

# Ohio State's Michael Jordan Follows Footsteps Of Former Buckeye Billy Price On Cincinnati Bengals' OL

For two years, Michael Jordan admired Billy Price on Ohio State's offensive line.

Initially in 2016, the Buckeyes threw Jordan into the fire at left guard, where he became the program's first lineman since legendary left tackle Orlando Pace (1994-96) to start as a true freshman.

Price, who was OSU's starting right guard at the time, helped calm Jordan's nerves while the former four-star recruit in the 2016 class from Canton (Mich.) Plymouth settled into his immediate-impact role.

After they spent their 2017 season in Columbus beside each other, with Jordan at left guard and Price kicked over to center, the two reunite for the 2019 campaign as Cincinnati Bengals.

Following the footsteps of Price, Cincinnati selected Jordan with the 136th overall pick before the 2019 NFL draft's fourth round finished in Nashville, Tenn., on April 27.

"The first thing is he's 6-7," Price said of Jordan. "When he was playing guard and he's 315 (pounds), that's a big, big dude inside. I just told (head coach Zac) Taylor — he asked me, I answered honestly.

"He's a good kid, young kid — I think he's only 21 years old right now. He grew up at Ohio State. I was around him. He's not a guy (who's) worrisome. Not someone you're going to make sure you have to babysit.

"So he's coming into a really good situation right now here. A lot of competition across all positions in the O-line room and, again, he's going to get into the mix. And whatever the coaches decide to do, they'll do."

Jordan brings versatility to the Bengals' offensive line after he capped his third year as an Ohio State starter with a strong junior season at center, filling the void left by Price — the 21st overall pick in the first round of the 2018 NFL draft.

Originally the 247Sports composite's No. 130 overall prospect, No. 14 offensive tackle and No. 3 player in Michigan for 2016, Jordan moved between left guard (27 starts, 2016-17) and center (14 starts, 2018) where he ended his career as a freshman All-American and two-time all-conference selection.

Had he returned for his senior campaign, Jordan would have moved back to left guard as the Buckeyes brought along sophomore Josh Myers (6-5, 310) into the fall of 2019, but OSU's three-year starter instead enters an offensive line in Cincinnati with right guard somewhat open.

"He's still a young guy, but man, he started as a true freshman at Ohio State," Taylor said of Jordan, who figures to compete with John Miller (6-3, 315) and Alex Redmond (6-5, 310) for right guard time around Price (6-4, 308) at center. "He's played a lot of football for a great team and in a great conference. Just the type of character we're trying to add to that room. I'm really a big fan of Michael

Jordan.”

While the Bengals return ninth-year veteran Clint Boling (6-5, 305) at left guard and signed Miller, who was previously the Buffalo Bills’ right guard with 47 starts over the past four years, Jordan adds value and flexibility for Cincinnati’s retooled offensive line.

“We love his position versatility,” said Bengals offensive coordinator Brian Callahan. “He can play all of the interior spots. He’s big and has size and athleticism. He checks all of the boxes for us. It’s fun to get another local kid in here as well. He’s a really good player and has everything we’re looking for on the interior of the offensive line.”

How much Jordan ultimately plays will be decided months from now, but he comes to Cincinnati with a favorable physical frame in the eyes of his future position coach.

“Those inside players, when they’re big, it helps,” said Bengals offensive line coach Jim Turner. “He has that width. One thing I love in players on the line is width. They have the body type to be a big mass inside. He’s got that.

“The other big thing for him is intelligence. He’s a smart player. He started his freshman and sophomore year at guard. When Billy Price got drafted here last year, there was a hole in the middle (at OSU). They took him going into his junior year and made him the center. They don’t do that often. They obviously respected his intelligence.”

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