

Recruiting Outlook: Ohio State Signs 19 On First Day Of Early Signing Period



Ohio State had one of the program's more drama-filled openings to the Early Signing Period in recent memory on Wednesday, finding out the decisions of several prospects both in and out of the Buckeyes' class as recruits began signing their national letters of intent.

All told, Ohio State signed 19 recruits out of high school to open the Early Signing Period, with all but two prospects signing that entered the day committed to the Buckeyes in addition to Ohio State picking up an additional commitment.

On the flip side of things, Ohio State saw on prospect flip to another school while another has yet to sign their national letter of intent, not to mention the Buckeyes missing on a pair of high school prospects.

For a full recap of the day's events, check out Buckeye Sports Bulletin's Early Signing Period Hub, but here are the highlights (and lowlights) of the opening day of the Early Signing Period.

Majority Of Previously Committed Prospects Sign

Ohio State entered the Early Signing Period with 20 committed prospects, and 18 of those recruits signed with the Buckeyes.

The exceptions were Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove four-star cornerback Kayin Lee (5-11, 185), who had an 11th-hour flip to Auburn, while Hillside (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep four-star safety Jayden Bonsu (6-1, 210) is still expected to sign with Ohio State but the Buckeyes have yet to announce his signing.

The Early Signing Period ends on Friday, at which point Bonsu would have to wait until National Signing Day on Feb. 1. Otherwise, the remaining 18 all signed within several hours of the Early Signing Period opening.

Ohio State Adds Mickens, Misses On Other DL Targets

The one addition Ohio State made on the first day of the Early Signing Period was Indianapolis (Ind.) Lawrence Central four-star defensive end Joshua Mickens (6-5, 225), who committed to the Buckeyes after previously being committed to LSU earlier in the cycle.

That was about the extent of the good news for Ohio State, though, as in addition to Lee's flip to Auburn, the Buckeyes lost out on Venice, Fla., five-star defensive end Damon Wilson (6-4, 230), who committed to Georgia, and Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco five-star Matayo Uiagalelei (6-5, 265), who elected to go to Oregon.

Along with Tampa (Fla.) Berkley Prep five-star defensive end Keon Keeley (6-6, 242) committing to Alabama earlier in December, this meant Ohio State and defensive line coach Larry Johnson missed on all three of their top targets.

With Mickens' commitment and no further defensive line targets on the horizon, the Buckeyes will likely finish with a grouping on the defensive line that includes Mickens, Hyattsville (Md.) DeMatha Catholic four-star Jason Moore (6-6, 255), Dublin (Ohio) Coffman four-star Will Smith Jr. (6-3, 260) and Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett four-star Kayden McDonald (6-3, 310).

Following Wednesday's festivities, Ohio State's class - assuming Bonsu signs - checked in as the No. 5 recruiting class in the country, according to the 247Sports composite ratings. The Buckeyes trail No. 4 Miami (Fla.), No. 3 Texas, No. 2 Georgia and No. 1 Alabama, though Ohio State's average player rating of .9357 ranks third in the nation.

"For me, on a day like today, these 19 guys that have signed right now, they deserve the recognition," Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said. "It's a great group. I think when you look at the quality of the people that we're bringing in, I think that's the focus right now. It has to be for us, not so much who we don't get, but who are we bringing into the program."