C.) Myers Park's Drake Maye (6-4, 200, Nov. 4), La Grange (Ill.) Nazareth Academy's J.J. McCarthy (6-2, 180, Dec. 11), Washington (D.C.) Gonzaga's Caleb Williams (6-1, 190, Jan. 21), Harbor City (Calif.) Narbonne's Jake Garcia (6-2, 185, Jan. 29) and Chesire (Conn.) Academy's Jack Brandon (6-3, 185, March 24).

Among those arms, Philadelphia St. Joseph's Kyle McCord evidently stood out enough for Ohio State to accept a commitment Tuesday from the 6-3, 204-pounder. In possession of an offer since Jan. 16 when the Buckeyes extended one to him and Philadelphia St. Joseph's wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. (6-4, 184), he announced his decision following visits Feb. 2 and April 13 — possibly solidifying Day's quarterback room for the next five years.

Two weeks ago, OSU's position group had just three signal callers — two scholarships and a walk-on — after redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin (6-3, 215) confirmed his transfer April 18. In the wake of the spring game April 13 at Ohio Stadium, Day said the competition between Baldwin and sophomore Justin Fields (6-3, 223) would continue into fall camp, although the Georgia transfer controlled only the first-team offense while Baldwin split both the first- and second-team units.

Baldwin's departure left Ohio State scrambling for depth with only fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov (6-0, 208) and sophomore Danny Vanatsky (6-1, 205) behind the dual-threat Fields, but Day responded swiftly as short-term options accepted opportunities for the 2019 season. Over the weekend, La Verne (Calif.) Bonita's JP Andrade (6-3, 205) accepted a preferred walk-on offer and Kentucky junior Gunnar Hoak (6-4, 212) chose to transfer in.

While the Buckeyes' immediate depth for the 2019 campaign is unchanged with McCord's commitment, Day and passing game coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich have two blue-chip pledges on pace to arrive in 2020 and '21. OSU only loses Chugunov in 2020 as Miller enters with the return of two scholarships — Fields (junior) and Hoak (fifth-year senior) — plus walk-ons Vanatsky (junior) and Andrade (sophomore).

McCord, meanwhile, has two more years at St. Joseph's after he led the Hawks (13-0) to the Pennsylvania 6A State Championship. As a sophomore, his 2,883 passing yards set a school record, completing 201 of 302 attempts (66.6 percent) and throwing 38 touchdowns along the way to being named Philadelphia Catholic League MVP.

As a rising junior against mostly rising seniors April 7 at The Opening Regional in New Jersey, McCord separated from the talented pack of upperclassmen and earned quarterback MVP. Upon the initial 247Sports rankings for 2021, McCord made the cut April 9 as the No. 113 overall prospect, No. 8 pro-style quarterback and No. 5 player in Pennsylvania.

Ideally, Ohio State projects to get at least two years out of Fields (2019 and '20) before the baton is potentially handed off to Miller (2021 and '22) and McCord (2023 and '24). However, as the past 12 months revealed — from Joe Burrow's LSU transfer to Dwayne Haskins' NFL declaration and Tate Martell's Miami transfer — nothing is ever set in stone.

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