A year ago the Ohio State recruiting class of 2012 was close to being written off as a down year...an unavoidable consequence of the trials and tribulations the program went through in 2011. But starting on November 28, the day Urban Meyer became the head coach of the Buckeyes, the team's recruiting fortunes turned around. Meyer and his staff finished with a flourish, landing several top-rated prospects in the last few weeks before signing day, and arriving in early February with a class ranked among the nation's top three or four by most of the scouting services .

A handful of this year's freshmen enrolled early and went through spring football, but the majority have yet to suit up for their first full practice session, so projecting the ten most likely to contribute significantly in 2012 is guesswork on the order of...well...of last week's Ten Breakout Buckeyes . But here we go.

Asked in February which of his new signees he expected to redshirt in 2012, Meyer's response was, "We don't redshirt. We're going to recruit the caliber of athlete you do not redshirt at Ohio State." I do believe Meyer will use his freshmen early and often, not least because, with the exception of his running back and defensive line units, his current roster is not a very deep group at all, and the incoming group is loaded with talent. In the Tressel years, about half of any freshman class would redshirt for a variety of reasons, and although Meyer wants all of his first-year guys to be ready to play, invariably some of them will end up saving a year of eligibility.

Incoming offensive linemen Kyle Dodson and Jacoby Boren are coming off surgeries in the offseason, so caution may rule the day with them, even though Boren all but won the backup center spot this spring. Other newcomers will find themselves nowhere near the two-deep lineup, and will have to wait for blowouts to get onto the field, if they see it at all.

First year defensive backs and linebackers have the best chance to see early playing time because they'll show up on special teams units, and that's one of the reasons my list has seven defenders and only three offensive players. One running back, one receiver and one offensive lineman make the most-likely-to-contribute list, and the rest are on the other side of the ball.

Some of the freshman defensive linemen are just too promising to keep off the field, and this year's Buckeyes are likely to employ at least an eight-man rotation on the D-line, giving the youngsters some early visibility. Three talented young OSU linebackers make the list, and while there's only one defensive back listed below, two others were a coin flip away.

From a class of 25 incoming freshmen then, these are the ten kids I think will make the biggest impact on the 2012 Buckeyes.

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Camren Williams - LB - 6' 2", 215 lbs - (West Roxbury, MA) Catholic Memorial School
Williams was an early Penn State commit who came around to the Buckeyes when the scandal erupted in State College. He was Rivals #8 ranked inside linebacker, while Scout had him as the nation's #16 outside backer, and the #2 2 overall player in the East. Williams is a versatile athlete who played wide receiver on offense in high school. His film shows a young man with a powerful upper and lower body, who is able to take on blockers and is a strong tackler. Some on the OSU staff are said to be projecting him as a middle linebacker in college, but inside or out, Williams brings welcome athleticism and speed to a linebacker unit that has been short on both of late. His high school teammate, 4-star cornerback

Armani Reeves
is also part of this incoming class.
Video1
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Se'Von Pittman - DL - 6' 3", 259 lbs - (Canton, OH) McKinley H.S.
Pittman enrolled early and went through spring football in Columbus, performing impressively before a minor knee injury cut short his spring season. Ranked the nation's #9 DE according to Scout, and #8 by Rivals , Pittman projects as a pass rushing end, capitalizing on his speed and his length to get after the quarterback. He made an early verbal commitment to Michigan State, but soon after Meyer was hired at OSU, Pittman made his interest in the Buckeyes clear to the OSU staff, and within two weeks he had flipped his commitment to Ohio State. Every major scouting service ranked Pittman among the nation's Top 100 players overall in the 2012 class. As you'll see below, he'll have plenty of competition among his fellow freshmen for playing time at defensive end, but his brand of "big speed" is a rare commodity, and if the knee is healthy, he should make his mark in 2012. Video1 - Video2

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