

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Ohio State Adds Centerville OT To 2013 Class

Given what Urban Meyer accomplished to close out the 2012 recruiting class in only two months of work, it was easy for recruiting experts to project Ohio State's 2013 class to be among the best in the country.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK

Ari Wasserman

That specifically looks to be the track the Buckeyes are on because the state of Ohio has senior prep talent that could be as deep as it has ever been and Meyer landed another important in-state commitment Feb. 28.

Offensive tackle Evan Lisle of Centerville, Ohio, became Ohio State's fifth verbal commitment for the 2013 class on that day. The 6-5, 260-pounder is considered one of the top prospects at his position in the nation, and he chose the Buckeyes over offers from Alabama, Michigan, Miami (Fla.) and Notre Dame among several others.

"I can't tell you how excited I am," Lisle told BuckeyeSports.com recruiting analyst Bill Greene shortly after making his commitment. "Everyone I know is so excited about my decision."

Lisle had just begun his selection process as far as recruiting was concerned, but with interest rapidly picking up from a

host of major schools, the offensive tackle said he didn't feel the need to postpone his decision.

"I loved everything about Ohio State, so there was no reason to wait," he said. "My entire family loved Ohio State and it's close to home for me. I have been a Buckeye fan since I was a little kid, so this is a dream come true for me. The academic side of Ohio State is also great, and that means everything to me."

Lisle was the latest in what has been an impressive run by Meyer in landing top offensive line talent. OSU's new head coach landed four-star tackles Kyle Dodson and Taylor Decker as well as three-star offensive guard Joey O'Connor for his 2012 class.



Evan Lisle

SCOUT24.COM

But it isn't only the OL talent that made it an easy choice for Lisle, who has noticed the Ohio State program trending upward quickly after perhaps the toughest year in the history of the program.

"I just know that Urban Meyer and his coaching staff are going to lead the Buckeyes to a national championship, and I want to be a part of it," he said.

Could Four-Star Receiver Follow Teammate To OSU?

When Dodson announced his intention to go to Ohio State, he told BSB that he's going to try to get Cleveland Heights teammate Shelton Gibson to follow him to Columbus.

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	CB	6-2	195	★★★★	Trotwood (Ohio) Madison
Evan Lisle	OT	6-6	275	★★★★	Centerville, Ohio
Jalin Marshall	RB	6-1	190	★★★★	Middletown, Ohio
Billy Price	DT	6-4	265	★★★★	Austintown (Ohio) Fitch
Eli Woodard	CB	6-0½	180	★★★★	Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern

"He isn't going anywhere else," Dodson said. "He's coming with me."

That may be easier said than done if Gibson's recruitment continues trending the way it's gone thus far. Gibson, a four-star wide receiver prospect, has more than 10 scholarship offers, and Auburn in particular has been a program that has come at him hard.

"I've been to Auburn and I love it there," Gibson said. "I need to get back with those coaches and set up another visit with them."

Sources close to BSB have indicated the Buckeyes are in very good position with the 6-1, 190-pound speedster, however, and Gibson has already made multiple visits to Columbus. Meyer has shown a great interest in the prep star, especially because he's hoping to find fast skill players to run his offense through.

"I went to Ohio State a few weeks ago and it was nice," Gibson said. "It was my first time to Ohio State, and I liked what I saw. The facilities were great and the coaches were very nice."

"We watched film on Percy Harvin from

when he was at Florida, and that was great seeing how he was used. Going across the middle is my specialty, just like he did. I'm going back there in the spring for sure."

Gibson isn't in a hurry to make a college decision, but he hopes to make a choice before he starts his senior year at Cleveland Heights.

"Once I see who has offered and who won't be offering, things will be easier," he said. "I'm still looking for Alabama, USC, Oregon and some schools like that. I will definitely be committed before my senior season, but it might not be until after I see how things go this summer for me."

