

Four Buckeyes Selected To ESPN Way-Too-Early All American Team



Despite the start of the 2024 regular season still being over seven months away, Ohio State's premier players are already earning some national recognition. ESPN selected four Buckeyes to its Way-To-Early college football 2024 All-American team published on Tuesday, the most out of any program.

Safety Caleb Downs, running back TreVeyon Henderson, offensive lineman Donovan Jackson and defensive tackle Tyleik Williams were all selected to the publication's first-team All-American squad, which featured 26 players from 17 Division-I teams. Georgia and Michigan trailed Ohio State with three players recognized each, while Alabama and LSU each had two representatives. Running back Quinshon Judkins and cornerback Denzel Burke were also named to ESPN's second-team at their respective positions.

The new Buckeye Downs is perhaps the most obvious choice for an early All-American nod, having tallied an impressive 107 tackles at safety for the Crimson Tide in just his freshman season, a mark that helped him earn the SEC Freshman of the Year award and first-team All-SEC honors. Now, under the tutelage of defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, Downs will have a chance to take his game to another level and emerge as one of the nation's best defensive backs.

The returning Buckeyes who were honored to the first-team are all coming off stellar junior seasons. Henderson, despite missing three games for Ohio State last season with a foot injury, re-established himself as one of the most dynamic running backs in the nation, totaling a team-high 156 carries for 926 yards and 11 touchdowns, along with 19 catches for 229 additional yards. Henderson's 5.9 yards per rush also ranked second in the Big Ten behind Purdue's Tyrone Tracy Jr.

Jackson cemented himself as a stalwart on Ohio State's offensive line in 2023, starting all 13 games for the team and winning first-team All Big Ten honors by both coaches and media. Jackson, who helped allow the Buckeyes to rush for 138.8 yards per game last season, has started 26 straight games for Ohio State dating back to his sophomore season in 2022.

Williams experienced a breakout season in his third year with the program, totaling a gaudy 54 tackles (10 for loss), three sacks, five pass breakups, a quarterback hurry and a fumble recovery that was picked up for a touchdown in Ohio State's win over Western Kentucky on Sept. 16. The junior's efforts

earned him some personal accolades, including a third-team All-Big ten honor from coaches and a second-team nod by the media.

Each honored Buckeye will have the chance to prove their worth as among the nation's premier players starting on Aug. 31, when Ohio State opens the season against Akron at Ohio Stadium.