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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Feb. 11, 2012

# Completing His Checklist

## Meyer Fills Areas Of Need In Class

 By MARCUS HARTMAN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The star power of Urban Meyer's first Ohio State recruiting class impressed fans and analysts, but the head coach of the Buckeyes sounded more enamored with how many immediate needs it could fill.

### BSB's 2012 Recruiting Wrap-Up Edition

In all, the Ohio State class of 2012 numbered 25 members at the end of the Feb. 1 National Signing Day. That included four players rated five-star recruits, 11 four-star talents and 10 given three stars by Scout.com.

Meyer signed 12 offensive players and 13 on defense with the most-represented positions being linebacker and offensive line, where the class includes five apiece. Four of the signees are defensive linemen, including three ends and one tackle.

That the linebacker, offensive line and defensive end positions had the most influx of talent was no coincidence.

"I am really still not aware of areas of need because I haven't coached this team yet, but according to the coaches who were on the previous staff, the defensive line was very critical this year - in particular the defensive end," Meyer said. "We signed three kids that are in the top 100 and three guys that we identified as guys that we had to have."

Meyer actually had a head start on that project thanks to a verbal commitment from Adolphus Washington, the five-star end from Cincinnati Taft rated the overall No. 1 player in Ohio. Washington gave a verbal commitment Nov. 22, less than a week before Meyer was hired,



MATTHEW HAGER

**FEELING GOOD** - Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer attempted to fill some holes in his roster with the 25 prospects who made up his first recruiting class since taking over the Buckeyes.

although the 6-5, 245-pounder told reporters at the time he was under the impression he would be playing for Meyer.

That was confirmed Nov. 28, and Meyer reeled in three more coveted defensive frontliners within the next three weeks. First came four-star end Se'Von Pittman of Canton (Ohio) McKinley and five-star tackle Tommy Schutt of Glen Ellyn (Ill.) Glenbard West on Dec. 12. Noah Spence, a five-star end from Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt, followed six days later to give Meyer and defensive coordinator Luke Fickell a variety of talented athletes with whom to work.

"I call them the prize of the recruiting class," Meyer said of the talented D-linemen. "They are the guys that you can take anywhere in the country at any time - high-character guys that play really hard (with) different body types."

Although signing so many highly rated players at the same position could create a logjam for playing time down the line, Meyer pointed out they all bring unique attributes to the playing field.

The 6-3, 300-pound Schutt is the one destined to play inside while Spence (6-4, 245) is a different type of end than Pittman (6-5, 245) and Washington.

"Noah Spence is a fastball pass rusher," Meyer said. "I like to call them an 'open end.' In our defense, we call them the Leo, but he is a guy that lines out wide and accelerates up the field. That's what you are looking for and he has that. Adolphus and Se'Von Pittman are more of the wider body guys that are going to be more power rushers."

Though he was proud of the defensive line haul, Meyer described linebacker as the most dire need on the team after the position was decimated by attrition, disciplinary

### In This Issue Of BSB

- Thumbnail bios and photos of Ohio State's class of 2012 (Pages 12-14)

- OSU assistant coaches Luke Fickell and Tim Hinton assess the newest slate of Buckeyes (Page 15)

- After being wiped out by Mother Nature last year, our signing day diary returns as BSB staffers Matthew Hager, Marcus Hartman, Mark Rea, Jeff Svoboda and Ari Wasserman crisscrossed Ohio for various events (Pages 16-19)

- A look at the newest Buckeyes who will participate in this year's Ohio North-South Classic (Page 20-21)

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Luke Fickell

Continued On Page 6

# Meyer Puts Offensive Tackles At Premium

Continued From Page 1

measures and injury problems during the past year.

As a response, Meyer secured verbal commitments from four-star prospects David Perkins of South Bend (Ind.) Washington and Camren Williams of West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial in mid-January before snagging a signature from Jamal Marcus of Durham (N.C.) Hillside on signing day.

Scout rated Marcus a three-star defensive end, but Meyer sounded like a coach who saw much more out of him when he put in his high school tape.

"Without reading rankings or without listening to everybody's opinion, the guy that is really impressive to me is Jamal Marcus," the OSU coach said. "I invite you at some point – it's easy to do on YouTube – watch that highlight video. It borders on ridiculous as far as his ability level."

The three late commitments joined a pair of Ohioans – Luke Roberts of Lancaster and Joshua Perry of Lewis Center Olentangy – to fill out the class of linebackers.

"We're excited to sign five linebackers," Meyer said. "That was obviously an area of need."

Last but not least came the offensive line, another area Meyer was not finished stocking until signing day when he secured a signature from four-star tackle Kyle Dodson of Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

Meyer was thrilled to be able to add

Dodson to a list of commits that already included another four-star tackle from Ohio – Taylor Decker of Vandalia-Butler.

"The day I was hired, we came back here, got to work, said, 'Let's pick out the top offensive tackles in America because that's where we are as far as our shortage,'" Meyer said. "That night we were on the phone. If you would have told me we would get the top two guys, that would have been a good day for us. We got the top two guys."

Both Dodson and Decker figure to jump into the fray immediately when the staff begins to form a 2012 depth chart as they will arrive in Columbus to find a roster with only one bona fide tackle on it. That would be Andrew Norwell, a former five-star recruit who turned in a solid sophomore season in 2011.

Norwell started five games at left tackle before moving to guard to accommodate the return of suspended senior Mike Adams. Now with Adams gone, Norwell seems a certainty to slide back outside, but the other tackle position will be up for grabs. Experienced candidates to fill that spot include juniors Jack Mewhort, Corey Linsley and Marcus Hall – each of whom appears better suited to play inside – as well as senior Reid Fragel, who will be in his first year at tackle after three seasons at tight end.

"Where we are right now at offensive tackle and depth on the line, our sheer numbers, (Dodson) was a must-have,"

Meyer said. "I would almost trade him for any other player that we signed. We had to have him. You get the two offensive tackles that three weeks ago it didn't look like we were even in the running. And the body types are exact. God created two offensive tackles for us. That's exactly what we go look for – big, athletic guys that can block second-level defenders. Both those guys are A-1 guys. Perfect for a fit."

## Teaming Up For Success

All in all, it was a positive first National Signing Day back in his home state, but Meyer resisted calling the 2012 recruiting class a home run.

"We'll evaluate that later," he said. "We signed a class one time when I was at Florida that I heard a reporter say was the greatest class in the history of football. Half of them aren't there anymore. You just don't know."

Meyer was clearly proud of what he and his staff – a mix of newly hired coaches and holdovers from the previous regime – were able to do.

The new coach retained Fickell along with Mike Vrabel and Stan Drayton while adding offensive coordinator Tom Herman, offensive line coach Ed Warinner, tight ends and fullbacks coach Tim Hinton, wide receivers coach Zach Smith and co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Everett Withers. Meyer intended to keep cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson, but Johnson left in mid-January to become linebackers coach at Arkansas and was replaced by defensive assistant Bill Sheridan shortly before signing day. Drayton will coach running backs after mentoring wide receivers last season while Vrabel moves to the defensive line after leading the linebackers in 2011.

"Let me say this about recruiting for Ohio State," Meyer said. "Recruiting is work ethic. It's uncovering who the champions are for each young man that you're recruiting, but most of all it's a belief in

the place you are and knowledge of the place where you are. To be able to do that in such a quick time period, a lot of credit goes to our coaching staff.

"If you take a good close look at them, either they're from Ohio or they have strong ties in the state. Tim Hinton, a member of our staff, was a very successful high school coach, a very important member of the high school association in the state. This staff was put together with a purpose. Recruiting without question was of No. 1 importance in putting together a staff."

Particularly worthy of praise was Fickell, the former Ohio State defensive lineman who accepted the head coaching position May 30 after Jim Tressel was forced out

because of NCAA violations. Fickell was regarded as one of Tressel's top recruiters during a nine-year tenure as an assistant coach, and he continued to sell his alma mater to recruits across the state and beyond despite not knowing if he or anyone else on the staff would be back for the 2012 season.

OSU lost one verbal commitment – five-star offensive tackle Kyle Kalis of Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward, who signed with Michigan – but maintained relationships with seven others who had joined the class while Tressel was head coach. Fickell and company added seven more commitments during the interim and maintained relationships with such players as Pittman and Dodson, both of whom committed to other Big Ten schools throughout the season. Pittman originally pledged to Michigan State, while Dodson was headed to Wisconsin.

"Ohio State is so much bigger than any situation," said Fickell, who identified a 250-mile radius around Columbus the staff continued to treat as its home turf. "We knew those were the guys we had to focus on, those were the guys that knew what this place is about, not just the things that happened in the last six months. That was always our focus."

"The staff and everybody did a great job of saying, 'Hey, keep us in the ballgame,'" he continued. "A lot of those guys – even inside the state – we couldn't solidify before the end of the season. I've got to give them a lot of credit for keeping our foot in that door. I kept saying all year, 'When there's clarity with what's going on in the program, we'll be in fine shape.' We all bought in. That's kind of the way we went about the entire recruiting throughout the season."

The result was a bonanza once Meyer joined the effort and pushed a recruiting class that had ranked in the 20s nationally to No. 3 according to Scout.com in the span of roughly two months. The Buckeyes surpassed Michigan in late January to take over the top spot in the Big Ten.

The group of 10 players to verbal after Meyer's hiring included two five-stars, six four-star prospects and two three-star recruits.

Meyer made waves not only with his propensity for pulling in talented players but also for how many of them had been pledged to other schools at one time.

In addition to Pittman and Dodson, Schutt was headed to Penn State at the time Meyer was hired. Williams, offen-



Tim Hinton

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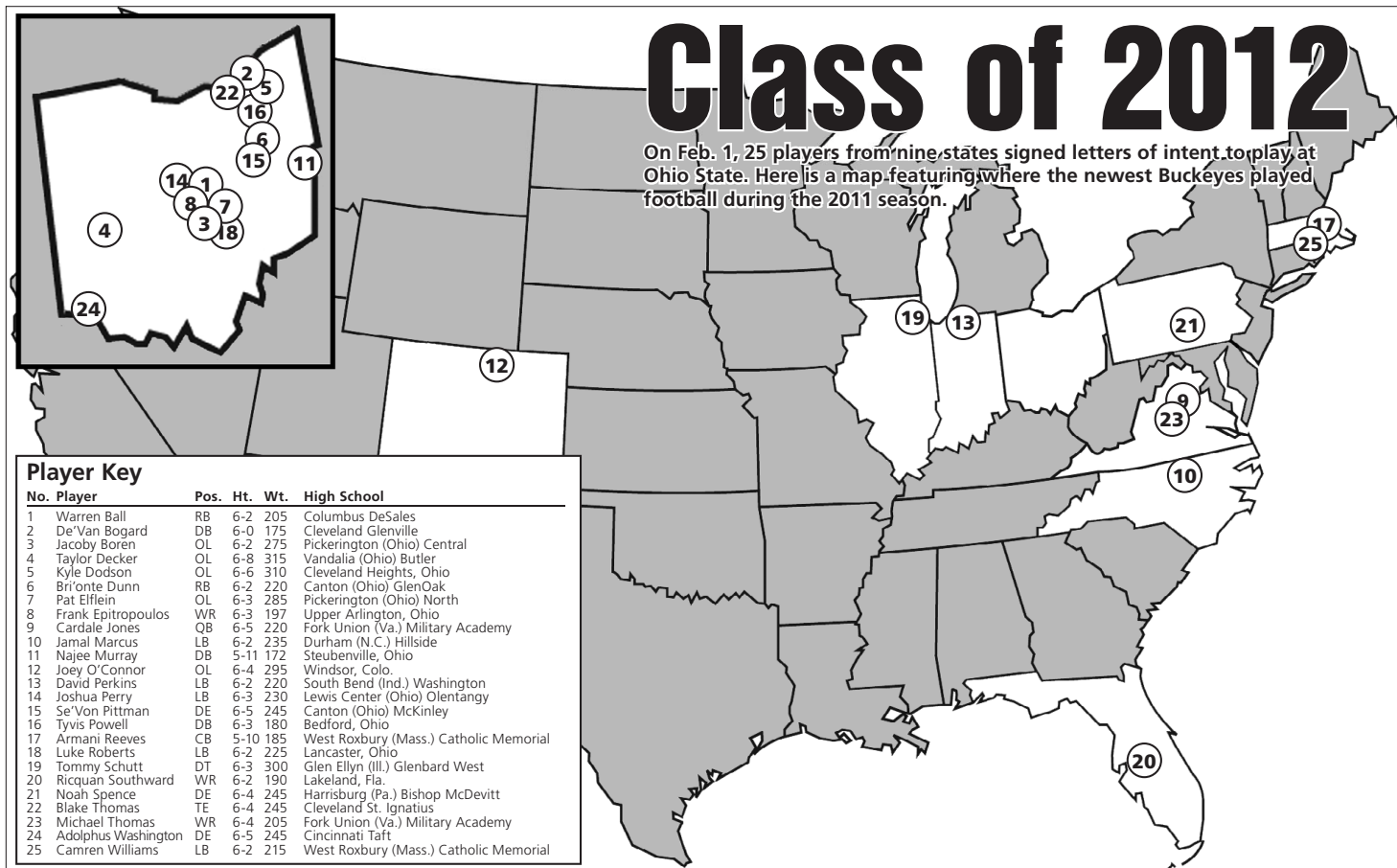
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## COVER STORY

# Class of 2012

On Feb. 1, 25 players from nine states signed letters of intent to play at Ohio State. Here is a map featuring where the newest Buckeyes played football during the 2011 season.



