



After Urban Meyer's 2013 recruiting stretch run culminated on national signing day with OSU landing all three of his prime out-of-state targets, Buckeye fans were officially on notice that the game had changed. Could this be the new normal?

Meyer finished with a flourish last year too, when he had only two short months to cap off the 2012 class after agreeing to coach the Buckeyes in late November. But for most of the previous decade, signing day was an anti-climax for Ohio State...with the best players in Ohio long since committed to Columbus, and all too often, OSU finishing second with the blue-chip late-deciders. Well...that stuff is so over.

Ohio State had put together a consensus Top 5 class in the weeks and months leading up to signing day, but when Meyer pulled in Florida wide receiver [James Clark](#) , Texas athlete [Dontré Wilson](#) , and finally, Georgia safety [Vonn Bell](#) at the wire, the experts vaulted the OSU class to the top of the rankings.

Meyer's [2013 recruiting class](#) for the Buckeyes finished up ranked [#1 in the nation by Scout.com](#) , and [#2 by Rivals.com](#) . [24/7Sports](#) had OSU [5th overall](#) , and [ESPN ranked them 3rd](#) .

It is not today's project to get into profiling individual Buckeye commits here, but you can see the breakdowns of Meyer's latest haul of talent as compiled by [Rivals](#) and [Scout](#) and [24/7](#) if you have some catching up to do, and ElevenWarriors did their usual thorough job of [introducing the newest Buckeyes](#)

In a perfect Scarlet and Gray world, this 2013 group might have included another top-notch offensive lineman or two (although Centerville's [Evan Lisle](#) was the nation's #5-ranked OT). That seems a minor quibble though, especially with the best two offensive tackles in Ohio, [Marcelys Jones](#) and [Kyle Trout](#), already in the fold [for 2014](#), and Meyer referring to his O-line recruiting as "priority 1, and also priorities 1A, 1B, and 1C," for next year. It's hard for me to recall an OSU recruiting class that looked better on paper, and I've been following this for a very long time.

Who's With Me?

The Big Ten's anemic showing in the 2012 football season is well-documented and much lamented in this part of the country, and I plan to give the subject a more thorough treatment in the spring. For now, suffice it to say that the Big Ten's 2013 recruiting crop, outside of OSU and Michigan, doesn't look like it even begins to solve the problem.

After raking in a boatload of elite football talent, Urban Meyer had to feel a little bit like the Belushi character in [that classic scene in Animal House](#), when Bluto tries to rally the Delta House boys with his rousing speech.

Was it over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor?"

"Who's with me?", he cries...and then charges out of the room...followed by no one. In the Big Ten version, Brady Hoke might have raised his hand, but the rest of Meyer's fraternity brothers sat in the living room with their heads hanging down.

Before I get into any talk of team rankings by this or that scouting service, I suppose the ritual disclaimers must be issued all around: *Evaluations of individual players vary widely... There are regional biases... We won't know how good these classes are for three or four years... Some coaches do more with less... Some 3-star players become All-Americans..*

.did I miss any? Oh yes, one more..

.the scouting services and the programs are influenced by each other as the process evolves each year.

Sometimes it's hard to tell if Ohio State is recruiting a player because he is highly rated, or if he is highly rated because Ohio State is recruiting him.

With all that understood, scouting services and star ratings still have some merit as a way to determine who the studs are, who the standout players are, and who the better than average guys are, etc. Some services rank on a 100-point scale, or just on a national ranking by position, but most still also use the star system.

Seeing Stars

5-star players are the *creme de la creme*. The scouting services limit the number they give out each year so as not to dilute the brand. By my count, this year Scout.com awarded the 5-star honor to just 42 recruits nationwide, and of those, more than half (23) were scooped up by just five programs...the usual suspects: Alabama, USC, Ohio State, Michigan, and Ole Miss. (*Ole Miss?*)

The point is, there are so few of them that they are not a very helpful tool to use in comparing recruiting classes. It's enough to say that if a program can snag even one, it's a coup. A better measure is the breakdown of 4-star and 3-star kids a program can get to sign on the dotted line. And that's where the gap in recruiting between the Big Two and the Little Ten in the Big Ten is most glaring.

Many Big Ten programs are happy to get 3-star players, and rejoice if they can land a 4-star or two. In Columbus, eyebrows get raised if the OSU coaches even offer a kid with only three stars. Urban Meyer's concern about Big Ten recruiting, discussed a bit later, appears to be well-founded. His message to his fellow Big Ten coaches...if I might presume to interpret...is "Aim higher". Here's why. (*Bear with me as a get into a little number-crunching.*)

OSU brought in 24 recruits in the [class of 2013](#) . Using Scout's rankings for our purposes here.. four of them were 5-star players, 17 were 4-star, and only three were 3-star rated. Similarly, [Michigan](#) landed four 5-star recruits, 15 with 4-stars, and 7 rated as 3-star players.

Bo Pelini and [Nebraska](#) did a commendable job too, considering their geographic disadvantage, landing nine 4-star players to go with 16 with 3-stars. That ranked them 11th out of 126 FBS schools. And Penn State nabbed two 5-star talents, but didn't supplement the class with much depth.

Here's how the rest of the conference did in signing up top-rated high schoolers relative to the Big Two, with their national team rankings according to Scout.com: (*remember OSU and Michigan also have four 5-stars each!*)

And in case you're interested, the two programs joining the Big Ten in 2014....you know, the ones being ridiculed for having weak football programs...fit right in with the pack of traditional B1G powers like MSU, PSU and Wisconsin, with Rutgers out-recruiting all three.

