

Ohio State Wide Receiver Depth, Commitments And Targets Breakdown For The 2021 Recruiting Cycle



Over the course of the next week the staff of Buckeye Sports Bulletin will take a position-by-position look at Ohio State's current roster, as well as commitments and top targets from the 2021 recruiting class.

Up next are the wide receivers.

Roster Breakdown

Despite losing three starters at wide receiver for the second straight year, Brian Hartline and the Buckeyes are still loaded at the position. And that does not seem to be changing any time soon.

K.J. Hill, Austin Mack and Binjimen Victor have moved on to the NFL, but the future of the Ohio State wide receivers room is bright. The only scholarship seniors at wide receiver are Elijah Gardiner, Jaylen Harris and C.J. Saunders, granted he is given a sixth year of eligibility, who have all been reserves as Buckeyes, but the non-seniors offer more upside.

Standout receiver Chris Olave will be a junior and Kamryn Babb, who has been plagued by injuries, will be a redshirt sophomore. Of the two, it seems more likely Olave could leave early for the NFL with another solid season, but regardless, Ohio State has a slew of underclassmen who are eager to perform.

Ohio State's 2019 recruiting class included speedy wideout Jameson Williams and five-star receiver Garrett Wilson, who will both take on bigger roles after both saw the field as true freshman. Wilson became one of quarterback Justin Fields' favorite targets and scored five touchdowns, while Williams scored once on a slant that he took 61 yards for six.

After bringing in Williams and Wilson for 2019, Hartline secured one of the best wide receiver classes in the history of college football for 2020. Hartline and Ohio State brought in four prospects who were ranked among the top 100 recruits regardless of position: Julian Fleming (No. 3), Jaxon Smith-Njigba (No. 28), Gee Scott (No. 65), and Mookie Cooper (No. 91).

Current Commits

Keeping up with the trend of locking up commitments from the top recruits in the country, the Buckeyes have two of the top receiving talents committed to the 2021 class.

Marvin Harrison Jr. is a four-star receiver out of Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep, which is also the home of Ohio State 2021 quarterback commit Kyle McCord. At 6-foot-4 and 184 pounds, Harrison Jr. has a large frame and sky-high potential. He is the nation's No. 56 overall prospect and No. 8 wide receiver, as well as the fifth-highest rated recruit in the talented state of Pennsylvania.

Jayden Ballard is Ohio State's other current commit at the position, and the 6-foot-2, 175-pound receiver checks multiple boxes for the Buckeyes. The Washington, Ohio, Massillon product is one of the most talented playmakers in the country and one of the premier talents in Ohio.

Ballard, who is a four-star prospect, ranks No. 68 nationally regardless of position and No. 12 at receiver. He is also the second-highest rated recruit in the state, behind only fellow Buckeye commit Jack Sawyer.

Remaining Targets

Harrison Jr. and Ballard are a great foundation to the Buckeyes' 2021 class, and Hartline already has six solid underclassmen, but that has not stopped him from seeking out the best talent available.

Emeka Egbuka, who is the No. 1 wide receiver in the country, remains Ohio State's top target, and for good reason. The Stellacoom, Wash., native is a five-star wideout with elite athleticism, showcased by five punt returns across his past two seasons.

Egbuka ran the 40-yard dash in 4.42 seconds at the national combine on Jan. 4, 2019, and completed the 20-yard shuttle in 4.19 seconds at the Opening, where he also posted a 35.1-inch vertical on May 11, 2019. The 6-foot-1, 190-pound receiver is the eighth-highest rated recruit regardless of position for 2021, and he is the second-best in Washington, per 247Sports Composite.

Troy Stellato, who is a four-star receiver from Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) Cardinal Gibbons, also represents one of Ohio State's top remaining targets. The 6-foot, 172-pound wideout is nationally ranked No. 141 overall and No. 24 at receiver.

Stellato snagged 42 receptions for 727 yards and nine touchdowns as a junior after he caught 44 passes for 706 yards and five touchdowns as a sophomore. Although Stellato's 20-yard shuttle time of 4.47 seconds and his 27.9-inch vertical leap do not stand out, he possesses excellent straight-line speed, indicated by a 4.42-second 40-yard dash.

While Ohio State holds 92 percent of 247Sports crystal ball predictions for Egbuka, who was previously trending toward Washington, Clemson is considered the favorite to secure Stellato, who holds 75 percent of the crystal balls to Ohio State's 25 percent.

Beyond Egbuka and Stellato, Christian Leary is a talented receiver who has been ascending recruiting-ranking lists that has garnered interest from Ohio State.

Leary jumped nearly 100 spots in the 247Sports Composite rankings, passing 15 wide receivers in a two-week span. The 5-foot-9, 180-pound receiver is the nation's No. 152 overall recruit and No. 26 wide

receiver, as well as Florida's No. 21 prospects regardless of position.

The Orlando (Fla.) Edgewater product possesses elite top-end speed, and his track background is evident when he runs. Leary hauled in 46 receptions for 1,036 yards and eight touchdowns as a junior. He flashed his speed and athleticism as a ball carrier as well, taking 56 carries for 528 yards and eight touchdowns.

The speedy playmaker was clocked at 4.56 seconds in the 40-yard dash and 4.31 in the 20-yard shuttle at the Opening on Feb. 24, 2019. Leary kicks it into another gear in the open field, which partially comes from his background on the track, where he ran the 100-meter dash in 10.5 seconds.

The lone crystal ball projection for Leary has him going to Oklahoma, which was one of his top six schools along with Ohio State, Alabama, Auburn, Florida and West Virginia. Leary plans to make his commitment on June 6.

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