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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

February 17, 2001

Fast Finish; Great Start

Tressel's First Recruiting Class Comes Together In Final Week

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Jim Tressel had been the Ohio State football coach for only a few days when it hit him exactly how difficult — not to mention important — it would be to finish the 2001 recruiting season on a strong note.

"I know in the first four or five days I was here I think I was hoping we would just reach double digits (in signees)," Tressel told reporters at his national signing day press conference Feb. 7. "I thought we'd be lucky to do that."

"I was confident we would do the best we could do. How good that would be I didn't know. That's why I just put my head down and went."

"But to finish like this is a credit to everybody here."

The Buckeyes ended up with 17 signees in their 2001 recruiting class, firming up verbal commitments from as many as eight players in the final week.

Practically everything went OSU's way on signing day as Florida running back Lydell Ross and Ohio standouts Maurice Hall and Dustin Fox all committed to OSU and signed with the Buckeyes.

The only negative was the defection of Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy offensive lineman Alphonso Townsend to Michigan State. But Tressel was happy with the players he and his staff were able to sign.

"It's a great day here at Ohio State and we are proud to announce an outstanding group of young people who have thoroughly impressed our coaches with their character and desire to be great young people on and off the field," Tressel said.

Tressel took over as the OSU coach on Jan. 18 after the search for John Cooper's successor stretched over two weeks. On the day he was hired, OSU had 11 commitments, although two of

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Hall photo by STEVE HELWAGEN
Fox photo by DARRELL DAWSON



LAST-MINUTE CALLS — Three high school players picked OSU on signing day. Above, Columbus Brookhaven's Maurice Hall, pictured with his father, Reuben, smiles after signing with the Buckeyes. At left, Canton (Ohio) GlenOak's Dustin Fox telephones OSU coach Jim Tressel with his decision. Florida running back Lydell Ross also selected OSU on signing day.

BSB's 2001 Recruiting Wrap-Up Edition



STEVE HELWAGEN

HIS FIRST CLASS — OSU head coach Jim Tressel met with the media Feb. 7 to share details on his first recruiting class. Tressel and his staff signed 17 players.

Inside BSB's Recruiting Wrap-Up edition:

- Tressel adds LSU's Mel Tucker to his staff (Page 7)
- National recruiting experts give OSU, Tressel high marks (Pages 10-11)
- Recruiting coordinator Bil Conley discusses this year's effort (Page 12)
- A look at how the rest of the Big Ten and Notre Dame fared this year in recruiting (Pages 14-16)
- BSB tracks where Ohio's top prospects landed (Pages 18-19)
- Recruiting Outlook: Fox, Hall, Ross all commit to the Buckeyes on national signing day (Pages 20-23)
- An early look at the top underclassmen in Ohio and nationally (Pages 24-27)
- Complete bios on OSU's 17 signees (Pages 28-29)
- A recap of the BSB Hot 25, where OSU signed six players (Page 30)
- A profile on OSU signee Mike Nugent, a kicker from Centerville, Ohio (Page 31)

COVER STORY: FAST FINISH; GREAT START

Tressel Gets Job Done In Florida

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them — Fox and Ohio wide receiver Angelo Chattams — were wavering.

At the same time, many of the key prospects OSU was still recruiting began to look elsewhere.

"When there was a little lull there, there were some questions coming up, like, 'Is Jim Tressel going to be a great finisher there?'" said Bill Kurelic, who tracks OSU recruiting for The Ohio Football Recruiting News. "I don't think there is any question that he ended up showing he is a great finisher. He closed the door."

In the end, Tressel and his staff succeeded in keeping Chattams and Fox. They also went to Florida and brought back three of that state's top 35 players in Ross, wide receiver Chris Gamble and defensive lineman Quinton Thomas. For good measure, they lured in Kentucky lineman Marcus Green, a top-five player in the Bluegrass State, and kept native

OSU Football Signees

Football players who have signed letters of intent to play college football at Ohio State, with rankings as overall prospects from The Ohio Football Recruiting News for the Ohio players and All-American honors listed.

TOFRN Rank	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	High School	All-American Honors
1	Redgie Arden	LB	6-5	225	Ironton, Ohio	RR100, G&W, PFR, PS, SP
7	Angelo Chattams	WR	5-11	185	Dayton Chaminade-Julienne	RR100, PFR, PS, SP
—	Ryan Cook	OL	6-7	295	Martinsville, Ind.	
3	Dustin Fox	DB	6-0	185	Canton (Ohio) GlenOak	G&W, SP
5	Simon Fraser	DE	6-5	250	Upper Arlington, Ohio	RR100, G&W, PFR, PS, SP
—	Chris Gamble	WR	6-2	180	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Dillard	SP
—	Marcus Green	DL	6-3	300	Louisville (Ky.) Male	
4	Maurice Hall	RB	5-10	180	Columbus Brookhaven	RR100, G&W, PFR, SP
24	Ryan Hamby	TE	6-4	245	Cincinnati Moeller	
35	Mike Nugent	K	5-10	165	Centerville, Ohio	
11	Adam Olds	C	6-5	270	Dublin (Ohio) Coffman	PS
—	JaJa Riley	RB	6-2	188	San Diego Mission Bay	SP
—	Lydell Ross	RB	6-0	205	Tampa (Fla.) Galthier	G&W, PFR, SP
22	Brandon Schnittker	FB/LB	6-1	255	Sandusky (Ohio) Perkins	
—	Quinton Thomas	DL	6-5	255	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Dillard	
17	Andree Tyree	DL	6-3	280	London, Ohio	
—	Chris Vance*	WR	6-2	185	Fort Scott (Kan.) Comm. College	SP-JUCO

*Already enrolled at Ohio State.

All-American Honors Key: RR100, Rivals100.com Recruiting (top 100 nationally); G&W, G&W Recruiting Report (top 100); PFR, Tom Lemming's Prep Football Report (top 168); PS-PrepStar Dream Team (top 120); SP, SuperPrep (top 285); SP-JUCO, SuperPrep JUCO All-American (top 100).

son Hall, a 3,000-yard rusher from near-by Columbus Brookhaven, at home.

The Buckeyes ended up with a class ranked 14th nationally in BSB's consensus poll of recruiting experts. Kurelic rated OSU No. 3 in the Big Ten behind Michigan and fast-closing Penn State.

The OSU class included nine SuperPrep All-Americans, players picked among the top 285 nationally.

"We knew we were running from behind," Tressel said. "Having a two-week hiatus there, when a guy's got five good opportunities, he is looking for reasons to eliminate them. We gave some of them reasons to eliminate us."

"The fact we had a transition going on and we were getting started late with some people was overcome by a tremendous team effort."

The new coach gave credit to his patchwork staff of seven full-time assistants.

"I can't thank our staff enough," he said. "They burned the midnight oil the last three weeks. I think they have brought to us a great group of young men, and we can't wait to start working with them in August."

One national expert said Tressel's retention of recruiting coordinator Bill Conley, who had served in that capacity for Cooper much of the last 10 years,

was instrumental in OSU's strong finish.

"Keeping Bill Conley was the key," said Tom Lemming of Illinois-based Prep Football Report. "He was the glue that kept it all together. That was true not only in state but also down in Florida, where they got their out-of-state guys. Those were Bill Conley's recruits."

Likewise, Tressel also praised Conley for his efforts.

"Bill Conley headed up the attack as the recruiting coordinator," he said. "When we began on Jan. 18 with time running out, he put us in the right direction."

"Then the folks who hit the road, (holdover assistants) Jim Heacock and Tim Spencer, they helped lead the charge. Then the new guys on our staff came in and hit the ground running."

