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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



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.

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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 Chhattams — 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 Chhattams 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 Chhattams	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 nearby 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

Get the most accurate information on next season's top high school prospects in Ohio and OSU's 2001-2002 recruiting class

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 Chattsams, 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 Chattsams** — "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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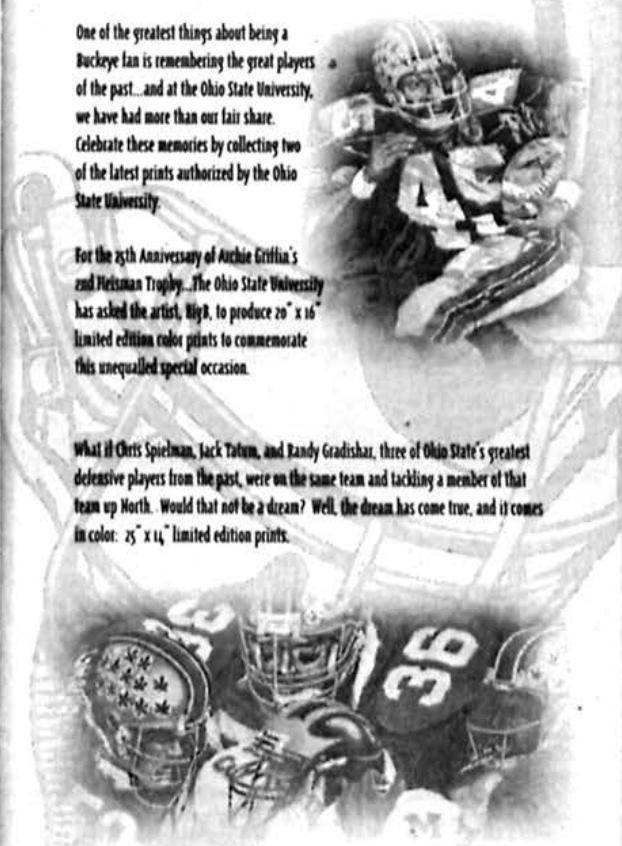
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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE EXPERTS

Bowden Gets His Due From Recruiting Experts

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

There is football recruiting and then there is Bobby Bowden football recruiting.

The venerable Florida State coach and his staff again showed why they run the game's preeminent program right now by clearly winning the national recruiting battle for 2001.

FSU received all six first-place votes in BSB's consensus poll of national recruiting experts, taking the title easily over second-place Michigan and third-place LSU. Ohio State ended up in a tie for 14th with USC (see graphic).

"Florida State completely dominated the scene at the end," said Allen Wallace of California-based SuperPrep. "They won in a landslide."

"They signed nine of the top 15 players in Florida. Then they went to California, Georgia, Minnesota — wherever they wanted to go — and got the players they wanted. It was an amazing effort."

When the dust had settled on national signing day Feb. 7, Florida State had signed 10 of Rivals100.com Recruiting's national top 100 players (see graphic, page 11).

Included in that group were signing-day announcements by Florida defensive back Jerome Carter, Florida linebacker Willie Jones and Kentucky running back Eric Shelton.

"They always close strong," said Rick Kimbrel of California-based PrepStar magazine. "It's almost like they sandbag people to make a big splash on signing day. It's almost like they orchestrate it. I wrote on Sunday night before signing day that they were still waiting on six of our Dream Team players (national top 120) to decide and they all came in."

Other notables to pick FSU from the Rivals100 list included California cornerback Dominic Robinson, Florida linemen Chauncey Davis and Ron Lunford, Minnesota quarterback Joe Mauer, Florida receiver Crapponso Thorpe, Florida defensive back Gerard Ross and Georgia lineman Eric Broe.

Mauer, USA Today's national offensive player of the year, was among five FSU signees selected to that newspaper's 48-man All-USA team. The others were Shelton, Thorpe, Carter and Robinson.

"They signed three All-American quarterbacks with Mauer, (Florida's) Adrian McPherson and (Georgia's) Matt

Henshaw," Wallace said. "Joe Mauer may go and play baseball, but he could always come back like Chris Weinke did."

In the days leading up to signing day, it appeared that the race was wide open between several schools. But Tom Lemming of Illinois-based Prep Football Report said he had FSU pegged all along.

"They were unbelievable at the end," he said. "Everyone was saying Oklahoma or LSU was going to be No. 1, but I kept saying, 'Watch out for Florida State.'"

"That run was just amazing," added Rivals100.com's Jeremy Crabtree. "The only guy they lost at the end was (Ohio running back) Maurice Hall, and they weren't expecting him anyway. I think everybody figured he'd end up at Ohio State all along."

FSU became the second unanimous winner in the six years of BSB's consensus poll, joining Texas' class from 1999. The Seminoles spoiled in-state rival Florida's shot at a unanimous title last year, garnering one of the six first-place votes.

Michigan won the tightest consensus poll race 3-2 over UCLA in 1998, while Ohio State (1996) and Florida State (1997) were comfortable winners.

The Wolverines held off LSU for second place this year behind the signing of seven Rivals100.com top 100 players.

"Michigan got players everywhere, including three USA Today first-team guys in (Michigan DB) Ernest Shazor, (Pennsylvania DB) Marlin Jackson and (Michigan RB) Kelly Baraka," said Phil Grosz of Pennsylvania-based G&W Recruiting Report.

(For more on Michigan's recruiting effort, see the Big Ten roundup on pages 13-15.)

LSU coach Nick Saban attacked his first full recruiting effort with the Tigers head on. He landed six Rivals100.com top 100 players, including in-state stars tight end Marcus Spears, defensive tackle Marquise Hill, wide receiver Michael Clayton and offensive linemen Andrew Whitworth and Rudy Niswanger.

"Nick Saban did an incredible job," Grosz said. "They put a picket fence around Louisiana and got nine of the state's top 10 kids. The important thing is that four of those guys were among the top three at their position in the country."

Wallace added, "What they did was absolutely amazing. He has reigned that whole situation in an incredible fashion. Right now, Nick Saban is one of the top three young coaches in America with Rick Neuheisel and Bob Stoops."

There were some raised eyebrows a year ago when Saban left Michigan State for the lucrative job at LSU — and he didn't take any of his MSU assistants with him. But the move paid off.

National Recruiting Experts Rankings

BILL KURELIC The Ohio Football Recruiting News	JEREMY CRABTREE Rivals100.com Recruiting	RICK KIMBREL PrepStar Florida State
1 Florida State	1 Florida State	1 Florida State
2 Michigan	2 Oklahoma	2 Michigan
3 LSU	3 LSU	3 Texas
4 Oklahoma	4 Michigan	4 LSU
5 Texas	5 Texas	5 Miami (Fla.)
6 Miami (Fla.)	6 Washington	6 Tennessee
7 Tennessee	7 Miami (Fla.)	7 Oklahoma
8 Washington	8 Tennessee	8 UCLA
9 Nebraska	9 UCLA	9 Washington
10 UCLA	10 Nebraska	10 (tie) OHIO STATE
		10 (tie) USC

PHIL GROSZ G&W Recruiting Report	TOM LEMMING Prep Football Report	ALLEN WALLACE SuperPrep Florida State
1 Florida State	1 Florida State	1 Florida State
2 Texas	2 Michigan	2 LSU
3 LSU	3 LSU	3 Michigan
4 Michigan	4 Texas	4 Texas
5 Oklahoma	5 Tennessee	5 Washington
6 Washington	6 Oklahoma	6 Oklahoma
7 Miami (Fla.)	7 Miami (Fla.)	7 Nebraska
8 Tennessee	8 Washington	8 Virginia Tech
9 UCLA	9 Clemson	9 UCLA
10 Clemson	10 Wisconsin	10 Clemson

NATIONAL RECRUITING EXPERTS CONSENSUS POLL (Determined by voting points; First-place votes in parentheses)					
1 Florida State (6)	60	6 Washington	24	11 Clemson	4
2 Michigan	49	7 Miami (Fla.)	23	12 Virginia Tech	3
3 LSU	48	8 Tennessee	21	13 Wisconsin	1
4 Texas	43	9 UCLA	11	14 (tie) OHIO STATE	0.5
5 Oklahoma	36	10 Nebraska	7	14 (tie) USC	0.5

"When Saban got there, he brought in a Southern staff," Lemming said. "That was really, really smart. They were able to hold on to everything in their own state."

