



# Race Against Time

*Buckeyes Still Putting Together Pieces  
In Hopes Of Strong 2026 Season*

SONNY BROCKWAY

**MAINSTAY** — With 51 new players, including 27 early enrollees from the 2026 recruiting class, the theme for the spring was building a bond that will have Ohio State ready in the fall for an arduous schedule. Fortunately, the offense is in good hands with returning quarterback Julian Sayin (10).

**By GREG WILSON**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Head coach Ryan Day is much like his predecessor, Urban Meyer, in that he never seems to be pleased with where his team stands after spring practices. He has even gone so far as to say that after the first spring practice, he usually feels like his team won't win a single game that season.

Of course, even Day knows that will nev-

er be true at a program like Ohio State, but in a year like this one, in which the Buckeyes play six teams that finished the 2025 season ranked inside the top 25, the eighth-year head coach knows that his team needs to be at its best by the time the fall comes.

So, did Day change his usual post-spring practice tune of being critical of where his team stands? Not really.

"We're still a work in progress in all three phases. This summer, we all need to focus

on getting better individually," Day said. "What comes after the spring is identifying the things we need to get better at. Each guy is in a race to get better."

Whether it's a motivation tactic for his players or if he actually believes it, the Buckeyes did have a lot of progress to make this spring.

With 51 new players joining the program — including walk-ons — and a new offensive coordinator, whom Day is entrusting to be the "head coach of the offense" in Arthur Smith, there was a lot of acclimating that needed to be done.

Senior defensive end Kenyatta Jackson Jr. said as much after the spring game.

"In the beginning, it was really rough with 51 new players coming into the program," Jackson said. "It was really rough to try to lead by example and teach people the standard of Ohio State football. Now, we're just trying to put all of those pieces

## *Four Bucks In Top 11 As OSU Leads 2026 NFL Draft*

**By GREG WILSON**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Many times, when Ohio State has a player projected to go early in the draft, the talk is about how high that player will be taken.

This time, it was less about an individual player in the lead-up to the event and more about how many Ohio State players would be taken early.

The Buckeyes were shooting to become the first team since Michigan State in 1967 to have four of its players go in the top 10 of the same NFL draft, but after the first 10 picks came and went, only three Ohio State players had their names called by NFL commissioner Roger Goodell in Pittsburgh, where it was hosted.

Perhaps the most complete NFL prospect, Caleb Downs, was the player who had a chance to go in the top 10 but dropped out of it, almost certainly due to positional value as a safety.

Downs didn't have to wait long after the top 10 selections, with the Dallas Cowboys trading up to take him with the 11th overall pick of the night. That made him the fourth OSU selection after wide receiver Carnell Tate was selected by the Tennessee Titans at No. 4, Arvell Reese by the New York Giants at No. 5 and Sonny Styles by the Washington Commanders at No. 7.

Head coach Ryan Day and multiple other Buckeyes were in Pittsburgh with his former players to celebrate when they heard their names called.

"The cool thing in the green room was, we had a group together in the corner and it was a lot of excitement, a lot of screaming and yelling," Day said. "Brian Hartline came back, Brandon Inniss was in the room, (walk-on wide receiver) Nolan Baudo was in the room. That whole area in the green room was all Buckeyes."

Even though Ohio State didn't have four players in the top 10, it was still the first time since the Spartans did so in 1967 that four from the same program went in the top 11.

Day seemed to be surprised by how much Downs dropped after watching him be so successful for the Buckeyes for the last two years.

"I don't think there was any doubt that he is a generational player, talking to dif-

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# FAN FORUM

## Buckeye Leaves

*When it comes to the spring game, every healthy player on the roster gets their chance to make an impression by the time the fourth quarter finishes. Here's who the Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff felt were deserving of Buckeye Leaves for their performances in the 15th and final practice of the spring.*

**Sam Cipriani, BSB:** For a stellar performance in his Ohio State debut, I'm giving my Buckeye Leaf to freshman wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. The five-star recruit finished with four receptions for 96 yards and

one touchdown during the Buckeyes' spring game, an early indicator of what he could bring to the Ohio State offense. The 6-5, 195-pound Henry showcased all of his physical tools, catching two passes of 30 or more yards against the Buckeye defense.

**Bobby Gorbett, BSB:** Although the defense prevailed in the spring game on April 18, my Buckeye leaf is going to redshirt freshman quarterback Tavien St. Clair. The five-star may have solidified himself as the backup quarterback behind starter Julian Sayin.

St. Clair made a few freshman

mistakes and nearly threw an interception in the first half of the game but also displayed the arm strength and accuracy that has many optimistic about his future. St. Clair connected with freshman receiver Chris Henry Jr. for a couple of lengthy completions, including a 40-yard touchdown in the first quarter.

The Buckeyes will hope to keep Julian Sayin healthy throughout the 2026 season, but St. Clair proved that he can be a talented option coming off the bench.

**Greg Wilson, BSB:** My Buckeye Leaf goes to left tackle Ian Moore, who replaced the injured Austin Siereveld

in the game. While his counterpart, redshirt-freshman Carter Lowe, was struggling on the other side of the line at right tackle against the first-team defense, Moore was holding his own and proving that his Cotton Bowl performance was no fluke.

Moore played admirably throughout spring practices when the media was able to get a look at the team, and he has put himself in the conversation to earn a major role for the 2026 season.

If Ryan Day and Tyler Bowen are looking to get their best five offensive linemen on the field come the regular season, Moore could be in that group.



## From The Message Board

"I can't think of any advantages of holding a regular 15th practice instead of a spring game. I have no complaints about the spring game, but I don't think it tells me much. I'm undecided on format. I tend to prefer having the teams 'draft/select' the players for each side rather than offense vs. defense, but I defer to the multimillionaire coaches to know what is the best approach."

— Terrier Buck

"I think the taste of a Saturday gameday atmosphere outweighs the efficiency of a 15th practice. I like seeing how the veterans blend with the newbies running plays. I like having the offense play against the defense. I think it makes for more cohesive units."

— R1TBDBITL

"That's a lot of questions. I'll just say the spring game is mainly for the benefit of Buckeye junkies who are long tired of eating cold turkey. It's also good for the players to be seen by a crowd. So keep it up, however you do it."

— PeyoteBuck

"I think it's valuable for both fans and the players to have a spring game instead of a 15th practice – the players who haven't had the chance to play in front of a large crowd in the 'Shoe, yet, at least. It can also be a solid fundraiser for NIL purposes, I imagine. In terms of what I like or dislike about the spring game, I'm fairly indifferent. This year, it was nice to see how much Tavien St. Clair has already developed. I'm looking forward to seeing what he looks like when his number is called to start. I personally prefer drafting teams for the spring game, but I can understand the value for the team of playing the full group of ones on the offense against the defensive first team, especially when there are 51 new players on the roster. They need to build some chemistry together."

—Greg Wilson, BSB

"I think a 15th practice would be more productive. The coaches could run the practice as they wish, rather than being held to a game format, and it would be a lot easier for coaches to yell at players – if necessary – in private, rather than in front of 50,000 people.

"That said, I think there is a place for a

***The Buckeyes made it through 15 spring practices with 51 new faces on the roster, with the spring game on April 18 ending the period. We asked subscribers on the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum whether they believe Ohio State would be better served by having a normal 15th practice rather than the spring game. We also asked what they like or dislike about the spring game, and whether they prefer the spring game format being the offense against the defense, or the team split up into two different squads.***

spring game, but more for the fans. A spring game breaks up the long offseason and, for Buckeye fans, it is a rite of spring. A time to see old friends, dust off the grill and clean out the cooler. It also offers a chance for fans who cannot afford to go to a real game to enjoy an Ohio Stadium experience. It's especially good for moms and dads to take the kids to Ohio Stadium without paying high prices. If the kids are not enjoying their experience, you can just up and take them home.

"I prefer breaking the team up into two squads and playing a 'game' instead of coming up with some exotic scoring system for the defense. Remember what a big deal they used to make about 'drafting' the teams? You could gather a lot of intel by watching where the team 'captains' drafted players. If a player was supposed to be an up-and-comer and he was drafted late, you knew something was up. Players are not under the same constraints as coaches when it comes to candor. However, playing offense vs. defense is probably better for building the team and team chemistry."

—Frank Moskowitz, BSB

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# Observations From OSU Spring Game

Ohio State has been spoiled in recent seasons regarding the health of its starting quarterbacks. Since Cardale Jones took over for J.T. Barrett to complete the 2014 national championship run, backup QBs have started only two of the past 145 games for the Buckeyes. Those came in 2021 when Kyle McCord threw for 319 yards against Akron while C.J. Stroud was nursing an ailing shoulder, and at the end of the 2023 season when Devin Brown made an emergency start in the Cotton Bowl after McCord had departed for Syracuse through the transfer portal.

The recent past notwithstanding, there have been notable instances in the past when Ohio State needed the services of its backup quarterback on multiple occasions.

Ron Maciejowski bailed out the Buckeyes several times during the 1968-70 glory days when Rex Kern's derring-do sidelined him. Troy Smith got his first career start in 2004 when Justin Zwick was injured, and two years later Smith was accepting the Heisman Trophy. More recently, Kenny Guiton threw for 491 yards and 10 touchdowns during a two-game run in relief of Braxton Miller in 2013, and of course, Jones rode to the rescue the following year as the Buckeyes broke their 12-year national title drought.

Is there a Maciejowski, Smith, Guiton or Jones on this year's roster? It's always difficult to tell during a controlled scrimmage with its screwy rules and cobbled-together rosters. Still, during the annual spring game held April 18 at Ohio Stadium, there were some things that caught my eye about all three quarterbacks angling to become first in line to replace Julian Sayin as the starter in 2027.

We've heard the pronouncements from Ryan Day that the No. 2 spot remains undetermined, but barring something unforeseen, Tavien St. Clair will be the backup quarterback this coming season. St. Clair has been waiting his turn since throwing for more than 10,000 yards and 100 touchdowns in high school at Bellefontaine, Ohio.

The five-star prospect showcased some of his raw talent during the spring game, including excellent accuracy on a couple of deep balls to freshman phenom Chris Henry Jr. Each pass traveled more than 40 yards in the air and was a drop-in-the-bucket dart that Henry easily gathered in behind defenders, the first for 34 yards midway through the opening quarter and the second a 40-yard touchdown with 1:45 remaining in the first period.

While those throws got most of the attention for St. Clair, the 6-4, 230-pound sophomore had other highlight moments. His first completion of the afternoon came after a smooth roll-out that resulted in a 9-yard strike to freshman Brock Boyd. He also had a nice sideline scramble midway through the fourth quarter to keep a possession alive, and I liked the way St. Clair carried out his fakes on play-action runs.

Nothing allows a defense to key on running backs more than a lazy fake by the quarterback, and while I'm not sure where new offensive coordinator Arthur Smith comes down on the run-pass option, St. Clair appeared – at least in the spring game – a perfect fit for the RPO game.

That said, St. Clair remains very much a work in progress. Oftentimes, he waits for a receiver to get open rather than throwing to a spot and relying on the receiver to have created enough space to make the catch. Then, there were a couple of near-picks when St. Clair stared down his receivers, allowing cornerbacks Devin Sanchez and Inky Jones to make relatively easy breakups.

Still, there is a lot to like about the skill set

St. Clair brings to the table.

I was less impressed with transfer QB Justyn Martin, originally a four-star prospect from California now with his third college team. Six career games – five at UCLA and one at Maryland – have produced 179 yards and one touchdown through the air and another 12 yards on six rushing attempts.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Martin is in his final year of eligibility, meaning his transfer to Ohio State was likely geared more to gaining better coaching with the hope of one day earning a spot on an NFL roster. His throwing motion often had a bit of a windup to it, delaying his release. Perhaps that could explain why he completed just 1 of 5 attempts for a modest 8 yards.

I was more excited about freshman Luke Fahey, another four-star prospect out of California. His passing line didn't amount to much – just 3 of 8 for only 26 yards – although some of that was due to the swirling wind and rain at Ohio Stadium that greeted Fahey when he got his first action at the end of the second quarter. I was more impressed with his wheels. He took off for a 5-yard scramble late in the first half and then broke away from the defense for a 61-yard touchdown romp during the spring game's final minute.

Again, I realize it was just a scrimmage, and Fahey has little chance of seeing any playing time this fall, but an Ohio State quarterback hasn't run for 60-plus yards on a single play since Barrett ran 86 yards for a touchdown against Minnesota in 2014.

As long as we're on the subject of quarterbacks running with the football, many observers seemed satisfied that Sayin began to deliver on his promise to tuck and run this season when the situation dictates itself. I wasn't one of them.

Sayin was credited with only two rushing attempts, one that netted 6 yards and the other that resulted in a 4-yard touchdown. The scoring run seemed a bit tainted to me in that Sayin didn't appear to be motoring at full speed – at least, I hope that's not his full speed – and linebacker Christian Alliegro looked like he pulled up near the goal line. Under normal game conditions, one would have expected Alliegro to have deposited the opposing quarterback into the concrete wall that circles most of the stadium.

With the receiving corps that he has at his disposal, Sayin is going to have ample opportunities when opposing linebackers and defensive backs are so concerned with covering OSU receivers that they will have their backs to the quarterback. Every time Sayin can turn a potential sack into a scramble for chunk yardage is a plus-plus for the already-potent Ohio State offense.

The question remains: Will he?

### Other Observations

For a unit that lost eight starters, three of whom were taken among the first 11 picks of this year's NFL draft, the Ohio State defense looked none the worse for wear during the spring game. But there were so many new faces, I found myself scurrying to a roster sheet to figure who was who.

During the first quarter, the Gray got its first points during a 35-26 win when defen-

sive tackle John Walker fought through a double-team and was credited with a sack of St. Clair. The 6-3, 303-pound Walker is a transfer from Central Florida, where he totaled 64 tackles, including eight for loss, in three seasons.

One name that is a little more familiar is Will Smith Jr., son of the former OSU All-American and 2003 Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year. The younger Smith tipped a Sayin pass at the line of scrimmage that wound up in the hands of defensive end Beau Atkinson, who joined the Buckeyes last year after transferring from North Carolina. That interception was worth three points to the Gray.

Freshman linebacker Cincere Johnson experienced his first spotlight moment late in the first half when he shot a gap and met running back Ja'Kobi Jackson in the backfield. Johnson's tackling technique could use a little work, but he slowed Jackson enough to allow his teammates to come in and complete the third-down stop.

It seemed all anyone wanted to talk about was the performance of Henry, but with all due respect to the 6-5, 195-pound phenom, spring-game performances mean very little when the autumn leaves begin to fall. For example, this time last year everyone was salivating over Mylan Graham and his four catches for 104 yards and a touchdown. Graham went on to total just six receptions for 93 yards in nine games during the 2025 season after which he transferred to Notre Dame.

I'm not suggesting Chris Henry Jr. is the next Mylan Graham, but I'll also reserve judgment just yet on anointing him the next Jeremiah Smith.

There are some things in Henry's game that need work, primarily attention to detail. He made the difficult look easy with his two long receptions, but he also dropped a pass midway through the second quarter he likely could catch in his sleep. I guess it's worth remembering Smith dropped the first pass thrown to him in his college career, a short flip from Will Howard on the second play of the 2024 opener against Akron.

Again, it was difficult to glean much about how (or if) the offensive approach will change from Brian Hartline to Arthur Smith. One new wrinkle was unveiled early, Sayin's game-opening flip to Jeremiah Smith on a swing screen that was a slight variation on the old bubble screen.

It also appeared that Arthur Smith isn't bashful about using his receivers to stretch the field. Despite weather conditions that included the aforementioned swirling winds and heavy rain, there were several long passes attempted during the afternoon by each of the quarterbacks.

With an obvious emphasis on the passing game, there were only 28 rushing attempts in the game. True freshman Favour Akih got more than half of those carries, finishing with 50 yards on 16 attempts. Jackson, a transfer from Florida, had 20 yards on eight carries, adding three receptions for 35 yards, and Stanley Jackson Jr. rushed four times for 7 yards. In case you didn't know, Stanley Jackson Jr. is the son of former OSU quarterback Stan Jackson.

It was nice to see new kicker Connor Hawkins deliver field goals of 46 and 42 yards. Not so nice was to watch him miss a 43-yarder. Hawkins has a big leg as evidenced by his three field goals of 50 yards or more last season at Baylor, but he needs a little more consistency. While he was 3 for 4 from 50 or more last year for the Bears, Hawkins was just 5 for 8 from 40-49 yards.



**Walker Takes Winding Road To OSU**

He may have taken an unconventional route, but senior defensive tackle John Walker eventually ended up a Buckeye.

Walker, a top-100 recruit out of Kissimmee, Fla., was recruited by defensive line coach Larry Johnson and other members of the Buckeye coaching staff out of high school. If it weren't for the distance between his hometown and Columbus, he very well might have joined Ohio State rather than UCF as a freshman.

"At that time, I just wasn't ready to leave my family," Walker said when asked why he initially chose UCF over Ohio State. "I wanted to stay home in Florida, and because I knew I probably wasn't going to be right mentally if I came out here."

Walker had a solid career as a Knight. In two seasons, he had 64 total tackles, tallied 1½ sacks and forced a fumble. He was a starter in 2025 but decided to move out of Florida and find a new opportunity this offseason.

When he hit the transfer portal, Johnson immediately showed interest in bringing him on board.

"The past relationship I had with Coach Johnson coming out of high school," Walker said when asked what attracted him to Ohio State. "He's still family to me, even though I didn't go to him at first. I hit the portal, and he was the first guy to reach out to me. I came up here for a visit, and everything worked out."

Walker hasn't been in Columbus for very long, but he says Johnson has already

**2026 Ohio State Football Schedule**

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2025 Record, Bowl Result
Sept. 5	BALL STATE	TBA	TBA	4-8, not bowl eligible
Sept. 12	at Texas	TBA	TBA	10-3, 41-27 win over Michigan
Sept. 19	KENT STATE	TBA	TBA	5-7, not bowl eligible
Sept. 26	ILLINOIS	TBA	TBA	9-4, 30-28 win over Tennessee
Oct. 3	at Iowa	TBA	TBA	9-4, 34-27 win over Vanderbilt
Oct. 10	MARYLAND	TBA	TBA	4-8, not bowl eligible
Oct. 17	at Indiana	TBA	TBA	16-0, 27-21 win over Miami (Fla.)
Oct. 31	at USC	TBA	TBA	9-4, 30-27 loss to TCU
Nov. 7	OREGON	TBA	TBA	13-2, 56-22 loss to Indiana
Nov. 14	NORTHWESTERN	TBA	TBA	7-6, 34-7 win over Central Michigan
Nov. 21	at Nebraska	TBA	TBA	7-6, 44-22 loss to Utah
Nov. 28	MICHIGAN	TBA	TBA	9-4, 41-27 loss to Texas
Dec. 5	Big Ten Championship	TBA	TBA	

helped with some of the more subtle aspects of the interior defensive line.

"Now he's really focused on the little details, and that's what I'm here for, to work on the little details and (improve) my pass rush and just continuing to work on my run game," Walker said.

Walker is only one of a deep Buckeye interior defensive line group and will have to compete with talented options such as Eddrick Houston, James Smith and many others for playing time. He took his first step toward earning playing time on April 8 when he had his black stripe removed and became an "official" member of the team.

"It's a blessing," Walker said of what it meant having his black stripe removed. "I'm here to work now. I'm here to compete, and that's what I'm going to do."

**Houston Addresses Position Switch**

After arriving in Columbus in 2024 as a five-star defensive end prospect out of Buford, Ga., Houston made a significant transition just six weeks into his freshman year, shifting from the edge to defensive tackle.

The move, though challenging, began to pay off for Houston late in 2024 during the Buckeyes' national championship run, putting him in a position to start alongside Kayden McDonald entering 2025.

After Houston played in 14 games and took just 141 snaps in the 2024 season

with just seven tackles and two breakups as a rotational piece, he was much more productive in 2025.

Though he was limited to 13 games because of an injury suffered during Ohio State's first fall practice, the 6-3, 292-pound Houston played 323 snaps, second among Buckeye defensive tackles behind McDonald, while rotating in with senior Tywone Malone Jr. He finished his season with 21 total tackles, four tackles for loss, three sacks and a forced fumble.

That increased workload in 2025 reflected both his growing comfort level in the interior and the continued learning curve that came with the position change. Houston described the transition from defensive end to defensive tackle as an adjustment that didn't happen overnight.

"It took a minute, because you can't just switch positions. At defensive end, where I'm dropping in coverage, or on the edge, I have time to think about what I'm doing," Houston said. "On the inside, everything is happening right away. You've got stuff moving across your face and stuff like that. So it took a minute. I played defensive end my whole life and then at the last second I switched. But I don't regret it, because I actually like playing 3-tech now. I have the weight, the physical and mental part of it, so it's been great."

Now in his third year with the Buckeyes, the junior is focused on making the most of

**I Believe In BSB**

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- Walt Willer, Fremont, Ohio

his opportunities while representing Ohio State with pride.

"This year, I've been focused on just the mental part, being able to keep going and regardless of what happened, knowing that God got me and that this year I'm not looking to let down any fans, teammates, or coaches," Houston said.

**Little Out For Spring Game**

Ohio State safety Earl Little Jr. was out for the Buckeyes' spring game as he continues to recover from a knee procedure. Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said that he expects Little, a senior transfer from Florida State, to return within a few weeks.

"He had a procedure on his knee, cleaning something up, so he'll be back here in a few weeks," Day said after the spring game. "Some of these things – this time of year is the right time to get them done, so that they get put behind us, as much as we love to see them continue to evolve within the defense."

Little showed flashes early in the spring before experiencing the setback that ultimately led to the decision. Day emphasized the importance of addressing the issue now to ensure long-term health.

"He certainly flashed early," Day said, "but then he had a little bit of a setback. We wanted to make sure we took care of that so that he had a full summer."

Little totaled 76 total tackles, four interceptions and two forced fumbles in 2025 with the Seminoles. He was ranked the No. 70 overall transfer and No. 3 safety in the 2026 cycle.

Day commented on all of his players who were injured during the spring on April 24, saying that he doesn't expect any



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of them to be long-term issues.

"They're all going to have a full summer," he said. "I wish we had those guys for the spring, but I think we did procedures at the right time to make sure they have a full summer. That was the most important thing. The next few weeks will be important for them to get strong."

### OL Moore Seizes "Amazing Opportunity"

With starting offensive tackles Phillip Daniels and Austin Siereveld sidelined for the remainder of the spring with injuries, backup offensive tackle Ian Moore was under the spotlight. Moore, who usually earns reps at both left and right tackle, said before the end of spring practice that he had mostly played left tackle since Siereveld was sidelined and added he was excited for the chance to play with and against first-teamers for the remainder of the spring.

Moore, a four-star recruit, earned playing time last year when there were injuries to the starters on the offensive line. Moore earned his first start in his team's 34-10 win over Purdue on Nov. 8, but he said it was a mentality shift rather than that performance that helped him improve his confidence.

"I think about midseason last year, it hit me that I used to be just so in my head about everything," Moore said. "Going into the spring, I just keep telling myself every day that I belong out here, I belong with these guys. I think not even the Cotton Bowl reps or the Purdue starting reps had anything to do with it. It was just a mindset switch that gave me a little bit more confidence."

It may not have done much to boost his confidence, but Moore played well against the Boilermakers. Appearing in 66 snaps against the Boilermakers, Moore was the third highest-graded offensive lineman by Pro Football Focus.

On paper, it's expected that Siereveld and Daniels will rejoin the starting rotation when they become fully healthy, but Day said that Moore and fellow backup tackle

Carter Lowe could take a step toward earning more playing time with a quality spring.

### Day Says Smith Making Strides As Leader

Nearly everything has come naturally to star receiver Jeremiah Smith since he first arrived in Columbus as a highly touted freshman.

In his first year as a Buckeye, Smith set multiple receiving records before hauling in 87 receptions for 1,243 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns as a sophomore to earn unanimous All-America honors.

Off the field, though, the vocal leadership role may not be the easiest thing for the quieter Smith to embrace.

According to Day, Smith has made progress using his voice to support his teammates.

"Jeremiah, as you guys know, is sort of a man of few words, but he's found his voice more and more," Day said. "I've noticed the last few practices, even when the twos and the threes are in there, he's near the huddle, he's listening to the call, he's encouraging them, he's coaching them, he's there. Leaders have to be felt. Leaders have to be heard. He's making a conscious effort to do that. I think the guys see that."

Although he may not be the loudest person in Ohio State's locker room, Smith has always set a good example with his tireless work ethic. Smith has already won Iron Buckeye honors four times (winter and summer) for his effort in the weight room. Day said it means a lot to Ohio State's culture that the best player on the team works as hard as anyone on the team.

"What he's always done since he stepped in this building is he's practiced really hard and set an example of discipline and how you practice," Day said, "When your best players are your hardest workers, it gives you a chance to build the culture. He's done that for sure, like a giant check mark from the day he walked in until just his practice today. I think what he's really working on is being felt and heard in terms of encouraging guys, pushing guys, being that leader and having an impact, and hav-

ing a connection with the guys."

### Discher Looks To Elevate OSU Special Teams

Under Day, Ohio State has more often than not been proficient on both sides of the ball, but one aspect that could use some improvement is special teams. Last year, the Buckeyes had their moments in special teams with a couple of lengthy returns, including one kick return touchdown from former cornerback Lorenzo Styles Jr, but still ranked just 67th nationally in special teams, according to SP+.

With the special teams being a mixed bag under Day, it was no surprise that he hired former Illinois special teams coach Robby Discher for the same position over the offseason.

"The goal is to always try to elevate any place you're at, and that's always a challenge," Discher said. "And it's a competitive business, and it's a performance-based business. So it's like that with the players. It's like that with the coaches. Obviously, there are a lot of things that Ohio State's done extremely well, and no sense in changing some of the stuff. Some things you feel strongly about, maybe you can have your own fingerprint on."

Discher hasn't been in Columbus for very long but already appreciates the intensity that players have brought to his drills.

"The guys do a really good job competing here," Discher said. "It's been fun to be a part of. We've done a lot of competitive drills and technical drills. All the guys on offense, defense are extremely bought in. We're just trying to get better every day."

One specific area of special teams that failed Ohio State in the postseason last year was placekicking. Senior kicker Jayden Fielding had a pivotal 27-yard field goal miss in Ohio State's 13-10 loss to Indiana in the Big Ten Championship Game and missed another field goal in the team's loss to Miami (Fla.) in the Cotton Bowl.

The Buckeyes replaced him with former Baylor kicker Connor Hawkins, who made 18 of 22 field goals last year with a long of 54 yards. Discher, who had a similarly

productive kicker at Illinois last year, with David Olano making 20 of 23 field goals, was complimentary of Hawkins.

"Connor's super talented," Discher said. "He had a great year last year at Baylor. And both (Hawkins and Olano), if you're asking me to compare them, have a really good mindset. They're never too high. They're never too low. If you miss a kick, you've already forgotten about it by the time you've got the next opportunity. So both of those guys have got a good mindset. They're both super competitive, which is a big thing as well."

### Frosh Henry Sheds Black Stripe

Ohio State gained another "official" member of its team on April 15 when true freshman wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. shed his black stripe after practice.

He was the second freshman to do so this spring, joining fellow pass catcher Brock Boyd, who lost his black stripe on March 31. Transfer receivers Kyle Parker and Devin McCuin also lost their black stripes this spring.

Henry was a highly touted recruit out of high school, joining the Buckeyes as the No. 14 overall prospect in the country and the No. 2-ranked wide receiver in the 2026 class. He had been committed to OSU since the summer of 2023 and ultimately signed with the Buckeyes despite the departure of wide receivers coach Brian Hartline.

Now, Henry is trying to make his mark on the field with Ohio State and is apparently off to a great start.

Smith, who himself was able to make a big impact as a freshman wide receiver, praised Henry when speaking with the media.

"He came in with his head down, just working," Smith said. "He's the next one up."

Henry is competing for a starting spot after former Buckeye Carnell Tate left for the NFL draft, where he was taken fourth overall by the Tennessee Titans. He will

Continued On Page 6

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# OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

need to beat out a deep room, which includes the likes of Parker and McCuin, to make it onto the field by the fall.

## JSN Rings Spring Game Victory Bell

Ohio State continued its new pregame victory bell ritual for the spring game, and it had a former star wide receiver at Ohio Stadium to do it. Jaxon Smith-Njigba was at the spring game on April 18 to ring the victory bell before the scrimmage began.

Smith-Njigba is nearly four years removed from his Buckeye career, during which he spent three seasons in Columbus and had 1,698 yards receiving and 10 touchdowns on 110 catches.

Since he left Ohio State, the star receiver has become one of the top pass catchers in the NFL, winning Offensive Player of the Year in the 2025 season. With the Super Bowl-winning Seattle Seahawks, Smith-Njigba had 119 catches for 1,793 yards and 10 touchdowns.

In his three-year career, the wide receiver has totaled 282 catches for 3,551 yards and 20 scores. At the end of the season, Smith-Njigba agreed to a four-year, \$168.6 million extension with the Seahawks that made him the highest-paid wide receiver in the NFL.

## Gray Selected In WNBA Draft

Former Ohio State guard Chance Gray is headed to the WNBA. The sharpshooter was selected in the second round of the WNBA draft with the 24th overall pick by the Los Angeles Sparks on April 13.

Gray was with the Buckeyes for only her last two collegiate seasons after spending her freshman and sophomore seasons at Oregon, but she certainly made an impact. As a junior at Ohio State, Gray had a decent season but struggled at times with consistency. She averaged 12.0 points per game but shot just 39.8 percent from the floor, including 34.8 percent from three-point range.

Gray was much improved as a senior. As the second-leading scorer on an Ohio State team that won 27 games, Gray averaged 14.7 points, 2.7 assists and 2.5 rebounds. Perhaps most important was that she greatly improved her efficiency. The Cincinnati native shot 45.3 percent from the floor and 40.5 percent from three-point range.

Gray earned All-Big Ten honorable mention after the season.

Former Buckeye Cotie McMahon also heard her name called in the draft. She was selected with the 11th overall pick in the first round of the draft by the Washington Mystics.

## The Last Print Issue Of BSB Until June 2

This is the final issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin on our winter/spring biweekly schedule. The next issue of BSB, the June issue, is set to be mailed on June 2 as we switch to our monthly summer schedule.

In this ever-changing college sports landscape, there is bound to be plenty of news between now and when the next issue hits the mail. There is no reason to wait for your next Buckeye Sports Bulletin to get the latest OSU sports news, including any recruiting or transfer portal activity.

All the news is available in real time at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all subscribers. BuckeyeSports.com also offers plenty of additional content not found in your paper. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff mans BuckeyeSports.com, reporting on the breaking stories plus posting additional features. Along with daily posts, we offer reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Also, staff members man the Fan Forum, where the discussion between staff and readers is always lively.

We want to remind readers that the complete edition of each BSB is posted at BuckeyeSports.com immediately upon completion of the paper, making the site a must for readers having continuing mail problems. This electronic service, while not a

substitute for your print edition, is a stopgap as your paper winds its way through the postal system and is also free to subscribers.

BSB is still offering a chance to upgrade your subscription to first-class mail in an envelope for football season at the current price of \$35 – \$45 through the playoffs and football recruiting in February – in advance of the upcoming postal increase on July 12. Just give us a call at (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862 to order by credit card. Or you can send your check, money order or credit card information (don't forget your three- or four-digit security code) to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Be sure to mention either the "Football Upgrade" or the "Recruiting Upgrade."

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McMahon was with the Buckeyes for three seasons before transferring to Ole Miss before her senior season. McMahon made the All-Big Ten team every year she was in Columbus and helped lead Ohio State to a Big Ten regular season title in 2023-24. McMahon was also the second-leading scorer on an Ohio State team that went to the Elite Eight in 2022-23. She averaged a career-high 19.5 points per game this season for the Rebels.

## WBB Team Returns Main Contributors

For women's basketball, the transfer portal closed on April 20, and since BSB last went to press, Ohio State announced that with the exception of freshman guard Dasha Biriuk, every player from its 2025-26 roster who still has eligibility remaining will return in 2026-27.

Despite coming off a disappointing end to last season, the Buckeyes have a promising outlook for next season needing only to replace Gray among top contributors.

Rising junior point guard Jalonni Cambridge is undoubtedly the most prominent returner. In her second collegiate season, Cambridge firmly established herself as one of the best players in the sport. Earning second-team All-America honors, Cambridge averaged career-high totals of 23.2 points, 5.6 rebounds and 4.4 assists per game while shooting 49.4 percent from the floor, including 36.0 percent from three-point range.

Her sister Kennedy, who will also be returning next season, also had a standout season. Kennedy Cambridge is not an offensive phenom like her sister, but she still averaged 9.0 points, 4.7 rebounds and 3.3 assists per game. Where Kennedy Cambridge is most impactful is on the defensive end. She averaged 3.7 steals per game, the sixth-best mark in the nation, and was named to the Big Ten All-Defensive team for her efforts last season.

Guard Ava Watson, forward Kylee Kitts and center Elsa Lemmilä all will return to Columbus after starting multiple games last season.

## Diaz Signs With OSU Women

Ohio State made a late addition to its 2026 recruiting class on April 15 when it signed 6-1 center Adriana Diaz.

Diaz played professionally for Club Estudiantes de Baloncesto in Madrid, Spain. She earned limited playing time with the team for two seasons, and played for Spain's U18 team and averaged 7.1 points, 4.1 rebounds and 1.9 assists per game over seven games.

Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff had high praise for the newest member of the team when her signing was announced on social media.

"Adriana is an exceptional talent with a natural feel for the game that immediately stands out," McGuff said. "Her work ethic, versatility and competitive drive give her the tools to become a high-impact player here. I am so excited to see her continued growth and watch her become a great Buckeye!"

