

Ohio State Senior Forward Zed Key Enters Transfer Portal



Ohio State senior forward Zed Key has reportedly entered the transfer portal, ending his four-year career with the Buckeyes. He has one year of collegiate eligibility left due to his participation in the COVID-19-shortened 2019-20 season.

Key, who became a fan favorite throughout his Ohio State career due to his eccentric personality and patented “finger guns” and “raise the roof” celebrations, emerged as a reliable contributor to the program from 2020-24. He appeared in 121 games (49 starts) across his career for the Scarlet and Gray and averaged 7.4 points, 5.0 rebounds and 0.5 assists per game, along with 55.3 percent shooting from the field.

While the Glen Head (N.Y.) Long Island Lutheran product received considerable playing time his first two seasons, Key’s best season may have come his junior year in 2022-23, where he was averaging 13.4 points and 8.4 rebounds while shooting 63.5 percent from the floor before Jan. 5. Unfortunately for Key, that season was cut short by a season-ending shoulder injury which he first suffered against Purdue in early January 2023, an ailment that hindered his production throughout the winter and ultimately prompted him to have season-ending shoulder surgery on Feb. 12, 2023.

The injury may have cost Key the starting job his senior season in 2023-24, as sophomore center Felix Okpara started all but one game this year, but he still had some impactful moments in his final season with the Buckeyes. Key averaged 6.6 points and 4.1 rebounds in 15.4 minutes per game this season, often emerging as a much-needed spark plug off the bench.

Perhaps Key’s best moment from this season was on Feb. 18 against then-No. 2 Purdue, where — in the program’s first game since firing former Ohio State head coach on Feb. 14 — Key helped stymie Boilermakers superstar Zach Edey with a career-high five steals, all on Edey, along with nine points on 4-of-7 shooting.

Key also had a strong performance in his final regular season home game as Buckeye on March 3 against Michigan, throwing down a thunderous dunk early in the contest and finishing with nine points, three rebounds, two steals and two blocks.

Following the Michigan win, Diebler spoke about what the senior Key has meant to this program, saying that he is proud of the way he has grown throughout his career and become a better man and player on and off the court.

"I love Zed," Diebler said. "Zed's a great — he's not kid, I almost said kid — he's a great young man. He's the type of guy that you love having over to your house and being around your family. He's like a family favorite. The thing about Zed that I'm most proud of is he showed some real growth since he got here, maybe even more so off the court, which is ultimately what this is about.

"So I love Zed. His family is awesome. The support they provide for him by coming to so many games (is awesome). We got to build a relationship (with Key) through recruiting. And then to coach him, he's a special young man."

With Key departing, the Buckeyes have now experienced four losses through the transfer portal this offseason, with sophomore guards Roddy Gayle Jr. and Bowen Hardman and freshman guard Scotty Middleton all announcing their decision to transfer in the last 10 days.

Key's departure clears the way for both Okpara and Devin Royal to man the Buckeyes' frontcourt next season, while forward Kalen Etzler and center Austin Parks are also set to return. Ohio State is also expected to search for a big through the transfer portal this offseason.