Texas came next with three Rivals100.com top 100 players, including in-state standouts running back Cedric Benson, lineman Jonathan Scott and linebacker Derrick Johnson.

"They took seven offensive linemen and they all look to be good ones," said Crabtree, whose Rivals100.com service is based in Texas.

Speaking of Texas, that is where Oklahoma

fresh off a national championship — did some heavy damage.

The Sooners got 14 of their 29 signees from the Lone Star State, including that state's top player in defensive

linebacker Tommie Harris of Killeen.

Harris was one of five Rivals100 top 100 players to sign with OU, joining fellow Texas stars wide receiver Brandon Jones, defensive end Jonathan Jackson and running back Donta Hickson as well as Louisiana quarterback Brent Rawls.

"They got back into Texas and got some really good kids, including Tommie Harris," Grosz said. "Some say he was the best player in Texas and the best defensive lineman in the country."

Washington, with three Rivals100 top 100 signees, came next at sixth in the consensus poll. The Huskies, with Neuheisel calling the shots, bagged Florida receiver Charles Frederick, Illinois quarterback Casey Paus and in-state receiver Reggie Williams, who spurned Michigan.

One of the nation's biggest success stories was at Miami (Fla.), where the Canes still pulled in the nation's seventh-ranked class despite the 11th hour departure of

head coach Butch Davis to the NFL's Cleveland Browns. Assistant Larry Coker, a former Ohio State assistant, was elevated to the top spot, and Miami held on to all of its key prospects.

Miami inked five Rivals100 top 100 players, including New York linebacker Leon Williams, Delaware defensive tackle Orien Harris and Florida defensive back Antrel Rolle.

"They got a great class despite losing Butch Davis," Grosz said. "They got Leon Williams away from Penn State late in the game."

"How they do it just blows my mind. They play in a dump at the Orange Bowl and they don't get anybody to their games. But they do have a big attraction in South Beach."

"They kept the class together with the threat of everything going on in the last few days," Kimbrel said. "They lifted Frank Gore from Ole Miss and reclaimed Kevin Everett from Texas. They got Orien Harris, who was our No. 2 defensive lineman in the country."

"They fought off the disaster of Davis leaving so late. Larry Coker was a good captain of that ship to keep things together."

Tennessee got six Rivals100 players but finished eighth in the consensus poll. The Vols nailed down two of the top four players on that list in California linebacker Kevin Simon (No. 2) and Georgia running back Jabari Davis (No. 4).

UCLA, finishing ninth, signed four Rivals100 players. The key name was California safety Matt Ware.

"They did pretty well, although they lost (in-state USA Today national defensive player of the year) Shaun Cody to USC at the last minute," Grosz said.

Nebraska, never known for having top-ranked recruiting classes, rounded out the consensus poll top 10. True to form, the Huskers did not have a single player on the Rivals100 top 100 list.

The following are comments from each of the six experts used in the consensus poll on Ohio State's recruiting effort.



Eric Shelton



Tommie Harris

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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE EXPERTS

Kurelic

Bill Kurelic of Dublin, Ohio-based The Ohio Football Recruiting News ranked OSU's 17-man class third in the Big Ten and 15th nationally.

"The way things finished at the end, that was borderline spectacular," Kurelic said. "They had four guys they were after and got all four."

Kurelic noted the importance of new head coach Jim Tressel retaining recruiting coordinator Bill Conley.

"(Conley) had been working on those players for over a year," Kurelic said. "They started recruiting a lot of them prior to their junior season. They had a lot of continuity with him staying on board. I thought Tim Spencer and Jim Heacock were instrumental as well."

"Mark Dantonio came in and helped out. But it all starts at the top. Jim Tressel was a tireless worker from the moment he got the job and he hasn't stopped working yet. He's already working on juniors for next year."

Kurelic believes OSU solidified its ground game with this attack.

"If you look at Ohio State's needs, there certainly could be an opportunity for a running back from this class to play right away," he said. "Both Lydell Ross and Maurice Hall have a chance to be something special. Maybe they'll be a special tandem because Ohio State is going to play more than one running back."

"Obviously, I like Reggie Arden and Dustin Fox. They are two of my top three players in Ohio. They each have a chance to have great careers at Ohio State."

Crabtree

Crabtree's Rivals100 service uses a rating system to rank each school's efforts. Those rankings are then tweaked, he said, based on each school's needs, speed and balance.

Prior to OSU's big finish, Rivals100 had the Buckeyes 47th nationally. Crabtree said OSU would be 20th in the final rankings, however.

"They rolled at the end," Crabtree said. "That was one of the most impressive recruiting jobs in the nation this year. We were going to list Ohio State as one of our disappointments, but things changed suddenly for them at the end."

"(Angelo) Chattams was the guy who got the ball rolling. When he committed to them, that signaled that it was OK to go back and be a Buckeye."

Arden, Chattams, Hall and defensive end Simon Fraser were all named to the Rivals100 top 100.

"Maurice Hall is special," Crabtree said. "I also like Simon Fraser. He has the frame to bulk up and maybe play defensive tackle. You can't teach a frame like that."

"Fox is a good, heady player. He's probably a strong safety. He's not a real speedster, but he has those intangibles."

"Lydell Ross is a big back, the kind you need to win games in the Big Ten."

Grosz

Grosz picked OSU fifth in the Big Ten behind Michigan, Wisconsin, Penn State and Purdue.

"The best part of Ohio State's class is the three running backs with Maurice Hall, JaJa Riley and Lydell Ross," Grosz said. "How they got Ross to leave Florida I will never know. He took a late visit there and they got him. He must not have been satisfied with Notre Dame or Florida."

"Holding on to (wavered verbally) Dustin Fox and Angelo Chattams was also a key."

Grosz believes OSU may already have

a leg up on next year's class.

"The thing Ohio State fans should already be excited about is they've already wrapped up Maurice Claret and Drushaun Humphreys and I think they are the big leader for Justin Zwick," he said. "They all know and like Jim Tressel."

Kimbrel

Kimbrel's PrepStar magazine gave Ohio State its best marks, tying the Buckeyes with USC for 10th place nationally.

"I think Tressel is going to be really good," he said. "One thing that was key was keeping Bill Conley. It is still a glamorous school that kids far and wide know about. They kept the majority of the good ones in-state, and that is a telling tale if they're going to be successful."

Kimbrel gave OSU high marks for snagging California back JaJa Riley.

"JaJa Riley is an outstanding back," he said. "I know that every Pac-10 school wanted him. That was a great get for the Cooper staff and even bigger for Tressel and his guys to hang on to him."

"They also did a great job with Maurice Hall there in their own hometown."

Lemming

Lemming had not finalized his rankings beyond the top 10 but said OSU would likely fall between No. 15 and No. 25.

"They did great for the circumstances," Lemming said. "At one point I didn't think they would be in the top 40."

"They did well at the end to land Hall and Ross and to keep Chattams and Fox. I know Fox nearly went to Penn State."

"If Chris Gamble gets his grades, he could be a good player for them. Chattams could be a great one. I think Adam Olds is pretty steady. He could be a captain there one day."

Lemming liked OSU's haul at running back.

"JaJa is a terrific talent as a running back or a DB," he said. "He also has good hands and could be a receiver."

"There were a lot of good backs in Florida this year, but I thought Lydell Ross was the best. And that's not all because of performance, but also because of size. He's 6-0, 210 pounds and runs a legit 4.5 or 4.45 40. When he squares his shoulders, defenders kind of cringe because he can run them over."

"Simon Fraser looks skinny at 240 pounds. With that frame, he could probably get up to 270 or 280 pounds. Maybe he'll redshirt this year and get up to the 270-pound range."

Lemming assembles the prep All-American team for ESPN. That team will be featured in a special on that network at 1 p.m. Mon., Feb. 19. It will be replayed throughout the rest of the month.

Wallace

Wallace rated OSU 15th in the nation for SuperPrep.

"The coaching switch helped Ohio State," he said. "From a national perspective, people viewed John Cooper as an excellent coach. But inside the state, which is where Ohio State focuses much of its attention, people wanted a change."

