

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

July 2018

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Setting The Standard

OSU Athletics Continues To Lead On, Off The Field

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

The 2017-18 academic year was another resounding success for Ohio State athletics, both on and off the field of play.

The year included a resurgence from the men's basketball team under new head coach Chris Holtmann, another Big Ten title in football and various other successful seasons. It also marked the conclusion of Ohio State careers for some of the school's best athletes – most notably quarterback J.T. Barrett, women's basketball star Kelsey Mitchell and champion wrestler Kyle Snyder.

Off the field, the Buckeyes set new records for academic honors once again, finishing the season with the most Academic All-Big Ten selections in school history. The academic side has always been a focal point for athletic director Gene Smith, who has spearheaded the charge to make Ohio State athletics a success in all facets since he took over the job in 2005.

Smith sat down for his annual Interview Issue session with BSB in June to chronicle the past year at Ohio State and take a look ahead at things to come.



The Interview Issue:
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JOSH WINSLOW

FOCUSED – Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith has overseen progress on the field, in the classroom and around the Buckeyes' vast athletic complex.

BSB: Starting off broad, how would you sum up the 2017-18 academic year for Ohio State athletics?

Smith: "It was a great year. Our coaches continue to do a great job. Our academic support unit continues to do a great job. We ended the year with like 238 graduates of 1,034 students. We ended up with 34 teams with 3.0 or better average GPA out of 36. Our kids are doing a great job in the classroom. We're just proud of them. I think we had eight degree-completion graduates, people who come back and finish their degrees. That culture of academic excellence we've been striving towards, we're there. I think it was 692 Scholar Athletes, I think, is what we had.

"It's the culture we wanted to create so it's been a great year. We have more student-athletes taking summer school courses. We had athletes graduating faster which is cool because you end up with a number of them taking master's courses, graduate school courses. I think we had 16

this past year that are doing that which is a different thing for us that we're getting used to. It's cool, the culture is where we wanted to be. Academically, a great year."

BSB: Since you mentioned the degree completion program, what does OSU do to promote that when athletes are first getting here to know that they'll have that option if they do pursue another path?

Smith: "We talk to them as they leave. (Former football captain) Christian Bryant, who just completed, when he left, we kind of – there's a gentleman by the name of John Macko in our student-athlete support operation. That's his responsibility to work with the individual sports to make sure Christian Bryant understands, 'Hey, this is what you need to complete. Go chase the dream.' Which they're doing. Then, we're trying to stay in touch. Some of them can take courses online from where they are but, ultimately, many of them have to come back and sit in a classroom to finish. It's really, we kind of keep track of them at the moment that they get ready to go chase the dream.

"Then, some of them, they get that opportunity to just keep playing for quite some time. Every now and then we'll see them come back to a game or something, and then, we'll whisper in their ear. I don't know if Joey Bosa will ever come back, (laughs) but we'll always whisper in his ear and see how it goes. It's just more when they leave, we tell them, 'You need X number of credit hours. You need to keep that in mind.' Then, we stay in touch with them."

BSB: There are a few athletes I wanted to ask you about in particular – a couple of them have their pictures right out here on the wall outside your office. Kyle Snyder, Kelsey Mitchell and J.T. Barrett all wrapped up their careers this year. What was it like to watch them over the past four or five years, especially Kyle and Kelsey competing for Ohio State and internationally as well?

Smith: "It's unbelievable. I tell recruits and their families when you look at Ohio State, you come to Ohio State, you need to really, hopefully, get a chance to see other sports because you're going to probably see the top of the pyramid athletes in a particular sport. A Kyle Snyder, a gold medal winner, comes back to finish his degree. While you're here, you need to go see him. Those athletes, a Kelsey Mitchell, those athletes, they hopefully inspire other athletes towards excellence.

All of our athletes get it, coaches in other sports get it, it's the competitive fire of a J.T. Barrett and how he maximized his talent and skill not only from his athleticism but from his leadership traits and his fortitude. They were special athletes. What's interesting, there are a whole lot more."

BSB: Looking at some of the stuff going on with the NCAA, I know last year was the first year of the

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BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN.COM

From Nick Bosa to J.K. Dobbins, the stars at Ohio State – and on any team – get most of the attention, and that’s fair. But the Buckeyes have a few unsung heroes as well. With that in mind, we took to the BuckeyeSports.com Forum to ask readers and BSB staffers who they feel is Ohio State’s most underrated player. Here’s what they had to say.

I know an ESPN story selected Jordan Fuller, but I’ll go with K.J. Hill. He led the team in receptions last year and nobody seemed to notice.

– **AcrossTheField**

K.J. Hill’s a good one. I hope they use his variety of skills more this season.

– **Poster That Harley Built**

Jordan Fuller. Not much pub on him outside of C-Bus.

– **mrbigbux**

Fuller and Hill are two good answers. Robert Landers might be another possibility. I feel like he sometimes gets overlooked when people talk about the DL.

– **Ryan McGlade, BSB Staff Writer**

Definitely don’t disagree with Hill as the choice. At the same time, for the sake of another name, I think people forget how great Mike Weber could be ever since J.K. Dobbins stepped into his spotlight at running back.

– **Garrett Stepien, BSB Staff Writer**

Pretty difficult to argue against Hill (56 receptions, 26 punt returns, 6 kickoff returns and 2 rushing attempts = 844 yards and three touchdowns).

But how about a little underrated love for Sean Nuernberger? Last year he was 17 for 21 in field-goal attempts and a perfect 71 for 71 in PATs. The dude is 176 for 176 in career PATs, and that’s a program record for efficiency.

– **Mark Rea, BSB Managing Editor Emeritus**

Nuernberger is workmanlike, especially on PATs, but it is hard for me to call him underrated until he nails an important – or game-winning – field goal. I’m more inclined to go with Mike Weber. Many failed to notice how much stronger he got as last season progressed – and he was already a 1,000-yard runner – because of the fine and surprising season J.K. Dobbins was having. This is Weber’s money season. Don’t be surprised if he overtakes Dobbins.

– **Frank Moskowitz, BSB Publisher**

Wanted to mention Isaiah Prince. He was terrible as a sophomore, sure, but he came a long way last season. He deserves some credit. I think he’ll be a monster this year.

– **LM28**

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1983

Jim Tressel had replaced former Ohio State quarterbacks and receivers coach Fred Zechman in January after Zechman became the head coach at New Mexico State in December. A lifelong Buckeye fan from Berea, Ohio, Tressel previously had been the quarterbacks coach at Syracuse. Now on the OSU campus, the 30-year-old realized that an appointment at Ohio State was too good to ignore.

“I wasn’t looking for anything, but when Coach (Earle) Bruce called there wasn’t much doubt in my mind I would come,” Tressel said. “Being an Ohio native, it’s a thrill to be here. When I was growing up, I enjoyed football, and when you grow up in Ohio enjoying football, the Ohio State Buckeyes are the thing.”

30 Years Ago – 1988

Bruce left the ranks of the unemployed when he accepted the head coaching position at Northern Iowa on June 29. Bruce had originally been contacted by former OSU basketball coach Eldon Miller, who was entering his third year at UNI, who asked Bruce to give some suggestions as to a replacement for retired coach Darrell Mudra.

Bruce, who had been fired at Ohio State in the fall of 1987 after compiling an 81-26-1 record at his alma mater, ultimately became a candidate for the Northern Iowa job.

“I came up and met the UNI president, I met the vice president, I met the selection committee and the athletic administration, and I liked what I heard,” Bruce said. “I liked what I saw. Iowa has been good to me. In the six years I was at Iowa State I was well known. If this job had come open in any other state, I probably would not have applied.”

25 Years Ago – 1993

Ohio State football head coach John Cooper and his staff were set to permanently move their offices to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center before the beginning of the 1993 season.

Plans had called for such an arrangement when the center was constructed in 1987. But budget constraints and the desire of university officials to keep as many coaches as possible under

one roof put those plans on hold. The football offices had been in St. John Arena.

The football coaches did have offices at the WHAC for some time, spending their time there during the regular season and spring practice, then returning to St. John Arena during the rest of the offseason.

20 Years Ago – 1998

Damon Stringer, who had left the Ohio State basketball team in the wake of charges stemming from an April 26 late-night incident, was found guilty of criminal damaging in Franklin County Municipal Court on June 24 and was fined \$100 and placed on one-year probation. After pleading no contest to that charge, additional charges of misdemeanor assault and disorderly conduct were dismissed.

Stringer was charged – but not arrested – after fellow apartment complex tenant Daniel Schneider filed a complaint that Stringer attacked and damaged his car after a minor collision in a parking lot. Stringer was returning to a courtyard gathering outside his apartment at the time of the accident, then allegedly went into a rage, striking Schneider in the face, tearing his shirt and bouncing up and down on his car.

On June 29, Stringer, a former Mr. Basketball at Cleveland Heights High School, announced he was transferring to Cleveland State.

15 Years Ago – 2003

After leading the Ohio State football team to a national championship – its first since 1968 – in just his second year on the job, Tressel was rewarded.

OSU decided to rip up the original five-year deal Tressel had signed upon his arrival from Youngstown State in January 2001 and gave him a lucrative six-year extension that kept Tressel attached to the Scarlet and Gray until at least 2008. His new salary was set to start at \$1.309 million in the first year with the deal capping out at \$1.871 million in 2008.