Answering The Questions

As always, reporters from around Ohio descended on Columbus on signing

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Bill Kurelic's

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COVER STORY: FAST FINISH; GREAT START

day. Tressel faced tough questions from the group on a wide variety of topics, including the following:

• **How OSU was able to hold on to Chattams, who visited Purdue, and Fox, who saw Penn State** — "We felt like we had to close the gap a little bit and do the things that interested them and tie in with why they had picked Ohio State in the past."

"When they sat back and thought about it, I'm sure it was the Horseshoe, the academic tradition, being close to home and 99 other reasons."

"When change happens, it sometimes makes you think a little. But in the end they did what they wanted to do in their heart."

• **On the challenge of recruiting as a Division I-A head coach after spending the last 15 years as the coach at Division I-AA Youngstown State** — "It was fun. I love competition. Wherever you are recruiting, you're recruiting like mad. It isn't any easier to recruit at Youngstown State than it is here. It's neat carrying around this flag. When you're carrying around the Ohio State banner, it is neat who you get to talk to."

• **On not awarding as many as 11 other available scholarships** — "The problem that would have been created is if we had given out over 20. We only have 12 seniors this coming year. We feel strongly about the talent pool in this next recruiting class. We didn't want to be going out there with 14 or 15 scholarships. This helps our balance."

• **On not recruiting a quarterback in this class** — "I'm not a guy who believes you have to recruit a quarterback each year. We have four guys on campus, three of which have some youth. That never came up as a discussion item since I've been here."

• **On closing the class with the hometown kid in Hall** — "I think Maurice was a key guy for a lot of reasons. You start with that GPA. Then, he's at Brookhaven. Those 3,000 yards don't hurt, either. And then you have just the kind of kid he is."

"He is a guy that cares about other people. The last couple of times he called me, he was calling about friends of his he wants to get up here. He wasn't calling me about what he needed, how many carries he'd get or who else we were recruiting. That's why he's so special."

• **On whom he expects to play in the first year** — "I know in talking to every one of them they intend on coming in and competing right away. But it will come down to how they adjust and how they learn our system. We don't really know the answer to that because we haven't even built our system yet."

Speaking Individually

Here are excerpts of what Tressel had to say about several of OSU's new signees:

• **Redgie Arden** — "He is a big guy out of Ironton, Ohio. He is a linebacker with tremendous range, speed and hitting ability. I know he'll do a great job there."

• **Angelo Chattams** — "He is a big-play guy from over at Dayton Chaminade. He's just an outstanding guy from right down the road. It's important to us that guys like that become Buckeyes."

• **Ryan Cook** — "He mentioned to us that he had scholarship offers in football, basketball and track. He wears a size 18 shoe and can throw the discus 177 feet."

• **Dustin Fox** — "He is a free safety with tremendous athletic ability. He has great explosion, great vertical jump and plays the ball well. I know (new defensive coordinator Mark) Dantonio is especially excited that Dustin Fox will continue the legacy."

"I think he will be the sixth member of his family to play Big Ten football. We're excited that Dustin Fox has chosen to be a Buckeye."

• **Chris Gamble** — "When we first started discussing him, somebody told me, 'Do you remember Terry Glenn? He's a lot like him.' I said, 'Let's go. Let's go get him.' He was a guy when we talked to coaches around the country, you always got raised eyebrows when they heard you were recruiting him."

• **Maurice Hall** — "How someone can rush for 3,000 yards is mind-boggling to me. He is a quality guy. He can run the football and catch it. But I know Coach Spencer has also talked to him a lot about being a pass protector."

"Every time I talked with Maurice Hall, he was an upbeat guy. Deep down, I always felt he wanted to be an Ohio State Buckeye. We were happy he announced that. I would have preferred it at 7:30 this morning, but tests and things like that take precedent. He had a lot of things tugging at him."

• **Mike Nugent** — "We lost a great kicker (Dan Stultz) and you love to have competition at every position. We think he can come in and compete for a job right away."

"He played quarterback and was also the captain of the football team. That tells me he is a lot more than just a specialist."

• **Lydell Ross** — "This is a guy who impressed us all. He rushed for 2,600 yards and also caught the ball. He's a 3.4 student. He just has a glow about him. He's an outstanding young man and I know he's excited to be a Buckeye."

• **Chris Vance** — "He is already on campus here as a junior college transfer. He is a hardworking guy. I am impressed with what I've seen of him so far in our winter program. He also catches punts and kicks. He seems to be a strong young man."

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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE BUCKEYE STATE

Art Of Persuasion: 3 Of Ohio's Best Pick OSU

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

So far, new OSU football coach Jim Tressel is 3 for 3 in keeping Ohio's best prospects at home.

By the time Tressel took the OSU coaching job on Jan. 18, just one of Ohio's top 10 prospects — as ranked by The Ohio Football Recruiting News — had yet to pick his school. That was Columbus Brookhaven running back Maurice Hall (ranked No. 4).

Two other top-10 Ohio players, Canton GlenOak

defensive back Dustin Fox (No. 3) and Dayton Chaminade-Julienne wide receiver Angelo Chattams (No. 7), were already on OSU's commitment list. But each expressed reservations over John Cooper's firing and took visits to other Big Ten schools.

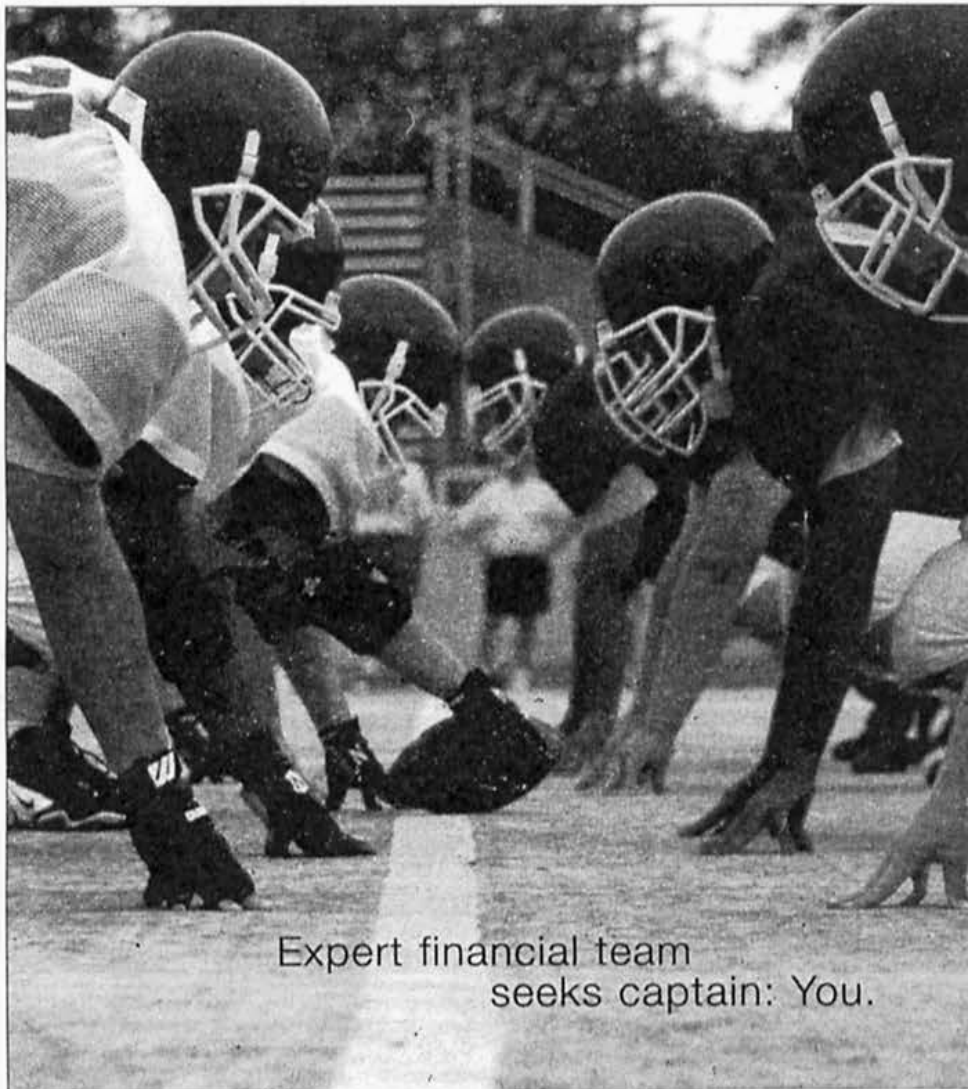
But in the end, Tressel and his staff succeeded in signing Hall and firmed up the commitments from Fox and Chattams.