"They were sick and tired of losing to Michigan."

OSU ended up signing nine SuperPrep All-Americans.

"We had Simon Fraser and Reggie Arden on our Elite 50 and those two as well as Dustin Fox were on our Super 100," he said. "Plus, we liked Angelo Chattams and Chris Gamble. They were also SuperPrep All-Americans."

The Rivals 100

Here is a look at the final Rivals100.com national top 100 list, ranked from No. 1 down to No. 100. Ohio State received verbal commitments from four of these players and had seven of them make visits (denoted with asterisks).

Pos.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown	Signed With
RB	Kevin Jones	6-0	200	4.23	Chester (Pa.) Cardinal O'Hara	Virginia Tech
LB	Kevin Simon	6-0	210	4.5	Concord (Calif.) De La Salle	Tennessee
WR	Roscoe Crosby	6-2	195	4.4	Buffalo (S.C.) Union	Clemson
RB	Jabari Davis	6-0	230	4.5	Stone Mountain (Ga.) Tucker	Tennessee
DT	Tommie Harris	6-3	275	4.8	Killeen (Texas) Ellison	Oklahoma
S	Ernest Shazor	6-4	200	4.5	Detroit Martin Luther King	Michigan
S	Matt Ware	6-3	195	4.49	Los Angeles Loyola	UCLA
CB	Dominic Robinson	6-2	200	4.4	Diamond Bar, Calif.	Florida State
TE	Marcus Spears	6-5	270	4.6	Baton Rouge (La.) Southern Lab	LSU
QB	Brodie Croyle	6-3	186	4.71	Rainbow City, Ala.	Alabama
DE	Shaun Cody	6-5	240	4.7	Hacienda Heights (Calif.) Los Altos	USC
LB	Blake Larsen	6-7	295	5.01	Atlantic, Iowa	Iowa
LB	Leon Williams	6-3	232	4.4	New York Canarsie	Miami (Fla.)
DT	Marquise Hill	6-8	290	4.75	New Orleans De La Salle	LSU
WR	Charles Frederick	5-11	170	4.45	Boca Raton (Fla.) Pope John Paul	Washington
LB	Ben Wilkerson	6-4	265	4.8	Hempfield, Texas	LSU
DE	Chauncey Davis	6-2	230	4.6	Auburndale, Fla.	Florida State
LB	Ron Lunford	6-5	320	5.0	Jacksonville (Fla.) Ed White	Florida State
LB	Michael Craven	6-2	215	4.6	Palm Desert (Calif.) La Quinta	Stanford
LB	Jonathan Scott	6-7	286	5.0	Dallas Carter	Texas
CB	Ahmad Carroll	6-0	190	4.4	Atlanta Douglass	Arkansas
OL	Chris Spencer	6-4	305	5.2	Madison (Miss.) Central	Ole Miss
WR	Reggie Williams	6-4	215	4.4	Tacoma (Wash.) Lakewood Lakes	Washington
LB	Kelly Baraka	6-1	185	4.4	Portage (Mich.) Northern	Michigan
LB	Marvin Simmons	6-1	210	4.5	Long Beach (Calif.) Poly	Unsign'd
WR	Michael Clayton	6-2	200	4.4	Baton Rouge (La.) Christian Brothers	LSU
DT	Orien Harris	6-4	270	4.8	Newark, Del.	Miami (Fla.)
QB	Joe Maurer	6-4	205	4.7	St. Paul (Minn.) Crotin Durham Hall	Florida State
RB	Derrick Tinsley	6-1	180	4.4	Marletta, Ga.	Tennessee
DE	Marquis Elmore	6-4	230	4.65	Folkston (Ga.) Charlton County	Georgia
RB	Carmell Williams	5-11	192	4.42	Attalla (Ala.) Etowah	Auburn
QB	Cedric Benson	6-0	195	4.5	Midland (Texas) Lee	Texas
QB	D.J. Shockley	6-2	185	4.4	College Park (Ga.) North Clayton	Georgia
S	Jerome Carter	6-1	205	4.5	Lake City (Fla.) Columbia	Florida State
CB	Marlin Jackson	6-1	185	4.5	Sharon, Pa.	Michigan
WR	Tim Massaquoi	6-4	215	4.6	Orefield (Pa.) Parkland	Michigan
OL	Andrew Whitworth	6-7	300	4.9	West Monroe, La.	LSU
RB	Cedrick Houston	6-0	200	4.4	Clarendon, Ark.	Tennessee
DT	Charles Rush	6-3	286	4.9	Erie (Pa.) Cathedral Prep	Penn State
DE	Pierre Woods	6-6	215	4.6	Cleveland Glenville	Michigan
OL	Jami Hightower	6-4	302	5.2	Jacksonville, Texas	Texas A&M
CB	Antrel Rolle	6-0	200	4.4	Homestead (Fla.) South Dade	Miami (Fla.)
LB	Derrick Johnson	6-4	205	4.4	Waco, Texas	Texas
RB	Frank Gore	5-10	190	4.45	Miami Coral Gables	Miami (Fla.)
OL	Mark LeVoi	6-7	305	5.0	Eden Prairie, Minn.	Notre Dame
QB	Kellen Clemens	6-2	190	4.8	Burns, Ore.	Oregon
LB	Lamaricus Rowell	6-3	212	4.67	Opelika, Ala.	Auburn
DE	Jocques Dumas	6-8	240	4.75	Asheboro, N.C.	North Carolina
CB	Lamar Baker	5-11	180	4.5	Avondale (Ariz.) Agua Fria	Arizona State
WR	Aleese Currie	5-11	180	4.4	Columbia (S.C.) Richland Northeast	Clemson
DT	Lorenzo Alexander	6-2	292	5.2	Berkeley (Calif.) St. Mary's	California
DE	Pat Massey	6-8	235	4.7	Cleveland St. Ignace	Michigan
WR	Craphonso Thorpe	6-2	175	4.4	Tallahassee (Fla.) Lincoln	Florida State
OL	Robert Cleary	6-7	275	5.0	Lake Elsinore (Calif.) Temescal Canyon	UCLA
QB	Matt Leinart	6-5	208	5.0	Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei	USC
S	Gerard Ross	6-2	190	4.4	Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian	Florida State
RB	J.R. Lemon	6-2	217	4.5	Tyrene (Ga.) Sandy Creek	Stanford
LB	Job Huckleba	6-5	201	4.47	Searcy (Ark.) Harding Academy	Arkansas
WR	Jerome Janet	5-11	190	4.5	Tulsa (Okla.) Union	Kansas State
RB	Maurice Hall*	5-10	180	4.3	Columbus Brookhaven	Ohio State
TE	Mark Anderson	6-7	258	4.7	Levittown, Mont.	Stanford
DT	Antaij Hawthorne	6-5	285	4.9	Hamden, Conn.	Wisconsin
CB	Brett Bell	6-0	180	4.5	Wheaton (Ill.) Warrenville-South	Wisconsin
LB	Eric Shelton*	6-3	235	4.5	Lexington (Ky.) Bryan Station	Florida State
LB	Willie Jones*	6-2	195	4.5	Miami Carol City	Florida State
QB	Casey Paus	6-5	200	4.7	New Lenox (Ill.) Lincoln-Way	Washington
OL	Shawn Andrews	6-4	320	5.1	Camden, Ark.	Arkansas
WR	Brandon Jones	6-1	195	4.54	Texasdiana (Texas) Liberty-Eylau	Oklahoma
S	Clarence McDougal	6-1	200	4.52	Cinton, Miss.	Mississippi State
RB	Theo Robinson	5-11	185	4.5	Lyons (Ga.) Toombs County	South Carolina
LB	Redgie Arden Jr.*	6-5	225	4.7	Ironton, Ohio	Ohio State
QB	Brent Rawls	6-5	190	4.65	Shreveport (La.) Evangel Christian	Oklahoma
DE	Jonathan Jackson	6-4	220	4.56	Houston North Shore	Oklahoma
OL	Robert Bergman	6-5	280	5.2	Bakersfield, Calif.	Miami (Fla.)
QB	Kyle Orton	6-4	200	4.8	Runnells (Iowa) Southeast Polk	Purdue
LB	Scott McClintock	6-3	240	4.58	Belle Vernon, Pa.	Michigan
CB	De'Arrius Howard	5-11	220	4.5	West Memphis, Ark.	Arkansas
RB	Robert Boulware	5-11	185	4.35	Charlotte (N.C.) Vance	Tennessee
WR	Ratavious Biddle	6-0	170	4.4	Decatur, Ala.	Mississippi
DT	Thomas Derricks	6-1	287	4.85	Dallas Jesuit Prep	Northwestern
WR	Junior Taylor	6-3	185	4.4	Mesa, Ariz.	UCLA
OL	Eric Broe	6-6	275	5.0	Norcross (Ga.) The Wesleyan School	Florida State
RB	Donta Hickson	5-10	185	4.4	McKinney, Texas	Oklahoma
DE	Derek Anderson	6-6	220	4.8	Scappoose, Ore.	Oregon State
WR	Angelo Chattams*	5-11	185	4.45	Dayton Chaminade-Julienne	Ohio State
S	Jovonny Ward	6-1	210	4.48	Miami Northwestern	Unsign'd
OL	Zachary Giles	6-4	275	5.0	Marshfield, Mass.	Notre Dame
QB	Nic Costa	5-11	190	4.28	Aloha, Ore.	Arizona
DT	Wayne Dickens	6-2	273	5.0	Lakeland (Fla.) Lake Gibson	Auburn
WR	Kevin Noel*	6-2	180	4.5	Naperville (Ill.) Central	Purdue
QB	C.J. Foyton	6-2	190	4.4	Virginia Beach, Va.	Tennessee
DT	Tyler Reed	6-3	305	5.0	Pittsburgh Thomas Jefferson	Penn State
WR	Earvin Johnson	6-4	200	4.5	South Gate (Calif.) Cathedral	UNLV
CB	Paul Troth	6-4	205	5.1	Charlotte (N.C.) Vance	East Carolina
OL	Rudy Niswanger	6-6	265	5.05	Monroe (La.) Ouchita Christian	LSU
DE	Simon Fraser*	6-5	250	4.7	Upper Arlington, Ohio	Ohio State
LB	Spencer Havner	6-3	215	4.65	Nevada City (Calif.) Nevada Union	UCLA
QB	Billy Hart	6-2	190	4.5	Santa Ana (Calif.) Mission Viejo	USC
TE	Ben Hall	6-5	229	4.59	Duncan, S.C.	Clemson
QB	Ingle Martin	6-4	205	4.6	Nashville (Tenn.) Bell Academy	Florida

