

Ohio State's Hankins giving up senior season

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COLUMBUS (AP) — The guy they call “Big Hank” is taking a big, early jump to the next level.

All-Big Ten defensive tackle Johnathan Hankins announced on Monday he will give up his senior season at Ohio State to make himself available for the 2013 NFL draft.

“I will always be grateful for the family I have gained here at Ohio State,” Hankins said in a release issued through the school. “My three years have provided amazing experiences for me, and they are years I will never forget or take for granted.”

Hankins, who said he plans to return to finish his degree, appeared in 38 games the past three years and started every game the past two seasons. He was fourth on the team in tackles in 2011 with 67, including 11 for minus yardage. This past season he was fifth in tackles with 55, including four tackles for a loss.

“I have enjoyed coaching and getting to know Johnathan Hankins over the past year,” Ohio State coach Urban Meyer said. “His hard work on and off the field has given him an opportunity to move on to the next level. The coaching staff and I wish him all the best.”

The 6-foot-3, 322-pound Hankins ends his Buckeyes career with 138 tackles, including 16.5 tackles for a loss and five quarterback sacks.

The Buckeyes went 12-0 and won the Big Ten's Leaders Division, but were barred from playing in a bowl game by violations committed under former coach Jim Tressel.

Hankins thanked several staff people, including Meyer. He also thanked Tressel for recruiting him.

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