Diaz is joined by Norristown (Penn.) Westtown School four-star shooting guard Atlee Vanesko in Ohio State's 2026 class.

## OSU Surveying Fans On Upgrading The 'Shoe

Ohio State is surveying fans and season-ticket holders about possible updates to Ohio Stadium.

With the help of sports and entertainment consulting firm CSL, Ohio State will have its most extensive evaluation of Ohio Stadium in nearly 10 years.

The survey focuses on improving the fan experience and exploring new seating options with the 'Shoe – particularly premium offerings like suites, club seats and all-inclusive areas with food and drinks – as Ohio State athletic director Ross Bjork and the Buckeye athletic department explore high-end alternatives after internal research showed Ohio Stadium trails other major venues in premium seating.

"We've got to keep up," Bjork told The Columbus Dispatch's Joey Kaufman. "Whether it's driving revenue, whether it's

aging amenities, whether it's fan experience stuff, it's really just making sure the stadium is modernized every step of the way."

Kevin Griffin – former Buckeye wide receiver, associate VP for brand engagement, services and partnerships, and associate director of athletics for business strategy – identified the importance of relying on verified insights, noting Ohio State's push toward a more data-driven approach.

Still, Griffin said the project is in its initial phases, with no new proposals planned until research is complete.

"This is really just listening," Griffin said. "Zero decisions have been made, and no commitment has been made to do any of this. We just want to see what people are interested in."

## Men's Lax Wins B1G Regular-Season Title

The Ohio State men's lacrosse team claimed the Big Ten regular-season men's lacrosse championship with a 9-8 last-second victory over Michigan on April 17 and a 9-8 Maryland loss to Johns Hopkins on April 18.

The Buckeyes' win came in dramatic fashion. Junior attack Garrett Haas netted the game-winner with just 3.4 seconds remaining. Yale transfer and Buckeye graduate midfielder Logan Soelberg led Ohio State with three goals.

The Buckeyes finished the regular season 10-3, with a 3-2 record in Big Ten play, finishing in a four-way tie with Johns Hopkins, Maryland and Penn State for first-place in the conference.

Ohio State then turned its attention to the Big Ten tournament, where the Buckeyes were the No. 4 seed due to tiebreakers, and fell to the Wolverines 11-8 in a rematch on April 25.

## Men's And Women's Tennis Earn B1G Titles

Ohio State's men's and women's tennis teams each captured Big Ten regular-season championships before entering the postseason.

# BSB Subscribers Show Support Through VIP Program

Now is the time for loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers to show their support through our VIP subscription program as we struggle through these times of high inflation, which have affected all small businesses. As most of you know, the newspaper business these days is challenging in even the best of times.

"We want to thank the many BSB readers who have stepped up and shown their support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "It is a true vote of confidence in what we are doing now, what we have done the previous 44 years and what we plan to do in the future."

A VIP upgrade can easily pay for itself each year with special VIP discounts and perks.

VIP subscribers enjoy a 5 percent discount on any Ohio State football trip booked through Reynolds Travel. And VIP subscribers receive a certificate good for \$10 off at Roosters restaurants, the "Fun, Casual Joint," a \$10 gift card from College Traditions, as well as a card from either Rusty Bucket or Cameron Mitchell restaurants good for \$10 off your next food purchase.

With the \$50 Brutus VIP upgrade, Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers will have their names and cities listed in two different issues annually as supporters of BSB.

Those who add \$100 to their subscriptions will have their names and cities listed in all 24 issues each year as BSB Scarlet patrons. Those who donate \$125 will be designated as Elite patrons in each issue.

And those who donate \$150 or more will have their names listed as Elite-Plus VIPs. The four largest Elite-Plus donors to the Buckeye Sports Bulletin VIP program will have their names listed in each issue as Wachsman Level Elite Plus donors, in honor of the late BSB assistant publisher, Karen Wachsman, and our largest donor will be designated as the Woody Level Wachsman Elite-Plus Donor.

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The men's squad claimed a share of the conference championship with a 4-0 sweep over Nebraska in Lincoln on April 19. The Buckeyes split the Big Ten crown with Michigan State with both teams finishing 12-1 in conference.

The win over the Cornhuskers marked the Buckeyes' 20th consecutive Big Ten championship under head coach Ty Tucker. Ohio State finished the regular season 27-3, riding a 13-match win streak.

In the conference tournament, Ohio State swept the Cornhuskers on April 23, before beating Illinois, 4-3, on April 24 and lost to Michigan State 4-3 in the finals on April 25.

The women secured their regular-season title with a 4-2 win over Washington in Columbus on the same day, sharing the Big Ten championship with Michigan and USC.

Ohio State closed out the regular season on a 10-match win streak and a 21-3 record.

The Buckeyes swept Illinois in the quarterfinals of the Big Ten tournament on April 24 before claiming a 4-2 victory over UCLA in the semifinals. Then, against

Michigan in the finals, Ohio State came up short, falling 4-2.

## Agonis Club Set To Honor Griffin

Columbus' Agonis Club recently made a big announcement when it revealed that its Person of the Year for 2026 would be two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin. The Person of the Year honor was established in 1968 "to honor individuals who demonstrate exceptional career achievement alongside remarkable leadership, kindness, and humility within the central Ohio community."

Few meet those characteristics more than Archie Griffin.

The event will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 19, at the Villa Milano Banquet and Conference Center, 1630 Schrock Rd., in Columbus. Doors open and a silent auction begins at 5:30 p.m., happy hour starts at 5:45, dinner begins at 6:30 and the program starts at 7 p.m.

There will be a live auction for two Ohio State football season tickets after the program, and the event is scheduled to end at 8 p.m.

For additional information, contact Tom Sappington at [agonisclubcolumbus@gmail.com](mailto:agonisclubcolumbus@gmail.com) or call (614) 506-1064.

The Agonis Club continues to celebrate excellence while supporting its mission of assisting central Ohio student athletes.

## Aviators HC Ginn Arrested For DWI

Former Ohio State wide receiver and Columbus Aviators head coach Ted Ginn Jr. was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated in Tarrant County, Texas, the morning of April 11, multiple reports indicated.

According to the Euless Police Department, Ginn was pulled over at approximately 12:58 a.m. for traffic violations before officers conducted a DWI investigation and took him into custody. He later posted a \$1,000 bond and was released, according to ABC6.

The arrest came just one day before the Aviators' third game of the season against the Dallas Renegades, with offensive coordinator Todd Haley stepping in as interim head coach during a 28-23 loss.

Ginn made his return to the sidelines

for the Aviators for their first victory, a 28-14 win over the Dallas Renegades on April 17.

The former Buckeye spoke about his arrest before his return.

"Well, first off, I take accountability," Ginn Jr. told ABC 6, "being a leader of my team and a leader of my family. It was just a mistake.

"It's a blessing that no one got hurt," he added. "It was a blessing that there was no car accident or anything like that. Bad decision, be accountable, look myself in the face, and just try to move past it."

Ginn played at Ohio State from 2004-06, recording 135 receptions for 1,943 yards and 15 touchdowns.

He spent 14 seasons in the NFL from 2007-20, making stops with the Miami Dolphins (2007-09), San Francisco 49ers (2010-12), Carolina Panthers (2013, 2015-16), Arizona Cardinals (2014), New Orleans Saints (2017-2019) and Chicago Bears (2020).

Ginn totaled 412 receptions for 5,742 yards and 33 touchdowns for his NFL career while also adding 486 rushing yards and two more scores.

# Offense Has Questions That Need Answered

Continued From Page 1

together.”

Earlier in the spring, incoming senior defensive tackle James Smith talked about how it was strange to walk into the locker room and not know almost any of his teammates and how that was the case for so many of the players on the roster this spring.

It's likely tough for a team to build chemistry with so many newcomers, and with how much Ohio State emphasizes the importance of “the brotherhood” every year, that's a big piece of what the Buckeyes will be working on over the summer, Day said.

“We also need to build chemistry in all three phases – offense, defense and special teams. The last piece is everybody coming together for one common purpose. We're off to a good start, but with 51 new players, we have a lot of work to do.”

But Day knew those were going to be things the team would be working through when he put this team together, and he acknowledged that after the spring, they are right where he thought they would be.

“I don't think we're behind where I thought we would be right now,” he said, “but we all know that where we are with some of these new players and some of the guys we had to replace, it's going to be a process, and so we're in a race against time.”

## Tackles Tested

One of the stories of the spring game was yet again the offensive line, maybe somewhat unfairly so. Both Austin Sierveld and Phillip Daniels – who started at left and right tackle, respectively, last season – were out.

In their places were sophomore Ian Moore at left tackle and redshirt-freshman Carter Lowe at right tackle.

While it is encouraging to see the two young players get the nod at tackle, the results were inconsistent, at best, particularly from Lowe. Moore had already been thrown into the fire, replacing Sierveld in the second half of last season's Cotton Bowl and performing well. He continued his strong performance into the spring.

Lowe, on the other hand, was beaten off the edge multiple times in the spring game, allowing defensive ends multiple simulated sacks since they weren't allowed to hit starting quarterback Julian Sayin.

It may be unfair to judge Lowe on a performance in the spring game at the beginning of his redshirt-freshman season, but if he is going to be a backup at tackle, he could be one unfortunate misstep by Daniels away from being in the starting lineup.

There is a lot of time to go before the fall, and Lowe could make major strides by then. Jackson, when asked about how the offensive line performed this spring, seemed to believe in the depth of the unit.

“Obviously, we had our two starting tackles and a couple of other guys out, but those guys have depth too,” he said. “Carter Lowe, even the freshmen who are stepping into the second group, we're going against good on good. When you come to Ohio State, you're playing against the best. It's good on

## Spring Game Box Score

### Gray 35, Scarlet 26

April 18, 2026 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
SCARLET	17	0	0	9	26
GRAY	11	16	8	0	35

#### First Quarter

SCAR – Sayin, 4-yard rush, 8:24.

SCAR – Hawkins, 46-yard field goal, 5:09.

SCAR – Henry Jr., 40-yard pass from St. Clair, 1:45.

#### Fourth Quarter

SCAR – Hawkins, 42-yard field goal, 3:28.

SCAR – Fahey, 61-yard rush, 0:31.

Att. – 40,240

Weather – Rain

Scarlet had ball on offense entire game. Gray was on defense entire game.

**\*Gray was awarded points for certain benchmarks, including touchdowns, takeaways, sacks, three-and-outs and forced punts.**

#### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.)** – SCAR: Fahey 3-73; Akih 16-50; Jackson 8-20; St. Clair 2-14; Sayin 2-10; Jackson Jr. 4-7; Martin 1-3. **GRAY:** None.

**PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD)** – SCAR: St. Clair 9-21-0-166-1; Sayin 8-15-1-82-0; Fahey 3-8-0-26-0; Martin 1-5-0-8-0. **GRAY:** None.

**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.)** – SCAR: Henry Jr. 4-96; Adolph 1-38; Roberts 2-24; Smith 2-21; Boyd 2-21; Jones 1-11; McCuin 2-10; Welcing 1-10; Guilford 1-8. **GRAY:** None.

**PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long)** – SCAR: N/A. **GRAY:** N/A.

**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** – SCAR: N/A. **GRAY:** N/A.

**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** – SCAR: N/A. **GRAY:** N/A.

**FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.)** – SCAR: N/A. **GRAY:** N/A.

**INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.)** – SCAR: N/A. **GRAY:** N/A.

**SACKS** – SCAR: N/A. **GRAY:** N/A.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.)** – SCAR: N/A. **GRAY:** None.

**TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.)** – SCAR: N/A. **GRAY:** N/A.

#### Starters

**SCARLET** – QB Julian Sayin, RB Ja'Kobi Jackson, WR Jeremiah Smith, WR Brandon Inniss, WR Devin McCuin, TE Nate Roberts, LT Ian Moore, LG Luke Montgomery, C Carson Hinzman, RG Gabe VanSickle, RT Carter Lowe.

**GRAY** – DE Beau Atkinson, DE Kenyatta Jackson Jr., DT Eddrick Houston, DT Will Smith Jr., LB Christian Alliegro, LB Payton Pierce, CB Devin Sanchez, CB Dominick Kelly, CB Jermaine Mathews Jr., SAF Jaylen McClain, SAF Terry Moore.

good every day, and I think those guys took a step forward after the spring.”

One thing the offensive line's struggles during the spring game did was give those outside the program the opportunity to see what Sayin has been working on over the offseason in terms of using his legs as a weapon.

Since being sacked 10 times in the only two postseason games the Buckeyes played, losses to Indiana in the Big Ten championship and Miami in the Cotton Bowl, Sayin and Day have both talked about the need for the signal caller to escape the pocket.

On a fourth-and-goal on the first drive of the game, Sayin and the first-team offense needed 4 yards to score. On the play, Lowe was beaten on an inside move by sophomore Zion Grady, sending Sayin scrambling to the right.

Without an open receiver ahead, Sayin tucked the ball and ran for the front right pylon, staying on his feet through the run into the end zone for six points.

If the defense were able to hit the quarterback during the game, Sayin would have been met at the 1-yard line by transfer line-

backer Christian Alliegro. Of course, Alliegro held up, but the defense reacted in a way that made it seem they believed they deserved the fourth-down stop, which would have been worth three points the way the game was being scored.

Sayin was credited with the rushing touchdown, and he claimed after the game that, even if it had been live, he was going to score.

“One hundred percent I'm scoring,” Sayin said when asked what would have happened on that play. “As the quarterback, there's going to be moments where you have to drop your shoulder and go get the first down or go get the touchdown for the team. That's part of being a tough leader.”

The comment by Sayin was met by a couple of laughs from the media in the post-game press conference. Maybe the sophomore quarterback would have powered his way into the end zone, and maybe he would have been slammed out of bounds by the 6-4, 241-pound Alliegro, but the result isn't what was important from that moment. What mattered most was that Sayin was completely serious about putting his shoul-

der down and doing what it takes to score when it's needed from him.

Maybe Day would advise against Sayin putting himself on the line in a situation like that, especially in a game that the Buckeyes are going to run away with – which there will surely be some of this season, even with the tough schedule – but a run like that could be the difference in a game, which Day has acknowledged.

“That's the X-factor. It's something that he knows. In some of the games, he did (in the 2025 season). I think going into this season, there's going to be opportunities for him to do that,” Day said at the beginning of the spring. “That can be a big point of the game. There's two ways to do that. One, when it breaks down, escaping the pocket, keeping your eyes downfield, or then escaping and getting a few yards. In the rivalry game, he had a big scramble down the sideline for a first down. That was huge. The more of that, the better.”

## Forecast Full Of Stars

As is the case in any spring game, the projected starters were mainly relegated to the sideline, which gave the future stars chances to shine.

Chief among them was redshirt-freshman quarterback Tavien St. Clair and freshman wide receiver Chris Henry Jr., and the connection the two already had together.

It began early for the duo, with St. Clair finding Henry for a 34-yard pass on the first drive for the second-teamers. That put transfer kicker Connor Hawkins in position to nail a 46-yard field goal when the offense couldn't convert.

Later on, the two connected again for a 40-yard touchdown when Henry broke free from freshman cornerback Jordan Thomas on a go route down the left sideline.

After the game, Day praised the work that St. Clair has been putting in since he arrived on campus last spring.

“Being quarterback at Ohio State is not easy, and he's battling every day,” Day said. “You can see the talent, for sure. He threw some really nice balls down the field and then missed some as well. He's got to learn from those things and continue to grow.”

“He's been showing up every day with a good attitude, and that's important. We can all see the talent. That's why he was recruited here. He's got to continue to grind and learn how to run the offense at a high level, because he's going to be an important part of this team.”

While St. Clair won't be in a battle with Sayin for the starting quarterback job this year, Henry is fighting for a role this year in the wide receiver room.

After the game, Sayin praised Henry, who is still in an ongoing battle to take the starting Z-receiver spot opposite Jeremiah Smith.

“He's done a really good job,” Sayin said. “He's a big, tall, fast receiver who can make great plays. He had some great plays today. He's done a great job of developing in the program, and I think he's got a bright future.”

# Most First-Rounders Exclusively Buckeyes

Continued From Page 1

ferent clubs, the feedback we got in his interviews and his production on the field," Day said. "It's interesting to watch the draft year in and year out. You see certain things that make you look at things sideways.

"But sitting there as a coach when you see some guys come off the board in front of somebody like Caleb Downs, it makes you wonder where they're going to be in five to 10 years looking back on this draft and if they have any regrets. I don't know, but I know the Cowboys got a great one."

Tate, Reese, Styles and Downs ended up being the only first-round selections the Buckeyes boasted this year, with defensive tackle Kayden McDonald dropping to the second round, where he was taken by the Houston Texans with the 36th overall pick.

In total, Ohio State had 11 players taken in the draft, more than any other program this year, which made it 25 players selected in the last two years, tying a record for a two-year span.

After McDonald, it was tight end Max Klare (61st overall, Los Angeles Rams), cornerback Davison Igbinosun (62, Buffalo Bills), tight end Will Kacmarek (87, Miami Dolphins), cornerback Lorenzo Styles Jr. (172, New Orleans Saints), defensive end Caden Curry (214, Indianapolis Colts) and offensive tackle Ethan Onianwa (231, Atlanta Falcons).

Day said the draft is something he always looks forward to, seeing it as the proof that he was able to do his job well for each individual player who came to Ohio State with hopes of making it to the league someday.

"When you shake a father's hand like Lorenzo (Styles Sr.), and you see Gary Downs and you say, 'Mission complete,' " Day said. "When (you're recruiting players), we talk about everything that's going to happen. Then, as a coach, you've got to follow through. To see them get drafted and walk up, put that hat on and hug the commissioner, it's a great moment."

In the Day era of Ohio State football, 28 players have been drafted in the first or second round in seven years. That compares to 24 in the seven years that Urban Meyer was head coach at Ohio State and 19 during the entire 10 years that Jim Tressel was the Buckeye head coach.

Day has talked about the standard at Ohio State and said that the players he wants to bring into Ohio State are players who are aiming to join that list of first- or second-round draft picks. He made headlines when he went on former Buckeye Cam Heyward's podcast, "Not Just Football," and said as much.

"Across the board at Ohio State, there's an expectation when you come here, you're coming to be a first- or second-rounder, regardless of your position," Day said. "Just like (how) if we don't win games and championships, they're going to find a new coach. Well, if you're not a first- or second-rounder, then this probably is not the right place for you."

That's a high standard to have for a program, but it seems to be paying off in terms of sending players to the NFL.



SAM CIPRIANI

**BEST OF THE BUNCH — Linebackers coach James Laurinaitis in only two seasons has left his mark by developing Arvell Reese and Sonny Styles into first-round picks in the 2026 NFL draft. No program had ever had two linebackers taken in the top 10 in the same draft.**

Day certainly still takes pride in players who aren't drafted in the first two rounds, and he clarified his comments a few days later when he met with the media on an April 24 teleconference.

"You heard me say the other day on a podcast that you come in looking to be a first- or second-rounder," he said. "Well, not everybody is, but it's the mindset of that being the expectation."

"We want to win every game. Does it always happen? No. Does everybody always become a first- or second-rounder? No, but the mindset is that way, and that's been here for a long time — a lot longer than I've been here."

## Linebacker U?

Ohio State has a long history of sending strong linebackers to the NFL. Chris Spielman, Randy Gradishar, A.J. Hawk, James Laurinaitis, and many more have donned the scarlet and gray before going on to have successful pro careers.

The two latest additions to that list of successful linebackers could be Reese and Styles, both taken in the top-seven picks this year.

As it was covered in the April 18 issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, Laurinaitis has become a top position coach at Ohio State, and possibly in the country after just two years in the role.

"As the head coach, I have to get the

best position coaches," Day said. "I feel like James, overnight, is the best linebacker coach in the country."

"While Arvell was getting drafted, then Sonny was going right after him, I put my arm around James, and I said, 'Remember when you first got here, and I said your job is to make this 'Linebacker U' again?' Look how quickly he did it."

Styles came to Ohio State as a 17-year-old safety after reclassifying from the 2023 recruiting class to 2022. Then, after his first two seasons with the Buckeyes, Laurinaitis clamored to have Styles drop to linebacker.

Reese was nearly moved to the edge when he joined the Buckeyes in the 2023 class, and Laurinaitis saw the potential of how much he could help the defense as a versatile 'backer.

While Laurinaitis didn't recruit either

Styles or Reese, he helped develop them at the position and has turned the linebacker room into possibly the deepest in Columbus.

"There's so much that goes into development, and he's done it in a short period of time," Day said of Laurinaitis. "You look at where it's going in recruiting and what he does in that room, he does an excellent job. He deserves recognition for the development there."

## Developed In Columbus

In the transfer-portal era, Ohio State is no stranger to bringing players to Columbus who started their college careers elsewhere.

However, even after the portal era began, the majority of the first-round picks the Buckeyes have produced signed out of high school with Ohio State and stayed there for their full college careers.

Since players have been allowed to transfer without having to sit out a year (before the 2021 season), Ohio State has had 14 first-round draft picks. Of those 14, only two of them have come to Columbus out of the transfer portal.

Downs is the latest example of that, starting his career at Alabama, and left tackle Josh Simmons — taken with the 32nd pick in the 2025 draft — started his career at San Diego State before joining the Buckeyes.

Each of Tate, Reese and Styles signed with OSU out of high school, as did Emeka Egbuka, Donovan Jackson and Tyleik Williams, who were drafted last year; Marvin Harrison Jr. in 2024; C.J. Stroud, Paris Johnson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba in 2023; and Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave in 2022.

"When you come into our program, you are going to get developed in all kinds of different ways to maximize yourself," Day said. "When you see guys who have been in the program for four or five years, you see the maturity. You see the way that they handle themselves."

Day believes the way they do things at Ohio State, in terms of player development, is better than how it's done elsewhere, and what he hears from players who have been at other programs confirms that for him.

"When we bring players in from the transfer portal, I ask them, 'What do you think? What's the big difference?' And they say it's the intensity, the way we practice, the competitiveness, the development, the interaction with the coaches — they list off a bunch of things. You watch some guys and you can recognize how long it's going to take for the program to kick in."

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# Buckeyes Bountiful In NFL Draft Takeover

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State came tantalizingly close to matching a 59-year-old record but still managed to dominate the headlines during the 2026 NFL draft in Pittsburgh from April 23-25.

There was hope inside the program that four Buckeyes would be selected in the top 10, an achievement not done since Michigan State in 1967. That didn't happen, but only because safety Caleb Downs slid to No. 11, where the Dallas Cowboys traded up to take him.

While he, wide receiver Carnell Tate and linebackers Arvell Reese and Sonny Styles were drafted as expected, their order was not.

Tate was the first Buckeye off the board at No. 4 to Tennessee. He followed Indiana quarterback and 2025 Heisman Trophy winner Fernando Mendoza, who went No. 1 to the Las Vegas Raiders. The New York Jets were next and chose edge rusher David Bailey from Texas Tech, while Notre Dame running back Jeremiyah Love went to the Arizona Cardinals at No. 3.

Some mock drafts had Reese going second to the Jets, and he was the heavy favorite to be the first OSU player chosen, so it was a shock that the honor went to Tate.

In fact, the ESPN Draft Day predictor gave Tate a 0.4 percent chance of going fourth.

Even though Michigan State's top-10 record is safe for another year, Ohio State had several notable achievements after the first round:

- It became the first school to have three defensive players taken among the first 11 picks, and never before had one program produced two top-10 linebackers.

- For the fifth consecutive year, a Buckeye wide receiver was drafted in the first round: Garrett Wilson (10th, Jets) and Chris Olave (11th, New Orleans), 2022; Jaxon Smith-Njigba (20th, Seattle), 2023; Marvin Harrison Jr. (fourth, Arizona), 2024, and Emeka Egbuka (19th, Tampa Bay), 2025.

Also, the Big Ten can thank Ohio State for having more first-rounders than the SEC for the first time since 2006. The conference had 10 compared to seven for the SEC.

It was a momentous evening backstage for the OSU players and their families, as well as coach Ryan Day.

"Just that whole area of the green room was all Buckeyes last night," Day said the next morning. "So, a lot of celebrating."

The fun continued on the second day of the draft when four more Buckeyes were chosen, beginning with defensive tackle Kayden McDonald joining the Houston Texans with the No. 36 pick.

Next was tight end Max Klare to the Los Angeles Rams at No. 61 in the second round. The Buffalo Bills had the next pick and selected cornerback Davison Igbinosun. Tight end Will Kacmarek was drafted in the third round at No. 87 by the Miami Dolphins.

Ohio State had two tight ends drafted in the same year for the first time in its history, and it is the only program this decade to have accomplished that feat.

The Buckeyes can take partial credit for another tight end, Joe Royer, who played for them from 2021 to 2023 before finishing with two seasons at Cincinnati. Cleveland selected him in the fifth round at No. 170.

On the final day, cornerback Lorenzo Styles Jr. was selected by New Orleans with the No. 172 pick in the fifth round; defensive end Caden Curry, from Center Grove (Ind.) High School, went to the Indianapolis Colts in the sixth round (No. 214) and offensive lineman Ethan Onianwa was selected with the No. 232 pick by the Atlanta Falcons in the seventh round.

In total, OSU led all schools with 11 picks, just as it did in 2025 when its 14 tied the school record from 2004 and was one behind the all-time mark set by Georgia in 2022. Alabama and Texas A&M each had 10 players drafted this year.

With 25 draftees the past two seasons, OSU tied Georgia (2022-23) for the most over a two-year span. The Buckeyes' previous best was 24 selected in 1975-76 when there were 17 rounds.

The Buckeyes' NFL class of 2026 continued after the draft ended on April 25 when running back CJ Donaldson signed



SONNY BROCKWAY

**CATCH A RISING STAR — Even though Carnell Tate (17) was the second-best receiver for Ohio State last season behind Jeremiah Smith, he was so highly thought of that the Tennessee Titans made him the fourth overall pick in the 2026 NFL draft on April 23. Tate was the first of four Buckeyes selected among the top 11, and he extended the program's streak of having a receiver drafted in the first round to five years.**

with the Saints as an undrafted free agent, as did Tywone Malone Jr.

If he, Donaldson and Lorenzo Styles make the roster, they will join fellow Buckeyes Olave, Pete Werner and Chase Young.

Long snapper John Ferlmann was invited to the Cleveland Browns' rookie minicamp.

## High Standards

The Buckeye first-rounders rated well. SB Nation gave the Tennessee Titans a B-plus for picking Tate and an A-minus to the New York Giants for selecting Reese:

"The Giants now have some talent on their defensive front with the addition of Arvell Reese. There will be some refinement needed if he moves to the edge full-time, and he can still offer some athleticism on the second level if the Giants want to use him in an off-ball role, but they have given themselves some options here at No. 5, and I love when a team seems to have a plan."

Sonny Styles drew an A grade from SBN: "An off-ball linebacker with a background as a safety might not seem like a need, but the Commanders needed some help with their front seven, and they get that with the super athletic Styles. He is one of the most athletic linebacker prospects we have ever seen, which will make him an asset on passing downs and give Dan Quinn's defense some schematic flexibility."

Meanwhile, its highest rating (A+) was reserved for the Cowboys, who moved up a spot by trading picks No. 12, 177 and 180 to secure Downs.

"In Downs, the Cowboys are getting an experienced defender who was a starter at Alabama under none other than Nick Saban, which is a massive bit of evidence to show you the kind of player he is," SBN wrote. "His awareness is off the charts, particularly in zone coverage, and he is a force against the run and as a blitz. But Ohio State used him all over the field, and he'll bring some much-needed versatility and athleticism to this Dallas defense."

"And even though Dallas had to make a trade to get him, it is worth it."

## Quotables

Tate praised his former receivers coach, Brian Hartline, for making Ohio State "Wide Receiver U."

"It starts with Coach Hartline," he said. "He pours so much love and attention into us that he sets us up for the next level. And then that's why our game is so easy to be able to translate to the next level."

Hartline was hired as the South Florida head coach on Dec. 3.

Subsequently, Igbinosun praised the wide receivers in explaining why he transferred from Mississippi to play three seasons for the Buckeyes.

"That was the whole plan," he told the Buffalo media on April 25. "They had Marvin (Harrison Jr.) up there, who was the best receiver in college football. Why would I not go against Marvin every single day, whether I'm having a good day or a bad day? I still got a lot out of it."

"Iron sharpens iron, so another man sharpens another man. If you go against the best every day, if you want to become the best, you have to go against the best every day."

Giants coach John Harbaugh on Reese: "Arvell is a versatile player, and we're going to play him at inside backer, Will linebacker. Our defense is pretty flexible. position-less, you might call it. We'll have an opportunity to move those guys around. But he'll line up next to Tremaine (Edmunds), and he'll be in the A-gap, the B-gap, the C-gap, the D-gap, and off the edge."

The Commanders were thrilled that Sonny Styles was available.

"Looking at this, we wanted to get the best player," general manager Adam Peters said. "We didn't want to draft for need, and we felt the best player staring us in the face was a linebacker."

"A lot of guys try to sell themselves, and rightfully so. It's a job interview. But he was very real and very comfortable in what he said. It gives you confidence he's going to do everything he can to be great for us."

Downs said he was not surprised to land with the Cowboys.

"I had an inclination just being around everybody, getting a feel for everybody and the vibe," he said. "I definitely knew it was an opportunity and was excited with it. So, who wouldn't want to be here? It's a great feeling."

"I was praying that morning and the whole draft process, 'I want to get in the best place for me, Lord. Put me in the place that you want me to be.' And this is where he put me, so this is where I'm going to make an impact."



