

Film Friday: James Peoples Flexes Smooth Running Style, Sky-High Ceiling



Every Friday, Buckeye Sports Bulletin will be taking some time to break down Ohio State's recruiting class of 2024 on film to see what each prospect brings to Columbus. Reviews will take place in the order in which prospects verbally committed to the Buckeyes.

Running back was a glaring position of need for Ohio State's 2024 recruiting class.

The Buckeyes whiffed on all their targets at the spot in 2023, at one time holding a pledge from Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage four-star Mark Fletcher (6-1, 226) before he decommitted and ultimately signed with Miami (Fla.).

Thus, when San Antonio Veterans Memorial four-star ball carrier James Peoples (5-10, 192) announced his commitment to Ohio State April 2 it was a massive win for running backs coach Tony Alford. Two more running backs have joined the class since then, but Peoples is the highest-touted of the bunch.

Ranked as the No. 5 running back in the country and the No. 76 player regardless of position in the 247Sports composite, Peoples has developed against top competition throughout his high school career playing in Texas. He chose Ohio State over offers from Alabama, Oklahoma, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee and USC among many, many others.

It shouldn't be a surprise to say he looks excellent on film. Let's dive in. To view the full video these clips were pulled from, visit here: <http://www.hudl.com/v/2K6RUT>



Peoples is an entertaining runner of the football. His strengths, which he plays to well, generate an incredibly smooth, elusive running style.

His cuts are the main reason why "smooth" is an apt descriptor. He has fantastic feet and great agility, and he's able to knife through defenses with quick turns like the one he uses to evade a crashing safety on this play.

From there he throws on the brakes to stutter-step around another defender and keeps his legs

churning, allowing him to step through one final tackle and break away for a touchdown. Of note, Peoples' refined footwork assists in breaking the final tackle attempt, as he keeps his knees high to rip through the arms of a defender attempting to trip him.



This is another display of Peoples' excellent feet and smooth running and cutting ability. He slices in and back out after initially sweeping out to his right, wheeling around the defense and finding the best hole possible to fall forward for extra yardage.

It's after this that the true magic begins, however. The trick to an excellent spin move is to rotate in a way that carries you downfield while keeping a foot on the ground as much as possible to protect you from hits. Peoples executes one perfectly here, taking the defender latched around his waist for a ride and eluding the others.

More than that, again, Peoples keeps his legs churning. Doing so allows him to break free of the opponent's grasp, then lower his shoulder and truck over one final obstacle to waltz into the endzone standing.



This last clip here doesn't require much elaboration. It's an obvious showcase of Peoples' speed and burst, with a little vision to find the crease on the play.

Peoples takes a hand-off sweeping to his left, seeing daylight between his slot receiver and the opposing cornerback on that side. His acceleration carries him through the hole with separation once he gets downfield, and from there it's a footrace that he wins, separating from the opposing defensive backfield the whole way.

Ohio State's running back room is crowded at the moment, but by the time Peoples hits his second year there's absolutely a chance to be the feature back. And he could be one of the best in the country by the time he's done.