

Five-Star Linebacker Grant Picks Ohio State

By Adam Jardy

One year after missing out on three highly rated national recruits on National Signing Day, Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel and his program hit a home run this year when five-star prospect Curtis Grant announced in front of a national television audience that he wanted to become a Buckeye.

Grant, a highly sought-after linebacker from Richmond (Va.) Hermitage, donned an OSU hat for ESPNU cameras and became the final member of a 23-player recruiting class for the Buckeyes.

The 6-3, 225-pound Grant said he chose Ohio State from a list of finalists that included Florida and Virginia because it was where he felt most comfortable.

"I pulled the trigger for the Buckeyes because that's where I felt the most love from," he said during his live announcement. "Those guys recruited me in a different way, and I like the way they recruited me."

Although OSU linebackers coach Luke Fickell handled most of Grant's recruiting, it was offensive line coach Jim Bollman who had the first contact with the linebacker.

Grant's early plans are to make an immediate impact upon his arrival in Columbus.

"I told the coaches when I come there I don't plan on sitting on the bench," he said. "We're going to stick together and we're going to work hard and fight for the national championship. I think we are



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THE CLOSER – Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel welcomed 23 new players Feb. 2 on National Signing Day, including five-star linebacker Curtis Grant of Richmond (Va.) Hermitage.

Carter's Status On Hold

The status of Ohio State verbal commitment Chris Carter remains unclear after the Cleveland native was arrested Feb. 1 after being accused of molesting at least eight girls at his high school.

The 6-4, 325-pound offensive lineman from John F. Kennedy High School did not sign a national letter of intent with the Buckeyes, but his future with the program has not yet been decided.

In his opening signing day statement to reporters inside the team meeting room at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, OSU head coach Jim Tressel said the Buckeyes had welcomed in 23 signees "to this point." Asked later to clarify whether the class could still grow, the coach declined to discuss specifics but did not rule out the addition of one more player.

"There's a possibility," Tressel said. "I think everyone is aware that we had something pop up yesterday we didn't know much about. (We) can't talk about it because the only thing we're allowed to talk about today is the kids who have signed letters with us. We don't know what the situation is, so (our class) could be larger and it might not."

Tressel was not asked further about the topic in the five minutes during which he took questions.

According to a police report, a 15-year-old girl notified authorities after Carter approached her claiming to need to measure her for a ROTC uniform. The girl became suspicious, the report stated, when he turned off the lights and told her she would have to remove her bra. Carter, a member of the school's ROTC program, is alleged to have used the situation to attempt to fondle several other girls.

Carter's attorney, Harvey Bruner, told multiple media outlets that Carter had been released from jail as of Feb. 2 and that he expects all charges to be dropped. In addition, Bruner said it is his understanding that Carter will still sign with Ohio State.

A three-star prospect, Carter is rated the No. 27 offensive guard in the nation by Scout.com. He committed to the Buckeyes in March.

– Adam Jardy

going to stick together as a family and try to do good things together."

Thanks in large part to Grant's signing, the Buckeyes closed this year's signing day with a flourish and a recruiting class that was rated No. 3 nationally and tops in the Big Ten by Scout.com.

"I like everything about it," Tressel said. "It's a good-sized group. We think it's going to be a good one."

Grant was not the only player to pledge for OSU on signing day. Three-star quarterback Cardale Jones from Cleveland Glenville selected the Buckeyes although he will postpone his enrollment until next January. Meanwhile, four-star linebacker Ejuan Price from Pittsburgh Woodland Hills firmly settled on Ohio State after briefly considering switching his verbal commitment to hometown Pittsburgh.

Jones, a 6-5, 215-pound athlete, will enroll in a prep school in order to put a year of eligibility between him and Braxton Miller of Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne, the five-star quarterback who has already enrolled for winter courses at OSU.

Bollman indicated the coaching staff does not view the situation as bringing in two quarterbacks in the '11 class because Jones will not be on campus until next season. Quarterbacks coach Nick Siciliano added that the Tarblooder was just too good a prospect to pass up.

"We thought that these were the two best quarterbacks in the country," Siciliano said of Miller and Jones. "It happened to be that both of them were from our state, so we felt like we had to go out and get both of them."

As for the 6-0, 235-pound Price, Fickell said the coaches gave him some space in the days leading up to signing day as he struggled with his previous verbal commitment to the Buckeyes.