RECRUITING WRAP-UP: BILL CONLEY

Recruiting Coordinator Didn't Sweat This One

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Bill Conley has had more nerve-racking days.

Sure, he's been involved with national signing days when as many as 25 letters of intent were pouring out of the fax machine. But he's also had days when some of those faxes didn't come over until nearly 4 p.m. Then there have been the dreaded moments when that one fax never came.

So while virtually every hard-core OSU fan was sweating out local star Maurice Hall's decision on the afternoon of signing day, Feb. 7, Conley, OSU's nationally regarded recruiting coordinator, was as cool as a polar bear. He already had 16 letters from standout players in hand and had every reason to believe Hall would put the cherry on the sundae by sending his fax.

Hall did just that shortly after his press conference at Columbus Brookhaven High School, sending his signature to OSU at about 1:45 p.m. That ended a glorious day that began with Reggie Arden's fax at about 7:15 a.m.

"Obviously, this is why you're in the profession," said Conley, who was courted last month by Tennessee to fill a similar position for the Volunteers. "You're a coach because you like competition, and recruiting is part of that coaching process. That's why we do what we do. That's what makes us go."

"It's a lot of hard work and a lot of effort but it's worth it on a day like today," Conley, of course, is no stranger to success when it comes to noteworthy recruiting efforts. Approaching his 14th year as an assistant at OSU, where he has been the recruiting coordinator since 1991, Conley has had a hand in several top-five rated classes, including the 1996 class that was deemed the nation's best by most analysts.

Mostly because of the relatively low signing total of 17, most experts have downgraded the Buckeyes' class a bit this year and rate it right around 15th in the nation and second or third in the Big Ten. But considering that John Cooper was fired Jan. 2 and OSU was without a head coach until Jim Tressel was in place Jan. 18, most agree that Ohio State gave a laudable effort.

Quality abounded in the class with

Hall and fellow well-rated tailbacks Lydell Ross and JaJa Riley as headliners along with linebacker Arden, safety Dustin Fox, defensive ends Simon Fraser and Marcus Green, and receivers Chris Gamble and Angelo Chattams.

"Going into the bowl game we were expecting up around 21, 22, possibly 23 good players," Conley admitted. "But we still wanted to be very selective because of our numbers and make sure we didn't take a marginal-type athlete. The way it worked out with the 17 we got, I don't think we could have gotten a finer quality 17. It's got to be one of the top-quality small classes in the country."

There have been signing days in the past when Conley looked like he needed some well deserved R&R. This time, the adrenaline was still flowing.

"We're very excited," Conley said. "This is a great group of young men and as Coach Tressel said, we got not only good football players but good students and great people."

"I think one thing he did when he went into these homes and these schools, he sold the parents on himself as a person, and I think that's why these guys are Buckeyes."

Picking Up The Slack

Tressel, however, can't take all the credit. The new head coach eventually retained running backs coach Tim Spencer, defensive line coach Jim Heacock and Conley, who also oversees the tight ends. That left those three to mind the store during the most crucial period of recruiting, and Conley to somehow keep it all organized.

He had to make a plethora of calls and appearances to recruits while Tressel added to his staff and tried to put out fires. In fact, the OSU coaches spent a majority of their time in January working on players like Chattams and Fox who already had committed to Ohio State.

"I think you can never take anything for granted," Conley said. "Even though a lot of these kids had committed, we went after them and approached it as if they were just new recruits, and I know Coach Tressel did a great job of getting in everybody's home or school and seeing those kids face-to-face."

"We not only continued on from that point but we made sure we kept the home fires burning also. At the end we were just cautiously optimistic because it seemed like the last three or four days things really started to fall into place."

Some national experts doubted OSU could sign a quality class in light of the coaching change. Still other skeptics said OSU would have no closing power with

players because of Tressel, who came to OSU after 15 years at Division I-AA Youngstown State. But it turned out that Conley carried the same charm with recruits and Tressel had more name recognition and recruiting clout than first thought.

"I think everybody in the state of Ohio knew Jim Tressel," Conley said. "You know a coach who's been coach of the year as many times as he has and has won four national championships, even though it's I-AA. It's still four national championships — that's big. Coaches around the country knew Jim Tressel, too."

"One thing that impressed me when we traveled around the country, particularly south Florida, a lot of kids in the homes and schools we went into knew Coach Tressel because other kids from those same programs had come up and played at Youngstown State. He knows areas of the country outside of Ohio, and really they're areas we recruit also. That was a good bridge right there."

Another smooth transition was Tressel's reputation for stressing education combined with a pool of players with lofty GPAs and academic records.

"We always want to recruit the best student-athlete we can — I think you've seen a change in that the last two or three years, and we're continuing that process," said Conley, who claimed there was no edict from on high to raise academic standards this year. "I think also there's been a great improvement by schools around the country and counselors around the country who are making them more in demand."

OSU did lose out on lineman Alphonso Townsend, who had committed to OSU last year before attending Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy. But when Townsend, who is still trying to gain eligibility for next season, opted on signing day to ink a letter of intent with Michigan State instead of OSU, few fans complained.

Conley also seemed to shrug off the loss of Townsend, saying he thought the prospect's decision was a "toss-up" going into the day.

Plus Conley was absolutely thrilled OSU secured the services of Hall and Ross in the final days.

Hall claimed to have picked OSU over Florida State on signing day, but Conley believed all along that would be the decision.

"His parents (Reuben and Gloria Hall) did a great job of coming over and spending time at the university and spending time with Coach Tressel," he said. "I think that was the key because as they got to know him as a person they realized why go somewhere else when right down the road you had the type of program and the type of head coach that you'd like to play for?"

