

Fifth-Year Wide Receiver Xavier Johnson To Wear Block “O” Jersey For Ohio State



Ohio State announced Saturday that fifth-year wide receiver Xavier Johnson will wear No. 0 this season, chosen to represent the Block “O” jersey for the Buckeyes.

Congrats to this years ██████ █ Recipient, ████████ ██████████ █
@J5Xavier pic.twitter.com/HdZrQAhzJM

— Ohio State Football (@OhioStateFB) August 19, 2023

He earned the honor for demonstrating “toughness, accountability and the highest of character,” with the tradition honoring program great Bill Willis, who played at Ohio State from 1942-44 and was later being inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame and College Football Hall of Fame.

Johnson arrived at Ohio State out of Cincinnati Summit Country Day in the 2018 recruiting class, turning down offers from Akron, Ball State, Bowling Green, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Iowa State, Kent State, Miami (Ohio), Ohio and Western Kentucky and instead opting to walk-on with the Buckeyes.

He mostly appeared on special teams through his first three seasons, returning five kickoffs and making eight tackles on returns, though he did receive four carries for 17 yards during the 2020-21 season. He was eventually put on scholarship ahead of Ohio State’s home contest against Oregon in 2021, though Johnson did not reveal that news until last season.

“It was one of those things where my main focus was going out and keeping the focus on the game,” Johnson said. “So it wasn’t a big parade. It wasn’t one of those big things where the team huddles up and there’s a big celebration. My main focus was going to get that win. We came up a little short, but just wanted to keep everything on the team.”

He saw his role expand last season, appearing in every game and playing 207 snaps, fourth-most among

Ohio State's wideouts. He brought in 13 receptions for 151 yards and two touchdowns, including a pivotal score in the Buckeyes' season opener against Notre Dame.

No. 2 @OhioStateFB has the lead.  pic.twitter.com/nAKP5Uhuh2

— Big Ten Network (@BigTenNetwork) September 4, 2022

He also carried the ball 12 times for 146 yards and an additional score while returning 12 kickoffs and totaling six tackles on special teams. With his role expanding last year, Johnson will continue to be an important factor for Ohio State's offense this season.

"Xavier's awesome," offensive coordinator/wide receivers coach Brian Hartline said this spring. "The growth he's had over the last 12-18 months has been awesome. A true offensive weapon. His ability to be an elite receiver and also go in the backfield and carry the football, pick up protections, there's so many things that young man brings to the table, let alone special teams. To me, he's going to play football for a long time."

Defensive end Jonathon Cooper first wore the jersey in 2020, followed by offensive lineman Thayer Munford in 2021, though he was not able to actual wear the number due to NCAA rules. Then-fifth-year wide receiver Kamryn Babb wore it last season and offered a memorable moment for the Block "O" with his first career reception and touchdown catch against Indiana.