**CARNELL TATE**

Wide Receiver

6-2 • 192

Recruit Rank: Overall 60;  
WR 9



**DRAFTED:** Round: 1 Pick: 4

**2025 RECORD:** 3-14

**EXPERT'S TAKE:** "This might be a best-case scenario for the Titans offense. Plenty of reports during the predraft process paired Tennessee with Jeremiyah Love, but with the Notre Dame running back off the board, Tennessee rolls with a big-time playmaking receiver instead in Tate. The former Ohio State star is exactly what Cam Ward needs to accelerate his development: Tate has natural hands, wins at the catch point, and can get deep to take the top off a defense. He can make this offense better from day one. Ward has to be doing backflips right now." – Danny Kelly, The Ringer

**DEPTH CHART:** Calvin Ridley, **Carnell Tate**, Wan'Dale Robinson, Elic Ayomanor, Chimere Dike, Mason Kinsey



## ARVELL REESE

Linebacker  
6-4 • 241

Recruit Rank: Overall 212;  
LB 22



**DRAFTED:** Round: 1 Pick: 5  
**2025 RECORD:** 4-13

**EXPERTS TAKE:** "The criticism around this pick will center on development. Reese isn't a fine-tuned prospect. He did a little bit of everything at Ohio State ... because he can do just about everything. You're hoping, in time, Reese turns into a player as dominant around the edge and inside as Micah Parsons. That's his ceiling. He just won't be that in 2026. Again: He needs time. But that doesn't mean he won't have a major role this season – that's what was lost in the pre-draft process. He'll be on the field just about every play for John Harbaugh as the most versatile chess piece at his disposal. He'll put his hand in the dirt and rush. He'll play off-ball linebacker. He'll drop into coverage. He'll line up over the A gap and torpedo the middle." – Connor Hughes, SNY

**DEPTH CHART:** Tremaine Edmunds, Arvell Reese, Abdul Carter, Kayvon Thibodeaux, Micah McFadden



## SONNY STYLES

Linebacker  
6-5 • 244

Recruit Rank: Overall 12; SAF 1



**DRAFTED:** Round: 1 Pick: 7  
**2025 RECORD:** 5-12

**EXPERTS TAKE:** "Dan Quinn is a defensive coach at heart, and his defense was in dire need of a second-level playmaker. There's no better off-ball linebacker than Styles, who can play in any subpackage and wreak havoc on an offense. He's also a high-character leader and will make for a great pairing with Leo Chenal. Styles began his career as a safety, then shifted to linebacker, where he started 42 games over three seasons, including all 16 in the Buckeyes' 2024 national championship season. A first-team All-American last year, Styles put up 244 tackles – including 22.5 for loss – nine sacks and nine passes defended." – Scott Dochterman, The Athletic

**DEPTH CHART:** Sonny Styles, Leo Chanel, Jordan Magee, Frankie Luvu, Nick Bellore



## CALEB DOWNS

Safety  
6-0 • 206

Recruit Rank: Overall 6;  
SAF 1



**DRAFTED:** Round: 1 Pick: 11  
**2025 RECORD:** 7-9-1

**EXPERTS TAKE:** "Some personnel people considered Downs, 21, the best player in the draft, even though he does not play one of the pivotal positions. He was a great player at Alabama and Ohio State. Last season for the Buckeyes, he played for coordinator Matt Patricia, who oversaw some of the Patriots' Super Bowl defenses. Downs was able to understand Patricia's defense quickly and excelled. The Cowboys added safeties Jalen Thompson and P.J. Locke in free agency, but Downs can fill a different role as a slot player. He is more than willing to be physical. He can stay with running backs and tight ends. He knows how to communicate to bridge the differences between the front seven and back end. He was one of the 12 players the Cowboys had a first-round grade on entering the draft." – Todd Archer, ESPN

**DEPTH CHART:** Malik Hooker, Caleb Downs, Reddy Steward, Markquese Bell



## KAYDEN MCDONALD

Defensive Tackle  
6-2 • 326

Recruit Rank: Overall 261;  
DL 35



**DRAFTED:** Round: 2 Pick: 36  
**2025 RECORD:** 12-5

**EXPERT'S TAKE:** "If the Texans had drafted McDonald with their Round 1 pick, it would have been applauded. In fact, I liked this connection so much that I predicted him to the Texans in my Day 2 mock draft. The Texans needed to plug the middle of the defensive line, and McDonald can do that and more. He had 65 tackles last season despite being in a position that rarely generates solo tackles. He also just turned 21 years old, so there's room for development in his game. And now he'll get to work freeing up Will Anderson Jr. and Danielle Hunter. That almost seems unfair." – Matt Miller, ESPN

**DEPTH CHART:** Sheldon Rankins, Tommy Togiai, Kayden McDonald, Logan Hall



## MAX KLARE

Tight End  
6-4 • 246

Recruit Rank: Overall 1,198;  
TE 70



**DRAFTED:** Round: 2 Pick: 61  
**2025 RECORD:** 12-5

**EXPERT'S TAKE:** "Is it possible to run packages with four tight ends? Sean McVay might be inclined to find out. Despite returning the likes of Colby Parkinson, Terrance Ferguson and Tyler Higbee, Los Angeles opts for another well-built target for Matthew Stafford. Klare, who had a solid case to be the second or third tight end taken, can help boost the passing game out of the gate ... if he can see sufficient reps." – Michael Middlehurst-Schwartz, USA Today

**DEPTH CHART:** Colby Parkinson, Tyler Higbee, Terrance Ferguson, Davis Allen, Max Klare, Mark Redman



## DAVISON IGBINOSUN

Cornerback  
6-2 • 189

Recruit Rank: Overall 162;  
CB 21



**DRAFTED:** Round: 2 Pick: 62  
**2025 RECORD:** 12-5

**EXPERTS TAKE:** "The Bills moved up to select Igbinosun, and in doing so, added another cornerback who gives them the ability to play man coverage at a higher rate than the veteran cornerbacks they purged from the roster in the offseason. Where Igbinosun lacks in body weight (189 pounds), he makes up for it with excellent height (6-2) and arm length (nearly 33 inches). Even for a slighter build, Igbinosun's physicality and ability as a run defender made him an appealing option. The newest Bills cornerback only turned 22 in early April." – Joe Buscaglia, The Athletic

**DEPTH CHART:** Christian Benford, Davison Igbinosun, C.J. Gardner-Johnson, Daryl Porter Jr., Dorian Strong, Dee Alford



## WILL KACMAREK

Tight End  
6-6 • 261

Recruit Rank: Overall N/A;  
DL N/A



**DRAFTED:** Round: 3 Pick: 87

**2025 RECORD:** 7-10

**EXPERT'S TAKE:** "It should be plenty clear by now that the Dolphins want to run the ball in 2026 – they've said it publicly all offseason and now have backed it up in the draft. Kacmarek might be the best blocking tight end in the draft and should be a road paver for De'Von Achane and company this season." – Marcel Louis-Jacques, ESPN

**DEPTH CHART:** Greg Dulcich, **Will Kacmarek**, Ben Sims



## LORENZO STYLES JR.

Cornerback  
6-1 • 194

Recruit Rank: 115; WR 20



**DRAFTED:** Round: 5 Pick: 172

**2025 RECORD:** 6-11

**EXPERTS TAKE:** "The Saints are getting one of the most impressive testers from this year's NFL Combine in Lorenzo Styles Jr., the brother of No. 7 overall pick Sonny Styles. Styles Jr. turned heads with a blazing 4.27-second 40-yard dash, the fastest time among all defensive participants. After recently transitioning to the defensive side of the ball, Styles Jr. still has plenty of room to grow. He showed inconsistencies with his fluidity and technique, which is to be expected for a player still developing at the position. That said, he was a valuable special teams contributor in college, and his elite athletic traits should give him an opportunity to make an early impact there while he continues to refine his game on defense." – Luke Loffredo, Saints Wire

**DEPTH CHART:** Julian Blackmon, **Lorenzo Styles Jr.**, Jayden Price, Beanie Bishop



## CADEN CURRY

Defensive End  
6-3 • 257

Recruit Rank: Overall 123;  
DE 13



**DRAFTED:** Round: 6 Pick: 213

**2025 RECORD:** 8-9

**EXPERT'S TAKE:** "The Colts took their second straight defensive end, adding the very productive Curry, who grew up in the Indianapolis suburbs. Curry registered 11 sacks for Ohio State in 2025, his first and only season as a starter. He displayed versatility up and down the defensive line, lining up on the edge and, on third downs, as an interior pass rusher. Among his best attributes is his high motor, which enables him to increase his production because of his effort." – Stephen Holder, ESPN

**DEPTH CHART:** Laiatu Latu, Arden Key, J.T. Tuimoloau, Michael Clemons, George Gumbs Jr., **Caden Curry**



## ETHAN ONIANWA

Offensive Lineman  
6-7 • 331

Recruit Rank: 1463; IOL 89

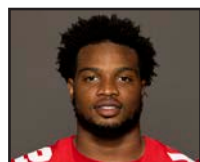


**DRAFTED:** Round: 7 Pick: 231

**2025 RECORD:** 8-9

**EXPERTS TAKE:** "Ethan Onianwa is a thick, wide-bodied guard prospect with good arm length and a stiff punch to deliver jolt. However, his marginal foot quickness and recovery skills expose soft edges that will be challenging for him to overcome and significantly narrow his path to an NFL roster spot." – Brandon Thorn, Bleacher Report

**DEPTH CHART:** Chris Lindstrom, Matthew Bergeron, Jake Matthews, Jawaan Taylor, Kyle Hinton, Jack Nelson, **Ethan Onianwa**



## CJ DONALDSON

Running Back  
6-2 • 230

Recruit Rank: Overall 934;  
TE 52



**DRAFTED:** Undrafted Free Agent

**2025 RECORD:** 6-11

**EXPERTS TAKE:** "Donaldson is a big-time run finisher with good touchdown production. He's a tunnel-vision runner with good power, but doesn't work beyond the assigned gap very often, regardless of what is in front of him. He looked a little more dynamic against Big 12 competition during his three seasons at West Virginia, but he profiled as more of a downhill hammer at Ohio State in 2025. He's ordinary on third down in protection and out of the backfield. Donaldson profiles as a potential RB3 with short-yardage value who could handle a heavier workload if asked." – Lance Zierlein, NFL.com

**DEPTH CHART:** Travis Etienne Jr., Alvin Kamara, Ty Chandler, Kendre Miller, **CJ Donaldson**



## TYWONE MALONE

Defensive Tackle  
6-4 • 309

Recruit Rank: Overall 63;  
DL 11



**DRAFTED:** Undrafted Free Agent

**2025 RECORD:** 6-11

**EXPERTS TAKE:** "Malone has the rare distinction of having won a college national title in two different sports – baseball with Ole Miss in 2022; football with Ohio State in 2024. He is slightly top-heavy but carries his weight well and uses his upper-body strength to create congestion in the run game. Though his pass-rush moves are underdeveloped, he has functional long arms that can put guards on skates (see the 2025 Indiana tape)." – Dane Brugler, The Athletic

**DEPTH CHART:** Davon Godchaux, Christen Miller, Khristian Boyd, **Tywone Malone Jr.**

# Experts View 2026 Spring As Integration Phase

By **SAM CIPRIANI**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State wrapped up the last of its 15 spring practices with the spring game on April 18, closing a camp defined more by transitioning an influx of newcomers, rather than tangible results.

With 44 new scholarship players – including 17 transfers and 27 freshmen – on the roster in the spring, much of the focus centered on building cohesion while also integrating new offensive coordinator Arthur Smith's system ahead of the fall.

That process was on full display during spring practices and in the spring game, where several transfers made their first appearances at Ohio Stadium, including wide receivers Kyle Parker and Devin McCuin, tight ends Mason Williams and Hunter Welcing, and defensive tackles John Walker and James Smith, among other notable additions.

Meanwhile, five-star freshmen Chris Henry Jr. and Cincere Johnson delivered standout performances, and injuries in the offensive tackle and running back rooms created additional opportunities that further showcased the team's depth.

With spring practices in the rearview mirror, Buckeye Sports Bulletin spoke with Eleven Warriors deputy editor Dan Hope, Bucknuts beat reporter Steve Helwagen, longtime Ohio State football reporter Tim May and Bill Landis, who covers Ohio State for the "Bill and Doug Show," to break down the Buckeyes' spring and the key storylines that emerged throughout the season.

## OC Smith Makes First Impression

Following the departure of former Ohio State offensive coordinator Brian Hartline on Dec. 3, 2025, Ohio State hired Arthur Smith to fill the role on Jan. 24.

The former Atlanta Falcons head coach and offensive coordinator for the Pittsburgh Steelers and Tennessee Titans was brought in to be the "head coach of the offense" under head coach Ryan Day.

May said the expectation is that Smith's NFL experience will help elevate Ohio State's offense, which sputtered down the stretch of the season in the 2025 Big Ten championship vs. Indiana and College Football Playoff quarterfinal against Miami (Fla.).

Smith's primary task will be revitalizing the Buckeye rushing attack after it ranked 72nd nationally in 2025, averaging just 154.4 yards per game. May stated that the offensive coordinator's track record has positioned him to do just that, with Day allowing Smith full control of the offense.

"If you look at the teams he comes from, he understands what a balanced attack means. He got kudos for helping the running game with the Tennessee Titans, then in Atlanta, he tried to run a balanced attack and even last year with Pittsburgh," May said. "The litmus test for Matt Patricia came in the first game of the year last year (against Texas). The litmus test for Arthur Smith is going to be the second game of the year (also against Texas). So that will be when we really know about him and his



SONNY BROCKWAY

**EXPERIENCE MATTERS – Although Arthur Smith is in his first season as Ohio State's offensive coordinator, he brings years of OC expertise from his time with the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Tennessee Titans as well as being the former head coach of the Atlanta Falcons. His goal is to improve the running game.**

offense and what he wants to do.

"I keep reinforcing with people this thought that it's Arthur Smith's offense. He was brought in to bring a little more pizzazz and consistency to the running game. With the emphasis they seem to put on it in the spring, even without their top running backs, I think you know that work is well under way."

While Smith's full schematic imprint wasn't fully visible during Ohio State's spring practices, early impressions centered less on X's and O's and more on structure, communication and leadership.

"I don't know that we had a ton of exposure to him necessarily, or even a prolonged view of what he's going to be doing schematically, but I like the fact that he's done this before," Landis said. "That's not throwing shade at Brian Hartline, but I think we've seen what happens for Ohio State when Ryan Day is able to hand the offense over to an experienced offensive coordinator, like Chip Kelly a couple of years ago. The vibes feel kind of similar. You just sort of trust that Arthur Smith will be organized and communicate clearly.

"They'll change some stuff schematically, and I do think he'll enhance the run game, and I'm excited to see what that looks like. But more than anything, you just like to know that there's a guy who's done this before – overseeing the offense. I think it's going to be really beneficial for everybody."

As Landis mentioned, Smith's presence has already impressed the Buckeye beat even without fully revealing what his and Day's schematic vision could ultimately develop into.

Hope echoed that sentiment, pointing to both Smith's insistence on bringing more physicality to the Buckeye offense and his experience in fostering a creative and explosive run game as early talking points around the program.

"The thing we heard a lot from people this spring was just the physicality and aggressiveness that he wants to bring," Hope said. "I think that he's going to be able to do some things schematically in the run game that were missing last year. We've seen it with all the different offensive coordinators who have come to Ohio State. It's Ryan Day's offense. It's always going to be Ryan Day's offense. They're not going to change things up drastically.

"I think, particularly in the run game, there was a step back there in terms of creativity and things they did schematically from Chip Kelly to Brian Hartline. Arthur Smith's expertise in that area is going to be able to bring that in and marry that with a lot of the passing concepts that have worked well in Ryan Day's offenses."

## RBs, OL Banged Up During Spring

While Ohio State brought back eight offensive starters, several were sidelined this spring due to injuries, creating opportunities for others to step in and showcase the Buckeyes' depth, especially at running back and along the offensive line.

Ohio State was without rising sophomore and projected 2026 starting running back Bo Jackson, who missed the entire spring after undergoing shoulder surgery, as did Isaiah West, his partner in the back-

field. To add to the fire, Buckeye freshman running back Legend Bey, a four-star recruit out of North Forney, Texas, missed the back half of spring camp and the spring game due to a hamstring injury. Rising sophomore Anthony "Turbo" Rogers also missed the spring game with an injury.

Despite the limited sample size, there was still buzz surrounding Bey inside the Woody Hayes Athletic Center and among Buckeye fans, with May noting that expectations remain high even without extensive live reps.

"Legend Bey is sort of a legend to us because we haven't really seen him do anything," May said. "Carlos Locklyn – I've never really heard a coach gush about a freshman in those terms, as he did. But we haven't really seen what he's all about, except watching video from high school and running a few drills in those early practices that we got to watch."

With four of Ohio State's top six running backs sidelined for the spring game, Florida transfer Ja'Kobi Jackson and four-star freshman Favour Akih stepped in to help shoulder the workload and fill the void left in the depleted position group.

Ja'Kobi Jackson, who is in his seventh year at the college level, had a promising spring following a season at Florida in which he was hindered by injuries with the Gators. In the spring game, he took eight carries for 20 yards, adding three catches for 35 yards and trailing only Henry in total receptions.

For Helwagen, Jackson's spring performance made him optimistic about what the veteran could bring.

"I think you have to be encouraged by what Ja'Kobi Jackson did," Helwagen said. "He's in his seventh year as a college player, and injuries have really hampered his career at community college and also in Florida. I think now you're looking at a guy, if he could stay healthy, he could be the No. 3 running back, potentially, behind Bo Jackson and Isaiah West."

Akih, on the other hand, was the most productive in the Buckeyes' ground attack, finishing with 16 totes for 50 yards and a catch for 5 yards.

The Buckeye beat saw both Jackson's veteran presence and Akih's breakout performance as encouraging signs of the depth of OSU's running back unit.

While Hope noted Ohio State would have benefited from a fully healthy running back group throughout the spring, there remains a general belief that the limited availability at the position is not a major long-term concern.

"I don't think it's a huge concern," Hope said. "Bo played a ton last year. Isaiah was out for the spring last year. I think the fact that you still have those 25 practices in August, as long as they're healthy for that, I think those guys will be fine. It's unfortunate because you would have liked to have a focused spring of skill development of those guys getting reps in Arthur Smith's offense, but I think you'd be more worried if they hadn't played significant snaps last year, especially in the case of Bo. I don't think it's a

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# Injuries Provide Opportunities For Backups

Continued From Page 13

huge concern, but it does mean that preseason camp is going to be important for those guys to ramp up.”

Landis shared a similar outlook, noting both players are still catching up on missed developmental time after a second straight year of missed spring camp.

“(Bo Jackson and Isaiah West) both could have benefited from a spring because they didn’t really have a spring last year either, as they were both coming off high school injuries. They are going to be basically experiencing spring ball for the first time, as they’re going into their junior year next year, provided they’re both healthy,” Landis said. “I think there’s enough time in the summer (to get up to speed).

“They have an offensive coordinator who’s pretty in-tune with the run game, and I think they’ll be OK. I don’t think it’s ‘Oh my goodness, five alarm, something bad’s going to happen here.’ But the run game does remain very much a mystery, because those two guys weren’t out there, and it would have been nice to come out of spring having a better idea of where exactly that was heading.”

Ohio State’s offensive line was also beat

up throughout the spring. The Buckeyes missed both of their starting tackles from 2025, Austin Siereveld and Phillip Daniels, along with right guard Josh Padilla, a key rotational piece a year ago.

It served as an opportunity for redshirt-freshman tackle Carter Lowe and sophomore Ian Moore to earn reps with Ohio State’s first team, but the pair had drastically different spring camps.

Lowe struggled against Ohio State’s top edge rushers, Kenyatta Jackson Jr. and Beau Atkinson, while Moore continued to build on his experience gained in last year’s Cotton Bowl loss to Miami (Fla.).

May identified a silver lining with the Buckeyes’ injuries across the offensive line, noting that the absence of key veterans ultimately forced younger players into valuable development reps against Ohio State’s high-level defensive line.

“The great thing is there’s a silver lining to seeing two guys have surgery in the middle of spring – Austin Siereveld and Phillip Daniels,” May said. “The other guys had to step up and play, and there’s nothing like quality reps against big-time defensive players. I thought that Ian Moore and Carter Lowe got that, but so did other guys. Gabe VanSickle, too. That was valuable to him,



SONNY BROCKWAY

**ON-THE-JOB TRAINING** – Injuries to starting tackles Austin Siereveld and Phillip Daniels in the spring allowed offensive linemen such as sophomore Ian Moore (69) opportunities for more reps with first-teamer Luke Montgomery (51) and others.

## PLAYERS ON THE SPOT

In the April 4 issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, we looked at five Ohio State players who needed to take the next step during Ohio State’s 15 spring practices. Now that the practices are done with, BSB revisited the same five players to see how they performed during the spring and if they did enough to secure their spot on the field for the 2026 season.

**Junior defensive lineman Jason Moore:** Moore went into the spring needing to prove that he’s able to make an impact on the interior. With so much depth on the line after multiple transfers joined the program, that was going to be a tall task for him.

Moore got reps in the practices that were open to the media, but he seemed to be buried down the depth chart, as he was last season with the Buckeyes. Eddrick Houston and Will Smith Jr. went out with the first team during the spring game, and when the second team went onto the field, it was transfers James Smith and John Walker on the interior.

There is still a lot of time for Moore to carve out a role for himself in the fall, with summer workouts and fall camp still to go before the season begins, but he didn’t seem to make much progress doing that during the spring.

**Junior wide receiver Kyle Parker:** The competition for the starting outside receiver spot that Carnell Tate left is still wide open after spring practices, but it was five-star freshman Chris Henry Jr., not Parker, who made the best case for himself at the spring game.

Henry finished the game with four catches for 96 yards and a touchdown, while Parker didn’t record any stats. However, most of Henry’s production came against the second-team defense, and Parker did get reps with starters at times throughout the spring, as did Henry and UTSA transfer Devin McCuin. McCuin got the call for the start in the spring game, but it didn’t seem in open practices that there was much distance between him and Parker on the depth chart.

Parker has shown his ability to play as an outside receiver as well as from the slot, and he was able to produce some as a sophomore at LSU, with 31 catches for 330 yards and four scores, so he has shown the ability to compete at the highest level and could still make the case for himself in the coming months.

**Sophomore linebacker Garrett Stover:** Stover started spring on the right foot by being named one of four winter Iron Buckeyes, along with three starters. After Jaylen McClain earned the honor last year, he pushed

his way into a starting role, which Stover is still hoping is possible after the departure of Arvell Reese and Sonny Styles, but as it stands currently, he is far from it.

Christian Alliegro and Payton Pierce received the starting reps in open practices and the spring game, and with Riley Pettijohn sidelined with an injury, it was TJ Alford who was sent into action when the defense was lined up in a 4-3 set. Stover got on the field with redshirt-freshman Eli Lee to go up against the second-team offense. Stover finished the spring game with four tackles.

Stover didn’t make much of a climb in the spring, but he could still make his way into a rotation in his third season with the Buckeyes.

**Junior cornerback Cam Calhoun:** The cornerback room is another deep one for the Buckeyes, and with Devin Sanchez and Jermaine Mathews Jr. seemingly having the starting outside spots locked up, Calhoun went into this spring hoping to carve out a backup role.

With Earl Little Jr. out at the nickel position, it was Dominick Kelly taking snaps on the outside and Mathews moving to the interior. However, when the second team came out, Calhoun was getting snaps. The ceiling for his playing time may not be that high this season, barring injury, but Calhoun was able to carve out his backup role for now.

He finished the spring game with one tackle and one pass broken up that could have been intercepted. He also had a pass-interference penalty, but he was able to get some early reps in the game.

**Sophomore guard Gabe VanSickle:** VanSickle started the Cotton Bowl loss last season with Tegra Tshabola out, and without major transfers coming in on the offensive line, he was already in very good standing in the group due to his climb last year as a redshirt freshman.

Then, Josh Padilla, who was competing with him for the starting spot, suffered an injury that kept him out for much of the spring, which made VanSickle the de facto starter if he had not already earned the role. The first-team reps likely only helped his case to stay in that position, going up against the top defensive linemen that Ohio State has to offer in practices.

With Padilla back at some point before the season begins, there will likely still be some sort of competition for the starting spot, but VanSickle was able to get a nice head start in the spring.

— Greg Wilson

because we all saw him sort of have a tough first start against Miami.

“Then you saw other guys like Josh Padilla missing, and freshman Mason Wilhelm had a good spring, because he had to step up. So that was a silver lining, and I think they really found some things there.”

While Lowe had a rough but developmental spring, Landis said he was solid but didn’t separate himself as a clear starter heading into the fall.

Landis added that Ohio State’s offensive line remains unsettled with injuries and constant personnel movement. Padilla and VanSickle are competing at guard, and Moore and Siereveld at tackle, though Siereveld has the flexibility to slide inside. He also noted the injury situation made it difficult to fully evaluate the unit as a whole.

“It was a rough spring for Carter (Lowe), but I think it’s one that he could use to grow as he moves forward,” Landis said. “I thought he was pretty solid. I was wondering if the spring game might be an instance of him making an emphatic statement that he is going to start for this offensive line in the fall, but it wasn’t quite that. Josh Padilla will compete at right guard once he gets back, then obviously Gabe VanSickle’s in that mix too.

“You still have these moving pieces on the offensive line. My prediction is that Ian Moore winds up playing left tackle, and Austin Siereveld moves to right guard, and all the other starters from last year remain the same, but you have to keep an open mind, especially with Josh Padilla. We unfortunately did not get a complete picture of where the offensive line was because of all the injuries they had.”

### Buckeye Newcomers Shine Bright

Ohio State’s newest additions have already made a noticeable impact during the Buckeyes’ spring camp. A mix of veter-

an transfers and early-enrolling freshmen delivered flashes across multiple position groups, particularly at receiver, tight end, linebacker, defensive line and in the secondary.

At wide receiver, the arrival of transfers Parker and McCuin added experience to an already crowded room. While Jeremiah Smith and Brandon Inniss return as established focal points, the pair of transfers, as well as four freshmen, have helped deepen the Buckeye receiver rotation.

Once practices got underway, Landis viewed the depth of the position group as much better than initially presumed with the two transfers and freshmen Henry, Brock Boyd and Jerquaden Guilford all turned in strong spring camps.

"Jeremiah Smith and Brandon Inniss are back, and then they brought in those two experienced transfers, with Kyle Parker and Devin McCuin," Landis said. "I think it would have been easy to just assume that those are the top four. Then Brock Boyd had that early spring breakout. Chris Henry seemed to have a late spring breakout. So I think those two guys are very much in the mix, and I'm still waiting for that Jerquaden Guilford breakout that I think could come sometime in the fall."

Boyd, the lowest-rated receiver of the bunch coming out of Southlake Carroll, Texas, became the third-fastest Buckeye ever to have his black stripe removed, doing so in six practices and trailing only Carnell Tate (five practices) and Jeremiah Smith (four) as the quickest to reach the milestone.

While Guilford had a rather quiet spring, with just one catch for 8 yards in the spring game, it was Henry who took all the limelight.

Ohio State's highest-rated recruit in the class of 2026 and No. 14 player nationally was dominant despite the defense's 35-26 victory over the offense in the spring game. Henry finished with a team-high four catches for 96 yards and a touchdown, including two passes of over 30 yards from backup quarterback Tavien St. Clair.

When asked who stood out during the scrimmage, Helwagen first mentioned Henry's performance, before adding that Cincere Johnson, Ohio State's second highest-rated recruit and five-star linebacker, also turned in a solid performance.

"The obvious one is Chris Henry Jr. Based on what we saw, he was able to get deep, and also, he didn't even really use his height in that game. It wasn't necessary. He was running by everybody," Helwagen said. "Cincere Johnson, I had him with five tackles in the spring game. He came in, played quite a bit, and did a great job. So I think the future is very bright at the linebacker position."

While Helwagen felt Henry was the Buckeye who stole the show, St. Clair also showed why he's one of Ohio State's most promising young players during the spring.

The 2025 five-star signee went 9 of 21 for 166 yards and a score in rainy weather conditions, working behind a makeshift offensive line with an inexperienced group of receivers. Despite the uneven stat line, Helwagen said St. Clair's potential stood out, especially in his early connection with Henry.

"He's still got a little way to go to just put the final polish on his game," Helwagen said. "There's a reason why (Julian) Sayin

is the starter and St. Clair is the backup, because Sayin has got that experience, but also just an understanding and that polish on his game that St. Clair will have to work on in the next year. But he is tremendously promising. He is very close."

Johnson wasn't the only addition in Ohio State's linebacker corps. The Buckeyes also brought in Wisconsin's Christian Alliegro and freshmen CJ Sanna and Braxton Rembert.

Hope called the linebackers Ohio State's deepest position group after a strong spring from those within the unit, stating that while the Buckeyes don't feature the same top-tier talent as last season, they could go seven-deep.

"I think they don't have the star power that they did last year with Sonny (Styles) and Arvell (Reese)," Hope said. "Payton Pierce is going to be the starting Mike linebacker. I think Christian Alliegro is going to play a significant role and probably be that second starter in the base, but at the very least, he is going to have a significant role in those three-linebacker sets. Riley Pettijohn and TJ Alford are also both pushing to play significant roles at linebacker. Then you have Cincere Johnson, a five-star recruit who's had a good spring. You have Garrett Stover, who was an Iron Buckeye, and I thought Eli (Lee) looked good in the spring game as well.

"They're not all going to play, but there's probably seven guys who probably legitimately could play if you needed them at a position where only two or three guys are going to play regularly. The depth there is really strong."

Ohio State's biggest additions, however,

may have come along the defensive front, where the Buckeyes brought in both interior depth and edge production this spring.

Ohio State added UCF transfer defensive tackle John Walker, as well as defensive tackle James Smith and edge rusher Qua Russaw, to bolster its defensive trenches. Both Smith and Walker earned praise from teammates and coaches for their veteran presence and hardworking attitudes, while Russaw's athleticism drew May's attention in the spring game.

"Defensively, John Walker and James Smith and Qua Russaw, just to name three," May said of who caught his eye. "I thought they lived up to what they expected from them and got better as the spring went on. They needed to add some depth there in the middle of the defensive line and then enhance the edge, which I truly believe they did."

Walker finished with one tackle and one-half sack, while Russaw was all over the field with two tackles, one-half sack and a quarterback pressure.

The Buckeye defense featured its biggest wave of new additions in the secondary, where a mix of transfers and freshmen has kept the competition as intense as ever.

Following a strong spring, Duke transfer Terry Moore is expected to step into a starting role at safety along with rising junior Jaylen McClain, while Florida State transfer Earl Little Jr., who also came in as a safety, was quickly positioned as the nickel back in the Buckeye secondary. While Little dealt with an injury late in the spring and missed the spring game, Hope still expressed confidence that he would be among Ohio State's starters in Week 1.

Cornerback transfers Cam Calhoun and Dominick Kelly are also competing for roles, with the latter of the two standing out to Hope after a strong spring game performance that included two tackles. He also noted that freshman Jay Timmons could factor into the rotation.

"I think Dominick Kelly, right now, is in position to be that No. 3 cornerback, just based on everything we've seen," Hope said. "Earl Little is probably the guy who's going to play that spot primarily. But we could see Jermaine (Mathews Jr.) kick inside with some looks there and get Kelly on the field as a third corner for a true three-corner-back look. I think that's certainly in play as well. (Leroy Roker III) and Jay Timmons are probably two other guys I'd look at who are contending for spots, potentially in those dime packages."

When looking at the spring from a broader perspective, Helwagen emphasized the value of experience gained across an Ohio State roster that brought in 44 new scholarship players.

"So many people got experience and got a chance to get their feet wet in the offense and the defense and were able either to get their college careers started or continue to build off what they've done in previous seasons," Helwagen said. "I think that was what this spring was about, to get everybody basically lined up, teach them how they practice at Ohio State, and now they can hit the ground running in the fall and not have to spend a lot of time going back over things. This spring was invaluable to get all those guys the experience that they need to be contributors for the team this year."

### Top Performers At The Spring Game

**Senior defensive end Beau Atkinson** - Coming off a disappointing first season in Columbus last year, Atkinson, a former transfer from North Carolina, was in desperate need of a strong spring. Atkinson's performance in the Scarlet and Gray Game capped a highly productive spring period. In the spring game, Atkinson had some impressive pass-rushing moments and made one of the bigger defensive plays of the game, making an interception on a tipped pass from senior defensive tackle Will Smith Jr.

**Freshman wide receiver Chris Henry Jr.** - Ohio State's depth chart won't really take shape until fall camp, but few Buckeyes stood more to gain during the spring game than Henry. The five-star recruit is seemingly in the thick of a position battle at the team's vacant outside receiver spot opposite Jeremiah Smith. Henry played about as well as anyone could have hoped. Making two receptions of over 30 yards, Henry finished the game with four catches for 96 yards and a touchdown. Henry did have a drop in the exhibition, but his size and athleticism may make it tough for the Buckeye coaching staff to keep him off the field during the regular season.

**Senior running back Ja'Kobi Jackson** - With several key running backs unable to participate in the spring game while they nursed injuries, Jackson, a transfer from Florida, performed admirably. The seventh-year runner finished the game with just 20 yards on eight carries but also proved he can be productive in the passing game with three catches for 35 receiving yards. It's unclear what Jackson's role will be when the Buckeyes get healthier at running back, but he proved he can be more than serviceable as a backup.

**Senior defensive end Kenyatta Jackson Jr.** - Unlike Henry, Kenyatta Jackson is well-positioned to start for the second year

in a row for the Buckeyes, but he was a standout in the spring game. Working against an offensive line that started youngsters Carter Lowe and Ian Moore at offensive tackle, Jackson was able to create havoc in the backfield. During one stretch of the game, Jackson recorded back-to-back sacks on starting quarterback Julian Sayin.

**Senior punter Joe McGuire** - Special teams haven't always been a strength for Ohio State under head coach Ryan Day, but this year could be different. The Buckeyes added former Baylor kicker Connor Hawkins from the transfer portal, and he made two field goals from over 40 yards but missed an attempt in the rain from 43 yards out. Joe McGuire also showed he may take another step as a senior. In the spring game, the returning starter had two punts, including a 50-yarder and a 46-yarder that stopped at the 3-yard line.

**Redshirt-freshman quarterback Tavien St. Clair** - With Sayin receiving limited reps, Saturday was St. Clair's time to shine. The former five-star wasn't without flaws but flashed his potential while completing 9 of 21 passes for 166 yards and a touchdown. He also added 14 yards on the ground on two carries. St. Clair's best pass came in the first quarter when Henry found an open patch of grass deep down the field. St. Clair calmly stepped up in the pocket and rifled a pass that traveled over 40 yards in the air, right on the money to Henry.

**Freshman defensive end Khary Wilder** - Despite being one of the highest-rated players in Ohio State's most recent recruiting class, Wilder is unlikely to start at a deep defensive end position. Still, he showed he's made plenty of progress in the spring during the exhibition. Wilder made mincemeat of Ohio State's backup offensive linemen in the second half of the spring game and routinely found himself in the backfield.

# Henry and St. Clair Shine In Spring Game

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The final score didn't matter, and any and all statistics were just numbers without a backbone, but Ohio State football is Ohio State football, so spotty weather didn't prevent a decent turnout for the annual spring game on April 18.

Freshman Chris Henry Jr. gave the 40,240 fans in Ohio Stadium a glimpse of his potentially bright future on a rainy afternoon.

The heralded wide receiver and son of late Cincinnati Bengals receiver Chris Henry had catches of 36 and 40 yards, the latter for a touchdown, in the first quarter, with both thrown by redshirt freshman Tavien St. Clair, the presumed backup to Julian Sayin.

Those were among the highlights when the Gray (defense) defeated the Scarlet (offense) 35-26.

"It was good to get those guys in that environment," coach Ryan Day said. "There's no substitute for being out there in the stadium, even in a setting like this."

If the result seems strange it's because of the scoring system: The offense scored as it would in a normal game. The defense got seven points for a defensive touchdown, three points for a takeaway, three points for a three-and-out, two points for a sack and one point for forcing a punt or fourth-down

stop.

Also, the first quarter was 15 minutes and the second 12 with normal stoppages. The 12-minute third quarter and the 10-minute fourth used a running clock, and the entire scrimmage took less than two hours.

The Gray, after falling behind early, dominated to take a 27-17 halftime lead.

## How It Happened

The game was expected to be an aerial display because of a lack of running backs, with sophomores Bo Jackson and Isaiah West missing the spring practices while recovering from shoulder surgeries. Freshman Legend Bey was nursing a hamstring injury, and Anthony "Turbo" Rogers was unavailable.

Transfer running back Ja'Kobi Jackson started, freshman Favour Akih was called upon frequently, and sophomore Stanley Jackson Jr. saw action. With Bo, Ja'Kobi and Stanley, all the Buckeyes needed was a Tito and a Michael for a Jackson Five backfield.

Also, 2025 starting tackles Austin Siereveld and Phillip Daniels were among those who did not play.

With the attention on the passing game, it was ironic that Sayin's 4-yard run was the first score on the first drive. He has been tasked with improving his mobil-



SONNY BROCKWAY

**PUTTING IN THE WORK** — Redshirt-freshman quarterback Tavien St. Clair (9) wowed the 40,240 spectators at the spring game in Ohio Stadium on April 18 with several of his throws, including a 40-yard touchdown to freshman Chris Henry Jr.

## Spring Scholarship Roster — Offense

QUARTERBACK				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
10	Julian Sayin	6-1	208	So./3
9	Tavien St. Clair	6-4	230	R-Fr./4
16	Justyn Martin	6-4	230	Sr./1
13	Luke Fahey	5-11	206	Fr./4

**Comments:** Ohio State returns a starting quarterback for the first time since the 2022 season, with Sayin coming back after a fourth-place finish in Heisman Trophy voting. There will be no battle for the starting spot, but St. Clair showed during the spring game that the QB room has some depth. He showed off his arm with two deep balls completed to freshman receiver Chris Henry Jr. in the spring game, and both Martin and Fahey showed the ability to move around out of the pocket. Sayin was 8 of 15 in the spring game for 82 yards, with 10 yards rushing and a touchdown on the ground.

