



Rating a single recruit or recruiting class is a nearly impossible feat, and it is one that I do reluctantly. Why? There are just too many intangibles that make a recruit a good recruit. For instance, all players who are moving into major Division I programs are talented. You don't get a good look from major programs if you are not, but since that is the case, talent alone is not enough to carry a recruit to great heights.

Intangibles in a player like heart and belief in the Buckeye football tradition are immeasurable. How do you project character and work ethic in an eighteen-year old kid? These players are only going to be here for five years at a maximum, but the damage they can cause to the Buckeye program in that time can be substantial.

Take Maurice Clarett for instance. He played in Columbus for one year. Now everytime he does something stupid the story is led off with, "Former Ohio State Buckeye, Maurice Clarett, ...." Granted, the Buckeyes enjoyed tremendous success during his only year in Columbus, but now we are forever linked with him. The bottom line is that a player's character is not easily measured in the scout.com star system.

Since I do not know each of the twenty new recruits personally, I am forced to speculate at what they will do based on needs at their position, past performance,

and physical attributes. At this point we, the general public, have very little insight into each of these players' personal motivations and heart, so we are stuck with looking at his height, his weight, and his 40-yard dash time. With that having been said, here is one Buckeye's opinion on who will make an immediate impact during the 2006 season and why.

**Chris Wells:** This man-child is generally referred to by most of the pundits as a bigger, stronger, and faster Maurice Clarett without all the baggage. I saw him play in the Army All American Game, and frankly he was a man among boys. Although we are currently deep and exceptionally talented at the tailback slot, I cannot help but think that this young man will find his way onto the field.

Additionally, Wells is already enrolled at the Ohio State University and will be attending all fifteen of the spring practices. That may not seem like a big deal, but that will give him about 50% more practice than his contemporaries within this recruiting class. This additional practice will help him to excel during summer practice and bolsters his chances of gaining some play time this season. I think that once this young man gets onto the field it will be awful difficult to take him off the field.

**Larry Grant:** As all of our starting linebackers from 2005 make the transition from Saturday football to Sunday football this April, there is a definite void to be filled. Larry Grant, an All American at the junior college level, stands as a front-runner to help fill that void. Obviously there is a very steep learning curve from the "JuCo" level to the Big Ten, but all the tape I have seen of him seems to indicate that it is one that he can handle. Grant comes in with two years of eligibility remaining and I think he will make the most of them here as a starter beginning next year. The fact that Larry Grant will also be attending all spring practices should help him meet that end.

**Dexter Larimore:** Those of us from Ohio may not be especially familiar with Mr. Larimore, but we will be soon. I am not completely convinced that he will see extensive play time next year, but given our current losses on the defensive line

he just may work himself in. This young man is not only one of the top two or three football players coming out of Indiana this year, but he is also the nation's number one ranked heavyweight wrestler. Nationally ranked wrestlers are not known to be lazy and his wrestling background and physical attributes conjure up memories of Tim Anderson. This comparison is not lost on Coach Tressel and most of the recruiting pundits.

**Ray Small:** This kid has Ted Ginn Jr. speed and can play either side of the ball. He has signed with Ohio State with the expectation to play as a wide receiver, but if our secondary has problems early on, I would not be surprised to see him emerge as a corner next year. This kid is just too fast to keep off the field. He may also be an heir apparent for Santonio Holmes as the second deep man on kick returns. Can you imagine two shifty, 4.3-forty, returners on the field at the same time? I can.

All in all I would have to say that this class is tremendous. It will not get the national acclaim that it deserves because there are only twenty members in it and many of them don't have the requisite number of stars from somebody's ranking system, but that is not what recruiting is about. Recruiting is about filling your needs with the best available players at the positions in which you need them and Coach Tressel has done exactly that.

If I did have one gripe with this class it is the lack of an "X" receiver, a big man on the outside, a "Michael Jenkins". Next year we have Roy Hall to fill that slot, but the future at that position looks fuzzy for 2007. I expect that either Brian Robiskie will emerge as the front runner to succeed Hall or an as of yet to be identified star from the recruiting class of 2007 will emerge to take it. In either case, I am sure that Coach Tressel is "on it."