"There was a kid that struggled but knew this was where he wanted to be, knew that his heart was here," Fickell said. "Just like all of us, sometimes when you're getting ready to make a big decision, that last few hours or minutes, sometimes you get some cold feet and you just need a few things to reassure you. That's all it really was for him."

Trio Heads Elsewhere

While the Buckeyes were accepting the aforementioned commitments, three other prospects remaining on their recruiting board committed elsewhere.

Of the three, the biggest surprise was four-star offensive guard Aundrey Walker

from Cleveland Glenville who signed with USC. The 6-6, 355-pound lineman told Scout that he picked the Trojans because of his relationship with recruiting coordinator Ed Orgeron.

"USC has a great coaching staff and it's a nice place," Walker said. "The school is great itself. I'm surrounded by a group of good people."

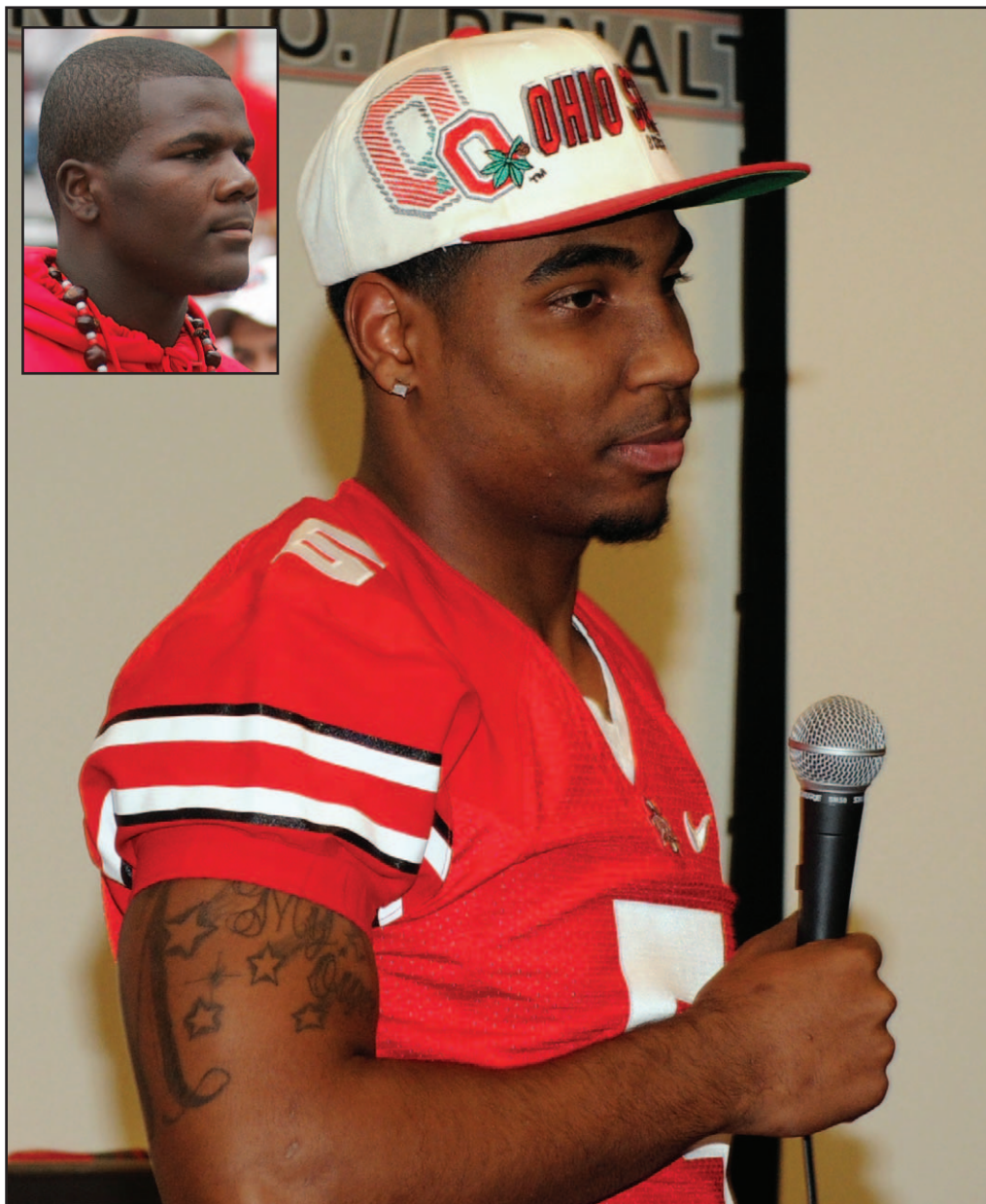
Scout rates Walker the No. 9 player at his position and the No. 12 overall prospect from Ohio.