“It’s obviously exciting,” Tressel said of his extension on June 16. “It’s not something that has dominated my thinking. But I

have a lot of confidence and faith in the people I work for that I will be treated more than fairly.”

10 Years Ago – 2008

On June 23, Georgia Southern head coach Chris Hatcher confirmed that quarterback Antonio Henton, a former Georgia prep star, was transferring from Ohio State and had enrolled in classes at the Division I-AA school in Statesboro.

The move ended an eventful year for Henton, a Fort Valley, Ga., native who had been arrested in late September and charged with soliciting a prostitute.

“He was looking for a place to go, and what better place to come to than Georgia Southern,” Hatcher told the Statesboro Herald. “He’s from middle Georgia so he knows all the traditions and lore about Georgia Southern. I think it’s going to be a good fit for him and us.”

Five Years Ago – 2013

When Dr. E. Gordon Gee announced his retirement on June 4, the school president made it clear he wouldn’t be needing an extended goodbye.

“I’m not a victory lap guy,” he said at an on-campus press conference after making it clear he would be done as of July 1. “I have had more transition than any guy in America, and the last thing I want to do is be queen for a day.”

The bespectacled, bow-tie-clad president was well-respected in the halls of power, but that wasn’t enough to save Gee when controversial remarks he made at a December meeting of the Athletic Council came to light in late May. Within a week, his decision to abdicate his post was made known.

One Year Ago – 2017

Robert C. Heid, the first team captain under legendary football coach Woody Hayes at Ohio State, died June 21 at the age of 87 in his sleep.

Heid was a member of the Buckeyes’ 1949 co-Big Ten championship team that defeated California in the Rose Bowl, 17-14, under head coach Wes Fesler. In 1950, Heid played in the legendary Snow Bowl loss to Michigan before being named a captain in his final year of 1951, when the Buckeyes finished 4-3-2 in Hayes’ first season at the helm.

Schlichter Tops Rea's Quarterback Rankings

up in the fact that Griffin voted for him as team MVP in 1975. That's how Corny came to be Big Ten Player of the Year the same year Archie won his second Heisman.

For the past couple of months, Buckeye Sports Bulletin has asked its readers to name their pick for the greatest quarterback in Ohio State history.

The question is a subjective one, of course, since beauty is very much in the eye of the beholder. The college passing game of today, with its proliferation of dizzying yardage figures that sometimes lead to arena league-type scoring, bears little resemblance to what was considered cutting-edge offensive philosophies of just a decade or so ago.

About the only things linking the scheme used by Paul Brown to lead Ohio State to its first-ever national championship in 1942 and the one employed by Urban Meyer during the program's latest title run in 2014 are that 11 players were utilized on offense and each of them was wearing scarlet and gray. Quarterbacks who excelled at Brown's simplistic-yet-effective single-wing attack might have been lost if asked to run Meyer's intricate read-option offense – and vice versa.

So, how do you compare eras and determine who was the greatest quarterback in Ohio State history? The simple answer is that there is no simple answer. It's like trying to determine the difference between the beauty of a sunrise and the opulence of a sunset.

Nevertheless, that doesn't stop us from trying. Here are my top 15 Ohio State quarterbacks in order. How does my list stack up with yours?

1. Art Schlichter (1978-81) – What he has done after leaving school haunts him, but the guy had a whale of athletic ability. He never won a national championship and was only 1-3 in bowl games, but nearly 40 years after playing his final game for the Buckeyes, Schlichter still holds the school record for most yardage in a single game. Until last year, he continued to hold the marks for most career passing yards and most career total offense. If you want to debate his character, it's a no-brainer. But as far as raw talent is concerned, I've never seen anyone better who played for the Buckeyes.

2. Troy Smith (2003-06) – The Heisman Trophy and three straight victories over Michigan pretty much speak for themselves. Smith came to Ohio State with a tempestuous persona and somewhat checkered past and turned himself into a model citizen. Along the way, he also transformed himself from a runner who could throw a little bit into one of the most productive passers in school history. If only he had never been introduced to In-N-Out Burger.

3. Rex Kern (1968-70) – He wasn't the fastest guy on the team and didn't have the strongest arm. What set Kern apart was his sheer determination – a will to win. And win the Buckeyes did when he was under center. It is a common misconception that Kern started every game between 1968 and '70 – injuries put backup Ron Maciejowski into the lineup on several occasions during that span and Mace deserves his due for that. But Kern was the undisputed leader among such other alpha dogs as Jack Tatum and Jim Stillwagon, and there is no doubt that the Buckeyes were 27-2 during that three-year stretch because of Kern.

4. Cornelius Greene (1973-75) – Archie Griffin got all the publicity and Pete Johnson scored all the touchdowns, but Greene was the fire that lit the fuse on a high-octane OSU offense during the mid-1970s. Besides being cooler than the other side of the pillow, Greene was the first African-American ever to start at quarterback for Ohio State, and he was an electrifying blur of kinetic energy. All you need to know about Greene's value to the team can be summed

5. Joe Germaine (1996-98) – No one ever squeezed more talent out of their right arm than Germaine. I can still remember the beating he took from Florida State in the 1998 Sugar Bowl. But he kept coming back and coming back like the Energizer Bunny and broke a bunch of school records the following fall. His 3,330 yards that season still ranks as the best all-time in Ohio State history – not bad for a guy who had to start his college career at the JUCO level because no one wanted to give him a scholarship to play quarterback.

6. J.T. Barrett (2014-17) – Barrett finished his career as the Big Ten's all-time leader in passing yardage as well as a guy who threw for 104 career touchdowns, 47 more than anyone else who ever played quarterback for the Buckeyes. He also rushed for 3,070 yards and knew the playbook so well he was considered an extension of the coaching staff on the field. These last couple of years, though, I just felt there was something missing. If there had been more performances like during the second half of last year's Penn State game, Barrett would be higher – much higher – in my rankings.

7. Mike Tomczak (1981-84) – Tomczak suffered from being forced to follow Schlichter as quarterback for the Buckeyes and from the fact the team seemed to underachieve during his tenure. Nevertheless, Mikey was the catalyst for a couple of ultratanted rosters that featured such stars as Tim Spencer, Keith Byars, John Frank, Jim Lachey, Cris Carter, Pepper Johnson, Chris Spielman, William Roberts, Marcus Marek, Garcia Lane and Kirk Lowdermilk. Tomczak also holds the distinction of having the longest NFL career of any Ohio State quarterback – 15 seasons with the Bears, Packers, Browns and Steelers.

8. Bobby Hoying (1992-95) – The benefactor of Ohio State's offensive firepower in the mid-1990s, Hoying probably doesn't get as much recognition as he deserves. Before Barrett came along, he held the school records for most career completions and most TD passes, and he joins Barrett and Schlichter as the only OSU quarterbacks in history to eclipse the 7,000-yard mark in career passing yardage. Fun fact: Hoying finished 10th in the Heisman Trophy balloting in 1995, the same year teammate Eddie George won the award.

9. Greg Frey (1987-90) – This guy is never mentioned among the best QBs in school history because he is associated with an era when the Buckeyes quite frankly weren't very good. Still, he remains the first player in the history of the program to produce three consecutive seasons with 2,000 or more passing yards and remained the only QB to accomplish that feat until Barrett equaled it. Also forgotten is Frey coming off the bench as a freshman for a 19-yard completion to Vince Workman late in the 1987 Michigan game, an important third-down conversion during the Buckeyes' march for the game-winning field goal in Earle Bruce's final game as head coach.

10. Braxton Miller (2011-15) – Perhaps as athletically gifted as anyone on this list, Miller fell prey to outside forces (coaching changes, injuries) beyond his control and was unable to realize his full potential. When you look back at what he managed to accomplish before his throwing shoulder turned to spaghetti – numbers such as 8,349 yards of total offense and a combined 84 touchdowns produced through the air and on the ground – Miller had a truly remarkable college career.

11. Terrelle Pryor (2008-10) – The poster child for what might have been. In the wake of how his OSU career ended, Pryor has been relegated to the scrapheap of history by most of Buckeye Nation. What those people tend to forget was the quick release and elusive running ability that produced three easy victories against Michigan, a Rose Bowl win against Oregon and a near-perfect season in 2010. Unfortunately, when Pryor was at Ohio State, he possessed some of the same qualities as fire-balling pitcher Ebby Calvin "Nuke" LaLoosh in the 1988 movie "Bull Durham" – a million-dollar arm and a five-cent head.

12. Craig Krenzel (2000-03) – Right place, right time for Krenzel, who owns a national championship ring as a starter, something accomplished by only one other guy ahead of him in my rankings. Krenzel has always been regarded as a cerebral quarterback, but he is most remembered for the pinpoint "Holy Buckeye" touchdown pass he threw in the waning moments of the Purdue game in 2002 as well as the gutsy MVP performance against supposedly-invincible Miami (Fla.) in the national championship game that year.