"I think that says a lot that Jim Tressel was able to come in and close the door on those three guys," said Bill Kurelic of The Ohio Football Recruiting News. "That may be an indication of what kind of job he will

Getting Ohio's Best

Here is a look at how Ohio State has done at recruiting within the state of Ohio, including a look at the number of The Ohio Football Recruiting News' top-10 Ohio prospects who have signed with OSU over the last six years.

Year	Total Signees	Ohio Signees	Ohio Top-10 Signees
2001	17	10	5
2000	25	13	5
1999	24	17	8
1998	14	6	3
1997	22	12	5
1996	25	15	7



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Isaac Smolko



Pat Massey

do in Ohio in years to come."

Those three were joined by two other top-10 picks, Ironton linebacker Redgie Arden (No. 1) and Upper Arlington defensive end Simon Fraser (No. 5), to give Ohio State five of the state's top 10 prospects.

OSU augmented its 17-man class with five other Ohio prospects in Dublin Coffman center Adam Olds (No. 11), London defensive lineman Andree Tyree (No. 17), Sandusky Perkins fullback Brandon Schnittker (No. 22), Cincinnati Moeller tight end Ryan Hamby (No. 24) and Centerville kicker Mike Nugent (No. 35).

Tressel said he and his staff will make Ohio their starting point in all future recruiting efforts.

"Getting 10 guys from Ohio in our first class sends a message that Ohio is going to be important to us," Tressel said. "Each and every year I hope the majority of our group is from Ohio."

"They're well-coached. They've had competition against good people. When you play close to home, it means a little bit more."

It helps, Tressel said, that all eight of the assistant coaches he has selected were either born or reared in the Buckeye State.

"We've kind of got the state circled in where we're all from," Tressel said. "Most importantly, we have all recruited the state of Ohio. Will high school coaches in the state push kids our way? No, probably not."

"They are going to allow their kids to make their own decisions. But, when asked, we hope they're going to say, 'Yes, those guys at Ohio State are good guys. You should look at them.' That's all we can ask."

A year after Ohio State allowed the state's top two players, linemen Antonio Hall and Michael Munoz, to defect to SEC schools, the Buckeyes quickly snapped up verbals from four of the state's top seven prospects in Arden, Fox, Fraser and Chattams.

Another top-10 prospect, Dayton Chaminade-Julienne defensive lineman Brandon McKinney (No. 10), also had committed to the Buckeyes. But two weeks before signing day, OSU dropped McKinney due to academic concerns. He ended up signing with Michigan State.

Michigan made a heavy dent in Ohio, signing top-10 players Pat Massey (No. 2), a defensive end from Cleveland St. Ignatius, and Pierre Woods (No. 6), a defensive end from Cleveland Glenville.

Canton McKinley linebacker Chad Anderson (No.



Pierre Woods

RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE BUCKEYE STATE

8) ended up joining his cousin Hall at Kentucky, while New Middletown Springfield tight end Isaac Smolko (No. 9) signed with Penn State.

It is also notable that a top-10 Ohio prospect from a year ago, former Lima Senior lineman Alphonso Townsend, spurned Ohio State at the last minute for Michigan State. Townsend, ranked sixth in the state by TOFRN a year ago, is spending this school year at Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy. He failed to qualify academically after signing with OSU a year ago.

Big Ten schools ended up signing 16 of Ohio's top 40 prospects, matching last year's figure for the highest conference total in the state in the last five years.

OSU's 10 Ohio signees represent the second-lowest number from in state the past five years. The Buckeyes took just six Ohio players in 1998, when they had only 14 scholarship spots available.

Headed Elsewhere

Michigan's recruiting class included a third Ohioan in 15th-ranked Lawrence Reid, a linebacker from Pickerington.

In terms of quality and quantity, Purdue may have done as much damage in Ohio as anybody. The Boilermakers signed five of the state's top 32 prospects, including Kirtland lineman Matt Turner (No. 16), Shaker Heights receiver Jameson Evans (No. 20), Strongsville lineman Josh Tomsheck (No. 21) and the Lakota West duo of lineman Matt Knollman (No. 31) and linebacker Jason Leimberger (No. 32). OSU did not offer any of those players.

Cincinnati signed four of TOFRN's top 40 players, including Columbus DeSales wide receiver Kevin Hazel (No. 14), Xenia linebacker Trent Cole (No. 33), Marion Harding receiver Derick Ross (No. 37) and Avon lineman Jamie Wimmer (No. 40).

Hazel had originally committed to Pittsburgh. But fearing a steep out-of-state tuition bill as a possible Prop 48, he chose Cincinnati at the last minute. OSU flirted with offering Cole, but he, too, was bound by academic concerns.

Boston College, Kentucky, Northwestern and Penn State all signed two top-40 prospects from Ohio this year.

BC got Upper Arlington tight end Chris Miller (No. 18) and Cincinnati St. Xavier defensive lineman Pat Ross (No. 30).

Kentucky got McKinley's Anderson as well as Dublin Scioto receiver Brian Pickard (No. 38).

Northwestern signed Upper Arlington running back Jeff Backes (No. 12) and Milford lineman Zach Strief (No. 29).

Penn State inked Smolko as well as Euclid receiver Chris Harrell (No. 26).

Other top-40 prospects going to Big Ten schools included Cincinnati Elder fullback Kyle Koester (No. 25) to Indiana, Bedford Chanel receiver Donte Sanders (No. 27) to Wisconsin and Columbus Brookhaven defensive back Danny Upchurch (No. 34) to Minnesota. Neither Koester nor Sanders, the brother of OSU tight end Darnell Sanders, was offered by the Buckeyes. Upchurch was offered, contingent on him qualifying academically.

Ohio Football Signees Elsewhere

The following is a list of Ohio football players who have signed letters of intent to play college football at schools besides Ohio State, with rankings as overall prospects by The Ohio Football Recruiting News.

