

Ohio State's 2024 Recruiting Efforts Heating Up With Pursuits Of Ali, McKinley



While members of Ohio State's 2023 recruiting class are expected to arrive on campus in the coming months, head coach Chris Holtmann and his staff have turned their attention to 2024.

The Buckeyes have seen a pair of positive developments on that front, with their efforts heating up for a pair of four-star prospects in Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy small forward Amier Ali (6-8, 175) and Branson (Mo.) Link Academy center Tyler McKinley (6-9, 220).

Starting with Ali, who ranks as the No. 43 overall player and No. 13 small forward in the class, he placed Ohio State in his top eight, alongside Alabama, Arizona State, Arkansas, Florida State, Kentucky, Michigan and Texas, on April 24. Ali also took an official to Ohio State on May 6, after also taking one to Florida State on Feb. 27.

Ali, a Columbus native, is currently playing on the Nike Elite Youth Basketball League circuit for Houston Hoops, where he has continued to develop his game for the next level. During the first two sessions of EYBL play, Ali averaged 11.7 points, 4.6 rebounds, 1.0 assists and 1.1 steals while shooting 44.1 percent from the field.

"2024 four-star wing Amier Ali has been a bit of a polarizing prospect since emerging as a top-50 talent in his age group. Standing 6-foot-8, he's a quick-trigger shooter with limitless range and confidence. Physically, he's got the tools to be a high-level player in college with pro potential," On3's Jack Pilgrim wrote. "Tools, sure, but not the consistency you're looking for."

Flipping over to McKinley, who hails from the same high school as Ohio State sophomore center Felix Okpara, he placed the Buckeyes in his top seven on Monday, slotting them in alongside Alabama, Cincinnati, Michigan State, Tennessee, Virginia Tech and Xavier. McKinley originally hails from Cincinnati and began his high school career at Walnut Hills High School.

McKinley ranks as the No. 60 overall player and No. 10 center in the class, according to 247Sports' composite score. As a sophomore at Walnut Hills, McKinley posted averages of 17.2 points, 7.4 rebounds, 2.9 assists, 1.6 steals and 1.3 blocks while shooting 68.6 percent from the field.

"Tyler McKinley is a strong-framed power forward. He is not afraid to mix it up and has an understanding of what his game is," On3's Jamie Shaw wrote. "At 6-foot-9, McKinley has soft hands and is an active rebounder. While he is a below-the-rim defender, he understands angles and has good footwork and a motor. McKinley finishes well around the basket and knocks down his free throws. He plays with a lot of energy and does not shy away from contact. There is a throwback nature to his game, and while he is still developing the range on his jump shot, there are a lot of tools to carry into the highest level of the college game."

McKinley has taken an unofficial visit to Ohio State at this point in his recruitment and said that "playing for Ohio State would be a dream."