

Five-Star Linebacker Gabe Powers Fulfills Childhood Dream With Ohio State Commitment



As a child, Marysville, Ohio, five-star linebacker Gabe Powers was destined to be a football player.

Born into a football family, with his great-grandfather Sam earning a tryout with the Green Bay Packers and his father, Mike, becoming a Division II All-American at Findlay before earning a tryout with the Dallas Cowboys, Gabe was taught football from a young age. He even dropped another sport that he enjoyed in order to pursue the family passion.

"It had a lot of influence on me growing up" Powers told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "Every day all we talk about really is football, watch football, study football. Everything's football in our house. At one point I really liked basketball. I was traveling all over the United States for basketball. But, you know, this is a football family. You're not meant for basketball."

With football at the forefront – his favorite football player from his youth being NFL Hall of Fame linebacker Ray Lewis – Powers came to Marysville High School prepared to make an impact. According to head coach Brent Johnson, who played tight end at Mount Union, it didn't take long for Powers to stand out among the rest.

"He's a long, big guy that can move fast, so when you get one of those on the field, you kind of know you have one and then you get to know him and he's a really driven kid who's pretty tuned in to what he wants," Johnson told BSB. "He keeps his circle pretty tight and he's pretty driven towards that goal. He's intelligent in terms of football and not all kids are that way, so he stood out that way quite a bit for us."

The 6-4, 220-pound Powers received his first offer from Colorado on June 28, 2019, after a camp at the university. Less than five months later on Nov. 14, Ohio State sent its offer.

Johnson said that, while it took a little longer than the initial offers, more of the powerhouse recruiting programs eventually got to Powers after getting to see him play in person.

"Colorado offered, and that same weekend Michigan offered, and then once they offered things picked

up pretty quick going into his sophomore year," Johnson said. "Schools like Ohio State and Penn State and Clemson, those schools were a little slower. They wanted to see him in action, and so those offers came later in the year. So it was pretty steady from a year ago this summer until he committed."

An Ohio State offer is a big deal for any prospect, but for Powers, who lives less than an hour away from Columbus and who, along with his family, has been a lifelong Ohio State fan, it meant that much more.

"That was a lot," Powers said. "Since I was a little kid growing up, I just wanted to play Ohio State football, and once I got that, I started tearing up a little bit. I called my grandma, and my grandma was crying, so it was a big moment for us. We've always been diehard Buckeye fans forever."

Johnson echoed how important the Ohio State offer was to Powers, while also saying that it was equally important to Marysville football as a whole.

"That was a big deal. They're Ohio people and their whole family lives here in Marysville, grandfather to the youngest and all the kids are living here. So that was a big one, and for our program that was a big one," Johnson said. "We've never had an offer from Ohio State. We have a kid playing in Minnesota, we've had kids at Northwestern, but for Ohio State to make an offer, and all the Big Ten schools, you know Michigan, Penn State, you name it, and he handled that with an incredible amount of maturity."

"You would never know it amongst our team that he has a full ride to all those places if he wanted it. He's very humble that way."

Powers committed to Ohio State on Aug. 1, becoming the fourth commit for the Buckeyes in the 2022 class. He is ranked the top outside linebacker in the class and the No. 31 prospect overall.

The commitment was a big deal to Powers and his family, as well as, according to Powers, much of the city of Marysville, which has a population just shy of 25,000.

"It was a very big moment," Powers said. "The whole family, friends, everybody gathered around. Marysville, we're all pretty much family here. We're all a very close community."

After committing at the beginning of the month, Powers was given his fifth star in the 247Sports Composite Rankings by the end of August following a 15-spot jump to No. 31. The move made Powers the lone five-star commit for the Buckeyes in 2022, and he said that it was a big step for him as a player to see the recognition he earned.

"It was very important to me," Powers said. "I'm very blessed to get that fifth star and I was working towards that fifth star, and once I got it, it was just very humbling."

Powers has developed his game significantly during his first two years at Marysville according to Johnson, and he should continue to progress as he moves into year three.

"You go from freshman to sophomore, from five coaches to 13 coaches, a little more involved," Johnson said. "There was a curve last year as a sophomore that all sophomores go through. The difference with him and other sophomores is how quick he picked it up. By game five, we were putting him on the offensive side of the ball as well. We initially put him back just to the defense, so he picked it up, and this year he's pretty much playing two ways."

Although Ohio State has been unable to play due to the Big Ten's current decision to postpone fall

sports, Governor Mike DeWine has allowed high school sports to return with a limited fan capacity.

Marysville got out to a 2-1 start this year, with the sole loss being a 31-28 defeat to Hilliard Darby on Sept. 4. Powers said that, while the lack of attendance and the inability to use the locker rooms in an attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19 has been an adjustment, he knows he still has to play his best for the Monarchs in his junior season.

"It's different when you go out on a Friday night and you only see 700 compared to 4,000, 5,000, I think we actually pack almost up to 6,000 and there's barely any standing room," Powers said. "Our town's a football town, so it's different, but you still have to go out there and perform."

With two years left until he makes the jump to the collegiate level, Powers still has time to develop further as the five-star linebacker he is ranked to be. Johnson said that he thinks there is plenty of room for Powers to continue to improve, both in high school and when he ultimately does head to Columbus.

"I think he's going to be explosive," the coach said. "I think he's really green right now, to be honest with you. He weighs about 225, and he has gotten strong in our weight room. I can't imagine what he's going to look like when he gets to Ohio State and gets into their program. He's got a good understanding. I think us playing him at Sam (strongside linebacker) and walking him up (to the line of scrimmage) will be a good introduction to what they want to do, so I think he's going to compete really well. I think the longer he stays, the better he's going to get, too."

As for Powers, he has set a high bar for himself and what he wants to achieve, and he is ready to leave his mark once he officially gets to Ohio State in 2022.

"I set my expectations as high as I can," Powers said. "I want to be there, and freshman year, I want to be a starter. So I set them high, and for myself I expect to achieve those."

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Gabe Powers

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