RUNNING BACK				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
25	Bo Jackson	6-0	217	So./3
32	Isaiah West	5-10	210	So./3
24	Ja'Kobi Jackson	5-11	217	Sr./1

**Other scholarship players:** Anthony "Turbo" Rogers (R-Fr.), Legend Bey (Fr.), Favour Akih (Fr.).

**Comments:** The Buckeyes were without Bo Jackson and West for all of the spring, both of whom were out due to shoulder operations. Both proved by the end of last season that they were reliable options in the backfield, and Bo Jackson will likely still be the No. 1 back in the room. Whatever the Buckeyes plan to do with their third option is yet to be seen, but there is an ongoing battle for that role. Ja'Kobi Jackson started the spring game, but Bey was also out with an injury and coaches spoke very highly of the skill and speed he brings to the backfield. Regardless, there is solid depth in the room.

WIDE RECEIVER				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
4	Jeremiah Smith	6-3	223	Jr./2

1	Brandon Inniss	6-0	199	Sr./1
3	Devin McCuin	6-0	189	Sr./1
15	Chris Henry Jr.	6-5	195	Fr./4
5	Kyle Parker	5-10	195	Jr./2

**Other scholarship players:** David Adolph (Sr.), Phillip Bell (R-Fr.), Brock Boyd (Fr.), Jerquaden Guilford (Fr.), Jaeden Ricketts (Fr.).

**Comments:** Even with Brian Hartline leaving his wide receivers coach position, the Buckeyes have been able to build a deep room yet again, with transfer additions contributing to that depth for the first time in McCuin and Parker. With Carnell Tate leaving, the starting spot opposite Smith is wide open. McCuin earned that start in the spring game, but he, Henry and Parker will likely compete through the fall for it. Boyd and Guilford have also shown flashes since they arrived on campus and could contribute at some point down the road for Ohio State.

TIGHT END				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
83	Nate Roberts	6-5	240	So./3
84	Hunter Welcing	6-3	246	Gr./1
86	Mason Williams	6-4	247	Sr./1
85	Bennett Christian	6-6	250	Gr./1

**Other scholarship players:** Max LeBlanc (So.), Brody Lennon (R-Fr.), Nick Lautar (Fr.).

**Comments:** Under offensive coordinator Hartline last year, the Buckeyes ran a lot of heavy sets, with tight ends being a major part of the offense throughout the year. At times, four tight ends were getting on the field at the same time, with Roberts earning time at fullback, mostly as a blocker. Now Roberts slots in as the starter, with transfers Welcing and Williams providing a lot of Division I experience, as does Christian. With Christian out for the spring game, it was LeBlanc earning snaps in his place as a blocker, and he performed well when he was on the field, opening holes for runners.

LEFT TACKLE				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
67	Austin Siereveld	6-5	325	Jr./2
69	Ian Moore	6-6	312	So./3

67	Austin Siereveld	6-5	325	Jr./2
69	Ian Moore	6-6	312	So./3

LEFT GUARD				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
51	Luke Montgomery	6-5	312	Sr./1
76	Jake Cook	6-4	306	R-Fr./4

CENTER				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
75	Carson Hinzman	6-5	300	Gr./1
62	Josh Padilla	6-4	300	Jr./2

RIGHT GUARD				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
58	Gabe VanSickle	6-5	316	So./3
62	Josh Padilla	6-4	300	Jr./2

RIGHT TACKLE				
No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
70	Phillip Daniels	6-5	315	Jr./2
74	Carter Lowe	6-6	313	R-Fr./4

**Other scholarship players:** Deontae Armstrong (So.), Sam Greer (Fr.), Maxwell Riley (Fr.), Landry Brede (Fr.), Mason Wilhelm (Fr.).

**Comments:** Having given up 10 sacks combined in the only two losses that Ohio State suffered last season, the offensive line had a lot of eyes on it over the offseason, and the Buckeyes decided to stick with four of the five starters they had last year, with right guard being the exception. If they are able to remain healthy, it could be a strong unit with the experience they have playing together. There also remains the possibility that Moore ends up starting at left tackle and Siereveld slides back inside to right guard in an effort to get the best five in the lineup. The Buckeyes will also be joined by incoming freshman Tucker Smith in the summer.

## Spring Scholarship Roster - Defense

### DEFENSIVE END

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
2	Kenyatta Jackson Jr.	6-6	265	Sr./1
12	Beau Atkinson	6-6	258	Sr./1
4	Qua Russaw	6-2	240	Jr./2
9	Zion Grady	6-4	258	So./3

**Other scholarship players:** Epi Sitanilei (R-Fr.), Khary Wilder (Fr.), Dre Quinn (Fr.)

**Comments:** With all of the strong defensive linemen who have gone through Ohio State, even in the time that Kenyatta Jackson has been with the program, he said after the spring game that he thinks this is the strongest group the Buckeyes have had in his five years in Columbus. Jackson will surely start for the second straight year, and the spot across him will be up for grabs in the fall, with Atkinson pushing to try to earn the role over Alabama transfer Russaw. Grady will be able to provide strong reps as a backup, and Wilder had a solid spring-game performance to give confidence in the future of the room.

### DEFENSIVE TACKLE

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
3	James Smith	6-2	314	Sr./1
96	Eddrick Houston	6-3	292	Jr./2
55	John Walker	6-3	303	Jr./2
53	Will Smith Jr.	6-4	292	Jr./2

**Other scholarship players:** Jason Moore (Jr.), Jamir Perez (Fr.), Emanuel Ruffin (Fr.), Darryus McKinley (Fr.), Damari Simeon (Fr.)

**Comments:** James Smith didn't earn the start in the spring game, but as possibly the most talented transfer the Buckeyes brought in over the offseason, it would be a surprise to see him not earn that role by the time the regular season begins. Smith has also been getting most of his reps at nose tackle, so that means Houston will likely start at three-tech. Walker and Will Smith will both be solid backups, with Will Smith proving he could handle that role last season behind Kayden McDonald. The Buckeyes may not feel very comfortable going more than two deep at the position, however, which isn't necessary for the interior to be great.

### LINEBACKER

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
26	Payton Pierce	6-1	228	Jr./2

ity, and he took off on a sprint to the right pylon shortly after opening the game with a 6-yard pass to Jeremiah Smith.

Of course, Sayin and the other quarterbacks were untouchable, so it might have been a different outcome for him if Wisconsin senior transfer linebacker Christian Alliegro hadn't given him a free pass to scamper into the end zone.

Baylor transfer Connor Hawkins kicked a 46-yard field goal during a drive that featured Henry's 36-yard grab, to make it 10-2 for the Scarlet.

Sayin was then intercepted when Will Smith Jr. deflected a pass at the line of scrimmage, and defensive end Beau Atkinson made the pick.

St. Clair followed a few plays later with his strike to Henry in the left front corner of the end zone to make it 17-5, but St. Clair was nearly picked off twice the next time he took the snaps.

The offense really bogged down from there, and at 6:33 of the second quarter, former UCLA and Maryland QB Justyn Martin replaced Sayin, and the defense went ahead 23-17 with the aid of two "sacks" of Martin.

The Gray extended its lead to 27-17 when Ja'Kobi Jackson was stuffed for no gain on a fourth-and-2 from the Gray 43.

14	Christian Alliegro	6-4	241	Sr./1
5	Riley Pettijohn	6-2	231	So./3
17	TJ Alford	6-1	233	So./3

**Other scholarship players:** Ty Howard (Sr.), Garrett Stover (So.), Eli Lee (R-Fr.), Cincere Johnson (Fr.), CJ Sanna (Fr.), Braxton Rembert (Fr.)

**Comments:** James Laurinaitis has been able to build a very impressive depth chart in his few years as the linebackers coach at Ohio State. Pierce was the backup to Sonny Styles and Arvell Reese last season, coming in as the third linebacker many times when Reese moved closer to the ball. Now Pierce will be a starter, and during the spring Alliegro made a good case to earn the role next to him in the Buckeyes' 4-2-5 base defense. Pettijohn didn't participate for much of the spring with an injury, but it seems likely that if he doesn't end up earning a starting spot, which he still could very well be capable of, he will have a similar role to what Pierce did last season. Johnson may get reps in blowouts to try to get him ready to play next year.

### CORNERBACK

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
7	Jermaine Mathews Jr.	5-11	190	Sr./1
6	Devin Sanchez	6-2	198	So./3
18	Cam Calhoun	6-0	176	Jr./2
24	Dominick Kelly	6-2	190	So./3

**Other scholarship players:** Jordyn Woods (R-Fr.), Jordan Thomas (Fr.)

**Comments:** Mathews is returning for his senior year after starting for all of the 2025 season, and he will assume that role again. Now that Davison Igbinosun is off to the NFL, Sanchez takes over outside after getting valuable experience as a true freshman, which he says motivated him to be better this year. Calhoun seems to have earned a backup role, and true freshman, Thomas, has been praised by teammates and coaches alike for what they were able to put on the field in their first spring..

### FREE SAFETY

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
11	Terry Moore	6-0	200	Gr./1
10	Leroy Roker	6-0	197	So./3

**Other scholarship players:** DeShawn Stewart (R-Fr.), Khmari Bing (Fr.)

**Comments:** Moore is a question to some extent,

but not because there isn't potential for a high ceiling. He was a top free safety in the ACC before a torn ACL forced him to miss the entire 2025 season. He hasn't played in an actual game since 2024 with Duke, but now that he's fully recovered, the Buckeyes have been impressed with what he's done in Columbus so far and he seems to have already earned the starting spot this year.

### STRONG SAFETY

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
8	Jaylen McClain	6-0	201	Jr./2
16	Blaine Bradford	6-1	209	Fr./4

**Other scholarship players:** Brenten "Inky" Jones (Sr.), Simeon Caldwell (Fr.), Kaden Gebhardt (Fr.)

**Comments:** McClain has already proved himself to be a strong option, starting all of last year for what was the No. 1 defense in the country in both scoring and yards allowed. Since arriving on campus as an early enrollee, Bradford has already been able to work his way into the two-deep, earning reps in open practices and in the spring game against the second-team offense. He broke up a pass in the spring game and looked the part.

### NICKELBACK

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Cl./Elig.
1	Earl Little Jr.	6-0	198	Sr./1
25	Jay Timmons	5-11	180	Fr./4

**Other scholarship players:** Miles Lockhart (So.)

**Comments:** Little was out for the last bit of the spring after getting minor surgery. He had already worked his way into a starting role and had earned a lot of praise from his coaches and teammates. When the Buckeyes' first-team defense trotted onto the field for the spring game, it was Mathews who took Little's place, and Kelly filled in for Mathews. Timmons could slide into the slot, as Mathews did last season when Sanchez came into games.

*\*Players are listed in order of the depth chart at each position. Under the "other scholarship players" section, players are listed in order of seniority. Those players aren't included above because they are unlikely to see much playing time this season as it stands now.*

Later, Hawkins missed a 43-yard FG try with 28 seconds left until halftime, and Day decided to end the half right there. Luke Fahey was the QB for the drive.

In the second half, St. Clair had a long drive come up short on a failed fourth-and-2 from the 15. The series included a 38-yard catch by David Adolph, but the defense still led 35-17 after three quarters.

Hawkins pulled the Scarlet offense to within 35-20 with 3:25 left on a 41-yard field goal, and Fahey took off out of the pocket for a 61-yard TD run in the final 25 seconds. The offense kept the ball and started from the defense 20 but couldn't score from there.

### Notes

In the unofficial stats, St. Clair was 9 of 21 for 166 yards and one TD. ... Sayin was 8 of 15 for 82 yards. ... Fahey ran three times for 73 yards and was 3 of 8 passing for 26 yards. ... Henry made four catches for 96 yards. ... Former OSU receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba, the 2025 NFL Offensive Player of the Year while helping the Seattle Seahawks win the Super Bowl, rang the pregame victory bell.



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# Roberts, Sanchez Make Strides In Spring

By **BOBBY GORBETT**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Needing to bring 51 new players up to speed, Ohio State's coaching staff was never going to have an easy spring. Through 15 practices, including a rain-riddled spring game, Ohio State made noticeable improvements on both sides of the ball and, perhaps more importantly, came together in the locker room.

The Buckeyes still had some issues along the offensive line, but that had something to do with injuries faced by starting offensive tackles Austin Sierveveld and Philip Daniels. The running backs also struggled with injuries, with the top two runners on the depth chart, Bo Jackson and Isaiah West, out for the entire period after suffering shoulder injuries.

Even with some missing pieces, the passing attack, led by starting quarterback Julian Sayin, continued to develop.

Defensively, the Buckeyes looked sharp once again, despite having to replace eight starters from last year's unit that ranked first in points allowed and yards allowed per game in the country.

Now that the spring period is officially over, Buckeye Sports Bulletin is looking at the players who stepped up the most in the spring, along with some key position battles to keep an eye on.

## Top Spring Offensive Player: Nate Roberts

Following the departures of first- and second-stringers Max Klare and Will Kacmarek, the Buckeyes' tight end spot was for the taking. Ohio State replaced Klare and Kacmarek with transfers Hunter Welcing and Mason Williams, but so far in the off-season, it's been Roberts who has stepped up as the leader in the room. Roberts mainly earned playing time at the fullback position last year as a freshman, but if his work ethic during the winter was any indication, he clearly is looking for a bigger role in the fall.

His tight ends coach, Keenan Bailey, put Roberts out with the rest of the first-teamers to start the spring, a decision that was fueled by his performance in the weight room.

"He's taken quite a bit of a step, and it started in the weight room," Bailey said. "Every day we were competing in there, and Nate was far and away top rank when we came out of winter, and that's why he got the first crack at it when we got to spring. Now he's got to keep improving, but we have high expectations. No one has higher expectations than he does for himself, and I'm



SONNY BROCKWAY

**FIRST IN LINE** — With the departures to the NFL of Max Klare and Will Kacmarek, sophomore Nate Roberts (83) is eyeing the starting role at tight end despite the arrival of transfers Hunter Welcing and Mason Williams. Roberts was on the field with the first team to open the spring game on April 18.

proud of how it's progressing."

Roberts continued his winter development into the spring, and his head coach, Ryan Day, was impressed enough to compliment him and the other tight ends midway through the spring period.

"Bringing in Mason Williams and Hunter at tight end with Nate, they're not perfect at all, but they're grinding at it, and they're working at it," Day said. "Those guys at tight end have shown up, especially in the pass game, just seeing them make a lot more plays maybe than we've seen in the past. That has been a bright spot."

Roberts appeared to hurt his shoulder and didn't play for very long during Ohio State's spring game, but he made an impact during his short time on the field. The four-star prospect had two receptions for 24 receiving yards, with his longest reception being a 20-yarder against the Buckeyes' starting defense.

Roberts gave Buckeye fans a taste of what he was able to do during the spring game and hopes to put his full skill set at

the tight end position on display in the fall.

"I'm (ready to show that) I'm able to block at that in-line (tight end position) and be able to run routes," Roberts said. "They've only seen me go out of the fullback spot, really. I think that's really all they got to see. But this year, I'm ready to show that I'm the all-around tight end and able to do everything."

## Top Spring Defensive Player: Devin Sanchez

Heading into the spring, the outside cornerback position opposite senior Jermaine Mathews Jr. was probably Sanchez' to lose, and over the last month, he's hardly stepped a toe out of line. In his freshman season, Sanchez, a five-star prospect, earned valuable experience in dime packages and when the starters dealt with injuries, but at times he was picked on in coverage by opposing offenses.

Sanchez chalked up some of his shortcomings last year to a lack of confidence, but an impressive late-season performance in Ohio State's 24-14 loss to Miami helped fix that problem.

During the off-season, Sanchez told his cornerbacks coach, Tim Walton, he has complete belief in himself and his abilities.

"When we went into the off-season, I told Coach Walt, 'I'm not stepping back this year. I'm coming in full head, foot on the gas. I'm not letting up. And it doesn't matter who's in front of me, I'm going to win,'" Sanchez said.

Sanchez said his confidence helped his football IQ and allowed him to identify what opposing offenses were attempting to do. Those improvements were reflected in the

spring. As expected, he lined up with the starting defense, and in portions of practice open to the media, he looked sharp working against the Buckeyes' starting receivers.

Walton felt like Sanchez was taking the next step in his development during the spring.

"Now he's taking that next step with growing, learning, understanding discipline, the responsibility that comes with it, the competitive nature you have to have," Walton said. "He's having a good spring so far. He has to be the guy that keeps stepping up for us."

Sanchez had his work cut out for him in the spring game. In his brief stint on the field, the native of Houston lined up against superstar receiver Jeremiah Smith. Like almost every other cornerback who has had the challenge of going against the All-American, Sanchez gave up a couple of catches for 21 yards, but he also held his own and broke up a pass after playing perfect coverage on Smith during one rep early in the game.

Heading into his sophomore season, Sanchez has very high expectations for himself, but considering how he fared in the off-season, his goals don't seem unrealistic.

"Obviously, do better than I did last year, for one," Sanchez said when asked about his goals for 2026. "I want to be a Thorpe finalist. I want to win a Thorpe, for sure. I want to be an All-American. I want to be Big Ten DB of the Year. It's a lot of things that I have on the table that I want to accomplish."

Mathews is certainly convinced that Sanchez can reach his lofty goals.

"I really believe he'll be one of the best corners in the country one day. I truly believe that," Mathews said. "He's got the stature. He's got everything that you want from a corner. He just has to put all of it together, all the little things, and he's going to be really good."

## Spring's Most Improved Player: Beau Atkinson

After transferring in from North Carolina, senior defensive end Beau Atkinson was viewed as someone who could earn legitimate playing time alongside eventual starters Kenyatta Jackson Jr. and Caden Curry.

It didn't turn out very well for the former Tar Heel. Atkinson earned playing time early in the season but didn't produce much. He finished the season with just 11 total tackles and one sack.

With his level of play last year, Atkinson wasn't necessarily viewed as a realistic candidate to earn a starting job at defensive end, but he's used his 2025 season as motivation and made himself a new and improved player over the off-season.

"I don't think it went anywhere near the way that I wanted it to, but I feel like that has given me some extra fuel to come into this season and to work really hard," Atkinson said of last year. "I've been working on my mobility a lot, and I've been feeling a lot looser out here. I'm excited to get back out there."

Atkinson said one thing that held him back during his junior year was that he felt much stiffer than he had in years past. Mobility is not something any pass rusher

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## OHIO STATE SPRING PRACTICE

wants to be short of, and so he's worked closely with strength and conditioning coach Mickey Marotti to improve in that respect over the winter.

"I feel like I've gotten a lot more mobile, and I've been putting a lot of work into that in the weight room," Atkinson said. "Coach Mick has been helping me get right a lot, and I've got a great extra work plan, and so I feel like all of that has been paying off."

Atkinson added that he's grown more accustomed to the locker room and feels like he's fit in better with his teammates this year. Jackson said after the spring game that Atkinson's mentality is also much improved from last season.

"He took his mobility and his flexibility seriously over the offseason," Jackson said. "In my opinion, he was overthinking last year, and I don't think he's overthinking. He's playing much faster and more explosive."

Atkinson's hard work in the offseason was rewarded in the spring. He lined up with Ohio State's first-team defense along with Jackson and proved he wasn't out of place.

In spring practices open to the media, Atkinson was as productive as any other Buckeye on the field and made a habit of getting in the backfield.

In the spring game, he continued that high level of play. In addition to being a disruptor at his position, he came up with an interception on a pass tipped by defensive tackle Will Smith Jr.

Before his impressive spring game, defensive line coach Larry Johnson reflected on Atkinson's drastic turnaround.

"I think he's done a 360 so far," Johnson said. "He's more flexible now. Last year was a transition from playing the North Carolina way to the Ohio State way. He's had a good spring. Now is his time. He didn't have a winter or spring here last year, but his body has changed. He's gotten bigger and stronger."

### Position Battle To Watch: Right Guard

Before the spring started, Ohio State's right guard position was viewed as one of the most tightly contested position battles. Heading into the fall, it doesn't appear much has changed. If the best ability is availability, then sophomore Gabe VanSickle certainly helped his case by being healthy enough to earn first-team reps, while senior Josh Padilla missed all of spring with an injury.

Last year, the Buckeyes had Tegra Tshabola starting at right guard, but he mainly struggled. That led to Ohio State giving both Padilla and VanSickle reps behind Tshabola in the regular season. Both players fared well in their limited reps off the bench, so when Tshabola was injured during the post-season, VanSickle earned a start against Miami (Fla.) in the Cotton Bowl.

VanSickle struggled against the Hurricanes' elite defensive line, and the coaching staff replaced him with Padilla midway through the game. Padilla fared a bit better against Miami than VanSickle, but with him being out in the spring, that position may be a toss-up.

There's also the possibility that neither player earns the starting job. Sophomore offensive tackle Ian Moore played well in the Cotton Bowl at offensive tackle when Sierieveld was injured, and with both starting tackles injured during the spring, he held up well.

It's possible that the Buckeyes stick with Moore and move Sierieveld, who started his Ohio State career at guard, to that position. Luke Montgomery played well at left guard last year, so it's very unlikely he would be out of the lineup. If the Buckeyes have Moore out there, it's easy to imagine Sierieveld sliding in at right guard.

Offensive line coach Tyler Bowen left the door open to Sierieveld starting at guard and said the Buckeyes will look to put the five best offensive linemen on the field when the season starts.

"The goal every year is you're trying to look at that group, not who's the first five, who's the second left tackle, but one through 16 or one through 20, when we're at full strength here, with a couple guys coming in, what does that ranking look like?" Bowen said. "Then from there, you're looking at what flexibility each guy has to be able to move around. I think that's where the tricky part comes in."

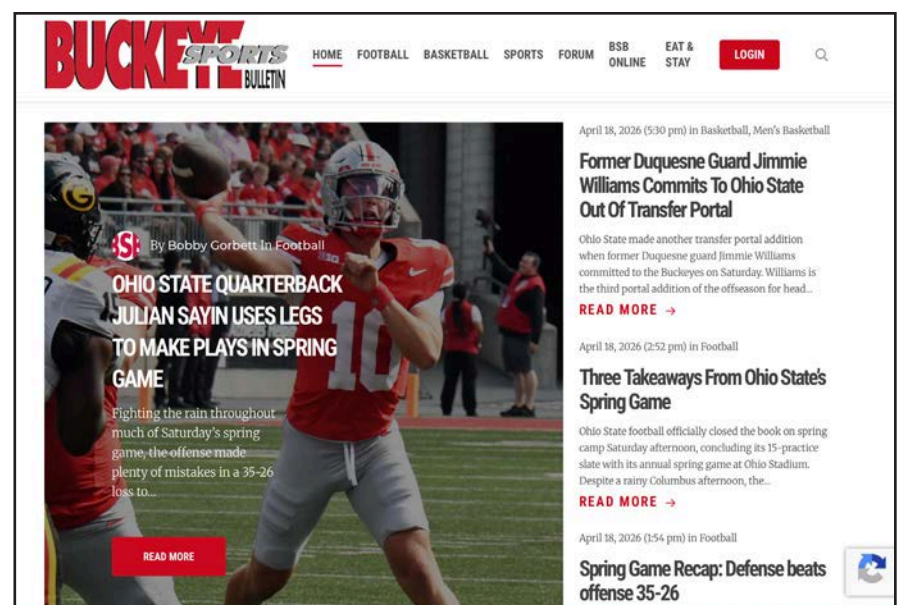
"You're looking at the flexibility. Some guys are tackle only, some guys are interior only. Then there's a few guys that would be categorized as swing guys. So you're trying to look at that one through five, one through seven, and try to make the best decisions to put the best group on the field."

### Other Spots Up For Grabs:

• Elsewhere on offense, the other boundary receiver position opposite Jeremiah Smith still seems to be there for the taking. The Buckeyes brought in a couple of receivers from the transfer portal, including Kyle Parker from LSU and Devin McCuin from UTSA, but five-star freshman Chris Henry Jr. is likely the most talented option in the room. It was McCuin who went out with the first-teamers for the spring game, but Henry was the one who played the best during the exhibition. Henry, a top-15 recruit in the 2026 class, finished the game with four catches for 96 yards and a touchdown, while McCuin had two catches for 10 yards. Parker played in the game but didn't record a reception. As of right now, McCuin may be the favorite to start alongside Smith and starting receiver Brandon Inniss, but it's also easy to imagine Henry improving enough before the fall to ultimately win the job.

• On defense, Ohio State is looking to find replacements for star linebackers Sonny Styles and Arvell Reese. Before the spring, it seemed that Payton Pierce and Christian Alliegro were the two favorites to become starters, and neither player did anything to change that. Pierce played well in the spring game. He had five total tackles, according to 247Sports, and Alliegro, who at times has lined up on the edge in the spring much like Reese did last year, finished with one tackle. Sophomore Riley Pettijohn missed nearly all of the spring with an injury. Pettijohn played well enough in limited reps last year to be considered for a role this year. Even if Pierce and Alliegro win their respective jobs, defensive coordinator Matt Patricia proved last year he's more than willing to put several linebackers on the field at the same time, meaning others in the room, such as freshman Cincere Johnson, junior Garrett Stover, sophomore TJ Alford and redshirt freshman Eli Lee, have the potential to earn playing time this year.

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# Early Enrollees Benefit From Spring Practice

By **SAM CIPRIANI**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State brought in one of the largest recruiting classes in program history in 2026, signing 29 players, with 27 of them arriving on campus for early enrollment to join the team for spring practices.

The Buckeye recruiting class, which finished fifth nationally according to 247Sports' composite rankings, features a mix of top-end talent and depth, including three five-star prospects and nine recruits in the top 150.

Headlining that group are wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. and linebacker Cincere Johnson, both of whom flashed significant promise for the Buckeyes throughout spring practice. At the same time, several other prospects are still working to find their footing with Ohio State.

With such a large group already getting reps, including 51 newcomers (counting walk-ons), the foundation for Ohio State's future is already taking shape.

Now, with spring ball officially wrapped up following the April 18 spring game, Buckeye Sports Bulletin took a closer look at how the Buckeyes' early enrollees performed throughout the spring, with players listed alphabetically. All defensive stats used from the spring game were pulled from 247Sports.

## RB Favour Akih

Heading into the spring, Akih (5-11, 184) was expected to take a back seat among a deep Buckeyes running back room.

However, with sophomore running backs Bo Jackson and Isaiah West out for the spring due to shoulder surgery, freshman Legend Bey out with a hamstring injury, and sophomore Anthony "Turbo" Rogers also missing the spring game, Akih was thrust into a key role for Ohio State.

Ohio State running backs coach Carlos Locklyn identified the freshman running back as one of two backs who still need to develop their pass-catching ability, including him with Rogers.

Locklyn also indicated that Akih has continued to improve throughout the spring, which is especially notable given his limited experience at the running back position.

"He's getting better," Locklyn said on April 10. "He's learning to fight through adversity. He had done some good things, but you're just talking about the kid who turned 17 in December. He's only been playing this game for maybe 2½, three years."

With four of its six top running backs out, Ohio State had Akih serve as one of the two lead backs for the spring game alongside Ja'Kobi Jackson. Akih led all Buckeye running backs during the spring game with 16 totes for 50 yards, and he also added one reception for 3 yards.

## RB Legend Bey

While Akih finished the spring healthy, Ohio State's Bey (5-10, 177) wasn't as fortunate. Bey saw the field early in camp but missed the entire second half of spring practices due to a lingering hamstring injury.



SONNY BROCKWAY

**SO FAR, SO GOOD — Wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. (15) was the most-talked about freshman among the early enrollees, and he didn't disappoint by flashing in the spring game with four catches for 96 yards and a 40-yard touchdown.**

The freshman speedster originally made a name for himself with a 4.33-second 40-yard dash during his recruitment.

Though Bey missed most of the spring due to injury, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day still noted his sky-high potential, adding that the Buckeye staff is still working to define his role and maximize his talents.

"He certainly has talent, but we had a lot of talented guys that have come through here, and everybody who's come through has earned it," Day said. "We could see the play-making ability, but we also know how to develop them, and it's going to take being with (strength and conditioning coach Mickey Marotti), getting stronger."

## SAF Khmari Bing

Among a stacked Ohio State safety group, Bing (5-11, 182), a four-star recruit out of St. Frances Academy in Baltimore, was one of four safeties Ohio State added in its class of 2026.

Bing concluded the 2026 recruiting cycle as the nation's No. 30 safety prospect and the third highest-rated safety among Ohio State's foursome of incoming freshmen at the position.

He recorded one tackle in the defense's 35-26 spring-game victory over the offense but is not expected to have a significant role during his freshman season.

Behind Jaylen McClain, Leroy Roker III, Deshawn Stewart, Terry Moore and at least two other safety recruits in the class of 2026, Bing seems likely to redshirt.

## WR Brock Boyd

A product of Southlake Carroll in Texas, Boyd (6-1, 184) quickly made a name for himself during Ohio State's spring practices.

Despite entering the spring as the Buckeyes' lowest-rated wide receiver among the four freshmen Ohio State brought in in the class of 2026, Boyd was perhaps the biggest standout of the quartet.

Boyd became the third-fastest Ohio State freshman in program history to lose his black stripe, doing so after just six spring practices. The only players to have it removed in a shorter span were Carnell Tate, who needed five practices, and Jeremiah Smith, who accomplished the feat in four.

"He's pretty mature," Day said. "He has a good approach. He goes hard every play. He's very smart in how he gets open. He's a good route runner. He understands multiple positions. He plays fast every play and looks very confident in what he does. I think he's a good example of people who prepare at a high level to play fast because they're anticipating as opposed to reacting," Day said.

In the spring game, Boyd caught two passes for 21 yards. In a deep receiver room expected to feature just one open starting spot alongside Smith and Brandon Inniss, Boyd may see the field as a freshman but is more likely to spend much of his season as a depth piece as he develops within an elite unit.

## SAF Blaine Bradford

While Bing was the third-ranked of Ohio State's four early enrollees at safety, Bradford (6-1, 209) was at the top of the list for the Buckeyes.

Coming in as the nation's No. 73 overall prospect and the third-ranked safety in the class, Bradford has already carved out a role as the backup behind McClain at the strong safety position, getting on the field

against the second-team offense in the spring game.

But a year behind McClain could position Bradford to gain valuable experience and step into a larger role down the line.

McClain, who started alongside Caleb Downs in all 14 games last season, said Bradford's physicality was already on display early in the spring.

"He's been very, very physical. I feel like we knew this coming in from high school," McClain said. "He's been very able to express himself as an aggressive player, and I love to see it. It's very exciting."

Bradford recorded one tackle and one pass breakup during the spring game.

## OT Landry Brede

Brede (6-6, 325) was one of 11 in-state early enrollees for Ohio State. Brede, a product of Mentor, Ohio, and came in as a three-star player and the No. 923 overall player.

Even though both of Ohio State's starting offensive tackles suffered injuries in the spring and did not play in the spring game, Brede's opportunity to see the field for the Buckeyes was limited.

Brede is currently buried on the depth chart, which is to be expected for a true freshman offensive lineman, and is a likely redshirt candidate barring a massive barrage of injuries during the season. Still, his size and athleticism make him an intriguing option for the Buckeyes moving forward.

## SAF Simeon Caldwell

Caldwell (6-2, 195) was the No. 206 overall recruit in the class, brought to Ohio State by safeties coach Matt Guerrieri to play in the defensive backfield.

At the high school level, the four-star recruit had experience at linebacker as well, which gives him some versatility that the Buckeyes have liked at the safety position in recent years.

Caldwell is expected to spend most of the 2026 season buried on the depth chart, with a redshirt remaining a possibility. He was very active during the Buckeyes' spring game, recording three tackles, which was tied for sixth most on the roster.

## QB Luke Fahey

Though the 5-11, 206-pound quarterback drew early concerns as a prospect due to a smaller frame, Fahey had a promising spring for Ohio State.

Fahey completed three of his eight passes for 26 yards in the spring game, but he shone most on the ground on April 18. The product of Mission Viejo, Calif., rushed three times for 73 yards and a touchdown, including a 61-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter.

Despite Fahey's impressive spring game, he isn't expected to see the field outside of garbage time in 2026 behind Heisman Trophy finalist and 2025 starter Julian Sayin, Tavien St. Clair and senior Maryland transfer Justyn Martin.

## SAF Kaden Gebhardt

Following a late flip from Clemson on the first day of the early signing period, Gebhardt (6-1, 200) landed in Columbus as

# OHIO STATE SPRING PRACTICE

## Ohio State's 2026 Early Enrollees

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Previous School
2	Legend Bay	RB	5-10	177	Forney (Texas) North Forney
6	Jerquaden Guilford	WR	6-3	185	Fort Wayne (Ind.) Northrop
11	Brock Boyd	WR	6-1	184	Southlake (Texas) Southlake Carroll
13	Luke Fahey	QB	5-11	206	Mission Viejo (Calif.) Mission Viejo
15	Chris Henry Jr.	WR	6-5	195	Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei
15	Jordan Thomas	CB	6-1	189	Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic
16	Blaine Bradford	SAF	6-1	209	Baton Rouge (La.) Baton Rouge Catholic
20	Cincere Johnson	LB	6-3	228	Cleveland Glenville
25	Jay Timmons	CB	5-11	180	Gibsonia (Pa.) Pine-Richland
28	Simeon Caldwell	SAF	6-2	195	Jacksonville (Fla.) The Bolles School
29	Favour Akih	RB	5-11	184	Delaware (Ohio) Rutherford B. Hayes
30	Khmani Bing	SAF	5-11	182	Baltimore St. Francis Academy
32	Kaden Gebhardt	SAF	6-1	200	Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy
34	Khary Wilder	DE	6-4	248	Gardena (Calif.) Junipero Serra
36	CJ Sanna	LB	6-2	230	Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy
41	Braxton Rembert	LB	6-5	200	Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek
66	Landry Brede	OL	6-6	325	Mentor, Ohio
68	Mason Wilhelm	OL	6-4	299	Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward
77	Sam Greer	OL	6-7	335	Akron Archbishop Hoban
77	Max Riley	OL	6-5	287	Avon Lake, Ohio
80	Jaden Ricketts	WR	5-11	201	Pataskala (Ohio) Watkins Memorial
89	Nick Lautar	TE	6-5	220	Lebanon, Ohio
90	Damari Simeon	DL	6-2	288	Richland (N.J.) St. Augustine Prep
91	Darryus McKinley	DL	6-3	270	Lafayette (La.) Acadiana
95	Emanuel Ruffin	DL	6-3	282	Bessemer (Ala.) Bessemer City
97	Dre Quinn	DE	6-4	223	Buford (Ga.) Buford
98	Jamir Perez	DL	6-3	360	Cleveland Glenville

Ohio State's fourth safety recruit.