13. Cardale Jones (2012-15) – Right place, right time, the sequel. In my humble opinion, many fans tend to overestimate the value of Jones during the 2014 national title run. There is no doubt Jones showcased his rifle-like arm during that postseason, throwing for a combined 742 yards and five touchdowns against No. 13 Wisconsin, top-ranked Alabama and No. 2 Oregon. But as good as Jones was during those three games, he was throwing to the likes of NFL-ready receivers Devin Smith and Michael Thomas while Ezekiel Elliott was shredding the Badgers, Tide and Ducks for 696 yards and eight TDs. Jones was good during the 2014 postseason – really good – but by no means was he a one-man band.

14. Don Unverferth (1963-65) – A player whose athletic legacy has largely been forgotten, Unverferth was a strong-armed quarterback out of Chaminade High School in Dayton. As a sophomore, he ran for the winning touchdown in OSU's 14-10 victory at Michigan in 1963 and then engineered a 9-7 win at Ann Arbor two years later. When he finished his career, he had set the school career record with 2,518 passing yards. The mark stayed on the books for 16 years until Schlichter broke it midway through the 1979 season. After his football career ended, Unverferth went on to graduate No. 1 in his class from the OSU medical school and became a world-renowned cardiologist at University Medical Center. He died of brain cancer in 1988, and the Unverferth House on the university campus was dedicated the following year in his honor.

15. William "Tippy" Dye (1934-36) – Hey, the guy beat Michigan three times in a row and ran Francis A. Schmidt's intricate, way-ahead-of-its-time, razzle-dazzle offense. He was also a three-time letterman in basketball at OSU and a two-time letter-winner in baseball. That's good enough to make anyone's list of the best Ohio State quarterbacks of all time.

To cast your vote, see the ballot on page 23.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea



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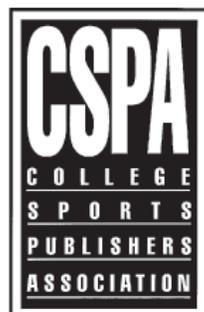
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The next issue (August cover date) will be mailed the week of Aug. 25.

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Charter Member



Meyer Confirms Haskins As Starting QB In 2018

Ever since Joe Burrow announced on May 8 that he was transferring from Ohio State, Dwayne Haskins was presumed by

many to be the Buckeyes' starting quarterback in 2018.

The program did not give a definitive answer as to who will be the starter this fall until head coach Urban Meyer did so when speaking to reporters at the sixth annual Ohio State Football Job Fair on June 15.

"Dwayne is our starting quarterback," Meyer said.

Haskins and Burrow, along with redshirt freshman Tate Martell, competed for the starting job all spring. Fifteen practices, including the spring game on April 14, weren't enough to determine a starter, though, as Meyer said in his press conference following the intrasquad scrimmage that decisions still had to be made.

Ten days after announcing he was leaving, Burrow, who graduated from Ohio State on May 6, unveiled that he was transferring to LSU. A redshirt his first season at OSU

in 2015, Burrow earned his degree in three years and therefore has two years of eligibility remaining and can play immediately.

Asked how the conversation with Burrow regarding his future played out, Meyer said,

"It was good. It was a situation that - his last two weeks of spring were excellent. I just talked to him the other day and his family. I saw his dad. It was great. He's a Buckeye forever, and he's going to go do the best he can at LSU. We wish him well. I understand."

Fifth-year senior H-back Parris Campbell said that heading into fall camp knowing Haskins will lead the offense this season is immensely beneficial.

"It's hard when you have multiple quarterbacks trying to get into a rhythm," Campbell said. "Knowing that he's the guy, it definitely makes it a lot easier."

Burrow and Haskins began their Ohio State careers operating mostly in the shadow of four-year starter J.T. Barrett, the only three-time captain in program history. With Barrett now trying to earn a spot on the New Orleans Saints' roster and Burrow off to LSU, the onus is on Haskins, a third-year sophomore, to become a leader, an aspect that Meyer said all of the signal callers currently at Ohio State lack.

"It's an unknown," Meyer said. "I'm very confident in the ability of the guys. There's a lot of newness. What's really neat to see is you've got four legitimate leaders in our program at receiver. (Strength and conditioning coach Mickey) Marotti is very positive about

everything going on in that room and how they're really helping Dwayne with the leadership standpoint. That's a void. J.T. Barrett was - not a good leader - a phenomenal leader."

Some of Haskins' teammates have already begun to notice him taking the necessary steps to fill that leadership void left by Barrett. Junior wide receiver Austin Mack, who is roommates with Haskins, is one of them.

"He has to grow up really quick," Mack said of Haskins. "Being the quarterback at The Ohio State, that's a big job for him. You can see him trying to make those improvements - speaking up, being more vocal - and it's cool. When we're at the crib, he's just a normal dude. But it's cool seeing that growth for him."

And while Meyer was direct in saying Haskins is the starter, the head coach added that Martell will get his shot this summer and in fall camp.

"You've got to compete for the spot, and he will have a chance to compete for that spot," Meyer said of Martell.

"Like any position, right now Thayer Munford is our left tackle, but you're competing for that spot. The better you recruit, the more competition you have."

Buckeyes Finish 7th In Directors' Cup Standings

Ohio State finished in the top 10 of the Learfield Sports Directors' Cup Standings for the eighth time in the past 10 years, ending the 2017-18 season seventh on the list.

Seven Ohio State programs finished in the top five in their sports, including



Dwayne Haskins

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Upcoming BSB Scheduling Notes

This is the final Buckeye Sports Bulletin until our 38th annual Football Preview Issue, tentatively scheduled to be mailed the week of Aug. 25. There is no reason to be without the latest news of the Buckeyes, however.

BuckeyeSports.com, BSB's new 24/7 full-service website, provides up-to-the-minute coverage of Ohio State sports, including the latest in recruiting news, and is free to all current Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers. The site will offer extensive coverage of the Big Ten Media Days from July 23-24, as well as coverage of the Buckeyes' fall camp once it opens. The start date for fall camp has not yet been announced, but practice began in late July last year.

If you are not already taking advantage of this exciting service, simply email your name, address and preferred email address to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send back simple instructions on how to access the BuckeyeSports.com site.

Once there, remember to monitor the BuckeyeSports.com Forum. Much of the breaking news, often provided by fellow BSB subscribers from around the state and country, can be found there, and the interaction among readers – along with the BSB staff – can be interesting and entertaining. Remember, everyone's opinion is equal on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum.

If you have any questions about BuckeyeSports.com, feel free to call us at (614) 486-2202.

second-place finishes by the wrestling and men's tennis teams. The Ohio State fencing, men's ice hockey, women's ice hockey and men's volleyball teams finished third while the football team was fifth.

Stanford finished first in the standings thanks to four national championships and a total of 12 top-10 finishes while UCLA was second and Florida placed third.

Ohio State was second among Big Ten schools as Michigan finished one spot ahead in sixth. Penn State was 12th, Minnesota was 19th and Wisconsin placed 22nd to round out the conference programs in the top 25.

Haskins' U-M Performance Impacted QB Competition

When Meyer was asked about the quar-

terback competition during spring practice, the coach often mentioned Haskins' performance in the game at Michigan last season.

Haskins took over for the injured Barrett in the third quarter with OSU trailing, 20-14, and led the team to a 31-20 victory. On Haskins' first drive of that game, he threaded a 27-yard pass between two Michigan defenders to Mack to convert a third-and-13, which was set up because of back-to-back false start penalties. Two plays later, Haskins scampered for 22 yards before J.K. Dobbins punched it in from a yard out to give Ohio State the lead for good. Haskins finished the contest completing 6 of 7 passes for 94 yards with no touchdowns or interceptions while running three times for 24 yards.

Campbell said the way Haskins played in

Michigan Stadium last year was significant in how the quarterback derby unfolded this spring.

"I think it played a huge role, honestly," Campbell said. "Just because there were certain things Dwayne had on his résumé that others didn't. He played a big-time game on a big-time stage and came out and won the game. I think that definitely played a role. I'm not saying that Dwayne was ultimately better than everyone else, but that definitely gave him a step up."

Fifth-year senior wide receiver Terry McLaurin concurred with Campbell but to a lesser extent.

"I feel like a little bit, to a certain degree," McLaurin said of Haskins' outing at Michigan influencing the QB battle. "But being in the biggest rivalry in all of sports, for him to come in cold off the bench and make that throw (to Mack), for a guy who hadn't really played, that was big-time."

"Now he's just trying to take that next step and be more consistent because anybody can have that one great play. He's just trying to take that next step in being a leader and being the quarterback that we need this year."

Johnnie Dixon, a fellow fifth-year wide-out, wasn't as convinced as Campbell and McLaurin were when asked if Haskins leading the comeback against the Wolverines was pivotal in the quarterback race.

"It's kind of hard to answer that because you still have to compete against a guy in spring ball and the upcoming camp," Dixon said. "It helped him, I guess, a little bit probably because he was able to go in there and make those kinds of plays and lead us to victory. It probably played a little bit into it, but who really knows."

Meyer Weighs In On NCAA Rule Changes

On June 13, the NCAA Division I Council approved a couple of proposals that give student-athletes more autonomy while simultaneously giving athletic institutions less.

College athletes will now be allowed to transfer without the permission of the university or coach, and the school will be obligated to enter the athlete's name in a national transfer database within two business days.

