

# Ohio State Freshman WR Mookie Cooper Catching On Quickly, Earns Praise From Brian Hartline



Mookie Cooper came to Columbus as the No. 16 wide receiver and No. 93 overall prospect in the country for 2020.

Even though he was a four-star recruit ranked in the top 100, Cooper was just the fourth highest touted receiver in the Buckeyes' fifth-ranked recruiting class behind five-star standouts Julian Fleming and Jaxon Smith-Njigba and the No. 10 wideout Gee Scott Jr.

As a junior at St. Louis Trinity Catholic averaged 29.8 yards per reception, with 28 catches for 834 yards and nine touchdowns. The dynamic playmaker also carried the ball 17 times for 261 yards (15.4 yards per carry) and three touchdowns.

After helping lead Trinity Catholic to a state championship, Cooper hoped to play for Pattonville, but he was ruled ineligible due to transfer guidelines.

After missing his senior season, there were naturally concerns about how quickly Cooper could acclimate to college football having been more than a year removed from game action. Ohio State wide receivers coach Brian Hartline has been impressed with Cooper's ability to take his lessons to the field.

"It's funny, we'll do drills sometimes and I'll be coaching them up on it and it might not be quite right," Hartline said. "But then he'll run out there and do it, and it's perfect."

Slot receiver is the most likely spot for Cooper in the Buckeyes' offense, and his speed and athleticism should help him stand out in that spot. The St. Louis native boasts a 4.49 40-yard dash and 4.07 20-yard shuttle, along with a 35 ½ inch vertical leap.

“His natural ability to just play football and fill space,” Hartline said. “He does things that you really can’t even coach.

“I think Mookie is much further along than I, frankly, anticipated.”

As a recruit, Cooper earned praise from Ohio State wide receiver Jameson Williams, who is a fellow St. Louis native. Williams, who hauled in six receptions for 112 yards and a 61-yard touchdown as a true freshman, is excited to keep the St. Louis to Columbus pipeline going with Cooper.

“He’s a tough ball player,” Williams told BSB in December. “He can play ball, too. He’s from my city, we talk almost every day. I can’t wait till he gets up here, so I can play ball with my boy from St. Louis. It’s going to be fun.”

Now that the two have been working together since Cooper arrived on campus in January, Williams has noticed rapid improvement in the true freshman on and off the field.

“We went to different high schools, so I didn’t see him that much in high school,” Williams said. “When he got to Ohio State, it was a lot of growth with Mookie, he’s grown a lot. It was the same thing with me.”

The Ohio State wide receivers room is stacked full of talent with Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson, and Jameson Williams returning, Kam Babb, Jalyn Harris, and Demario McCall eager to emerge, and the four highly rated freshmen ready to make an impact.

From Hartline’s perspective, he wants to see all of his receivers striving to become the best they can be as individuals instead of worrying about where they stack up against their teammates.

“The biggest thing I try to have a conversation about with these athletes is that it’s okay to share goals, but don’t think you’re going to share paths,” Hartline said. “Different guys need different things. To sit around and compare yourself to your peers doesn’t help you. It’s not about what they’re doing, it’s about what you’re doing.

“At this point, I think we’ve done a really good job to set ourselves up for success. Now it just comes down to maximizing the opportunities when they come to us.”

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