

Cleveland dynasty started with road trips

The best high school football factory in the Big Ten started when a security guard rented a seven-passenger van. A decade later, Glenville Academic Campus in Cleveland is the most important place on every recruiting map. You want to build a Big Ten dynasty? You'd better start here.

With Ted Ginn Sr. He has sent 31 players to Big Ten schools over the past decade. No other school in the country has produced more than 12.

How did it happen? Ginn's mother moved him from New Orleans to Cleveland when he was 11. He played for Glenville in an era when Glenville didn't win anything.

Two years after he graduated, his mother died. The head coach made Ginn volunteer on the football staff "so I wouldn't go astray." In '97, Ginn took over the program. School security guard by day, head football coach by night.

Soon he established a bold plan to draw attention to his players. Instead of waiting for college coaches to call him, Ginn took his players on the road. He packed them in a van and spent most of the summer ushering them to college camps.

Sometimes seven or eight slept in the van. Sometimes they piled into one hotel room. The next morning, they showed up at a campus, spent an hour or two running through drills, then hit the road for the next stop. They drove as far as LSU.

Ginn recalls telling college head coaches like Nick Saban that he had five kids in his van who could run a 4.3-second 40-yard dash.

"Everybody used to laugh at me," Ginn Sr. said.

Until they observed the talent in the van. Pierre Woods was the first Glenville player to take advantage of Ginn's recruiting showcase on wheels. In 2001, he signed with Michigan.

Why limit the journey to seven passengers, Ginn decided. He got a bus. Picked up kids all over Cleveland. Why limit it to Cleveland, Ginn decided. He picked up kids all over the state. Columbus. Dayton. Toledo.

"When you're driving around and putting on a show like that, word is going to travel," Ginn said.

Now Ginn's teams regularly compete for state championships. Now the Glenville Tarblooders attract players from all over the city.

"It's kind of the all-stars of Cleveland," said Bill Conley, a former Buckeyes assistant.

Ginn, who knows Bo Pelini, recalls days when eight or nine Big Ten coaches came to Glenville. The most frequent visitor: Ohio State.

Of the 31 Glenville players who signed with Big Ten schools the past decade, 17 landed at Ohio State. Pretty good players, too. Troy Smith, Heisman Trophy winner. First-round draft pick Donte Whitner and Ted Ginn Jr.

In February, the Glenville pipeline continued. One player signed with Indiana, one with Michigan, one with Ohio State.

Ted Ginn Sr. doesn't need a van or a bus. Now the recruiters come to him.



Glenville coach Ted Ginn Sr. talks to his team. Ginn's rolling showcase helped make his team the top Big Ten recruiting factory since 2002.

HIGH SCHOOL HOTBEDS

Schools that produced at least eight Big Ten scholarship players since 2002 (Nebraska recruits included). Of the 14 schools on the list, half are in Ohio:

31	Glenville Academic Campus, Cleveland
12	St. Mary's, Orchard Lake, Mich.
10	Warren Central, Indianapolis
9	Cardinal Mooney, Youngstown, Ohio
9	Cass Tech, Detroit
9	Harding, Warren, Ohio
9	St. Edward, Lakewood, Ohio
9	St. Thomas Aquinas, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
9	Wayne, Huber Heights, Ohio
8	Colerain, Cincinnati
8	Gateway, Monroeville, Pa.
8	Renaissance, Detroit
8	Washington, Massillon, Ohio
8	Wayzata, Plymouth, Minn.

WESTERN FRONTIER

Nothing stirs conference pride in Big Ten country more than the Granddaddy of 'em all, the Rose Bowl.

But in recruiting, Big Ten schools gain almost nothing from the New Year's Day tradition.

Only 88 Big Ten recruits the past decade came from California. Iowa and Penn State signed two from California, Wisconsin just one. Minnesota (17), Michigan (14) and Northwestern (14) led the way. Even more remarkable: The vast majority of California recruits were junior-college players.

It's not just California. The Big Ten nabbed just 20 recruits from Arizona, one from Washington and none from Oregon.

That means just 109 recruits (5 percent) came from traditional Pac-10 country.

Meanwhile, 18 percent of Nebraska's recruits were from California. Forty players total. The Huskers lured eight more from Arizona, two from Washington and one from Oregon.

Almost one of every four Husker recruits (23 percent) came from the Pac-10 footprint.