Once a name is in the database, any coach can contact that athlete. Previously, athletes had to receive permission from their current school to be contacted by another school before they could receive another scholarship. The rule change, which begins Oct. 15, applies to all Division I sports.

Meyer said at the job fair that he supports

Continued On Page 6

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Continued From Page 5

the rule change, provided one aspect of the legislation does not get altered.

"As long as they keep it that you have to sit a year, I think that's good," Meyer said, referring to student-athletes who have yet to graduate and decide to transfer. "I'm not a big fan of all the transfers. That's an easy way out, but I get it. I'm a big fan of the graduate transfer. If they fulfill their obligation, go. But I also understand the other part."

Additionally, the NCAA ruled that athletes competing in Division I football can now participate in up to four games in a season while still taking a redshirt. The NCAA previously considered a redshirt burned if a player took the field for a single play of live action in any game.

Meyer said this adjustment gives him more options in terms of when he'll decide to play potential redshirt candidates during a season.

"Now there's going to be the maneuvering of do you hold onto them until the stretch run when it gets really hard?" he said. "Because usually at the end of the season

you're dealing with injury issues. We (the staff) probably had a 30-minute conversation about that today."

Back in April, the NCAA passed a new rule that allows teams to call for a fair catch on any kickoff inside the 25-yard line, resulting in a touchback if they do. This presents a dilemma for Ohio State.

Since Meyer became OSU's head coach before the 2012 season, the Buckeyes have had a clear and consistent kickoff strategy, which is kicking the ball short of the end zone but as close to the goal line and sideline as possible, with the intent of pinning opponents inside their own 25-yard line on the return.

Now that any ball that is kicked in the air and lands inside the 25 can be fair caught, Meyer said he and the staff may have to re-evaluate their kickoff style.

"(On June 14), we had a long meeting about that, and (special teams coordinator) Taver Johnson did all the different options that we have," Meyer said. "I don't want to get too technical (about the different strategies discussed). Obviously, it depends on the team you're playing. If you can create an advantage, we'll return it. If not, you fair catch it. It's going to remain to be seen how people handle this because we're very unique on our kickoff style. So it's going to be interesting to see teams' philosophies against us."

OSU Frosh DB Reportedly Charged With DUI

Marcus Hooker arrived at Ohio State in June for summer enrollment, but the freshman safety's actions away from campus appear to have landed him in legal trouble.

As first reported on June 27 by the New Castle (Pa.) News, Neshannock (Pa.) Township police charged Hooker with driving under the influence.

Police additionally charged Hooker, 18, with purchase of an alcoholic beverage by a minor, disregarding traffic lanes, careless driving and no rear lights.

Lawrence County, Pa., court records show that Hooker's preliminary arraignment for the June 16 incident was set to begin July 5 at 9:30 a.m.

According to those records, the description of Hooker's driving under the influence details his offense as having a high rate of alcohol with a blood alcohol content between .10 and .16.

Hooker hauled in an OSU offer July 26, 2017, and committed to the program the next day. After he inked his National Letter of Intent during the early signing period Dec. 20, Hooker – who is the younger brother of former Ohio State defensive back and current Indianapolis Colts safety Malik Hooker – officially joined the Buckeyes' 2018 recruiting class.

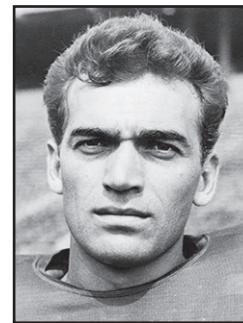
The 247Sports composite rated Hooker a three-star recruit out of New Castle High School, ranked nationally as the No. 642 player and No. 20 prospect in Pennsylvania.

As the void left by former two-year starter Damon Webb remained open through the end of the spring, Hooker was considered a candidate to earn playing time in the fall at boundary safety, where OSU has a vacancy next to junior field safety Jordan Fuller.

Despite the emergence of sophomore Isaiah Pryor, multiple members of the Ohio State staff – Meyer, defensive coordinator Greg Schiano and co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Alex Grinch – pointed to Owasso, Okla., four-star Josh Proctor and Hooker as the two incoming freshmen with chances to compete for the starting position.

QB Of First OSU Team To Win Rose Bowl Passes Away

Ohio State won its first Rose Bowl after the 1949 regular season. The quarterback of the team that year, Pandel Savic, passed away on June 12 in Columbus at the age of 92.



Pandel Savic

A native of Macedonia, Savic immigrated to the United States when he was 9 years old by himself after his mother and grandmother had died and his father was already in America. He attended Girard (Ohio) High School and received a football scholarship to Ohio State.

Upon graduating from high school in 1943, though, Savic joined the Marine Corps. He served with the First Marine Division in the South Pacific Theatre during World War II.

At the end of the war, Savic enrolled at Ohio State and played quarterback for the football team from 1947-49. As a senior in 1949,

he led the Buckeyes, who were coached by Wes Fesler, to a Big Ten championship with a 5-1-1 conference record and an overall mark of 7-1-2, which included a 17-14 Rose Bowl win over California.

Inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009, Savic was one of the founding members of Muirfield Village Golf Club. He was lifelong friends with Ohio State golf legend Jack Nicklaus, another founding member of Muirfield Village Golf Club. Savic served as general chairman of the Memorial Tournament for more than 30 years.

Member Of '57 National Championship Team Passes

Less than a week before Savic's passing, James Martin, a member of Ohio State's 1957 football national championship team, died on June 6 at the age of 84.

Martin, who graduated from West High School in Columbus and was a US Navy veteran, was a part of the 1957 Ohio State squad that was coached by Woody Hayes and went 9-1. The Buckeyes lost the season opener that year to TCU, 18-14, before rattling off nine consecutive wins, the last victory being a 10-7 outcome against Oregon in the Rose Bowl.



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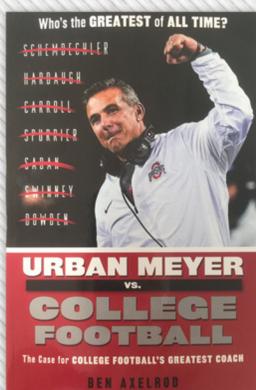
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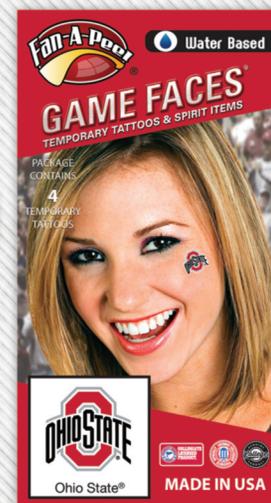
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Buckeyes Adjusted Well To New Recruiting Timeline

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early signing period in football. How do you think that went for Ohio State, and maybe how do you see that going in the future?

Smith: "We adjusted. We were one of the schools that, originally, was against it. We understood some of the benefits, we just had some concerns, but we adjusted to it and we've benefited from it. We've signed a number of athletes, and our coaches' time is different.

"The intent to allow those athletes who definitively knew where they wanted to go, go ahead and get it done, that's been that. That was the impetus from the beginning. I think from that perspective, it's worked. We just have to see I think the impact of it. You have to see over time. We have to go to a few iterations and look back and say, 'Okay, was there anything that changed in the behaviors of recruiting?' That takes a look back so we need some evidence before we can actually say, 'This is a great thing.' I think it is, but we need some time to see that."

BSB: You have a year on the College Football Playoff selection committee under your belt. How did that go? What were some of the highlights of it for you?

Smith: "It was a great learning experience. I served on the basketball committee, and one of the things that I was hopeful that I'd benefit from was just the camaraderie. We'll be around other teammates who have the same passion and interest that I do and around our sports programs, in that case football. It was cool. Just sitting around with the (committee) and you're talking football. Ultimately Frank Beamer, you go back to roots a little bit. I was having a lot of fun with that, and the policies and procedures were very similar to what we had on the basketball committee, that was a little bit easier for me to transition into from that perspective.

"Then, just watching games in a different way than I used to watch them and becoming more definitive and focused on the evaluation of the team as opposed to just watching games. It's a great experience and I'm looking forward to it now that I've gotten past my

rookie year and got my sea legs under me a little bit. I'm anxious to try to be a little bit better in serving a membership in that role this coming year. I'm looking forward to it."

BSB: Ohio State at the end of the year was right there on the fringe. What was that process like for you to have your school right on the edge of the picture?

Smith: "Well, I was out of the room. They have a policy where anytime your school's talked about, or your school is in a situation where the team that you might play is being talked about, you're out of the room. I don't know what the conversations were in the room. I just accepted the fact that that was the choice of my peers and my colleagues and I respect that. We move on and take advantage of the opportunity we had at the time and go play and be where we got to play. At that point you just shift your thinking because you can't change anything. I accepted the fate and moved on."

BSB: How do you think this new playoff system has gone through the first few years, and do you see any changes coming down the road?

Smith: "I think it's going well. I always had the concern of its impact on the other bowls. I think that has played out. We have to be really careful about that. How do we keep the other bowls relevant when everybody is so focused on the final four? It's difficult. I think we have to keep our eye on that ball. I think it's played out extremely well. I don't see any changes in the near future.

"The commissioners, the management committee, everyone seems to be comfortable with the current format. I think we need time. I think we always have to let these types of things play out over time, to see what tweaks need to occur as opposed to just being reactive. Just let it play out over time. I can't see any changes in the near future."