Younger Brother Of Current Buckeye TE Down To Four

The Buckeyes have made the final four of tight end Mike Heuerman of Naples (Fla.) Barron Collier, another one of the top prospects at the tight end position in the 2013 class.

One of the most promising young players on Ohio State's current roster is the prospect's older brother, Jeff Heuerman, so the Buckeyes know what kind of player they

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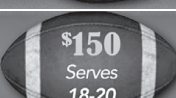
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will be getting if they land his 6-4, 215-pound younger brother.

Watching his older brother go through the recruiting process before ultimately picking Ohio State has already been a big help for Heuerman, who recently narrowed his list to the Buckeyes, LSU, Notre Dame and Miami (Fla.).

"It was amazing watching Jeff go through the process," the younger Heuerman said. "Some of the same contacts that he made, some of the same coaches who recruited him are recruiting me. I think that really helps because there is some familiarity for me with what to expect, and I am grateful that the process is a little easier on me because of it."

The Buckeyes, however, won't simply lock up Heuerman because his older brother is on the roster. The four-star prospect, who took a visit to LSU with his father March 8-9, left Baton Rouge impressed by the Tigers.

"I loved LSU," he said in the days after his trip. "I loved about everything about it. The coaching staff and Coach (Les) Miles were amazing. They really blew me away. Right now, LSU is No. 1 for me."

Given the relationships Heuerman has built in his various trips to Columbus, the Buckeyes won't go down without a fight. Heuerman has acknowledged Ohio State is going to be a tough team to beat when all is said and done.

"I felt very much at home at Ohio State on my visits there," said Heuerman, who will visit Ohio State for the annual spring game April 21. "I have been very comfortable with the players on the team and have also bonded with the new staff."

"I have spent the most time in Columbus of any college town, and I am confident that I fit in well as a student and athlete. The new offense intrigues me, and obviously I think Coach Meyer is going to be very successful."

Notre Dame was the first school to issue Heuerman a scholarship offer, but it is the only school in his top four that he has yet to visit. However, he has a scheduled visit to South Bend coming up in April.

"They have a great tradition at tight end and the education is world-class," he said. "I will know more after being on campus."

Heuerman added he hadn't expected Miami to gain this much ground in his recruitment, but he has been to Coral Gables twice and been impressed with head coach Al Golden.

His decision could be sooner rather than later.

"I am going to commit early," Heuerman said. "I will certainly be committed before my senior season if not before the summer."

Breneman Issues Verbal Commitment To Penn State

While the Buckeyes remain favorites to land Heuerman, they missed out on another top tight end prospect when Adam Breneman of Camp Hill (Pa.) Cedar Cliff committed to Penn State on March 9.

The 6-5, 230-pounder said he was fully aware of the child sexual abuse scandal that has plagued the Penn State program for much of the past six months, but being there for his in-state team at a time of need meant a lot to him.

"I want to be a leader," Breneman said after choosing the Nittany Lions over Ohio State, Maryland and Notre Dame. "I want to start the healing process at Penn State."

A first-team all-state selection and a five-star prospect according to Scout, Breneman earned more than 30 scholarship offers

before narrowing his choice to the aforementioned four schools.

Breneman, a lifelong Penn State fan, said the allure of his homestate team was too much to pass up. The outspoken tight end wasn't afraid to tackle questions about the scandal that eventually led to the dismissal of legendary coach Joe Paterno.

"I think what happened at Penn State over the past few months is a really terrible and tragic thing," he said. "And I think it's really tragic that it happened to a school like Penn State that's always had a great tradition."

"I think that out of all the bad that happened, something good is going to come out of this. I really think Penn State has started the healing process. And I really want to be a part of that and bring back the great tradition of football that Penn State fans deserve."

First-year head coach Bill O'Brien left a lasting impact on Breneman during a January visit, specifically because he coached tight end stars Rob Gronkowski and Aaron Hernandez at his former job as New England Patriots offensive coordinator.

Though Meyer coached Hernandez while he was in college at Florida, O'Brien's recent experience helped him close the deal on Breneman.

