

# Column: Ohio State Can Become “Offense U” In NFL Draft



Other than being named a national champion, perhaps no moniker in college football is more important to a school – or a position group, to be more specific – than being called the best in the country. For most, that comes in the form of, as an example, being called “Wide Receiver U” or “Quarterback U,” signifying that no program in the country does a better job of sending professionals to the NFL.

Different schools have claimed different “U” over the years, with those teams often changing based on recent draft results. For several years, Oklahoma or USC were considered “QBU,” Alabama and Wisconsin both made arguments for “RBU” and, more recently, Ohio State has made a significant push for “WRU,” with no shortage of Buckeye receivers heading to the NFL in recent years.

But when it comes to offense as a whole, few programs have consistently put more talent into the league than Ohio State and head coach Ryan Day, and that was on display again in the 2023 NFL Draft. The Buckeyes tied with Alabama and Georgia for the most first-round picks with three (also extending Ohio State’s all-time lead in first-round selections), but all three of Ohio State’s picks were on offense, with two on offense and one on defense for Alabama and one on offense and two on defense for Georgia.

For the draft’s entirety, Ohio State finished with five drafted on offense, tied with Georgia, Oklahoma and TCU for the most in the draft. But a closer look at Ohio State’s first-round draftees – for this year as well as the last several years – shows a dominance of the draft board.

C.J. Stroud became the Ohio State’s third first-round quarterback in last five drafts, the only school (along with Alabama) to have three in the last five years. No other school has more than one during that stretch dating back to the 2019 NFL Draft. As far as wide receiver goes, Alabama has led the way in the last five drafts with five first-round receivers, but Ohio State is lurking behind with three after Jaxon Smith-Njigba went in the first round and is likely to add more next year.

And while Smith-Njigba was the first wideout off the board, Paris Johnson Jr. became the first offensive lineman off the board when he went with the sixth overall pick to the Arizona Cardinals. All told, the early stages of the draft had a strong Ohio State flair.

The later rounds did not go as expected for the Buckeyes with offensive linemen Dawand Jones and Luke Wypler both landing with the Browns but doing so later than expected in the fourth and sixth rounds, respectively, but it still meant that three Ohio State offensive linemen heard their names called in the same draft for the first time since 2004.

And don't think next year won't continue that trend. Marvin Harrison Jr. is in contention to become the first top-three wide receiver since Calvin Johnson in 2007, and several other Buckeyes - including Emeka Egbuka, Donovan Jackson, TreVeyon Henderson and potentially even Kyle McCord - all have first-round potential on that side of the ball.

Ohio State may not be the outright leader yet in "QBU," "WRU," "OLU" or any other categories, but if the Buckeyes' offense continues to perform the way it has in recent years under Day and recruiting continues to progress on that side of the ball as it has, then there's no question that Ohio State may one day be dominating the NFL at every conceivable position on that side of the ball.