

Ohio State's Michael Jordan Becoming A Consistent Force At Center



In both 2016 and 2017, Ohio State had a star offensive guard switch to center. Each one of those players - Pat Elflein followed by Billy Price - ended up winning the Rimington Award as the nation's best at that position before being drafted into the NFL.

In 2018, Ohio State faced a similar situation when starting left guard Michael Jordan (6-7, 310) switched to the middle of the line ahead of the season after never having previously played the position. With the Buckeyes heading into their eighth game of the year, the move has become a resounding success, but it wasn't without concerns at the start.

Offensive line coach Greg Studrawa said Wednesday that he had concerns about Jordan's move early in the year, especially after he struggled snapping the ball against TCU in week three. Since then, though, Jordan has seemingly improved on an almost daily basis, becoming a consistent performer on an inconsistent line.

"His snap accuracy has gone through the roof since the TCU game," Studrawa said. "We worked on that, we fixed his stance a little bit. He's getting more and more comfortable each game."

Jordan's play hasn't gone unnoticed nationally, either. On Monday, ESPN released its midseason All-American team, and Jordan made the cut at center. He was one of just two Buckeyes - along with sophomore defensive end Chase Young - to earn the honor.

That's certainly a long way to come at center for a player who likely never expected to play the position in college. Jordan was recruited as a four-star offensive tackle out of Canton (Mich.) Plymouth, and started at left guard from week one as a true freshman in 2016.

He was the left guard again last season, but ended up being asked to provide help at center this year in a bid to get the best five linemen on the field.

From high school offensive tackle to starting at a completely new position as a junior, Jordan might have ended up in the perfect spot. Studrawa said center could be Jordan's best position as he moves forward in his football career - at Ohio State or at the next level.

"I think it sure can be. Because for a tall guy ... he bends pretty well and he's just getting used to it

right now," Studrawa said. "He's growing. Each game, he's gotten better and better and better. It was difficult for him early on. I was worried about it early on. And then the snap consistency at TCU, the concerned me, and he's fixed that. Now he's coming off, he's better pulling, he's better one-on-one - we've put him in a lot of one-on-one situations in pass pro."

As good as Jordan has become at center, though, he's not done developing yet. Studrawa said he hopes to see even more improvement as the Buckeyes near their stretch run.

"I'd like to see him still get better because I think there's even more ahead," Studrawa said. "I don't think he's anywhere near the finished product. I think there's more in there."

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