## Player Key

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	High School
1	Warren Ball	RB	6-2	205	Columbus DeSales
2	De'Van Bogard	DB	6-0	175	Cleveland Glenville
3	Jacoby Boren	OL	6-2	275	Pickerington (Ohio) Central
4	Taylor Decker	OL	6-8	315	Vandalia (Ohio) Butler
5	Kyle Dodson	OL	6-6	310	Cleveland Heights, Ohio
6	Br'onte Dunn	RB	6-2	220	Canton (Ohio) GlenOak
7	Pat Elflein	OL	6-3	285	Pickerington (Ohio) North
8	Frank Epitropoulos	WR	6-3	197	Upper Arlington, Ohio
9	Cardale Jones	QB	6-5	220	Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy
10	Jamal Marcus	LB	6-2	235	Durham (N.C.) Hillside
11	Najee Murray	DB	5-11	172	Steubenville, Ohio
12	Joey O'Connor	OL	6-4	295	Windsor, Colo.
13	David Perkins	LB	6-2	220	South Bend (Ind.) Washington
14	Joshua Perry	LB	6-3	230	Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy
15	Se'Von Pittman	DE	6-5	245	Canton (Ohio) McKinley
16	Tyvis Powell	DB	6-3	180	Bedford, Ohio
17	Armani Reeves	CB	5-10	185	West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial
18	Luke Roberts	LB	6-2	225	Lancaster, Ohio
19	Tommy Schutt	DT	6-3	300	Glen Ellyn (Ill.) Glenbard West
20	Ricquan Southward	WR	6-2	190	Lakeland, Fla.
21	Noah Spence	DE	6-4	245	Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt
22	Blake Thomas	TE	6-4	245	Cleveland St. Ignatius
23	Michael Thomas	WR	6-4	205	Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy
24	Adolphus Washington	DE	6-5	245	Cincinnati Taft
25	Camren Williams	LB	6-2	215	West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial

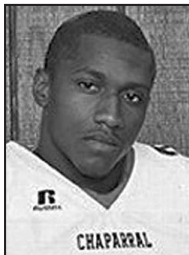
sive lineman Joey O'Connor of Windsor, Colo., and cornerback Armani Reeves (a high school teammate of Williams) were committed at various times to Penn State, and Decker and Perkins were initially bound for Notre Dame. Pittman, Schutt, Williams and Decker jumped directly from commitments to other schools while O'Connor, Reeves and Perkins chose to become Buckeyes some time after dropping their initial pledges. Ohio State also picked up former Miami (Fla.) commitment Ricquan Southward of Lakeland, Fla., one day before Meyer's hiring was announced.

The volume of flipped commitments made a stir across the country, but Meyer offered no apologies.

"Someone may say, 'How can you go recruit a young guy committed to another school?' " the OSU coach said. "You ask a question, 'Are you interested?' If they say no, you move on. If they say, 'Yes, very interested,' then you throw that hook out

there. If they're interested, absolutely, especially from your home state.

"We went after a young guy in Cleveland, Ohio," he added, likely referring to Kalis. "I asked him if he was interested in Ohio State and he said no. I wished him the best of luck, told him to do well in school, and moved on. Especially from your home state, you ask a young man, 'Are you interested in Ohio State?' ... That's really the only way we've recruited."



Davonte' Neal

## Not Finished Yet?

Though happy to fill holes at linebacker and on both lines, Meyer admitted there was one area that still needed to be addressed on offense.

"Speed at the skill positions," he said. "I would say some of the things we like to do offensively that you're going to hear us talk about - we want the defense to defend the width and length of the field. There's only one way to attack the width (and) that's flat

speed. We've tried it. There's no other way that you can make a defense defend the entire width of the field."

To that end, Meyer and his staff finished signing day with the hope of adding one more player.

Five-star receiver Stefon Diggs of Olney (Md.) Our Lady of Good Counsel and four-star receiver/defensive back Davonté Neal of Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral did not ink letters of intent on signing day, each planning to continue mulling their options for at least a week. The Buckeyes pursued

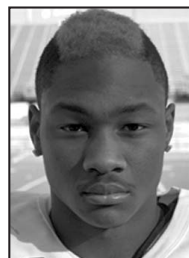
both before signing day although sources told BSB the team prefers Diggs over Neal.

"That's something we're still actively recruiting because we have one spot available," said Meyer, who is prohibited from talking directly about unsigned recruits.

The coach did admit being in new territory chasing players after signing day.

"Is there any difference? I don't think so," Meyer said. "I know you can't visit them. It's a quiet period. Well, I think it's a dead period. I know it's unlimited calls for 48 hours after (signing day).

I have to make sure I know those rules because I've never (continued to recruit past signing day)."



Stefon Diggs



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## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

# Meyer Closes 2012 Recruiting Class With Bang

Urban Meyer came to Ohio State known as one of college football's most relentless coaches on the recruiting trail.

After roughly eight weeks on the job – a span during which he took a 2012 class many expected to be marginal and turned it into one of the best groups in the nation – Meyer made a lasting impression to solidify his already booming reputation.

## RECRUITING OUTLOOK Ari Wasserman

On the Feb. 1 National Signing Day, the OSU coach topped off his efforts by securing signatures from two of the top undecided recruits making their college selections late in the process.

The commitments of four-star offensive tackle Kyle Dodson of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and three-star defensive end/linebacker Jamal Marcus of Durham (N.C.) Hillsdale helped Meyer land a 2012 class that numbered 25 players, a group rated third best in the country by Scout.com.

"We want to make the great state of Ohio proud with everything we do," Meyer said, "and I think this class of new Ohio State Buckeyes is certainly going to do that."

Dodson, a 6-6, 310-pound prospect rated by Scout as the No. 24 offensive tackle in the class, was previously committed to Wisconsin. Once Meyer was hired, Ohio State immediately jumped back in the game

for the lineman before eventually securing his commitment.

"I knew I wanted to go to Ohio State when Coach Meyer looked me in the eye and told me he really cared about me even if I went somewhere else," Dodson told BSB. "Ohio State is the in-state school, but once Meyer came in, I just knew it would be the right place for me to go."

Though Dodson suffered a torn labrum in his right shoulder in the middle of his senior season, the offensive tackle played through the final four games of the season with the ailment. Despite the injury, he said he feels prepared to come into Ohio State in the fall and compete for playing time.

"I don't anticipate having to redshirt," Dodson said. "They'll have to see how I recover from the surgery, but they say it's really common for offensive linemen to go through this. I am hoping I'll recover quickly and be ready to go when I get there."

Though Dodson first offered his verbal commitment to Wisconsin, it was at a time when the Ohio State program was going through turmoil. Not only did the Buckeyes have a recent scandal that eventually led to head coach Jim Tressel's dismissal, a large portion of his recruiting process went on while Luke Fickell was the interim head coach at OSU.

Without the security that Fickell would be retained for the long haul, Dodson admitted the instability within the program made it tough for him to go with his gut instinct at first. However, when Meyer was hired – and Fickell was kept on the staff – Ohio

## 2012 Ohio State Football Signees

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Warren Ball	RB	6-2	205	****	Columbus DeSales
De'Van Bogard	DB	6-0	175	****	Cleveland Glenville
Jacoby Boren*	OL	6-2	275	****	Pickerington (Ohio) Central
Taylor Decker	OL	6-8	315	****	Vandalia (Ohio) Butler
Kyle Dodson	OL	6-6	310	****	Cleveland Heights, Ohio
Bri'onte Dunn*	RB	6-2	220	*****	Canton (Ohio) GlenOak
Pat Elflein	OL	6-3	285	****	Pickerington (Ohio) North
Frank Epitropoulos	WR	6-3	197	****	Upper Arlington, Ohio
Cardale Jones*	QB	6-5	220	****	Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy
Jamal Marcus	LB	6-2	235	****	Durham (N.C.) Hillsdale
Najee Murray	DB	5-11	172	****	Steubenville, Ohio
Joey O'Connor	OL	6-4	295	****	Windsor, Colo.
David Perkins	LB	6-2	220	****	South Bend (Ind.) Washington
Joshua Perry*	LB	6-3	230	****	Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy
Se'Von Pittman	DE	6-5	245	****	Canton (Ohio) McKinley
Tyvis Powell*	DB	6-3	180	****	Bedford, Ohio
Armani Reeves	CB	5-10	185	****	West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial
Luke Roberts	LB	6-2	225	****	Lancaster, Ohio
Tommy Schutt	DT	6-3	300	*****	Glen Ellyn (Ill.) Glenbard West
Ricquan Southward	WR	6-2	190	****	Lakeland, Fla.
Noah Spence	DE	6-4	245	*****	Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt
Blake Thomas	TE	6-4	245	****	Cleveland St. Ignatius
Michael Thomas*	WR	6-4	205	****	Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy
Adolphus Washington	DE	6-5	245	*****	Cincinnati Taft
Camren Williams	LB	6-2	215	****	West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial

\*Enrolled at Ohio State in January 2012

## OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2013 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Cameron Burrows	DB	6-2	195	****	Trotwood (Ohio) Madison
Jalin Marshall	QB	6-1	190	*****	Middletown, Ohio

State became the clear choice for his college destination.

"It got them back in the game, that's for sure," Cleveland Heights head coach Jeff Rotsky told BSB. "Once they were an option again, Meyer was able to recruit Kyle with a fresh start. From there, they built a relationship that turned into this. Not once did (Meyer) ever pressure (Kyle) to do something he didn't want to do."

Dodson said he wasn't too concerned about the one-year bowl ban the Buckeyes will face during his freshman year. Seeing top talent flock toward Columbus was more than enough for him to feel like he was making the right decision.

"Look at the defensive linemen coming into the class," Dodson said. "I love that they did that because now I am going to get to practice against all of the best players in the nation and that will only make me a better player. I have a lot of faith that Ohio State is going to do big things, and I am happy I can be a part of it."

Dodson selected Ohio State over Michigan State, USC and Wisconsin. Though the Badgers earned his commitment early in the process, Dodson said things just felt right at Ohio State.

"It was tough to tell the other coaches the bad news," he said, "but I have to do what is right for me and that's all about Ohio State. All the other schools were even and gave me opportunities, but I am happy to be a Buckeye."

The other signing-day coup for Meyer came courtesy of Marcus, a three-star defensive end/linebacker rated by Scout as the 70th-best player at defensive end. The Buckeyes plan to use the 6-3, 245-pounder at linebacker.

## OSU Lands Reeves Just Before Signing Day

Though West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial teammates Camren Williams and Armani Reeves were perceived to be a pack-

age deal, the Buckeyes were unsure if they were going to land both prospects.

Ohio State received a commitment from Williams on Jan. 20 but had to wait nine more days before receiving a pledge from Reeves. The 5-10, 185-pound cornerback was also seriously considering Michigan before officially selecting the Buckeyes.