TOFRN

Rank	Player	Pos.	High School	College
2	Pat Massey	DE	Cleveland St. Ignatius	Michigan
6	Pierre Woods	DE	Cleveland Glenville	Michigan
8	Chad Anderson	LB	Canton McKinley	Kentucky
9	Isaac Smolko	TE/LB	New Middletown Springfield	Penn State
10	Brandon McKinley	DL	Dayton Chaminade-Julienne	Michigan State
12	Jeff Backes	RB	Upper Arlington	Northwestern
13	Rashan Johnson	QB/DB	Middleburg Hts. Midpark	Georgia Tech
14	Kevin Hazel	WR	Columbus DeSales	Cincinnati
15	Lawrence Reid	LB	Pickerington	Michigan
16	Matt Turner	OL/DL	Kirtland	Purdue
18	Chris Miller	TE	Upper Arlington	Boston College
19	Rodney Carter	WR	Columbus Brookhaven	Unsigned
20	Jameson Evans	WR	Shaker Heights	Purdue
21	Josh Tomsheck	TE/OL	Strongsville	Purdue
23	NaShan Goddard	DE/DL	Dayton Dunbar	Unsigned
25	Kyle Koester	FB	Cincinnati Elder	Indiana
26	Chris Harrell	WR/DB	Euclid	Penn State
27	Donte Sanders	WR/DB	Bedford Chanel	Wisconsin
28	Tim Murphy	RB	Akron Buchtel	Pittsburgh
29	Zach Strief	OL	Milford	Northwestern
30	Pat Ross	DL	Cincinnati St. Xavier	Boston College
31	Matt Knollman	OL	Lakota West	Purdue
32	Jason Leimberger	LB	Lakota West	Purdue
33	Trent Cole	LB	Xenia	Cincinnati
34	Danny Upchurch	DB	Columbus Brookhaven	Minnesota
36	Josh Anderson	WR/DB	Canton GlenOak	Unsigned
37	Derick Ross	WR	Marion Harding	Cincinnati
38	Brian Pickard	WR	Dublin Scioto	Kentucky
39	Sean Coffey	WR	East Cleveland Shaw	Missouri
40	Jamie Wimmer	DE	Avon	Cincinnati

OTHER OHIOANS WITH BIG TEN SCHOOLS

—	Jerrold Ellerson	WR	Copley	Minnesota
—	Damien Fortson	QB	Ravenna	Michigan State
—	Charlton Keith	LB	Akron Buchtel	Minnesota
—	Will Lumpkin	DB	Dayton Trotwood-Madison	Indiana
—	Eric Smith	DB	Groveport-Madison	Michigan State
—	Carlos Tipten	LB	Cincinnati Winton Woods	Indiana
—	Danny Upchurch	DB	Columbus Brookhaven	Minnesota
—	Ken Williams	RB	Bedford	Minnesota

In the top 20, Middleburg Heights Midpark quarterback Rashan Johnson (No. 13) signed with Georgia Tech. OSU had recruited him early in the

process before deciding to pass on quarterbacks this year.

For the first time in recent memory, MAC schools apparently will be shut out from signing any of the state's top 40 prospects. However, three Ohio top-40 prospects remained unsigned. Brookhaven wide receiver Rodney Carter (No. 19) and Dayton Dunbar defensive end NaShan Goddard (No. 23) remained unsigned due to academic concerns. Also unsigned was Canton GlenOak defensive back Josh Anderson (No. 36). His status was unclear.

Counting four unranked Ohio prospects (see chart), Minnesota matched Purdue's haul of five Ohio signees. Indiana and MSU also had two unranked Ohio signees, giving each school three players from the state.

Mr. Football

Upper Arlington's Backes, fresh off a 3,000-yard senior season when he helped lead the Golden Bears to a 15-0 mark and a Division I state championship, was named the 2000 Ohio Mr. Football award winner by The Associated Press.

He is the first Ohio Mr. Football award winner to sign with Northwestern since the award's inception in 1987.

He becomes just the third Ohio Mr. Football award winner to spurn OSU — he was offered by the Buckeyes and picked NU over OSU and Virginia — for another Big Ten school. The others were Curtis Enis (1993 award winner, Penn State) and Charles Woodson (1994 winner, Michigan).

Other Mr. Football award winners who went elsewhere included Derek Kidwell (1991, Bowling Green), Marc Edwards (1992, Notre Dame), Tony Fisher (1997, Notre Dame) and Ryan Brewer (1998, South Carolina).

OSU has signed six players who have won a combined seven Mr. Football awards. They were Buster Howe (1987), Robert Smith (1988-89), Bobby Hoying (1990), Andy Katzenmoyer (1995), Derek Combs (1996) and Brandon "Bam" Childress (1999).

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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: RECRUITING OUTLOOK

This Signing Day Was Full Of Suspense For OSU

National signing day Feb. 7 had more suspense for Ohio State than any other in recent memory.

For starters, it was the day that new head coach Jim Tressel's first recruiting class came together. And there was the tension accompanying the signing day announcements of three key players — Ohio standouts Dustin Fox and Maurice Hall and Florida running back Lydell Ross.

All three ended up committing to the Buckeyes just moments before they made it official by signing their national letters of intent.

Ross was the first to get the decision out of the way as he announced for the Buckeyes at 9 a.m., picking OSU over Notre Dame and Florida.

Then Fox, who had committed to OSU previously only to waver after John Cooper's firing, announced at 10 a.m. that he would sign with OSU.

Finally, Hall convened a 1 p.m. press conference at his school, Columbus Brookhaven. After much fanfare — including the signing of his teammate, Danny Upchurch, by Minnesota — Hall made his dramatic announcement that he had picked OSU over Florida State and Georgia Tech.

However the 3,000-yard rusher could not play it straight. Hall, showing he has a real flair for the dramatic, played a psych job on the 200 classmates, faculty members and media who attended his press conference.

"After weighing all my options and opportunities, I've found the right school for me," Hall said, grabbing an FSU cap in front of him.

"I've chosen to be a Sem ... Buckeye," Hall said, grabbing an OSU cap and putting it on his head. The self-correction/announcement, which finally came at 1:27 p.m., elicited cheers from the Brookhaven student body and faculty.

Tressel, speaking at his signing day press conference just after 4 p.m., was glad to land a pair of running backs like Hall and Ross at the last minute.

"That speaks to the tradition of being a running back at Ohio State," Tressel said. "When they walk in and see those Heisman Trophies and big pictures on the wall, those were all running backs."

"I have to point out that Tim Spencer is a quality guy. They made an immediate bond when they sat down and met with him."

Here are updates on all three OSU signees who finalized their decisions on signing day.

Dustin Fox, defensive back, Canton (Ohio) GlenOak — Fox (6-0, 185, 4.4) had previously said his feelings toward OSU dimmed after Jon Tenuta, the secondary coach the last five years, left for North Carolina in early January.

But Tressel and new defensive coordinator Mark Dantonio picked up the ball — and scored — with Fox.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK with Steve Helwagen



DARRELL DAWSON

SLY FOX — Canton (Ohio) GlenOak defensive back Dustin Fox (pictured with his mother, Jean) waited until the Feb. 7 national signing day to announce that he would play his collegiate ball at Ohio State and bypass Penn State.

"I didn't get to know Tenuta as well as I've gotten to know Dantonio the past three weeks," Fox said. "It's kind of funny. I would say Tenuta was more of a motivator as far as I can tell because he's kind of quiet-spoken."

"But Coach Dantonio knows what he's talking about. He said (Michigan State) didn't have a run-over 20 yards last season. That's pretty impressive for the secondary."

Fox said he arrived at his decision the evening before signing day.

"I talked to them (coaches) last night around 5," he said. "I talked to (PSU coach Joe) Paterno, then Coach Tressel called me and I told him the good news."

"There's so many things that add up to the one big thing you're talking about. Being close to home, it's a two-hour drive as opposed to a four-hour drive for your family to get to watch you play. I have family in Columbus. That's a part of it. Playing in the Horseshoe, getting to wear the scarlet and gray, the band, all that good stuff."

When asked if he figures to redshirt, Fox replied, "Well, Coach Dantonio's words were he wouldn't be sitting with us at Red Robin at 10:30 on a Friday night if he was going to redshirt me."

"Ohio State, they talk about implementing me very soon because Coach Dantonio likes to run a lot of nickel, what they call a star-player, a fifth DB. I hope to play right away. I think I can get on the field early, at least returning kickoffs. Penn State was hurting for a free safety, but it's just better for me at Ohio State."