TALKING POINTS

"I couldn't tell you how many times I walked into a high school and saw a 6-foot-3, 215-pound power forward. And the kid never played football. He was playing AAU basketball all summer."

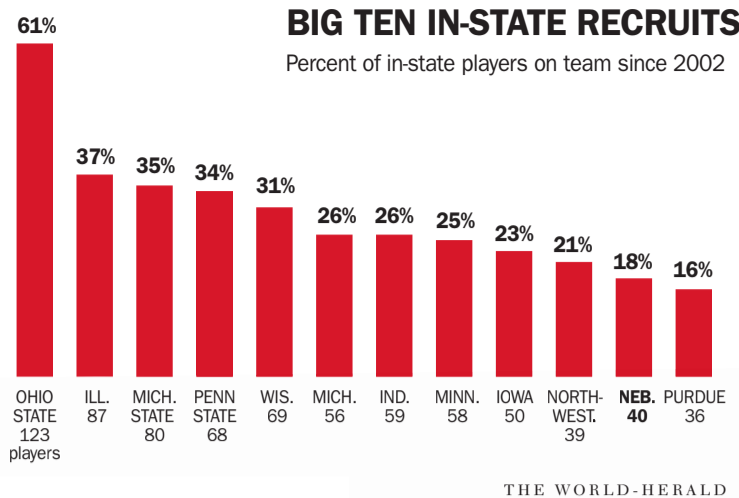
Joe Tiller, former Purdue coach, on why the Boilermakers had to recruit in Texas and Florida

"One of the things I love to do, when I'm sitting in my office, we'll have kids and their parents on the couch and I'll point at the head coach's desk and I'll say, 'Hey, in the last 23 years, you know how many guys have sat at that desk? Me and another guy, Coach Alvarez, who you're going to meet in an hour.' If we're competing against a school that's had five coaches in that time, it makes a big difference."

Bret Bielema, Wisconsin coach, on the importance of coaching stability

"Take a drive through western Pennsylvania. Look at all the boarded up steel factories. Obviously, there aren't as many kids out of there making an impact in college football."

Tim Brewster, former Minnesota coach, on economic troubles in the former Big Ten hotbed

