

Observations From Ohio State's 1st Summer Camp

After members of Ohio State's coaching staff spent last Friday at Rutgers for the Scarlet Knights' East Coast Elite camp, the Buckeyes hosted their own event Thursday when they started the June slate in Columbus with the skills/big man camp on the Woody Hayes Athletic Center's outdoor practice fields.

The camp featured skill players in the morning and linemen in the afternoon, an even split for OSU and more than 30 schools — including Boston College, Iowa State and RU — to coach and evaluate the high school football prospects on display.

From top performances on the field to notable spectators and other observations, BSB looks back at an eventful first camp of the summer for head coach Ryan Day.

The Offers

Ohio State extended offers to two offers — one who has long been on the Buckeyes' radar and another who broke out with an impressive performance in front of OSU's staff — in the 2021 class.

The first went to Dublin (Ohio) Coffman four-star safety A.J. Kirk, the younger brother of former Ohio State safety Mike Doss (1999-2002). The 6-0, 200-pounder is from the same high school as four-star all-purpose back Michael Drennen (5-10 1/2, 187), one of the Buckeyes' top targets in the 2020 class. The 15th offer for Kirk, whom OSU sees as a fit for its new hybrid linebacker/safety "bullet" position, meant a bit more when he told his older brother about the news.

"His reaction — he got a little teary eyed, but he just said, 'A.J., that just means you got to go out here and work a little harder, each and every day,'" Kirk said, "'because he said, 'You're going to have a target on your back and everyone's going to be wanting to come after you.'"

Ohio State offered Dublin (Ohio) Coffman 2021 4-star SAF A.J. Kirk after his impressive camp performance in front of HC Ryan Day and the coaching staff.

He's the younger brother of former Ohio State DB Mike Doss (1999-2002) and teammate of 2020 4-star APB target Michael Drennen. pic.twitter.com/aOO3sBeDIJ

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

The second went to Bowling Green, Ky., tight end Jordan Dingle. The 6-4, 230-pounder caught the eyes of Kevin Wilson and landed an offer from the Buckeyes after a conversation with the offensive coordinator/tight ends coach and Day inside the team facility. Rutgers, Kent State and Toledo also offered Dingle at the camp.

"They were just impressed with my ability that I have, being able to move and just catch the ball," said

Dingle, who previously picked up offers from Kentucky and Louisville. “I was running around, being physical, just giving it my all and they saw that, saw my effort and everything.”

Ohio State offered Bowling Green (Ky.) 2021 3-star TE Jordan Dingle after his impressive performance in front of head coach Ryan Day and offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson. (Rutgers also offered.)

The 6-4, 230-pounder adds to offers from Kentucky and Louisville.
pic.twitter.com/1GYyMdGQg5

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

The Prospects

Still without a tight end for the 2020 class, Ohio State worked out three local stars at the position, but none came away with an offer — yet.

The three-star trio of Mansfield’s Clay Caudill (6-5, 230), Columbus Grandview Heights’ Luke Lachey (6-6, 220) and Cincinnati Elder’s Joe Royer (6-5, 225) received extra work from Day and Wilson after the morning session ended.

Lachey and Royer appeared to stand out more from 1-on-1 reps of the camp, flashing some athleticism, but the Buckeyes’ search for a tight end continues with the Ohioans as potential options down the road.

“We thought we got pushed a lot by Coach Wilson and I feel like we came up for it, and I think we did well,” said Lachey, who is the son of former OSU offensive guard Jim Lachey (1981-84).

Columbus Grandview Heights 2020 three-star tight end and Ohio State prospect Luke Lachey (6-6, 220). pic.twitter.com/aNQ9ns0Ni3

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

The Targets

In both classes, Ohio State’s first camp offered an opportunity for the coaching staff to get around some of its top targets from 2020 and ’21.

The morning session featured Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard, who continues to build his bond with wide receivers coach Brian Hartline. The 6-2, 175-pounder is over 20 offers with the Buckeyes heavily involved in a recruitment led by Hartline — a fellow Stark County native by way of North Canton and GlenOak High School. In possession of an OSU offer since last June, Ballard showed burst, physicality and straight-line speed in his latest camp performance as he remains atop the board for 2021.

