

Ohio State Lands 2023 Four-Star CG George Washington III



The Buckeyes are back in business on the recruiting trail. Shortly after wrapping up the 2022 recruiting class with Bryce Sensabaugh, Chris Holtmann and his staff have hit the ground running on the class of 2023, welcoming a number of visitors to Columbus over the weekend of Oct. 30-31 as they looked to get some traction in the class, potentially with a first commitment.

A few days later, Ohio State has its wish. Christian Academy Of Louisville (Ky.) four-star 2023 combo guard George Washington III announced his pledge to the Buckeyes Nov. 3 through 247Sports, giving Holtmann the traction that he was looking for and a centerpiece prospect to build around.

Committed! @OhioStateHoops #GoBuckeyes @CenturionsMBB @JL3Elite @FreeKeyThree
pic.twitter.com/eEJL3eUsTf

— George Washington III (@3dubbshoop) November 3, 2021

Washington is ranked as the No. 50 player in the nation and the No. 9 combo guard by 247Sports. He's the No. 2 player in the state of Kentucky and opted for the Buckeyes ahead of in-state stalwart Louisville, as well as Auburn, Liberty and Tennessee. He told ESPN that Ohio State long sat atop his list, thanks in large part to the early interest that the Buckeyes showed him.

"Ohio State has always been at the top of my list," Washington said. "They were my first offer. There was no point in continuing to search when I had already found the school I wanted. I was looking for a school that needed someone like me to produce and make things happen at a position of need. I love their style of play."

A 6-2 guard with the ability to play both spots in the backcourt and a 40 percent hit rate from downtown, Washington burst onto the scene over the summer.

"I never really expected to get all these offers," Washington said. "Until recently I wasn't an athletic player. In the summer everything took on a mind of its own. When the latest batch of rankings came out in August, I checked the very end of the list, didn't see my name, and thought they had left me off. I started going through the names of some of the guys I know to congratulate them, and kept scrolling up and then saw my name at No. 24 (in the ESPN rankings), which was shocking. I couldn't believe it."

He cited Ohio State's style of play as especially appealing as well, with recent combo guards like Duane Washington and Meechie Johnson finding success early and often within Holtmann's program.

"It's a combination of things," Washington told 247Sports. "Throughout this process two things have stuck out. One being I wanted to go to a place that needs me and can use me in their system and they fit that. The Big Ten is a great place and the school is a great place. I found a school that checks all of the boxes and doesn't have any negatives. I can't ask for anything better than that. It seemed like the right time.

"Really I feel like being on campus solidified everything. They've been at the top of my list and just being there I've drawn closer to the program more and more. I got to know the team way better than I did beforehand and seeing the school again was special."

With Justin Ahrens, Cedric Russell, Jimmy Sotos, Justice Sueing and Jamari Wheeler all slated to depart from Ohio State before Washington arrives, his prospects for early playing time are solid. The Buckeyes will likely still have Johnson and Eugene Brown III around in the backcourt, along with current freshman Malaki Branham and 2022 signees Roddy Gayle Jr. and Bruce Thornton, but Holtmann likes a deep bench and if one or two of that group is successful enough to leave early for the pro ranks, Washington could be asked to contribute as a freshman. If he is, he says he'll be ready to go.

"People valuing shooting so much more these days," Washington told ESPN. "That's something my dad drilled in me since day one. I've heard some comparisons to Jamal Murray. My ball-handling and shooting are the first two aspects of my game that stick out to people as a combo guard who is interchangeable at the 1 and 2. My playmaking has made major strides and my bounce has been taking steps. I'm 2-3 inches from hitting my head on the rim now. My move up the rankings means I need to work harder now because I have a bigger target on my back."