"Cam and I have been friends since second grade, so it's great to be going to school with him," Reeves said. "If I had gone to Michigan, Cam and I would still be friends, but when we played against each other, we would have been enemies. That would have been hard, but now we can go on and do great things together."

Williams and Reeves, both four-star prospects, were originally committed to Penn State, but after news broke about the child sexual abuse scandal involving former defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, each reopened his recruitment.

Reeves, who is rated by Scout as the sixth-best cornerback in the 2012 class, was sold on the Buckeyes for the same reasons Williams was.

"Ohio State was the right place for me because of their coaching staff," he said. "I've known Coach (Everett) Withers for a long time and that relationship has been strong. Once I visited the campus and saw everything, I knew it was a great place. Coach Meyer is a great coach and I know he is going to do great things there. Everything just fit perfectly for me at Ohio State."

Though Reeves' friendship with Williams had an effect on the decision to commit to Ohio State, it was the mentorship of Williams' father, Brent, that helped him through the difficult process.

"He has been a blessing to me, to be honest," Reeves said of the elder Williams, who is his godfather. "He never tried to push me to one school or another, but he was there every day for me as a father figure."

"He's been like a father to me and I thank him for everything he has done for me. He

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## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

## Consensus Poll To Be Published March 3

Buckeye Sports Bulletin's annual consensus poll of the nation's top recruiting classes will be published in the next print issue of BSB. That issue will be dated March 3 and is scheduled to be mailed Feb. 28.

BSB's annual consensus recruiting poll charts several national rankings and compiles an overall recruiting champion. Last year, Florida State nosed out Alabama in the consensus poll with Auburn, Georgia, Texas and USC all tied for third. Ohio State finished seventh.

Before the March 3 print issue is mailed, BSB will publish electronic issues Feb. 14 and 21. Electronic issues of BSB are available free online to paid subscribers. To sign up to read all of BSB's content online, see the instructions on page 5 of this issue.

has helped me and supported me, and that wouldn't have changed whether I chose Michigan or Ohio State."

Though Reeves had narrowed his list to Michigan and Ohio State, the cornerback admitted the depth chart at his position in Columbus was a major selling point.

"Of course, I noticed that," he said. "We talked about the opportunity available to me. I feel like physically I'm ready. I just need to learn the playbook to be ready to go. My goal is to be on the field next year, and I'm going to work extremely hard to make that happen."

"My strength is my ability to play physically on wide receivers, even if they're bigger than me. I have great coverage skills and I have quick feet and good speed. Once I get the playbook down, I feel I will be ready to contribute. I want to work on all the little things that go into being a great cornerback."

Above all, Reeves said he was relieved to finally be completely finished with the recruiting process. Being a part of the Buckeyes' 2012 class, he said, is an opportunity he couldn't have even imagined only a few months ago.

"I'm thrilled to be a part of such a great class, and I already know a few of these guys," Reeves said. "I'm honored to be a part of Coach Meyer's first recruiting class and I'm expecting big things from our class."

"We want to not only win Big Ten championships but contend for national championships. They will be on probation next year, but the year after we all get there we plan on contending for it all. That will be the No. 1 goal for us as a class, not our own individual accomplishments."

## WR Diggs Remains On Radar Screen For Buckeyes

Recruiting experts are admittedly blown away by how much progress with his 2012 class Meyer was able to make in two short months.

If Ohio State's new head coach is able to land the signature of the remaining target for this year's class, it would cap what has already been an unprecedented run with an unbelievable statement.

With one spot remaining in the 2012 class and five-star wide receiver Stefon Diggs of Olney (Md.) Our Lady of Good Counsel still uncommitted, signing the nation's second-ranked wide receiver would make for a monumental finish for Meyer.

Diggs is not expected to announce his college decision until sometime around Feb. 10, but there is an indication the OSU coaching staff likes its chances.

"I really don't have any concrete inside information on what he'll do," BuckeyeSports.com recruiting analyst Bill Greene said of Diggs. "I know Urban Meyer has had a relationship with him that goes back a while, probably to the end of his freshman or sophomore year. I think Stefon Diggs' early interest in Florida comes from Urban Meyer, so that gives OSU more than a fighting chance."

Diggs, who took an official visit to Ohio State the weekend of Jan. 28, was on an official visit at Maryland a week later. Viewed as perhaps Ohio State's biggest competition to land Diggs is Florida, where he visited in an official capacity the weekend of Jan. 20.

Though Greene admits Diggs' camp has kept quiet on where the receiver prospect might be leaning, he wouldn't be shocked if the Buckeyes pulled off the big get when the receiver finally makes his announcement.

"You have to add in what Meyer has done since he's come back into coaching," Greene said. "If you look at the kids he's signed, he has the magic touch. I wouldn't put landing Diggs past him. We're going to have to wait and see on where he goes and it is going to be a hard one to track down, but I'd give Ohio State at least a 50-percent shot."

Perhaps the biggest indication of the Buckeyes' confidence in landing Diggs comes from what sources have told BSB regarding Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral wide-out Davonté Neal. The four-star prospect reportedly wanted to commit to OSU on signing day but the offer was declined.

Given that Ohio State normally would have jumped at the opportunity to land a skill player of Neal's caliber – a speedy prospect who excelled on both sides of the ball in his senior season – sources said the OSU coaching staff is being extra careful with its scholarship numbers.

"With Neal, it probably was a numbers problem and they've decided to put all their eggs in the Diggs basket," Greene said. "Worst case scenario now for Ohio State is it doesn't work out with Diggs and then they can add an extra scholarship for next year."

Neal will not announce his decision until Feb. 21, and reports in the Arizona Republic indicated that he would still be interested if Ohio State were to offer.

## Ohio QB Gives Buckeyes Second Verbal For 2013

Five-star quarterback Jalin Marshall of Middletown, Ohio, became the second member of Meyer's class of 2013 when he issued a verbal commitment to the Buckeyes in late January.

Marshall, who followed four-star cornerback Cameron Burrows of Trotwood (Ohio) Madison in the Buckeyes' class for next year, had planned to commit to Ohio State on Jan. 31 in honor of his father's birthday.

Unfortunately, news leaked out a day earlier than he anticipated, and BSB confirmed with the quarterback Jan. 30 that his commitment to Ohio State had been finalized.

"I've known for a while I was going to be a Buckeye, but I waited until now because it was my dad's birthday and I wanted to honor him with my commitment," Marshall said. "I didn't want to do anything fancy. I just wanted to spend time with my family because this is just as much about them as it is about me."

"My family means everything to me and my dad is so important to me. My dad has always been there for me, and he has impacted my life in such a positive way that I wanted to pay him back for all he means to me. I owe the fact that I'm headed to play college football to my dad and everything he's done for me."

Continued On Page 10

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PENN STATE - Blue White Illustrated	27 issues	\$47.00	800-282-1629
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VIRGINIA TECH - Inside Hokie Sports	11 issues	\$37.95	540-231-4134
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## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

# One-Time Verbal Commit In Legal Trouble

Continued From Page 9

Marshall spent Jan. 29 on an unofficial visit to OSU, watching the men's basketball team dispatch Michigan by a 64-49 final. During his visit, he got a chance to catch up with Burrows.

"Ohio State was just the right place for me and it was home for me," Marshall said. "It's important to me to help recruit other great players to Ohio State, and I talked that over with Cameron Burrows. When he committed, I already had it in mind to commit too, so he and I have talked about putting together the top recruiting class in America for next year. We are going to be recruiting other great players to Ohio State."

Though Marshall has made plays for Middletown at quarterback, he projects at a number of positions at the next level. Marshall said Meyer has compared him to two of his former players at Florida – QB Tim Tebow and WR/KR Percy Harvin.

"Coach Meyer means a lot to me and I'm thrilled to be able to play for him," Marshall said. "We talked about all the players he's put into the NFL, and that meant a lot to me. This is a great opportunity for me to learn from such a great coach. I'm excited to play for Urban Meyer."

Marshall, who is dubbed "Mr. Excitement," rushed for 1,859 yards in Middletown's triple-option offense during his junior season and has shown he's a difference-maker with the ball in his hands. He said he anticipates starting his Ohio State career as a quarterback.

"(Coach Meyer) and I talked about that and I am going in there as a quarterback, but that's not that important to me," Marshall said. "Wherever they put me at is fine with me. Coach Meyer is going to watch me throw this spring, and then we will decide what's best from there. I just want to get out on the field and help my team win championships, and that means more to me than my stats or where I play. I'm going to do what Coach Meyer wants me to do."



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SMOKE ONE AND YOU'LL KNOW WHY

## A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

### 30 Years Ago – 1982

Earle Bruce signed 23 players to the newest OSU recruiting class. Included in a group of 17 Ohioans were kicker Rich Spangler of Geneva, two-way lineman Gene Hulshult of Hamilton and running backs Jeff Cargile of Cincinnati, Mike Lanese of Mayfield, John Wooldridge of Akron and Keith Byars of Dayton.

### 25 Years Ago – 1987

Four Ohioans announced they would sign national letters of intent to be Buckeyes – offensive lineman Paul Long of Mayfield, linebacker Andrew Gurd of Chagrin Falls Kenston, defensive back Tim Rutledge of Youngstown East and kicker/quarterback Mark Smith of Canton McKinley.

Gurd's teammate, offensive lineman Darryl Wodecki, told BSB he was still open despite reports he had committed to Notre Dame.

Ohio State and Michigan remained in the running for the services of several Ohioans, including Cincinnati Northwest linebacker Brian Townsend, Kenton linebacker Tom Lease and Kettering Alter cornerback Jeff Graham.

Linebacker Mike Uhlar transferred from Penn State to Ohio State.

### 20 Years Ago – 1992

By signing running backs Travis McGuire of Massillon, Ohio, and Eddie George of Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy early and counting them toward the previous season's scholarship count, Ohio State was able to sign all 27 verbals it had for the upcoming signing day.

McGuire and George each told BSB they planned to enroll early and take part in spring practice.

Meanwhile, six members of the class remained unsure of their academic eligibility status in terms of Proposition 48 – defensive back Dan Colson of Middletown, Ohio; linebacker Jayson Gwinn of Columbus Brookhaven; offensive lineman Chris Holbrook of St. Paris (Ohio) Graham; tight end Eric Moss of Belle (W.Va.) DuPont; wide receiver Eric Starks of Columbus Ready; and wide receiver Buster Tillman of Steubenville, Ohio.

### 15 Years Ago – 1997

The Buckeyes lost out on a pair of out-of-staters as Miami Carol City defensive back Delvin Brown committed to Miami (Fla.) and Cleveland (Miss.) East Side defensive lineman Dorsett Davis verbalized to Oklahoma.

With 22 commitments, Ohio State was down to one open slot available to either Long Beach (Calif.) Poly wide receiver Ken-Yon Rambo or Syracuse (N.Y.) Henninger linebacker Damien Mallery.

### 10 Years Ago – 2002

Belle Glade (Fla.) Glades Central wide receiver Antonio Holmes and linebacker Bobby Carpenter of Lancaster, Ohio, announced they would be Buckeyes.

Meanwhile, at press time Ohio State was still hoping to add one or two commitments from a list including North Carolina offensive lineman Derek Morris, Florida linebacker Buster Davis and Ohio athlete prospect Troy Smith.

## WR Prospect Lewis Does Not Sign; Faces Rape Charges

Instead of preparing to sign a national letter of intent with Ohio State the night before signing day, Pickerington (Ohio) Central wide receiver Roger Lewis was arrested by Pickerington police and charged with two counts of first-degree felony rape.

Lewis, 18, was charged in connection with two separate incidents involving an 18-year-old woman that occurred in December 2011 and again on Jan. 6.

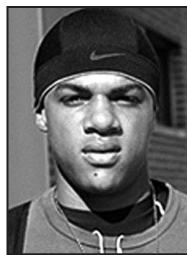
Lewis, who was the subject of a monthlong investigation, spent National Signing Day in Fairfield County (Ohio) Municipal Court trying to get his \$250,000 bond reduced, according to the Lancaster (Ohio) Eagle-Gazette.

The Eagle-Gazette reported Lewis did not enter a plea bargain and made bail at \$75,000. Judge Teresa Liston, who granted the lowered bail, also issued an order forbidding Lewis to go anywhere near his accuser and he must also wear a monitoring device restricting him from leaving the state of Ohio without the court's permission.

