

# Recruiting Outlook: Ohio State Awaiting Series Of Decisions As Early Signing Period Is Set To Begin



*Recruiting Outlook is a regular series on Buckeye Sports Bulletin designed to be your one-stop shop for all news related to the Ohio State football recruiting trail.*

Ohio State will await decisions from a pair of five-star defensive ends on Wednesday, the first day of the Early Signing Period, with Damon Wilson (6-4, 230) of Venice, Fla., and Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco's Matayo Uiagalelei (6-5, 265) both expected to announce their colleges of choice.

Wilson is the No. 13 overall prospect and No. 2 defensive end in the class, while Uiagalelei checks in at No. 31 and No. 5 in the same categories. Landing one or both is an important final addition for Ohio State's class given the Buckeyes have just three commitments on the defensive line, and at least two - Dublin (Ohio) Coffman four-star Will Smith Jr. (6-3, 260) and Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett four-star Kayden McDonald (6-3, 310) - are viewed as interior prospects.

Wilson is down to Georgia and Ohio State, with the Bulldogs seemingly taking recent momentum in his recruitment, though Ohio State is not out of it by any means, as Wilson visited for Ohio State's loss to Michigan and the Buckeyes conducted a recent in-home visit with the five-star prospect.

The odds seem slightly better with Uiagalelei, who will be deciding between Ohio State, Oregon and USC. He made official visits to his top three schools over the summer and has cited a relationship with defensive line coach Larry Johnson as one of the main reasons Ohio State is in the running.

The only other defensive end target Ohio State is recruiting still is Indianapolis (Ind.) Lawrence Central four-star Joshua Mickens (6-5, 225), who will announce his decision on Jan. 7 at the All-American Bowl.

## **Transfer Tackle Cornelius Announcing Decision**

Ohio State will also await the decision of transfer offensive tackle Ajani Cornelius (6-4, 315), who will decide between Nebraska, Ohio State, Oregon and Tennessee at 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

Cornelius is in the portal out of Rhode Island, where he earned first-team All-CAA honors after start 11

games at right tackle this past season, and made an official visit to Ohio State this past weekend.

My family and I really enjoyed our visit at The Ohio State University this weekend. Thank you!  
@ryandaytime @OhioStateFB pic.twitter.com/LEnt9q6uAW

— Ajani Cornelius (@AJCornelius65) December 19, 2022

Ohio State has already lost out on a transfer tackle target, as Jeremiah Byers (6-4, 331), who the Buckeyes offered last week, committed to Florida State on Monday. The Buckeyes have also offered Dillon Wade out of Tulsa, though Ohio State is likely looking to take just one tackle prospect out of the portal.

### **Other Notes For The Early Signing Period**

- The Buckeyes continue to assess options at running back for 2023 - one of which is Akron Archbishop Hoban three-star Lamar Sperling (5-10, 180), who is committed to Buffalo and recently visited Ohio State and does not hold an offer - but the situation is unlikely to be resolved during the Early Signing Period.
- Ohio State currently has 20 committed prospects in 2023. With the exception of Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage five-star wide receiver Brandon Inniss (6-0, 190) and Titusville (Fla.) Cocoa four-star safety Cedrick Hawkins (6-0, 175), who reportedly may wait until February to sign, the remainder of the Buckeyes' targets are expected to sign on Wednesday.