

Ohio State Graduate Linebacker Kourt Williams Retires Due To Knee, Shoulder Injuries



Ohio State graduate linebacker Kourt Williams announced his retirement from football on Wednesday afternoon — just one day before the Buckeyes begin fall camp — revealing in an Instagram post that he has undergone four knee surgeries and three shoulder surgeries over the past five years.

Kourt Williams II (@k_dub.327) • Instagram photos and videos

“In these five years, there’s been a lot of light and a lot of dark...but I wouldn’t change a thing,” Williams wrote in his Instagram post. “It’s been a long time coming, and it’s time to move on. My family, teammates and everybody who has stuck by me (through) it all...I thank you and I love you.”

Williams’ injury troubles began right when he entered college as a four-star linebacker out of Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco in 2020. He suffered a torn ACL during a preseason training camp practice that fall, ending his freshman season before it even began. He made an admirable recovery from his surgery that next offseason and returned in a backup safety role in 2021, appearing in 11 games at the new position — including his first start in the Buckeyes’ Rose Bowl win against Utah — and recording 28 tackles (four for loss), one sack and one pass deflection.

Williams played in just six games in 2022, recording four tackles, before going down with a shoulder injury, but recovered before the 2023 campaign, where he was on track to make the full-time switch back to linebacker. But his fourth Buckeye season, just like his first, ended before it even started when he suffered his second torn ACL in August, an injury that forced him to miss the entire 2023 season.

“Really feel awful for Kourt,” Day said when he revealed the season-ending injury at a press conference last August. “I just feel like he can’t catch a break. He’s such a great young man.”

Williams appeared to make another recovery from injury this offseason after Day proclaimed during Big Ten Media Days that only running back TC Caffey — who tore his own ACL this summer — would be held out of fall camp. But a constant string of injuries prompted the graduate linebacker to call it a career after five seasons with the program, finishing with 32 tackles (four for loss), one sack and a pass deflection.

Ohio State is now left with seven linebackers on its roster, including likely top contributors C.J. Hicks, Cody Simon and Sonny Styles along with reserves Mitchell Melton, Payton Pierce and Gabe Powers, Arvell Reese and Garrett Stover.