

Recruiting Outlook: Branch Commits To USC, Bowen To Commit Jan. 1



Recruiting Outlook is a weekly series on Buckeye Sports Bulletin designed to be your one-stop shop for all news related to the Ohio State football recruiting trail.

All focus is on the Rose Bowl as “The Granddaddy of Them All” approaches on New Year’s Day, but there’s still news to recap in recruiting for Ohio State.

- Las Vegas (Nev.) Bishop Gorman five-star wide receiver Zachariah Branch committed to USC on Christmas Eve. Rated as the No. 14 overall prospect in 2023 and the No. 2 wide receiver, he committed to the Trojans over Alabama, Ohio State and Oklahoma, among others, to join his brother Zion, a four-star safety in 2022.
- Denton (Texas) Guyer four-star safety Peyton Bowen (6-1, 185) has set a commitment date of Jan. 1. He’s rated as the No. 58 overall prospect in 2023 and the No. 4 safety in his class. He holds offers from Alabama, Florida, LSU, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Ohio State and Oklahoma, among others, but the Fighting Irish are expected to be the pick.
- Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove four-star defensive lineman Christen Miller announced he plans to commit on National Signing Day, pushing his schedule back from a planned commitment at the All-American Bowl on Jan. 8. He’s rated as the No. 107 overall prospect in 2022 and the No. 19 defensive lineman. His top three schools are Alabama, Georgia and Ohio State, and while the Bulldogs have been a long-time lean for the Georgia product, Ohio State has made in-roads in recent weeks.
- Ohio State was listed in the top seven for Kissimmee (Fla.) Osceola four-star defensive lineman Derrick Leblanc (6-4, 250), along with Clemson, Florida, Miami (Fla.), Oklahoma, Penn State and UCF. He’s the No. 84 overall prospect in 2023 and the No. 13 defensive lineman. The Buckeyes hold the lone 247Sports crystal ball prediction 247Sports’ Steve Wiltfong.
- Ohio State was listed in the top seven for Orlando (Fla.) Dr. Phillips four-star offensive tackle Payton Kirkland (6-5, 330), along with Clemson, Georgia, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Oklahoma and Penn State. He’s the No. 201 overall prospect in 2023 and the No. 15 offensive tackle.

- Ohio State was listed in the top five for Kissimmee (Fla.) Osceola four-star defensive lineman John Walker (6-4, 280), along with Alabama, Florida State, Penn State and UCF. He's rated as the No. 99 overall prospect in 2023 and the No. 17 defensive lineman.
- Ohio State was listed in the top 12 for Downey (Calif.) Warren five-star quarterback Nicholaus Iamaleava (6-5, 195), along with Alabama, Auburn, BYU, Georgia, Miami (Fla.), Ole Miss, Oregon, Oregon State, Notre Dame, Tennessee and UCLA. He's the No. 17 overall prospect in 2023 and the No. 4 quarterback in the class.
- Ohio State was listed in the top seven for Deerfield Beach (Fla.) four-star linebacker Jayvant Brown (6-0, 220), along with Alabama, Florida, Florida State, LSU, Michigan and Penn State. He's the No. 176 overall prospect in 2023 and the No. 13 linebacker.

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