

2024 NFL Draft: Former Ohio State Tight End Cade Stover Selected With the No. 123 Overall Pick By The Houston Texans



Former Ohio State tight end Cade Stover was selected by the Houston Texans with the No. 123 overall pick in the 4th round of the 2024 NFL Draft on Saturday, joining his former Ohio State teammate C.J. Stroud.

With the No. 123 overall pick in the 2024 @NFLDraft, the @HoustonTexans select Cade Stover!

📺: #NFLDraft on NFLN/ESPN/ABC

📺: Stream on #NFLPlus pic.twitter.com/5YYjAPhEFX

— NFL (@NFL) April 27, 2024

Stover is the eighth overall tight end to be picked in this year's draft and the third Buckeye to be selected, joining wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr., who went fourth overall to the Arizona Cardinals, and defensive tackle Michael Hall Jr., who was drafted 54th overall in the second round by the Cleveland Browns.

Stover, a Mansfield, Ohio, native who spent his formative years working on his family farm, enters the NFL as one of the more decorative tight ends in Ohio State history. Despite playing three of his five seasons at tight end in Columbus, he totaled 82 catches for 1,058 yards and 10 touchdowns, marks that all rank within the top three in program history at the position.

Stover joined Ohio State in 2019 as a four-star outside linebacker out of Mansfield (Ohio) Lexington, where he racked up 175 tackles (11 for loss) and was named Ohio's Mr. Football in his senior season.

His production did not translate early on in college, however, recording just five tackles and a forced fumble across his first two seasons with the Buckeyes.

Stover's lack of usage prompted him to switch sides and become a tight end starting in 2020, a move that helped springboard his college career. After playing both offense and defense in minimal roles in 2021, he experienced a breakout season in 2022 in his first year as a starter, becoming one of C.J. Stroud's favorite targets with 36 catches for 406 yards and five touchdowns on his way to a third-team All-Big Ten honor.

Stover's efforts helped reignite Ohio State's previously quiet tight end production, as his five touchdowns were the most by a Buckeye tight end since Jake Stoneburner's seven in 2011, while his receptions and yardage totals were the most since Rickey Dubley's 37 and 575 in 1995.

Stover then carried that production into this past season, where this time he served as one of Kyle McCord's favorite targets and ultimate safety blanket — not to mention being named team captain for a second straight season— hauling in 41 catches for 576 passing yards and five touchdowns. These marks ranked second on the team to only Harrison and allowed him to receive the Big Ten's Kwalick-Clark Tight End of the Year award and earn first-team All-Big Ten honors, putting a bow on a strong final two seasons at Ohio State.

"It's hard to replace Cade," senior tight end Patrick Gurd said earlier this spring. "Cade is an amazing guy. He left some great leadership for us and he left that toughness aspect."

Despite being hampered by a knee injury at the end of his senior season, Stover opted to suit up for his final collegiate game at the Cotton Bowl, where he failed to record a statistic and was taken out prior to halftime. He then spent the offseason training for the NFL, participating in both the NFL Combine in February and Ohio State's pro day in March.

"Catch first, block second tight end whose jump in play as a receiving threat is going to be hard to ignore," NFL analyst Lance Zierlein wrote. "Stover possesses the tools to move in a positive direction as a run blocker but needs to upgrade his grit at the point of attack and effort as a move blocker. He's an upside prospect with the potential to play in-line or flexed out and should become a productive starter within a couple of years."

Now with the Texans, Stover will look to carve out a role for himself on a high-powered offense that includes Stroud and wide receiver Stefon Diggs among others.