



# Ohio State Cornerback Jermaine Mathews Jr. Named College Football Network Freshman All-American



Ohio State cornerback Jermaine Mathews Jr. earned national recognition for his breakthrough performance this season when College Football Network named him a freshman All-American on Wednesday alongside first-year cornerbacks D’Angelo Ponds (James Madison) and Raion Strader Miami (OH). Mathews was the only freshman Buckeye to earn the distinction.

College Football Network Freshman All-American, @Jr2Maine    
[pic.twitter.com/8ZgrsbMQAV](https://pic.twitter.com/8ZgrsbMQAV)

— Ohio State Football (@OhioStateFB) December 6, 2023

Appearing in 11 games in 2023, the defensive back turned heads with his raw athleticism and football acumen in his inaugural collegiate season, recording 13 tackles, three pass breakups and an interception that was returned for a touchdown.

His biggest moments this season came while he was thrust into a larger role in the Buckeyes’ secondary to relieve the injured Denzel Burke. The freshman helped plug the holes left by Burke in Ohio State’s wins over Penn State on Oct. 21 and Rutgers on Nov. 4, combining for six total tackles along with an impressive pass breakup in the third quarter of the 20-12 victory over the Nittany Lions.

“The kid has moxie,” defensive coordinator Jim Knowles told the media after the Penn State game. “I don’t think he knew how big of a moment it was, and that’s not a bad thing. He just went out and

played, made some tackles, didn't flinch at the moment of truth. I'm really proud of him. He's a good player."

Mathews' efforts in the starting role allowed him to earn increased playing time towards the end of the season, where he most notably recorded a season-high three tackles and a pass breakup in Ohio State's 38-3 victory over Michigan State on Nov. 11.

With the Buckeye future of Burke in question and cornerbacks Jyaire Brown and Ryan Turner entering the transfer portal this offseason, the former four-star Cincinnati Winton Woods prospect could compete for a starting role in the secondary alongside returning defensive backs Davison Igbinosun, Jordan Hancock and fellow-freshman Calvin Simpson-Hunt, among others.