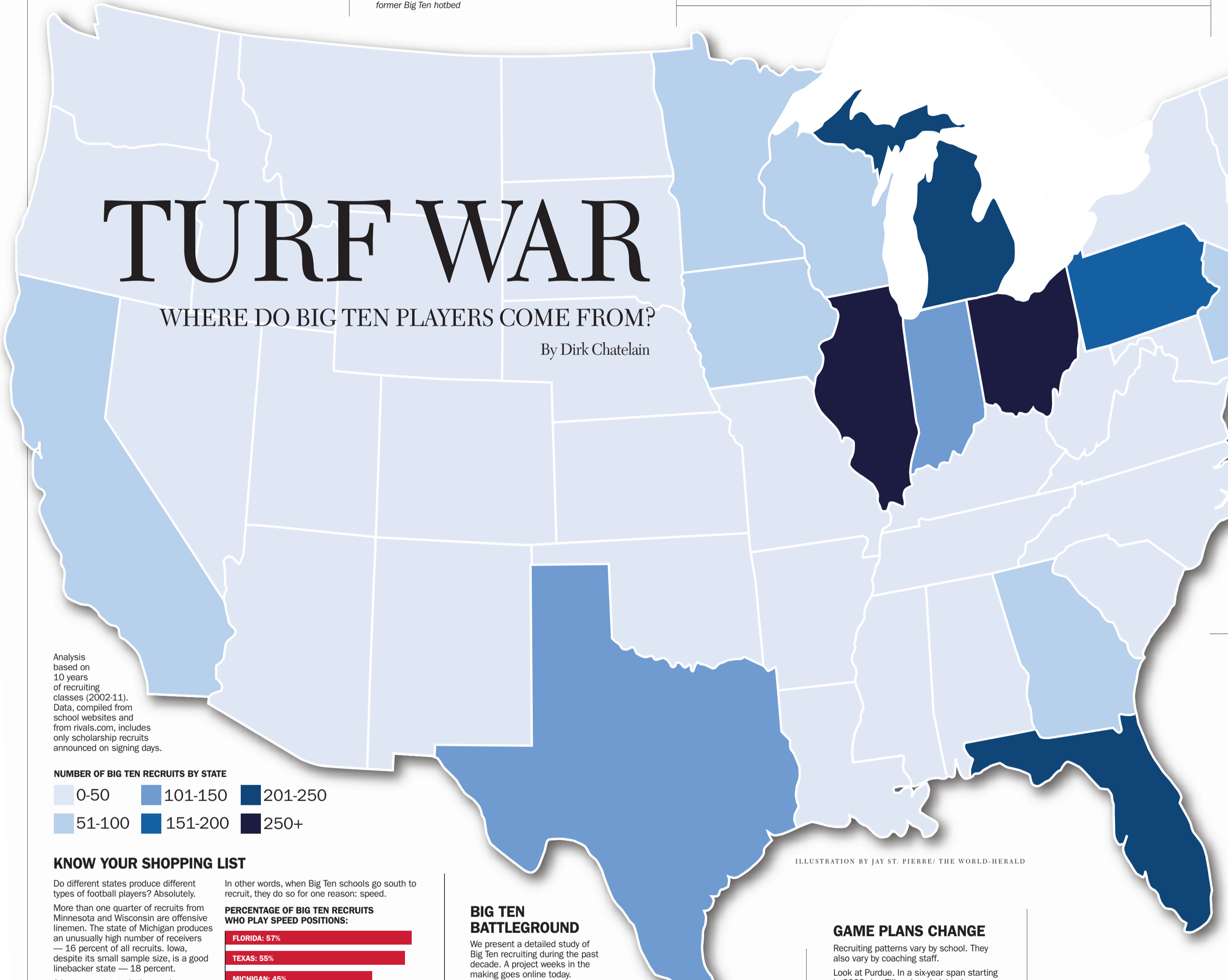


THE WORLD-HERALD

TURF WAR

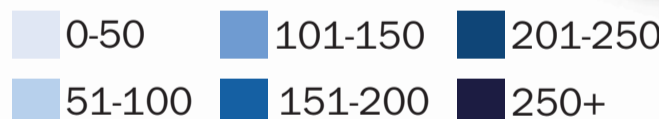
WHERE DO BIG TEN PLAYERS COME FROM?

By Dirk Chatelain



Analysis based on 10 years of recruiting classes (2002-11). Data, compiled from school websites and from rvsls.com, includes only scholarship recruits announced on signing days.

NUMBER OF BIG TEN RECRUITS BY STATE



KNOW YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Do different states produce different types of football players? Absolutely.

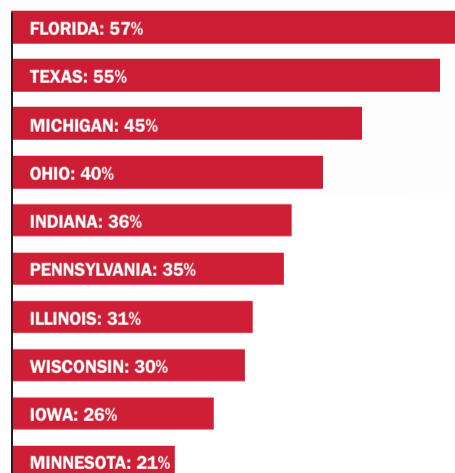
More than one quarter of recruits from Minnesota and Wisconsin are offensive linemen. The state of Michigan produces an unusually high number of receivers — 16 percent of all recruits. Iowa, despite its small sample size, is a good linebacker state — 18 percent.

A better way to study the numbers: Divide players into speed positions (running back, receiver, defensive back) and non-speed positions. Generally, the farther north and more rural a state, the bigger and slower its recruits. Only 21 percent of recruits from Minnesota play a speed position. In Michigan, it's 45 percent.

Break away from the Big Ten footprint and the numbers get more interesting. Of recruits from Florida, 57 percent are running backs, receivers or defensive backs. In Texas, it's 55 percent.

In other words, when Big Ten schools go south to recruit, they do so for one reason: Speed.

PERCENTAGE OF BIG TEN RECRUITS WHO PLAY SPEED POSITIONS:



BIG TEN BATTLEGROUND

We present a detailed study of Big Ten recruiting during the past decade. A project weeks in the making goes online today. Omaha.com/battlegrounds

DEFENDING HOME FIELD

In 10 years, only five lowans have left the state to play for a conference rival.

