

Early Signing Period: Four-Star TE Jelani Thurman Signs With Ohio State



Get to know Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes four-star tight end Jelani Thurman, who signed his national letter of intent with Ohio State on Wednesday.

Height, Weight: 6-5, 230.

247 Composite Rankings: He's rated as the 99th overall prospect, second-best wide receiver and the No. 5 prospect out of Georgia.

Commitment Date: Thurman committed to Ohio State on July 17.

Other Offers: Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Florida Atlantic, Florida State, Georgia Tech, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Liberty, LSU, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Michigan State, NC State, Oklahoma, Ole Miss, Oregon, Pittsburgh, Purdue, South Carolina, Tennessee, UCF, USC, Vanderbilt, Virginia Tech.

How he did in high school: Thurman played at tight end and defensive end for Langston Hughes and also took the court for basketball, so Ohio State will get an impressive multi-sport athlete. For the football team this past season, Thurman hauled in 39 receptions for 624 yards and 13 touchdowns, and finished with 83 tackles (four for loss) with three sacks on the other side of the ball.

While Thurman showed a propensity for catching the ball, he's a willing blocker, which gives him in advantage as he prepares for his arrival in Columbus.

Why he committed to Ohio State: Thurman's decision came down to Ohio State and Auburn, and the Buckeyes have been able to win out despite continued advancements from the Tigers. Thurman committed to Ohio State after a round of official visits, including Michigan State on June 2, Auburn on June 10, Alabama on June 17 and Ohio State on June 24.

"I feel like I can grow up there, come in and make an impact in my freshman year," he said. "Complete my goal to win a Mackey Award and get to the NFL one day with a ring."

He's made several visits to both Auburn and Ohio State this season, but the Buckeyes have been able to fend the Tigers off to secure Thurman's signature.

Where he fits in for 2023: Thurman is the lone tight end in Ohio State's class, and with Mitch Rossi's departure combined with no word yet on Cade Stover's potential return next season, Thurman could have the opportunity to establish himself in his freshman season.

Outside of Stover and Rossi, tight end Gee Scott Jr. was the only other in the position group to receive any notable time on the field, so it doesn't appear additional options have taken hold as new tight ends coach Keenan Bailey prepares to set a rotation for next season. Even so, Ohio State will still have several scholarship tight ends competing for snaps, so a year of development is likely for Thurman.