Considered one of the top running backs in Florida, Ross tabbed OSU over Florida and Notre Dame to the surprise of many.

"He didn't fall in our lap," Conley said. "We just finally got him up here on the visit. He always liked Ohio State and was excited about visiting, but when the change took place he started having some second thoughts. Coach Tressel, Coach Heacock and Coach Spencer did a great job of staying on him hard and going to the school each week and talking to him."

"We felt all along that if Lydell made a

ESPN.com Says Conley's Top 10

OSU's Bill Conley recently was lauded as one of the top 10 recruiting coordinators in all of college football in a Feb. 1 article on ESPN.com.

Recruiting expert Tom Lemming's other nine top recruiters are, in no particular order, Georgia's Rodney Garner; Georgia Tech's Bill O'Brien; South Carolina's Dave Roberts; Arizona's Rob Inello; Virginia's Al Golden, a former Penn State coach; Florida's Buddy Teevens; Notre Dame's Greg Mattison; Nebraska's Turner Gill and Purdue's Jim Chaney.

Said Lemming of Conley: "The first coach that new coach Jim Tressel kept on the staff. He's known throughout the nation as the best recruiter in Ohio and one of the best in the state of Florida. Extremely thorough locally."

— Darrell Dawson

visit to this campus and got to see all the positives that we would have a legitimate shot at him."

Unending Process

It's difficult, of course, for Conley to feel full satisfaction with his handiwork. For one, recruiting never ends at a major program like Ohio State. For another, few fans really know how much grunt work is involved or all the reasons Johnny Prospect did or didn't choose OSU.

However, the "sport" of recruiting has taken on a whole new perspective recently with seemingly every move being followed via web sites. That, at least, adds a little importance to the process.

"A lot of people today, and in the last two or three years, follow the Internet and follow recruiting more than anything I've ever seen in the past," Conley said. "I mean, it's amazing. It used to be that football was over at the end of the bowl season, but now it's like an extra season itself. And with the mass media it has become something that is followed around the country. So I think a lot of people do recognize what we've done with this class, especially a lot of (other) football programs."

Now the challenge is to make them all take notice again. The Buckeyes will be in the market for several quality offensive linemen, a couple of cornerbacks and a topflight quarterback, among other spots, next season.

Conley has already plotted a course for that effort.

"We were looking at junior tape today as we were waiting on the faxes to come in on these kids," he said. "We've sent out mailings and things like that and kids will be visiting campus within the next few months for unofficial visits so recruiting never, ever stops. It's a continual process."

"We've already talked about our needs for next year, and the fortunate thing is it's going to be a strong year, a very strong year in Ohio. Great recruiting classes have to have a great home base and that's what we have next year in Ohio."

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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.

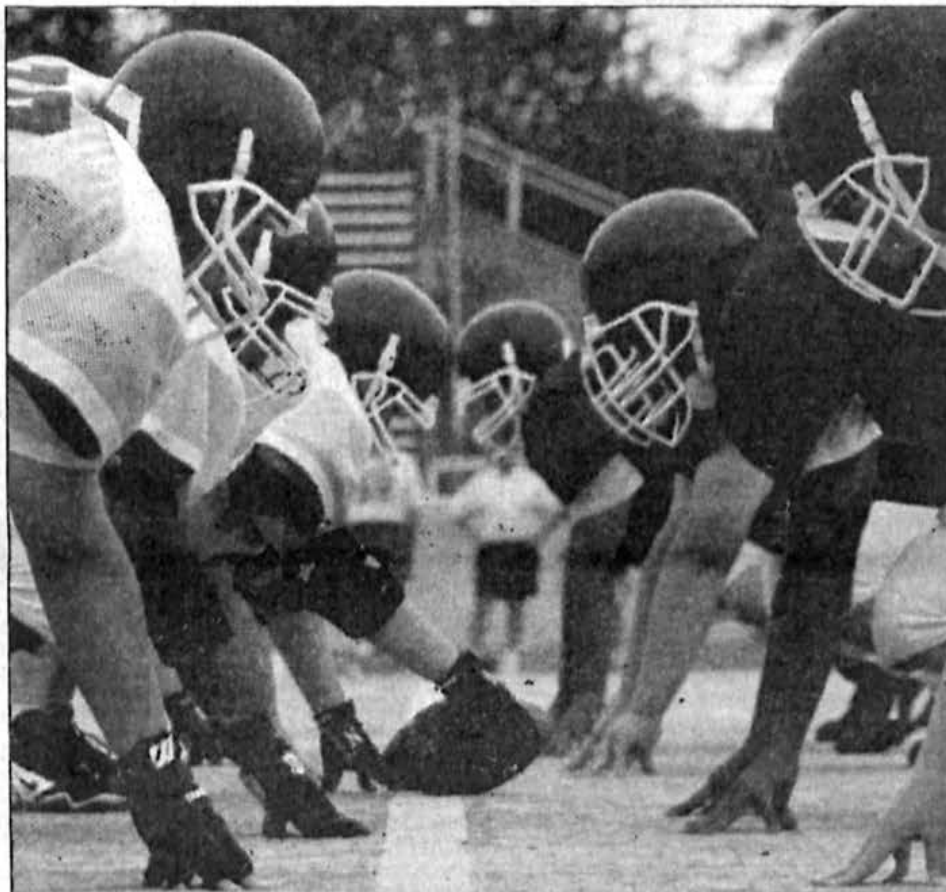
But in the end, Tressel and his staff succeeded in signing Hall and firmed up the commitments from Fox and Chattams.

"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 McKinney 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	Unsign'd
20	Jameson Evans	WR	Shaker Heights	Purdue
21	Josh Tomsheck	TE/OL	Strongsville	Purdue
23	NaShan Goddard	DE/DL	Dayton Dunbar	Unsign'd
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	Unsign'd
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
—	Damen 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 Hoving (1990), Andy Katzenmoyer (1995), Derek Combs (1996) and Brandon "Bam" Childress (1999).

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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: UNDERCLASSMEN TO WATCH

Ohio's Class Of 2002 Could Be A Special One

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

New OSU head coach Jim Tressel will likely put all 26 years of his experience recruiting football talent in the state of Ohio on the line in the next 12 months.

Tressel and the Buckeyes will be going after what some pundits say is the most talented class in the Buckeye State in recent memory.

"It should be a strong year," noted OSU recruiting coordinator Bill Conley.

When asked whether the Buckeyes will be able to capitalize on such a crop of players in their own back yard, Conley said, "We would hope so. We always want to have a strong base in Ohio. Hopefully, we can keep a large percentage of those kids here at home."

"Anytime you can do that, it definitely helps."

For the fourth consecutive year, Duane Long and Chris Roberts will publish their Ohio's Future Stars newsletter. As always, OFS will focus on the state of Ohio's top seniors-to-be with cursory glances at the top sophomores and freshmen around the state.

In recent years, most Ohio-based talent evaluators have been most impressed by two classes:

- The 1994 class, which produced the likes of Dee Miller, Orlando Pace, Damon Moore, Eric Gohlin, John Lumpkin and Pepe Pearson for Ohio State and Curtis Enis for Penn State; and

- The 1996 class, which sent the likes of Andy Katzenmoyer, Jefferson Kelley, Nick Goings, Gary Berry and Tyson Walter to OSU.

But Long said the 2002 Ohio crop ranks right up with those two — if it's not better.

"This is the best class in Ohio in at least 10 years, with all due respect to the Pace and Katzenmoyer classes," Long said. "This is one of the most well-rounded classes to come out of this state. There may be aren't a lot of big-time defensive

backs, but there are still a lot of great athletes who could go on and play those positions at the college level.

"It will be a great year for linebackers and running backs. I would go so far as to say I would be surprised if there aren't five linebackers from the state of Ohio in the consensus top 20 at that position nationally."

"This has the potential to be a monster class."

Ohio State is in a unique position to capitalize on such a banner year in state. With just 17 signees in the class of 2001, the Buckeyes figure to have at least 23 scholarships to give next year. That figure will likely increase as current Buckeyes fall by the wayside due to the normal attrition factors — academics, injuries or transfers.

It certainly will help that Tressel has been recruiting the state of Ohio since he became an assistant at Akron in 1975. Even during his two-year stint at Syracuse (1981-82), Tressel handled recruiting duties in Ohio.

