

Kourt Williams To Lead By Example As A Captain



Third-year safety Kourt Williams may not be slated to start for Ohio State in 2022, but his importance to the team is not lost on his peers.

Williams was named a team captain on Aug. 13, as voted on by his teammates. As the Harbor City, Calif., native steps into his new-found leadership role, he understands his duties as one of the team's six commanders.

"It was truly an honor. I think it's a testament to how my teammates feel about me. I have a responsibility to them now as a captain," Williams said on Tuesday. "I think leadership is not only about talking the talk, but you also have to walk the walk. I think they felt that."

Entering his third season in the program, Williams has endured an unorthodox journey during his first two years as a Buckeye. As a true freshman, Williams sustained a torn ACL during the offseason — holding him out of his entire first season at Ohio State.

Williams saw his first game action as a sophomore in 2021, appearing in 11 games and earning his first starting nod against Utah in the Rose Bowl. He racked up 27 tackles, four tackles for loss, a sack and a pass break-up during his sophomore season.

This season, Williams is expected to be the first Buckeye off of the bench for deep safeties unit. With the implementation of new defensive coordinator Jim Knowles' scheme, three safeties will share the field at a time which opens plenty of opportunities for Williams to see the field.

As his on-the-field role is likely to increase in 2022, Williams said he refocused his leadership style to be more outspoken.

"I've always been a lead-by-example kind of guy," Williams said. "This offseason, I really stepped up in terms of being more vocal, letting them feel me. I think that was big part of (me becoming captain)."

Williams' veteran presence is important to carry along the young cornerback unit in the secondary. With six scholarship corners, five are sophomores or younger. Second-year cornerback JK Johnson said Williams has brought the younger guys in the unit along by showing them his dedication to the program.

“Even off of the field, he’s making sure we’re good, with lifts, being on time, all of that,” Johnson said. “Kourt is a really good leader. He’s going to make sure we stay on point and do what we’re supposed to do.”