

Williams Looking To Build Off Previous Two Seasons For Buckeyes



Prior to joining Ohio State in January 2021 as an early enrollee, defensive tackle Tyleik Williams hadn't played in a regulation football game in over a year.

As the COVID-19 pandemic forced his senior season to be canceled, Williams was left without one of his true loves in football for a prolonged period of time. In that time, Williams admitted that he struggled to keep off weight and entered spring camp at 360 pounds — 40 pounds over his initial plan of arriving in Columbus at 320 pounds.

Williams struggled to acclimate in his first spring camp, tasking himself with shedding the weight he put on during the pandemic while also trying to make a case for playing time as a true freshman. Now two years later and a veteran of 25 games, Williams is down to 320 pounds and is looking to play his best football in his junior season.

"I just want to dominate," Williams said. "I feel like it's my time to step up. Our whole group needs to dominate, we need to implement the Rushmen back into what we've been."

Williams flashed in each of his first two seasons in the scarlet and gray, compiling 37 tackles, 9.0 tackles for loss and six sacks while manning the interior defensive line for the Buckeyes.

As a freshman, Williams finished second on the Buckeyes with five sacks, tallying a quarterback takedown in three-consecutive games against Tulsa, Akron, and Rutgers — while registering a pair of sacks against the Zips. But, he saw his production dwindle as the season wore on while pointing to his struggles to stay in shape prior to his freshman season as a factor in his decline.

Williams was a more consistent presence on the field for the Buckeyes as a sophomore, producing 21 tackles (2 1/2 for loss) and a sack. Consistency remains at the forefront of the Manassas, Va., native's mind as he seeks another breakout during his third season at Ohio State.

"Of course, you have to stay consistent," Williams said. "I feel like I've been out of shape, that's how I

felt. But being consistent, every play you've got to bring it. You can't take plays off, teams will notice that and start going at you."

Not only is Williams looking to put together a season of consistent production, but he's also increasing his voice along the defensive line and embracing his role as a veteran contributor. Although he acknowledges that he's a quiet guy, he said he's coming along in regard to leadership.

"We lost Taron (Vincent) and Jerron (Cage), so now Jaden (McKenzie) and I are the older defensive tackles," Williams said. "So, I'm trying to speak my mind and speak on what I know to the younger guys because I've been here going on my third year. I've seen a lot, so I'm trying to teach them."

Williams' attention to building consistent habits has been noticed by head coach Ryan Day, who emphasized that his presence was felt during Ohio State's open scrimmage on Saturday. As Williams builds up toward his third season as a member of the Buckeyes, he said he's looking for continual growth as the offseason wears on.

"Of course, I'm not at my best (right now), there's always progression to be made," Williams said. "I feel great. I feel amazing and I'm ready to play."