

Ohio State Lands Three On ESPN's Preseason All-American List



The 2022 college football season is still more than 200 days away from kicking off, but that isn't stopping the All-American industrial complex from churning out content, and that means there are Buckeyes to be recognized. In its Jan. 19 list of "Way-Too-Early Preseason All-Americans", ESPN recognized a trio of Ohio State players among college football's elite returners, the second-most of any school in the nation, tied with Georgia's three and trailing only Alabama's four.

The Buckeyes do claim victory, however, in offensive selections. All three picks out of Columbus will suit up on Ryan Day's offense, while no other team has any more than one pick on that side of the ball.

Leading the way out of the backfield is tailback TreVeyon Henderson. A rising sophomore, Henderson earned a starting role in Columbus after only one game off the bench, racking up 1,248 rushing yards and 15 touchdowns in the process. With the departures of Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson on the outside, Henderson could be in for a heavier workload in 2022, landing him on this list alongside Texas tailback Bijan Robinson.

"The Ohio State offense isn't going to lack for dynamic playmakers in 2022, and Henderson could easily surpass the seven plays from scrimmage of 40-plus yards he had this past year," ESPN writer Chris Low said.

Next up, sliding into the spaces vacated by that receiver pairing, Jaxon Smith-Njigba is recognized as one of the nation's best receivers, next to Pitt standout and Biletnikoff winner Jordan Addison. He led the Buckeyes in receptions and receiving yards a season ago, shattering the school records for both categories in the process.

"The talent in the Ohio State receivers room the past couple of years has been staggering," Low writes. "The next star (if he already wasn't one) is Smith-Njigba, who led Ohio State in receptions (95) and receiving yards (1,606) in 2021. His record-setting 347-yard performance in the Rose Bowl came with potential first-round draft picks Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave watching from the sideline. C.J. Stroud also returns at quarterback for the Buckeyes, which will make Smith-Njigba even more dangerous."

Lastly, in the trenches, right tackle Dawand Jones has earned a spot among the nation's elite linemen only days after declaring his intention to return to Columbus for a fourth season. He's one of three Big Ten products in the line group, along with Michigan center Olusegun Oluwatimi and Northwestern left tackle Peter Skoronski.

"Jones put off the NFL to return for his senior season, a decision that should benefit both him and the Buckeyes," Low writes. "His basketball background and 6-8, 360-pound frame make him a natural as a pass protector, but he's also a force from his right tackle position in clearing the way for Ohio State's running game. Jones and the Ohio State offensive line had the one hiccup against Michigan last season, which will only fuel his fire to become one of the country's top tackles in 2022."