Gebhardt, coming out of Olentangy High School in Lewis Center, Ohio, was the No. 664 overall recruit and the No. 50 safety.

Ranked lowest among Ohio State's four early-enrollee safeties, he is expected to slot in behind the Buckeyes' veteran group of McClain, Moore and Roker, who are expected to fill the first and second strings. With as many as seven other safeties competing for a role, a redshirt season is likely in an already crowded unit.

### OT Sam Greer

Even before he arrived on Ohio State's campus, Greer's sheer size (6-7, 335) had already drawn notice from the Buckeye faithful.

In the spring game, Greer received reps at left tackle, with the Buckeyes' offensive line hampered by injuries.

Ohio State left guard Luke Montgomery emphasized Greer's physical traits, adding that he feels the Buckeye freshman on the offensive line shone throughout the spring.

"Sam's a big boy," Montgomery said. "I'll tell you what – not just Sam Greer, but the whole freshman class, they've been great. We're pretty hard on them in the offseason, but they're quick learners, and they want to be great. They're going to be great players down the road. All of them will be. It's been a lot of fun to watch them."

As highly as Greer was ranked, No. 52 in the country, he will still need a year of development. However, if injuries continue to impact the Buckeye offensive line, he could earn a spot in the rotation later in the season.

### WR Jerquaden Guilford

Guilford (6-3, 185) was one of two top-50 wide receivers who enrolled early. A high-four-star recruit out of Northrop in Fort Wayne, Ind., Guilford was ranked the No. 44 overall recruit and No. 6 wide receiver in the class.

While Henry took much of the limelight throughout the spring, Guilford was solid

in his first set of spring practices with the Buckeyes, adding one catch for 8 yards in the spring game.

With Ohio State losing Carnell Tate to the NFL draft along with Notre Dame transfers Mylan Graham and Quincy Porter, Guilford could have an opportunity to compete for a role in the Buckeyes' receiver rotation. To earn even a rotational spot, however, he would need to surpass Boyd, Kyle Parker, and likely one of Henry or Devin McCuin.

### WR Chris Henry Jr.

Henry (6-5, 195) lived up to his hype as a prospect during his first spring in Columbus. The five-star recruit out of Mater Dei in Santa Ana, Calif., was by far Ohio State's most productive wideout in the spring game. Henry caught two passes of 30 or more yards from St. Clair, including the lone receiving touchdown of the game with a 40-yard pass and catch late in the first quarter. He finished with a team-high four catches for 96 yards and a touchdown.

Following the spring game, Sayin praised Henry's performance and early development.

After a strong spring session, Henry remains poised to compete for Ohio State's second outside receiver spot, with his sheer size offering mismatches that could help him carve out a consistent role in the wide-out rotation this fall.

### LB Cincere Johnson

Among a deep Ohio State linebacker corps, Johnson (6-3, 228) already made his presence felt for the Buckeyes early in the spring.

The five-star prospect and top-ranked player in the state of Ohio out of Cleveland Glenville shone early with a pass break-up against Inniss during the first week of spring practice in March. He then continued his spring breakout into the April 18 scrimmage, finishing with five tackles, tying him with Moore and fellow linebacker Payton Pierce for second most on the Buck-

eyes.

Despite an impressive spring season, Johnson faces stiff competition in a linebacker room loaded with high-end talent. Pierce is expected to start as a returning junior after serving as Ohio State's third linebacker behind Sonny Styles and Arvell Reese a season ago.

Wisconsin transfer Christian Alliegro and rising sophomore Riley Pettijohn, who missed much of the spring due to injury, are also viewed as top candidates to start, while rising sophomore TJ Alford and rising junior Garrett Stover remain in the mix as additional competition for Johnson.

### TE Nick Lautar

Lautar (6-5, 220) was the only tight end in the 2026 class, with the Buckeyes adding transfers to reinforce the position group. The freshman had a relatively quiet spring within a veteran tight end room.

The three-star currently stands firmly behind Ohio State's top four tight ends, which include Nate Roberts, Northwestern transfer Hunter Welcing, Ohio transfer Mason Williams, and graduate Bennett Christian. With rising junior Max LeBlanc and rising sophomore Brody Lennon also in the room, Lautar faces an uphill battle for meaningful snaps and is likely to spend the year in a depth role, with a potential redshirt season on the table given the crowded rotation ahead of him.

Lautar has already begun to earn praise inside the tight end room, and Roberts talked about the freshman's potential.

"Nick, he can make plays," Roberts said. "He's a great kid. He loves football. I really see him having a really bright future."

### DL Darryus McKinley

A three-star recruit out of Acadiana High School in Lafayette, La., McKinley (6-3, 270) enters a top-heavy defensive tackle room.

While the Buckeyes lost Kayden McDonald and Tywone Malone Jr. to the NFL draft, Ohio State returns rising junior Edrick Houston, as well as rising seniors Jason Moore and Will Smith Jr. Similar to the

tight end room, Ohio State also brought in two veteran defensive tackle transfers with James Smith of Alabama and John Walker of UCF. Freshmen Jamir Perez, Damari Simeon and Emanuel Ruffin will all compete with McKinley for a spot down the depth chart.

With Ohio State's top five defensive tackles all returning players or transfers, McKinley, along with the other freshman defensive tackles, is unlikely to see meaningful playing time.

### DL Jamir Perez

Perez (6-3, 360) exits the spring in a situation similar to McKinley's, as the defensive tackle remains piled underneath a veteran-heavy group.

A teammate of Johnson at Cleveland Glenville, Perez arrived in Columbus as a three-star recruit and the third-lowest overall rank of the Buckeyes' early enrollees at No. 837 nationally.

While his size could create opportunities at nose tackle during heavy offensive sets, Perez has yet to break through enough to earn meaningful playing time. Without a significant leap this fall, it's unlikely he'll see snaps outside of blowouts during the 2026 season.

### DE Dre Quinn

The first but lowest-rated of Ohio State's two early-enrollee defensive ends, Quinn (6-4, 223) is coming off a rather quiet spring camp for the Buckeyes.

Though Quinn, hailing from Buford, Ga., was a four-star recruit, he appeared to get lost in the shuffle and did not record any stats during the spring game.

Quinn already faced a steep climb for playing time, but the path has become even tougher given Ohio State's crowded defensive end room. The Buckeyes' edge rusher group features Kenya Jackson Jr., Beau Atkinson, Zion Grady, Epi Sitanilei, fellow freshman Khary Wilder and Alabama transfer Qua Russaw.

While Quinn has the potential to devel-

Continued On Page 22



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# Freshmen Could Battle For Action At CB

Continued From Page 21

op into a contributor, the elite depth ahead makes earning a role a major challenge.

## LB Braxton Rembert

Though Rembert was listed as a hybrid edge rusher and linebacker coming out of Mill Creek in Hoschton, Ga., the 6-5, 200-pound freshman was recruited by Ohio State linebackers coach James Laurinaitis and staff to play linebacker. However, his experience coming off the edge is certainly seen by the Buckeyes as a plus because he could develop into an Arvell Reese-style 'backer with the ability to move around.

Rembert, a late addition in the 2026 recruiting cycle, turned heads with his imposing frame and put together a solid spring, recording two tackles for the Buckeye defense in the spring game.

Even so, it's highly unlikely Rembert sees the field in 2026 because Ohio State's linebacker room could feature five or more returning contributors and Alliegro, along with fellow freshmen Johnson and CJ Sanna, also vying for snaps.

## WR Jaeden Ricketts

Ricketts (5-11, 201), the third-highest rated among Ohio State's four wide receiver commits, appears to have slipped to the back of the freshman receiver group following the spring.

The Pataskala (Ohio) Watkins Memorial

High School product and three-star recruit was overshadowed during camp, with Henry, Guilford and Boyd each turning in more notable performances.

Ricketts was held without a reception in the spring game and primarily worked with the Buckeyes' third- and fourth-string receiver groups during spring practice. Three fellow freshmen, two transfers, and several returning players currently sit ahead of him on the depth chart.

## OL Maxwell Riley

Among Ohio State's talented interior offensive line, which features the most returning snaps in the country, Riley (6-5, 287) will likely spend the 2026 season on the sidelines, though that's not to say Riley hasn't had a strong spring.

The four-star recruit saw action at both guard and center during spring camp, with his versatility enabling him to line up at multiple spots along the interior and potentially giving offensive line coach Tyler Bowen the flexibility to develop him for different roles.

With the Buckeyes' interior featuring Montgomery, center Carson Hinzman and multiple strong options at right guard, including Josh Padilla and Gabe VanSickle, a rotational role is unlikely. However, his versatility could bode well as the in-state prospect out of Avon Lake works to find his role within Ohio State's front five.

## DL Emanuel Ruffin

Ruffin arrived this spring as a four-star defensive lineman from Bessemer City, Ala., ranking No. 251 in the 247Sports composite.

The 6-3, 282-pound defensive tackle impressed throughout camp but had a particularly strong spring game, finishing with three tackles in rotation at defensive tackle.

Following the spring game, Kenyatta Jackson emphasized the early work of the defensive end group and their willingness to buy in.

"Even some of the freshmen, like Khary Wilder and Emanuel Ruffin and all those guys, bought into the program," Jackson said.

While a strong top four in the defensive tackle unit may ultimately limit his chances at meaningful reps, Ruffin could climb the depth chart with continued development, though a redshirt remains the most probable outcome.

## LB CJ Sanna

Though Sanna (6-2, 230) spent the spring out with an injury, the in-state product from Lewis Center Olentangy could have a bright future with the Buckeyes.

Sanna was Ohio State's third highest-rated linebacker behind Johnson and Rembert but was still a four-star prospect ranked No. 15 nationally at the position and was the 264th overall recruit in the class of 2026.

With an injury in the spring already setting him back, Sanna will struggle to compete for time in a deep Ohio State linebacker room.

## DL Damari Simeon

During the spring, Simeon (6-2, 288) saw limited action, working within a deep and experienced defensive tackle rotation.

Simeon was ranked No. 214 overall in the 2026 class and was the 25th-ranked defensive lineman out of St. Augustine Prep in Richland, N.J.

The four-star freshman spent most of his time developing behind a veteran-heavy group that includes Houston, Moore, Will Smith, and transfers James Smith and Walker, as well as fellow newcomers McKinley and Perez.

While his frame and recruiting pedigree give him long-term upside, a redshirt season remains the most likely path for Simeon as he continues to develop within Ohio State's defensive front.

## CB Jordan Thomas

Thomas (6-1, 189) is one of a pair of top-15 cornerback recruits that Ohio State brought in as early enrollees in the class of 2026.

Hailing from Bergen Catholic in Oradell, N.J., Thomas arrived in Columbus as a long, physical defensive back, giving the Buckeyes another high-upside piece in a deepening cornerback pipeline. Thomas also added three tackles in the spring game, a promising sign for the young cornerback.

With Ohio State returning Jermaine Mathews Jr. and Devin Sanchez, the Buckeyes' top two spots in the cornerback room are likely locked up. However, Thomas

could compete with Alabama transfer Cam Calhoun, Georgia transfer Dominick Kelly and fellow freshman Jay Timmons for back-up spots.

Day emphasized the depth of Ohio State's cornerback room, mentioning both Thomas and Timmons.

"You have the young guys, Jay and Jordan, and so those guys are very competitive," Day said. "They're all fighting for playing time. The good news, I think we'll have some depth there."

## CB Jay Timmons

Timmons (5-11, 180), the other half of the pair, was a five-star prospect out of Pine-Richland in Gibsonia, Pa.

He finished the 2026 recruiting cycle as the No. 24 overall player nationally and the third-ranked cornerback.

Following spring practices, Timmons stands in a nearly identical position to Thomas, with the cornerbacks looking to break into a rotational role behind the two transfers the Buckeyes brought in and Ohio State's returning starters from 2025.

Although he didn't record any statistics in the spring game, both his teammates in the cornerbacks room and the wide receivers who faced him during practices have already taken notice of his ability.

When asked which freshman stood out to him on March 28, Jeremiah Smith didn't hesitate to shine the spotlight on Timmons.

"Jay Timmons is going to be a very special player for us," Smith said.

Timmons brings some versatility and could play outside corner or slide into the slot if called upon.

## DE Khary Wilder

Wilder (6-4, 248) entered the spring as Ohio State's top-ranked defensive line recruit, finishing as the No. 51 overall player and No. 3 edge rusher in the 2026 recruiting cycle.

The defensive end looked the part during the Buckeyes' spring camp, finishing with three tackles in Ohio State's spring game.

After Ohio State's second spring practice on March 12, Kenyatta Jackson said Wilder has shown a strong work ethic for a freshman, adding that he feels he and the freshman group's confidence is growing.

"(Wilder) keeps his head down, and he works real hard," Jackson said. "All the freshmen, all the new guys, they came in real quiet, but they're starting to come out of their shell a little bit, but they work really hard."

Even with that early praise, Wilder must make major strides to earn a spot in the defensive end rotation, sitting behind a veteran-heavy rotation that includes Jackson, Atkinson, Russaw, Grady and other established contributors.

## IOL Mason Wilhelm

Of the Buckeyes' 27 early enrollments, Wilhelm (6-4, 299) was the lowest-rated of the bunch.

The three-star prospect did not see much action during the spring and is expected to enter the fall in a similar developmental position as Riley, working to adjust to the college level within a deep interior offensive line room.



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# Jackson Uses Experience To Bolster RB Room

By **BOBBY GORBETT**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

As a senior at Pensacola (Fla.) Catholic, Ja’Kobi Jackson probably never envisioned himself being on Ohio State’s roster, much less starting the spring game as the team’s de facto No. 1 running back, but in Team Scarlet’s 35-26 loss to Team Gray, that’s exactly what he was. The former unranked recruit had to step up as a leader and important ball-carrier in a young running back room that was depleted by injuries in the spring.

It wasn’t necessarily the most action-packed performance, but Jackson proved in the spring game that he had learned a thing or two during his previous six years of collegiate experience. A transfer from Florida, Jackson did a little bit of everything in the exhibition. He ran for 20 yards on eight carries, had three receptions for 35 yards and was solid in pass protection.

All of the attributes displayed by Jackson in the exhibition were shown during his three years at Florida and played a role in his being recruited to Ohio State in the off-season, according to running backs coach Carlos Locklyn.

“Ja’Kobi’s film in Florida, you saw a guy who was elite in tight areas. He has quick feet and may not look the part, but he made guys miss, had good hands, and he understands pass protection,” Locklyn said. “So I was looking for a guy who had one year, who was an older guy, and he fit what we do.

“You’re talking about a great kid (who says) ‘Yes, sir, no, sir.’ So he fit the room, but what I saw from him was a guy who can create on his own and who can give you some explosive runs. He’s just had a couple bad breaks throughout his career. And I hope this year he gets the opportunity to play some really good football.”

After being lightly recruited out of high school, Jackson went to Coahoma Community College. It was there that Jackson spent the first three years of his career.

Jackson was a bright spot on a squad that won just four games over his three years there. He ran for 1,390 yards and 14 touchdowns on 276 carries during his career.

That production earned him a scholarship at Florida, and although injuries mostly derailed his 2025 season, he had shown he could make an impact at the Power Four level during the 2024 season with the Gators.

That was an efficient season for Jackson. He rushed for 509 yards and seven touchdowns on 95 carries and had seven catches for 76 yards.

Locklyn did not delay in showing interest when he entered the portal. Jackson said he immediately heard from his eventual running backs coach when he decided to find a new school.

“It was my first day in the transfer portal. Coach Locklyn texted me, then called me, and then we just built that relationship,” Jackson said. “That was my first visit. I got down here that Saturday night. I can’t remember the exact date, but I got down here and just walked around with him and had meetings with him. I enjoyed his vibe, and I enjoyed his mindset in the way that he



SONNY BROCKWAY

**BACK FOR MORE — Veteran running back Ja’Kobi Jackson (24) has been a nice addition after three seasons at a junior college and the past three with Florida. With several returning backs out due to injuries, he had a productive spring game on April 18 with 20 yards on eight carries and three catches for 35 yards.**

planned on using me.”

Jackson said the quality time he spent with Locklyn was an important factor in his decision to commit to Ohio State over the off-season.

“Just (Locklyn’s) vibe and his energy as a coach. We sat down, and we watched film, and me communicating with him and knowing he’s a guy from close to my area,” Jackson said when asked what drew him to Ohio State. “Also, sitting down and talking to Coach (Ryan) Day and discussing football was very exciting. It felt like it was home.”

Off the field, Jackson will put his experience to good use as an important leader in a room that features five underclassmen. Jackson is the only senior in the room.

“Just positive energy and (being an) older leadership type of guy,” Jackson said when asked what he brings to the running back room. “I’m just trying to do everything right and still show everyone the right way to do things.”

Jackson said the other running backs have also helped him acclimate to the new program and a new offense.

“These guys are hard workers,” Jackson said. “They already know the majority of the stuff that I know. I’m getting in, learning the system, and taking some things from them as well.”

It’s never easy for a newcomer to make himself at home at a new campus, but Jackson said he’s been impressed with Ohio State’s culture.

“I love the culture,” Jackson said. “It’s very high energy. Everybody does everything the right way. Everybody’s brotherly. It’s love, so that’s what also made me fall in

love with Ohio State.”

Earlier in the spring, Jackson said he was quiet despite being the elder statesman of the room, but now that he’s gotten to know his teammates more, he’s used his voice to help guide the other players.

“I’m trying to be a more vocal leader as of right now,” Jackson said. “I was just leading by example earlier in the spring. Now I’m talking more, since I’m getting a better understanding of everybody else.”

On the field, Jackson said he feels like he brings a varied skill set to the program.

“I’m doing anything that they really need me to do as far as pass protection, running the ball, or even catching the ball out of the backfield,” Jackson said.

Given his 5-11, 217-pound frame, it would be logical to assume Jackson would fit in as a short-yardage runner, but the former Gator doesn’t necessarily fit the stereotype of a stiff-runner only in the game to pick up tough yards.

When asked to describe his skill set, Jackson said he prides himself on his elusiveness. He said his ability to win one-on-one situations helps him near the goal line.

“That’s something I try to display in short yardage and in tight spaces, where I can just make people miss, either with that shiftiness or a stiff arm, or my ability to break tackles.”

When asked if it’s rare for a running back of Jackson’s stature to be able to make guys miss, Locklyn said the Buckeyes had that type of runner not long ago when eventual second-round pick Quinshon Judkins helped lead the team to a national championship in 2024.

“You think about when we had Quinshon here. Quinshon had a great ability to make guys miss, and because some guys didn’t want to run into him, but Ja’Kobi, watch his high school film, it’s a natural thing for him,” Locklyn said. “He probably played a lot of ball in the school yard, down in the South, making guys miss and running around, so he’s pretty good at it.”

As many things as Jackson can do out of the backfield, he almost certainly didn’t expect to get so many first-team reps in the spring. Not only did Ohio State return key second-year running backs Bo Jackson and Isaiah West, but it also brought in talented freshmen Legend Bey and Favour Akih.

However, Bo Jackson and West both were ruled out of the spring after shoulder injuries required surgery, and Bey missed the spring game with a hamstring injury. That trio’s absence allowed Ja’Kobi Jackson to showcase his abilities in the spring game.

“I’m very excited,” Jackson said when asked about the spring game. “I’ve been looking forward to this moment ever since I got down here, the ability to show what I can do and what everybody should look forward to this year.”

If his performance in the spring game was any indication, Jackson should be a legitimate weapon in the passing game. His three catches were the second most on the team, and his 35 receiving yards were the third most on the team.

Jackson’s 2.5 yards per carry may not suggest he had an elite performance as a runner, but his lack of efficiency had as much to do with some poor offensive line play and the fact that some of his carries came during the “thud” period when ball-carriers weren’t live, as anything else.

Despite his humble beginnings as an unranked recruit who initially took the JUCO route, Jackson is well-positioned to use his experience and varied skill set to make an impact on the Buckeye running backs room.

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# O-Line Hungry For Bounce-Back Year In 2026

By **BOBBY GORBETT**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State's loaded offense had plenty of things go unexpectedly wrong in the 2025 postseason.

The Buckeyes failed to score over 14 points in either of their losses to Indiana and Miami (Fla.), the running backs struggled to make defenders miss in the open field and in pass protection, starting quarterback Julian Sayin had trouble extending plays with his legs, and even superstar receiver Jeremiah Smith missed a key block on a play that led to a pick-six for the Hurricanes.

However, no unit was more to blame for the offense's shortcomings than the offensive line. Following an impressive regular season in which it allowed just six sacks (one-half sack per game, the second-best mark nationally at that time), the Buckeyes conceded 10 combined sacks in the postseason.

In the running game, the offensive line wasn't much better in the postseason. They failed to create many holes for Buckeye runners, and the team failed to rush for more than 58 yards against either the Hurricanes or the Hoosiers.

Much to the dismay of some Buckeye fans, the Ohio State coaching staff didn't go to the transfer portal to completely revamp the offensive front following the disappointing postseason.

Instead, Ohio State returned four of its five starters from last year's starting group, with Tegra Tshabola, who has since transferred to Kentucky, the only starter not to return.

"The portal really wasn't in play there because it took everything we had to get the guys to come back," Ryan Day said in January. "I think when you look at the offensive line just across the country, the last five years, experience is really important. When you see some of the guys who have now been in the program, (center Carson Hinzman is) into his fifth year, (left guard) Luke Montgomery will be a senior, (right guard) Josh Padilla is a senior, (left tackle) Austin Siereveld is a senior, (backup tackle) Ian Moore is a junior, (right guard) Gabe VanSickle is a junior. It's really important to have this type of maturity on the offensive line."

It is no secret to the Buckeyes' returning offensive linemen that their performance at the end of last season was not good enough. Montgomery, who earned second-team All-Big Ten honors last year and was one of the brighter spots on the line in general, said the group plans to use its shortcomings as fuel for the 2026 season.

"It was justified, one hundred percent," Montgomery said of the criticism the offensive line faced following the postseason. "We understand that. We took that, and we're going to implement it now. We're pretty pissed off."

Hinzman echoed that sentiment and feels the unit will only grow with another offseason under its belt.

"I think this season is going to be a great opportunity to kind of right some of our wrongs we had this last year," Hinzman said. "But I think we have more experience, more skill work, and I think our guys have only gotten better."

It's hard to overstate the importance of the experience of the Buckeyes' offensive line.

Last year, Ohio State's starting front five didn't include a single senior, and the schedule may not have done them many favors. Unlike in 2024, Ohio State's offensive line wasn't necessarily tested by an elite defensive line in the regular season. The Buckeyes faced the talented Longhorns in Week One of the season, but a conservative game plan shielded Sayin and the offensive line.

When the Buckeyes faced Indiana in the Big Ten Championship Game, it was the best defensive line they had faced all season to that point. Then Miami, complete with two eventual first-round picks at defensive end, provided an even stiffer challenge.

Ohio State's offensive line was clearly not up to the task in pass protection in either game, which offensive line coach Tyler Bowen partially attributed to its failure to establish any run game on early downs.

"As an offensive line, we had opportunities to play better on early downs, to put ourselves in more advantageous situations, so you don't have a pass rush teeing off on you," Bowen said. "That's the No. 1 thing. It all works together. The plays aren't secluded in individual moments. The game gets played together."

Bowen explained that when the Buckeyes got behind schedule and were faced with third-and-long situations, they struggled to deal with the elite pass-rushers who made up Indiana and Miami's defensive line. They've worked hard enough in the offseason to be better-equipped to deal with those situations.

"We know a big marching charge coming out of the offseason is that we've got to be able to handle elite movement better," Bowen said. "And that's something that we work on every day, but it's become more of a point of emphasis. We're building that into our practice plan more often than maybe we have in the past, just making that a point of emphasis."

As bad as Ohio State's final two games of the 2025 season were, Montgomery said the line has also been able to learn from the experience of going against two of the best defensive lines in the country last year and the adversity that comes from their struggles.

"I think you learn most from adversity," Montgomery said. "Those were two pretty great teams, obviously, and both were in the national championship. You learn a lot from it, and when you go against great players like that, it's only going to help us in this upcoming season, and obviously, with that comes experience, and we're very experienced up front. A lot of guys can cross-train and play different spots, and that helps, too. We're going to be ready to roll, and it's going to be a lot of fun, but spring ball is just about no pressure and just grinding, and it's a lot of fun."

Hinzman knows that there are still months to go before Ohio State plays a game against a real opponent, and with that in mind, he realizes the Buckeyes can't be fueled only by vengeance. He hopes the unit can simply make fundamental improvements to reach its potential.

"Obviously, we have something to prove, but we can't let that be the main driving force," he said. "(Julian Sayin) is a great guy. We don't want to see him get hit. Together, if we just nail down the fundamentals, which is exactly what we're doing this spring, we're going to be a pretty solid group."



SONNY BROCKWAY

**ANOTHER LEVEL NEEDED** — The Ohio State offensive line rolled through the regular season, blowing out holes for the running backs and protecting quarterback Julian Sayin, but the Buckeyes allowed 10 sacks in postseason losses to Indiana and Miami (Fla.) after giving up six in the first 12 games. Returnees such as Gabe VanSickle (58), Carson Hinzman (75) and Luke Montgomery (51) know they must do better this season.

## Moore, Lowe Step Up At Tackle

On paper, the Buckeye offensive line was dealt a blow in the offseason when starting offensive tackles Siereveld and Phillip Daniels missed the spring with respective undisclosed injuries. However, with Daniels and Siereveld out, backup offensive tackles Ian Moore and Carter Lowe each earned valuable experience working with the rest of the starters and against the starting defensive line.

While no one likes to see players get injured, Day appreciated the opportunity afforded to the young tackles.

"It was good to see those guys get some reps and kind of get forced into it, and they'll be like that for the rest of spring," Day said. "It's great to see both Ian and Carter have to step up in a big way. It's one thing when you're the second guy, or maybe the third for Carter, but now he's getting reps with the ones and is going against the best guys over on the other side of the ball."

"This is a great opportunity for him, and he has to take it and run. It's not just the physical part. It's the mental part, being able to do it and then consistently do it over and over again. I know it happened a couple of years ago in preseason camp. We had some guys out on the offensive line. Some guys had to step up, and that paid off dividends down the road."

It wasn't always easy for Lowe or Moore. In fact, Lowe, a former top-75 recruit in his second year with the program, had some serious growing pains while receiving his first dose of first-team football at Ohio State.

The 6-6, 313-pound tackle struggled in both practices made open to the media and during the spring game, but that is to be expected at a developmental position like tackle.

Even if it hasn't quite connected for Lowe yet on the gridiron, Bowen feels like he's mak-

ing progress off the field, both with his body and mind.

"The No. 1 thing when you look at Carter, I think, and this goes for all offensive linemen coming in, and we're going through that with our freshmen right now, as physically gifted as they are coming out of high school, there's a lot of physical development that goes into it," Bowen said. "Carter is a good example of how he really came into his own, I would say, probably in week seven or week eight of last year."

"Really, he's gotten his body right and is really starting to get stronger. You always see the movement. Carter's an intelligent young man who's starting to really understand the game a little bit more in the big picture. Now I think he's starting to have some strength come together, and he knows he's still got a long way to go in that department. As the physical development catches up with where he's trending from a football standpoint, I think we have a chance to have a really good player."

Considering he played in just two games as a freshman and isn't expected to earn much playing time this year, Lowe's career may not have started exactly as he had hoped when he initially committed to Ohio State. However, Montgomery is quick to remind Lowe that he also had to wait his turn and get past growing pains to make an impact.

"Carter having to go up against (Kenyatta Jackson Jr.), Beau Atkinson, those guys, and Epi (Sitanieli), he's only got to get better," Montgomery said. "And I'm always reminding (Lowe and Moore) every day, that's where I was two years ago in my progression playing here. It just takes time. The reps are crucial, and you're getting those good reps."

While Lowe has had some struggles, Moore has risen to the occasion, filling in for Siereveld. Unlike Lowe, Moore, also a four-star recruit, earned legitimate playing time last year for the Buckeyes. In his second col-

legiate season, Moore played in all 14 games and even earned a start in Ohio State's 34-10 win over Purdue. Moore fared well against the Boilermakers, and that performance must have left him in good standing with Ohio State's coaching staff, because when Siereveld went down with injury in the Cotton Bowl, he was tasked with filling in at left tackle.

Moore held up admirably against the Hurricanes' loaded front. He was the Buckeyes' second-highest graded offensive lineman in the game by Pro Football Focus.

Over the offseason, he's picked up right where he left off at the end of last year and certainly has impressed his teammates.

"Ian's been stepping up," Hinzman said. "It's fun to watch him starting to come into his own. In the weight room, he's like insanely dominant. So for him to start taking that strength and translating that into football strength is huge. Being a firsthand account of that and seeing that is pretty cool."

As much as Moore has progressed, he knows he has a long way to go before the start of the season.

"It's great. It's an amazing opportunity," Moore said when asked how it feels to compete for a starting role, "But in my opinion, I'm not there yet, so I just have to keep working, keep pushing, and come the season, then we'll find out."

**Bowen, Day Will Play Top Five O-Linemen**

With Siereveld and Daniels having experience at their respective tackle positions, it would seem safe to assume that Lowe and Moore are only temporarily filling in at those spots.

However, Day said each player had the chance to position themselves for a starting job with a quality performance in the spring.

"We need (Lowe and Moore) to finish with two really good weeks of work, and they'll be right at the point of attack," Day said during practice. "They need to really step up for us, because not only are they playing for depth, but they're playing for a starting position. Everything is on the board, and the more guys we have that can play, the more we're going to put them in the game."

That doesn't necessarily mean Siereveld or Daniels are on the hot seat at tackle. It could be that if Moore or Lowe play well enough in the fall, Siereveld bumps over to right guard. The Buckeyes don't seem to have a solid replacement for Tshabola at the right guard position at this point, although VanSickle and Padilla are each candidates to fill in to that slot, and Siereveld has prior experience at that position.

Day said the priority for Ohio State will be to get the five best players on the field.

"We'll try to find the best five," Day said. "Josh Padilla is another one that has been out this spring, so how does he fit in? That's what we're trying to figure out. The good news about Austin is that he has flexibility right there (to move to guard), so we'll look at it. Josh has flexibility. So we'll try to find the best five, the best we can, and all we can do is just keep practicing every day and evaluate what we have."

Siereveld, a 6-5, 325-pound lineman, started his Ohio State career at the guard position and played well there, but after an outstanding offseason, he was bestowed the honor of being the Buckeyes' starting left tackle. Bowen said Siereveld's size and arm length allow him

**FOOTBALL**

**Sept. 5** BALL STATE; **12** at Texas; **19** KENT STATE; **26** ILLINOIS.

**Oct. 3** at Iowa; **10** MARYLAND; **17** at Indiana; **31** at USC.

**Nov. 7** OREGON; **14** NORTHWESTERN; **21** at Nebraska; **28** MICHIGAN.

**Dec. 5** Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

**BASEBALL (21-21, 10-11)**

**Feb. 13-14** vs. Saint Louis at Pensacola, Fla., W 7-1; W 3-2; W 7-3; **20** vs. Louisiana Tech at Grind City Classic in Memphis, Tenn., L 6-0; **20** vs. Memphis at Grind City Classic in Memphis, Tenn., W 12-5; **21** vs. Louisiana Tech at Grind City Classic in Memphis, Tenn., L 9-3; **22** vs. Memphis at Grind City Classic in Memphis, Tenn., W 8-2; **27** vs. Texas-San Antonio at BRUCE BOLT College Classic in Houston, L 6-5 **28** vs. Ole Miss at BRUCE BOLT College Classic in Houston, L 8-0.

**March 1** vs. Texas at BRUCE BOLT College Classic in Houston, L 10-3; **4** XAVIER, L 13-4; **6-8** UCLA, L 11-1; L 19-6 (8 inn.); L 10-7; **10** KENT STATE, L 8-5; **13-15** at Washington, W 10-9 (10 inn.); L 5-4 (11 inn.); L 5-4; **18** at Xavier, W 8-4 (10 inn.); **20-22** BUTLER, W 11-0 (7 inn.); W 13-3 (8 inn.); W 14-4 (7 inn.); **24** at Wright State, L 10-8; **27-29** at Minnesota, W 4-3; W 9-3; W 12-9; **31** TOLEDO, W 10-5.

**April 3-5** MARYLAND, W 10-8; W 14-12; W 7-0; **7** BOWLING GREEN, L 9-3; **10-12** PENN STATE, L 10-6; W 3-2; W 15-10; **15** MARSHALL, L 11-7; **17-19** at Purdue, L 10-9; L 12-7; L 6-2; **21** AKRON, W 19-7 (7 inn.); **24-26** at Rutgers, W 8-0; L 3-0; L 11-5.

