

2021 Virginia Five-Star Cornerback Tony Grimes Includes Ohio State In Final Four

Virginia Beach (Va.) Princess Anne five-star cornerback Tony Grimes revealed his final four schools on Sunday afternoon, listing Ohio State alongside Georgia, North Carolina and Texas A&M.

Final 4 ♥ @dhglover @Bubblesdnf @Giavanni_Ruffin @RivalsFriedman @BrianDohn247
@DemetricDWarren pic.twitter.com/oilNaCKm3U

— Tony Grimes (@757EliteDB) May 31, 2020

The 6-0, 180-pound Grimes — the cousin of Buckeyes junior linebacker Teradja Mitchell — is considered the top-rated cornerback and No. 7 prospect overall in the class of 2021, as he recorded 48 tackles and four interceptions to lead the Cavaliers to the state playoffs last fall.

Grimes landed an offer from Ohio State clear back in May 2019, and he made his first and only trip to Columbus a few weeks later. He and his father spent a considerable amount of time that weekend with linebackers coach and area recruiter Al Washington, who he's known since the Buckeyes assistant was at Michigan, and then-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley.

That visit coupled with the significant improvement from Ohio State's defensive backs under Hafley's direction last season seemingly put the Buckeyes at the forefront of Grimes' recruitment. But then Hafley's decision in mid-December to accept the head coaching job at Boston College forced Grimes to reassess his options.

While Ohio State head coach Ryan Day knew all along he wanted to replace Hafley with former cornerbacks coach Kerry Coombs, the Buckeyes had to wait several weeks before they could hire him away from the NFL's Tennessee Titans. That allowed other programs, particularly the other finalist, to make a move in Grimes' recruitment.

A trip to Georgia in January had the Bulldogs trending for some time, while the Tar Heels have gained some momentum as of late thanks to Grimes' growing relationship with cornerbacks coach Dre Bly, a nearby Chesapeake native who started at North Carolina before he played 12 seasons in the NFL.

The Buckeyes have tried to get back in the race for Grimes, with Coombs stopping by his high school just days after he was hired. He even invited Grimes back to campus for an unofficial visit during a spring practice or the annual spring game, but that was obviously cancelled amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Nevertheless, Grimes doesn't plan to make his college decision until Dec. 1. That gives Ohio State plenty of time to get him on campus for an official visit — if not an additional time or two — and that could very well be enough to swing things back in the Buckeyes' favor.

Ohio State's top-rated recruiting classes currently sits at 19 total commitments, including six defensive

backs: St. Louis De Smet Jesuit four-star cornerback Jakailin Johnson; Nashville Ensworth four-star safety Andre Turrentine; Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro four-star cornerback Denzel Burke; Bowling Green (Ky.) South Warren four-star safety Jantzen Dunn; Cincinnati La Salle four-star linebacker/safety Jaylen Johnson; and Cincinnati La Salle three-star cornerback Devonta Smith. The Buckeyes are looking to add one more this cycle, though, with Grimes; Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei four-star cornerback Jaylin Davies; and Monroeville (Pa.) Gateway four-star safety Derrick Davis among those under consideration.

If he does ultimately choose Ohio State, Grimes would also give the Buckeyes two of the top-rated players in the commonwealth of Virginia, joining Hopewell five-star running back TreVeyon Henderson.

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