BSB: Now, looking at the football team in general, Urban Meyer signed a new contract this year. Can you take me a little bit through the process of first the decision to extend him, and why the timing was right to do it now?

Smith: "We were a little concerned about some of the conversations around recruit-

ing, and there were, for whatever reasons, suggestions that he might not be here long – those type of things – and that was a concern of mine and a concern of his. I forgot when we had the conversation. We ended up having a conversation about doing a contract extension. At the same time, I had a concern about his salary not being No. 1 in the Big Ten. When his performance – not just in the wins and losses, but in culture around our team. Behaviorally, academically, knock on wood, all those things are happening on track.

"I just feel like he's the No. 1 coach in the league and he needed to be compensated consistent with that. We talked to the president, got authorization to move forward and try to put it in place, and then it just came about a time we needed to get it to the trustees and get it approved. It was the right time to send the message that he is going to be here for a long time which was a concern of recruits, concern of those – not a concern but window for our competitors to call to recruits against us. Then also media conversations about that so I wanted to put all that to bed."

BSB: Then obviously the rest of the staff got new contracts as well, Greg Schiano and Ryan Day both hit that million dollar mark for the first time at Ohio State. Are you still comfortable with that decision to give those contracts, and was it really just kind of an inevitable thing where the market is?

Smith: "It was. You get it. It was inevitable. I knew we'd get there, it was just a matter of what year, what time. In that window of time the year before, actually, the market went berserk. It was unbelievable – salary increases and coordinators. There already were some, but it really went berserk the year before. Urban and I talked about it for a long time, but the ones that we took to that level they deserved to be at that level compared to their peers in their market performance.

"Those guys were the top of the pyramid. For us, one of the things that we have to constantly think about is talent retention. This great city, Columbus is a great place to live. This is a great place to work at Ohio State. At the end of the day, we need to make sure we have fair compensation. Salaries have gone berserk, we're in that game, we've just got to play it. So, that was an easy decision."

BSB: You mentioned talent retention. When you've got a guy like Ryan Day who's relatively young in his coaching career and he's had a lot of opportunities this year both as a collegiate head coach or maybe going off to the NFL, what does it say about Ohio State that he's not only staying, but he signs a three-year contract to stay at Ohio State?

Smith: "It's awesome. That's one of our commitments to do what is right from a salary perspective. One, the contract as you said. Two, the security piece. Someone like him with his family and I think he said this as well, finding a place like this to live and then raise your children and then have some stability for some period of time was important. We can't take for granted how great a place this is to live and work. Then you have a chance to – for him, as you said, a young coach to work with somebody like Urban, the experiences that he will gain by working with Urban, competing against the teams we compete with in our league and out of our league.

"Unbelievable experiences for him to

grow. He'll be a head coach someday, hopefully it's not too fast. In order to make sure that we help him reach that dream, we want to make sure that he has family, he's really comfortable with everything around him. That was important for us."

BSB: What did you think when you were watching the quarterback competition as it unfolded this spring?

Smith: "It was hard. Because you have – I'm on the periphery on that. You like the coaches but I had enough of a relationship with actually all three of them. Tate Martell, Joey (Burrow) and Dwayne (Haskins). I just love them as people. I had no clue where everyone was going to land, but my role was how do we make sure we do what's best for the student?

"I'm thinking Joey did the right thing for himself. He's got two years of eligibility, and he's a smart, smart young man. He's a perfect example of one that graduated early. Taking advantage of summer school and maximizing his credit hours. I might be the athletic director but I'm also a fan of sports so I was watching it like everybody else to see who was going to emerge. It was, I think, a good decision on Joey's part. When you still have two outstanding returning quarterbacks that have got this experience but our freshman (Matthew Baldwin) came in, it's pretty good. He'll be healthy and ready to roll."

BSB: Now looking at Haskins, he's going to be the starting quarterback this year. What are your memories from watching that Michigan game after Barrett got hurt and Haskins comes in?

Smith: "Unbelievable, because I went in the locker room with J.T. for a while with the doctors. Then when I came back out I was on the sideline. Just to watch him, you know what's interesting is I have a different perspective. The throw was phenomenal, but that catch. People forget how hard Austin Mack got hit.

"That grab, man. It's not a lot of receivers that you could throw it on a dime like that that would have held on, but Michael Thomas would have. (Anthony Gonzalez) would have. That was a heck of a catch and retention of the ball when he went to the ground. Those two are pretty special. Then, all the other receivers are going to be just phenomenal to watch. Great throw, great leadership. That speedy run he had, probably broke the speed barrier. It was fun to watch. (laughs) You know that demonstrated unbelievable decision-making. He didn't make a mistake. He made unbelievable decision-making, thrown in the fire in that situation."

BSB: Going back to Burrow, are you able to keep track of athletes like that? Especially a guy like him who had been here for years and has a degree?

Smith: "We'll be watching him and see how he does. Anyway, it depends on the athlete and how they leave. Some leave in a disgruntled way. Someone like Joey we'll track and obviously, I'll watch (LSU's) games more than I've ever watched them before and cheer for them and hopefully he does well. As I told Joey after he made his decision and announced it, I called him and said, 'Look, you're still our guy. Don't ever forget. If you need us, we're here. You've got my cell number, you reach back if you need some help.'

"Hopefully, he doesn't. Hopefully, things go excellently for him. He gave us a lot, and if he wants us, we'll be here for him. Even



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when he's done there, if he needs help trying to find a job or something like that, we're here for him."

BSB: Shifting focus to the basketball team, we're here a year later after Thad Matta left and Chris Holtmann was hired. What was this year like for you, and what were your expectations going in compared to what you ended up seeing?

Smith: "I didn't have expectations that we would excel at the level that we did. I knew we had guys who were hungry. (Jae'Sean Tate) was hungry, Keita (Bates-Diop) was hungry. Unfortunately, Keita had a career prior to this year where he had so many different small injuries here and there. One major one but others were nagging so he really couldn't get on the floor in a consistent way. We knew once he did, that he would be an impact player. The thing that I was really – Chris did in a phenomenal way was gain their trust fast. I think we made some very good strategic moves to help with that.

"He established trust early, and then it's his coaching. This tactical and strategic coaching with these guys in their individual capabilities. He never asked J.T. to do what he couldn't do. Keita was always in a position where he could take advantage of his talents and skills. Andrew Dakich, holy smoke. (laughs)

"I mean, we could sit here and go through each guy, right? To me, that was the beauty. One of the beauties of what he did is he put each of them in a position where each of them could benefit the team based upon their individual talents and skills."

BSB: You said you didn't have those expectations last year, but now seeing this season, what's your expectation going forward?

Smith: "Now, we've got to do more. (laughs) Just like everything in life. What did you do for me lately? But it is going to be interesting to watch and learn. We've never seen how he and his staff transitions in five new guys. We have four freshmen, a graduate transfer and C.J. Walker can't play yet but he will be practicing. Transitioning those individuals into guys who are returning, how do you re-create the leadership that J.T. and Keita provided? Who emerges? Who's that floor guy that helps them get through the storms?"

BSB: When I talked to you last summer it was a few days after Holtmann was hired. One of the things you stressed was recruiting, especially recruiting in this region. Obviously, last year he was able to put a roster together and then this year, another good class coming in. It seems that going forward in the future years, recruiting in this state is going well compared to maybe some of the more recent years under Matta.

Smith: "It's beautiful. It's beautiful. ... Well, Thad did an outstanding job for a long time recruiting in our home base and this happens for all of our sports, in Ohio, student-athletes at the high school level to aspire to be at Ohio State. Chris and his staff have done a great job of connecting with the high school coaches, the club coaches and all those people. Kind of share his style, his philosophy, what he does for students."

BSB: Talking about Matta, it seems like, No. 1, he's been pretty content over the past year, and I think it sounds like he missed coaching less than he expected to. What is your impression of the year, what it might have been like for Matta and how much of a relationship have you had with him over the past year?

Smith: "I think this past year has been great for him. He's had a chance to get away from

the game, get away from the stress, reconnect with his family. I was with him Monday in Indianapolis. We had two meetings, we had to come in. Actually, we were sitting together in this meeting all morning long and he is in a good space. I think he'll always peek and see if there's something that fits him.

"I think he's doing well and he's enjoying life reading books and enjoying his family and helping the industry a little bit."

BSB: Obviously, we talk a lot about basketball and football here at Ohio State, but you still get athletes from some of the smaller sports that are able to compete at a high level. What do you think you can do to keep promoting those sports and get them at a higher and higher level here at Ohio State?

Gene: "Great question. Dan (Wallenberg) and his staff, communications, continue to do a great job, and then we have a social media team. They're trying to do the best they can around that – in publications like yours and others focusing on recognizing their talents and skills. We had 10 conference championships this year. We had 10 conference championships, nine coaches of the year, one national coach of the year. That's a lot of talent. You go sport by sport by sport, from tennis to the track, and you can pick those individual athletes.

"You just go through every single sport. What we have to do is, in the moment when they're competing, we've got to try to bring them to life. Social media has been our primary avenue to try to do that. Then some things back home in their areas where they came from. Most of us would track that but trying to make sure there's articles in your local paper and those type of things. Tough to do. This is tough to do but we've got a great staff. They do the best job they can. Then the athletes promoting themselves, which they also do the job of, probably do their own little thing."

