

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Buckeyes Get Nod From Jersey Cornerback

When Ohio State hired Darrell Hazell away from Rutgers in the spring to be the team's new receivers coach, it was anticipated that he would bring with him not only coaching acumen but also some connections in the New Jersey area.

While Hazell probably doesn't deserve all the credit for OSU's newest verbal commitment — Piscataway, N.J., cornerback Malcolm Jenkins, who announced his intentions Aug. 5 — it's worth noting that Jenkins hails from Hazell's area of expertise and that the OSU assistant also served as Jenkins' primary recruiter.

"It was more me feeling like that was where I needed to be," Jenkins told BSB. "I felt more comfortable with that

RECRUITING OUTLOOK

with
Chris Nida

program. There were a lot of positives with other schools, but there were a lot of positives with Ohio State. I felt like I could succeed there and really get to the best of my abilities."

Jenkins has not been ranked by most major recruiting services, but he has had a strong summer. He received offers from almost every school he camped with including the Buckeyes.

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Football players in the class of 2005 who have issued verbal commitments to play college football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	High School
Kevin Bemoll	OL	6-5	295	Mission Viejo, Calif.
Alex Boone	OL	6-8	296	Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward
Jim Cordle	OL	6-5	285	Lancaster, Ohio
Todd Denlinger	DL	6-3	280	Troy, Ohio
Brian Hartline	WR	6-2	174	Canton (Ohio) GlenOak
Malcolm Jenkins	CB	6-0	185	Piscataway, N.J.
Jamario O'Neal	DB	6-1	190	Cleveland Glenville
Rob Schoenhof	QB	6-5	227	Cincinnati St. Xavier
Ryan Williams	DL	6-5	240	Mission Viejo, Calif.



The coaches were impressed with the 4.43 time in the 40-yard dash that he turned in, and Jenkins has the size (6-0, 185) the coaching staff is looking for in its cornerbacks. OSU offered almost immediately after the New Jersey prepster returned home from the school's one-day senior advanced camp.

Jenkins' decision eventually came down to the Buckeyes, Virginia Tech and home-state favorite Rutgers, though he also received offers from Indiana and Syracuse.

"Since I already had a top three in my head, I talked to my parents and we decided that I might as well make a decision," he said. "I had a top three and I decided to get it over with before the season comes."

Likely influencing his decision to wind up his recruitment were the lofty goals Piscataway has for this season. The school is a two-time defending Garden State champ and has not lost a game in the past two years.

Last year's title was somewhat unexpected considering subpar preseason projections for Piscataway, but this year Jenkins makes it clear his school enters the season as the favorite.

"We should do it again," he said. "We have most of our players back."

NEWEST COMMITMENT — Cornerback Malcolm Jenkins of Piscataway, N.J., became the ninth player in Ohio State's 2005 recruiting class when he verbally to the Buckeyes on Aug. 5.

Buckeyes Would Like End To Join Defensive Fold

Defensive line coach Jim Heacock said recently that he would like to rotate as many as 10 players along the line this season. One of his projected starting defensive ends, Simon Fraser, is a senior this year, and the other, Mike Kudla, will be a senior next year.

With that in mind, the Ohio State coaches are in the market for some defensive linemen this year, specifically ends.

At 6-3 and 280 pounds, previous commitment Todd Denlinger could play at either end or tackle in college, but 6-5, 240-pound Ryan Williams is the only true defensive end committed to the Buckeyes at this point.

OSU would like to add another in the form of Athol Springs (N.Y.) St. Francis star Doug Worthington, who doesn't see himself as anything except an end.

"I think I'm mobile enough because I run a 4.78, and I think I'm strong enough because I bench 320, but I don't know what's going to happen at the next level," the 6-7, 256-pounder told BSB.

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

2005 by Rivals.com, Worthington visited the OSU campus for one of the Buckeyes' one-day senior advanced camps (though he did not participate in drills). After touring a number of different schools throughout the remainder of the summer — including Boston College, North Carolina, North Carolina State and Duke — Worthington returned to New York with the Buckeyes still in good standing.