Prosecutor Gregg Marx told the Eagle-Gazette that he will refer the case to the grand jury in the near future and the grand jury will decide upon indicting Lewis on the rape charges.

Lewis, who totaled 22 catches for 450 yards and eight touchdowns and returned three kickoffs for scores, helped lead Pickerington Central to the Division I state championship game before the Tigers fell to Cleveland St. Ignatius by a 34-13 final on Dec. 3 at Fawcett Stadium in Canton.

Before the arrest was announced, sources told BSB that Lewis was going to be dropped from the Ohio State recruiting class anyway because of likely academic difficulty.



Roger Lewis

## Top 2013 CB Woodard Set For Ohio State Visit

Ohio State has enjoyed a quick start on building its 2013 class, and the momentum could continue when the Buckeyes welcome four-star cornerback Eli Woodard of Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern to campus Feb. 9.

Regarded as one of the best cornerback prospects in the nation, the 6-0½, 180-pounder has been to Columbus numerous times for camps, but he's looking forward to visiting with Meyer.

"I'm going mainly to talk to Urban Meyer and meet the new staff and start developing a relationship with them," Woodard said. "I've talked with Coach Meyer on the phone, but it will be great to see him face to face. I want to see how everything is going with the new staff and see if there are any differences to the way Coach Fickell did things."

Woodard hasn't been shy about sharing his interest in Ohio State, but things have changed since Meyer has taken over the program. Recruited by former cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson, who is now at Arkansas, Woodard has been visiting with a different Buckeye coach.

"I'm being recruited by Coach (Ed) Warinner now, and we've spoken by phone lately," Woodard said. "He has also been to my school before. Taking this visit will give me a chance to talk to the new secondary coaches and get to know them."

Woodard will be joined on the visit by his parents, both of whom have previously made trips to Columbus. This time, however, Woodard said he'll partake in a campus tour with his mother for the first time.

Though the cornerback currently seems to be an Ohio State lean, he's also heavily considering Notre Dame, Michigan State

Smith was hoping OSU would have a letter of intent for him. If not, he seemed ticketed for West Virginia.

At the same time, Florida wide receiver Richard Washington was giving consideration to North Carolina State after previously committing to OSU.

### Five Years Ago – 2007

In Florida, Ohio State found out it would retain a verbal commitment from Immokalee linebacker Brian Rolle while losing another prospect previously thought to be leaning toward OSU – safety Major Wright from Fort Lauderdale St. Thomas Aquinas.

Rolle told BSB, "I did some thinking that I made some commitments to (Ohio State) and there's no sense in me backing off because I'm a man of my word and I want to stick to it."

Wright said Florida "just felt like my home."

### One Year Ago – 2011

Ohio State's recruiting class totaled 23 members on National Signing Day after head coach Jim Tressel picked up commitments from five-star Richmond (Va.) Hermitage linebacker Curtis Grant and three-star Cleveland Glenville quarterback Cardale Jones.

There remained a possibility of finishing with 24, however, as Cleveland JFK offensive lineman Chris Carter remained in limbo because he faced charges of molesting at least eight girls at his high school.

Carter's attorney told multiple media outlets his client had been released from jail and he expected the charges to be dropped.

and Rutgers. His decision, however, will likely be made in the near future.

"I don't want to wait too much longer and I plan on getting it done before next summer," Woodard said. "I'd like to have this done before too much longer."

## Zaire Cuts List, OSU Makes Top Three

Ohio State took one step closer to landing another top quarterback from the Dayton area when junior prospect Malik Zaire of Kettering Alter announced his newest top three.

The 6-1, 190-pounder has seven offers for 2013 with the most recent one coming from Nebraska. That allowed the Cornhuskers to immediately jump into Zaire's top three with Ohio State and Pittsburgh.

"I'm definitely interested in them," Zaire said of the Huskers. "Nebraska has a great coaching staff and a great school environment. I love their offense and they told me I'm a better passer than Taylor Martinez. They want to pass the ball more, and they said they can open it up a lot more with me at quarterback. I'm definitely looking to visit there at some point, but I don't have anything set yet."

If the Cornhuskers want a realistic chance at landing the prep star, however, they are going to have to outrecruit the Buckeyes. Zaire, who visited Ohio State on Jan. 29 for the men's basketball game against Michigan, has admitted the home-state team will be tough to beat.

Meyer was at Zaire's high school Jan. 23 and Ohio State's head coach conveyed his interest to the prospect's high school coaches.

"I didn't speak to him other than saying hello," Zaire said of Meyer. "He let my coaches know he is interested, and I met him when I went to bowl practice before. He is a great coach and I'm definitely very interested in Ohio State. Coach Meyer has spoken to



## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

me about what it takes to be a leader in his offense and how much he thinks of me."

The X-factor could be Pitt, a program that has been establishing itself in Zaire's area. New Panthers head coach Paul Chryst has already had a positive influence on Pittsburgh's recruiting, and Zaire has noticed.

Chryst could have a head start, too, given he offered Zaire on behalf of Wisconsin before leaving the Badgers for Pittsburgh.

"I like Pittsburgh because of Coach Chryst, and he was the first to offer me when he was at Wisconsin," Zaire said. "I also like Coach (Joe) Rudolph, and I have a great relationship with them. I like their style of play and they're one of my top schools. They haven't offered yet, but I'm going to be there for a visit soon and I'm expecting that offer."

Zaire, who had yet to be ranked by Scout, also has offers from Notre Dame, Boston College, Cincinnati, Indiana and Northwestern. The quarterback runs a triple-option offense for his high school, but Alter head coach Ed Domsitz told BSB that he anticipates using Zaire as more of a passer during his senior season.

### Buckeyes Recruit Younger Brother Of Current RB Smith

Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bishop Luers linebacker Jaylon Smith is considered to be one of the best players at his position in the 2013 class, and he was fairly busy on National Signing Day.

While coaches waited for their 2012 classes to fax in their signed letters, the four-star prospect was receiving phone calls from some of the top coaches in the nation stressing to the linebacker that he's a top priority for next year's class.

Smith, the younger brother of Ohio State running back Rod Smith, heard from both Notre Dame head coach Brian Kelly and Michigan's Brady Hoke that day, both of whom communicated to the linebacker that he is their top target for next year.

Because he has a close relationship with his older brother, Smith already has a visit scheduled to Ohio State for Feb. 18 after members of the Buckeyes' coaching staff came to visit him at his high school recently.

"Coach (Mike) Vrebel came to the school a couple of weeks ago watching my film and he has been communicating with me on a basic level," the 6-2, 225-pounder said. "The Patriots are actually my favorite team and he was my favorite linebacker when he was playing."

"It was an honor to meet somebody like that and now he is recruiting me. I have been getting letters from Coach Meyer and everything, but we haven't had a chance to talk on the phone yet."

Though Ohio State is most certainly an intriguing option for Smith, he said he is going to do his research on other top schools that have offered him, which include U-M, ND, Iowa, Purdue, Tennessee and others.

Notre Dame is one that has stood out most for Smith so far.

"I have looked at their depth chart and how they didn't bring any outside linebackers in for the class of 2012, so that is a great chance for me," he said. "Also they have Manti Te'o and a few other guys who will be seniors and guys who will be leaving after my freshman year, so that would be a good opportunity. Just talking to (defensive line coach) Mike Elston has been good and I am looking forward to the process with Notre Dame."

With regard to Michigan, Hoke's signing-day phone call left an impression.

"I haven't been to see the Big House yet," Smith said. "I haven't seen their facilities, but I went down there for a camp and I saw the school. I am just looking forward to getting to know them better and getting down there and seeing everything."

Though Smith now knows what it feels like to be a priority for top programs, he said he isn't in any hurry to make his college decision.

"I just look for the success each program has had along with the opportunity that I will have when I get to that school," he said. "Also there is going to come a day where football is going to be over, so I want to set myself and my family up when it comes to academics, so that is also important."

### Recruiting Notes

- Dodson's Cleveland Heights teammate, wide receiver Shelton Gibson, has racked up seven offers for 2013, including ones from Auburn and Ohio State. The 6-1, 190-pound speedster plans to be in Columbus for a visit sometime before mid-February.

- Sources close to BSB have indicated that one of Ohio State's top targets for next year is Alliance (Ohio) Marlinton athlete Dymonte Thomas. Though the four-star prospect has been committed to Michigan for several months, sources say the Buckeyes will do what they can to have the standout reconsider the Buckeyes. Thomas, a 6-1, 180-pound prospect, is the cousin of current Ohio State running back Bri'onte Dunn.

- Midlothian (Va.) Clover Hill linebacker Holland Fisher took an unofficial visit to Ohio State the weekend of Feb. 4. The 6-2, 202-pound linebacker goes to the same high school as 2012 wide receiver prospect Joel Caleb, who chose Virginia Tech over Ohio State this year.

- Jeannette, Pa., safety Demetrious Cox signed with Michigan State on National Signing Day. Cox, who went to the same high school as former Ohio State quarterback Terrelle Pryor and current running back Jordan Hall, selected the Spartans over Ohio State and other top programs.

- Chicago Simeon offensive tackle Jordan Diamond, one of the best at his position in the 2012 class, committed to Auburn over Ohio State and Michigan. Diamond (6-6, 290) removed Ohio State from his list before he selected the Tigers. Diamond is a five-star prospect and rated by Scout as the No. 8 offensive tackle in the 2012 class.

- Warren (Ohio) Howland junior running back DeVeon Smith was at Ohio State's junior day, and the Buckeyes issued him a verbal offer. Smith, a 5-11, 210-pound back who rushed for nearly 2,000 yards in his junior season, also has an offer from Michigan.

- Youngstown (Ohio) Cardinal Mooney linebacker Courtney Love and Hudson, Ohio, linebacker Ben Gedeon – both 2013 prospects – picked up offers from Ohio State during the Jan. 29 junior day. Gedeon is a four-star prospect while Love has yet to be ranked by Scout.

- Two-time Mr. Ohio Football and one-time Ohio State running back recruit Erick Howard of Canton (Ohio) Hoover was found guilty Feb. 3 on counts of aggravated burglary, aggravated robbery, rape and kidnapping by a 12-member jury in Stark County (Ohio) Common Pleas Court. Howard and two others were involved in a home invasion and robbery Aug. 20, 2011. Howard faces up to 31 years in prison.

## The Scout.com 100

Here is a look at the Scout.com 100 list for the class of 2012, with players ranked in order from 1-100. Ohio State received letters of intent from seven of these players, listed in bold.