"High school coaches want to feel good that their young person, whom they have nurtured for years, is going to be well cared for," Tressel said. "I think you can help them feel that way if you get to know them a little bit. Creating those relationships in the state is crucial."

A look at OSU's projected roster for 2001 would show a pressing need for the Buckeyes on the offensive line. OSU will also be looking for one or more quarterbacks in addition to help on the defensive line and in the secondary.

"We're working hard on juniors and we feel we know who the good sophomores are in the state," Tressel said. "The key for us will be to keep the pulse on the great kids and make sure they are constantly being bombarded with the idea they have to do well academically and they have to understand the responsibility they have now because big-time folks like Ohio State are looking at them."

In fact, the Buckeyes may already have a head start on next year's class with ver-

bal commitments in principle from Toledo Rogers running back/linebacker Drushaun Humphreys and Warren Harding running back Maurice Claret. Humphreys' verbal is contingent on him qualifying academically, while Claret was reportedly waiting until after signing day to announce his verbal publicly.

OFS will come out with the first of three issues planned for the next 12 months in March. However, the following is a list of players being considered for the publication's early Ohio top 10.

That list is followed by a position-by-position look at prospects in Ohio and around the Midwest as well as top sophomores and freshmen to watch.

Top 10 Contenders

Here are 10 players being considered for a list of the state's top juniors, listed as ranked by OFS (40-yard dash times are included as available).

- **Drushaun Humphreys, running back/linebacker, Toledo Rogers** — Humphreys (6-3, 235, 4.48) gets the nod as OFS' top Ohio junior. He was offered a scholarship by OSU after starring at last summer's camp.

"He's a phenomenal talent," Long said. "At the Ohio State camp, he ran three sub-4.5 40s — and this kid weighs 235 pounds. In seven-on-seven drills, he intercepted six passes."

He also finished the 20-yard shuttle run in 3.91 seconds — a time consistent with the fastest times turned in by OSU players.

After rushing for 500 yards, intercepting six passes and scoring 13 touchdowns in limited action as a sophomore, Humphreys carried for 1,107 yards and scored 19 TDs as a junior.

"He is such an athlete he plays a strong safety in Rogers' scheme," Long said. "He is a big, athletic kid. He's a natural football player who wants to play running back. He probably could play linebacker as easily as he could play running back."

Academics remain the one big hurdle for Humphreys, who is attending night school to shore up some core course deficiencies.

"He is working very hard at it," Long said. "He takes it very seriously. He is a very determined kid."

- **Maurice Claret, running back, Warren Harding** — Claret (6-1, 230, 4.5) seemed poised to make his verbal commitment to OSU for 2002 public any day. Claret had also considered Notre Dame.

"That should be a done deal," Long said. "He got excited and committed and the only reason they backed off of it was because it might affect this recruiting class."

Claret has had the eyes of college recruiters since his freshman year at Austintown Fitch, when he was already a man among boys.

He transferred to Harding as a sophomore, rushing for 1,058 yards and scoring 18 touchdowns despite missing considerable time due to injury.

"This past season, he played in just five-plus games due to injuries, but still accumulated over 1,000 yards. He tried to play in a week two showdown against Cincinnati Moeller but was still injured. He recovered enough to play most of the season's final five games."

"When he has been healthy, he has been the most potent back in the state," Long said. "He is a power back, but he is not just a straight-ahead runner. I would compare him somewhat to Jerome Bettis. He has good change of direction."

"Outside of the injury problems, he has consistently beaten just about everybody he has faced."

He reportedly benches between 350 and 400 pounds and also is a 3.3 GPA student.

- **Bryan Andrews, defensive end/linebacker, Lima Senior** — Andrews (6-6, 215, 4.7) earned first-team All-Ohio honors in Division I at linebacker as a junior. He notched 13 sacks as a sophomore for a Division I playoff team.

"He is an intriguing prospect," Long said. "He could play defensive end or linebacker. As a defensive end, he reminds me a little bit of (Penn State's) Courtney Brown when I saw him as a senior in high school."

He has reportedly already been offered by OSU. New OSU defensive coordinator Mark Dantonio had been recruiting Andrews as well for Michigan State.

- **Mike D'Andrea, linebacker, Avon Lake** — D'Andrea (6-3, 230, 4.55) was a first-team All-Ohio pick and The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer's defensive player of the year as a junior, when he tallied 120 tackles and five sacks. He also caught 20 passes at tight end.

That followed a junior year when he helped lead Avon Lake to an 8-3 mark and a playoff berth with a team-high 97 tackles. He also set a national record for 15- and 16-year-olds in the shot put (62 feet, 9 inches) in the Junior Olympics in Orlando, Fla.

"A lot of people like to compare him to Andy Katzenmoyer," Long said. "Everybody I speak to says he plays sideline to sideline and is an instinctive linebacker out of the Katzenmoyer mold."

"But this kid holds a 3.5 GPA."

D'Andrea recently made an unofficial visit to Nebraska and was offered. Oklahoma and OSU also have offered. Michigan and Notre Dame are also in the picture.

- **Quinn Pitcock, tight end/defensive tackle, Piqua** — Pitcock (6-4, 287, 4.9) earned first-team All-Ohio honors in Division II as a junior. That followed a sophomore year when he had 14 sacks, 20 tackles for loss and blocked four punts.

"I saw Piqua play Marysville in the playoffs and Quinn Pitcock is the best defensive lineman I've seen in Ohio since (Chillicothe's) Chuck Jones," Long said. "And that goes back before Big Daddy (Dan) Wilkinson and Trent Zenkewicz."

"Quinn is strong and fast. He's almost 290 pounds and looks like he has a 34-inch waist. He's huge, mobile and just throws kids around. He has excellent speed."

Pitcock, who holds a 3.9 GPA, already squats 550 pounds.

- **Justin Zwick, quarterback, Massillon Washington** — Zwick (6-4,



Drushaun Humphreys



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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: UNDERCLASSMEN TO WATCH

205, 4.67) has already received a lot of acclaim by surpassing the Ohio career passing yardage record in just three seasons.

So it may seem strange that a player at an important position like quarterback is rated as low as No. 6. But that is not a knock on Zwick, Long said.

"Why he's down this far on the list has nothing to do with his talent level," Long said. "But this is just such a monster class."

Zwick has 7,208 yards — and 75 touchdowns — in three seasons, giving him a legitimate shot at becoming one of the few 10,000-yard passers in national prep history.

He threw for 2,460 yards and 24 touchdowns after transferring to Massillon this past year. He was a first-team All-Ohio pick and led the Tigers to the Division I playoffs. He helped Orrville win a Division III state title as a freshman.

"Justin is the most complete quarterback in Ohio since (Cleveland St. Ignatius) Joe Pickens," Long said. "He has excellent size, he's got a strong arm and he moves well. His field vision is outstanding."

"But the game he played against St. Ignatius showed one thing about him nobody knew about — his toughness. He stood in there and delivered pass after pass. He kept getting knocked down and just kept getting up."



Justin Zwick

Zwick has toured several of his favorite schools recently and now lists OSU, Michigan and Pittsburgh as his favorites. His brother, Jared, played for Tressel at Youngstown State as a backup quarterback and receiver from 1996-99. Jared was a member of the Penguins' 1997 Division I-AA national championship team.

• **DeShawn Wynn, running back, Reading** — Wynn (6-1, 210, 4.34) is a prolific running back who moved from Lockland, another Cincinnati suburb, prior to his junior year. Because of the transfer, he was limited to the last five regular-season games. But, including his team's run to the Division V state semifinals, he ended up carrying 229 times for 1,971 yards (8.6 average) and scoring 27 TDs.

Injuries limited him to only 40 carries as a sophomore at Lockland after he broke loose for 1,915 yards and 34 TDs as a freshman.

"DeShawn has the potential to be at the top of this class," Long said. "He is a speed back with good size. There is absolutely no reason why he should always depend on his speed with that size. He also has good hands and could become a wide receiver."

"If his grades are in order, he could shoot up the list."

• **Roy Hall, wide receiver, Lyndhurst Brush** — Hall (6-3, 205, 4.4)



Roy Hall

had 42 catches as a sophomore, but injuries limited him to 21 catches in seven games as a junior.