Fox's uncle, former Buckeye Tim Fox, accompanied him on his official visit to OSU in late January.

"My uncle Tim was on my visit with me and we went through everything," Fox said. "But he didn't put too much pressure on me. The biggest thing was when he left and went back to Boston he said, 'Dustin, whatever you do I'm going to support you.' He didn't say you

better go to Ohio State or I'll never talk to you again."

Fox said he will wear No. 37 at Ohio State.

GlenOak coach Jack Rose shared his view on what OSU is getting: "An unbelievable athlete. He's a difference-maker. He can change the game in a hurry. His athletic prowess is super and he's a player. He'll make plays for him."

Maurice Hall, running back, Columbus Brookhaven — Hall (5-10, 180, 4.3) admitted that he had told Tressel of his decision a week prior to signing day, as was reported by WTVN-AM. But he said he did waver in the days leading up to signing day.

"It's been a wild ride and an exciting one," Hall said. "This has not been an easy decision for me or my family. I visited five great academic institutions."

"I let him know last week," Hall said. "But I told him I was still thinking about it. Then I just kept changing. It was Ohio State Thursday and Florida State on Friday. I was like, 'Which one is it going to be?'"

"Today, I talked to my dad on my way to school and we felt (OSU) was the best decision."

In the end it was Ohio State that stood out for Hall.

"I really like Coach Tressel," Hall said. "He's a real good guy. Every time I've talked to him, I've been more impressed."

"The proximity was probably the least biggest factor. I knew my parents would come and see me wherever I went. I felt really good with Coach Tressel and what he's planning to do."

Hall joins Ross and JaJa Riley as running backs in this OSU recruiting class. The Buckeyes will have only two scholarship backs in camp this fall in Jonathan Wells and Sam Maldonado.

"Florida State has three running backs and Ohio State has two," Hall said. "That was a small factor. But I knew I would have to compete where-

er I went."

Hall said he took all of the pressure and scrutiny and set it aside when he made his choice.

"I tried to block all of it out," he said. "A lot of people were selfish because (Ohio State) is close to home and they wanted me to go there. But I just chose the best school for me."

Brookhaven coach Gregg Miller said he tried to help Hall sort everything out.

"There is a lot of stuff on the Internet you can't believe," Miller said. "Everybody has their opinion, but you can't take those opinions as facts. We read all kinds of crazy things."

"But I just kept reminding him that none of it is fact and nobody really knows what's going on except him."

"Maurice was very thorough in his research on the schools. He kept a chart on each of the schools and graded them on things he was looking for."

Miller said Hall will be a credit to Brookhaven and the Buckeyes.

"The best thing to say is he is all real," Miller said. "I don't know that there is a negative side to him. He is a great student and a great person. He believes in family and he believes in religion."

"He tries to be a role model for everyone in this school. And on top of all of that, he's a great football player."

No longer bound by NCAA rules on commenting on players, OSU's Spencer discussed Hall.

"I've had him in camp for three years, so we've had an opportunity to know him for a while," Spencer said. "I couldn't wait to get to this point, and I always would tell him, 'Now look, when you become a senior don't act like you don't know us.' Seeing what he was able to do, was able to do then, I knew what he was going to be like when he got to this stage, and I wanted him because of the things he can bring to the table."

"He can do so many things and run the football. When you talk about match-ups, this guy can create a match-up nightmare."

Spencer said he also has been impressed with the durability of Hall, who eclipsed 6,000 yards in his prep career.

"To me he's got perfect running back size," Spencer said. "All running backs aren't 6-2 or 6-3 and 230 (pounds) like Eddie (George). You look at the guys in the NFL, most of them are right around 5-10 or so, 200 or the 205 range."

"And he was able to stay healthy while getting all those carries and doing what he did. It's a testament to his durability."

Lydell Ross, running back, Tampa (Fla.) Gaither — Ross (6-0, 205, 4.5) originally had committed to Notre Dame. In-state power Florida was also looming. But Ross took a Feb. 2 visit to OSU and became sold on the Buckeyes.

"When Coach Cooper was fired, I wanted to wait it out and see who was coming in," Ross said. "When Coach Tressel got the job, I re-established my visit."

"I ended up deciding that Ohio State

Continued On Page 22

RECRUITING WRAP-UP: RECRUITING OUTLOOK

Late Decision Leads Townsend To Michigan St.

Continued From Page 20

was the college for me. It came down to Jim Tressel. He's just a great all-around guy. Out of all the schools I visited, I felt most comfortable at Ohio State.

"I came to the conclusion that I knew that Ohio State would be best for me. I went with my heart in picking Ohio State and it was a difficult decision, because both Notre Dame and Florida had a lot to offer as well."

Ross, who lists George as his favorite player, hopes to write his own chapter as an OSU back.

"Everyone here was pretty much delighted," Ross said of the reaction at his school. "They know that Ohio State is one of the better running schools around, and hopefully that will fit me pretty well."

"Dotting that T' (formation), that's what I love about that Ohio State program. Playing in an offense that features the running back was a big factor."

Ross carried for 2,676 yards as a senior, scoring 28 touchdowns.

"I would describe myself as being a big, strong, fast guy who can make you miss," Ross said. "I can run you over if I have to. I can separate if I have to."

Gaither coach Howie DeCristofaro was glad to see his star player reach the

school of his dreams.

"I counseled him to take all of his visits and to wait till the end," DeCristofaro said. "What may have been a bad thing (committing to ND early) could turn out to be good because it's a learning experience for him."

Townsend Defects To MSU At Last Minute

Of course, signing day would not be signing day without its strange twists and turns.

A day after Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy lineman Alphonso Townsend told BSB he was sealed and delivered for Ohio State, he opted instead to commit to Michigan State. He then signed with the Spartans early in the morning on signing day.

Townsend, originally from Lima (Ohio) Senior, signed with OSU a year ago. But he ended up at Fork Union after he failed to qualify academically.

After Cooper's firing, Townsend took visits to Michigan State and North Carolina. In the days leading up to

signing day, he was actually favoring UNC.

But it was learned that Townsend actually graduated from Lima with a GPA in the 2.15 range. That means he needs a much higher test score — either a 20 on the ACT or 960 on the SAT — to qualify. Sources told BSB that was unlikely to happen, and UNC would not be able to take Townsend as a Prop 48.

It seemed that his best option was Ohio State, where, even if he were a Prop 48, he would be able to attend school on lower in-state tuition rates.

But something changed all of that on Feb. 6 as Townsend switched his commitment to MSU, a school that has a strong "bridge" program for at-risk student-athletes.

"There was just some stuff that came up," Townsend told The Lima News. "I felt that Michigan State was the best place for me."

"I know there are going to be a lot of people there (in Lima) who are going to be mad. But I've got to do what's best for me."

Tressel was asked for his take on what happened to Townsend, whom OSU was counting on to help provide badly needed depth on the offensive line.

"Apparently, he thought that was the best thing for him," Tressel said. "Exactly why, I'm not sure. I know we spent a lot of time talking with him."

Academics Always Factor; Carter Waiting To Sign

Only two of OSU's signees appear to need substantial work to qualify under Prop 48 guidelines.

Those players are likely Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Dillard teammates Chris Gamble and Quinton Thomas.

Gamble reportedly holds a 2.8 GPA but still needs a qualifying test score. Thomas reportedly has a 2.5 GPA and an 840 on the SAT. That GPA is right on

the dividing line for Prop 48 status, while the test score is just 20 points above the 820 minimum, meaning Thomas has little margin for error.