**May 1-3** NEBRASKA; **5** MIAMI (OH); **8-10** MICHIGAN STATE; **12** WRIGHT STATE; **14-16** at Michigan; **19-24** Big Ten tournament at Omaha, Neb.; **29-31** NCAA Regionals, TBA.

**June 1** NCAA Regionals, TBA **June 5-8** NCAA Super Regionals, TBA; **12-22** College World Series at Omaha, Neb.

**MEN'S GOLF**

**Feb. 9-11** Puerto Rico Classic at Rio Grande, P.R., T6th/15; **16-18** Watersound Invitational at Panama City Beach, Fla., 10th/12.

**March 1-2** Colleton River Collegiate at Bluffton, S.C., 2nd/15; **20-22** Linger Longer Invitational at Eatonton, Ga., 8th/18.

**April 11-12** ROBERT KEPLER INTERCOLLEGIATE, 2nd/16; **18-19** Hoosier Collegiate at Bloomington, Ind., 8th/15.

**May 1-3** Big Ten Championship at North Plains, Ore.; **18-20** NCAA REGIONAL; **29-June 3** NCAA Championship at Carlsbad, Calif.

**WOMEN'S GOLF**

**Feb. 1-3** Therese Hession Regional Challenge at Palos Verdes Estates, Calif., 12th/16; **15-16** Spartan Suncoast Invitational at Sarasota, Fla., 3rd/15.

**March 2-4** Darius Rucker Intercollegiate at Hilton Head, S.C., 8th/17; **27-29** Clemson Invitational at Sunset, S.C., 5th/16.

**April 17-18** THERESE HESSION BUCKEYE INVITATIONAL, 1st/14; **24-26** Big Ten Championship at Los Angeles, 2nd

**May 11-13** NCAA Regionals at TBD; **22-27** NCAA Championship Finals at Carlsbad, Calif.

**MEN'S LACROSSE (10-4, 3-2)**

**Feb. 1** DETROIT MERCY, W 19-3; **7** CLEVELAND STATE, W 17-7; **10** BELLARMINE, W 11-6; **14** at Air Force, W 14-9; **21** HIGH POINT, W 13-5; **28** at Georgetown, W 10-9.

**March 7** NOTRE DAME, L 9-8; **12** DENVER, W 6-4; **21** at Rutgers, W 6-5; **28** PENN STATE, L 13-6.

**April 4** at Maryland, L 8-7 (OT); **11** JOHNS HOPKINS, W 7-6; **17** MICHIGAN, W 9-8; **25** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT FIRST ROUND AT COLUMBUS VS. MICHIGAN, L 11-8.

**SOFTBALL (24-25, 11-10)**

**Feb. 6** Paradise Classic at Boca Raton, Fla., vs. Florida Atlantic, L 10-6; **6** Paradise Classic at Boca Raton, Fla., vs. Indiana, L 12-3 (5 inn.); **7** Paradise Classic at Boca Raton, Fla., vs. Army, W 11-0 (5 inn.); **8** Paradise Classic at Boca Raton, Fla., vs. Wisconsin, W 8-5; **13** Bevo Classic at Austin, Texas, vs. Northern Illinois, W 7-2; **13** Bevo Classic at Austin, Texas, vs. Texas, L 14-6 (5 inn.); **14** Bevo Classic at Austin, Texas, vs. Abilene Christian, W 15-7 (5 inn.); **15** Bevo Classic at Austin, Texas, vs. Syracuse, W 9-0 (6 inn.); **15** Bevo Classic at Austin, Texas, vs. Texas, L 7-4; **20** Mizuno Classic at Charlottesville, Va., vs. Delaware, L 2-0; **20** Mizuno Classic at Charlottesville, Va., vs. Virginia, L 8-4; **21** Mizuno Classic at Charlottesville, Va., vs. Delaware, W 11-2 (5 inn.); **21** Mizuno Classic at Charlottesville, Va., vs. Virginia, L 8-0 (5 inn.); **27** Duke Invitational at Durham, N.C., vs. Northwestern, L 11-1; **28** Duke Invitational at Durham, N.C., vs. Boston, L 10-5; **28** Duke Invitational at Durham, N.C., vs. Duke, L 6-3.

**March 1** Duke Invitational at Durham, N.C., vs. Duke, L 3-1; **6-8** IOWA, W 5-2; L 9-1; W 10-2 (6 inn.); **10** WESTERN MICHIGAN, L 11-10; **13-15** at Purdue, L 12-6; L 6-5; L 12-6; **20** OHIO STATE TOURNAMENT vs. INDIANA STATE, W 10-0 (5 inn.); **20** OHIO STATE TOURNAMENT vs. CAMPBELL, W 8-6 (8 inn.); **21** OHIO STATE TOURNAMENT vs. LOUISVILLE, L 6-5; **21** OHIO STATE TOURNAMENT vs. CAMPBELL, L 11-5; **22** OHIO STATE TOURNAMENT vs. INDIANA STATE, W 11-1 (5 inn.); **25** CALIFORNIA, W 10-3 (6 inn.); **27-29** MICHIGAN STATE, W 9-0 (6 inn.); W 2-0; W 10-0; **31** BOWLING GREEN, W 18-7.

**April 4-5** at Minnesota, W 9-5; W 10-1; L 2-1; **8** DAYTON, W 12-4; **10-12** at Michigan, L 10-8; L 11-1; W 13-2; **15** PITT, W 9-1; **17-19** PENN STATE, W 4-3; L 15-7; W 9-0; **21** AKRON, L 9-5; **24-26** at Oregon, W 3-0; L 13-6; L 8-0.

**May 1-3** WASHINGTON; **6-9** Big Ten Tournament at College Park, Md.; **15-17** NCAA Regionals at TBA; **22-24** NCAA Super Regionals at TBA; **28-June 5** Women's College World Series at Oklahoma City, Okla.

**MEN'S TENNIS (29-4, 12-1)**

**Jan. 18** TOLEDO, W 4-0; **18** XAVIER, W 4-0; **23** NORTH ALABAMA, W 4-0; **24** PURDUE W 4-0; **30** TEXAS, W 4-1.

**Feb. 1** WAKE FOREST, W 4-0; **7** VIRGINIA, W 5-2; **13** ITA National Team Indoor at Dallas vs. Southern Methodist University, W 4-3; **14** ITA National Team Indoor at Dallas vs. Stanford, W 4-3; **16** ITA National Team Indoor at Dallas vs. Virginia, W 4-2; **17** ITA National Team Indoor at Dallas vs. Texas, L 4-2; **22** NOTRE DAME, W 5-0; **22** DAYTON, W 4-0.

**March 5** at Baylor, L 4-2; **7** at Penn State, W 4-0; **13** MICHIGAN, W 4-0; **15** MICHIGAN STATE, L 4-3; **18** at Texas A&M, W 4-1; **20** at Indiana, W 4-1; **22** at Purdue, W 4-0; **27** ILLINOIS, W 5-2; **29** NORTHWESTERN, W 5-0.

**April 3** at UCLA, W 4-0; **5** at Southern California, W 4-3; **10** NORTHERN KENTUCKY, W 7-0; **10** OREGON, W 4-0; **12** WASHINGTON, W 4-0; **12** TOLEDO, W 6-0; **17** at Wisconsin, W 4-1; **19** at Nebraska, W 4-0; **23** Big Ten Tournament at Ojai, Calif., vs. Nebraska, W 4-0; **24** Big Ten Tournament at Ojai, Calif., vs. Illinois, W 4-3; **25** Big Ten Tournament at Ojai, Calif., vs. Michigan State, L 4-3.

**May 1-3** NCAA 1st and 2nd Rounds; **8-9**

NCAA Super Regional; **14-17** NCAA Team Championships.

**WOMEN'S TENNIS (23-4, 12-1)**

**Jan. 26** IOWA, W 4-0.

**Feb. 1** VIRGINIA, W 4-0; **6** ITA National Team Indoor Championship at Champaign, Ill., vs. Duke, W 4-2; **7** ITA National Team Indoor Championship at Champaign, Ill., vs. North Carolina, W 4-2; **9** ITA National Team Indoor Championship at Evanston, Ill., vs. Texas A&M W 4-2; **10** ITA National Team Indoor Championship at Evanston, Ill., vs. Georgia, L 4-3; **13** NC STATE, W 5-2; **15** at Penn State, W 5-2; **22** at Oklahoma State, W 4-3; **28** MICHIGAN STATE, W 6-1.

**March 6** MICHIGAN, W 4-1; **11** at Pepperdine, L 4-0; **14** at UCLA, W 4-0; **15** at Southern California, L 4-1; **22** DUKE, W 4-0; **27** RUTGERS, W 4-0; **29** MARYLAND, W 4-0.

**April 1** at Michigan, W 4-1; **3** at Nebraska, W 4-1; **5** at Iowa, W 4-0; **11** at Purdue, W 4-0; **12** at Indiana, W 4-0; **17** OREGON, W 4-0; **19** WASHINGTON, W 4-2; **24** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT AT COLUMBUS VS. ILLINOIS, W 4-0; **25** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT AT COLUMBUS VS. UCLA, W 4-2; **26** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT AT COLUMBUS VS. MICHIGAN, L 4-2.

**TRACK & FIELD**

**Jan. 9-10** Rod McCravy Memorial Invitational at Louisville, Ky. NTS; **16-17** Indiana Invitational at Bloomington, Ind., NTS; **23** Stan Scott Invite at Lubbock, Texas, NTS; **30-31** PNC Lenny Lyles Invitational at Louisville, Ky., NTS; **30-31** Meyo Invitational at South Bend, Ind., NTS.

**Feb. 13-14** David Hemery Valentine Invitational at Boston, NTS; **13-14** Tiger Paw Invitational at Clemson, S.C., NTS; **26-28** Big Ten Indoor Championships at Indianapolis, Men 8th/15, 41 pts; Women 10th/18, 25 pts.

**March 13-14** NCAA Indoor Championships at Fayetteville, Ark., Men 52nd, 1 pt; Women DNP, 0 pts; **20-21** USF Alumni Invitational at Tampa, Fla., NTS; **26-28** Raleigh Relays at Raleigh, N.C., NTS.

**April 1-4** Texas Relays at Austin, Texas, NTS; **17-18** Tom Jones Memorial at Gainesville, Fla., NTS; **17-18** Virginia Challenge at Charlottesville, Va., NTS; **23-25** Penn Relays at Philadelphia, NTS.

**May 1-2** JESSE OWENS CLASSIC; **15-17** Big Ten Championships at Lincoln, Neb.; **27-30** NCAA East Preliminary Round at Lexington, Ky.

**June 10-13** NCAA Championships at Eugene, Ore.

**MEN'S VOLLEYBALL (14-12, 9-7)**

**Jan. 8** CENTRAL STATE W 3-0; **9** N.J. INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, W 3-0; **15** GEORGE MASON, W 3-0; **17** LONG BEACH STATE, L 3-1; **23** LINCOLN MEMORIAL, W 3-0; **29** Big Ten Challenge at Los Angeles vs. UCLA, L 3-0; **30** Big Ten Challenge at Los Angeles vs. USC, L 3-2.

**Feb. 5** at Northern Kentucky, W 3-0; **8** CENTRAL STATE, W 3-0; **13** at Queens University of Charlotte, W 3-1; **15** at Queens University of Charlotte, L 3-2; **19** BALL STATE, W 3-0; **21** PURDUE FORT WAYNE, W 3-0; **26** at Lewis, L 3-0.

**March 1** at Loyola-Chicago, L 3-1; **5** LINDENWOOD, L 3-0; **7** MCKENDREE, L 3-0; **12** at Ball State, L 3-1; **14** at Purdue Fort Wayne, W 3-0; **19** LOYOLA-CHICAGO, W 3-1; **21** LEWIS, W 3-0; **25** at Penn State, L 3-1.

**April 4** NORTHERN KENTUCKY, W 3-0; **9** at McKendree, W 3-2; **11** at Lindenwood, L 3-2; **18** MIVA Quarterfinals at Lebanon, Ill., vs. McKendree, L 3-2.

**May 7** NCAA Quarterfinals; **9** NCAA Semifinals; **11** NCAA Finals.

to excel at both guard and tackle.

"He's got some movement skills you were able to see that last year with the role he had to step into. Austin provides length," Bowen said. "He's a guy who has long arms. When you think of it at the collegiate level, he's an above-average length guy to play tackle, which is also going to help him on the interior. But I think those physical traits – and then you're

dealing with a guy who's been fortunate to play a lot of football, just like a few of these guys have. So it's not a total mind change for him or anything."

It doesn't seem like Bowen or Day are anywhere close to finalizing who will start at each position along the offensive line. With months to go before the season, the Buckeye coaching staff doesn't need to come to a decision

anytime soon, but regardless of who starts on Ohio State's line, Hinzman wants the entire unit to play with a chip on its shoulder.

"Whoever we have on the field, we have to understand that we're the offensive line of the Ohio State Buckeyes," Hinzman said. "So you have to have a little bit of swagger to you about that, and I think those guys understand that. They understand how important that is."

# Four-Star Offensive Tackle Joins 2027 Class

Ohio State added to its 2027 class for the first time since December when Pittsburgh Central Catholic four-star offensive tackle Jimmy Kalis committed to the Buckeyes on April 17.

## RECRUITING OUTLOOK Greg Wilson

Kalis is the 10th commitment in the class and the fourth offensive lineman, continuing a very strong start to the season for OL coach Tyler Bowen in his first full recruiting cycle with the Buckeyes.

By 247Sports' composite rankings, Kalis is the No. 312 prospect in the country and the No. 30 offensive tackle. He chose Ohio State over Clemson, Georgia, LSU, Miami (Fla.) and Texas.

Here's what the scouting report on Kalis says on 247Sports.

"Tall, battle-tested puncher that shines as a drive/down blocker," wrote Andrew Ivins, the director of scouting. "Moves with a higher center of gravity, but finds a way to engage the lower half. Almost always looking to finish and take defenders to the ground. Bulldozes on double-team calls and frequently engages multiple targets each snap."

Kalis joins Liberty Center, Ohio, four-

OSU Football 2027 Commitments						
Player(s) in the class of 2027 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.						
Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School	
Jamier Brown	WR	5-11	170	★★★★★	Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut	
Quinton Cypher	LB	6-2	220	★★★★	Raleigh (N.C.) Millbrook	
Brady Edmunds	QB	6-5	215	★★★★	Huntington Beach, Calif.	
DJ Jacobs	DL	6-5	225	★★★★★	Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity	
Eli Johnson	S	6-3	200	★★★★	Cibolo (Texas) Steele	
Jimmy Kalis	OT	6-6	280	★★★★	Pittsburgh Central Catholic	
Brody McNeel	OT	6-5	285	★★★★	Richmond (Va.) Godwin	
Davis Seaman	IOL	6-4	290	★★★★	Columbus Bishop Watterson	
Angelo Smith	S	5-10	170	★★★	Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna	
Mason Wilt	OT	6-5	265	★★★	St. Clairsville, Ohio	
Kellen Wymer	OT	6-5	265	★★★★	Liberty Center, Ohio	

OSU Football 2028 Commitments						
Player(s) in the class of 2028 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.						
Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School	
Elijah Newman-Hall	RB	5-11	195	★★★★	Tampa (Fla.) Blake	
Jameer Whyce	DL	6-4	270	★★★★★	Trotwood (Ohio) Trotwood-Madison	

star offensive tackle Kellen Wymer (6-5, 265), Richmond (Va.) Godwin four-star offensive tackle Brody McNeel (6-5, 285) and St. Clairsville, Ohio, three-star offensive lineman Mason Wilt (6-5, 295) in the class.

Kalis is the starting left tackle for his high school team at 6-6, 280 pounds. His dad, Todd, played at Arizona State as an offensive lineman and spent time in the NFL with the Minnesota Vikings, Pittsburgh Steelers and Cincinnati Bengals. Jimmy Kalis is also the half-brother of former Michigan offensive guard Kyle Kalis

Jimmy Kalis was on campus for the spring game on April 18, along with many more visitors.

With spring practices coming to an end and official visit season approaching, the Buckeyes will certainly speed up their additions to the 2027 class, still with over six months to go until the early signing period in December.

### Four-Star IOL Commits To OSU

Ohio State added yet another offensive lineman to its 2027 class on April 27, with four-star interior offensive lineman Davis Seaman committing to the Buckeyes.

The Columbus Bishop Watterson product seems to have been an OSU lean for a while, but now he officially joins the class to become the fifth offensive lineman committed to the Buckeyes already.

Seaman (6-4, 290) is considered by 247Sports composite rankings as the No. 400 player in the country, the No. 21 interior offensive lineman and the No. 15 player in Ohio. He chose Ohio State over Auburn and Penn State.

He is ranked higher by 247Sports individual rankings at No. 241 in the country and No. 15 at his position. He is the third in-state commitment of the five offensive linemen.

Seaman is the 11th commitment for the Buckeyes in the class, also joining Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic five-star edge rusher DJ Jacobs (6-5, 235), Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut five-star wide receiver Jamier Brown (5-11, 192), Cibolo (Texas) Steele four-star safety Eli Johnson (6-3, 200), Raleigh (N.C.) Millbrook four-star linebacker Quinton Cypher (6-2, 220), Huntington Beach, Calif., four-star quarterback Brady Edmunds (6-5, 220) and Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna three-star safety Angelo Smith (5-10, 170).

### Spring Game Attracts Visitors

The spring game may have been a bit gloomy when it came to the weather, but that didn't stop the Buckeyes from hosting a talented group of recruits for the event.

The only two signees who are not on campus yet from the Buckeyes' 2026 class

were both in town for the game. Kicker Cooper Peterson and interior offensive lineman Tucker Smith were both spotted on the sideline before the game began.

Current OSU commits from the 2027 class made their way to Columbus on April 18, with Kalis; Huntington Beach, Calif., four-star quarterback Brady Edmunds (6-5, 220); Cibolo (Texas) Steele four-star safety Eli Johnson (6-3, 200); Wymer; and Wilt all making it to campus.

From the 2028 class, the Buckeyes had Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star running back Elijah Newman-Hall (5-11, 195) on site as well.

There were also many other prospects from the 2027 class on campus. The Buckeyes hosted Wellington (Fla.) Palm Beach Central four-star defensive lineman Tyler Alexander (6-4, 315); Cleveland Glenville three-star linebacker Kaylon Bailey (6-1, 225); Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star cornerback Jaden Carey (6-0, 165); Blue Springs (Mo.) South four-star linebacker Prince Goldsby (6-3, 205); Manvel, Texas, three-star safety and Texas commit Karnell "Greedy" James (6-0, 175); Baton Rouge (La.) Catholic four-star running back Jayden Miles (6-2, 203); and Gainesville, Ga., four-star running back Nigel Newkirk (5-11, 200).

Newkirk talked with 247Sports after his visit to Columbus and said that he will need more time to decide on his school, likely taking his official visits before he commits. But he also said that he enjoyed what running backs coach Carlos Locklyn can do for him.

"I spent time with Coach Locklyn and all that, and it was my first time being at the stadium," Newkirk said. "Even though Bo Jackson and Isaiah West didn't get any reps because of injuries, I just feel like Coach Locklyn plays a big part in the running game. He's a legend and knows how to really develop a running back, based on Bo Jackson running for 1,000 yards last year. He really knows what he's doing."

Newkirk already has official visits scheduled to Alabama (May 29-31), LSU (June 5-7), Ohio State (June 12-14) and Michigan (June 19-21). He has previously said that his commitment date will be July 1.

The campus was most populated by 2028 recruits for the spring game. Ohio State had West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Judah Blair (6-1, 200); Drexel Hill (Pa.) Monsignor Bonner offensive tackle Tyrie Davis-Winn (6-8, 270); Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Cypress Bay defensive end Meshi Dobson (6-3, 235); Norfolk (Va.) Maury quarterback Dominick Everette (6-1, 160); Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut defensive lineman Thomas Minor (6-3, 275); Clairton, Pa., safety Brandon Murphy Jr. (6-0, 175); Princeton (N.J.) Hun School quarterback Lukas Prock (6-2, 190); Severn (Md.) Archbishop Spalding four-star offensive tackle Bryce Smalls (6-4, 290); Chicago Mount Carmel four-star defensive lineman Caleb Tucker (6-3, 355); Rancho Santa Margarita (Calif.) Catholic four-star cornerback CaRon Williams (5-11, 175) all on campus for the event.

The Buckeyes are also starting to ramp up their recruitment for the 2029 class as well, hosting Allen, Texas, quarterback Ty Snell (6-2, 174), Nashville (Tenn.) Battle

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# ASK AN ANALYST

## With Allen Trieu of Rivals

**Ohio State added Pittsburgh Central Catholic four-star offensive tackle Jimmy Kalis (6-6, 280) to its 2027 class on April 17. What do you make of him as a prospect?**

"First off, great bloodlines. The whole football family comes from a really good high school program. When you start at left tackle at that school, it's no small feat. So he played against very good competition in high school. He played for a competitive high school. So he's going to come into college ahead of the game, just from having a family that's been around football and coming from a good high school. He's going to be very polished. You can't teach 6-6, 280 pounds. He's super strong, very physical. In scouting terms, we talk a lot about upside. I think this is a guy where the floor is really high. It's very safe to say that he's going to come in, work hard and do all the things he needs to do to be a contributor at Ohio State."

**Offensive line coach Tyler Bowen has been at Ohio State for over a year now. How do you evaluate him as a recruiter in his time with the Buckeyes so far?**

"I think he's done a really, really good job. First of all, in this class, Jimmy Kalis was a guy who was recruited by a lot of big schools. He also locked the state down pretty well (for 2027) with St. Clairsville, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Mason Wilt (6-5, 295) and Liberty Cen-

ter, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Kellen Wymer (6-5, 295). You go back into the last couple of cycles, he's been in on some big names, landed some other top in-state guys like Sam Greer a year ago. I think where he's really going to separate himself is where we don't know yet. Some of the guys that he took (in the 2026 class) that maybe weren't necessarily obvious, top of the board, blue-chip guys – Landry Brede, Tucker Smith and then Mason Wilhelm. Those are evaluations taken, and Ohio State has hit on a lot of guys like that in the past. It would be a huge feather in the cap for him if those guys ended up turning out well. The offensive line is a position where it's really important to be thorough in evaluation and kind of catch some guys on the rise, more so than just the ready-made guys."

**Are there any players who aren't committed that you feel strongly will end up in Ohio State's 2027 class?**

"There's a lot of really good buzz for them. Cleveland Glenville three-star linebacker Kaylor Bailey (6-1, 225) has been to campus quite a few times. I think that's one that's trending towards Ohio State. Baxter (Tenn.) Upperman three-star tight end Colton Johnson (6-5, 235) is another one who's spoken really highly of Ohio State and has gone there a couple of times. I think he's one that I feel pretty strongly about Ohio State's chances. Same with Columbus Bishop Watterson three-star inte-

rior offensive lineman Davis Seaman (6-4, 290). I know that Penn State has made a really good push there, but I think ultimately, with him being right there in Columbus, I feel pretty good about him ending up at Ohio State as well."

**Ryan Day talked this spring about how having two coordinators who are former NFL head coaches helps recruiting at Ohio State. What feedback have you heard from recruits who have attended practices when both Arthur Smith and Matt Patricia were with the Buckeyes?**

"The recruits that come to campus for spring practices, I think they can see what having those two NFL head coaches does for the competitiveness of the practice. They've coached at the highest levels. They know what it takes to get players to where it takes to succeed at that level. The things I hear the most are, first of all, that they have a ton of talent. It's cool to go see those guys practice and see what a top team looks like. Also, there's no wasted time in practice. Those guys are always doing something of value. They make the best use of their time. They really get after it and they compete. They cheer each other on, but there's friendly fire. Those are the things that I hear the most from kids who come through practice."

Ground Academy wide receiver Maddox Porter (6-2, 175), and Loganville (Ga.) Grayson defensive lineman Rome Samuels (6-5, 290).

### Bailey Trending Toward OSU

Bailey, who as mentioned was on campus for the spring game, has been trending toward Ohio State recently.

It's well known that the Glenville to Ohio State pipeline is flowing as strong as ever, with freshman linebacker Cincere Johnson and defensive lineman Jamir Perez being the latest to make the trip down I-71 to Columbus.

Greg Smith of On3 believes that Bailey will be the next Glenville linebacker at Ohio State, making an official prediction that it's where the three-star linebacker will end up.

Bailey didn't receive an offer from the Buckeyes until this spring, but he's apparently intrigued by the option of playing at Ohio State with some of his former teammates.

"It was awesome watching some of the younger guys get into the action," Bailey told 247Sports about his spring-game visit. "I watched (my former teammates) Cincere Johnson and Jamir Perez make a couple plays. It was great. I talked to Ryan Day before the spring game started and James Laurinaitis. They want me down there."

"I'll be committing in a couple of months to wherever I go, but I know I've been to Ohio State a bunch of times since my freshman year. I've been building relationships with them for three to four years, so it's family down there."

Bailey already has an official visit to Columbus scheduled on June 5, and he says that the Ohio State coaches see him as a versatile linebacker who can move around the same way Arvell Reese – another Glenville product – did last season for the Buckeyes.

### Hartline Competing For 2027 Commit

Ohio State may need to compete down to the wire when it comes to the recruitment of Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna three-star safety Angelo Smith (5-10, 170).

Smith received an offer from South Florida earlier this year, after former Ohio State offensive coordinator and wide receivers coach Brian Hartline took the head coaching position with the Bulls.

Now, Smith has set up an official visit to get to Tampa, Fla., on May 29, a week before he will be visiting Columbus (June 5).

Smith is the brother of current Buckeye receiver Jeremiah Smith, who was brought to Ohio State by Hartline, and now the South Florida head coach is attempting to go 2 for 2 with the Smith brothers.

Angelo Smith has been committed to Ohio State since Sept. 21, 2025, and is currently rated by 247Sports' composite rankings as the No. 803 player in the country and the No. 77 safety prospect in the class.

While it wouldn't be the biggest loss, rankings-wise, for the Buckeyes – Smith is currently their lowest-rated prospect committed in the 2027 class – they would certainly still like to keep him in the fold if possible.

Here's what Ivins had to say about Smith in his scouting report.

"Deep safety that lacks size, but makes up for it with his football IQ," he wrote. "Surprisingly physical for a defender of his stature as he strikes in the open field and can wrangle larger ball carriers to the ground."

While Ivins is correct that Smith is currently slightly undersized for his position, it's possible a growth spurt could be coming his way. His older brother is listed at 6-3, 223 pounds on Ohio State's roster, so if Angelo Smith ends up getting bigger and is able to keep his speed (16.01-second 110-meter hurdle as a high school sophomore), he could shoot up the rankings.

### Buckeyes Miss On Multiple Prospects

The Buckeyes missed out on a few targets they were after in the 2027 class since BSB last went to press.

Alpharetta (Ga.) Milton four-star tight end Grant Haviland (6-4, 225) committed to Vanderbilt on April 14, choosing the Commodores over Clemson, Georgia, Ohio State and Tennessee.

Haviland is the No. 271 player in the country and the No. 15 tight end. The Buckeyes are still without a player at the position this cycle but have shown that

they won't shy away from making major additions at tight end in the transfer portal.

This season, two of OSU's likely top three options are veteran players they found in the portal, in seventh-year Hunter Welcing from Northwestern and senior Mason Williams from Ohio University.

The day before Haviland committed, Baltimore St. Frances Academy five-star defensive end Anthony Sweeney (6-4, 230) pledged to Texas Tech.

Continued On Page 28

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# Ohio State Still In Hunt For 5-Star RB

Continued From Page 27

There wasn't much traction with Sweeney and the Buckeyes in recent months, so it came as no surprise that he didn't end up in the class for OSU.

The Red Raiders added the No. 23 player in the 2027 class and the No. 3 edge rusher. The Buckeyes still have the No. 1 edge rusher in the class in Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic five-star DJ Jacobs (6-5, 235).

Greenwich (Conn.) Country Day four-star defensive end Mekai Brown (6-6, 235) ended up committing to USC on April 17 over Ohio State, Ole Miss, Texas A&M and Notre Dame.

The Trojans were long considered a favorite for Brown, who helps the Trojans class climb to No. 3 in the country, jumping Ohio State, which is down to No. 4. Brown is ranked the No. 47 player in the country and the No. 6 defensive end.

The Buckeyes also missed on Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star safety Zayden Gamble, who committed to Notre Dame on April 25. His commitment date was originally set in July, but he moved it up to pledge to the Fighting Irish earlier.

He had four official visits set to get to his top four schools, which were Miami, Ohio State, Florida and Notre Dame. He hasn't said whether he will still take those visits. Gamble is ranked the No. 176 play-

er in the country and the No. 14 safety.

## OSU Among Recruits Top Schools

As spring visits came to an end, the Buckeyes were able to stay in the race for more recruits who narrowed down their top choices since BSB last went to press.

Possibly the biggest of those prospects was Chattanooga (Tenn.) Baylor School five-star running back David Gabriel Georges (6-0, 205), who has been a priority target for Locklyn since the running backs coach arrived in Columbus.

That has paid off, with Ohio State being included along with Georgia, Ole Miss and Tennessee in his top four. For a long period, the Volunteers and Bulldogs were considered the biggest contenders against the Buckeyes in his recruitment. Tennessee is still seen as a major threat, but Georgia less so after it landed McKeesport, Pa., five-star running back Kemon Spell (5-9, 205), who flipped from Penn State.

The Buckeyes will continue to go all in on Gabriel Georges.

Ohio State was also included in the top six for Garner, N.C., four-star linebacker Arosen Randle Jr. (6-3, 210). He included the Buckeyes with Georgia, Florida, Miami, NC State and South Carolina. Randle will take an official visit to each of those programs and will commit after. He is the No. 94 player in the country and the No. 6 linebacker.

## Offers

• **Owensboro (Ky.) Catholic offensive tackle John Paul Carrico** – Carrico is a 2028 prospect and was on campus for a visit when he received his offer. He is currently unranked, but his 6-8, 295-pound frame makes him an intriguing prospect. He has eight offers from Alabama, Kentucky, Louisville, Ohio State, Virginia Tech, Miami (Ohio), Eastern Kentucky and Murray State.

• **Pflugerville (Texas) Weiss four-star wide receiver Tre Moore (6-3, 200)** – The Buckeyes are a bit late entering the recruitment of Moore, a 2027 prospect, but there is an existing relationship between Moore and new wide receivers coach Cortez Hankton, who was recruiting Moore when he was at LSU. Moore already has five official visits set up with LSU, Miami (Fla.), Texas, Texas A&M and Washington. It may be somewhat of a long shot to make up the ground needed to land Moore, but it's a shot that is worth trying for, as he is the No. 20 receiver in the country.

• **Huntsville (Ala.) Mae Jemison offensive tackle Samuel Bailey (6-6, 290)** – Bowen got in on the recruitment of another 2028 offensive lineman and is fairly early as one of seven offers, which include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi State, South Florida and Southern Miss. Bailey is currently unranked.

• **Des Moines (Iowa) Christian offensive tackle Declan Heying (6-5, 270)**

– Bowen was very active with offers since BSB last went to press. Heying is also currently unranked in the 2028 class, but he holds 11 Division I offers. The Power Four schools to extend a scholarship offer are Arkansas, Iowa, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Penn State and Tennessee, along with the Buckeyes.

• **Davis-Winn (6-8, 270)** – Davis-Winn's scholarship offer from the Buckeyes came when he was on campus for the spring game. He is also unranked in the 2028 class but has five offers from Georgia, Ohio State, Penn State, Syracuse and Temple.

## Other Notes And Tidbits

• The Buckeyes are already off to an extremely strong start in the 2027 class when it comes to the offensive line, with four of their 10 commitments being in the front five. They are also still in a good spot for Englewood (Colo.) Cherry Creek four-star interior offensive lineman Jackson Roper (6-5, 305), who confirmed that he will take his June 12 official visit to Ohio State. He is the No. 217 prospect in the country and the top player in Colorado.

• The Buckeyes are getting plenty of official visits scheduled, one of which is for Carey, who was on campus for an unofficial visit for the spring game. Carey is scheduled to be in Columbus on June 5.

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

### 30 Years Ago — 1996

Ohio State's football recruiting class for 1997 doubled in size from one to two with the April 24 verbal commitment of Sidney, Ohio, defensive lineman Ben Pulfer.

Pulfer and his coach, Scott Roddy, came to Columbus that day to meet with OSU coach John Cooper. During that meeting, Pulfer accepted Cooper's scholarship offer. He joined Cincinnati Elder linebacker Jason Ott as early verbal commitments in the class.

At face value, it looked like OSU was taking a slight risk offering a scholarship so early to Pulfer, rated Ohio's 16th-best prospect by The Ohio Football Recruiting News.

In fact, the offer took Pulfer a bit by surprise.

"(OSU recruiting coordinator Bill) Conley called over to my coach, Coach Roddy, and asked about a camp this summer," Pulfer told BSB. "I wasn't sure about my schedule and whether I would be able to make it. So they hung up and I guess they called back about five minutes later to see if I'd be interested in giving them a verbal commitment.

"When my coach first told me, it was just kind of like he hit me with a ton of bricks. I wasn't sure what to think."

### 25 Years Ago — 2001

Tragedy struck Toledo Rogers High School as well as the Ohio State football program on April 30 when prized football prospect Drushaun Humphrey collapsed and died after participating in a pickup basketball game.

Humphrey, a junior running back and linebacker, had committed to the Buckeyes after a fine showing at the OSU football camp the previous summer.

"We're kind of devastated," Rogers coach Rick Rios told The (Toledo) Blade. "It's so unexpected. I was just talking to him after school about what he needed to take for summer school and how we were going to try and work in (football) camp."

