

# “An Honor” For Emma Shumate To Play At Ohio State



It's seemingly a match made in heaven between Ohio State and guard Emma Shumate. Raised in Dresden, Ohio, and playing high school basketball for Newark under head coach and her father, J.R. Shumate, the Buckeyes were the relative hometown college team for Emma, considered one of the top prospects in the 2021 recruiting class.

“I grew up in Ohio, and to play for Ohio State, it's an honor,” Shumate told BSB. “It's something that I never could have imagined, I guess. Growing up, this is something that if you would have told me this when I was in middle school, it would have just blown my mind. I would have been like, ‘No way. That's awesome.’”

While Shumate is at Ohio State now, there was a brief stop along the way as she committed to West Virginia out of high school, spending just one semester there before opting into the transfer portal. From there, it didn't take long for Shumate to announce that she would be returning home — or at least close to it — to play for Ohio State, revealing her transfer destination last fall.

“Ohio State was actually the first phone call I got after entering my name (into the portal) and that meant a lot to me,” Shumate said.

Of course, there was a reason Ohio State was so quick to contact Shumate. She was a four-star recruit in 2021 and was ranked by ESPN as the No. 23 guard and No. 59 overall prospect in the class. A two-time OPSWA All-Ohio first team honoree, Shumate helped lead Newark to a runner-up finish in the 2021 OHSAA Division I Girls Basketball Tournament, the best in program history.

“I've been watching Emma since she was really early in her high school career since she's local,” Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff told BSB. “I'm really excited about her potential. She played for her dad who's a great high school coach, and he's really prepared her well. I think she'll be a really terrific fit in our system and our style of play.”

The proximity to home was important in her decision to transfer to Ohio State, but she said the environment at Ohio State stood out to her.

“Especially with that comparison between another university and this one, things have been great for me here,” she said. “I’m closer to home and I’m surrounded by people that make me want to work. It’s a great environment.”

Once the net was cast in her recruitment and she committed to Ohio State, Shumate officially joined the team this past January, ineligible to play but still able to participate in practice and sit on the team’s bench. Able to do little else than watch the games, Shumate said the experience offered her a new perspective.

“Being down there on the court, the energy is not comparable to anything else, and it just made me really excited,” she said. “That’s what came from it. I was just very excited that I get to be a part of something like this.”

Now eligible to play for the Buckeyes this season, Shumate said she is excited to get going.

“I can’t wait. I’m just very grateful to be a part of something bigger than myself and with these people,” she said. “I love these people.”

Having been on campus since January and involved with college basketball since her enrollment to West Virginia last fall, Shumate is listed as a sophomore on Ohio State’s roster but has taken the path of few freshmen, yet to play or even be available for a game. When she takes the court this fall, though, Shumate doesn’t feel that she will have missed a step.

“It was very advantageous for me to come in January and get that semester where I wasn’t eligible but I was practicing,” she said. “I got a feel for my teammates, I got a feel for what we do offensively, defensively and my coaches. I think that that gave me a good start to this year.”

McGuff echoed Shumate’s sentiment, and added that she looks more advanced than someone normally in her position.

“I think being here in the second semester last year really helped in terms of just acclimating her to our system and our style of play,” he said. “She’s a really bright kid, so she picked it up pretty quickly.”

Shumate got to Ohio State in time to watch the Buckeyes claw their way to a share of the Big Ten regular-season championship as well as make a run to Sweet 16, and she said the expectations have been made clear at Ohio State for her as well as the team.

“We’re going to work hard together, we’re going to strive to be in that same position that we were last year, and I think that we have a group to do it,” she said. “We’re very committed to each other, so I think it’s a good group.”

“Everyone has the opportunity to come up big for us,” she continued. “I think that it’s obviously a team effort, and I think a lot of people are excited and ready to do the hard things to make our team successful.”

As for her role on the team, she’s joining a roster that already features several guards such as Madison Greene, Taylor Mikesell and Jacy Sheldon. Playing time may be hard to come by at points, but

Shumate's focus right now is on improving as a player.

"We've gotten really good feedback from (associate head coach) Carla (Morrow). She's a great coach, knowledgeable about the game, and I think that they're helping me to get stronger physically and just stronger all around as a player."

While she becomes further acclimated to Ohio State, Shumate said that the veteran leadership on the team means a lot to her, and inspires her as well as everyone else in the program.

"Jacy and T-Mike are great leaders and very encouraging," she said. "As I said, they're just people that make you want to work. They're people that when you come in, they inspire you to do better just because they're such good leaders in what they do and their actions."

As she prepares to take the court for the first time in her college career — perhaps as soon as Ohio State's season opener against Tennessee on Nov. 8 — she said that her goals for this season remain team driven.

"I really want to help this program in any way that I can," she said. "But personally, I always want to get better at basketball. I just want to grow, and I think on this team I can become a better person too with the personnel we have. I just think it's the perfect environment for growth for me."