In fact, his case is so close that athletic director Andy Geiger and OSU academic counselors had to sign off on allowing Thomas to sign with the Buckeyes. That approval did not come down until the day before signing day.

But the fact that most of OSU's signees appear to be in the clear was a relief for Tressel.

"Of course, all of them have to graduate and they have courses they must complete," the coach said. "I think there are only two of them who have to turn it up a notch."

"One of the beauties of this class is it looks pretty good for all of them to qualify," added Bill Kurelic of The Ohio Football Recruiting News. "As we know, that's been a problem in the past. It wasn't long ago that six guys didn't qualify. That isn't going to happen this year."

Apparently, Brookhaven wide receiver Rodney Carter's academic credentials were not strong enough for OSU to sign him on signing day.

Carter, who had a reported 2.2 GPA earlier this year, was still looking for a passing test score.

"I'm getting my grades together right now," Carter told BSB after attending Hall's press conference. "I will probably sign with Ohio State toward the end of the school year. They are still with me."

"I plan on starting my freshman year. They told me the other day they plan on giving me an opportunity to play. They're going to give me a chance



Rodney Carter



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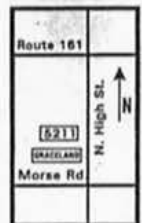


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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: RECRUITING OUTLOOK

athletically as soon as I come in."

Coach Miller added, "That is very possible (about him signing later on). Rodney has got to get some things done yet. We'll be meeting with the Ohio State coaches to design a plan to help him get where he wants to go."

If Carter fails to qualify, he could spend next school year at Fork Union.

Winslow Still Debating Decision, But OSU Is Out

San Diego Scripps Ranch wide receiver Kellen Winslow Jr. still had not made his college choice as of Feb. 12.

Winslow was reportedly still trying to decide between Miami (Fla.), Michigan State and Wisconsin. He visited OSU over the weekend of Jan. 5, when turmoil reigned in the aftermath of Cooper's firing.

"People are the most important consideration," Winslow told The San Diego Union-Tribune. "You have to feel comfortable. For example, it felt right at Washington, Michigan State and Miami."

"But it just didn't feel right at Ohio State."

It was unclear when Winslow would finally sign, but he said, "I won't wait that long. It would drive everyone crazy."

Kentucky Coach Steps Down Day Before Signing Day

College football was rocked by the revelation that Kentucky coach Hal Mumme resigned on Feb. 6, literally hours before players were scheduled to sign letters of intent.

• UK immediately named assistant Guy Morriss as the acting head coach for the next year and the Wildcats were still able to sign an 18-man class.

Mumme resigned in the wake of an investigation that turned up improprieties. Two UK assistants resigned last month after it was revealed they had made cash payments to recruits.

But the signing day controversy did not dissuade Canton (Ohio) McKinley linebacker Chad Anderson, a top-10 Ohio prospect, from signing with UK.

"The new head coach (Morriss) was already there," Anderson told The Canton Repository. "That doesn't make too much change. What affected me more was when the linebackers coach (Mike Major) got fired."

"As far as what I've been told, the penalties aren't going to keep them from playing on TV or being eligible for a bowl game. They may lose two or three scholarships over two years and lose some (recruiting) visits."

Louisville did call Anderson to see if he was interested in switching his commitment. But he decided to stay with UK.

Kentucky did lose three high-profile recruits, including in-state wide receiver Montrell Jones (unsigned), Kentucky lineman Marcus Green (Ohio State) and Pennsylvania linebacker Joe Dipre (Pittsburgh).

Another UK verbal, Kentucky quarterback Gino Guidugli, was still waiting to see what would happen before he signed.

According to one national recruiting expert, it doesn't look good for UK.

"They lost a lot of good people," the expert said. "That thing is about to blow up, especially when the coach resigns the day before signing day."

In other signing day headlines:

• LaQuinta, Calif., linebacker Michael-Jordan Craven, who looked at OSU briefly last fall, went into his signing day press conference undecided between Stanford and UCLA.

"Everybody could sense I was undecided," said Craven, a USA Today All-USA first-team pick. "They were yelling, 'Go with your gut.'"

Then, when Craven picked up the letter for UCLA, his father leaned in and said, "You know what you want to accomplish."

Craven picked up his pen and signed with Stanford instead.

• Former San Diego State quarterback Spencer Brinton faxed in his letter of intent for Michigan from Johannesburg, South Africa, where he is finishing a two-year Mormon mission.

Brinton has never been to Ann Arbor but decided UM was the place for him.

• New Alabama coach Dennis Franchione lost out to rival Auburn on several key in-state recruits. But the Tide did lock down the state's top-ranked player in quarterback Brodie Croyle as well as running back Marquez Dupree, the son of former Oklahoma All-American Marcus Dupree.

Miscellaneous Notes

• In this edition of BSB, we have a list of over 50 underclassmen who have advanced to the forefront (see pages 24-27).

A number of those players were among the estimated group of 25 football underclassmen who attended OSU's junior day Feb. 10.

The day's festivities gave prospects a chance to meet Tressel and his staff, tour the campus and the Woody Hayes Athletic Center and attend the day's OSU men's basketball game with Wisconsin at Value City Arena.

Among the key Ohio juniors attending were Warren Harding running back Maurice Claret, Canton GlenOak lineman T.J. Downing, Warren Howland lineman Doug Datish, Lyndhurst Brush wide receiver Roy Hall, Centerville linebacker A.J. Hawk, Hamilton defensive back B.J. Underwood, Dublin Coffman lineman Eric Fritz, East Cleveland Shaw quarterback Denayne Davidson-Dixon, Lancaster linebacker Bobby Carpenter, Piqua defensive lineman Quinn Pitcock, Westerville North tight end George Cooper Jr., Dayton Chaminade-Julienne wide receiver Andre Chattams and Mansfield Senior lineman Mike Donaldson.

Also, Warren Harding sophomore defensive back Prescott Burgess was in attendance.

• Canton's Fawcett Stadium will be the site Sept. 1 for the inaugural Northeast Ohio Gridiron Classic.

The exact order of games will be set later, but there will be four games that day. Included in the lineup will be Canton McKinley against Cincinnati Elder, Division I runner-up Solon against Cuyahoga Falls Walsh Jesuit, Canton GlenOak against Mentor and Warren Harding facing Cincinnati Moeller.

Plans are to start the quadruple-header at noon with the last game to start at 8:15 p.m. One \$10 ticket will gain admission to all four games.

IF YOU WEREN'T ON THE BSB WEB SITE LAST WEEK ...
You missed the story!

The Buckeye Sports Bulletin web site logged over 400,000 hits on national signing day.

Below is a look at the archive of stories posted on the site since Feb. 1.