"Everywhere you go you're not going to be treated like you want to, but Ohio State was the best place as far as the coaches treating you like they want you," he said.

"Coach Heacock is a nice guy and the facilities are second to none. The coaching staff and Jimmy Tressel treat you like you should be treated. They're basically at the top of my list as far as everything."

A number of schools are in the running for Worthington's services, but he has begun narrowing his list slightly. UNC and Maryland were eliminated, but Worthington remains interested in a number of southern schools that have offered him a scholarship, including

LSU, Alabama and Georgia.

As far as the Big Ten goes, Penn State and Wisconsin are making the biggest pushes for Worthington, though he has expressed reservations about how long Nittany Lions coach Joe Paterno will remain in his position. Michigan has been in contact as well.

Worthington may also visit Virginia Tech and Boston College. Ideally, he would like to schedule visits during weekends that he could see two teams he has interest in.

"I have to go to the Michigan-Ohio State game," he said. "That's being played at Ohio State, so I have to take a visit there during that game. But I might have committed to Ohio State or another school by then."

Worthington would like to take his visits during his high school season and make a verbal commitment before St. Francis' year comes to an end, but he's not going to force anything either.

"I'm not going to make my decision real soon, but I'm not going to make it real late," he said. "I want to do it

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He's Not In School But Pettrey's Still Kicking

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before the season's over. It's a big decision. I want to look at all my bridges before I burn them."

Kicker Remains On Track To Join OSU In January

For some high school prospects — such as Raceland (Ky.) Raceland-Worthington kicker Aaron Pettrey — grayshirting is the best thing to do for their futures.

By not enrolling at Ohio State until January, he'll have a chance to step right into the Buckeye lineup in 2005 and fill the shoes left behind by the departing Mike Nugent.

This, though, is the time of year that grayshirts dread. While their friends are heading off to college and their future teammates are getting ready for yet another season of football, the grayshirts must wait around for their time to come.

"It's real weird not playing football right now," Pettrey told BSB. "You're out there watching everybody else when you're usually out there every season."

He's trying to make the best of his downtime, enrolling part-time at a local community college to get some of his future requirements — English, math, geography and psychology — out of the way.

Pettrey said he's also kicking 35 to 40 times a day in addition to keeping up a conditioning regimen that

includes running and weight room work.

The Buckeyes coaching staff is clearly in the midst of one of their busiest times of the year, but Pettrey has been staying in contact with them whenever possible.

"We talk to them probably once every week or two," he said. "They really helped us out with taking classes and helping me know what to take."

Pettrey also is planning to be a steady presence at Ohio Stadium this fall, barring any scheduling complications.

"I'm going to try to make it up to all the home games if I can," he said. "I want to get a feel for it and just stay around to see what's going on."

Four Ohioans Still Atop Buckeyes' Wish List

According to Rivals.com, Ohio State has already locked up five of the top 10 players in Ohio, and wide receiver Brian Hartline is close behind at No. 14.

Of the top 10, three players remain uncommitted, and the Buckeyes have offered each of them. Highest-ranked is Hamilton, Ohio, safety Adam Myers-White at No. 3.

Coming out of the same school that has sent both E.J. and Brandon Underwood to Columbus in recent years, some have presumed Myers-White to be a lock for the Buckeyes. While they may still be the favorite, he is showing interest in other schools that have offered him as well, most notably Purdue and Southern California.

The 6-4, 190-pound safety, also rated No. 3 nationally among safeties and No. 63 overall, enjoyed a recent trip to Purdue and said the Boilermakers, Buckeyes and Trojans were definitely in line for a

visit, likely along with Florida and Tennessee.

After Myers-White, Columbus Brookhaven linebacker prospect Alex Daniels is the highest-rated uncommitted prospect in Ohio at No. 6.

Ranked No. 10 nationally among athletes, Daniels is up to about 6-2 and 230 pounds but has maintained a 40-yard dash time around 4.5 seconds.

