

## Previewing The 2007 Buckeyes: Defensive Line

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Sunday, August 12 2007 7:00 PM -

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With new faces at the offensive skill positions, the Buckeye defense will be counted on to be stout this season. And despite losing some solid performers, Furls feels the defensive line will be deep and dominant this season, led by phenom Vernon Gholston (pictured). Furls position by position look at the 2007 Buckeyes begins for us here at TCF ...



### **Gone:**

*Defensive Tackles - Patterson, Pitcock, and Penton.*

*Defensive End - Jay Richardson*

### **The Replacements:**

*Defensive Tackles - Worthington, Denlinger (starters), Larimore, and Abdallah*

*Defensive End - Lawrence Wilson*

The defensive line was hit as hard as any other part of this

team, losing four of its nine man rotation in the offseason. Yet, I think this unit will actually recover and exceed all reasonable expectations this season.

Vernon Gholston quietly led the Buckeyes with 8.5 sacks, and has reportedly added a very good set of inside moves to his arsenal to compliment his outside rush. Teams will now have to respect Gholston's ability to support the defensive tackles in C-gap and tackles will not be able to cheat outside on him as they have been in the past. As Gholston's national stock goes up, watch for him to garner more preferential officiating. It is a fact that All American candidates get more holding calls, and Gholston deserved a lot more than he got last year.

Wilson, on the other end, of the line, will offer similar size and athleticism. As a matter of fact, all four Ohio State defensive ends (Barrow and Rose) weigh over 260 lbs. That is an astonishing number for defensive ends in a 4-3 in the college ranks, and all four possess great speed on the edge.

Early rumors had Robert Rose moving to "3 Technique DT" to replace Quinn Pitcock, but those rumors have since subsided. While Rose, a terrific DE prospect, does have the size to play the position it is not clear if he could play with the leverage required at the position as a very long limbed 6'5" player. Playing Rose inside would also diminish the

effects of his speed, which is much better suited for the edge.

Speaking of tall men, Doug Worthington, will be moving from defensive end to defensive tackle and it will be interesting to see how this works out. At 6'7", Worthington will be the tallest defensive tackle that I can remember at any major program. To make things even more interesting, Worthington is not just tall, he also has somewhat disproportionately long arms (think Othello Hunter). I am pretty sure that he can cover two gaps just by stretching his arms out.

Denlinger, a more prototypical DT, will likely round out the group, while Dexter Larimore and Nader Abdallah will provide depth. Denlinger earned a spot on the two deep last year, playing very capably behind David Patterson, and he should transition nicely into the 2007 defensive line. Abdallah has been disappointing since arriving at Ohio State as a member of the 2004 recruiting class and it would not surprise me to see him fall on the depth chart. I like Dex Larimore a lot. I have seen a lot of film on this guy and he is impressive. As a former national champion wrestler at the high school level, Larimore knows how to play with leverage and draws quick (and accurate) comparisons to Tim Anderson.

All in all Ohio State will have the advantage against most teams with their front four. They will have incredible speed on the

ends and a lot of size and push up front. In today's college football schemes, the defensive ends have to be considered two key playmakers on the field. Great ends can single handedly bring a passing game to its knees, watch last year's National Championship Game for further proof.

## **Star: □ Vernon Gholston**

He will lead the teams in sacks and the line in hype. He plays with exceptional strength and insane quickness. At about 5% body fat, he looks more like a body builder than a lineman, but don't be mistaken, he is most definitely a football player.

## **Star on the Rise: □ Lawrence Wilson**

Odds are that the casual fans have no idea who this guy is. Odds are that they will know by about the third week of the season. This guy may have more speed than Gholston, but he still needs to refine his technique. It will be interesting to see what he has added/improved for 2007.

## **Star of the Future: □ Dexter Larimore □**

He will be on the two deep and will get a lot of snaps on the inside as a redshirt freshman. I saw film on this kid when the Buckeyes were recruiting him and I was impressed, but what impresses me more are the comments by Ohio State's first team offensive linemen about him.

## **Watch out for.... The Doug Worthington experiment**

If it works (I think it will) it could be amazing, if not, well, hopefully we can get find a couple of DTs (really quick).