

Recruiting: Five-Star Wide Receiver Vernell Brown III Lauds Brian Hartline, Ohio State Ahead Of Commitment Decision



Ohio State has built the nation's top-rated recruiting class for 2025 over the past several months, garnering pledges from a quartet of five-stars and 16 four-stars for a 247Sports Composite score of 309.94, just over three points ahead of Alabama (306.37) for the top spot.

Although the Buckeyes already own the No. 1 ranking, they could bolster an already loaded class by earning a commitment from Orlando, Fla., Jones five-star wide receiver Vernell Brown III (5-11, 170), who is announcing his commitment decision on Sunday at 2 p.m.

Brown, the nation's 25th-best prospect, sixth-best wide receiver and No. 5 player from Florida will choose between four schools on Sunday, those being the Buckeyes along with Florida, Florida State and Miami. While Brown has kept his recruitment mostly within the Sunshine State, Ohio State still remains high on his list, mainly because of the coaching pedigree of wide receivers coach/co-offensive coordinator Brian Hartline.

Brown pointed to Hartline's ability to mold young receivers into top tier NFL talent over their years at Ohio State as something that intrigues him the most about Ohio State, a special coaching trait that the five-star was able to witness in person when he paid a visit to Columbus for an official visit from June 1-2.

"Coach Brian Hartline and Ohio State produce receivers and develop guys at my position," Brown told On3 earlier this month. "It is that simple with Ohio State."

"As far as the (June 1-2) visit goes, I really loved everything about (Ohio State)," Brown told Eleven Warriors on June 3. "I can say that for both me and my family. OSU has done a great job showing me and my family why they are the program they are and show the way they do things. It's a really good program and it really opened my eyes on this OV."

Ohio State and Hartline have seemingly put in the work to make the Buckeyes an intriguing landing spot for Brown, but it appears the program will be the underdogs in this recruitment heading into Sunday, as Florida owns the crystal ball projection over Ohio State per 247Sports.

"I have those connections to Florida, so it starts there," Brown said. "I like (Florida wide receivers coach) Billy Gonzales too and their development is proven, so they think I can be featured in that offense."

Regardless of Ohio State's chances, Brown — who caught 70 passes for 1,363 yards and 10 touchdowns this past season for Jones while adding another four punt or kick return touchdowns on special teams — said his final decision will ultimately come down to which school best aligns with the goals and aspirations he has entering college.

"It comes down to where I want to be," Brown said. "All four are great schools that have great programs and a lot to offer on and off the field, so it comes down to where I want to be."

If Brown commits to Ohio State on Sunday, it would be the 24th pledge and fifth five-star commit, joining Bellefontaine, Ohio, quarterback Tavien St. Clair (6-4, 225), Houston North Shore cornerback Devin Sanchez (6-2, 170), Birmingham, Ala., Parker cornerback Na'Eem Offord (6-1, 185) and McKinney, Texas, linebacker Riley Pettijohn (6-2, 215).

He would also be the fourth wide receiver commit in the class, joining Wayne (N.J.) Depaul Catholic four-star De'Zie Jones (6-0, 180), Mansfield (Ohio) Ontario three-star Bodpegn Miller (6-3, 180) and Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic four-star Quincy Porter (6-3, 190), as well as the fifth five-star wide receiver pledge in the last five years.