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN
BuckeyeSports.com

Headline	Date	Author
OSU 63, Wisconsin 58	Feb. 10	Steve Helwage
Key Juniors Attend Game	Feb. 10	Steve Helwage
Daily Dose - OSU vs. UW	Feb. 10	Mike Wachsmann
Tucker: New DBs Coach	Feb. 9	Steve Helwage
One Man's Franchise Team	Feb. 8	BSB Staff Reports
OSU 69, Iowa 68	Feb. 7	Steve Helwage
Tressel: His First Class	Feb. 7	Steve Helwage
Tressel On Signees	Feb. 7	Steve Helwage
Hall: 'A Sem ... Buckeye'	Feb. 7	Steve Helwage
WR Carter To Sign Later	Feb. 7	BSB Staff Reports
Hall Stays Home	Feb. 7	Mike Wachsmann
Fox Is A Buckeye	Feb. 7	Mike Wachsmann
Daily Dose - Recruiting	Feb. 7	Mike Wachsmann
One Down, Two To Go	Feb. 7	BSB Staff
Thomas To Sign On Wed.	Feb. 6	Steve Helwage
Introducing Dantonio	Feb. 6	Jeff Rapp
Chattams To OSU!	Feb. 5	Steve Helwage
Hall's Announcement Set	Feb. 4	BSB Staff Reports
Update: Dustin Fox	Feb. 4	Steve Helwage
Ross, Chattams Updates	Feb. 4	Steve Helwage
Nugent Commits To OSU	Feb. 4	Steve Helwage
Introducing Bollman	Feb. 4	Steve Helwage
Green Latest Verbal	Feb. 4	Steve Helwage
OSU 73, Minnesota 66	Feb. 3	Steve Helwage
New OC: Whatever It Takes	Feb. 2	Steve Helwage
Conley Nets 2 In Fla.	Feb. 1	Steve Helwage
Gamble Commits To OSU	Feb. 1	BSB Staff Reports

BSB Message Board Now Password Protected

We invite you to check out the OSU Fan Forum message board by clicking on Message Boards from the BSB home page. This message board is password protected, meaning it is free of most of the useless clutter and flames showing up on other message boards.

Obtaining a password is easy. Just follow the directions on the site. We invite you to join a small collection of devoted Buckeye fans who talk OSU athletics in a respectful manner, all day every day.

BSB Editor Conducts Message Board Chats

The OSU Fan Forum message board is also the place to interact with BSB editor Steve Helwage, who hosts a Chat session every Friday afternoon at 1 p.m. Again, click on Message Boards and then on OSU Fan Forum to ask Steve any question pertaining to OSU athletics and recruiting.

BuckeyeSports.com

RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE SIGNEES

Coach's First Class 'A Special Bunch'

Around For Just Three Weeks,
Tressel Manages A Top-20 Group

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

They are a group that will go down in history as Jim Tressel's first recruiting class as the head football coach at Ohio State.

Taking over at the late date of Jan. 18 after the firing of 13-year coach John Cooper, Tressel and his staff turned what looked to be a reclamation project into a respectable class.

The 17-man class, which includes 16 high school seniors and one junior college transfer, was rated 14th nationally in BSB's consensus poll and third in the Big Ten by Bill Kurelic of The Ohio Football Recruiting News.

Beyond the rankings and everything else, Tressel believes Ohio State has added quality people to its football program.

"As I think about those 17 guys, I can't tell you how excited I am about what they're going to bring to us on the field, off the field and in the community," he said on national signing day Feb. 7. "It is a special bunch."

"The thing that impresses me is the character and positive outlook all of the young people I met with had. It was really refreshing and really encouraging. I'm excited for them to be our first class."

Here are thumbnail sketches of the 17 new Buckeyes with heights and weights coming from OSU's signing day release and players listed alphabetically.

• **Redgie Arden, linebacker, Ironton, Ohio** — Arden (6-5, 225, 4.7) was a Rivals100.com Recruiting national top 100 pick. He was also a SuperPrep



Redgie Arden

All-American, ranking on that publication's national Elite 50 at No. 36 and as the country's fourth-best linebacker. He was the No. 1 prospect in Ohio, according to TOFRN. As a senior, he was the Division IV

Associated Press co-defensive player of the year. That marked his third year as a first-team All-Ohio pick. As a senior, he notched 107 tackles, eight sacks and three interceptions. Arden was the first player to verbally commit to OSU in the 2001 class, committing to the Buckeyes in October 1999. Arden, who benches 300 pounds, holds a 3.0 GPA and scored a 21 on the ACT.

• **Angelo Chattams, wide receiver, Dayton Chaminade-Julienne** — Chattams (5-11, 185, 4.45) was also a Rivals100.com Recruiting top 100 pick. He was ranked Ohio's No. 7 senior prospect by TOFRN. SuperPrep rated him the nation's 13th-best receiver. He earned a first-team Division III Associated Press All-Ohio selection as a

junior and senior. He was tabbed as the player of the year in the Greater Catholic League.

As a senior, he totaled 78 receptions for 1,100 yards and 19 touchdowns. He had 80 receptions and 16 touchdowns as a junior. He has been selected to play in the Big 33 All-Star game.



Angelo Chattams

Chattams committed to OSU last summer. But after Cooper's firing he visited Purdue and considered the Boilermakers until deciding on Feb. 5 to sign with OSU. He holds a 3.1 GPA, scored a 20 on the ACT and benches 275 pounds.

• **Ryan Cook, offensive lineman, Martinsville, Ind.** — Cook (6-7, 295, 4.95) was ranked Indiana's sixth-best senior prospect and the Midwest's No. 5 line prospect by The Midwest Recruiting News. He was a first-team All-Indiana selection.

He was a three-year starter at offensive tackle. Cook attended summer camps at OSU and Michigan and had offers from OSU and Indiana before committing to the Buckeyes. Cook, who benches 315 pounds, holds a 3.2 GPA and scored a 1040 on the SAT.



Ryan Cook

• **Dustin Fox, defensive back, Canton (Ohio) GlenOak** — Fox (6-0, 185, 4.4) was a SuperPrep All-American pick, ranking as the nation's 10th-best defensive back. TOFRN listed him as Ohio's third-best prospect. He was a first-team Division I AP All-Ohio selection on defense as a junior and senior. He was a three-year starter at free safety.



Dustin Fox

As a senior, he recorded three interceptions. He finished with 12 interceptions in his career. Starting at tailback as well, Fox had 2,500 yards rushing and 38 touchdowns in his career. He played in the inaugural National High School All-Star Game and has been selected to play in the Big 33 All-Star game. His brother, Derek, played at Penn State the last four years. Uncles Kenny Kuhn, Richard Kuhn, Mark Stier and Tim Fox played at Ohio State.

Fox committed to OSU last summer over Michigan and Penn State. Then, after Cooper's firing, he visited Penn

State. He finally decided between the two schools on signing day. Fox, who benches 260 pounds, holds a 2.8 GPA and scored a 19 on the ACT.

• **Simon Fraser, defensive end, Upper Arlington, Ohio** — Fraser (6-5, 250, 4.7) also was a Rivals100.com top 100 pick. SuperPrep named him to the Elite 50 team, ranking him at No. 40 overall nationally and as the country's fifth-best defensive lineman. TOFRN listed him as Ohio's fifth-best prospect. He was a first-team Division I All-Ohio selection as a junior and senior.

As a senior, he had 130 tackles, 30 sacks, six forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries for the 15-0 Division I state championship team. He had 115 tackles and 18 sacks as a junior and was a three-year starter at defensive end. Fraser, who benches 340 pounds, narrowed his choices to OSU and Michigan before picking the Buckeyes on July 21. He holds a 3.8 GPA and scored a 22 on the ACT.



Simon Fraser

• **Chris Gamble, wide receiver, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Dillard** — Gamble (6-2, 180, 4.43) was judged a SuperPrep All-American, ranking as the No. 14 overall prospect in the state of Florida and No. 20 receiver prospect in the country. The Jacksonville (Fla.) Times-Union listed him as Florida's No. 1 receiving prospect. He was a first-team All-Florida pick as a senior.

As a senior, Gamble recorded 65 receptions for 1,012 yards and 10 touchdowns for a 13-2 Dillard team that reached the Class 6A state championship game. He also returned two kicks and one punt for touchdowns. Gamble holds a 2.8 GPA but needs to improve on his test score to qualify.

• **Marcus Green, defensive lineman, Louisville (Ky.) Male** — Green (6-3, 300, 5.15) was regarded as the No. 1 lineman and No. 4 overall prospect in the state of Kentucky by SuperPrep. He was a first-team All-Kentucky selection on offense and second-team selection on defense. He played both offensive and defensive tackle in high school but will play defense at OSU.

