

C.J. Hicks And Sonny Styles Named To Butkus Award Watch List



Ohio State linebackers C.J. Hicks and Sonny Styles were named to the Butkus Award watch list on Tuesday. Hicks and Styles were among 51 players to be named to the list. The Butkus Award, which is annually given out to the nation's best linebacker, hasn't been won by an Ohio State player since James Laurinaitis won the award in 2007.

Now Laurinaitis coaches the Buckeye linebackers under defensive coordinator Jim Knowles. They are still yet to name a starter between Hicks and Styles at the Will linebacker position.

Hicks and Styles will make up a trio of linebackers alongside fifth-year senior Cody Simon who will attempt to replace All-Big Ten linebackers Steele Chambers and Tommy Eichenberg, who have both since gone on to the NFL.

Simon had a career-high 57 total tackles in 2023 and was somewhat surprisingly left off the list despite being the presumed starting Mike linebacker for the Buckeyes in 2024.

This time last year, Styles wasn't even in the linebacker room, rather spending time with the defensive backs as the team's starting strong safety. Styles will hope to make a smooth transition from starting safety to potentially starting linebacker.

Hicks and Styles were the first and second ranked players respectively in the Buckeyes 2022 recruiting class, and will attempt to take home the third Butkus award in Ohio State history, joining Laurinaitis in 2007 and Andy Katzenmoyer in 1997.