BSB: There are a few ongoing construction projects like at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, renovations of the stadium. Can you give me an update on the general athletic projects that are going on?

Smith: "We've got a lot going on. The Covelli Arena will probably be done in March of 2019. It's going well. The Schumaker facility (housing additional sports adjacent to the WHAC), that will be open in October sometime. Again, I'm budging on time. It's going well. Suite project (at Ohio Stadium), suite and loge seats are doing good. They'll be ready for the 2019 season. We'll have less seats in the stadium this year because of it. I think our capacity will be 102,000, and then we'll add those back in '19, but that's gone well.

"Concrete renovation that most people don't pay attention to but I do. We're down to one side of the stadium that we have to finish and then we would have resealed and repainted the entire concrete in the stadium over a four-year period, and that will give us another 10 years before we have to do it again. That's a major project to help sustain the life of that iconic facility. We started the Wi-Fi project.

"We're pretty confident we'll have it done for the 'Shoe by this fall. There could be a couple of dead spaces because antennas didn't get done in time, but we'll have it pretty much done. Again, the 'Shoe will be done, the Schott (renovations) actually should be done by basketball season. We have a lot of projects."

BSB: Looking around Columbus in general, obviously the Blue Jackets had a big run this year. Then the Crew going through the situation they're going

through with a potential move to Austin, Texas. What kind of relationship does Ohio State have with the pro sports teams in Columbus, and what has it been like to watch them over the past couple of years?

Smith: "It's great. We have a strong relationship with the Blue Jackets, we've had for a long time and the Crew we've had for a long time. Blue Jackets we are from a management point of view, we oversee Nationwide Arena, we manage Nationwide Arena. We have a working relationship with them as our primary tenant at Nationwide, but we also have a collaborative relationship with them. Well, I'm just so happy that they were able to have a run that they had for the year, and hopefully they'll get a deeper run and it's just so much fun to watch and going to the games. This is really cool, they are unbelievable tenants.

"With the Crew, we hired (former Crew star) Brian Maisonneuve (to coach) the soccer program. One of the things we wanted to get stronger at is that relationship with their youthful member club program, the recruiting and things of that nature. We've always had a collaborative relationship, but we haven't been as successful as we wanted to in recruiting out of their system, their clubs, their youth system so I'm looking forward to working with them better and I hope they stay. I really do. I understand the business piece of it. I get it. Well, I hope they stay."

BSB: Earlier this week I was over at the Buckeye Boosters golf outing at the Scarlet Course. Meyer was there and he talked about you a little bit. He mentioned your experience as a college athlete yourself and how that can impact your outlook on the wellness of the student-athlete here. How do you think

your experience from when you played football in college has impacted your job here at Ohio State?

Smith: "It was one of my greatest blessings, to find a career path where I can take my personal experience and apply it in what I do every single day. If it wasn't for football, let's say high school sport participation with football was in the air, I never would have gone to college. My parents couldn't send me to college. I'm the only person in my family that's got a college degree. My dad worked in the Navy, my mom was a nursing student for a two-year program, but a four-year degree, that didn't exist in my family so I was blessed.

"Then to have the experience that I had playing in college. I wasn't the greatest student, so I did have academic support. I did have tutors to get through college. I remember that and I know that the young people that we have in whatever sport, also, I kind of relate it back to my experience, I never forgot those things. I understand why someone needs a tutor. I understand when I have to tell a coach, 'Look, you got to give that student more time away from practice in order to help them attack their academics.' And coaches get it. I never get any pushback.

"It's valuable. It's helped me and that makes my opportunity not to just be professional but to be personal because that's how I look at it from a student-athlete, is look, this is personal for me. What I've got today, you can do better if you do what you're supposed to do. That's why you'll see more athletes probably talk to me the way I engage with them than most ladies because I can get granular with them around their experience and what they're going through. I'm passionate about what we do for our kids, all of them, every single sport."

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Coombs Will Forever Cherish Time At OSU

By RYAN McGLADE
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Kerry Coombs has coached high school and college football for the last 35 seasons and is now roughly two months away from beginning his first at the highest level – the NFL.

After six seasons at Ohio State, Coombs was hired by the Tennessee Titans in January to be their secondary coach. He was the Buckeyes' cornerbacks coach and special teams coordinator for all six years he spent in Columbus and was promoted to assistant coordinator on defense last offseason.

A talented recruiter, Coombs constructed his own pipeline from Ohio State to the NFL. Every OSU cornerback who started for him has reached the NFL. Not only that, three Ohio State corners were taken in the first round of the past two NFL drafts, marking the first time any school has achieved that feat.

Now in charge of the Titans' defensive backs, Coombs is coaching for Tennessee head coach Mike Vrabel, a former Buckeye defensive lineman who was a defensive assistant coach on Ohio State's staff from 2011-13.

Despite 2018 being a busy year for Coombs, he found a few minutes to chat with BSB about his time in Columbus and his move to the NFL.

BSB: Have you had a chance to get settled in Nashville?

Coombs: "We have. It was very fast. We bought a house. My wife is there. It went much faster than any transition that I've ever had, but we're in, we're settled in, going to work every day. It's just like Columbus South."

BSB: What do you think of Nashville so far?

Coombs: "We love Nashville. We were always country music fans, which makes it a great fit. We like the weather. The people are incredibly nice, friendly, polite and helpful. The town is vibrant. It's growing at a ridiculous pace, which made buying a house hard. But other than that, it's a really neat place."

BSB: How are things going for you as the secondary coach for the Titans?

Coombs: "I think it's going great. You'd probably have to ask my players more than

anybody. We just finished our last minicamp. We went pretty much from April 9 until June 14 on a consistent basis with phase 1, phase 2, (organized team activities) and then minicamp, so I've gotten a good chance to coach them. We haven't put pads on yet. But I've had a chance to work with them every day, and that's been really exciting."

BSB: Rookies and quarterbacks report to training camp July 22, while the rest of the team does so on July 25. As a coach, what are you doing between now and then?

Coombs: "Actually, we've had some time off, which is really nice and unusual. I've never had that before like this. The fact that there's no recruiting going on makes it different because when you're at Ohio State you're recruiting every day, 365 days a year. There wasn't a holiday or a weekend that you weren't actively recruiting players. So that's a little different."

"I spend my mornings trying to watch and study third-down and two-minute (situations) because I think that's really important in the NFL. I've been communicating with my current players by text, but they are all off site. There's no workouts going on at the facility. They are enjoying their time off and are working out all over the country at their own hometowns or back at their college campuses or any number of places. Our coaches are kind of spread out, so it's a little bit of a different experience."

BSB: After being the cornerbacks coach at Ohio State for six years, how much different is it coaching the entire secondary for the Titans?

Coombs: "I (coached corners and safeties) at (the University of) Cincinnati (from 2007-11). It's kind of the nature of how coaching staffs want to divide themselves. I like having all of the guys in the same room all of the time. I'm still able to be as specific with the corners as I ever was because the reality is we just have more time. Nobody has to rush off and go to class. Nobody has any of those kinds of obligations. So I can still be specific with the corners the same way I was at Ohio State, but now I'm able to do that with the safeties as well."

"Right now, our study – primarily – has been twofold. One, it is to learn the playbook because it's a new installation for everybody. Two, it really focuses on individual technique. So we've been able to spend a lot of quality time, I think, on players' technique."

"One of the most valuable things I learned at Ohio State in my process there was you had to coach every player differently. I had to coach Eli Apple differently than Bradley Roby and differently than Marshon Lattimore and so on. Because I learned that, I think that helps me now because these guys are different players that come from different programs that you can't put everybody in the same box. So I try to meet them where they are, enhance their strengths and focus on the things they can get better at."

BSB: During your time at Ohio State, you were known for the energy and passion with which you coached. There may be some who wonder if that same type of style will successfully translate to the NFL. What is your response to those people?

Coombs: "I've heard that from a lot of people. It's hard for me to imagine that the day that a Marshon, a Gareon (Conley), Bradley, Denzel (Ward), any one of them, walk into a new facility six months after graduating from

college that they all of a sudden choose to have a different demeanor about how they do their business. What I've learned is that players are players. They love to play football, and these guys (in the NFL) really love it. For me, I learned a long time ago to try to be who I am and not try to be somebody else. So I guess we'll all find out if it works or not. So far, I'm really enjoying coaching these guys, but you'd have to ask them about their reaction."

"I typically like being around people who are having fun at what they do. I know that the head coach of the Tennessee Titans is a very energetic guy, and nobody would say that Mike is anything less than that, and it's worked out pretty well for him."

BSB: Outside of what you've mentioned already, what are some other differences between coaching in college and coaching in the NFL?

Coombs: "I think there's two things. One is the playbook is bigger, and that is something that is a function of having to play 16 games against pro athletes who don't do anything or have anything to do but study the game. So you have to have more variety. You have to attack differently because they're really sharp. They know and spend a lot of time learning and studying the tendencies of the opponent."