Rk	Name	Pos.	Ht./Wt.	High School	Commitment
1	Dorial Green-Beckham	WR	6-6/220	Springfield (Mo.) Hillcrest	Missouri
2	Arik Armstead	OT	6-8/275	Elk Grove (Calif.) Pleasant Grove	Oregon
3	Shaquille Thompson	S	6-2/210	Sacramento (Calif.) Grant Union	Washington
4	Mario Edwards	DE	6-4/291	Denton (Texas) Ryan	Florida State
5	<b>Noah Spence</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>6-4/245</b>	<b>Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt</b>	<b>Ohio State</b>
6	Stefon Diggs	WR	6-0/185	Olney (Md.) Our Lady of Good Counsel	Uncommitted
7	John Theus	OT	6-6/292	Jacksonville (Fla.) The Bolles School	Georgia
8	Landon Collins	S	6-0/210	Geismar (La.) Dutchtown	Alabama
9	Ronald Darby	CB	5-11/175	Oxon Hill (Md.) Potomac	Florida State
10	<b>Adolphus Washington</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>6-5/245</b>	<b>Cincinnati Taft</b>	<b>Ohio State</b>
11	D.J. Humphries	OT	6-6/262	Charlotte (N.C.) Mallard Creek	Florida
12	Keith Marshall	RB	5-11/190	Raleigh (N.C.) Millbrook	Georgia
13	Jonathan Bullard	DE	6-4/250	Shelby (N.C.) Crest	Florida
14	Kyle Murphy	OT	6-7/268	San Clemente, Calif.	Stanford
15	Johnathan Gray	RB	5-11/195	Aledo, Texas	Texas
16	Trey Williams	RB	5-8/180	Houston Andy Dekaney	Texas A&M
17	Malcom Brown	DT	6-2/280	Brenham, Texas	Texas
18	Rushel Shell	RB	5-11/215	Aliquippa (Pa.) Hopewell	Pittsburgh
19	Jordan Jenkins	DE	6-3/246	Hamilton (Ga.) Harris County	Georgia
20	Darius Hamilton	DE	6-4/245	Ramsey (N.J.) Don Bosco	Rutgers
21	Duke Johnson	RB	5-9/188	Miami (Fla.) Northland	Miami (Fla.)
22	Reggie Ragland	MLB	6-4/245	Madison (Ala.) Bob Jones	Alabama
23	Ellis McCarthy	DT	6-5/295	Monrovia, Calif.	UCLA
24	Quay Evans	DT	6-2/318	Morton, Miss.	Mississippi State
25	Brian Poole	CB	5-11/185	Bradenton (Fla.) Southeast	Florida
26	Eli Harold	OLB	6-3/230	Virginia Beach (Va.) Ocean Lakes	Virginia
27	Avery Young	OT	6-5/292	Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.	Auburn
28	Mario Pender	RB	6-0/210	Cape Coral (Fla.) Island Coast	Florida State
29	Chris Casher	DE	6-4/240	Mobile (Ala.) Faith	Florida State
30	Cayleb Jones	WR	6-2/185	Austin, Texas	Texas
31	Eddie Goldman	DT	6-4/315	Washington (D.C.) Edison-Friendship	Florida State
32	<b>Bri'onte Dunn</b>	<b>RB</b>	<b>6-2/220</b>	<b>Canton (Ohio) GlenOak</b>	<b>Ohio State</b>
33	Isaac Seumalo	OG	6-3/275	Corvallis, Ore.	Oregon State
34	Channing Ward	DE	6-4/265	Aberdeen, Miss.	Ole Miss
35	Kyle Kalis	OT	6-5/305	Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward	Michigan
36	Josh Harvey-Clemons	OLB	6-4/207	Valdosta (Ga.) Lowndes	Georgia
37	Curtis Riser	OG	6-5/300	DeSoto, Texas	Texas
38	Gunner Kiel	QB	6-4/200	Columbus (Ind.) East	Notre Dame
39	Tee Shepard	CB	6-0/172	Fresno (Calif.) Central East Campus	Notre Dame
40	Shaq Roland	WR	6-1/180	Lexington, S.C.	South Carolina
41	Jameis Winston	QB	6-4/190	Hueytown, Ala.	Florida State
42	Joshua Garnett	OG	6-5/275	Puyallup, Wash.	Stanford
43	Bryce Treggs	WR	5-11/175	Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco	California
44	Kennedy Estelle	OT	6-7/305	Pearland (Texas) Glenda Dawson	Texas
45	Cyrus Jones	WR	5-10/185	Baltimore Gilman	Alabama
46	Deontay Greenberry	WR	6-3/180	Fresno (Calif.) Washington Union	Houston
47	Jordan Diamond	OT	6-6/290	Chicago (Ill.) Simeon	Auburn
48	<b>Tommy Schutt</b>	<b>DT</b>	<b>6-3/300</b>	<b>Glen Ellyn (Ill.) Glenbard West</b>	<b>Ohio State</b>
49	Tracy Howard	CB	6-0/175	Miramar, Fla.	Miami (Fla.)
50	Sheldon Day	DT	6-2/278	Indianapolis Warren Central	Notre Dame
51	Andrus Peat	OT	6-7/305	Tempe (Ariz.) Corona Del Sol	Stanford
52	Kwon Alexander	OLB	6-2/210	Oxford, Ala.	LSU
53	Eddie Williams	S	6-4/205	Panama City Beach (Fla.) J.R. Arnold	Alabama
54	Thomas Johnson	WR	6-0/175	Dallas Skyline	Texas A&M
55	Elijah Shumate	S	6-1/205	Ramsey (N.J.) Dom Bosco	Notre Dame
56	Camron Hughes	OT	6-7/270	Killeen (Texas) Harker Heights	Texas
57	T.J. Yeldon	RB	6-1/215	Daphne, Ala.	Alabama
58	<b>Se'Von Pittman</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>6-5/245</b>	<b>Canton (Ohio) McKinley</b>	<b>Ohio State</b>
59	Dante Fowler	DE	6-3/238	Saint Petersburg, Fla.	Florida
60	Barry Sanders Jr.	RB	5-10/190	Oklahoma City Heritage Hall	Stanford
61	Nelson Agholor	WR	6-1/175	Tampa (Fla.) Berkeley	USC
62	Jordan Simmons	OG	6-5/340	Encino (Calif.) Crespi Carmelite	USC
63	Aaron Burbridge	WR	6-1/180	Farmington Hills (Mich.) Harrison	Michigan State
64	Darreus Rogers	WR	6-2/194	Carson, Calif.	USC
65	Ondre Pipkins	DT	6-3/320	Kansas City (Mo.) Park Hill	Michigan
66	Ronnie Stanley	OT	6-6/285	Las Vegas Bishop Gorman	Notre Dame
67	Carlos Watkins	DT	6-4/280	Forest City (N.C.) Chase	Clemson
68	Michael Starts	OG	6-4 1/2/275	Waco (Texas) La Vega	Texas Tech
69	Joe Bolden	OLB	6-3/320	Cincinnati Colerain	Michigan
70	Jessamen Dunker	OT	6-6/315	Boynton Beach, Fla.	Florida
71	Mike Davis	RB	5-10/195	Stone Mountain (Ga.) Stephenson	South Carolina
72	Zach Banner	OT	6-9/295	Lakewood (Wash.) Lakes	USC
73	Kent Taylor	TE	6-5/230	Land O' Lakes, Fla.	Florida
74	Davonte' Neal	CB	5-9/175	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral	Uncommitted
75	Ifeadi Odenigbo	OLB	6-3 1/2/217	Centerville, Ohio	Northwestern
76	Jonathan Taylor	OT	6-3 1/2/307	Millen (Ga.) Jenkins County	Georgia
77	<b>Taylor Decker</b>	<b>DT</b>	<b>6-8/315</b>	<b>Vandalia (Ohio) Butler</b>	<b>Ohio State</b>
78	Javonte Magee	DE	6-6/273	San Antonio (Texas) Houston	Baylor
79	<b>Armani Reeves</b>	<b>CB</b>	<b>5-10/185</b>	<b>West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial</b>	<b>Ohio State</b>
80	Markuss Eligwe	CB	6-2/215	Stone Mountain, Ga.	Florida State
81	Ishmael Adams	CB	5-10/190	Westlake Village (Calif.) Oaks Christian	UCLA
82	Erik Magnuson	OT	6-6/275	Encinitas (Calif.) La Costa Canyon	Michigan
83	James Ross	WR	6-1/215	Orchard Lake (Mich.) St. Mary Prep	Michigan
84	Leonte Carroo	OLB	6-2/200	Ramsey (N.J.) Don Bosco Prep	Rutgers
85	LaDarrell McNeil	S	6-2/190	Dallas Wilmer-Hutchins	Tennessee
86	Amari Cooper	WR	6-2/180	Miami Northwestern	Alabama
87	Justin Shanks	DT	6-4/320	Prattville, Ala.	Florida State
88	Devin Fuller	QB	6-0/185	Old Tappan (N.J.) No. Valley Reg. Old Tappan	UCLA
89	Eugene Lewis	WR	6-2/180	Plymouth (Pa.) Wyoming Valley West	Penn State
90	Bralon Addison	WR	5-10/180	Sugar Land (Texas) Hightower	Oregon
91	Wes Brown	RB	6-0/190	Olney (Md.) Our Lady of Good Counsel	Maryland
92	Marcus Maye	S	6-1/195	Melbourne (Fla.) Holy Trinity Episcopal	Florida
93	Tom Strobel	DE	6-6/265	Mentor, Ohio	Michigan
94	Torshiro Davis	OLB	6-3/210	Shreveport (La.) Woodlawn	Texas
95	Jordan Payton	WR	6-2/205	Westlake Christian (Calif.) Oaks Christian	UCLA
96	Max Tuerk	OG	6-4/290	Santa Margarita (Calif.) Catholic	USC
97	Demetrious Cox	S	6-1/185	Jeannette, Pa.	Michigan State
98	Tyler Nero	DT	6-2 1/2/285	Atmore (Ala.) Escambia County	Auburn
99	Dan Voltz	OG	6-4/290	Barrington, Ill.	Wisconsin
100	Jaquay Williams	WR	6-4/191	Tyrone (Ga.) Sandy Creek	Auburn



## RECRUITING WRAP-UP: OSU'S 2012 CLASS



Warren Ball



De'Van Bogard



Jacoby Boren



Taylor Decker



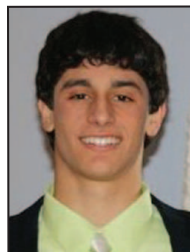
Kyle Dodson



Bri'onte Dunn



Pat Elflein



Frank Epitropoulos



Cardale Jones



Jamal Marcus



Najee Murray



Joey O'Connor



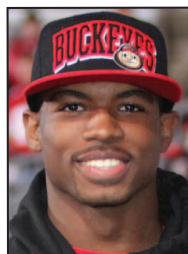
David Perkins



Joshua Perry



Se'Von Pittman



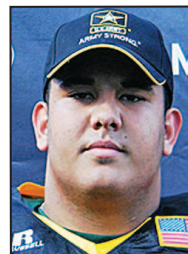
Tyvis Powell



Armani Reeves



Luke Roberts



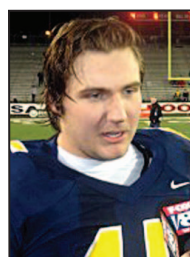
Tommy Schutt



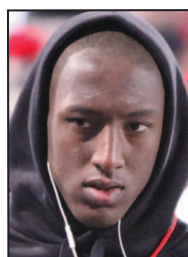
Ricquan Southward



Noah Spence



Blake Thomas



Michael Thomas



Adolphus Washington



Camren Williams

All photos from Scout.com except Warren Ball (Josh Winslow), Kyle Dodson (Kyle Wasserman), Bri'onte Dunn (Josh Winslow), Pat Elflein (Matthew Hager), Cardale Jones (Josh Winslow), Najee Murray (Marcus Hartman), Joshua Perry (Josh Winslow), Tyvis Powell (Josh Winslow), Michael Thomas (Josh Winslow).

## Meyer's First Class Features Plenty Of Talent

By **MATTHEW HAGER**  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

If signing day was any indication, the Urban Meyer era will be one with plenty of surprises and a fast tempo.

The surprises came in the commitments from offensive lineman Kyle Dodson of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and Durham (N.C.) Hillside linebacker Jamal Marcus. Both players signed letters of intent with Ohio State on Feb. 1 during ceremonies at their respective high schools.

Their pledges pushed the Buckeyes' total to 19 letters of intent on signing day. They joined six players who had already enrolled at Ohio State, giving Meyer 25 new charges.

"Everything went smooth today," Meyer said. "I love to recruit and I love to recruit great players."

The Feb. 1 signing day closed a hectic few months for Meyer. After taking over Nov. 28 as Ohio State's head coach, he turned what was a middle-of-the-road recruiting class into the No. 3 haul in the nation, behind only Texas and Alabama, according to Scout.com.

Of the 25 new Buckeyes, Meyer was able to get 10 of them to pick the Buckeyes after

he took the job. They were Vandalia (Ohio) Butler offensive lineman Taylor Decker; Canton (Ohio) McKinley defensive end Se'Von Pittman; Glen Ellyn (Ill.) Glenbard West defensive tackle Tommy Schutt; Windsor, Colo., offensive lineman Joey O'Connor; Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt defensive end Noah Spence; South Bend (Ind.) Washington linebacker David Perkins; West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial teammates Camren Williams, an outside linebacker, and cornerback Armani Reeves; Dodson; and Marcus.

Meyer also managed to keep Canton (Ohio) GlenOak tailback Bri'onte Dunn in the fold after the prospect visited Michigan in late November.

A large part of Meyer's success came in-state – 16 of the new Buckeyes hail from Ohio. Meyer also received letters of intent from prospects in California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Florida, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Additionally, Meyer was able to get players to pick Ohio State after previously giving verbal commitments to go elsewhere. Schutt, Williams and Reeves were Penn State verbals, Pittman and Dodson had been committed to Michigan State and Wisconsin, respectively,

and Decker had previously given a pledge to Notre Dame.