Green had 80 tackles and 10 sacks as a senior for a team that won the Class 4A state championship. He originally committed to Kentucky last fall but reopened his search after UK was accused of recruiting violations. He also visited Texas, Michigan State and Indiana before picking the Buckeyes on Jan. 26. Green holds a 2.7 GPA and scored an 18 on the ACT.



Marcus Green

• **Maurice Hall, running back, Columbus Brookhaven** — Hall (5-10, 180, 4.3) was a Rivals100.com top 100 pick. He was also a SuperPrep All-American, ranking No. 12 nationally

among all backs. He was listed as Ohio's fourth-best prospect by TOFRN. He was the Division II Associated Press offensive player of the year and a first-team All-Ohio selection. He was also the winner of the Watkins Scholar-Athlete Award.

Hall rushed for 3,057 yards and 51 touchdowns in leading Brookhaven to a playoff berth as a senior. He also recorded eight receptions with two touchdowns. He finished with over 6,000 career yards. Hall visited OSU, Penn State, Georgia Tech, Florida State and Northwestern before picking the Buckeyes over FSU on signing day. He holds a 4.0 GPA and scored a 19 on the ACT.



Maurice Hall

• **Ryan Hamby, tight end, Cincinnati Moeller** — Hamby (6-4, 245, 4.7) was ranked Ohio's 24th-best prospect by TOFRN. He was a second-team Division I All-Ohio selection and first-team All-Southwest District pick as a senior.

As a senior, Hamby had 45 receptions for 700 yards and scored seven touchdowns for a 9-2 Division I playoff qualifier. He also played defensive end. Hamby visited Indiana and Miami (Ohio) before committing to OSU over the weekend of Jan. 5. He holds a 3.0 GPA and scored a 1060 on the SAT.



Ryan Hamby

• **Mike Nugent, kicker, Centerville, Ohio** — Nugent (5-10, 165, 4.65) was a first-team Western Ohio League and All-Southwest District selection. He was also a second-team Division I All-Ohio selection. Nugent connected on 5 of 7 field goal opportunities as a senior, when he also served as Centerville's quarterback. He kicked a school-record 52-yard field goal this past year. He converted 13 of 17 field goals in his career and was a perfect 29 of 29 on PATs in 2000. He totaled 262 points in his four-year career. He also looked at Pittsburgh and Central Michigan before committing to OSU during his Feb. 2 official visit. He holds a 3.3 GPA and has posted scores of 20 on the ACT and 1000 on the SAT.

For more on Nugent, see profile, on page 31.



Mike Nugent

• **Adam Olds, offensive lineman, Dublin (Ohio) Coffman** — Olds (6-5, 270, 4.9) was ranked Ohio's 11th-best prospect by TOFRN. He was a first-team Division I All-Ohio selection. He has been Coffman's starting center and

RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE SIGNEES

long snapper since his sophomore year and also has played some at defensive tackle.

He played in the National High School All-Star Game and has been selected to play in the Big 33 All-Star game. He is the Central District's top-rated heavy-weight wrestler in Division I and was a state meet qualifier last year. Olds committed to OSU last Feb. 24. He benches 325 pounds, holds a 3.45 GPA and scored an 1110 on the SAT.

• **JaJa Riley, running back, San Diego Mission Bay** — Riley (6-2, 188, 4.4) was a SuperPrep All-American pick. That magazine ranked him as the nation's 23rd-best back and as California's 12th-best prospect. He was a first-team All-California Interscholastic Federation Division III selection.

As a senior, he rushed for 1,500 yards and 20 touchdowns. He also hauled in 11 receptions for 150 yards. He helped lead Mission Bay to the CIF Division III championship — with a 13-0 record. Riley visited OSU Dec. 2 and committed during the visit, picking the Buckeyes over USC, Oklahoma and Arizona State. He holds a 2.9 GPA and scored a 960 on the SAT.

• **Lydell Ross, running back, Tampa (Fla.) Gaither** — Ross (6-0, 205, 4.5) was a SuperPrep All-American, ranking as the country's 38th-best back and as his state's 21st-best prospect. He was a first-team Class 6A All-Florida selection and won the Guy Toph Award as Hillsborough County's most outstanding football player as a senior.

He rushed for 2,676 yards on 355 carries

(7.5 yards per carry average) his final season and scored 28 touchdowns. He also had 18 receptions for 200 yards. Ross originally committed to Notre Dame. But he visited OSU Feb. 2, returned home and announced for the Buckeyes on signing day. He also saw Auburn and Florida. Ross holds a 3.7 GPA and scored an 890 on the SAT.

• **Brandon Schnittker, fullback, Sandusky (Ohio) Perkins** — Schnittker (6-1, 255, 4.63) was ranked Ohio's 22nd-best prospect by TOFRN. He was the Division IV co-defensive player of the year and a first-team All-Ohio pick at linebacker.

As a senior, he had 105 tackles, 13 tackles for loss, three sacks, four forced fumbles, three fumble recoveries and five interceptions (two for touchdowns). On offense, he rushed for 900 yards and averaged 9.2 yards per carry. Schnittker committed to OSU in October. He holds a 4.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale with honors courses. He has scores of 29 on the ACT and 1300 on the SAT.

• **Quinton Thomas, defensive lineman, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Dillard** — Thomas (6-5, 255, 4.8) was considered Florida's 34th-best prospect by SuperPrep. He joined Gamble on Dillard's state runner-up squad.

As a senior, Thomas had 65 tackles, four sacks, three forced fumbles and six fumble recoveries. That followed a junior season when he had 63 tackles and eight sacks as a junior. He also plays basketball. Thomas visited N.C. State, Iowa State, Minnesota, OSU and Virginia Tech before picking the Buckeyes on Jan. 31. Thomas, who benches 295 pounds, holds a 2.5 GPA and scored an 840 on the SAT.

• **Andree Tyree, defensive lineman, London, Ohio** — Tyree (6-3, 280, 4.8) was a first-team Division III All-Ohio selection on defense. He was ranked Ohio's 17th-best prospect by TOFRN. He had experience at defensive end, linebacker and tight end this past season.

As a senior, he caught 24 passes for 450 yards with two touchdowns. He also

recorded 76 tackles with 11 tackles for loss and three interceptions on defense.

He had seven sacks as a junior and eight sacks as a sophomore. He has been selected to play in the Big 33 All-Star game. Tyree, who benches 375 pounds, was offered a scholarship during the summer camp before his senior year and accepted. He holds a 2.7 GPA and scored a 19 on the ACT.

• **Chris Vance, wide receiver, Fort Scott (Kan.) Community College** — Vance (6-2, 185, 4.5) is originally a native of Fort Myers, Fla. He enjoyed two fine seasons at Fort Scott. He was an All-

Jayhawk Conference selection this past season after earning honorable mention all-conference honors in 1999.

Vance led Fort Scott in every receiving category with 37 receptions for 598 yards and 10 touchdowns. He also returned 17 punts for 113 yards. In 1999, Vance recorded 43 receptions for 688 yards and five touchdowns.

Vance actually signed with OSU — over Colorado and Purdue — in December and enrolled in time for winter quarter. He will participate in spring football and will be eligible as a junior this fall.



Adam Olds



Brandon Schnittker



JaJa Riley



Andree Tyree



Chris Vance



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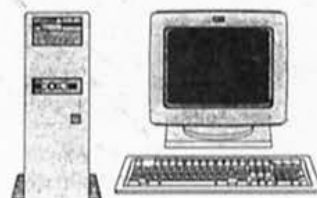
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