"Coach O'Brien's offense is going to be very similar to what it was like in New England," Breneman said. "I know there is going to be a lot of use of the tight end, which I'm excited about. It will definitely be a very dynamic offense."

Pennsylvania OLB Slates Host Of Unofficial Visits

When the recruiting process was just beginning for outside linebacker recruit Alex Anzalone of Wyomissing (Pa.) Area, he was only a regional recruit. Fast-forward a month later and he's suddenly one of the most sought-after prospects in the country.

Anzalone, the No. 10 outside linebacker in the nation according to Scout, has garnered more than 30 offers from some of the nation's top programs, including Alabama, Florida, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Penn State and Stanford.

"I guess coaches are sitting down and watching my film," the 6-3, 220-pound prospect said. "I know a lot of coaches don't even look at how many offers I have before they offer, and that's a good thing because I know they're offering because they actually want me."

Anzalone has already taken unofficial visits to Penn State, Michigan State, Ohio State and Rutgers, and he's currently setting up more visits in an attempt to get a better idea of how to narrow down his rapidly growing scholarship list.

The linebacker prospect will take an unofficial visit to Florida for two days on March 16, and the following two weeks he'll visit Notre Dame and Ohio State. In the first week of April he's taking a family vacation to California, where he'll take tours of USC, UCLA and Stanford.

"USC is pretty cool because they offered me—a linebacker all the way in Pennsylvania and they're all the way in Los Angeles," he said. "That was pretty crazy. I know they have a great football program, and their academics are very good because it's a private school."

Anzalone, who made 54 tackles on defense and scored 13 touchdowns and averaged 11.6 yards per carry as a running back on offense, said he hopes the recruiting process doesn't drag out too long.

"I think I want to make a decision before

the season," he said. "I will have to trim down the list, though, because I can't look at them all."

Northern Ohio QB Picks Up Big Scholarship Offer

Mentor, Ohio, quarterback Mitch Trubisky had only three offers from in-state programs before he picked up a big one from Alabama in early March that could change the landscape of his recruitment.

Trubisky (6-3, 195) was blown away by the opportunity to potentially play college football for the defending national champion Crimson Tide led by Nick Saban, one of the most prolific recruiters in the nation.

"I talked to Coach Saban on the phone," Trubisky said. "He said he watched my film. He was impressed with what I could do. He wants me to come down to see Alabama for myself. He told me about the program and why Alabama is a great school."

"It was awesome to get an offer from them. It's a good school with a lot of tradition. They have a lot of great things going. It's great for a program with so much prestige as Alabama to offer me."

Trubisky has three other offers—from Ohio State, Cincinnati and Toledo—but it is not surprising Alabama immediately jumped to the top of the prep quarterback's list.

"I like Alabama a lot and they are one of my top schools right now," he said. "They run a pro-style offense and I like how they run their team. They have won more games than any school in the past four years. That's very impressive to me. I plan to take my first visit there April 14 for their spring game."

Given that programs often follow other programs with scholarship offers, there could be a load of new opportunities for Trubisky in the coming months. For now,

though, he has only April visits to Alabama and Ohio State planned.

Trubisky finished his junior season with 3,850 yards through the air with 41 touchdowns. He also rushed for 680 yards with 12 touchdowns.

"Right now, I really like Alabama, Ohio State and Cincinnati," Trubisky said. "But I don't have any time frame for a decision."

Zaire To Participate In Elite 11 Camp

Kettering (Ohio) Alter quarterback Malik Zaire hasn't been shy about admitting he has a lot to do before he becomes the whole package at his position. Zaire, however, has been working diligently to improve his skill, and he's seen that pay off with an invite to the Elite 11 Quarterback Camp.

Perhaps the most prestigious quarterback camp, hosting the top talent in six regional locations around the country, the Elite 11 camp will have a location in Columbus on May 4 and Zaire will be in attendance.