Here are thumbnail sketches of Ohio State's 25 signees in the recruiting class of 2012.

- **Warren Ball, RB, Columbus DeSales** – The second verbal commit of the recruiting class, the 6-2, 205-pound running back grew up approximately 15 minutes from the Ohio State campus. Ball, the No. 21 ranked running back in the country according to Scout.com, rushed for 1,232 yards and 29 touchdowns as a senior for the Stallions. He was named first-team Division III all-state by The Associated Press.

As a sophomore in 2009, Ball helped the Stallions reach the D-III state championship game. Injuries caused him to miss time during that season, and a high ankle sprain a year later kept him out of six contests.

Personal: Son of Warren Sr. and Danielle Ball ... One of six players to have enrolled at Ohio State in January ... Will play in the Ohio North-South All-Star Classic on April 20 in Ohio Stadium.

- **De'Van Bogard, DB, Cleveland Glenville** – Bogard is the latest Tarblooder to become a Buckeye, joining such former OSU

greats as Donte Whitner, Troy Smith and Ted Ginn Jr. Bogard, listed at 6-0 and 175 pounds, was a hard-hitting linebacker for Glenville but projects as a safety in college.

The four-star prospect was a first-team Division I all-state selection last season by The Associated Press after a season during which he recorded 91 tackles.

Personal: Son of Ali and Cynthia Shakir ... Will play in the Ohio North-South All-Star Classic on April 20 at Ohio Stadium.

- **Jacoby Boren, OL, Pickerington (Ohio) Central** – The third Boren to join the Buckeyes, Jacoby was mainly an offensive guard for the Tigers. He was a first-team Division I all-state pick by The Associated Press after completing a senior season during which the Tigers reached the D-I state championship game for the first time in program history. Boren (6-2, 275) played both offense and defense and was a four-year letter winner, a three-time all-Ohio Capital Conference first-team pick, an all-central district honoree and a member of the Columbus Dispatch 2011 All-Metro team.

Personal: Enrolled at Ohio State in January ... Son of Mike and Hope Boren and younger brother of Justin and Zach ... Both parents



## RECRUITING WRAP-UP: OSU'S 2012 CLASS

were athletes at Michigan, with Mike playing football and Hope competing in track and field ... Justin was a letter winner at OSU from 2009-10 after transferring from Michigan ... Zach will be a senior at OSU this fall.

• **Taylor Decker, OL, Vandalia (Ohio) Butler** – The largest member of the class at 6-8 and 315 pounds, Decker gave his verbal commitment to Ohio State in January after decommitting from Notre Dame. The No. 7 senior in the state of Ohio according to Scout was a three-year starter at Butler. Decker helped the Aviators post a 6-4 record during the 2011 season, the program's first winning campaign in eight years.

Decker was named a first-team Division II all-state player by The Associated Press following his senior season.

Personal: Also played basketball, winning three letters and garnering interest from mid-major schools ... Wants to pursue a degree in some area of sports medicine ... Son of Ron and Sheila Decker... Will play in the Ohio North-South All-Star Classic on April 20 at Ohio Stadium.

• **Kyle Dodson, OL, Cleveland Heights, Ohio** – The final player to join the 2012 recruiting class, Dodson committed to Ohio State on signing day. The four-star prospect had been committed to Wisconsin before reopening his recruitment in the final weeks leading up to Feb. 1.

His Cleveland Heights squad earned a Lake Erie League championship last fall. Dodson suffered a torn labrum in his right shoulder but played through the final four games of the season with the injury. The 6-6, 310-pounder was ranked the No. 24 offensive tackle in the nation by Scout.

Personal: Was raised since the age of 11 by grandparents George and Barbara Allen ... Lost his mother, Catherine Moore, in 2005 in an automobile accident.

• **Br'onte Dunn, RB, Canton (Ohio) GlenOak** – A two-time, first-team Division I all-state selection by The Associated Press, Dunn was a workhorse for the Golden Eagles. He rushed for 5,479 yards during his high school career. The 6-2, 220-pound running back rushed for 2,030 yards and 22 touchdowns as a junior and 1,657 yards and 17 scores as a senior.

The five-star prospect began his prep career at Alliance High School, rushing for 1,900 yards as a freshman, before heading to GlenOak. During his three seasons with the Golden Eagles, Dunn scored 51 touchdowns and was named to the All-Northeast Inland District, The (Canton) Repository All-Stark County and All-Federal League first teams numerous times.

According to The Repository, Dunn is the first Stark County running back since Travis McGuire of Massillon Washington in 1992 to sign a national letter of intent with Ohio State.

Personal: Son of Brion Dunn and Donna Hatcher ... Enrolled at Ohio State in January.

• **Pat Elflein, OL, Pickerington (Ohio) North** – A two-time team captain for the Panthers, Elflein quickly gave his verbal commitment to Ohio State when he was offered in July. The 6-3, 285-pound offensive guard was a first-team Division I all-state selection in 2011 and is the No. 31 guard nationally according to Scout.

Elflein, who pours and breaks up concrete during summers, was an All-Ohio Capital Conference, All-Central District and Columbus Dispatch All-Metro pick in 2011.

Personal: Elflein was the 2011 Ohio Capital Conference wrestler of the year as well as a state and national qualifier ... Is on track to earn 12 varsity letters because of his efforts with the football, wrestling and track and field squads ... Son of Ken and Lisa Elflein and brother of Matt, Chris and Heather ... Matt played football at Ohio Dominican.

• **Frank Epitropoulos, WR, Upper Arlington, Ohio** – Epitropoulos is slotted to be a wide receiver for the Buckeyes, but he did a little bit of everything for his high school team. In addition to his receiving duties, Epitropoulos was also a defensive back and punter for the Golden Bears. The 6-3, 197-pound prospect reportedly has a vertical jump that exceeds 40 inches and is coming off a year in which he missed games because of a hand injury.

Epitropoulos was ranked the No. 60 receiver nationally according to Scout. He participated in the International Bowl on signing day and caught a 12-yard touchdown.

Personal: Son of John and Alice Epitropoulos ... Father was a three-year Ohio State football letterman (1978-80) and played in 34 games for Woody Hayes and Earle Bruce ... Mother also attended OSU, as did uncle Ernie, who also played for Ohio State ... His sister Christina has been accepted into Ohio State's dental school ... Frank is considering a premed course of study at OSU.

• **Cardale Jones, QB, Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy** – For the second straight year, Jones is a part of an Ohio State recruiting class. He initially signed a national letter of intent with OSU in February 2011 but delayed his enrollment and instead attended Fork Union in the fall. Jones roomed with fellow OSU recruit Michael Thomas.

During his high school career at Cleveland Glenville, Jones (6-5, 220) led the Tarblooders to a 24-3 record.

Personal: Enrolled at Ohio State in January ... Was also a basketball letterman at Glenville ... Son of Florence Jones.

• **Jamal Marcus, LB, Durham (N.C.) Hillside** – Like Dodson, Marcus was a signing day prize for the Buckeyes. He selected OSU over East Carolina at a morning ceremony at his high school. The all-state defensive end projects as a collegiate linebacker and reportedly boasts 4.6-second speed in the 40-yard dash.

Marcus led Hillside to a 16-0 record and a state championship in 2011. He made 89 stops with 17½ sacks en route to earning a first-team all-state honor by The Associated Press. Marcus led all defensive players in votes for the all-state team.

Personal: Listed at 6-2 and 235 pounds ... Son of Reginald and Keisha Marcus.

• **Najee Murray, DB, Steubenville, Ohio** – The No. 20 cornerback in the nation ranked by Scout, Murray was a shutdown cornerback for the Big Red. He made 54 tackles during the 2011 season and was named first-team Division III all-state by The Associated Press and the AP's co-defensive player of the year.

In addition to his exploits on defense, the 5-11, 172-pounder caught 17 passes for 280 yards and four touchdowns. Murray recorded 62 tackles and had two interceptions as a junior. As a sophomore, he notched 57 stops.

Personal: Son of Horace Hampton and Danita Murray-Hampton ... Helped his 4x200-meter relay team win a state championship at the 2011 state track and field championship meet ... Will play in the Ohio North-South All-Star Classic on April 20 at Ohio Stadium ... First Steubenville product to sign with Ohio State since receiver Buster Tillman in 1992.

• **Joey O'Connor, OL, Windsor, Colo.** – O'Connor was a four-year starter for his high school and earned all-state honors as a junior and senior. He capped his high school football career by being named Colorado's 3A player of the year following a season during which the Wizards won a state championship.

O'Connor is listed at 6-4 and 295 pounds.

Personal: First Colorado product to sign a letter of intent with Ohio State since Denver



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Continued On Page 14

# Teammates Reeves, Williams Sign With OSU

Continued From Page 13

Montbello receiver Chris Sanders in 1990 ... Son of Joe and Ann O'Connor ... Played hockey for 11 years and even considered moving to Canada before his first year in high school to pursue the sport ... Student body president at Windsor.

• **David Perkins, LB, South Bend (Ind.) Washington** – Perkins, who reportedly boasts 4.43 speed in the 40-yard dash, was a four-star prospect and the No. 22-ranked outside linebacker nationally by Scout. He totaled 103 tackles in 2011, including 22 tackles for loss and seven sacks, in addition to eight forced fumbles and nine pass break-ups. He also played offense and rushed for 1,311 yards and 15 touchdowns plus had 20 catches for 291 yards.

Perkins (6-2, 220) ended his prep career by leading Washington to its first state championship game in 38 years.

Personal: Son of Mac and Natalie Henry ... Attended Kalamazoo (Mich.) Central before transferring to Washington after his sophomore season.

• **Joshua Perry, LB, Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy** – A three-sport standout, Perry was the first verbal commitment to Ohio State's 2012 class. Perry, the No. 9 outside linebacker in the nation and ninth-ranked overall prospect in Ohio according to Scout, was named second-team Division I all-state by The Associated Press as a senior after completing a season in which he recorded 70 tackles and seven sacks.

The 6-3, 230-pound linebacker had a grade-point average of better than 3.80 on a 4.00 scale in high school.

Personal: Enrolled at Ohio State in January ... Son of Jim and Georgette Perry ... Older brother, Wes, is a second-year student at Ohio State studying jazz and music education ... Younger brother, Jahred, is a high school sophomore ... Also played basketball and was a member of the track and field team in high school ... Was twice a top-five finisher in the long jump at the state level, finishing second as a sophomore in 2010 to new OSU teammate Devin Smith.

• **Se'Von Pittman, DE, Canton (Ohio) McKinley** – A four-star prospect, Pittman was Urban Meyer's second verbal commit, joining the class in mid-December. Pittman was a three-year starter at McKinley and finished his career with 18 sacks.

The 6-5, 245-pounder was ranked the No. 58 overall prospect in the 2012 class and No. 4 in the state. Pittman was a two-time AP Division I all-state first-team selection. He had verbally committed to Michigan State

before reopening his recruitment and eventually selecting Ohio State.

Personal: Son of Velvet Hutchinson ... High school teammate of 2011 OSU signee Steve Miller ... Expected to enroll at Ohio State in March and participate in spring practice.

• **Tyvis Powell, DB, Bedford, Ohio** – Powell boasts impressive height, listed at 6-3 and 180 pounds. That height equals fifth-year senior Zach Domicone for tallest among Ohio State defensive backs.

Powell, the No. 37 safety prospect according to Scout, recorded six interceptions over his junior and senior seasons along with 115 tackles.

Personal: A three sport athlete who played basketball and baseball before dropping baseball for track as a junior ... Son of Robin Powell-Richardson ... Enrolled at Ohio State in January.

• **Armani Reeves, CB, West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial** – A late addition to the class, Reeves will bring added depth to Ohio State's secondary. The cornerback is ranked the No. 6 player at his position nationally by Scout and a four-star recruit.

Reeves was the Catholic Conference overall MVP following his senior season. During that campaign, the 5-10, 185-pounder notched 57 tackles and an interception on defense. Offensively, he rushed for 445 yards and nine touchdowns.

Personal: Son of Victoria Reeves ... Brent Williams, father of high school teammate and fellow OSU signee Camren Williams, is Reeves' godfather ... Cousin of Basketball Hall of Famer Charles Barkley ... Member of the National Honor Society who might study information technology at OSU.

