

Malik Hartford's Commitment Gives Ohio State Seventh-Ranked Class In 2023



West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star safety Malik Hartford (6-2, 175) committed to Ohio State on Wednesday, giving the Buckeyes their sixth commitment in 2023 and the seventh-best class in the country according to the 247Sports team rankings.

Ohio State has a team score of 133.62, which ranks behind Louisville (135.86), Penn State (150.41), Georgia (152.45), Arkansas (165.54), Texas Tech (184.92) and Notre Dame (196.29).

Others in the top 10 include No. 8 Baylor (126.62), No. 9 Florida State (110.40) and No. 10 Iowa (109.41). Ohio State is tied with Florida State for the fewest commits among the top 10, with six.

Penn State's class is boosted with a five-star commitment from Ashburn (Va.) Broad Run offensive lineman Alex Birchmeier (6-6, 275), who has been committed to the Nittany Lions since last July. Arkansas and Texas Tech find themselves among the top schools due to their high number of commitments - 10 for the Razorbacks and 14 for the Red Raiders, four of which are four-star prospects.

Other than Iowa, Ohio State and Penn State, the Big Ten has five other teams in the top 25, including No. 11 Michigan (six commits, 107.91), No. 13 Michigan State (five commits, 96.67), No. 17 Nebraska (five commits, 80.53), No. 18 Northwestern (five commits, 75.77) and No. 20 Rutgers (four commits, 66.61).

The remaining Big Ten teams are No. 30 Indiana (three commits, 52.76), No. 35 Minnesota (three commits, 49.37), No. 41 Illinois (two commits, 36.11), No. 47 Maryland (two commits, 27.32), No. 51 Purdue (one commit, 21.68) and No. 59 Wisconsin (one commit, 15.77).

Other notable teams include USC at No. 15 with only three commitments, but all are five-star prospects. Alabama is off to a slow start with only two commitments and ranked 29th, but the Crimson Tide will likely get going soon and reclaim its spot near the top of the rankings.

The Buckeyes are second in the country in average player rating (among schools with at least five commitments) at .9396, which only trails Notre Dame's .9446.