

Alabama, Other Programs Tried To Hire Ohio State Assistant Coaches In 2017



Following the 2017 season, both college football programs and NFL organizations tried to steal away some of Urban Meyer's assistant coaches from his staff.

Alabama, Florida State, UCLA, Texas A&M, Mississippi State and various NFL teams allegedly offered Zach Smith, Ryan Day, Greg Schiano, Kerry Coombs and Alex Grinch jobs, according to text messages released by the university in response to public records requests related to last August's independent investigation of Urban Meyer and Zach Smith.

The text message which revealed these poaching attempts came from Meyer to Ohio State president Michael Drake. The following assistants were allegedly offered jobs elsewhere:

- Greg Schiano was offered jobs at Alabama, Texas A&M, Florida State and "three jobs in the NFL."
- Zach Smith was offered a job at Alabama.
- Ryan Day was offered a job at UCLA and with the Tennessee Titans as well as a head-coaching position at Mississippi State.
- Kerry Coombs was offered a job at Alabama and "the NFL."
- Alex Grinch was offered jobs at Alabama, UCLA and Mississippi State.

"Thank u for all ur support with my coaching staff," Meyer wrote in the text to Drake. "The current market and aggressiveness of the business has never been like this."

According to Meyer's texts, all of the offers would "pay significantly more" than his assistants made at Ohio State, but other than Coombs - who joined former Buckeye player and coach Mike Vrabel in the NFL with the Titans - they remained because "they luv Ohio State."

Meyer also sent a text message to a redacted recipient asking if Ohio State should leak news that Alabama unsuccessfully attempted to poach Schiano, Grinch and Smith, questioning whether it might give the Buckeyes an advantage in recruiting.

More of Meyer's texts revealed the three-time national champion coach thought about giving Smith his blessing to take the offer.

“Zach Smith was offered wr/passing game Coord at Alabama,” Meyer said in a text message to a redacted recipient. “At first I thought maybe he should go then decided that all effort I’ve put u to him and it’s Alabama. I told him to stay and he turned it down.”

Alabama head coach Nick Saban, however, said he interviewed Smith for a job, but no real offer was ever made.

“We talk to a lot of coaches about a lot of things,” Saban said when asked about Smith. “I really never did offer this guy a job. We did interview him and he did a nice job in the interview. But it was when we did the background check that we decided that there was a better opportunity to hire somebody else, and that’s what we did.”

Another text message conversation came from Jan. 18, 2018, when Meyer tells Smith not to take the Alabama job, writing “I have personally invested far too much in u to get u in position to take next step.”

Just more than six months later, on July 23, 2018, Smith was fired by Ohio State after his ex-wife Courtney Carano Smith filed a domestic violence protection order against the receivers coach.

In addition to the alleged attempts at Meyer’s assistants, more messages revealed presumably more realistic offers for current Ohio State head coach Ryan Day.

Meyer’s messages indicated that Vrabel — head coach of the Titans — offered Day an NFL offensive coordinator job and that Vrabel was “Going after him real hard.”

“Every f----- day it’s something,” Meyer texted about the attempts to hire his coaches.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin will publish our top takeaways from the 225 pages of text messages and 1,840 pages of emails that were reviewed in the investigation into Urban Meyer and Zach Smith at 8:00 a.m. on Aug. 6.

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