

2022 Tennessee Five-Star Defensive Tackle Walter Nolen Includes Ohio State Among Top Schools



Ohio State already holds a commitment from the top-rated offensive player in the class of 2022 in Southlake (Texas) Carroll five-star quarterback Quinn Ewers and finds itself in a position to land the country's best defensive player, as well, after Cordova (Tenn.) St. Benedict at Auburndale five-star defensive tackle Walter Nolen included the Buckeyes in his top 10 on Friday alongside Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Florida, LSU, Michigan, Oregon, Tennessee and USC.

Honored and blessed to say at this moment to have named my top ten schools at the moment recruitment is still fully open @Hayesfawcett3 @ChadSimmons_ @YONO96933567 @BigWalter79 @Coach_WallsSBA @dzoloty @ESPN3ALLDAY pic.twitter.com/An8GLk8v5G

— Walter Nolen9 [] [] (@WalterNolen4) February 12, 2021

As mentioned, the 6-4 and 300-pound Nolen is considered the top-rated defensive tackle and No. 2 prospect overall in his cycle, as he recorded 92 tackles, 26 tackles for loss, 21 quarterback hurries, two sacks, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery to lead Olive Branch, Miss., to the state playoffs in 2019. He then transferred to Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy last February but returned to the Memphis area over the summer without ever playing a snap for the Ascenders.

Nolen, who did not have any official statistics but garnered first-team all-region and all-metro honors this past fall, landed a scholarship offer from defensive line coach Larry Johnson during a virtual visit in November and has maintained contact with Johnson and defensive graduate assistant Lorenzo Jackson ever since. He's never been to campus but hopes to visit for the first time when the ongoing recruiting dead period comes to a close.

My Top schools...

pic.twitter.com/MvNHXHZbFo

— Walter Nolen9000 (@WalterNolen4) February 12, 2021

If Ohio State does ultimately sign both Ewers and Nolen, the Buckeyes will become just the fourth school to land the nation's top-rated player on both sides of the ball, according to the 247Sports composite team rankings, joining Texas with quarterback Vince Young and defensive tackle Rodrique Wright in 2002; Ole Miss with offensive tackle Laremy Tunsil and defensive end Robert Nkemdiche in 2013; and Clemson with quarterback Trevor Lawrence and defensive end Xavier Thomas in 2018. No team has ever signed the top two players overall, though.

That said, the Buckeyes are still looking for their first commitment along the defensive line but are in a good spot with a number of top players at the position. That includes Philadelphia Imhotep Charter five-star end Enai White; Alabaster (Ala.) Thompson five-star end Jeremiah Alexander; Greenwood (Ind.) Center Grove four-star tackle Caden Curry; Baltimore St. Frances four-star end Derrick Moore; Greensboro (N.C.) Grimsley four-star tackle Travis Shaw; Columbus (Ga.) Hardaway four-star tackle Mykel Williams; and Sicklerville (N.J.) Timber Creek three-star end Jihaad Campbell, among others.

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