

Reassessing Ohio State's Options At Offensive Tackle For The 2021 Recruiting Class



Though he was considered a heavy Ohio State lean for most of his recruitment, Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy five-star offensive tackle J.C. Latham committed to Alabama on Friday afternoon.

That's a significant miss for the Buckeyes, especially given how quickly things changed in Latham's recruitment over the last few weeks. The lack of an official visit to Columbus this spring amid the coronavirus pandemic allowed the Crimson Tide to make their own push through video meetings and other virtual elements, meanwhile.

Ohio State still holds the nation's top-rated recruiting class with 19 commitments, which includes a pledge from Richfield (Ohio) Revere four-star offensive tackle Ben Christman. The Buckeyes also signed five-star Paris Johnson in December and recently landed a commitment from 2022 West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Tegra Tshabola, and that future depth worked against them in their pursuit of Latham.

So, where does Ohio State offensive line coach Greg Studrawa turn now that Latham is off the board? The answer isn't so simple.

The Buckeyes could very well call it a day at offensive tackle and fill out the class by addressing needs elsewhere. The aforementioned depth allows the staff to be selective with its remaining targets, and they won't sign a prospect they don't believe has the elite characteristics needed to start at Ohio State.

There are a few players who fit that profile, though the Buckeyes have some work to do in their respective recruitments.

That includes Fairfax (Va.) Robinson Secondary five-star Tristan Leigh, who made his way to campus for an unofficial visit last November but is considered a Clemson lean at the moment.

Lititz (Pa.) Warwick five-star Nolan Rucci has been to Columbus on an unofficial visit, as well, but Penn State is considered the favorite in his recruitment since his father also played for the Nittany Lions.

Clarkston, Mich., four-star Garrett Dellinger recently included Ohio State in his top four, but LSU is widely expected to land his pledge on June 24 — and sources have indicated to Buckeye Sports Bulletin that his commitment video has already been filmed.

That leaves Oak Park, Mich., four-star Rayshawn Benny as the only other uncommitted offensive tackle that currently holds an offer and has been to campus in the past. He'll be hard to pull away from the home-state Wolverines, and the Buckeyes haven't had the greatest luck at his high school in recent years (see: former quarterback commit D'Wan Mathis, former offensive guard target Justin Rogers).

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