"The second thing is just the quality of time and amount of time that you get to spend with them without any concerns for anything other than football. These are men who have wives and children and a lot of really neat things going on in their life. I talk to them about different things than I did the guys at Ohio State, but they are all football all day every day. That is the difference."

"I think anybody who makes this transition has to get used to the NFL game vs. the college game. I talked with (Ohio State associate head coach and defensive coordinator) Greg Schiano, who was the head coach at Rutgers (from 2001-11) and then the head coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (from 2012-13), and those guys about what the challenges were and what the differences were."

"I think the league is much more competitive. In other words, Mike likes to tell our players all the time that it's an 8-8 league, and we've got to figure out a way to win four more games than they do. But everybody has good players and good coaches, so it's going to come down to every Sunday."

"When you're at Ohio State and you're able to recruit your players and you have great tradition and all of that, it may not necessarily be an 8-8 schedule. I think we had 11 of our 16 regular-season games last year with the Titans decided by one score or less. So the games are going to be close. They're going to be competitive, and you better be able to win in third-down and two-minute (situations)."

BSB: You've mentioned Mike Vrabel a couple of times. What are your impressions of him in his first year as an NFL head coach?

Coombs: "Tremendous leader. First of all, he's a man's man and he's a player's coach, but he has very high standards. There's no entitlement. He's very consistent and his players know what to do and play fast and aggressive. It's our job to make sure you know what to do. He wants them to be competitive and disciplined. He wants them to work hard."

"I've been so impressed by the things that Mike has learned and taken from every coach

he either played or coached for. There's a Bill Belichick emphasis. There's a clear Urban Meyer emphasis. I think he took some things from Bill O'Brien as well. His leadership style and his ability to communicate with the players and his passion for everything that he's doing is clear. We haven't played a game yet, but I think he's going to be one of the great coaches in the game. I really do."

BSB: You mentioned there is a clear Urban Meyer emphasis with Vrabel. In what ways have you seen that?

Coombs: "No doubt, many of the things that we talked about in staff meetings at Ohio State about the manner in which we would communicate with the players, how we would teach, how we would coach, how to maximize the development of players, all of those things that he learned from Urban, that I learned from Urban, that a lot of good coaches have learned from Urban, they show up – even to the point of the same phraseology."

"That's what makes Urban Meyer great. It's not just that he wins games or develops great players or great people after football, but he also develops coaches. That's one of the things that I really appreciate about Urban. My six years spent with Urban Meyer emphatically made me a better coach. It made me better prepared for this journey. I believe that the two years Mike spent with Urban made him a better coach."

"I think if you talk to (former Ohio State defensive coordinator and linebackers coach and current University of Cincinnati head coach) Luke (Fickell) or (former Ohio State co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach and current Rutgers head coach) Chris Ash or (former Ohio State offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach and current Texas head coach) Tom Herman, they would all tell you that because it's true. There's a huge influence of Urban Meyer throughout football in the country today at every level."

BSB: How much did the two years you spent with Vrabel as assistants on Ohio State's staff play into your decision to join him at Tennessee?

Coombs: "One hundred percent. I had a great job. I wasn't looking to leave Ohio State, that wasn't something that was on my agenda. I loved what I was doing. But I also love Mike. In the two years that I spent with Mike (at Ohio State), I really developed a great connection with him. We sat on the same side of the table every day for two years for every defensive meeting. We planned, we worked, we fought, we strained."

"When he got the (Tennessee) job and called me – I'm not going to tell you it was an easy decision because it wasn't – but at the same time, it was because of Mike that I made this move. It's another opportunity for me to grow and continue to develop as a coach. It wasn't the NFL attractiveness as much as it was Mike Vrabel."

BSB: How long did you ponder the decision to leave Ohio State to join Vrabel's staff with the Titans?

Coombs: "Not long. It's been my experience with these things that they are very time-sensitive and you're never going to have a lot of time to sit around and think about it. It's kind of weird. I've been in this situation four times. Each time I was never looking. These things have just happened. They kind of just show up on your front porch. But somebody needs an answer pretty quick."

"I talked to Coach (Meyer) about it and, obviously, my wife and I talked at length how it would affect our family dynamics. That was the most important consideration. I talked to Urban and Greg and those guys. I was on the

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FILE PHOTO

BUCKEYE FOR LIFE – Kerry Coombs (in white) was Ohio State’s cornerbacks coach from 2012-17.

road recruiting, and I flew back in to talk to my players face to face before I even went down to meet with the guys at Tennessee. I thought that was important. In too many of these cases, I think the kids get left out. I brought every one of those kids on campus, so it wasn’t fair for me to walk out of there and not tell them that I was considering it. They were great about it and have been. I think my relationship with them remains intact.

“By the way, that’s the best unit room in the country. (The cornerbacks) right now, the depth that they have top to bottom, they are going to have extraordinary success. And you can write that down. I love those kids, and they are going to be really good. I miss them.

“I would tell you the hardest part I miss about all of it – and as much as I love Urban, Greg and all of the guys on staff – I miss those kids. And I’m going to miss the ‘Shoe on Saturdays. The things that happen there are unique. It was a phenomenal, phenomenal experience.

“But timeframe-wise, it was quick. I didn’t have a lot of time to make a decision. You always hope and pray you do the right thing. So far, I think we’re OK.”

BSB: How did Vrabel present this coaching opportunity to you?

Coombs: “He pretty much called me and said you’re coming. Mike did everything right. He called Urban first, which is exactly the right thing to do, and let him know he was going to call me. (Vrabel) is not only a gifted leader, he’s an exceptional professional. And he did things the way you’re supposed to. None of this was backdoor. None of this was behind anybody’s back. It was all right up front. He called Urban first, and then he called me.”

BSB: What were your conversations with Meyer like when you were contemplating the move?

Coombs: “I’ll probably keep most of those between Urban and me. I don’t think that’s for the general public. I think Urban and I are and will be close for a long, long time.

“I can tell you this, I owe Urban Meyer an awful lot. He has taught me a tremendous amount about coaching, how to develop players, how to run a program, how to manage the time and intensity. One of the great things that I appreciate about Urban is as hard as we worked at Ohio State every day – every day you worked now – you never had to worry that you were working harder than the head coach (because) he was outworking everybody. That was a great model for all of us.

“In addition to all of his skill sets that he has, he just has this extraordinary passion for being the best in the world at what he does. I could not appreciate him more. I look forward to continuing to having a great, deep relationship with him. I just saw him (on June 16), and it was awesome. I miss him. I miss learning from him, his leadership. I’m going to try to pay him back every day with the way I do my

business here so that people will recognize that somehow in the way or manner in which I coach I’ve learned things from Urban.”

BSB: How often do you keep in touch with the coaches currently at Ohio State?

Coombs: “Not as often as I would like. It’s sporadic. Weekly. Biweekly. (Linebackers coach) Billy Davis and (running backs coach) Tony Alford came down to practice because they were down in Nashville for a one-day camp and had a two-hour window. So they came over and I got to see them. I saw Greg. I saw Urban, (wide receivers coach) Zach (Smith), (offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach) Ryan Day.

“There’s good communication. But at the same time, they’re busy, they’re recruiting, they’re on the road, they’re grinding. It’s mostly text. It’s mostly quick. It’s mostly, ‘Thinking about you,’ kind of thing. Those are guys I’m going to be connected to forever.”

BSB: You’ve brought up recruiting a few times. How do you feel about no longer recruiting?

Coombs: “I miss it. I miss going into high schools. I miss talking to high school coaches. I love that part of it. I miss the communication with the players. I miss the competitive nature of recruiting. I loved the winning. I loved getting a kid and convincing him what I knew to be true, which is Ohio State was the absolute best place for him to go to school and play football.

“Recruiting takes so much of your time. My wife and I will go out to dinner or wherever we are, and I’ve got my phone right out there on

the table and it’s not going off anymore. She’ll say, ‘You can put it away.’ It is different because it becomes so much a part of who you are that when you go cold turkey it’s kind of hard to not be doing it all the time.”

BSB: What do you know about Taver Johnson, the man who replaced you as Ohio State’s cornerbacks coach and special teams coordinator (and also the man you replaced when you arrived in 2012)?

Coombs: “I’ve known Taver because he went to (the now-defunct Cincinnati Academy of Physical Education), so he’s a Cincinnati guy. I know he went to Wittenberg with one of the guys who coached for me at (Cincinnati) Colerain (High School), Tommy Bolden. Our paths have crossed periodically professionally. When he was coaching college ball he recruited my high school. I know Taver well. I’d say we’re friendly. I don’t know that we would say we’re friends.

“I think Taver is going to do a great job. He’s a high-energy guy who’s had a great level of experience and has coached corners at Ohio State before (from 2007-11). I think he’s in a great spot because I think that room is good, and I think he’ll do a great job with them.”

BSB: You’ve coached at the high school and college ranks, and now you’re in the NFL. What else would you like to accomplish?

Coombs: “I’ve got a whole lot more to do. We’re looking forward to every challenge. We’re going to compete as hard as we can every single Sunday in Nashville, Tenn. We’re going to try to win every day. We’re not going to just try to win on Sundays. We’re going to try to get out of bed and win tomorrow. To me, there’s a whole lot more to be accomplished.

