

Ohio State Beats Michigan In Back-To-Back Recruiting Battles



It's no secret that one of the top storylines for the 2024 recruiting class was whether Michigan's past two years of on-field success against Ohio State would start translating into head-to-head victories over the Buckeyes on the recruiting trail. Particularly for players hailing from Ohio.

The Wolverines got off to a strong start in this regard, landing Cincinnati Archbishop Moeller four-star running back Jordan Marshall (5-11, 193) in March. While the Buckeyes later added a higher-rated ball carrier in San Antonio Veterans Memorial four-star James Peoples (5-10, 192), Marshall held an Ohio State offer and was actively being recruited by the team.

Still, the Buckeyes got involved late and now hold pledges from three running backs in the class. Peoples was more of a priority target for the staff, based on how both recruitments were handled. The real question pertained as to whether Michigan could pull a player from Ohio that Ohio State considered one of its top targets.

So, the Wolverines took their swing at Cleveland Glenville four-star cornerback Bryce West (5-11, 177), the No. 1 player in Ohio and No. 45 overall prospect in the 247Sports composite. Both teams made West a priority, staying in as much contact as possible and hosting him for an official visit in June.

But in the end, West elected to stay home and play for the Buckeyes. He committed June 24 alongside high school teammate and four-star tight end Damarion Witten (6-4, 215).

West was one of the most important additions for the team's recruiting class of 2024, especially since Ohio State kept him from going to its archrival. Another more unexpected victory followed and made perhaps an even bigger splash, however.

Sunday the Buckeyes landed a commitment from the highest-ranked defensive tackle they'll have signed since 2000. That player is Chicago St. Ignatius five-star Justin Scott, a behemoth at 6-5, 310 with enough athleticism to play defensive end out of a two-point stance for his high school team.

Scott became OSU's fourth five-star commitment of the class and its first on defense since the 2022 cycle. And here's the kicker: Ohio State plucked him from right under Michigan's nose.

Coming to Columbus for his last official visit the weekend of June 23, Scott was all but a silent

commitment to the Wolverines.

““Going into the visit, my family was heavily set on Michigan,” Scott told On3. “Throughout the (Ohio State) visit they were really still set on Michigan. But towards the end of it, coach Johnson sat us down and went over an in-depth plan that they had for me.”

Battles still remain between the schools, however. Chief among them is the quest for Springfield, Ohio four-star cornerback Aaron Scott.

The 6-0, 170-pound cornerback possesses fantastic athleticism and long limbs, making for a future shutdown corner at the next level. Some services have him as Ohio’s best prospect, though he slots in at second behind West in the composite rankings. He is the nation’s 52nd-ranked recruit and No. 5 corner.

Both Ohio State and Michigan desperately want him, and all reports indicate that it’s those two schools he’s deciding between. He’s announced a commitment date of July 30, meaning that both sides will know his intentions in the next 27 days.

“They talk about each other all the time,” Scott said in May of Ohio State and Michigan. “Talking about how they don’t want me to go there. They’re definitely competitive and preach on going to their schools.”

West has been taking an active role in Scott’s recruitment as well, both publicly on Twitter and privately as a friend.

“I’m definitely recruiting him,” West told Eleven Warriors of Scott. “I’m just trying to get him there. He’s definitely an Ohio kid, so I definitely want him to play at Ohio State because he’s a great player.”

Despite recent trends on the gridiron, Ohio State’s class of 2024 hasn’t been derailed by Michigan in a significant way thus far. Securing Scott is one of the final steps in ensuring that remains the case.