According to reports, Humphrey, 18, was playing basketball on a court near his home when he collapsed.

### 20 Years Ago — 2006

Considering his prowess as a sprinter, it was no surprise that Brandon Saine put his football recruitment on the fast track.

Rather than waiting things out and taking official visits, Saine made his college decision three days into the month of May, phoning Jim Tressell to let the Ohio State head coach know he had de-

ecided to become a Buckeye.

The tailback out of Piqua, Ohio, gave OSU its long-awaited second commitment to the class of 2007, with Saine joining Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward safety Nate Oliver, who verbally to the Buckeyes on Feb. 1.

"I was getting sick of all that recruiting stuff," Saine told BSB. "I was tired of that and felt like there was no real need to wait. I already knew where I was going to go."

### 15 Years Ago — 2011

Although he did not make the trip north for the spring game, Amari Cooper found himself landing good news from Ohio State as the Easter holiday weekend began. On April 22, the unranked wide receiver prospect out of Miami Northwestern learned that he had landed a scholarship offer from the Buckeyes.

"At first, I wasn't sure I had the offer, but they confirmed it with me," Cooper told BSB. "I'm really excited to have an offer from a school like Ohio State, and that goes without saying. Obviously, this is huge for me, and I'm very interested in the school. I was hoping for this offer.

"I know they have other Florida players on their roster, and this is big news. I would love to get up there and see their school at some point, whether it's an unofficial or official visit. I like the coaches I've talked to at this point."

### 10 Years Ago — 2016

It had long been known that Ohio State was facing a serious numbers crunch for the class of 2017, and the effects of the looming crisis were finally beginning to show.

According to multiple reports – including one source at Scout.com – Akron Hoban running back Todd Sibley had been asked to grayshirt and was considering alternatives to his Ohio State commitment. A grayshirt would have required him to delay his enrollment until the end of the fall 2017 semester and count as a member of the class of 2018.

The Buckeyes had only five scholarship seniors for the 2016 season, and more than half the team had freshman eligibility. With more than a dozen players already committed, OSU would need massive attrition from within the team in order to stay at 85 scholarships but also might need to sign a smaller-than-usual class in 2017.

Sibley, a four-star running back, had been committed to Ohio State for more than a year, but the Buckeyes accepted a commit-

ment from La Grange, Texas, four-star J.K. Dobbins on March 6 and were still chasing after other top running backs in the class of 2017 as well.

### Five Years Ago — 2021

Along with making it to the Elite 11 Finals, Quinn Ewers also made comments since BSB last went to press to solidify his place as an Ohio State commit.

In a story from April 16, Ewers was asked by Joseph Hastings of Buckeye Grove about rumors that he had been wavering in his commitment to Ohio State. The five-star quarterback was not fazed by those rumors and quickly shut them down.

"I haven't heard a whole lot about that, but it's funny that you say that," Ewers said. "My message is that I haven't really talked to any other coaches besides, obviously, (head coach Ryan) Day, (quarterbacks coach Corey) Dennis and those guys. I'm pretty locked in with my decision."

He again confirmed those feelings when talking with Dave Campbell's Texas Football staff writer Greg Powers in a story published on April 23. There, Ewers said that his commitment was 100 percent to the Buckeyes, and that had led to fewer and fewer phone calls from other teams.

"It's all Ohio State," Ewers said. "(The other programs) kind of stopped calling."

### One Year Ago — 2025

Ohio State earned another pledge on April 15 when Southlake (Texas) Carroll 2026 four-star wide receiver Brock Boyd announced on Twitter that he was flipping his commitment from TCU to Ohio State.

"After many conversations and prayers, I would like to announce that I'm committing to Ohio State," his post read. "Thank you TCU for all that you've provided for me. I enjoyed building relationships with the entire staff. Let's get it!!"

Boyd was the third commitment in the 2026 class for offensive coordinator and wide receivers coach Brian Hartline, joining Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei five-star Chris Henry Jr. and Pataskala (Ohio) Watkins Memorial four-star Jaeden Ricketts.

"Coach Hartline and I have a great relationship," Boyd told 247Sports. "He's a great guy, as real as can be. He's hard on his guys, but that shows how much he cares about them. He spends a lot of extra time with them."

# Bucks Add Former Duquesne Guard In Portal

The Ohio State basketball team is slowly filling out its roster in the transfer portal after losing nine players due to eligibility running out or to the portal.

## COURT REPORT Greg Wilson

The latest addition to the 2026-27 roster was former Duquesne guard Jimmie Williams, who committed to Ohio State on April 18 after a weekend visit. Williams is now the third addition to the roster through the portal after the Buckeyes also added former Cal guard Justin Pippen and former Kentucky big man Andrija Jelavić.

Williams, at 6-0 and 185 pounds, came out of high school as an unranked prospect from Solon, Ohio, and first started at Wallace Community College in Alabama before joining South Florida for the 2024 season.

With the Bulls, Williams averaged 7.5 points, 2.6 rebounds, 1.2 assists and 1.2 steals per game as a sophomore. Then, after that season, he entered the transfer portal and committed to Duquesne, where he played all of last season and averaged 15.1 points, 4.5 rebounds, 2.6 assists and 1.6 steals per game.

With Bruce Thornton, Taison Chatman, Gabe Cupps and Mathieu Grujicic all leaving the program, the Buckeyes went into the offseason in desperate need of help in the backcourt, and Williams undoubtedly adds to that, along with the addition of Pippen.

There's also what seems like a small possibility of guard John Mobley Jr. not being with the program next year if he decides to remain in the NBA draft, but it seems more likely that he will return for his junior season with the Buckeyes.

Williams will likely rotate in behind Mobley in that scenario, and head coach Jake Diebler surely hopes that the former Duke will help the depth on the Ohio State bench, an area where the Buckeyes were lacking last season.

### Buckeyes Add More Guard Depth

Ohio State added a fourth transfer-portal pledge of the offseason when former Memphis guard Curtis Givens III committed to the Buckeyes on April 23.

Givens, 6-3, brings two years of eligibility to Ohio State after having spent his freshman season with LSU before transferring to Memphis. He has played in 57 games in two seasons and averaged 6.8 points, 1.9 assists and 1.9 rebounds.

His best season was last year with the Tigers when he averaged 9.4 points, 2.3 assists and 2.1 rebounds per game in 25.6 minutes per contest. He started in 15 of the 25 games he played in.

Ohio State also returns Amare Bynum from the starting lineup last year and adds incoming freshman forward Anthony Thompson, a five-star player out of Ohio, and four-star freshman forward Alex Smith.

The Buckeyes hosted former LSU guard

Jalen Reece on a visit before BSB went to press. Reece will be a sophomore next season after averaging 5.8 points, 3.6 assists and 1.8 rebounds per game last year, breaking out in his final eight SEC games, but he committed to Texas A&M on April 22.

### Transfer Portal Closes

With the portal closing on April 21, multiple Buckeyes will officially be returning for another season in Columbus.

Scholarship players who will be back are forward Amare Bynum – who had already announced he would return – center Ivan Njegovan, guard Myles Herro and center Josh Ojianwuna. Mobley may also be added to that list, as previously mentioned.

Njegovan's return was confirmed by Ohio State on April 21, which will help the Buckeyes' depth in the frontcourt, another area where they may have been lacking last season.

It will be his third season with Ohio State after he gained a larger role behind Christoph Tilly throughout the season. He finished the year with 2.6 points and 3.0 rebounds per game, playing in 30 of 34 contests and averaging 11.4 minutes per game.

Those were all improvements from his averages of 1.6 points and 1.5 rebounds per game in 21 appearances during his freshman season.

Also improving in his sophomore season was Njegovan's defense, which, at times, gave the Buckeyes a solid interior presence when opponents were attempting to attack the rim.

A three-man rotation of Njegovan, Ojianwuna and Jelavić at the center position seems to be how Diebler plans to go into next season.

### Buckeye Transfers Find New Homes

Most of the players who entered the transfer portal out of Ohio State had gone on to find new homes in college basketball as BSB went to press.

The first of them was Devin Royal, who received a crystal ball prediction from 247Sports to commit to UConn before the transfer portal opened. However, he ended up landing with another Big East school, Villanova, out of the portal.

The Wildcats were an NCAA Tournament team last season, losing in the first round as an eight seed to nine-seed Utah State. The Wildcats finished the regular season third in their conference with a 15-5 conference record and a 24-9 overall mark.

Royal takes just one year of eligibility to Villanova.

A day after Royal committed to Villanova, Cupps pledged to the University of Illinois Chicago for his junior season. It will be the third school Cupps will attend after he transferred from Indiana to Ohio State last season.

Cupps struggled to make an impact most of the season with the Buckeyes and will now play in the Missouri Valley Conference, where

the Flames finished the 2025-26 season tied for third in the conference with a 12-8 record (19-16 overall).

It will undeniably be a downgrade in competition, which will almost certainly help Cupps become more of an impactful player. With the Buckeyes, he averaged just 1.7 points and 1.1 assists per game in 12.3 minutes while shooting 37.8 percent from the field.

Cupps has two years of eligibility remaining at the college level.

Chatman was the next former Buckeye to find a new school, pledging to Utah on April 17. His career at Ohio State ended up as somewhat of a disappointment after he joined the Buckeyes as the No. 39 overall prospect in the 2023 class. His three years with the program were riddled with injuries, and he was forced to sit out the entire 2024-25 season with a torn ACL after playing in just 17 games as a freshman due to multiple lower-body injuries.

Due to his injuries, his development was interrupted. However, he began to carve out a role for himself with the Buckeyes last season, taking the role that Cupps began the season with.

Chatman averaged 4.3 points and shot 47.1 percent from three-point range, scoring 7.8 points per game over the final 12 regular-season games before suffering a minor setback in the Big Ten tournament that kept him out of the loss to Michigan in the quarterfinals.

The Utes finished last season dead last in the Big 12 with a 10-22 overall record and a 2-16 mark in the conference. It likely won't be tough for Chatman to carve out a major role with Utah next year. He has two seasons of eligibility remaining.

Former Buckeye forward Colin White also found a new home, staying in-state with the Akron Zips of the MAC.

White's Ohio State career was also derailed by injuries, but his were more minor, and he attempted to play through them as a freshman. The former Ohio Mr. Basketball suffered a leg injury early during his freshman season but didn't get the surgery he needed until the offseason, finally being fully cleared at the beginning of his sophomore season.

In two seasons with the Buckeyes, White averaged 1.0 points and 1.0 rebounds per game, playing in 48 contests and making one start, which came early last season in a big win over App State.

Akron finished second in the MAC in the regular season with a 29-6 record and 17-1 conference mark but ended up winning the conference tournament and making the NCAA Tournament as a 12 seed, losing to Texas Tech in the first round.

White brings two years of eligibility to Akron.

Grujicic is the only Buckeye with eligibility remaining who had yet to find a new program.

### Tilly Enters Portal

Tilly is currently out of college eligibility, but in order to keep his options open, he entered the transfer portal on April 21, the last day it was open.

Tilly isn't the only player around college

basketball who has entered the portal without eligibility. Many are doing so because the NCAA is still considering a rule that

would allow players five years of eligibility, and the ruling could come at any point.

Should the NCAA decide that players will get another year to play, all of the players in the portal will be able to go through the usual recruitment

process when a player transfers and join a team for the 2026-27 season.

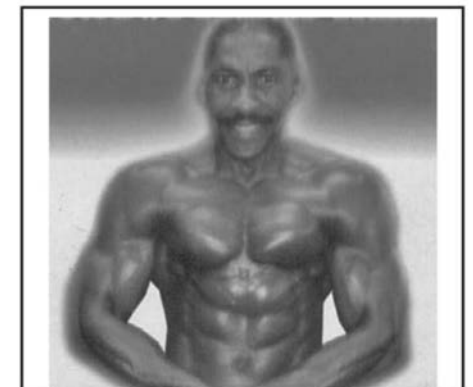
Tilly's only option to play another season would be if the NCAA passes the new rule, since he has already played for four seasons – three with Santa Clara before one with Ohio State – and made it into at least 26 games each year.

If the rule does pass, Tilly entering the portal wouldn't rule out a return to Columbus, where he averaged 11.0 points, 4.7 rebounds and 2.3 assists in 32 games.

### Other Notes And Tidbits

- Former Ohio State forward Aaron Bradshaw has entered the transfer portal yet again after one season with Memphis. He was with the Tigers after spending a disappointing year with the Buckeyes. At Memphis, he had his best college season, averaging 8.6 points and 4.2 rebounds as a junior. He spent his freshman season at Kentucky, so depending on where he lands, Bradshaw will go through four programs in four years.

- Thornton was named an Ohio State finalist for the Big Ten Medal of Honor. He joins tennis player Jack Anthrop, Cullen Brown of the lacrosse team, Davis Burnside of men's ice hockey and wrestler Carson Kharchla as the five men who were named as finalists. Thornton was chosen after becoming Ohio State's all-time leading scorer this season with 2,164 career points.



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**Gabe Cupps**

# Iowa Vacates Wins For Recruiting Violations

The NCAA ruled on April 14 that another Big Ten school will have to vacate wins from the 2023 season.

That school isn't Michigan, which was caught in a multiyear sign-stealing scandal, but Iowa, which self-reported recruiting violations for going after a former Wolverine quarterback in the transfer portal.

## BIG TEN NOTES Greg Wilson

The official NCAA release says that head coach Kirk Ferentz and assistant coach Jon Budmayr were involved in the tampering and both committed violations. Budmayr is said to have engaged in 13 phone calls with signal caller Cade McNamara (and/or his father) while McNamara was still enrolled at Mich-

igan. It also says that Budmayr facilitated a phone call between McNamara and Ferentz, after which the quarterback entered the portal and committed to the Hawkeyes.

NCAA rules say that a student-athlete who transfers to a school that engaged in tampering is ruled ineligible until the league reinstates the player. The release says that McNamara should have been ineligible for the 2023 season due to the tampering violations.

McNamara played in five games during the 2023 season, four of which were wins, so the Hawkeyes will vacate those wins.

Other penalties include one year of probation, a fine of \$25,000, a two-week ban on all football recruiting communication during the 2026 calendar year, a 24-day reduction in recruiting person days and a one-game suspension for Ferentz and Budmayr, which both already served during the 2024 season when the violations were self-reported.

Ferentz commented on the violations that season.

"The bottom line is this," Ferentz said on

Aug. 22, 2024. "I tell our players, we abide by the rules. And in this specific case, I did not do that. I made a mistake during the recruiting process. Twenty-six years as a head coach, this is the first potential Level II violation that I've had, and it won't happen again."

The NCAA Committee on Infractions commented on how the Iowa program handled the violations and said it appreciates that the Hawkeyes took responsibility.

"When respected individuals identify their mistakes and take responsibility for them, it sets the standard for appropriate behavior within their programs, universities and, more importantly, across the broader industry. The panel appreciates the actions taken by Iowa and Ferentz to publicly address his and his staff member's conduct."

### Moore Gets Probation

The Sherrone Moore saga seems to be coming to an end, with the former Michigan head coach being sentenced to 18 months'

probation on April 14.

In addition to the probation, Moore was also fined \$1,000. The punishments stem from the two misdemeanors committed at the apartment of the staff member with whom he had a reported inappropriate relationship.

District Court Judge Cedric Simpson decided against incarceration in the hearing, but he reminded Moore that, should he violate his probation, he wouldn't have any issue sending Moore to jail.

"I don't believe, when I look at the entirety of this situation, that incarceration should be appropriate," Simpson said. "I warn you, Mr. Moore, should there be a violation, all bets are off. I don't like sending people to jail, but I don't have a problem doing it."

The staff member, Paige Shiver, released a statement saying that she didn't agree with the sentencing, and that it "does not reflect the harm done to me."

"He broke into my apartment, crying, yelling, enraged, and came at me with knives," Shiver said. "I was threatened, and I feared

## From The Pages Of BSB

### 40 Years Ago — 1986

Although the weather resembled that of the Fourth of July holiday, there were very few fireworks during Ohio State's annual spring football game.

According to Buckeye head coach Earle Bruce, physical and political factors played major roles in the Gray's ho-hum 13-0 victory over the Scarlet on April 26 in sunshine-drenched Ohio Stadium. The contest marked a complete turnaround from Scarlet's 21-6 win over the Gray during OSU's April 18 scrimmage in Middletown, Ohio. "I think the only thing we wanted Ray Perkins to see was the Horseshoe, and that's about it," said Bruce. "There was no offense today, no big plays."

Bruce's tongue-in-cheek remark was in reference to the Ohio Stadium visit by Alabama football coach Ray Perkins, who would lead the tradition-rich Crimson Tide into battle against OSU on Aug. 27 in the Kickoff Classic. The game, which would be played before a national television audience in East Rutherford, N.J., would also kick off the Buckeyes' rigorous 12-game 1986 season.

### 35 Years Ago — 1991

Four months after Greg Frey took his last snap from under center at Ohio State, head coach John Cooper said he didn't know who would succeed Frey as the Buckeyes' starting quarterback.

In fact, Cooper made it plain he probably wouldn't know for another four months whether it would be senior Kent Graham, junior Kirk Herbstreit or redshirt-freshman Joe Pickens who would lead the offensive charge in the 1991 season opener against Arizona on Sept. 7 in Ohio Stadium.

After 15 days of spring practice, nothing was decided about the No. 1 quarterback position, although there were plenty of hints, albeit none from Cooper.

"Even if I knew in my own mind who the quarterback was, I wouldn't tell you," said the fourth-year head coach. "I wouldn't tell them either. I think the best thing we can do is let those guys work hard the rest of the spring, stay here in the summertime and work in the conditioning program, and compete early next fall."

### 30 Years Ago — 1996

It was a great philosopher — maybe Jock Ewing from the old "Dallas" TV series — who once said, "Real power isn't something you earn. It's something you take."

Well, if that's the case, none of Ohio State's three quarterbacks who survived spring practice managed to take firm control of the starting job and make it his own in the spring.

Instead, the quarterback battle — between juniors Stanley Jackson and Mark Garcia and sophomore Joe Germaine — would rage into the fall.

"I'm not troubled," said Cooper after his team's April 27 spring game at Ohio Stadium. "You guys (the media) worry about that more than I do. We'll have a quarterback to start the first ballgame."

"It's been my experience that a lot of progress can be made between the end of spring ball and the start of fall practice. Our players, obviously, will all stay here this summer, and we'll have a lot of 7-on-7 drills. A lot of the stuff (quarterbacks coach) Walt Harris has been preaching to those quarterbacks all spring long will hopefully sink in," he said.

### 25 Years Ago — 2001

Midway through Jim Tressel's first spring at Ohio State, the new coach tipped his hand a bit when he said that sophomore Scott McMullen had probably earned the No. 2 nod at quarterback behind two-year starter Steve Bellisari.

As the spring-ending Scarlet and Gray Game neared on April 28, most fans looked forward to a showdown for the starting job between Bellisari on the Gray team and McMullen on the Scarlet.

But the game seemed to show that Ohio State may actually have had as many as four serviceable quarterbacks. And it also appeared that Bellisari had no intention of surrendering the starting job without a fight.

"I would say that after 15 practices, with 29 more to go (in the preseason), the pecking order is about the same as it has been the last few days," Tressel told reporters after the Scarlet and Gray Game. "That doesn't mean the game is over by any means."

In fact, sophomore Craig Krenzel and redshirt-freshman Rick McFadden may have succeeded in muddying the waters for Tressel and his coaching staff with the way they played in the final scrimmage.

### 20 Years Ago — 2006

Good old-fashioned fundamentals coupled with fresh new faces as Ohio State completed its sixth spring practice under Tressel.

And as far as the coach was concerned, the two meshed very nicely as the Buckeyes made preliminary preparations for the 2006 season.

"I think we got a lot accomplished," Tressel said. "We know more about what our team's abilities are, what our strengths are, and we know even more vividly how far we have to go as far as some positions are concerned. We lost some very good players, but we made progress."

"Going into the spring, our hope was that our younger players would step up and seize the opportunities provided by so many open spots. I think we were pleased with the fact that so many of them did exactly that."

### 15 Years Ago — 2011

Joe Bauserman's chance to shine had finally arrived.

With incumbent starting quarterback Terrelle Pryor sidelined due to offseason foot surgery and facing a five-game suspension to open the 2011 season, Bauserman entered spring practice as the most experienced available option under center. With rain threatening in Ohio Stadium, the fifth-year senior trotted out to get the April 23 spring game under way in front of a crowd contained almost exclusively in the lower bowl of the Horseshoe.

Flanked by the first-team offensive unit and preparing to face his defensive counterparts, an immediate wrench was thrown into Bauserman's plans. The national anthem had yet to be played, and suddenly game preparations were stopped as everyone faced the northern end of the stadium to watch as the flag was raised high in the air above the field.

"I was starting to get anxious," Bauserman said following the 59-27 victory posted by the offense in a scrimmage that used a unique scoring system.

### 10 Years Ago — 2016

When Urban Meyer approached the microphone following Ohio State's 2016 spring game to address the media, the head coach was

finally happy. After the last of 15 spring practices, the head coach was asked what he liked and didn't like about the spring game, and there was plenty of the former and none of the latter.

"What I didn't like?" Meyer said, pausing to contemplate the question, "I liked it all!"

That's in stark contrast to the head coach's first four springs in Columbus. Following previous spring games, Meyer found plenty to complain about, whether it was genuine disappointment or simply a motivational tactic. Ohio State fans were not accustomed to a happy coach at the end of spring practice.

Even after he was given four days to watch tape, survey assistants and zero in on deficiencies and problems, a favorite pastime of obsessive college football coaches, he had no issues with the Buckeyes' spring.

"I can't think of any negatives off the top of my head," he said April 20. "I thought our players did a good job!"

### Five Years Ago — 2021

For months, almost all the talk about Ohio State players in the 2021 NFL draft centered around quarterback Justin Fields.

That talk was on anything from Fields' arm strength, his ability or inability to read defenses, and his work ethic to his speed and pretty much everything in between. All that talk led the former Ohio State quarterback to be projected anywhere from No. 3 to No. 32 on various mock drafts leading up to the big day on April 28.

And finally, after 10 picks came and went, all that talk could be put to rest once Fields' landing spot became clear. At pick No. 11, the Chicago Bears selected Fields, a quarterback who never lost a Big Ten game at Ohio State and who threw for 5,373 yards, 63 touchdowns and just nine interceptions in 22 games as the Buckeyes' starter.

He was the fourth quarterback off the board, with Clemson's Trevor Lawrence, BYU's Zach Wilson and North Dakota State's Trey Lance going at picks 1, 2 and 3 to the Jacksonville Jaguars, New York Jets and San Francisco 49ers, respectively. With the selection, Fields became the highest-drafted quarterback for Ohio State since Art Schlichter went No. 4 to the then-Baltimore Colts in the 1982 NFL draft.

### One Year Ago — 2025

Emeka Egbuka was taken No. 19 overall by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, where he would be featured in a high-powered offense led by former Heisman Trophy winner and two-time Pro Bowler Baker Mayfield.

As a first-round pick, Egbuka became the fifth Ohio State wide receiver drafted on day one of the draft in the past four years, joining Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave in 2022 (10th overall and 11th overall), Jaxon Smith-Njigba in 2023 (20th overall) and Marvin Harrison Jr. (fourth overall) last draft.

Egbuka would join a wide receiver group in Tampa Bay that included multiple talented pass catchers, with Mike Evans, Chris Godwin and Jalen McMillan all requiring attention from opposing defenses. But that wouldn't be a new thing to handle for the OSU career receptions record holder. He was part of the 2021 wide receiver room that had him, Harrison, Smith-Njigba, Wilson and Olave in it.

for my life.”

Shiver also spoke publicly for the first time, talking with Linsey Davis of ABC News and saying she faced years of harassment and manipulation from Moore.

“Here’s a man that had complete control over me, over my emotions, over my career, and he knew that. He used it against me,” Shiver said in the interview. “Every time I tried to pull away, every time I tried to try and get out of even Michigan, he always had a way of pulling me in and making me feel that I couldn’t leave him because he was so miserable without me.”

Judge Simpson praised Moore’s wife, Kelli Moore, who attended the hearing with her husband, for remaining by Sherrone Moore’s side through this process.

“The person who is saving you from the full wrath of this court is the person who you betrayed,” Simpson said to Sherrone Moore. “When all of the circumstances are happening to her, and she is absorbing them in real time, she not once loses her focus, not once bats an eye to doubt you, not once wants something terrible to happen to you. As I listened to the terror in her voice that day, I don’t think there would be anybody in the world who would have blamed her for saying, ‘I am done here.’”

“I am amazed by you, Ms. Moore,” Simpson added. “I don’t know where it comes from. If we had more people like you in the world, I may be out of a job, but the world would be a better place.”

The court ruled that Sherrone Moore must abstain from using drugs or alcohol, cannot possess a firearm or have any contact with Shiver. He must also continue the counseling that he started after the time of his arrest.

**Whittingham Takes CFP Expansion Stance**

Michigan head coach Kyle Whittingham, who took over for Sherrone Moore, spoke about the expansion of the College Football Playoff in the future and said there is one way that he sees it working.

“Sixteen is the right number, but only in a super-conference structure,” he said via On3. “You govern yourselves. The NCAA is not involved, and you have your own commissioner.”

The talks of expansion from 12 teams started soon after the CFP originally expanded from four teams, and it seems certain that it will expand at some point if the conferences can agree on a format.

The SEC has been a proponent of the 16-team format, while the Big Ten has reportedly pushed for as many as 24 teams making the bracket.

However, it was Whittingham’s comments on a potential breakaway from the NCAA that made bigger headlines. The new Wolverine coach believes the top programs should be able to operate independently and have centralized governance, which would give them power to manage revenue sharing, NIL and potential player employment, likely through a commissioner chosen by the power conferences.

A breakaway from the NCAA would significantly change the landscape of college football in many ways, and there doesn’t seem to be any plan to do so for the major conferences at this point. However, with one of the major voices in college football, the head coach of Michigan, talking about doing so,

there seems to be at least some traction for the idea.

**Wisconsin AD Takes BIG Role**

Since BSB last went to press, there was a surprising change at the head of the Wisconsin athletics department.

Chris McIntosh, who had served as the athletic director for the Badgers for nearly five years, announced that he would step down from his role to take on a new job with the Big Ten.

Wisconsin Chancellor Jennifer L. Mnookin confirmed that McIntosh would be the first deputy commissioner for strategy for the conference and said that she has confidence in what he will be able to do for the Big Ten.

“We should all be pleased that he will bring this integrity and commitment to his new position as he will play an instrumental role in the future of the Big Ten conference and thus, in the future of Wisconsin athletics,” Mnookin said of McIntosh.

McIntosh, who had a pro football career cut short due to a neck injury after playing his college ball at Wisconsin, had been supportive of Badger football coach Luke Fickell. With a 16-21 record in three full seasons at the helm, Fickell has been on the hot seat after two straight seasons without a bowl appearance.

McIntosh previously had said that he still had full confidence in Fickell’s ability to lead the program and that more financial resources would be available to the football program following the 2025 season.

Now the Badgers are in search of a new athletic director, and while it’s unlikely that whoever is hired would fire Fickell before the 2026 season, the football coach may need to show major improvements this year if he wants to keep his role with the Badgers.

Fickell spoke with the media on April 14 about McIntosh’s departure.

“He was a guy you could visit with and sit down with, not that I can’t do that with (general manager) Marcus (Sedberry) and even some of the coaches on our staff, but anytime there are things like that with changes of people that you know were in your corner, it’s always a little difficult, disappointing, whatever you want to say, but so is life. You have to be able to move and continue to go on,” he said.

As BSB went to press, no athletic director had been selected. Sedberry was serving in an interim role as the search continued.

**Ten BIG Players Taken In First**

The Big Ten was well represented yet again in the NFL draft and stole the show the first night of the event with 10 players selected in the first round.

That was more than any other conference had in the first round. The SEC trailed with seven selections on day one, while the Big 12 and ACC both had six, Notre Dame had two, and the Mountain West Conference had one pick.

The Big Ten having the most first-round picks in the 2026 draft ended a 10-year streak that the SEC had dating back to the 2016 draft.

Seven first-round picks were also the lowest number for the SEC since the 2015 draft. That came after last year’s record of 15 first-round picks for the SEC.

Not only was the Big Ten the star of the

first round, but it was also most well-represented in the top 10 picks, largely due to Ohio State players. The run began with former Indiana quarterback Fernando Mendoza, who was selected first overall by the Las Vegas Raiders.

The next selection was Buckeye wide receiver Carnell Tate, who went with the fourth pick to the Tennessee Titans, one selection before linebacker Arvell Reese went to the New York Giants.

Ohio State linebacker Sonny Styles was next off the board with the Washington Commanders taking him seventh overall, and Buckeye safety Caleb Downs was selected 11th overall by the Dallas Cowboys.

The five other Big Ten players to go in the first round were Penn State offensive lineman Olaivavega Ioane (Baltimore Ravens, 14th overall), Oregon tight end Kenyon Sadiq (New York Jets, 16th), USC wide receiver Makai Lemon (Philadelphia Eagles, 20th), Oregon safety Dillon Thieneman (Chicago Bears, 25th) and Indiana wide receiver Omar Cooper Jr. (New York Jets, 30th).

**BIG To Start Volleyball Tourney**

After years of the conference winner being crowned in the regular season, Big Ten women’s volleyball will now have a postseason conference tournament, commissioner Tony Petitti announced.

Of the 18 teams in the conference, 15 will make it into the bracket, with three matches played in the opening round followed by four second-round matches.

In order to make room for the tournament in the season schedule, the conference regular-season slate will decrease from 20 to 17 games, with every team playing each other once throughout the year.

The inaugural tournament will take place this fall, Nov. 20-25, at Fishers Event Center in Indianapolis.

Nebraska is coming off a historic season in which it finished with a 20-0 conference record, taking home the title of Big Ten champions, although the Cornhuskers ultimately fell short of making the semifinals in the NCAA tournament, losing to eventual champion Texas A&M in the quarterfinals.

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# Frosh OF Parr Surging Back From Injury

Ohio State freshman Jacob Parr is beginning to find his footing after an early-season setback kept him sidelined for an extended stretch.

A product of Lemont, Ill., Parr turned in an outstanding high school career, compiling a .406 batting average with 84 hits, 10

**FROM THE  
STRETCH  
Sam Cipriani**

triples and four home runs. His performances earned him first-team All-State honors in 2024 and second-team All-State recognition in 2025, while helping Lemont to a runner-up finish in the 2024 Class 3A state tournament.

Parr arrived at Ohio State as part of the program's 2025 recruiting class, being one of six freshmen brought in and one of two outfielders alongside Steven Cavaco.

The 6-4, 215-pound outfielder earned his first collegiate start against Louisiana Tech on Feb. 20 during the Grind City Classic in Memphis, Tenn., recording one hit. Parr then made two more pinch-hit appearances during the showcase, scoring one run but failing to record another hit.

Ohio State head coach Justin Haire said Parr suffered a wrist injury in late February

and spent over a month in rehab.

"He hurt his wrist and was out for quite a while with that. He ended up not having to get surgery and was able to rehab," Haire said.

After missing 21 straight games, Parr returned for the Buckeyes as a designated hitter in Ohio State's 10-8 victory over Maryland on April 3, finishing 1 for 4 at the plate. Including the game against the Terrapins, Parr had played in seven of Ohio State's last 12 contests, including six starts as of April 23.

After a weekend series against Rutgers, Parr had a .214 batting average, recording six hits, four RBI, three runs and one home run.

As Parr continues to work his way back from injury and develop in his first season with the Buckeyes, Haire emphasized the importance of Ohio State giving him opportunities to carve out a role.

"There are opportunities out there, and we're trying to give Jacob a chance to earn some more opportunities," Haire said. "He's put together a couple of decent at-bats and a couple of decent games, and he just needs to continue to grow."

With continued reps, Haire believes Parr can translate his flashes into more consistent production at the plate.

"He's got the talent, and he's got the tools," Haire said. "There are some things there that are promising, some physicality and some bat speed."

## Kaczmar, Harvey, Reach Hitting Milestones

Ohio State shortstop Henry Kaczmar and first baseman Dane Harvey each reached individual hitting milestones since BSB last went to press.

In his 150th career game as a Buckeye, Kaczmar reached 250 career hits during Ohio State's 12-7 loss to Purdue on April 18. He also reached 150 career RBI in the Buckeyes' 15-10 victory over Penn State on April 12.

Through 42 games, Kaczmar led Ohio State in batting average (.333), hits (58), doubles (20) and total bases (102). Additionally, Kaczmar recorded an 18-game hit streak spanning from March 7 to April 5.

While Kaczmar has been the most consistent at the plate for Ohio State, Harvey has been the most powerful.

Before the Rutgers series, Harvey had smashed home runs in six straight contests, bringing his season total to 13 long balls, tied for 19th all-time at Ohio State in a single season. With 11 regular-season games remaining, the 6-5, 270-pound first baseman stood just six home runs behind Zach DeZenko (2022) and Dan Seimetz's (1997) single-season home run record of 19.

Harvey said his recent surge has come from a more disciplined approach at the plate.

"One thing that I've been trying to hone in on is finding my pitch and staying convicted the entire at bat," Harvey said. "I had a conversation with (director of player personnel and development Jordan Stampler) a few games ago, where I had two strikes and I rolled over to second base. He was like, 'Hey, man, were you in a two-strike approach there? You have runners on, we have a three-run lead, so you have a chance to pick a pitch and break this one open. If you were sitting on that pitch, you'd hit that pitch a lot better.'

"So that just kind of shows the trust they have in me, and the trust in our process and what we do and the approach behind it. (Assistant coach) Joey Holcomb is a genius, and he's molded me into the ballplayer I am."

Through 42 games, Harvey led all Ohio State batters in home runs (13), RBI (47) and slugging percentage (.695).