OSU and Oklahoma have long been the top two schools in contention for his services, but he has told BuckeyeSports.com in the past that his mother would like him to leave Columbus for college.

Daniels once again confirmed that in an interview with SoonerScoop.com.

"She has been working on me a lot," he said. "She is really strong with it. She has been telling my sister and brother that she wants me to leave the state. They used to want me to stay, but now they are telling me to go off somewhere else, too."

Daniels said that he likely won't visit Ohio State because the school is so close by — he reportedly was at OSU's jersey scrimmage Aug. 21 — but it appears the Buckeyes will at least remain in contention until the end.

"It will be my decision though," he said. "I will listen to what everybody has to say, and then I will make up my own mind."

The final member of Ohio's top 10 still uncommitted is Middletown wide receiver Andre Amos, ranked No. 29 at his position nationally. The 6-1, 180-pounder is still considering OSU and Purdue and was likely to decide sometime around the second week of September.

At this point, the Buckeyes are the slight favorite.

"Right now, Ohio State is in the lead," Amos told BuckeyeSports.com recruiting analyst Bill Kurelic. "It's a little lead. I'll be at the Ohio State-Cincinnati game."



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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

A Little Historical Perspective, Please

New Poll Respects OSU's Offensive Output

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor



RB | 5th



WR | 6th



QB | Not Ranked

Ohio State has typically been known as a grind-it-out offense from the Woody Hayes days of "three yards and a cloud of dust" through the Heisman Trophy season of Eddie George to the national championship of 2002 led in part by freshman tailback Maurice Clarett.

But how do the Buckeyes stack up against other schools when it comes to offensive power? For instance, three of Ohio State's five Heisman seasons have been since 1970. How does that compare to other programs such as Southern Cal, Texas or Nebraska, schools which pride themselves on producing talented running backs?

And despite its reputation of having a run-first mentality on offense, has OSU produced the same number of high-quality pass receivers as some other universities such as Michigan, Tennessee or Florida?

CollegeFootballNews.com recently put together a list of the 10 greatest programs for producing running backs, wide receivers and quarterbacks. Writers Pete Fiutak and Richard Cirminiello put together a historical debate, listing the best college football factories for those skilled positions.

While Cirminiello concentrated on how many topflight players at those positions each of the programs had sent to the NFL — and which of those players had flourished as pros — Fiutak centered his rankings around college production during collegiate careers.

Both writers went back only as far as 1970 to determine their rankings (although Fiutak fudged that barrier at times), but what they unveiled was both interesting and thought-provoking. For example, each came to the conclusion that there have been a ton of excellent quarterbacks throughout college football history but not that many great receivers. Additionally, few programs have enjoyed any sort of steady success when producing receivers. Or as Fiutak wrote simply, "College football is a running sport."

Running Back U.?

Ohio State ranked a somewhat surprising fifth among Fiutak's historical comparison of running back production. The Buckeyes ranked below USC, Auburn, Texas and Georgia.

About the Buckeyes, he wrote, "From a two-time Heisman winner in Archie Griffin, to pounding backs like Pete Johnson, Eddie George, Jim Otis and many others, Ohio State runners have always cranked out yards as well as any backs in college football. While there aren't too many flashy stars, there are so many good, productive players that you could easily make a case for the Buckeyes to be in the top three."

Fiutak's list of OSU's five greatest running backs since 1970 was an easy one to guess — Heisman winners Griffin and George, near winner Keith Byars, Johnson and Tim Spencer. However, he commits Buckeye sacrilege by writing that Griffin not only shouldn't have won two Heismans, he shouldn't have won any.

"Fully prepared to incur the wrath of the Buckeye faithful, Griffin shouldn't have won two Heismans," Fiutak wrote. "USC's Anthony Davis should have won in 1974 and Cal's Chuck Muncie, Pittsburgh's Tony Dorsett and USC's Ricky Bell were better backs in 1975."

While any Buckeye fan can find fault with Fiutak for that assessment, little can be found wrong with his assessment that Southern Cal should be at the top of the list. No other team can boast a top five of O.J. Simpson (even though his college career was over in 1968), Charles White, Marcus Allen, Davis and Bell.

