

Tywone Malone Brings Depth To Ohio State's Defensive Tackle Rotation



Since the days of the Bosa brothers and Chase Young, Ohio State defensive line coach Larry Johnson has largely opted to dip into his depth along the defensive line.

In line with that approach, Johnson is always seeking ways to improve his unit's depth, whether that be through the transfer portal or recruiting. Johnson did just that with the addition of former Ole Miss defensive tackle Tywone Malone, who committed to Ohio State on May 9.

"I hope he'll bring some depth to us," Johnson said. "I liked him in high school, recruited him out of high school. We thought we had a shot at him but he wanted to play baseball and do both. He's going to bring depth to us."

As Johnson alluded, Malone was a two-sport athlete while at Ole Miss, competing on both the Rebels football and baseball teams. On the gridiron, the 6-4, 300-pound Malone registered 13 tackles and a pair of sacks across 14 games in his two seasons at Ole Miss, while he boasted a .263 batting average and hit a trio of home runs in 13 games on the diamond.

Although Malone's baseball career has come to an end as a result of his transfer to Ohio State, Johnson emphasized that it will benefit him as a football player since he'll be able to spend more time perfecting his craft at defensive tackle.

"He played baseball, so he never had his foot fully in football," Johnson said. "I think this is the first time that he's just going to play football and concentrate on football. So, I think you're going to see a different athlete. I think he didn't do spring ball his first year there because he played baseball. That did a lot to his development to where he's at now. Certainly, he's got a great upside."

Malone will factor into a defensive tackle rotation that will likely be headlined by Mike Hall Jr., Tyleik Williams, Ty Hamilton and Hero Kanu, among others. While at Ole Miss, Malone played in various spots across a trio of schemes, but Johnson said that he will start out at three-technique for the Buckeyes.

"He went through three different schemes while he was there so he got a lot of everything," Johnson said. "I think for us, I'd like to see if he could play some three-technique. He has the ability to rush the passer, so that's what we'll start with right now."

Overall, Malone's decision to come to Ohio State was rooted in a desire to improve on the gridiron, and Johnson recognized his newfound sole attention to the sport prior to Malone's arrival.

"He wanted to make a change, that's the biggest thing," Johnson said. "I liked what he said about what he wants to do. It's a new start for him, he said it himself. It's a fresh start, getting away from baseball and really concentrating on football."