"It's crazy how a year ago I didn't know if I was even going to be in the event and now they want me there," he said. "I've put in a lot of hard work the past year and look forward to the competition."

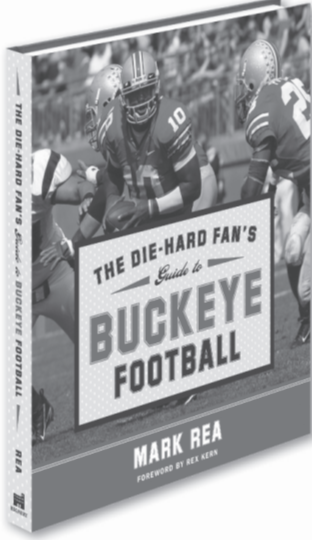
As if the camp invitation weren't enough, Zaire said one of the top programs in the nation has recently become interested in his services.

"Alabama has been talking with me the past couple of weeks, and they would really like me to come down and visit," he said. "It's not every day a quarterback gets a call from the defending national champion, so I definitely want to take advantage of it and take a look at them if I don't make a decision before that."

Continued On Page 24

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Sophomore QB To Attend Ohio State Camp

Continued From Page 23

Zaire, a 6-1, 190-pounder, had seemed to be close to zeroing in on his decision, but his recruitment has drastically picked up in recent months. The four-star quarterback is still mapping out his visits before he comes to a decision.

"Right now the plan is to visit Notre Dame later in the month for their junior day," said Zaire, rated Scout's No. 13 quarterback in the 2013 class. "I'm also looking at visiting Wisconsin, Nebraska and a few others."

Zaire has more than a dozen offers, including ones from Big Ten rivals Ohio State, Indiana, Nebraska, Northwestern and Wisconsin.

2014 QB Prospect Already Garnering Plenty Of Attention

Maria Stein (Ohio) Marion Local quarterback Adam Bertke just finished his sophomore season, but he's already quickly becoming one of the most interesting prospects in the state of Ohio.

At 6-5 and 195 pounds, Bertke has the prototypical look for a college quarterback, and he's already drawing attention from top Midwest programs.

"I've gotten questionnaires and camps invites, so it's pretty exciting," Bertke said. "I've heard from Iowa, Iowa State, one from Michigan State and I got some invitations from Michigan State and Ohio State to their camps."

Despite his physical stature and his athletic ability – he also plays basketball and baseball – Bertke admitted he had a lot

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

25 Years Ago – 1987

Tyrone Harrison of Highland Park High School in New Jersey signed a national letter of intent hoping to follow in the footsteps of great OSU fullbacks such as Pete Johnson, John Brockington and Champ Henson, just as the man who recruited him envisioned.

"He's a big, raw, talented football player, which is what we wanted," OSU assistant coach Chuck Heater told BSB. "He's really the big fullback we were looking for."

15 Years Ago – 1997

California wide receiver Ken-Yon Rambo's father, Cedric, told BSB his son had received a qualifying score on his most recent ACT, although he could not confirm if his son would stick with his previous claims to become a Buckeye.

"He's still thinking," Cedric Rambo said. "I think he's going to announce at the end of the week. To be honest with you, he's probably going to go out of state."

Tim Cheatwood of Cleveland Benedictine, a member of Ohio State's recent recruiting class, found himself in hot water after being charged with felonious assault for allegedly striking a police officer.

10 Years Ago – 2002

Junior Prescott Burgess, a safety at Warren Harding and one of the top Ohioans in his class, told BSB he was interested in becoming a Buckeye.

"They're one of the top schools on my list, and I'm going to keep them in my interest," he said.

Another junior defensive back from that part of the state, Donte Whitner of Cleveland Glenville, told BSB he was keeping things open with his recruiting and did not have a favorite yet. He visited Ohio State for the school's recent junior day along with Glenville teammates defensive end Michael Hearn, two-way back Dareus Hiley and sophomore defensive back Ted Ginn Jr.