"He is a phenomenal athlete who has not put up big numbers," Long said. "He's been in a bad situation. He's not in a passing offense. You have to grade high school wide receivers on athletic ability."

"That's true with this kid. Don't look at the catch total. He's got it all."

Hall holds a 3.5 GPA.

• **Bobby Carpenter, running back/linebacker, Lancaster** — Carpenter (6-3, 220, 4.5) is the son of former Miami (Ohio) and New York Giants star Rob Carpenter, also the Lancaster head coach. But he was limited to just four games as a junior due to injuries.

"He is an outstanding linebacker with a great frame," Long said. "He is just about the ideal size. He's very consistent. He's a workaholic. He's fast enough to maybe play strong safety. He loves the game."

Carpenter reportedly favors OSU. But with a 3.8 GPA he will have everybody nationwide jingling his telephone.

• **Mike Kudla, linebacker/defensive end, Medina Highland** — Kudla (6-4, 245, 4.52) tallied 100 tackles as a junior.

"He probably projects as a defensive

end," Long said. "He could easily add 20 to 40 pounds and become a down lineman. They say he already benches 450 pounds."

Kudla attended the OSU and Michigan camps last year and, with a 3.8 GPA, already has interest from Northwestern and Stanford.

Seniors: Position-By-Position

Here is a position-by-position look at the top prospects in Ohio and the region.

Quarterbacks

• **Denayne Davidson-Dixon, East Cleveland Shaw** — Davidson-Dixon (6-3, 205, 4.65) is the state's solid No. 2 QB prospect behind Zwick. As a junior, he threw for 2,000 yards and 16 touchdowns and completed an amazing 70 percent of his passes.

He reportedly likes OSU and also has Wisconsin and Purdue inquiring.

• **Bryan Cupito, Cincinnati McNicholas** — Cupito (6-3, 170, 4.7) has thrown for over 5,000 yards and 45 touchdowns over the last two years. He had 2,000 yards and 21 TDs as a junior.

• **Jimmy Skinner, Chillicothe, Ohio** — Skinner (6-4, 180) threw for 1,400



Denayne Davidson-Dixon



Bobby Carpenter

Continued On Page 26

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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: UNDERCLASSMEN TO WATCH

Younger Chattams Gets His Run Through The Mill

Continued From Page 25

yards and 18 TDs as a sophomore for the Cavaliers.

• **Dusty Aldrich, McComb, Ohio** — Aldrich (6-1, 175) completed 175 of 272 passes (64.3 percent) for 3,014 yards. He had a wicked touchdown-to-interception ratio of 44 to 4. He did most of his damage by throwing to his twin brother, Rusty.

• **Mark Borda, Allentown (Pa.) Bethlehem Catholic** — Borda (6-3, 190) is a Student Sports junior All-American.

• **Tyler Palko, Imperial (Pa.) West Allegheny** — Palko (6-2, 205) is also a Student Sports junior All-American. Palko earned first-team all-state honors as a defensive back as a junior.

Running Backs

• **Regis Edgerson, Garfield Heights, Ohio** — Edgerson (6-1 1/2, 220, 4.4) rushed for 1,400 yards as a junior, missing considerable time due to shin splints.

"He looks a bit like Eddie George and, like George, he has good character," Long said.

• **Erick Phillips, Hilliard (Ohio) Davidson** — Phillips (5-10, 205, 4.5) rushed for 1,923 yards and scored 20 touchdowns as a junior, when he earned second-team All-Ohio honors in Division I. That followed up a sophomore campaign when he had 941 yards.

"He is bigger than he looks and he runs

like it," Long said. "He is a high-energy kid and a leader."

• **Sean Miller, Solon, Ohio** — Miller (5-11 1/2, 195, 4.48) served as the backup to Scott Greenberg for the Division I runner-up squad. Still, this son of former Cleveland Browns star Cleo Miller got 1,300 yards and will become the feature back this year.

• **Tyler Everett, Canton (Ohio) McKinley** — Everett (5-11, 190) emerged as a big-time rusher for the Bulldogs as a sophomore, when he had 842 yards. Injuries have limited his progress, however.



Tyler Everett

• **Gerald Riggs Jr., Chattanooga (Tenn.) Red Bank** — Riggs (6-1, 195), the son of former NFL standout Gerald Riggs, is Student Sports pick as the junior player of the year. He had 2,434 yards, 39 touchdowns and 117 tackles for a 15-0 Class 5A state championship team.

Wide Receivers

• **Andre Chattams, wide receiver, Dayton Chaminade-Julienne** — Chattams (5-11, 185, 4.4) is the younger brother of OSU signee Angelo Chattams.

Andre, who caught 17 passes as a sophomore, had 23 catches for 525 yards (22.8 average) and seven TDs during the regular season as a junior.

"He is an over-the-top guy," Long said. "Angelo is more of an underneath guy, while Andre can stretch the field. It should be interesting to see how he does without Angelo, who had 160 catches the last two years."

• **Josh Williams, Cincinnati St. Xavier** — Williams (6-0, 190, 4.45) caught 49 passes for 832 yards and seven TDs as a junior.

"This was just his second year of playing football," Long said.

• **Jimmy Riley, Youngstown (Ohio) Ursuline** — Riley (6-1, 185) helped Ursuline win the Division IV state title. He caught 42 passes for 1,000 yards.

• **Jared Gulling, North Canton (Ohio) Hoover** — Gulling (5-10, 170) caught 51 passes for 595 yards as a junior and had only two drops all season. He was a first-team All-Ohio pick in Division I.

• **Agim Shabaj, Farmington Hills (Mich.) Harrison** — Shabaj (5-10, 180) is a Student Sports junior All-American.

Tight Ends

• **George Cooper Jr., Westerville (Ohio) North** — Cooper (6-5, 255) is the son of former OSU fullback George Cooper. With one year of high school left, the son is already bigger than the dad, who played at 6-2, 245 pounds for the Buckeyes.

"He looks lean," Long said. "He has athletic ability and runs like a guy who is 50 pounds lighter. He catches like he has mitts on."

"There is a chance he could grow into being an offensive lineman. He has the frame to do it."

• **Anthony Montgomery, Cleveland JFK** — Montgomery (6-6, 240, 4.65) is similar to current OSU tight end Darnell Sanders: He also plays quarterback at the prep level.

He is a standout pitcher and first baseman in baseball. He reportedly already favors Penn State.

Offensive Linemen

• **Doug Datish, Warren (Ohio) Howland** — Datish (6-5, 290) may be the state's top offensive line prospect and



Andre Chattams



George Cooper Jr.

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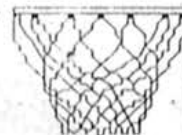
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there are reports that OSU has either offered or could be close.

"He has athletic ability — he can dunk a basketball — and is nasty," Long said. "He really gets after people."

• **Rob Sims, Macedonia (Ohio)** Nordonina — Sims (6-4, 287, 5.1) has the versatility to play center or tackle.

"He runs great and has great feet," Long said. "His dad was a Cleveland Brown and he's now 6-8, 360. This kid just turned 17. He benches 390 already and is still growing."

"Kent looked at four plays and offered. He plays basketball and had six steals in a game. He can move."

• **Mike Donaldson, Mansfield (Ohio) Senior** — Donaldson (6-6, 310) earned first-team All-Ohio honors in Division I as a junior. He is a prototype tackle prospect.

"He has long arms and works very hard," Long said. "That is the thing that separates the great high school player from the great college player. He takes coaching well."

• **Eric Fritz, Dublin (Ohio)** Coffman — Fritz (6-4, 300) is the son of former Buckeye lineman Ken Fritz. He has experience on both sides of the ball.

"He is big and mobile, but he is a raw guy," Long said.

• **Eric Tolbert, Shaker Heights, Ohio** — Tolbert (6-3, 285) also has two-way experience.

"He is an inside guy," Long said. "He could play defensive tackle."

• **Rick McDole, Marysville, Ohio** — McDole (6-6, 315) would be a tackle prospect.

"He held his own against (Piqua's) Pitcock," Long said.