• **Luke Roberts, LB, Lancaster, Ohio** – The 6-2, 225-pound linebacker was a three-year starter for the Gales and was rated the No. 28 inside linebacker in the nation by Scout. Roberts was named second-team Division I all-state by The Associated Press in 2011 after he recorded 118 tackles, including 19 for loss and five sacks.

As a junior in 2010, Roberts earned special mention all-state following a season during which he made 96 stops, including 23 TFL and three sacks. He earned All-Ohio Capital Conference and all-district honors as a junior and senior.

Personal: Also a wrestling standout ... Comes from the same high school that produced such former Buckeyes as Rex Kern, Bobby Carpenter and Jim Cordle ... Son of Mathew and Sharon Roberts ... Expected to enroll at Ohio State for the 2012 spring quarter.

• **Tommy Schutt, DT, Glen Ellyn (Ill.)**

**Glenbard West** – The first player to verbally commit to Meyer after he took over Nov. 28, the five-star defensive tackle was ranked the No. 5 player at his position in the nation and 47th-best prospect overall. He recorded 33 sacks, 45 tackles for loss, 21 batted balls and 11 forced fumbles during his high school career. Schutt earned all-state honors for three consecutive years and helped guide the Hilltoppers to the playoffs in each of his four years.

Last season, Schutt (6-3, 300) notched 14½ sacks, 23½ tackles for loss and 73 stops overall. Following the season, he was named ESPNChicago.com's defensive player of the year and was selected as a U.S. Army and SuperPrep All-American.

Personal: Son of David and Stella Schutt.

• **Ricquan Southward, WR, Lakeland, Fla.** – Southward, the lone Floridian in the class, scored nine touchdowns for the perennial power Dreadnaughts in 2011. He caught 54 passes for 994 yards for Lakeland, which finished the season 13-1 and advanced to the Class 7A state semifinals for the third consecutive season. In addition to his nine receiving scores, Southward also reached the end zone on both a punt return and kick return, respectively.

Southward, who is listed at 6-2, 190 pounds, was named first-team Class 7A all-state by The Associated Press as a senior and was rated the No. 119 wide receiver nationally by Scout.

Personal: Son of Cathy Howard.

• **Noah Spence, DE, Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt** – The five-star prospect and 2011 Pennsylvania Gatorade Player of the Year, Spence comes from a school that produced current NFL players LeSean McCoy (Philadelphia) and Aaron Berry (Detroit) as well as perennial Pro Bowl running back Ricky Watters.

Spencer, a 6-4, 245-pound defensive end, recorded 50 tackles for loss and 35½ sacks during his prep career. His Bishop McDevitt squads advanced to consecutive Class AAA championship games. After his prep career, Spence played in the Under Armour All-American Game on Jan. 5 in St. Petersburg, Fla., where he recorded a game-record three sacks.

Personal: Son of Greg and Helen Spence and is one of nine brothers ... Father was a football player at North Carolina State, and uncle Phil was a basketball player for the Wolfpack and part of the school's 1974 national championship team.

• **Blake Thomas, TE, Cleveland St. Ignatius** – A tight end who is known more as a blocker than a receiver, Thomas nabbed a combined 49 passes for 506 yards and eight touchdowns as a junior and senior. He caught 25 passes for 250 yards and six touchdowns in 2011 as a senior and capped his prep career with a state championship, the 11th Division I title in program history for the Eagles. In that championship game victory against Boren and

Pickerington Central, Thomas caught four passes for 47 yards.

The 6-4, 245-pounder was named special-mention all-state by The Associated Press following the 2011 season as well as to the Northeast Lakes all-district football team. He was ranked the 22nd-best tight end nationally by Scout.

Personal: Has hopes of attending dental school ... Son of Kevin and Gail Thomas.

• **Michael Thomas, WR, Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy** – Jones' roommate at FUMA, Thomas caught 23 passes for 497 yards and seven touchdowns in 2011.

Prior to enrolling at Fork Union, Thomas caught 86 passes for a state-best 1,656 yards and 21 touchdowns at Woodland Hills (Calif.) Taft. The 6-4, 205-pound receiver was voted the most improved player in Southern California in November 2010 by the Los Angeles Times.

Personal: Son of Michael Thomas Sr. ... Enrolled at Ohio State in January ... Nephew of former NFL receiver and ESPN analyst Keyshawn Johnson.

• **Adolphus Washington, DE, Cincinnati Taft** – Washington, a five-star prospect from the Queen City, was a Parade magazine and U.S. Army All-American. He led the Senators into the 2010 and 2011 state playoffs and recorded 23½ sacks, three forced fumbles and 90 tackles as a senior. Following the season, Washington was named the Division III co-defensive player of the year and a first-team AP all-state selection.

Washington was ranked the No. 1 overall player in the state of Ohio and the third-best defensive end prospect nationally. As a junior, the 6-5, 245-pound lineman notched 107 tackles and 19 sacks as Taft qualified for the playoffs for the first time in school history.

Personal: Son of Adolphus Washington Sr. and Rhonda Edwards ... Also a basketball standout who was named the Division III co-player of the year in 2011 after leading Taft to the state championship.

• **Camren Williams, LB, West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial** – A high school teammate of Reeves, Williams was a four-star prospect and the No. 16-rated outside linebacker by Scout. He recorded 11 tackles for the Knights during the 2011 season, one in which Catholic Memorial finished 7-2.

Williams was named all-scholastic by The Boston Globe and the defensive player of the year in the Catholic Conference. The 6-2, 215-pounder played in the inaugural Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl on Jan. 3 in Phoenix.

Personal: Member of the National Honor Society who is considering studying kinesiology ... Son of Brent and Jacquelin Williams ... Brent was an 11-year NFL vet (1986-96), playing with the Patriots, Seahawks and Jets ... Brother Brennan is an offensive lineman at North Carolina.



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## RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE JUNIORS

# Meyer Already Working On 2013 Recruiting

By ARI WASSERMAN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

As far as recruiting experts are concerned, Urban Meyer is all but guaranteed to guide the Ohio State football program to the nation's best recruiting class in 2013.

It's only natural to predict that, particularly when analyzing the class the coach put together this year – ranked by Scout.com as the third best in the nation – after little more than two months on the job.

Meyer isn't leaving anything up to fate with the 2013 class, however, especially since it will be the first at Ohio State he will be able to mold in its entirety. His efforts in putting together a top class were evident when he organized a junior day Jan. 29 to coincide with a men's basketball game against Michigan in Value City Arena.

With some of the nation's best junior prospects on hand to watch the fourth-ranked Buckeyes' 64-49 victory over the No. 20 Wolverines, Meyer was already setting the table for his 2013 class before getting letter of intent signatures this year.

"I've already talked to the best juniors in their areas," Meyer said on National Signing Day as he allowed himself to sneak a peek toward next year. "Recruiting is a process. It's a long process. You don't go on one date and you're done."

"I guess my point is that it's every day. You take a day off and your opponent is maybe making that phone call instead of you. That's what drives me. I know I drive our staff real hard about that."

Meyer has already secured two commitments for his 2013 class – five-star quarterback Jalin Marshall of Middletown, Ohio, and four-star cornerback Cameron Burrows of Trotwood (Ohio) Madison, both of whom could set the stage for what Ohio State fans hope will turn out to be a legendary class.

The 2013 class has perhaps the deepest talent pool of any in recent memory,

and with that in mind Meyer has already issued more than 40 offers to junior talent – a number that will undoubtedly continue to steadily rise.

Following is an alphabetical look at the high school juniors who reportedly hold offers from Ohio State, including the two who have already pledged to the Buckeyes.

• **Hunter Bivin, offensive tackle, Owensboro (Ky.) Apollo** – Though Meyer was pleased with the OL talent he signed in the 2012 class, no head coach thinks he ever has enough prominent offensive linemen. That's why Meyer has targeted the 6-7, 287-pound Bivin as a candidate to continue the trend. Bivin, who has only four offers, has been garnering a lot of attention in recent weeks and could see his recruitment explode by the end of February.

• **Joey Bosa, defensive end, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas** – The son of former Miami Dolphins defensive end John Bosa picked up two quick offers in his junior season from Alabama and Florida State. Since then, Bosa's recruitment has taken off with six more offers, including ones from Ohio State, Florida, Iowa, Tennessee and Wisconsin. Rated a four-star prospect by Scout, the 6-5, 245-pounder plays fairly low despite his immense height. Bosa also has experience playing as an interior defensive lineman.

• **Tashawn Bower, defensive tackle, Somerville (N.J.) Immaculata** – One would think after the haul Meyer put together on the defensive line in the 2012 class that it might not be a priority in 2013. That couldn't be further from the truth, specifically with prospects such as the 6-5, 228-pound Bower available. Bower, who also played tight end during his junior season, was officially clocked in the 40-yard dash at 4.71 seconds. That, combined with his size, is enough to excite any college coach.

• **Adam Breneman, tight end, Camp Hill (Pa.) Cedar Cliff** – Standing 6-5

and weighing 220 pounds and sporting the skills Breneman does as a receiver, it's no surprise Meyer wasted little time offering the four-star tight end. Meyer is not alone, however, as Breneman has already racked up 25 scholarship offers. Regarded as the best player in Pennsylvania in the 2013 class, Breneman is the prototypical tight end Meyer likes as a game-changer in his offense.

• **Cameron Burrows, cornerback, Trotwood (Ohio) Madison** – The four-star defensive back was the first commitment in Ohio State's 2013 class, making his pledge with the hopes of setting the path for what could be one of the nation's best classes a year from now. The 6-2, 195-pounder is regarded by experts as one of the most promising players in the nation, and he certainly set a positive tone for Meyer and Ohio State's recruiting endeavors moving forward.

• **Jordan Cunningham, wide receiver, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) University School of Nova Southeastern** – Meyer has an idea of what kind of talent he's looking for at the wide receiver position, which is why Ohio State's head coach has targeted the state of Florida for prep wide-outs. Cunningham (6-3, 175) already has more than 30 offers and is viewed as one of the best high school receivers in the nation. Bringing him north with the Florida and SEC influence, however, could be quite the battle.

• **Elijah Daniel, defensive end, Avon, Ind.** – The 6-3, 230-pound prospect gained immediate attention when he recorded six sacks as a freshman on the varsity team. The younger brother of former Georgia defensive end Montez Robinson, Daniel has seen his recruitment steadily expand over the course of the past few months. Now with more than 10 scholarship offers, the four-star recruit has been hearing from coaches from all over the country.

• **Caleb Day, cornerback, Hilliard (Ohio) Darby** – Located in Ohio State's back yard, the 6-1, 185-pound cornerback showed the intangibles as a junior to earn a scholarship offer from the Buckeyes. Ohio State could have a good shot at landing Day not only because of his proximity to the program, but because the Buckeyes were on his recruitment early in the process. Day still has only the OSU scholarship offer, which was earned after an outstanding camp performance at Ohio State last summer.

• **Robert Foster, wide receiver, Monaca (Pa.) Central Valley** – Meyer has talked about wanting more playmaking speedsters at the wide receiver position, which is likely why he's hot on the trail of Foster. Known for his ability to score anytime he touches the ball due to his speed, the 6-2, 190-pounder already has piled up six offers, including one from an Oregon program that loves receivers who can make plays after the catch. As a junior, the five-star prospect totaled 37 receptions, accounting for 584 yards and 12 TDs in the process.

• **Christopher Fox, offensive guard, Parker (Colo.) Ponderosa** – Rated the No. 1 prospect in the state of Colorado by Scout, the 6-5, 285-pound prospect played both ways for his high school in his junior season. Though he's not quite sure which position he will play at the next level, Fox has concentrated on offensive line development during his time in the prep ranks. The four-star recruit owns four early scholarship offers, three of which come from Big Ten programs – Ohio State, Michigan and Iowa.

• **Kendall Fuller, defensive back, Olney (Md.) Our Lady of Good Counsel** – A prospect at the same high school as 2012 target Stefon Diggs, Fuller is the next electrifying Maryland player the Buckeyes will pursue. The 6-0, 185-pounder's recruitment could resemble that of Diggs – which lasted past signing day – because of the vast

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## RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE JUNIORS

interest he's receiving. As a junior, Fuller had 526 receiving yards and five touchdowns in addition to the countless plays he made on defense.