There is more argument with the picks of Auburn, Texas and Georgia, but once you look at the backs those schools

have produced, perhaps Fiutak had a point.

The Tigers had Heisman Trophy winner Bo Jackson as well as Carnell Williams, Joe Cribbs, Brent Fullwood and James Brooks along with a supporting cast of Ronnie Brown, Lionel James, Willie Andrews, Rudi Johnson and Stephen Davis. But is that bunch better than the Longhorns, who have produced the likes of Heisman winners Ricky Williams and Earl Campbell, a third-place finisher in Roosevelt Leaks and one of this year's leading candidates in Cedric Benson? That doesn't even count Eric Metcalf, Jam Jones, Hodges Mitchell or Priest Holmes.

Then you have the Bulldogs, led by Heisman winner Herschel Walker, who some might argue was the best college football running back ever. But Walker isn't the only guy to come out of UGA. They had Garrison Hearst, Rodney Hampton and Robert Edwards to carry their mail over the past several seasons. In fact, the Dawgs have been so loaded during some seasons that running backs such as Terrell Davis and Olandis Gary couldn't even get off the bench.

Fiutak's second five were Penn State, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Miami (Fla.) and Nebraska. His choices for the top backs at those schools were Curt Warner, Ki-Jana Carter, John Cappelletti, Lydell Mitchell and Curtis Enis of the Nittany Lions; Billy Sims, Steve Owens, Joe Washington, Quentin Griffin and Greg Pruitt of the Sooners; Ron Dayne, Anthony Davis, Billy Marek, Brent Moss and Terrell Fletcher of the Badgers; Edgerrin James, Ottis Anderson, Willis McGahee, Clinton Portis and Stephen McQuire of the Hurricanes; and Mike Rozier, Ahman Green, Tom Rathman, Lawrence Phillips and Calvin Jones of the Cornhuskers.

Higher Than You Might Think

Since Ohio State really only discovered the forward pass in the late 1970s when Art Schlichter became quarterback, it was another surprise where Fiutak ranked the OSU program for wide receiver production.

The Buckeyes were sixth on the strength of such recent stars as David Boston, Terry Glenn, Joey Galloway and Michael Jenkins. Even Fiutak himself seemed surprised at ranking the OSU receiving corps so highly.

"There was a time when Ohio State was a pure power running program with Woody Hayes more likely to wear maize and blue than to throw a forward pass," he wrote. "That was a long time ago. Ohio State has cranked out some of the best receivers in college football over the past 25 years with top pro prospects, All-Americans and a Biletnikoff winner in Terry Glenn. It's not like the Buckeyes have had a who's who of all-star quarterbacks; the receivers have simply been that good."

Fiutak led off his list of the school's five greatest wide receivers with Cris Carter and finished with Boston, Glenn, Galloway and Doug Donley.

His top five receiver-producing programs since 1970 were topped by Michigan and its array of talent over the past several years. Interestingly, though, Heisman winner Desmond Howard didn't lead the list. Anthony Carter did, followed by Howard, David Terrell, Marquise Walker and Tai Streets.

Tennessee finished second on the merits of strong receivers such as Peerless Price, Carl Pickens, Marcus Nash and Tim McGee, but Fiutak's choice for the best of the lot was a bit of a shocker — Joey Kent — at least until you realize that Kent finished his career with 183 receptions for 2,814 yards and 25 TDs and still holds the Volunteers' career record for most 100-yard receiving games with 15.

Michigan State, Southern Cal and Florida rounded out the top five.

The Spartans have been producing excellent receivers for quite some time from Kirk Gibson and Andre Rison to Plaxico Burress and Charles Rogers. There were also guys such as Derrick Mason, Herb Haygood, Gari Scott and Muhsin Muhammad who starred for the Spartans.

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Starting with Lynn Swann in the 1970s and going through players such as Keyshawn Johnson and then Mike Williams last season, the Trojans have never been in short supply of receivers. In fact with their tremendous production at running back and receiver, it begs the question of why USC hasn't won more national championships than just the one undisputed title (1972) it has captured since 1970. (The Trojans have won three other titles in that time span but split them in 1974, '78 and 2003.)

