

Incoming Freshmen Eugene Brown, Zed Key Bring Winning Mentality To Ohio State



Despite losing both Andre and Kaleb Wesson, D.J. Carton, Alonzo Gaffney, and Luther Muhammad, the Ohio State men's basketball team welcomes a pair of talented freshman for the upcoming season.

Eugene Brown is a 6-foot-6 wing from Southwest DeKalb High School in Decatur, Ga., where he led the Panthers to a 19-13 mark as a senior, averaging 17 points and nine rebounds per game.

The Decatur, Ga., native was an all-around contributor, tallying 1,120 points, 584 rebounds, 149 steals, 139 assists and 138 blocks across 97 career games.

Brown earned much recognition for his excellent senior season, earning first-team all-state honors and the DeKalb Country Co-Player of the Year.

An excellent two-way player, Brown, was named the defensive player of the year by the Georgia Coaches Association.

Brown led the Panthers to consecutive state tournament final four appearances for the first time in school history. Southwest DeKalb won regional championships in three of his four years on the team.

"Eugene is a coach on the floor, respected and admired by teammates, coaches and opponents," said one of Brown's high school coaches. "He has a high basketball IQ, advanced skill set, tremendous work ethic, physical stature, strong will and athleticism which will help ease the transition to college and possibly pro game. He also is an emerging playmaker possessing exceptional defensive prowess. The consummate teammate."

Academically, Brown stood out as well, having earned all-regional academic first team and all-county academic first team honors. He also was awarded the David Mitchell Community Service Scholarship, Barack Obama Leadership Award and selection to the National Society of High School Scholars, in addition to finishing among the top 10 percent of his graduating class.

Zed Key, who is a 6-foot-8 forward, had a massive impact at Long Island (N.Y.) Lutheran High School, where he led his team to a 22-3 record as a senior.

"I've coached some good big men, rim protectors and terrific athletes but none like Zed," John Buck, Key's head coach said. "He has great hands, great feel and uses his body so well. He makes it look so easy. I don't think he missed a single practice. He is a great teammate who came to practice each day ready to be coached. He's a unique talent."

Key led Long Island Lutheran in scoring 18 points per game, and rebounding with 8.7 rebounds per game, shooting 68.2 percent (178 of 261) from the field and 71 percent from the free-throw line. The Long Island native is also a solid rim protector, blocking 2.0 shots per contest.

He earned first-team All-Long Island honors, but also showed his ability beyond the New York area. Key, who was a Max Preps fifth-team All-American, earned all-tournament honors at three events last year, including the 2019 Beach Ball Classic in Myrtle Beach, S.C., the 'Iolani Classic in Honolulu, and the Montverde Invitational in Florida.

The big man from Long Island elevated his game against the best competition as well, leading Lutheran to victory against No. 2 Sierra Canyon (Calif.) by scoring 25 points and grabbing 12 boards. Key followed that performance up with 37 points and 16 rebounds in a win against the Patrick School (N.J.), which ended the season ranked No. 11.

With many key departures from the roster, Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann knows Key and Brown may be called on to have an immediate impact and expressed confidence in their abilities.

"Congratulations to both Eugene and Zed on their senior seasons. I love that both guys helped their high school teams have excellent years," Holtmann said. "We have had several guys who have led their teams to state championships or made deep runs (Andre and Kaleb, Kyle, CJ Walker, E.J. and Duane to name a few) so credit to those guys for finishing their high school careers so well.

"We are really excited about both young men and their impact on our program. I know they are anxious to get to work and spend time with their teammates this offseason."

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