• **Ahmad Fulwood, wide receiver, Jacksonville (Fla.) Bishop Kenny** – The 6-4, 200-pounder's size has him considered one of the best downfield threats in high school football, particularly because he showed during his junior season that he catches nearly every pass that's within reach. After hauling in 42 receptions for 1,143 yards and 22 touchdowns – including a 27.2-yard average per catch – Fulwood has already landed 16 scholarship offers.

• **Ben Gedeon, outside linebacker, Hudson, Ohio** – Considered one of the best 2013 prospects in Ohio, Gedeon's quick offer from Ohio State most certainly shouldn't come as a surprise. The 6-2, 200 pound linebacker indicated that Ohio State, Michigan State, Michigan and Stanford will all be players in his recruitment. Michigan in particular was early with its interest in Gedeon, so the Buckeyes could be in store for a big battle with the Wolverines to keep the top linebacker in his home state.

• **Shelton Gibson, wide receiver, Cleveland Heights, Ohio** – Playing for the same high school that produced 2012 offensive line prospect Kyle Dodson, Gibson could be one of the best wide receivers in the 2013 class. Gibson was recently clocked at 4.48 seconds in the 40-yard dash and made a lot of plays for the Tigers as a junior. He has six offers to date, and Dodson told BSB at his National Signing Day ceremony Feb. 1 that he's going to make sure Shelton joins him in Columbus next year.

• **Greg Gilmore, defensive tackle, Hope Mills (N.C.) South View** – Regarded as one of the top prospects in North Carolina, Gilmore boasts 12 scholarship offers. The 6-4, 285-pounder has proved to be the prototypical interior defensive lineman, and that could go a long way in his recruitment given that position isn't often very deep. Ohio State nabbed linebacker/defensive end Jamal Marcus out of North Carolina in the 2012 class, but Gilmore could be a tough pull given the Southern influence currently taking place in his recruitment.

• **Derrick Green, running back, Richmond (Va.) Hermitage** – Though Green has yet to be ranked by Scout, his combination of size and speed already has college coaches very interested. The 5-11, 220-pounder, who hails from the same high school as current OSU linebacker Curtis Grant, already has over 20 scholarship offers. Green told BSB he grew up idolizing former Ohio State running back Eddie George and the prep star has a soft spot in his heart for the Buckeyes. Between that and his relationship with Grant, Ohio State should have a good shot.

• **Ryan Green, running back, St. Petersburg (Fla.) Catholic** – A different style runner than Derrick Green, Ryan Green is more of a speedster. His 40-yard dash time is clocked at 4.4 seconds, and he's raced his way to a list of 10 scholarship offers that is sure to continue to grow. The 5-11, 190-pound prospect finished his junior season with 1,069 yards and 14 touchdowns on the ground. He also hauled in 11 receptions for 143 yards and a score in addition to 57 tackles and two interceptions on defense.

• **Vernon Hargreaves III, cornerback, Tampa (Fla.) Wharton** – Nicknamed "Freeze" for his ability to stop opposing players in their tracks, Hargreaves looks to be one of the best defensive prospects in the state of Florida. The 5-11, 181-pounder accounted for two interceptions in his junior

year and made plays on offense, accounting for 11 touchdowns for his team. Hargreaves, a four-star prospect, already has offers from all the big Florida schools and should continue to see his recruitment expand.

• **Ty Isaac, running back, Joliet (Ill.) Catholic Academy** – If there is any doubt as to how coveted Isaac has become in the 2013 class, just take a look at the four-star recruit's offer list. The 6-2, 220-pound running back has secured nearly 30 scholarship offers, many of which come from the top programs in college football. Most known for his 515-yard, six-touchdown performance in the state championship game a year ago – a game his team somehow lost – Isaac's ability to burst out of his cuts and quickly change direction is what makes him so dangerous.

• **Patrick Kugler, offensive guard, Wexford (Pa.) North Allegheny** – The son of Pittsburgh Steelers offensive line coach Sean Kugler and younger brother of Purdue tight end Robert Kugler, the 6-4, 270-pound prospect certainly has the lineage to grow at his current position. Experts aren't hesitating to call him the best prep lineman in Pennsylvania, and the four-star recruit has the offer list to prove it. Along with his offer from Ohio State, Kugler boasts 15 others from programs all over the country.

• **Uriah LeMay, wide receiver, Matthews (N.C.) Butler** – Though Meyer had the incredibly hard task of filling out his 2012 recruiting class with less than three months remaining in the signing period, he made the time to offer LeMay less than two weeks after he was hired by Ohio State. The 6-2, 188-pound wide receiver hauled in 43 receptions for 842 yards and 14 touchdowns in his junior season. He also carried the ball 38 times for 397 yards and five touchdowns on the ground.

• **Courtney Love, outside linebacker, Youngstown (Ohio) Cardinal Mooney** – Entering his senior season at the high school that produced current Ohio State defensive lineman John Simon, Love was a regular on the sidelines at OSU games a year ago. Just recently picking up his scholarship offer from the Buckeyes, the 6-1, 222-pounder now has four offers, all of which come from Big Ten schools. Being an in-state prospect, Love has an appreciation for Ohio State and that could eventually make all the difference in his recruitment.

• **Jalin Marshall, quarterback, Middletown, Ohio** – Considered one of the best 2013 prospects in the nation, the five-star quarterback dubbed "Mr. Excitement" is already verbally committed to the Buckeyes. Though Marshall projects to multiple positions at the next level, Meyer knows he'll find a way to put the ball in the hands of the 6-1, 190-pounder. Marshall rushed for 296 yards in Middletown's playoff loss at Cincinnati Moeller last year, helping him account for 1,859 yards rushing in his team's triple-option offense as a junior.

• **Johnathon McCrary, quarterback, Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove** – Meyer's history of coaching in SEC country could pay off big for him at Ohio State, as the relationships he's built with coaches in that area could be a difference-maker. When it comes to the 6-3½, 180-pound McCrary, the OSU coach is attempting to pull the signal caller out of the Peachtree State. McCrary has developed into one of the best dual-threat quarterbacks in the country, and his over 40 offers prove that.

• **Leon McQuay, safety, Seffner (Fla.)**

**Armwood** – Though McQuay has stormed onto the scene as a national recruit, Ohio State got the top Florida defensive back on campus back in October – even before Meyer was hired. The 6-1, 175-pounder was in attendance for Ohio State's last-minute comeback victory over Wisconsin on Oct. 29. McQuay, who didn't register an interception during the regular season, had four in the playoffs while leading Armwood to a state title.

• **Marquez North, wide receiver, Charlotte (N.C.) Mallard Creek** – Another burner at wide receiver is North, who was clocked at sub-4.5 in the 40-yard dash – unique because that speed comes in a 6-3, 210-pound package. North totaled more than 1,000 yards receiving on 39 receptions – including 19 touchdowns – in addition to 400 yards rushing and five touchdowns in his junior season. He has more than 15 scholarship offers.

• **Ethan Pocic, offensive tackle, Lemont (Ill.) Township** – The 6-6, 280-pounder was one of the main reasons his high school team went 12-1 while reaching the state semifinals last year. In the process, he was invited to the U.S. Army, Under Armour and Semper Fidelis All-American combines. Pocic, who has already garnered offers from some of the top programs in the Midwest, was named the MVP of the Core6 Winter Showcase in Westmont, Ill., a camp that had some of the best talent in the country. He is rated a four-star recruit by Scout.

• **Henry Poggi, defensive lineman, Baltimore Gilman School** – Coming from the same high school that produced wide receiver Cyrus Jones in the 2012 class as well as former Buckeye fullback Stan White Jr., Poggi is starting to see his recruitment take off. Despite his size – he's 6-4, 260 pounds – Poggi has been clocked in 4.7 seconds in the 40-yard dash and has enough athleticism to also play tight end for his high school team. He already has 15 scholarship offers.

• **Billy Price, defensive tackle, Austintown (Ohio) Fitch** – A regular at Ohio State home games during his junior season, the four-star prospect will likely see his recruitment expand to a whole new level in his final high school season. Price now has nearly 20 offers from schools all over the country. Of course, Meyer wants to put a gate around the state of Ohio, but he'll likely have to work for the elite 6-4, 265-pound defensive tackle.

• **Jake Raulerson, offensive tackle, Celina, Texas** – A 6-5, 250-pounder already with 25 scholarship offers, Raulerson played both ways for his high school during his junior season. He said he grew up a Florida and Meyer fan and it was a dream come true when he received his offer on the phone from the Ohio State head coach. Raulerson helped lead his Bobcats to an 11-1 record as a junior. He gave his verbal commitment to Texas on Feb. 3.

• **Darryl Richardson, quarterback, Seffner (Fla.) Armwood** – McQuay wasn't the only driving force behind Armwood's 2011 state title, as Richardson led the way for the team at quarterback. And just like McQuay, Richardson has a scholarship offer from Ohio State to show for it. The QB has a 6-5, 230-pound frame and a strong arm and currently has offers from Tennessee and South Florida as well as OSU.

• **Wyatt Shallman, defensive end, Novi (Mich.) Catholic Central** – Though Shallman is listed as a defensive end, he also

played fullback and running back for his high school team during his junior season. The 6-3, 245-pound prospect could also project as a tight end at the next level, and he said Meyer compared him to former Florida and current New England Patriots tight end Aaron Hernandez. Though Shallman has plenty of Michigan fans in his family due to where he lives, the four-star prospect expects the Buckeyes will remain in the running for his services until the very end.

• **DeVone Smith, running back, Warren (Ohio) Howland** – The 5-11, 210-pound power back sports an uncanny ability to move like a much smaller runner. Smith racked up nearly 2,000 yards in his junior season, and his first two offers came from big-time programs that noticed – Ohio State and Michigan. Smith, who has drawn comparisons to 2012 signee Br'onte Dunn, partook of Ohio State's junior day in late January.

• **Jaylon Smith, linebacker, Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bishop Luers** – The younger brother of current Ohio State running back Rod Smith, the 6-2, 225-pound linebacker has seen a vast interest from top Midwest programs. Smith, a four-star prospect, has offers from Ohio State, Iowa and Michigan among others and will be making the rounds for various junior days. Smith is vocal about how close he is to his older brother, who was temporarily moved from running back to linebacker for the Buckeyes this past season – something that could potentially have an impact on his recruiting process.

• **Logan Tuley-Tillman, offensive tackle, Peoria (Ill.) Manual** – Despite being a mountain of a man – he stands 6-7 and weighs 301 pounds – Tuley-Tillman moves quite smoothly. That works right into what Meyer is hoping to see on his offensive line – players with size who don't lack the athleticism to handle the most talented defensive linemen. Tuley-Tillman has racked up 22 scholarship offers and isn't expected to announce his decision until after taking all five of his official visits next year.

• **Shaquille Wiggins, cornerback, Tyrone (Ga.) Sandy Creek** – What the 5-10, 160-pounder lacks in size, he makes up for with great anticipation, unmatched ball skills and playmaking ability. Obviously, college coaches know that because Wiggins has offers from schools all over the nation, including Ohio State. During his junior season, he recorded 40 tackles and had nine interceptions, two of which he returned for touchdowns.

• **Eli Woodard, cornerback, Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern** – The 6-0½, 180-pound cornerback doesn't necessarily have a physically imposing frame, but opposing teams generally shied away from throwing the football to his side of the field. Woodard believes his strengths at the position are his abilities to play press coverage and keep up with anyone, which is likely why he holds an extremely large offer list that includes the top programs in the country. Woodard has been pursued by Ohio State for quite some time, and many view the Buckeyes as having an inside track on the four-star prospect.

• **Malik Zaire, quarterback, Kettering (Ohio) Alter** – Ohio State has tried to make the Dayton area a hotbed for top talent, and the Buckeyes are certainly hoping they can land yet another quarterback from that part of the state. Not far from where current quarterback Braxton Miller went to high school is Zaire, whom Ohio State has been recruiting for quite some time. The 6-1, 190-pound prospect plays in a triple-option offense at his high school but oozes potential as a passer. Right now, Zaire's top three are Ohio State, Nebraska and Pittsburgh.