Former coach Steve Spurrier's "Fun-n-Gun" offense made the Gators a relatively easy choice, but UF was churning out the pass catchers long before Spurrier got to Gainesville as head coach. Take your pick from players such as Wes Chandler, Reidel Anthony, Jabar Gaffney, Jack Jackson, Jacquez Green, Ike Hilliard, Cris Collinsworth, Reche Caldwell, Taylor Jacobs, Travis McGriff, Darrell Jackson, Carlos Alvarez and Chris Doering, and you might wonder why the Gators weren't ranked a bit higher.

Finishing out the top 10 behind the Buckeyes were Florida State, Miami (Fla.), Pittsburgh and a tie between LSU and Wisconsin.

The top five ranked receivers for each of those schools were Ron Sellers, Peter Warrick, E.G. Green, Kez McCorvey and Lawrence Dawsey of the Seminoles; Michael Irvin, Santana Moss, Reggie Wayne, Eddie Brown and Lamar Thomas of the Hurricanes; Larry Fitzgerald, Antonio Bryant, Latef Grim, Julius Dawkins and Dietrick Jells of the Panthers; Josh Reed, Wendell Davis, Michael Clayton, Eric Martin and Andy Hamilton of the Tigers; and Lee Evans,

Al Toon, Chris Chambers, Lee DeRamus and Tony Simmons of the Badgers.

No Love For QBs

Despite the fact that someone had to deliver all of those balls to what Futak considers the sixth-best receiving corps since 1970, the Ohio State quarterbacks were left completely out of the top 10 in his historical comparisons. The likes of Rex Kern, Cornelius Green, Schlichter, Mike Tomczak, Jim Karsatos, Greg Frey, Bobby Hoving, Joe Germaine and Craig Krenzle evidently didn't measure up in his evaluation.

Miami (Fla.) topped off the list of quarterbacks, led by Ken Dorsey and Steve Walsh at Nos. 1 and 2. Vinny Testaverde, Bernie Kosar and Jim Kelly rounded out their top five, but former Heisman winner Gino Torretta didn't make the cut.

There was no real surprise in the rankings with Florida State at No. 2 and Brigham Young at No. 3. After all, how can you argue with the likes of Heisman winners Charlie Ward and Chris Weinke for the Seminoles and Ty Detmer for the Cougars? In fact, the only argument you might get is if the Florida State cast of Thad Busby, Danny McManus and Danny Kannell really is one notch above guys like Jim McMahon, Robbie Bosco, Steve Young and Gifford Nielson of BYU.

Another argument might stem from the placement of Nebraska with its option quarterbacks ahead of Florida and its pure passers. It's hard to argue with either school's top five, though — Tommie Frazier, Eric Crouch, Jerry Tagge, Scott Frost and Turner Gill for the Huskers and UF's lineup of Danny Wuerffel, Rex Grossman, Shane Matthews, Kerwin Bell

and the old ball coach himself, Spurrier (remember, he won a Heisman, too).

Finishing off the top 10 quarterback producers were Oklahoma, Purdue, Southern Cal, Michigan and Tennessee.

The top five players for each of those schools were Jamelle Holieway, Josh Heupel, J.C. Watts, Jason White and Jack Mildren of the Sooners; Drew Brees, Bob Griese, Mark Herrmann, Scott Campbell and Jim Everett of the Boilermakers; Carson Palmer, Paul

McDonald, Rodney Peete, Rob Johnson and Matt Leinart of the Trojans; Rick Leach, Jim Harbaugh, Elvis Grbac, John Navarre and Brian Griese of the Wolverines; and Peyton Manning, Tee Martin, Casey Clausen, Andy Kelly and Heath Shuler of the Volunteers.

Obviously, Ohio State would argue that a top five of Kern, Schlichter, Hoving, Germaine and Krenzle certainly belongs among those groups.

So, let the debate wage on.

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