

Ohio State Men's Basketball 2019-20 Player Review: Kyle Young



As part of our offseason men's basketball coverage, Buckeye Sports Bulletin will review the performance of every player who appeared in games for Ohio State last season.

Additionally, we will analyze his place on the team ahead of the 2020-21 campaign. Next in the series is forward Kyle Young.

For the second straight season, Kyle Young led Ohio State in field goal percentage in 2019-20.

After shooting 67.2 percent from the floor as a sophomore, Young hit 58.5 percent of his shots as a junior last season. The 6-foot-8, 225-pound forward increased his scoring and rebounding averages from 6.0 points and 4.4 rebounds per game to 7.5 and 5.8, respectively.

Though Young missed six games with a serious ankle sprain, he served as a pivotal part of the Buckeyes' rotation in 22.8 minutes per contest in his 25 appearances.

As a selfless, high-energy player, Young provided Ohio State with a strong defensive presence and an excellent rebounding forward. The former Massillon (Ohio) Jackson standout ranked third on the Scarlet and Gray with 13 blocked shots and his 5.8 boards per game ranked second.

In the Buckeyes' first game of the season, Young set career highs with 14 points and 13 rebounds in a 64-56 win against Cincinnati for his first career double-double. The Canton, Ohio, native broke that scoring mark on two separate occasions later in the season, taking on a larger role for the 21-10 Buckeyes.

As a 6-foot-8 forward, Young displays exceptional athleticism with his ability to run the floor and rebound at a high rate. A fierce competitor, Young has a knack to make hustle plays around the basketball.

After dealing with a stress fracture as a sophomore, a healthy Young put his athleticism on display in Ohio State's season debut against Cincinnati.

Down 6-0, seven minutes and 40 seconds into the game, Young made a play to put his team on the board. Hustling down the floor, Young beat every Bearcat back and caught a pass from DJ Carton before fending off a defender and throwing down a two-handed slam.


On the dunk that sparked a 6-2 Young spurt, the big man reeled in the pass, quickly dribbled with his right hand and then raised the ball above the swiping defender on his way to a thunderous jam.



Amid Young's 6-2 run of his own that cut the Bearcats' 6-0 lead to 8-6, he got it done on the defensive end as well. Using his combination of quickness and length, Young recovered after closing out hard at the top of the key, stayed with his man and blocked the shot.




As part of his development, Young became more aggressive on the offensive end for Ohio State. When his defender left him to double C.J. Walker, Young patiently waited for a pass in the middle of the floor with the Buckeyes leading 35-34 nearly midway through the second half.

As an underclassman, Young likely would have passed the ball off to a teammate since he caught it near the three-point line. Instead, he put the ball on the deck with two strong dribbles into a jump stop and strong finish through contact. 

Less than two weeks after his first career double-double and career-high 14 points against the Bearcats, Young set a new mark with 15 points to go with 10 boards against Stetson. That personal high would remain until a matchup with Purdue on Feb. 15 when the junior forward excelled with 16 points and seven rebounds in a 68-52 Buckeye victory.

The nonstop motor of Young was on full display at the Schottenstein Center against the Boilermakers with the Buckeyes up 37-23 less than four minutes into the second half.

Young was inside the paint on defense when Kaleb Wesson grabbed the rebound and launched an outlet pass to Walker. Without hesitation, Young sprinted from basket to basket, catching a pass from Walker and finishing strong off a power dribble. 

Later in the frame with Ohio State leading Purdue 53-39, Young showed his high IQ and athleticism with a heads up play.

With Walker probing off a hard hedge on a slip screen, Young's defender got caught in the middle of trying to help at the three-point line and at the basket. Young quickly realized his man was out of position and dashed toward the basket, where Walker through an excellent pass for an alley-oop slam.



While he is not particularly known for his passing, Young has shown the ability to create plays for others when the situation presents itself. Although he had just 23 assists across 25 games, Young also totaled only 14 turnovers.

He does not have the ball in his hands frequently, but Young can find the open man when he does. First, Young shows his athleticism and length by going up to get a tough pass from Andre Wesson. Then,

when the defense collapses on him, he quickly pivots and kicks the ball out to Luther Muhammad for a wide open three-pointer,



ANALYSIS

It is quite clear that Young is the motor of the Buckeye basketball machine. The impact of the highly active forward can not be measured in the box score alone. He sacrifices his body for the sake of team, making maximum hustle plays look routine.

As a junior, Young showed the ability to grab 10 or more rebounds on several occasions. There is no doubt he is capable, and while minutes often relate to rebound totals, Young should post higher marks on the boards more consistently.

The efficiency with which Young scores at is truly remarkable. Across his past two seasons, he has hit 62.8 percent of his field goals attempts (150 of 239). The Buckeyes could benefit from a more aggressive Young, like in the games against Cincinnati and Purdue.

The ability to knock down three-pointers would be a nice bonus to Young's game, but it is not necessary for him to succeed. After hitting just 1 of 6 attempts as a sophomore, he made just 2 of 13 last season.

Where Young's shooting could more importantly improve is on foul shots. Though his 64 free-throw attempts were the fourth most on the team, he only shot 65.6 percent from the line. If the Buckeyes find themselves in important games in March, making free throws could be the difference between a win and a loss.

With the departure of Kaleb Wesson, Ohio State was left rather thin in the middle. Young will need to become a more physical presence in the interior along with rising sophomores E.J. Liddell and Ibrahima Diallo, as well as true freshman Zed Key in an undersized Buckeye frontcourt.

Given his high motor, athleticism and versatility, Young is up for the task of becoming a more prominent part of the rotation as a senior and holding down the interior on defense when needed.

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