Meanwhile, four-star wide receiver Darius Jennings from Baltimore Gilman School issued a verbal commitment to Virginia. The 5-11, 175-pound wideout was rated the No. 43 player at his position. Wake Forest was his other finalist.

"One of the final things that led me to Virginia was input from my family," Jennings said. "My parents and little brother all said Virginia, so that helped me and put Virginia over the top. After talking with my head coach on Monday night, I prayed on it and made my decision final."

Finally, four-star wide receiver JaJuan Story opted to stick with his previous verbal commitment to Florida. The 6-4, 192-pound prospect from Brooksville (Fla.) Nature Coast Tech took an official visit to the Buckeyes before reaffirming his commitment to the Gators on signing day.

Story is rated the No. 33 prospect in the nation at his position.



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WELCOME ABOARD – Five-star quarterback Braxton Miller (5) was one of two quarterbacks to become a Buckeye in the 2011 recruiting class. Cleveland Glenville quarterback Cardale Jones (inset) will come to Ohio State in 2012 after attending prep school.



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Ohio State Football Commitments

The following 23 players signed national letters of intent Feb. 2 to play football at Ohio State.

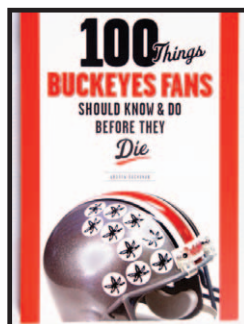
Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Mike Bennett	DL	6-3	280	★★★★★	Centerville, Ohio
Brian Bobek	OL	6-2	280	★★★★★	Palatine (Ill.) Fremd
Tommy Brown	OL	6-5	320	★★★★	Akron Firestone
Jeremy Cash	DB	6-2	190	★★★★	Plantation, Fla.
Conner Crowell	LB	6-1	220	★★★★	Waldorf (Md.) North Point
Chase Farris	DL	6-6	265	★★★★★	Elyria, Ohio
DerJuan Gambrell	DB	6-2	180	★★★★★	Toledo Rogers
Curtis Grant	LB	6-3	225	★★★★★★	Richmond (Va.) Hermitage
Doran Grant	DB	5-10	180	★★★★★	Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary
Joel Hale	DL	6-4	310	★★★★	Greenwood (Ind.) Center Grove
Ken Hayes	DL	6-5	255	★★★★★	Toledo Whitmer
Bryce Haynes	LS	6-4	185	★★★	Cumming (Ga.) Pincrest Academy
Jeff Heuerman	TE	6-5	240	★★★★	Naples (Fla.) Barron Collier
Cardale Jones	QB	6-5	215	★★★★	Cleveland Glenville
Braxton Miller	QB	6-3	210	★★★★★★	Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne
Steve Miller	DL	6-4	245	★★★★★★	Canton (Ohio) McKinley
Ejuan Price	LB	6-0	235	★★★★★	Pittsburgh Woodland Hills
Ryan Shazier	LB	6-2	210	★★★★★	Plantation, Fla.
Devin Smith	WR	6-3	190	★★★★★	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Evan Spencer	WR	6-1	190	★★★★★	Vernon Hills, Ill.
Ron Tanner	DB	6-1	190	★★★★★	Columbus Eastmoor
Tony Underwood	OL	6-3	305	★★★★	Shaker Heights, Ohio
Nick Vannett	TE	6-6	235	★★★★★	Westerville (Ohio) Central



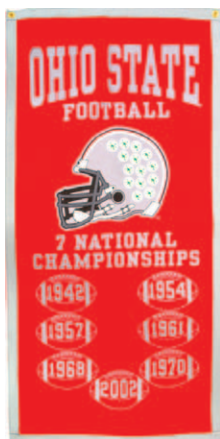
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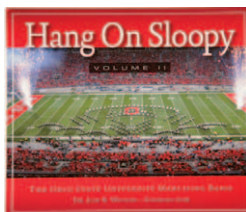
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