

5-Star DE Jack Sawyer Embraces Role As Early Commit, 2021 Leader In Ohio State Recruiting

Once the morning session ended last Thursday at Ohio State's skills/big man camp, a familiar face was one of the first campers to walk into the Woody Hayes Athletic Center for the afternoon workout.

At 6-5 and 230 pounds, Jack Sawyer was hard to miss. The five-star defensive end, who committed Feb. 2 to the Buckeyes, made his latest trip from nearby Pickerington (Ohio) North to Columbus for the day after several visits throughout the team's spring camp in March and April.

As one of OSU's top-rated recruits — 247Sports' No. 2 overall prospect, No. 1 strongside defensive end and No. 1 player in Ohio for 2021 — he had nothing more to prove. But the chance to work with defensive line coach Larry Johnson and help Ohio State recruit with multiple top defensive line targets in attendance from the classes of 2020 and '21 was an opportunity Sawyer jumped on.

"It's not that much different — it's just you've got to kind of be the leader in the pack, kind of like I was — take charge, be a leader, be first in line to go," Sawyer told BSB. "But it's great. It's great knowing that I'm coming here, great knowing that Coach Johnson's going to be my mentor and my coach here. It's a great feeling."

Before he became the Buckeyes' first commitment for 2021, Sawyer emerged on former head coach Urban Meyer's radar with a rare early offer last April, leading to his camp performance under Johnson and the staff last June.

Now committed for the past four months and counting, Sawyer felt at home as Johnson's lead example for defensive line drills, going first and following his future position coach's instructions almost seamlessly.

"There's nothing like it," he said. "Coach Johnson is one of the best at what he does in the business — probably *the* best — and just being able to get a whole day, three hours of working with him, it means the world to me, being able to get the teaching at such a young age with him. Just getting all those things to make my game better, make me a better player — it's just awesome."

Sawyer's status as Ohio State's cornerstone commitment for 2021 makes him an important branch of head coach Ryan Day's staff, spilling into the program's recruitment of top targets in Ohio and beyond.

Among the players in attendance, three priority prospects for the Buckeyes along the trenches — Cincinnati Princeton 2020 four-star defensive tackle Darrion Henry (6-4 1/2, 279), Pickerington Central 2020 three-star defensive end Ty Hamilton (6-3, 250) and Solon 2021 four-star defensive end Najee Story (6-4, 235) — worked out with Johnson and Sawyer.

"I work out with Ty every day," Sawyer said. "Up at D1 Columbus, we're up there working out together. So me and Ty have a good relationship. He's kind of a quiet dude until you get to know him, but he's a great player, great dude."

"Me and Najee, we're starting to get a bond, connection. I think he just got off a leg injury, so he's a

little slow (right now), but he's going to get back after it.

"It was great. They're great athletes. They're great players, too. It's just great to be able to work with people that are as good as you."

As he continues to build his relationships with recruits highest on OSU's board, Sawyer's presence is a driving factor, complementing the staff's approach.

Philadelphia St. Joseph's four-star quarterback Kyle McCord (6-3, 204) committed April 30, joining Sawyer as the second in the class and giving 2021 momentum into the summer.

"Kyle McCord's a special, special athlete," Sawyer said. "He can sling the ball. Just getting one on offense — now we have one on defense, one on offense — now we can start really building our class up from that way."

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