

# Denzel Burke Has Been Back To Dominant 2021 Form



The last interception for an Ohio State cornerback was Oct. 30, 2021, when Cameron Brown picked off Penn State's Sean Clifford in the Buckeyes' 33-24 win. Denzel Burke changed that against Youngstown State on Saturday with an interception of his own, taking a pass to the endzone away from Penguins wide receiver Bryce Oliver that was thrown by quarterback Beau Brungard.

"Shoot, I was thinking 'Go get it, it's mine.' That was the only thing that was going through my head. Just come down with it," he said.

It wasn't just a breath of fresh air for the Ohio State cornerbacks. For Burke, it was his first interception since the 2021 season as well. His was in the Oct. 2, 2021, win over Rutgers, which he ran back for a touchdown and is his only other pick of his college career.

Burke came out of Saguaro High School as a four-star prospect and was a breakout freshman star with the Buckeyes in 2021 with 12 passes broken up and the interception against the Scarlet Knights. But in 2022, his numbers dipped down to only five passes defended with no interceptions despite still getting about the same amount of time on the field.

Now, through two games this season, he seems to back to form with two passes broken up against the Hoosiers in Week 1 and his interception Saturday. He said part of that is because his approach to the game has been different so far.

"I'm more hungry man. I feel like coming out of my freshman year, going into my sophomore year, I got a little complacent in the offseason," he said. "I wasn't getting the extra work I needed to get in. But you learn those moments. You know, going into my third year, I have this whole different mindset, whole different approach. I know what I can do on the field, it's just a matter of me just taking care of the little things and working hard every single day."

Another reason he and the entire defense have improved this season is because they have had a year now to get used to defensive coordinator Jim Knowles and how he likes to call games. He said the whole team is more comfortable with the system and the play calls Knowles gives them. They can anticipate the call and they know where they need to be.

Knowles has helped the Buckeyes and Burke realize they need to have a different standard for their defense than they have in years past. The new standard has been successful so far with only 10 points given up in two weeks, the only touchdown on the Penguins opening drive Saturday.

“We want to be top three, we want to be No. 1, all those things,” Burke said. “And we have to do the little things right, and we have to be able to take care of the little details and just do our job as a whole.

“I always talk to myself, kind of about what I didn’t do, I ask myself ‘Am I playing good?’ I just look at myself in the mirror and say, ‘You really got it.’ You just have to find it every day, work hard, get some work in, and it’s going to show on the video.”