Five Years Ago – 2007

Ohio State gained a pledge from Ohio's top junior prospect when Dublin Coffman offensive lineman Mike Adams pulled the trigger on his commitment while at dinner with OSU coaches and several other prospects in Columbus.

"It just felt right," he said of his decision before announcing that he would take a

leading role in trying to acquire more players for the class of 2008.

"Last night I actually talked to (safety) Danny McCarthy and (linebacker) Mike Zordich from (Youngstown Cardinal) Mooney, and then I'll probably talk to (Cleveland Glenville wideout) Cordale Scott sometime soon, too, and try to get those guys on board," Adams said.

One Year Ago – 2011

Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward offensive tackle Kyle Kalis cleared up a rumor he was planning to visit Michigan after Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel became embroiled in a controversy regarding potential NCAA violations.

"I've heard so much about this (damn) Michigan thing," Kalis said.

He explained the confusion arose when a reporter from a Michigan website asked him about teammates who planned to visit Ann Arbor after they along with Kalis received offers from new Wolverines head coach Brady Hoke.

"Coach Hoke offered me the other day and I was like, 'Thanks, but no thanks,'" Kalis said.

of growing pains in his first season as the varsity starter. He had spent his freshman season playing on the junior varsity team and said there was a lot to adjust to when playing at the highest level of high school football for the first time.

"The beginning was a little shaky at the beginning of two-a-days," he said. "The starting job was between me and a senior and I ended up beating him out – got the starting

role – but the first game was a little rough. I threw interceptions, but I bounced back. The coaches coached me up, we had a good running back and I got more relaxed as the season went on. By the playoffs, I was playing good football."

When it comes to the numbers alone, Bertke fared quite well. He finished his sophomore season with 2,300 yards and 27 touchdowns. He threw three interceptions in the first game, but he threw only five for the remainder of the season.

While Bertke continues to improve, coaching staffs have seen incredible potential with everything from his size to his arm. With two more years of high school football left, it is hard to imagine he won't be one of the most coveted prospects in the 2014 class.

Being an in-state prospect, Bertke wasn't shy to admit Ohio State has already been a source of excitement for him. He hopes to show his talents when participating in camps in Columbus as soon as this summer.

"Growing up, I've liked Ohio State," he said. "I've liked the Buckeyes. I'm going up there in June to the two-day camp. I'm trying to increase my speed a little bit and just reading coverages because I know going from high school to college, that's a big step as far as reading defensive schemes."

Recruiting Notes

• Ohio State took Canton (Ohio) GlenOak running back Bri'onte Dunn in the 2012 class, and the Buckeyes could be interested in a younger halfback out of the

same high school. Though Jason Simon is only a sophomore, big things are expected from him as Dunn's replacement.

"I'm excited that the coaches have confidence in me," Simon said. "My vision and cutting ability is what I do best, and I think I can run away from people. I'm working on my speed and getting stronger. I was timed at 4.6 (seconds) in the 40-yard dash, but I can get that lower."

"Bri'onte worked with me a lot before he left about being prepared to step into his spot. I would love to be able to play in the Big Ten someday, and I like Ohio State, Michigan, Michigan State and Penn State."

• Richmond (Va.) Hermitage running back Derrick Green told BSB he earned offer No. 23 from UCLA on March 11. Green, a 5-11, 220-pound prospect, is regarded as one of the top players at his position in the 2013 class.

• New Lenox (Ill.) Lincoln-Way West offensive line prospect Colin McGovern has a visit to Ohio State scheduled the weekend of April 21. McGovern, a 6-6, 280-pound prospect, is rated by Scout as a four-star recruit and the No. 9 offensive tackle in the 2013 class. McGovern has more than 10 scholarship offers, including ones from Ohio State, Alabama, Michigan, Notre Dame and Tennessee.

• One-time Ohio State target Davonte Neal has withdrawn from his high school, Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral, and will finish his academic career elsewhere. Neal, a four-star target who signed with Notre Dame, reportedly left Chaparral for personal reasons.

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