

Jaylen Harris Hits Cleveland Heights Before Beginning Ohio State Camp



Before he returned to campus Thursday when Ohio State reported for fall camp, sophomore wide receiver Jaylen Harris stopped by his old high school earlier in the week at Cleveland Heights.

Harris, who signed with the Buckeyes as a four-star prospect for the 2017 recruiting class, enters his second season at OSU potentially on the verge of a breakout campaign after he emerged in the spring.

When Harris checked in Tuesday at Cleveland Heights, head coach Mac Stephens saw the further physical development in his former player's stature — one primed for a role in Ohio State's receivers rotation.

"In terms of Jaylen being a big body at 6-foot-5 — he goes anywhere between 215 to 220 (pounds), depending on the day — I can see him as a major red-zone threat," Stephens told BSB. "A big cornerback could stand at 6-feet, 6-1, 6-2 — and even at that size, they're outmatched against a guy like Jaylen."

"The one thing that I remember about Jaylen in high school is that he can catch a football at basically 11 feet in the air if you put it in the right spot. So that's a tough, tough thing to guard on top of his leaping ability as well as his size."

"So I'm looking for big things. I think when he gets an opportunity, Jaylen's going to have a breakout year this year."

As a true freshman in 2017, Harris played in three games — Sept. 23 against UNLV, Sept. 30 at Rutgers and Oct. 7 vs. Maryland. In his collegiate debut, he caught two passes for 27 yards as the Buckeyes routed the Rebels for a 54-21 win.

With a strong spring camp, capped by an exclamation-point performance in the spring game April 14

when he posted three catches for 39 yards and one touchdown on a 25-yard strike from sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins, Harris brings momentum into the fall. His ability stands out among a deep unit that returns versatility across the skill sets of upperclassmen Johnnie Dixon, Parris Campbell, Terry McLaurin, K.J. Hill, Binjimen Victor and Austin Mack.

Up from his listed weight of 205 pounds last season, Harris had obvious changes when he touched base with Stephens. The initiative Harris took to address his old program, though, highlighted a part of him that has stood out to Stephens for the past few years.

“One thing Jaylen always does when he’s in town, he’ll reach out and ask if he can come see the team or talk to the guys,” Stephens said. “We had just started our two-a-day practices and he had gotten in touch with me, so he came up and basically talked to the guys about their approach to preparing for practice every day and just being in the right mind set and letting those younger guys know especially, hey, he grew up in the same neighborhood as you and if you go about it the right way, you’ll have the same opportunities as he has.

“It speaks to his character as a person. The one thing that I ask of all of our players, whether they play at Ohio State or a small Division-III school, is that they always come back and inspire some of the younger guys because all of these guys look up to these guys. But they especially admire Jaylen because not many guys get the opportunity to play at a school such as Ohio State, so it’s just his presence of motivation and inspiration for the Cleveland Heights players.”

Much love to @JHarris5_ for stopping through HEIGHTS and talking to the guys about preparing for practice the right way! #OSU #Buckeyes HEIGHTS FOOTBALL!
pic.twitter.com/J0jEDqD7wC

— Mac Stephens (@MacStephens) August 1, 2018

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