Ninety percent of native lowans who play Big Ten football wear black and gold. That number easily leads the Big Ten. Wisconsin is next in line at 72 percent.

Naturally, the more prospects your state produces, the more native sons you'll see on rival sidelines.

Ohio has turned out 414 Big Ten recruits in the last decade, but only 30 percent play for the Buckeyes.

GAME PLANS CHANGE

Recruiting patterns vary by school. They also vary by coaching staff.

Look at Purdue. In a six-year span starting in 2002, Joe Tiller signed eight players from Florida. Then Tiller retired. The past four years, Danny Hope has signed 25 from Florida.

"There's so many players down there," Hope said. "There's so many people down there."

So why do coaching staffs recruit certain areas? It's partly strategy. Can you find players in a place few top schools are looking? But relationships are the No. 1 factor.

Illinois, for instance, signed nine players from Washington, D.C., from 2006 to 2009. Then D.C. ace recruiter Mike Locksley got a head coaching job at New Mexico. Illinois hasn't signed a D.C. kid since.

Under John L. Smith, Michigan State emphasized California and Florida, signing 20 players from those states from 2003 to 2006.

Then Mark Dantonio stepped in. The past four recruiting classes, Michigan State has signed 87 players. Sixty-four were from Michigan or Ohio. Only five were from California or Florida.

Dantonio, a Zanesville, Ohio, native, coached at Cincinnati prior to Michigan State.

"It used to be you'd get an airplane flight 15 minutes before, you jump on and you go," Dantonio said. "Now it's a lot more difficult to fly, so it becomes tougher to recruit farther away."

Ask any coach about recruiting strategy. His first thought is defending his backyard. Protecting the borders.

For most Big Ten schools, in-state players make up 25 percent to 35 percent of the average recruiting class. Some schools, like Purdue, have less. Some, like Illinois, have more.

But one Big Ten program doesn't fit the profile: Ohio State. The Buckeyes get 61 percent of their recruits from the state of Ohio. That extraordinary number speaks to the talent there. It also speaks to Ohio State's reputation.

Will that change without Jim Tressel? A lot of Big Ten coaches, including Bo Pelini, hope so.

PLAYING TO YOUR STRENGTHS (AND YOUR GENETICS)

In the quick-pace, innovative world of college football coaching, Wisconsin sticks with old-school, smash-mouth offense.

Why? Demographics.

When Barry Alvarez showed up in Madison in 1990, he hosted high school camps and marveled at the sheer size of Wisconsin kids.

"You've never seen so many 6-5, 6-6, 6-7, 300-pound kids in your life," he said. "You just realize you've got that type of people in your state ..."

"Large German, Scandinavian backgrounds. They're big-boned people. That's how I devised my whole plan."

Alvarez created a scheme to take advantage of his vast supply of in-state offensive linemen. Put a bruising back like Ron Dayne behind five 300-pounders and run downhill.

"That's how I felt like we could win," said Alvarez, now the Wisconsin athletic director.

The Wisconsin way continues under Bret Bielema. Last year, three Badger

running backs exceeded 995 rushing yards.

Every coach, Alvarez said, needs to look at the type of player he can recruit consistently. If he coached in Florida, where there's an abundance of skill players, he would put as much speed on the field as possible. But Wisconsin isn't Florida.

"You'd be foolish with our weather and the type of players we have in our state to try to run a spread offense," Alvarez said. "We line up with big guys and try to knock you off the ball."

TURNOVER MARGINS

In the past decade, Northwestern has signed 183 recruits. Michigan State has signed 237. Why the dramatic difference?

Roster turnover, first and foremost. The more players who leave before their eligibility expires, the more players a school must recruit.

Prolific walk-on programs have the opposite effect. When a coach gives a

scholarship to a walk-on player, that's one scholarship he won't be awarding in the next recruiting class.

Penn State, with 196 recruits in the last 10 years, is the only other Big Ten school with less than 200. The Nittany Lions are synonymous with stability.

(Nebraska, for comparison's sake, has signed 226.)

ROOTS OF A RIVALRY

A story about Woody and Bo.

The setting: Middletown, Ohio. The prize: Todd Bell, a stud defensive back who went on to shine for the Chicago Bears.

It was 1977, when coaches were still permitted to be in high schools on national signing day.