• **Mark Farris, Pittsburgh North Hills** — Farris (6-6, 270) is a Student Sports junior All-American.

• **Rob Smith, Fort Thomas (Ky.) Highlands** — Smith (6-5, 285) is also on the Student Sports junior list.

Defensive Linemen

• **Larry Tumbler, Oberlin, Ohio** — Tumbler (6-4, 235, 4.7) plays middle linebacker but could project as an end. He had 115 tackles as a junior.

• **Barry Coffield, Cleveland Heights, Ohio** — Coffield (6-4, 255, 4.7) plays tight end and fullback on offense and end on defense. He had seven sacks as a junior.

• **Tim Shaefer, Upper Arlington, Ohio** — Shaefer (6-5, 250) played opposite OSU signee Simon Fraser at end for UA.

"He really improved from the beginning of the year to the end," Long said.

• **Al Washington, Columbus Watterson** — Washington (6-0, 260, 4.9) is a standout interior lineman.

"I liken him to Warren Sapp a little bit — he's by you with his first step and you have to find him again," Long said. "He is strong and stays low. He is a very disruptive defensive lineman."

His father is former Buckeye Alvin Washington. The younger Washington was an MVP at the Boston College camp and was invited to attend Florida State's elite big man camp.

• **Joel Penton, Van Wert, Ohio** — Penton (6-5, 232) earned first-team All-Ohio honors in Division III.

• **Brian Mattes, Wyoming (Pa.)**

Valley West — Mattes (6-6, 240) is a Student Sports junior All-American.

• **Anthony Spencer, Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bishop Luers** — Spencer (6-4, 245) is also a Student Sports junior All-American pick.

Linebackers

• **A.J. Hawk, Centerville, Ohio** — Hawk (6-2, 215) has averaged right around 150 tackles in each of his three seasons on the varsity. He was a second-team All-Ohio pick in Division I as a junior.

"He is a great hole player and a classic middle linebacker," Long said. "Tackle to tackle, he's a demon. He's not going to let anybody get through."

• **Antonio Reynolds, Akron Buchtel** — Reynolds (6-4, 210) helped Buchtel advance in the Division II playoffs.

"He is just an incredible athlete," Long said. "He could grow into a defensive end or could stay at linebacker."

• **Jim Davenport, Lima (Ohio) Senior** — Davenport (6-3, 225) plays alongside Andrews.

• **Stan White Jr., Baltimore Gilman School** — White (6-3, 210, 4.6) is the son of former OSU linebacker Stan White. The elder White lettered in 1969-71, earning All-Big Ten honors before moving on to the NFL's Baltimore Colts. He helps coach his son's team.

OSU and Penn State are reportedly very interested.

Defensive Backs

• **Tremaine Suggs, defensive back, Canton (Ohio) McKinley** — Suggs (6-1, 170) had 49 tackles and three interceptions as a junior.

"He is a corner with safety size," Long said.

• **Troy Smith, quarterback/defensive back, Cleveland Glenville** — Smith (6-2, 180) enjoyed a big year as a pass/run threat and DB for Lakewood St. Edward. But he reportedly transferred to Glenville midway through the school year.

• **Rick Brown, Cincinnati Elder** — Brown (6-2, 215) stars at strong safety for Elder.

"Explosion is the word," Long said. "He comes up and knocks people's heads off."

• **E.J. Underwood, Hamilton, Ohio** — Underwood (5-11 1/2, 175, 4.4) had four interceptions and averaged 14.5 yards on punt returns as a junior.

• **Mike Hinger, Newark (Ohio) Licking Valley** — Hinger (6-2, 170) earned first-team All-Ohio honors in Division IV after notching 72 tackles and 10 interceptions as a free safety on a team that reached the state semifinals.

Kicker

• **David Abdul, Massillon (Ohio) Washington** — Abdul (5-9, 174) booted

four field goals of 50 or more yards as a junior for the Tigers.

Sophomores To Consider

Here are several sophomores to remember.

• **Dareus Hiley, quarterback, Cleveland Glenville** — Hiley (6-1, 175) has two years of starting experience at quarterback, leading his school to its only two playoff appearances.

"He is probably the best athlete in Ohio overall and our early No. 1 sophomore," Long said.

• **Prescott Burgess, safety, Warren (Ohio) Harding** — Burgess (6-3, 210) is a standout at safety, but he could grow into a linebacker. OSU and Michigan are already well aware of him.

• **Shawn Crable, defensive end/linebacker, Massillon (Ohio) Washington** — Crable is listed at 6-6, 215 pounds.

• **Louis Irizary, tight end, Youngstown (Ohio) Ursuline** — Irizary (6-5, 230, 4.7) "could become the best tight end to come out of Ohio if he keeps developing," Long said.

• **Terrence Graves, running back, Youngstown (Ohio) Ursuline** — Graves (6-1, 210) was one of Ursuline's two big rushing stars in its Division IV state championship win. He rushed for 219 yards and two touchdowns in the title game win over Coldwater.

• **Todd Boeckman, quarterback, St. Henry, Ohio** — As a freshman, Boeckman (6-5, 210) threw for 2,520

yards and 23 TDs in leading St. Henry to an 11-3 mark and the Division V state title game. He then completed 88 of 159 passes for 1,341 yards with just four interceptions as a sophomore.

He plays for his father, coach Tim Boeckman, at St. Henry.

• **John Ferguson, quarterback, Reynoldsburg, Ohio** — Ferguson (6-6, 210) started all season as a freshman, completing 88 of 189 passes for 1,345 yards. As a sophomore, he completed 119 of 268 passes for 1,649 yards.

"John has a big arm and his touch is tremendous," Long said. "He just needs to work on his consistency."

• **Ben Mauk, quarterback, Kenton, Ohio** — Mauk (6-1, 180) put up huge numbers playing for his father and coach, Mike Mauk. During the regular season, he completed 254 of 445 passes for a state-high 3,936 yards.

"Ben has the best field vision of any high school quarterback I've seen," Long said. "He can throw the ball and, what impressed me, he was even running a no-huddle offense at times."

• **Mike DeLuca, offensive lineman, Chardon (Ohio) Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin** — DeLuca (6-4, 280) "may be the next great offensive lineman in Ohio," Long said.

• **LeBron James, wide receiver, Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary** — Everybody knows James (6-6, 215) for his exploits in basketball, where one service already has him among the nation's top five players regardless of class.

But football is no lark for James. He caught 42 passes for 752 yards and 11 TDs as a sophomore. He earned first-team All-Ohio honors in Division IV.

• **Chinedum Ndukwe, wide receiver, Dublin (Ohio) Coffman** — Ndukwe (6-2, 190) is the younger brother of lineman Ike Ndukwe, who signed with Northwestern a year ago. As a sophomore, he caught 43 passes for 677 yards (15.7 average).

• **Eric Johnson, Bexley, Ohio** — Johnson (6-3, 260, 4.9) is a two-way lineman for the Lions. He benches 320 pounds and dead lifts 400.

Freshmen To Watch

Here is an early look at three Ohio freshmen to keep an eye on.

• **Jimmy Calhoun, running back, Middletown** — Calhoun is listed at 5-11, 180 pounds.

• **Blake Carter, wide receiver, Cincinnati Moeller** — Carter is listed at 6-2, 175 pounds.

• **Delbert Ferguson, running back, Youngstown Ursuline** — Ferguson (6-2, 200) was the other star of Ursuline's title game win, rushing for 280 yards and scoring five touchdowns in the win over Coldwater.

Long and Roberts are expanding Ohio's Future Stars from one issue to three this year. The three issues will be published in March, late spring and either November or December. The cost is \$15 for all three issues.

Send check or money order to Ohio's Future Stars, P.O. Box 44402, Columbus, Ohio 43204-0402. Or you can e-mail Long at ohiofuturestars@aol.com.



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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 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.

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.

• **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.

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.

• **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.

• **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.

• **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.

• **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.

• **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



Angelo Chattams



Simon Fraser



Ryan Cook



Dustin Fox



Marcus Green



Maurice Hall



Ryan Hamby



Mike Nugent



Redgie Arden

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.



Adam Olds

• **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.



JaJa Riley

• **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



Brandon Schnittker

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-



Andree Tyree

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.



Chris Vance



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