

Ohio State Safety Caleb Downs Sheds His Black Stripe After Six Spring Practices



Caleb Downs needed just six spring practices in scarlet and gray to lose his black stripe.

The transfer from Alabama becomes the latest Buckeye to shed his black stripe, just two practices after wide receiver Jeremiah Smith became the fastest freshman to shed his black stripe.

Downs transferred to Ohio State after a breakout season as a freshman with the Crimson Tide. Safeties coach Matt Guerrieri believes Downs is a special talent.

“When you look at safeties, how fast can guys react?” Guerrieri said Feb. 20. “There’s two ways you do that - one is mentally and he’s really special from a mental standpoint. And then how fast can you react physically. If you watch him in agility drills, his body, the functional movement skills are tremendous.

“If you have a guy that can respond quickly from a mental and physical standpoint, you’re a step up on guys. Not only does he have great physical tools, but he can use those in a really efficient way.”

Head coach Ryan Day also only had good things to say about the safety he recruited both out of high school and in the portal.

“His talent is exceptional, but he’s already created an unbelievable amount of discipline in his life,” Day said Feb. 7. “He’s created the skills to play the safety position at a high level.”

“Caleb, you saw what he did as a freshman. To say we’re all excited to have him as part of the program is an understatement. He brings a lot to the table.”

Downs is the first transfer to shed his black stripe in 2024.