## OSU To Honor 1966 Champs

Ohio State was set to welcome back multiple generations of all-time great Buckeye teams while hosting its annual alumni weekend from May 1-3 at Bill Davis Stadium.

While Ohio State was set to host a full slate of events throughout the weekend – including a Friday alumni gathering, a pre-game luncheon on May 2, alumni batting practice and dinner, and a May 3 captains breakfast – the centerpiece was set for the May 2 game against Nebraska, when three former Buckeye teams were to be honored.

Ohio State is honoring its 1991 and 2001 Big Ten championship teams, as well as the 1966 Buckeye squad that claimed the program's first and only national championship.

Former Ohio State first baseman and center fielder Russ Nagelson put the Buckeye championship in perspective, emphasizing both the talent of the 1966 team and its

historical significance.

"We definitely had a strong championship team," Nagelson said. "For the Ohio State University to win its first and only national championship in baseball, we had to be very exceptional. We had strong players. Steve Arlin played professionally, Chuck Brinkman played with Chicago professionally, I played with Cleveland and Detroit, and Raymond Shoup played with the Yankees. I'm sure that is one thing that people respect."

The 1966 Ohio State baseball team remains the most recent Big Ten squad to win a national championship.

## Buckeyes Lose Two B1G Series

Ohio State finished off its nine-game homestand with an 11-7 loss to Marshall and former Buckeye head coach Greg Beals on April 15.

The Buckeyes then traveled to West Lafayette, Ind., to take on Purdue in a three-game series at Alexander Field. Ohio State fell to the Boilermakers in all three contests, 10-9 on April 17, 12-7 on April 18 and 6-2 on April 19.

Following its series against Purdue, Ohio State returned home to face off against Akron, defeating the Zips 19-7 in seven innings on April 21.

After that, Ohio State hit the road for a three-game series against Rutgers (22-22, 9-12 Big Ten), where the Buckeyes defeated the Scarlet Knights 8-0 on April 24 before falling in the final two games of the series 3-0 on April 25 and 11-5 on April 26.

## Season Finale On Deck

Following its trip to Piscataway, N.J., Ohio State (21-21, 10-11 Big Ten) was scheduled to return home for an eight-game homestand. The Buckeyes were set to take on Nebraska (33-11, 17-4 Big Ten) on May 1 at 6 p.m., May 2 at 7 p.m. and May 3 at 2 p.m.

Ohio State will then remain home to face Miami (Ohio) (29-13) on May 5 at 6 p.m.

Following its midweek matchup against the RedHawks, the Buckeyes will take on Michigan State (15-25, 9-14 Big Ten) at Huntington Park, home of the Columbus Clippers, on May 8 at 6 p.m. Ohio State will then face the Spartans at Bill Davis Stadium in the final two games of the weekend series at 3 p.m. on May 9 and 1 p.m. on May 10.

The Buckeyes will end their homestand with a rematch against Wright State (19-21) on May 12 at 6 p.m. Ohio State fell to the Raiders 10-8 in their March 24 matchup in Dayton.

Ohio State then hits the road for its final series of the regular season, traveling to Ann Arbor to take on Michigan (27-17, 12-9 Big Ten) on May 14 at 6 p.m., May 15 at 4 p.m. and May 16 at 1 p.m. at Ray Fisher Stadium.

If the Buckeyes finish in the top eight of the conference, they will advance to the Big Ten tournament, which is scheduled for May 19-24 at Charles Schwab Field in Omaha, Neb. As BSB went to press, they were eighth in the conference.



# Buckeyes Reload for 2026 Football Season

In the modern era of college football, the spring game is not meant to have the same intensity, complexity and physical component as a real football game. Coaches want to get through the scrimmage without major injuries that could sideline players for months.

## COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

At the same time, it marks the culmination of months of offseason training in the weight room, spring practices on the field, and intense film study that are the building blocks of a championship football team.

Even though safety is a major concern for the coaches, the spring game is the first time the entire public gets a look at the 2026 version of their beloved Buckeyes. Fans are anxious to get a look at the new talent that will mix with veteran players in hopes of making a run for the Big Ten title and beyond.

There is very little full contact in the spring game, and the coaching staff will only display the basics of their offensive and defensive systems and schemes. The coaches already have a good idea of their two-deep, both sides of the ball, but the spring game is another measure of how the personnel respond and perform to the excitement and pressure of a game-like atmosphere.

There are a record number of new faces, over 50, that will don the scarlet and gray for the first time this season. Fans will quickly learn the names and jersey numbers of these portal transfers and incoming freshmen. Their talents and abilities will be observed and compared to those of former players.

Many of the new additions are high-profile athletes coming out of high school or from having past collegiate experience, but now they are Buckeyes and must start over in terms of earning their stripes. The culture here in Columbus is special surrounding Ohio State football, and it takes someone "special" to fit in.

### High Expectations For New Coaches

Not only will there be new faces between the lines, but there will also be some fresh ones on the sideline and in the press box. Ryan Day has done an excellent job of bringing in and replacing coaches throughout his reign as head coach, and it is vital that success continues. Day has been able to hire and then replace high-profile coaches such as Chip Kelly and Jim Knowles.

The defensive staff from 2025 is intact, and under Matt Patricia, it excelled last season. Even though Patricia lost some key players on the defense from last year's squad, there is little reason for concern. Patricia has Ryan Day's confidence and a very solid and experienced group of assistants in Larry Johnson, Tim Walton, Matt Guerrieri and James Laurinaitis.

The biggest amount of pressure is on new offensive coaches Arthur Smith, offensive coordinator, and Cortez Hankton, wide receivers coach, along with new special teams coordinator Robby Discher.

Day hopes Smith, with his vast professional coaching experience, can bring the same type

of success to the offensive side of the football that Patricia has brought to the Buckeye defense. With Smith having similar experience in the NFL as Patricia, Day is counting on him to put together an offensive scheme that matches the talent he has inherited. The 2025 Buckeye offense was solid but not spectacular, especially at the end of the season. As productive as it was, it lacked consistency in finishing drives, in pass protection vs. a heavy rush, and in crucial short-yardage running situations.

Smith does have the fortune of having one of the very best quarterbacks in the nation to lead his offense. Julian Sayin completed 77.0 percent of his passes last season and has all the physical tools in terms of throwing the football. What the Heisman finalist needs to improve on for 2026 is his ability to keep drives alive with his feet. He seems to have improved in terms of speed and has gotten stronger, which should give him more confidence in running the football.

As Smith helps Sayin develop in terms of becoming a complete quarterback, he, along with quarterback coach and passing game coordinator Billy Fessler, must produce solid backups to Sayin.

The No. 2 spot right now belongs to returner Tavien St. Clair. Even though he got limited reps last season, the tall freshman was impressive in the spring game in terms of arm strength and elusiveness as a runner. St. Clair needs to continue to improve in terms of timing and fitting the football into tight windows, but he showed he is a talented quarterback who is getting better.

Smith knows the offensive line play at Ohio State must be more consistent at both run blocking and pass protection. The Buckeye offense that averaged 37.0 points per game in the regular season sank to a 12.0 average in its final two, which is well below Buckeye standards offensively.

It is too early to tell what strides have been made in those areas due to some key injuries this spring. Tackles Austin Siereveld and Philip Daniels didn't play in the spring game, and they were sorely missed in terms of pass protection.

Too many times, the edge rushers on defense were able to pressure the quarterbacks in the scrimmage. We have good experience returning this fall with such players as Siereveld, Daniels, Carson Hinzman and Luke Montgomery, but it is imperative that Smith gets them to play at a higher level.

As with the offensive line, injuries kept some of our top talent at the running back position sidelined for the spring game. Four scholarship running backs, including the top two returners, Bo Jackson and Isaiah West, didn't play, along with freshman Legend Bey and Anthony "Turbo" Rogers. Jackson and West are still recovering from offseason shoulder surgeries.

Delaware Hayes product Favour Akih accounted for 50 of the 77 running back rushing yards for the scrimmage, but there were no breakaway runs, and few times did the ball get to the perimeter. The only big runs came from the quarterback position.

Most of the offensive production in the game came from the wide receivers and tight ends. Even though there was only one receiving touchdown, 10 different Buckeye receivers had receptions.

It is apparent that the Ohio State passing

game should be strong again this season, led by returners Jeremiah Smith and Brandon Inniss. Look for 6-5 freshman Chris Henry Jr. to be a major contributor this fall, along with UTSA transfer Devin McCuin, freshman Brock Boyd and returner David Adolph.

At the tight end position, Nate Roberts and Bennett Christian bring experience, and the coaches expect a lot out of Northwestern transfer Hunter Welcing. The real key to success for the Ohio State Buckeyes' passing attack will be consistency in pass protection.

### Replacing Defensive Standouts

The Matt Patricia defense in 2025 played at a very high level. Patricia and staff put together a scheme that complemented the personnel and ended up leading the nation in several different categories.

The scheme returns, but most of the players who executed that scheme do not. Replacing stars like Caleb Downs, Sonny Styles, Arvell Reese, Caden Curry, Kayden McDonald and Tywone Malone will not be an easy task.

Defensive end Kenyatta Jackson Jr., safety Jaylen McClain and cornerback Jermaine Mathews Jr. are the key returners who need to play at a high level for the Ohio State defense to excel again this fall.

Those three returning starters, along with other veterans like corner Devin Sanchez, linebacker Payton Pierce, defensive tackle Will Smith Jr., and defensive ends Beau Atkinson

and Eddrick Houston, must step up. At the same time, it is obvious that defensive success will rely heavily on many of the new faces to the program.

The defense outshone the offense in the spring game due largely to the format and offensive injury situation. It is also normal for the defense to mature more quickly than the offense due to the complexity of the offensive scheme.

Still, Buckeye fans had to have been impressed with several new defenders like Alabama transfer defensive tackle James Smith. He demonstrated both strength and mobility for a defensive lineman. Look for James Smith to be one of the best pass rushers this fall for coach Larry Johnson.

It will be hard to replace quick and versatile Arvell Reese at the linebacker position, but keep your eyes on Wisconsin transfer Christian Alliegro. The 6-4, 241-pound honorable-mention All-Big Ten 'backer had 53 tackles, eight tackles for a loss and four sacks for the Badgers last season. Alliegro can play on the line also in passing situations to bring pressure.

Another addition to the defense will be transfer defensive back Earl Little Jr. Little can play multiple positions in the defensive backfield, including nickel back.

Look for other players to emerge as big-time players on the defensive side of the ball this season. A high standard has been set, and Matt Patricia expects all his players to live up to that standard.

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Times have changed. Our values have not.

# Ohio State Continues To Rule NFL Draft

Ohio State seems to write a new chapter of NFL draft history as each year passes.

This year was no different, as teams were well aware of the cadre of talent on hand in Columbus and made it known that they coveted that talent.

## THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

Among the records set by Ohio State in the 2026 NFL draft were having the first set of linebackers ever selected in the top 10, five straight years of having a receiver selected in round one and becoming the first program to have two tight ends from the same class drafted. OSU also paced all schools in this year's draft with four first-rounders and narrowly missed tying the record of four top-10 picks, last achieved by Michigan State in 1967.

OSU also tied the record originally set by Georgia of 25 players drafted over a two-year span. Ohio State led all schools with 11 players drafted in 2026, and every defensive starter from the 2024 national championship team was ultimately drafted in the last two years.

You have to think that's an incredible recruiting tool, with kids wanting to make it to the NFL. And even though most won't, the belief that they can often tips the scales toward a school that can help them reach that goal.

And it won't subside next year with Jeremiah Smith as a likely top-three selection and Julian Sayin and possibly Jermaine Matthews Jr., Austin Sierveld and Kenyatta Jackson Jr. vying for first-round honors.

Talent is the name of the game in col-

lege football, so it's easy to see why the Buckeyes have been at or near the top in the chase for the national championship for most of Ryan Day's tenure.

Anyone who has watched Ohio State over the past few seasons knew that linebacker Sonny Styles and safety Caleb Downs were destined for NFL stardom. They obviously have to stay healthy, and the league is littered with high draft picks who did not perform up to expectations. But both are students of the game, and Styles especially has a broad skill set after playing safety before moving forward to linebacker.

Downs is a quarterback for the defense and is so, so instinctive, can sniff out plays before they start – just ask Texas – and is rarely out of position. He is versatile enough to line up in nickel coverage, to scoot up closer to the line as a linebacker or to man the middle of the field as a hard-hitting traditional safety.

In no world did I think Downs would be available for Dallas at pick 11, but once he was, you could almost hear the whoop of excitement emanating from the Cowboys' war room (and from me). They traded up a spot with Miami and sprinted the card to the commissioner. Barring injury, Downs will end up being the best player from this draft class.

Arvell Reese took a slightly less traditional path to top-five draft pick.

He was a struggling student who appeared headed nowhere, but a move to Cleveland Glenville and the mentorship of Ted Ginn Sr. turned his entire world around. Reese morphed from a student with a GPA hovering around 1.0 to a Glenville grad with a 3.7 GPA, and while I worry that having just one year of stardom under his belt has inflated expectations, Reese should still have an impact in the NFL.

Carnell Tate also endured hardship on the way to the pros, though his was much

more emotional. Tate lost his mother in a senseless drive-by shooting in the summer of 2023, and his play since then has been motivated by honoring her.

A surefire No. 1 receiver on probably 95 percent of college rosters, Tate was content to do some dirty work in the shadow of Smith. But he still put up excellent numbers, averaging nearly 17.2 yards per grab on 51 catches, with nine touchdowns. He honored his mother by wearing her name in the lining of his suit during the draft, where he was selected by the Tennessee Titans.

A few mock drafts had defensive tackle Kayden McDonald sneaking into the first round, but he ended up settling for an early second-round call from the Houston Texans, where he will be reunited with former Buckeyes C.J. Stroud, Cade Stover and Tommy Togiai. The emotional reaction to being chosen was one of the best highlights of day two.

Joining McDonald in the second round were tight end Max Klare and cornerback Davison Igbinosun, the latter being a bit of a surprise from this corner.

Klare came to OSU with a lot of hype after two solid seasons at Purdue, but he really didn't make the impact many expected. Some was due to the fact that OSU simply didn't call many plays for the tight end, but some was also that he took time to get used to a new offense, to playing with better talent around him and learning the nuances of blocking.

Igbinosun did a nice job of cutting down on penalties – 16 flags thrown in 2024 to just four in 2025 – and his length and physical style could transition well to the next level.

The final day saw four more Buckeyes selected, led by tight end Will Kacmarek. It isn't often that a guy with just 15 catches is coveted, but Kacmarek was seen as the best blocking tight end in the draft, and television analysts said that he could have a long career ahead of him because he is a quintessential team player.

To be honest, I had forgotten that Lorenzo Styles Jr. and Ethan Onianwa were even in the mix to be drafted, but both were – Styles in the fifth round, Onianwa in the seventh. Both dealt with injuries during the season and may have to work hard to make a roster, but both are athletic and have shown a willingness to put in the effort.

The head-scratcher for me was Caden Curry lasting until late in the sixth round. The knock on him was short arms, with the belief being that if a rush end lacks long arms, he will be unable to disengage from an offensive tackle. That may well be true, but this was simply a case of teams falling in love with measurables over production.

As edge after edge came off the board, it became more and more frustrating not to see Curry's name. He was finally called by the Colts, which meant returning home to his Indiana roots.

### Spring Football Thoughts

With 51 new faces on the roster, spring practice was more important than usual

for the Buckeyes. Never mind coaches finding out whether guys can play – it was a whirlwind just trying to learn everyone's name.

Spring is an important time for freshmen to make a splash, and two guys who did just that were wideouts Chris Henry Jr. and Brock Boyd.

Henry is seen as the "next up" in OSU's long line of stellar pass catchers, and his work in practice and moments during the spring game did little to quell that chatter. While it's unknown whether he will have the same impact as Smith did as a freshman, it's safe to say that Henry will be on the field a lot. A huge target at 6-5, 195 pounds, Henry should be ready to make himself known in 2026.

A name that was floating under the radar early but is no longer is Brock Boyd. A product of Texas powerhouse Southlake Carroll (the same high school attended by Quinn Ewers), Boyd ended his career as the school's all-time leading receiver.

He didn't come to OSU with nearly the hype of Henry but was the first freshman to lose his black stripe. Only Smith and Tate have lost it faster than Boyd, so that could be a portent of big things to come for the underrated three-star recruit.

"Well, he got his black stripe off today, so I'm sure that will be a headliner," Ryan Day told the media on March 31. "He made another couple big plays today. This is somebody who knows how to run a route. He's serious about it. He can play multiple positions. And he's productive. His dad's a receiver coach, and he plays that way. But he's got quick twitch. He can change direction. He's got strong hands. I'm excited to see where his career goes. But he's off to a great start."

### Returning To A Familiar Spot

It had been a while since yours truly had been to Bill Davis Stadium to take in an OSU baseball game, and with rare cooperation from Mother Nature, it was time to change that.

I was on hand for the Buckeyes' 19-7 weekday decimation of Akron, and while the game wasn't exciting from a drama standpoint, it did take me back a bit.

Many who have read BSB for years probably know that I used to cover the baseball team on a regular basis when Bob Todd was in charge of the program. Once that stopped, I didn't get to the stadium nearly as often.

This was probably my first trip in maybe six years to see a game, so imagine my surprise when there were a couple of OSU legacies in the lineup.

Henry Kaczmar is the son of Scott Kaczmar, who hit 18 home runs in 1994 and is second all-time in that category for a career with 39, and Mason Eckelman is the son of Alex Eckelman, whose career batting average of .367 is third best in OSU annals. True to form, Kaczmar hit a first-inning homer, and Eckelman finished 3 for 5 at the plate.

It appears that the apples do not fall far from the tree – even when it's a Buckeye tree.



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# Air Apparent: Next Great QB-Receiver Duo?

I know readers come to this column looking for insight into the goings on with Ohio State sports. When it comes to this year's spring game, I am not sure my insight is any different than yours. Frankly, with the players shuttling in and out, I found the scrimmage a little bit hard to follow.

But a couple of things stood out to me, and I am sure they stood out to you, as well.

Foremost would be the pass-catch combination of Tavien St. Clair and Chris Henry Jr. I was impressed with St. Clair's arm. Even though he went just 9 of 21, that was good enough for 166 yards and a TD to Henry. And I was simply impressed with Henry, who led all receivers with four receptions for 96 yards.

"Based on what we saw, he was able to get deep, and also, he didn't even really use his (6-5) height in that game." Steve Helwagen of Bucknuts said of Henry. "It wasn't necessary. He was running by everybody."

As an aside, I have to say that Henry committed to the Buckeyes so long ago that I was never completely comfortable that he would end up signing with the Scarlet and Gray. Yet here Henry is, and he looks like the next in the continuing line of receiving greats for the Buckeyes.

The thing that stood out to me the most about the St. Clair/Henry tandem was the obvious chemistry. While we have another year of the Julian Sayin-Jeremiah Smith combination to enjoy, I am also looking forward to the day when their apprentices St. Clair and Henry take over.

Up to now I would say the best quarterback-receiver combination as far as chemistry in the Ryan Day/Brian Hartline era was C.J. Stroud and Marvin Harrison Jr. Those two knew what the other was doing at all times, and Stroud was able to work the ball into the smallest of windows offered by Harrison. In their one full season together (2022), Harrison caught 77 passes for 1,263 yards and 14 scores.

We'll never know, but if Harrison hadn't been knocked out of the CFP playoff game in 2022, I believe the Buckeyes would have beaten Georgia and gone on to the national championship game. If you think back to the play where Harrison was knocked out, literally, Stroud was scrambling wildly and it initially looked like the quarterback was trying to throw the ball away. But upon further review, the two seemed to be on the same page, and might have completed the long pass for a touchdown if Harrison hadn't been separated from the ball on what was ultimately called a non-targeting hit.

We just had a small sample of the current Buckeye tandem in the spring game, but I could see them becoming a dynamic duo like Stroud and Harrison when they get their turn.

The other thing on offense we all saw was Sayin's willingness to run with the football (no contact of course). Quarterbacks tucking and running, whether planned or improvised, has been an issue, at least among Buckeye fans, dating back to the days of Stroud. As any regular reader of this column knows, I have repeatedly maintained that if not at least *posing* the threat of the quarterback running the ball, it is like the Buckeye offense is playing 10 against 11.

There is no guarantee that when the actual season comes along Day and new offensive coordinator Arthur Smith will be running Sayin on a regular basis. But even showing the run in the spring game gives future opponents something to think about.

As far as the defense was concerned, it was hard for me to tell what was going on, other than the fact the defensive line was dominating the O-line. Was that a comment on how good the defensive line is or how ineffective, especially without starters Austin Sierveld and Phillip Daniels, the offensive line is?

I'm not trying to be Debbie Downer here, but there is an assumption that when those two

## THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

come back, everything will be fine along the offensive line. I'm from Missouri (D.C. really): "Show me."

I can't help but think of a Buckeye twist on an old saying.

"The good news is the bulk of the offensive line is coming back. The bad news is the bulk of the offensive line is coming back."

The last we saw of the big guys up front in actual game action, they were being dominated by Indiana then Miami. There wasn't much reason for increased optimism after the spring game.

"I think this season is going to be a great opportunity to kind of right some of our wrongs we had this last year," returning center Carson Hinzman said. "But I think we have more experience, more skill work, and I think our guys have only gotten better."

Talk is cheap. Offensive line play is physical. Like I said, "Show me." I will be the first to give the unit its props if merited.

One player on defense who has generated some buzz this spring is defensive end Beau Atkinson, who was a bit underwhelming last season after transferring from North Carolina, registering 11 tackles, 2½ tackles for loss and a sack.

"I don't think it went anywhere near the way that I wanted it to, but I feel like that has given me some extra fuel to come into this season and to work really hard," Atkinson said of last year. "I've been working on my mobility a lot, and I've been feeling a lot looser out here. I'm excited to get back out there."

Added his position coach, Larry Johnson: "I think he's done a 360 so far. He's more flexible now. Last year was a transition from playing the North Carolina way to the Ohio State way. He's had a good spring. Now is his time. He didn't have a winter or spring here last year, but his body has changed. He's gotten bigger and stronger."

For more on the spring from some of Ohio State's leading experts, see pages 13-15 of this issue. For more on the offensive line, see pages 24-25

### Trivia Time

I asked this question on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum, and I was surprised more people didn't know the answer.

"What was former Ohio State receiver Chris Sanders' nickname?" The answer and a back story to come.

### Other Notes From This Issue

There was a potpourri of interesting stuff in this issue of BSB.

• Dan Hope of Eleven Warriors had a comment that made me stop and ponder: "I think, particularly in the run game, there was a step back there in terms of creativity and things they did schematically, from Chip Kelly to Brian Hartline. Arthur Smith's expertise in that area is going to be able to bring that in and marry that with a lot of the passing concepts that have worked well in Ryan Day's offenses."

Let me first of all say as I have said many times before, even though Brian Hartline was the greatest assistant coach in my nearly 50 years on the OSU beat, I was never completely sold on the notion that that would automatically make him a good offensive coordinator. Hartline's experience is in the passing game, as was that of his boss, Day. Why is it a surprise that the running game might drop off from the tenure of the more run-oriented and experienced Chip Kelly?

• In this world of NIL and the portal, college

football is a completely different ballgame these days. In the previously mentioned story on the offensive line, it is suggested that some fans are unhappy that Ohio State didn't go to the portal to revamp the O-line. (I guess I'm not the only one who is concerned.)

"The portal really wasn't in play there because it took everything we had to get the guys to come back," Day said.

Does that mean that Ohio State spent its offensive-line NIL budget on retention, with nothing left to bolster that unit? That's one way to play it I guess. But some of those Texas schools, or Oregon, would have done both.

• In the "Big Ten Notes" section, it is reported that Iowa and longtime coach Kirk Ferentz were slapped with penalties for tampering with Michigan quarterback Cade McNamara. The NCAA Committee on Infractions commented on how the Iowa program handled the violations and said it appreciates that Ferentz and the Hawkeyes took responsibility.

"When respected individuals identify their mistakes and take responsibility for them, it sets the standard for appropriate behavior within their programs, universities and, more importantly, across the broader industry," the committee said. "The panel appreciates the actions taken by Iowa and Ferentz to publicly address his and his staff member's conduct."

Is that a direct slap at Michigan, whose fan base and departed coach Jim Harbaugh – who fled college football just ahead of the NCAA posse – seem to take no responsibility for any illegal action?

### Let Me Save You A Phone Call

This is the last print issue of our traditional winter/spring biweekly publishing schedule. We now switch to the monthly summer schedule until the Football Preview Issue in late August. The next issue of BSB, the June issue, will be mailed on June 2.

If you are not already taking advantage of the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all subscribers, now would be the time. No need to miss any of the Buckeye action while waiting for that June issue. Don't forget, recruiting camps are coming up!

To enjoy BuckeyeSports.com, simply email your name, address and preferred email address to [subscriptions@buckeyesports.com](mailto:subscriptions@buckeyesports.com), and we will send back easy instructions on how to access the site. Don't forget, [subscriptions@buckeyesports.com](mailto:subscriptions@buckeyesports.com) is our email address, not the website. We will send you directions on how to access the site.

And when you start looking for your next BSB in two weeks rather than a month, there is no need to call us looking for it. We will be back on June 2.

### Constant Badgering Must Work

I know I have been relentless in this space about readers, who tell us all the time of their passion for BSB, helping us with keeping Buckeye Sports Bulletin vibrant and viable. It seems to have worked because since I last reached out to you the response from loyal readers has been stunning. VIP signups, "I Believe In BSB" participants, large donations, small donations – they all have been pouring in. You speak the truth when you tell us you love your BSB.

Just to recap how we got here, we have never shied away from admitting that we took a beating last year because of poor mail delivery. It actually started in the fall of 2024 when we were told by the post office that they were under strict orders to deliver election mail before all else. We

figured that things would improve after election day, but it never got better. Longtime readers were fleeing in droves.

Those of you still reading this seem in for the long haul, and as you have read many times over the last issues, we are working hard to get people to upgrade to first-class mail in an envelope to head off another wave of departures. First-class mail is not perfect, but it is far more consistent than periodicals-class mail, even for readers locally and in state. And as I have repeated, to show how serious we are about getting people to upgrade, we have actually lowered the rate to have your BSB mailed first class for the entire 24 issues.

Remember, you can upgrade for football season only at the current rate of \$35, or through the playoffs and the Football Recruiting Wrap-Up in February for \$45. Postal rates are going up on July 12, and our rates are sure to go up too, so lock in at these prices now by calling us at (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862 or upgrade by writing us at P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. If paying by credit card, don't forget your three- or four-digit code.

Now that, with your help, things are starting to stabilize, we continue to work on a price formula that allows us to publish Buckeye Sports Bulletin comfortably, while not pricing our readers on fixed incomes out of their BSB. Obviously, your donations are a big part of any formula. If you are having problems paying for your BSB, call us at one of the above numbers and we will try to find a promotion that works for you. The best offers are online, so make sure we have your email address.

Finally, I am going to keep posting this until someone other than our good friend from Bradenton, Fla. – who I am not going to name this issue because his name is in the paper more than mine – buys a subscription for their local library or barbershop for just \$32.95. I know that my Bradenton buddy is just as baffled as I am that no one is taking advantage of this offer. Great exposure for BSB at a minimum price for you.

### Trivia Answer

Chris Sanders (1992-94) was nicknamed "Tippy Toes." I was always led to believe that he was so nicknamed because he walked on his toes, not flat-footed and had done so since childhood. I took a quick look at the always reliable Wikipedia, to see what they said about the nickname. Wikipedia says he was called "Tippy Toes" because of his "graceful gait." I truly believed that to be incorrect.

I figured I would ask Bill Conley, who had coached Sanders at Ohio State and may have even recruited him from Denver Montbello.

"Chris had tight hamstrings, quads and calves which made it difficult to walk flatfooted," Conley said. "He learned to walk on his toes as a child."

That's why I call it (sarcastically) "the always reliable" Wikipedia.

I finally confirmed my version in the 1994 Ohio State Football Media Guide, which read, "he is nicknamed 'Tippy Toes' because his heels never touch the ground when he walks or runs."

It didn't seem to affect his game. In his final year in Columbus in '94 he grabbed 35 passes for 553 yards, a 15.2-yard average and eight scores, giving him 70 receptions for 1,114 yards total. He also was a track star, winning multiple Big Ten titles and All-America honors.

Sanders was selected in the third round of the 1995 draft by Houston and played seven seasons for the Oilers/Titans. His best season was 1996, when he had 48 receptions for 882 yards (18.4 average) and four scores. He had nine receiving TDs in his rookie year of 1995.



# Columbus Clippers

## 2026 SCHEDULE

		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>MARCH/APRIL</b>							27 IOW 8:08 PM	28 IOW 4:08 PM
	29	IOW 2:08 PM		31 IND 6:15 PM	1 IND 6:15 PM	2 IND 6:15 PM	3 IND 6:15 PM	4 IND 4:05 PM
	5	IND 1:05 PM		7 WOR 6:05 PM	8 WOR 12:05 PM	9 WOR 6:05 PM	10 WOR 6:05 PM	11 WOR 4:05 PM
	12	WOR 1:05 PM		14 IOW 6:15 PM	15 IOW 12:05 PM	16 IOW 12:05 PM	17 IOW 6:15 PM	18 IOW 4:05 PM
	19	IOW 1:05 PM		21 BUF 6:05 PM	22 BUF 6:05 PM	23 BUF 6:05 PM	24 BUF 6:05 PM	25 BUF 1:05 PM
	26	BUF 1:05 PM		28 TOL 6:15 PM	29 TOL 6:15 PM	30 TOL 6:35 PM	31 BUF 6:05 PM	
	Opening Night							

		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>MAY</b>							1 TOL 6:15 PM	2 TOL 4:05 PM
	3	TOL 1:05 PM		5 IOW 7:38 PM	6 IOW 1:08 PM	7 IOW 1:08 PM	8 IOW 8:08 PM	9 IOW 4:08 PM
	10	IOW 2:08 PM		12 STP 7:37 PM	13 STP 7:37 PM	14 STP 7:37 PM	15 STP 7:37 PM	16 STP 3:07 PM
	17	STP 3:07 PM		19 LOU 7:05 PM	20 LOU 12:05 PM	21 LOU 12:05 PM	22 LOU 7:05 PM	23 LOU 7:05 PM
	24	LOU 1:05 PM		26 TOL 5:05 PM		27 TOL 11:05 AM	28 TOL 6:35 PM	29 TOL 7:05 PM
	31	TOL 2:05 PM						30 TOL 7:05 PM

		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>JUNE</b>				2 OMA 7:05 PM	3 OMA 7:05 PM	4 OMA 12:05 PM	5 OMA 7:05 PM	6 OMA 7:05 PM
	7	OMA 1:05 PM		9 IND 7:05 PM	10 IND 1:35 PM	11 IND 7:05 PM	12 IND 7:05 PM	13 IND 7:05 PM
	14	IND 1:35 PM		16 SWB 7:05 PM	17 SWB 7:05 PM	18 SWB 12:05 PM	19 SWB 7:05 PM	20 SWB 7:05 PM
	21	SWB 1:05 PM		23 OMA 8:05 PM	24 OMA 8:05 PM	25 OMA 8:05 PM	26 OMA 8:05 PM	27 OMA 7:05 PM
	28	OMA 6:05 PM		30 LOU 7:05 PM				

		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>JULY</b>					1 LOU 7:05 PM	2 LOU 7:05 PM	3 LOU 6:05 PM	4 LOU 7:05 PM
	5	LOU 1:05 PM		7 LHV 11:35 AM	8 LHV 6:45 PM	9 LHV 6:45 PM	10 LHV 6:45 PM	11 LHV 6:35 PM
	12	LHV 1:15 PM		14 All-Star Break			17 IND 7:05 PM	18 IND 7:05 PM
	19	IND 1:05 PM		21 STP 8:07 PM	22 STP 2:07 PM	23 STP 8:07 PM	24 STP 8:07 PM	25 STP 7:37 PM
	26	STP 3:07 PM		28 TOL 7:05 PM	29 TOL 7:05 PM	30 TOL 12:05 PM	31 TOL 7:05 PM	

		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>AUGUST</b>								1 TOL 7:05 PM
	2	TOL 1:05 PM		4 SYR 6:35 PM	5 SYR 12:05 PM	6 SYR 6:35 PM	7 SYR 6:35 PM	8 SYR 6:35 PM
	9	SYR 1:05 PM		11 OMA 7:05 PM	12 OMA 7:05 PM	13 OMA 7:05 PM	14 OMA 7:05 PM	15 OMA 7:05 PM
	16	OMA 1:05 PM		18 STP 7:05 PM	19 STP 7:05 PM	20 STP 12:05 PM	21 STP 7:05 PM	22 STP 7:05 PM
	23	STP 1:05 PM		25 IND 6:35 PM	26 IND 1:35 PM	27 IND 6:35 PM	28 IND 7:05 PM	29 IND 6:35 PM
	30	IND 1:35 PM						

		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>				1 IOW 6:35 PM	2 IOW 6:35 PM	3 IOW 6:35 PM	4 IOW 7:05 PM	5 IOW 4:05 PM
	6	IOW 1:05 PM		8 LOU 6:35 PM	9 LOU 12:05 PM	10 LOU 6:35 PM	11 LOU 7:15 PM	12 LOU 7:15 PM
	13	LOU 1:05 PM		15 STP 6:35 PM	16 STP 6:35 PM	17 STP 6:35 PM	18 STP 7:05 PM	19 STP 4:05 PM
	20	STP 1:05 PM						
	27							

HOME
  AWAY
  "TANSKY TUESDAY" DIME-A-DOG
  FIREWORKS
  COPA DE LA DIVERSIÓN



### PROMOTIONAL SCHEDULE