Schembechler was in the principal's office that morning, certain that Bell was coming to Michigan, waiting to congratulate the kid after he signed the papers.

"All of a sudden," says Bill Conley, former Ohio State assistant, "Bo stands up and looks out the window. Woody's walking in on the sidewalk. Bell had already signed with Ohio State."

The Buckeyes and Wolverines are college football's greatest rivalry. One of the main reasons: a tradition of fierce battles for prospects.

"The rivalry begins in the recruiting process," said Luke Fickell, Ohio State's head coach.

Ohio's abundance of high school talent lures Michigan coaches across the border. Schembechler, a native Ohioan, recruited his home state intensely. Which is why Hayes enlisted boosters all over Ohio to alert him of Schembechler's movements.

"If Woody thought a guy was good enough to play for Michigan or Michigan State, he'd recruit him anyway just so he wouldn't have to play against him," Conley said. "And they would come. You didn't tell Woody no."

That's not quite right. Over the years, hundreds of Ohioans have chosen maize and blue. Enough that Chris Spielman, former Ohio State linebacker, kidded his friends up north that the best thing that ever happened to Michigan was that Schembechler had recruiting contacts in Ohio.

Brady Hoke, also an Ohio native, understands the importance of taking prospects from the Buckeyes' backyard. Of the Wolverines' 23 commitments for the 2012 class, 10 are from Ohio. That adds talent to Michigan's roster — and spice to the rivalry.

"I know one thing," Hoke said. "If they're on Michigan's team, they aren't playing against us."

Sound familiar?

NEBRASKA'S BIG TEN ROOTS

In the 1960s and '70s, Big Ten country was a key recruiting area for Nebraska — remember, Bob Devaney called Michigan home. Since then, the Huskers have shifted their focus to Florida, Texas and California.

Below are the best all-time Huskers from the Big Ten footprint. Some positions (linebacker and offensive line) are deeper in star power than others. Notice the number of great players Nebraska has recruited from Iowa (nine) and Minnesota (seven). The past decade, the Huskers haven't harvested much talent from either state.

OFFENSE:

DL: Dennis Claridge Robbinsdale, Minn. ('63)

QB: Jerry Tagge Green Bay, Wis. ('71)

QB: Joe Ganz Palos Heights, Ill. ('08)

RB: Bill Thornton Cleveland ('62)

RB: Frank Lolic Cleveland ('65)

RB: Roger Craig Davenport, Iowa ('82)

WR: Freeman White Detroit ('65)

WR: Kenny Brown Cincinnati ('79)

WR: Nate Swift Hutchinson, Minn. ('08)

TE: Jamie Williams Davenport, Iowa ('82)

TE: Todd Millikan Shenandoah, Iowa ('88)

TE: Johnny Mitchell Chicago ('91)

OL: Bob Brown Cleveland ('63)

OL: Lloyd Voss Magnolia, Minn. ('63)

OL: Larry Kramer Austin, Minn. ('64)

OL: Walt Barnes Chicago ('65)

OL: LaVerne Allers Davenport, Iowa ('66)

OL: Marvin Crenshaw Toledo, Ohio ('74)

DEFENSE:

DL: Ron McDole Toledo, Ohio ('60)

DL: Wayne Meylan Bay City, Mich. ('67)

DL: Willie Harper Toledo, Ohio ('72)

DL: Henry Waechter Epworth, Iowa ('81)

DL: Jared Tomich St. John, Ind. ('96)

DL: Kyle Vanden Bosch Larwood, Iowa ('00)

LB: Tom Ruud Bloomington, Minn. ('74)

LB: Trev Alberts Cedar Falls, Iowa ('93)

LB: Ed Stewart Chicago ('94)

LB: Jamal Williams Merrillville, Ind. ('96)

LB: Jay Foreman Eden Prairie, Minn. ('98)

LB: Carlos Polk Rockford, Ill. ('00)

DB: Jim Anderson Green Bay, Wis. ('71)

DB: Rodney Lewis Minneapolis ('81)

DB: DeJuan Groce Garfield Heights, Ohio ('02)

DB: Jerrell Pippens Philadelphia ('03)

PK: Paul Rogers Rock Rapids, Iowa ('70)

P: Dan Hadenfeldt Des Moines ('00)

* Number in parentheses is final year in program.