Massillon (Ohio) Washington 2021 four-star wide receiver and Ohio State target Jayden Ballard. Had an impressive camp performance and embraced the chance to get coached up by wide receivers coach Brian Hartline and offensive quality control coach Keenan Bailey. pic.twitter.com/Btux3rtxBq

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

In the afternoon, a pair of in-state defensive linemen for 2020 — Cincinnati Princeton four-star tackle Darrion Henry and Pickerington Central three-star end Ty Hamilton — headlined the targets on hand. Henry (6-4 1/2, 279), who included Ohio State in his top six April 29, embraced individual work with defensive line coach Larry Johnson while Day watched.

Cincinnati Princeton 2020 four-star defensive tackle and Ohio State target Darrion Henry (6-4 1/2, 279) with defensive line coach Larry Johnson working and head coach Ryan Day watching. pic.twitter.com/u7qjVpxYwo

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

Hamilton (6-3, 250), who is the younger brother of Buckeyes senior defensive tackle Davon Hamilton (6-4, 310), received an offer May 28. He has nearby OSU (June 14-16 official visit) high among his top three options, nearing a decision with Michigan (June 21-23 official visit) and Penn State (June 8-10 official visit) as the two competitors.

“The big takeaway is just learning from (Johnson) as a coach,” Hamilton said. “Being a possibility of going to Ohio State, just learning how he coaches — how he coaches me, personally — it’s a big decision for me to have that experience with the coaches.”

Pickerington (Ohio) Central 2020 three-star defensive end and Ohio State target Ty Hamilton (6-3, 250) under the guidance of defensive line coach Larry Johnson. Ohio State offered Hamilton, the younger brother of senior defensive tackle Davon Hamilton (6-4, 310), May 28. pic.twitter.com/FZ8ys4ufXV

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

The Commitments

Plenty of future Buckeyes returned to Columbus for camp, an opportunity to learn directly from Ohio State’s position coaches and get back around Day.

The list was headlined by an OSU pledge who did not compete, though, when Paris Johnson pulled up with Henry and Cincinnati Princeton head coach Mike Daniels. Now at Princeton after he transferred May 3 from Cincinnati St. Xavier to fulfill his early enrollment for January 2020, Johnson was decked

out in scarlet and gray while he watched his new high school teammate and hung around Ohio State players all afternoon. Johnson (6-7 1/2, 295) has been committed to the Buckeyes since June 28, 2018, despite visits elsewhere after former head coach Urban Meyer (2012-18) retired, but the camp setting offered a relaxed environment for the 247Sports composite's No. 1 offensive tackle to be back around OSU and other commitments.

Cincinnati Princeton 2020 5-star OT and Ohio State commitment Paris Johnson returned to Columbus today but did not camp.

The 6-7 1/2, 295-pounder spent all afternoon around Buckeyes players before walking into the team facility with OSU staffers and Princeton coach Mike Daniels.
pic.twitter.com/GBE038BHqy

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

The remaining pledges on hand for 2020 included Ohio State's two other in-state offensive tackles. Cincinnati Elder's Jakob James (6-5, 275) and Norwalk's Trey Leroux (6-8, 355) spent the afternoon under the guidance of offensive line coach Greg Studrawa, who at times put the pair together for drills.

Ohio State's two 2020 three-star in-state offensive tackle commitments — Norwalk's Trey Leroux (6-8, 355) and Cincinnati Elder's Jakob James (6-5, 275) — have been working under the guidance of offensive line coach Greg Studrawa all afternoon.
pic.twitter.com/306KggWEYA

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

Just outside Columbus, Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer was back on campus for his latest trip to compete at camp under Larry Johnson's direction. One of two commitments in the Buckeyes' 2021 class with Philadelphia St. Joseph's four-star quarterback Kyle McCord (6-3, 204) as the other, Sawyer looked the part at 6-5 and 230 pounds.

Pickerington (Ohio) North 2021 five-star defensive end and Ohio State commitment Jack Sawyer (6-5, 220) under the guidance of defensive line coach Larry Johnson.
pic.twitter.com/8CI6Z0pvH3

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

The Players

Ohio State players from the offensive and defensive lines, among other positions, were out in full force for the camp.

Out of the offensive linemen, junior left tackle Thayer Munford was rather active while leading groups through drills. The 6-6, 310-pounder missed all of spring camp with a lower-back injury — a recovery Day said Wednesday was “really looking good now” — and looked healthy. He moved sharply through his drill demonstrations, including one where Munford went side to side before shooting upfield.

Ohio State junior left tackle Thayer Munford (6-6, 310), who missed all of spring camp with a lower-back injury, looking healthy while demonstrating a drill for the offensive linemen.
pic.twitter.com/CfRFIU3iUX

— Garrett Stepien (@GarrettStepien) June 6, 2019

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