

Four Former Ohio State Quarterbacks Land On ESPN's Top 75 Signal Callers Since 2000



The job of the Ohio State quarterback has changed considerably throughout the years.

Ohio State has seen a great variety of quarterbacks throughout program history, with pocket passers and scramblers filling the ranks of Buckeye greats at the position. The Buckeyes have boasted several stellar signal callers since the turn of the millennium, with Troy Smith claiming the Heisman Trophy in 2006, J.T. Barrett shattering program records during his four-year stint at the position, Dwayne Haskins breaking several single-season Big Ten records in his lone campaign as the starter and current head coach Ryan Day's run of top-tier quarterback talent in Justin Fields and C.J. Stroud.

ESPN's Bill Connelly tried his hand at ranking the best 75 quarterbacks since 2000 on Monday, and several Buckeyes received recognition for their play during their at Ohio State.

Barrett received the lowest ranking of the bunch, slotting in at No. 66, despite holding several program records, including career passing yards (9,434) and career touchdowns (104) — which doubles as the Big Ten record. Barrett also got the job done with his legs, rushing for 3,263 yards and 43 touchdowns across his 50 games in the scarlet and gray. His stellar stats aided the Buckeyes to 38 wins under his guidance, including a 4-0 mark against Michigan, as well as a pair of Big Ten titles and the 2014 College Football Playoff National Championship — though, Barrett was injured for the playoff run.

Smith claimed the No. 33 spot in the rankings, with Connelly noting that the 41-14 BCS National Championship loss to Florida played a negative part in the Heisman Trophy winner's standing. Smith's best season in the scarlet and gray undoubtedly came in 2006, in which he tossed 30 touchdowns to just six interceptions while racking up 2,542 passing yards en route to the Heisman Trophy and a berth in the national title game. Overall, Smith tallied 5,720 passing yards, 54 touchdowns and just 13 interceptions across his 32 games at quarterback.

Day's quarterbacks took centerstage next, with Fields landing at No. 29 and Stroud at No. 20.

Starting with Fields, who led the Buckeyes to a pair of Big Ten titles and College Football Playoff appearances, across his two seasons with Ohio State. Although Fields' career stats were impacted by the COVID-shortened 2020 season, in which the Buckeyes played only eight games, he dazzled Ohio State fans with his accurate passing and running ability. In only 22 games as Ohio State's signal caller, Fields compiled 5,373 passing yards and 63 passing touchdowns while rushing for 867 yards and 15 touchdowns on the ground. After his short, but illustrious, Ohio State career, Fields was selected by the Chicago Bears with the No. 11 overall pick in the 2021 NFL Draft.

Stroud also enjoyed a pair of seasons at the helm of the Ohio State offense, appearing in 25 games for the Buckeyes, while registering a 21-4 record in that span. Although Stroud was unable to lead the Buckeyes past Michigan or claim a Big Ten title in his time at Ohio State, he was a constant threat to any opposing secondary. Stroud ended his Ohio State career with 8,123 passing yards and 85 touchdowns, both of which sit second behind Barrett in the Buckeye record books. Like Fields, Stroud also emerged as a first-round selection in the NFL Draft, landing with the Houston Texans as the No. 2 overall pick on April 27.

Haskins, whose 50 touchdowns in 2018 marked the most in a season by a Big Ten quarterback, was the most glaring snub on the list from the Ohio State perspective.

Joe Burrow, who spent three seasons with the Buckeyes before transferring to LSU, finished fifth on the rankings, slotting in behind No. 4 Tim Tebow, No. 3 Vince Young, No. 2 Cam Newton, and No. 1 Baker Mayfield.