

# Ohio State Athletic Director Gene Smith Discusses State Of Transfer Portal: 'I Think It Will Settle Down'



***This is an excerpt of a story from the July print edition of the Interview Issue at Buckeye Sports Bulletin. For four free issues of the print edition, no card required, sign up at the link here: <http://www.buckeyesports.com/subscribe-4issue-trial/>***

The transfer portal has increased in activity for many sports in the past few years, especially in football and both men's and women's basketball.

This has also been true on Ohio State's side of things. In football, the Buckeyes have lost players like quarterback Joe Burrow, wide receivers Mookie Cooper, Jaelen Gill and Jameson Williams, as well as safety Brendon White. But Ohio State has also brought in key contributors like quarterback Justin Fields, guard Jonah Jackson and running back Trey Sermon.

With all that in mind, Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith spoke to Buckeye Sports Bulletin for the annual Interview Issue, and said that, while it appears to be growing each year, he does expect the transfer portal to ultimately slow and get back to a lower, more consistent level across all sports.

"I think it will settle down. There's going to be student-athletes who think they can land somewhere and they won't be able to land at the place that they had aspirations to land. So over time, I think the culture will shift a little bit because people forget that all of our other sports have had this for years. Soccer has been dealing with this for years.

"The most important thing for us is to make sure we create a culture in our program where one, we stay true to our promise and our commitment to the student-athlete and their family. We don't waver from that. Two, we have open and honest communication with them about all the issues - academic performance, behavioral performance and competitive performance and be honest with them. Be totally transparent, and then, if the student-athlete chooses to leave because of playing time and they just can't get into that position where they can gain the playing time, I don't have a problem with that.

"But if you're leaving for other reasons, then we need to go look in the mirror and look at

what we did or didn't do. That's kind of how I always looked at transfers. For all of the other sports, it's always been that way for me, and it's that way for the sports that now have to deal with it for the first time.

"I think over time, though, the reality is there's some student-athletes who already have deals made where they know where they're going to transfer to. There's a high percentage of that.

"But there are a lot that go into the portal that have no clue where they're going and have aspirations to maybe go to certain places. And I think over time, as that data emerges and those experiences become more public, I think you'll see it steady a little bit."