“I’m looking forward to coaching guys that make the Pro Bowl. Hopefully we have an opportunity to be in the playoffs and compete for a Super Bowl and all of those things. That’s the reason you take this next step. I’m intrigued by it, I’m excited by it, and I think that is what it is really all about. It’s the next challenge. It’s the next thing on the horizon. I think when you stop growing you start dying, and I’m not ready to do that. We’re excited about the future.”

BSB: Do you eventually see yourself becoming an NFL head coach?

Coombs: “Everybody would want to do that. There’s only 32 of those in the world, so who wouldn’t? What I would say to you is the same thing I’ve told people all along. I just try

to do the job I have as hard as I can and see what happens. I didn’t apply for a job with the Tennessee Titans. I didn’t apply for one at Ohio State. I didn’t apply for one at the University of Cincinnati. It just happens.

“I’m looking forward to coaching the Titans. Whatever God has got in store for us after that is going to be what it is. But we’ll be prepared. That’s what it’s all about. I think guys that spend time looking too far into the future or over the horizon are the guys that go off the road. I’m just going to try to stay between the lines and do my work and let everybody else decide that stuff.”

BSB: Would you ever consider returning to college if the timing and situation were right?

Coombs: “Absolutely. I would consider everything. People that close doors are probably just as bad as the folks that are looking too far off into the horizon. It’s not for me to say what might happen and what’s in the best interest of our family and what’s going to be in the best interest of whatever. For now, I just took a new job. I’m not spending a whole lot of time thinking about the next one. I loved every bit of what I did at Ohio State.”

BSB: When you think about your time at Ohio State, what are some of your most prominent memories?

Coombs: “That’s a great question. I think the first word that comes to my mind is ‘confetti’ because Urban used to always talk about the feeling of the confetti coming down after you have won that game. We would talk about that with the players. The last couple of times that I’ve been on the field when that confetti is coming down, I’ve had grandchildren and children and other people to share that experience with me. Singing ‘Carmen Ohio’ in the end zone with a grandchild or two were great days and great experiences.

“For me, there was nothing like the daily walking into the locker room, going in front of the special teams’ meeting, loving those kids and feeling like they loved you back every day. That is what I will remember about Ohio State. I love those kids. I think they appreciate me. I haven’t gone to work in a long, long time, and I didn’t work a single day at Ohio State. I was playing a game and having fun with a bunch of boys who were really, really neat people. For me, the day in, day out, high five, slap on the backside, whatever, was something that I will treasure.”

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Mitchell Leaves Behind Record-Breaking Legacy

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Kelsey Mitchell cemented her place among the greatest players in Ohio State women's basketball program history at the end of the 2017-18 season when she capped her four-year career with a laundry list of NCAA (4), Big Ten (8) and OSU (17) records.

As a senior, the 5-8 guard started all 35 games and led the nation in total scoring as she tallied 849 points. During her tenure with the Buckeyes, Mitchell compiled 3,402 points to finish second on the NCAA's all-time career scoring list behind 3,527 by Washington's Kelsey Plum (2013-17).

Now in the WNBA after the Indiana Fever selected her with the second overall pick in the 2018 draft, Mitchell was two months into her rookie season when BSB went to press. From being recruited out of Princeton High School in Cincinnati by OSU head coach Kevin McGuff to her distinguished career in Columbus and catapulting into the professional ranks, Mitchell spoke with BSB about the past, present and future as she continues to push forward.

BSB: When you remember your recruitment in high school at Cincinnati Princeton, how did your process unfold? What led you to Ohio State?

Mitchell: "My recruiting process was real short and sweet. I didn't do much. I took one official visit, which was to Ohio State. I had taken an unofficial visit to UK, Louisville and one more, but I had just attended a game or whatever the case may be. But I took one official out of my five. After that, I kind of went through my AAU season, and then I committed after AAU was over. It was just that simple. I wasn't really into teams when it came to coaches on the phone, but I was grateful that it was colleges that I never thought would be interested in me, talking to me. So it was very humbling, but I didn't overthink it too much."

BSB: How much of your Ohio State decision came down to staying home?



Kelsey Mitchell

Mitchell: "That was a factor, but it was more about where I was comfortable. And believe it or not, Coach McGuff, based on his conversation and the way he treated his players and introduced me to his program, that all made me comfortable. But my family being close to home was the icing on the cake, so it was a bit that way."

BSB: When you entered through the 2014 recruiting class before the 2014-15 season, did you feel any pressure to potentially reshape the program under McGuff over the next four years?

Mitchell: "Not at all. When we first started, it was a lot of us learning. So we just kind of like learned throughout the process. Unfortunately, we had people go down in

regard to injuries. One way or another, he just kind of threw us in there, threw us in the fire and we adjusted from game to game. In certain practices, we also learned. But we adjusted, game to game, knowing how young we were."

BSB: How much did McGuff help you develop on both sides of the ball?

Mitchell: "He helped me a lot in regards to how he did it. He's not really a screaming type of coach. But when he broke it down in film and video, it took a while because I wasn't adjusting right quick from when he showed me. But he helped me from a standpoint of knowing not just for college, but for knowing now, here in the WNBA, where I need to be better or how effective I could be if I had gotten smaller things defensively right. So just over time, he taught me over time through a lot of film, and then I think the film, seeing yourself was better than just recalling information. I think once you see yourself on video and how you're supposed to be, he was really good at showing us film after games and how we could be better at it – and for myself, specifically. So that helped."

BSB: How did you feel like you fit his offense?

Mitchell: "Coach McGuff, his scheme was one that wasn't necessarily hard for me to adjust to based on the pace. It was hard for me to adjust based on what we were looking for. Where I came from, we just got it up and down the court, played off one another. It wasn't a lot of action into it – not entirely like playground ball, but in a way, it was. I'm just going to be honest – it was. So this game kind of implemented my game and helped me. My playground play, that people called it, kind of helped. But in the same breath, it kind of changed and made me screen things and my teammates in a way that made us successful. It was an open-space kind of offense. With that being said, it kind of let players know to be yourself, know who you are and kind of make reads in the process."

BSB: With your father, Mark, on

McGuff's staff for the last four years before he resigned and returned to coaching boys' varsity basketball at Western Hills High School in Cincinnati, what was that experience like for you?

Mitchell: "The experience was nothing short of great, sweet. He knew he wanted to be a coach, I knew I wanted to be a player.

He didn't want to put on the dad role – I didn't want to put on the daughter role. It wasn't like stuff that we were trying to do – it was just natural. At first, it would kind of be like, 'Oh, he's saying this to me and being hard on me because he's my dad,' but the more mature I became and the older I got, the more I understood. He's just been in this profession and he's been in his career. We kind of understood one another in so many ways. It wasn't bad at all."

BSB: What would you say to people who were critical of having him on the staff?

Mitchell: "I don't have any problem with defending him or letting anybody know about my dad's credibility – Coach Mitch's worth is what I call it. He's a true basketball mind with the way he studies the game on a day-to-day basis. You'd be surprised with how much film he watches and how much he breaks down the game. You'd be surprised. When you see it first off, he was at Ohio State. But he definitely helped us in so many ways. He's behind the scenes, but he was one of the integral parts to us winning the Big Ten tournament and the conference last year."

BSB: Now that he's back in Cincinnati, which is only about an hour away from where you play your WNBA home games in Indianapolis, how much do you enjoy having him and the rest of your family in attendance to watch you play during your new chapter?

Mitchell: "I enjoy seeing him and my whole family. I always enjoy seeing them still, and I enjoy it because I can just tell being by myself, and I see it's a great thing. So whenever they come and I hear his voice in the stands, it never fails."

BSB: Have you been able to reflect on the successful career you had on the court at Ohio State?

Mitchell: "Not really, to be honest with you. I haven't. It's been a quick turnaround. I actually haven't had time off. The wheels are still turning. I think once I actually take some time and kind of like be with family and have some fun – not that basketball isn't fun, but it's just about picking a time to take off and then I think I'll be able to reflect a lot more. I've definitely been grateful of Ohio State, though. I made so many memories, good and bad."

"I just kind of like stay stuck into what I'm focused on and let that be it. I try not to think too far ahead."

BSB: Two months into your rookie WNBA season, which started almost immediately after your senior NCAA season, how did you adapt to that quick turnaround?

Mitchell: "The adjustment has just been about picking my dos and don'ts. I'm learning, the more and more I play, about stuff that I can and can't do. I think the most important thing I've learned is knowing personnel. I know, in terms of personnel what a (Los Angeles Sparks guard) Chelsea Gray does or a (Phoenix Mercury guard) Diana Taurasi does, how they come off of ball screens. Defensively



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KELSEY MITCHELL

and offensively, it's just been about knowing personnel at the next level. It has changed for me because it's just important, it's just important. You're going to get exposed if you don't know the personnel."

BSB: Did you have a favorite WNBA player you looked up to while growing up that you're now playing against?

Mitchell: "Not necessarily. But the older I've gotten, the more I kind of want to focus on basketball. All throughout high school, I would say (guard) Cappie Pondexter, for sure."

(Editor's note: Pondexter was waived by Los Angeles before signing with Indiana on July 1.)

BSB: Do you anticipate that you might play overseas once your WNBA season ends?

Mitchell: "Right now, I'm not sure. But if I'm given the opportunity, I'm definitely going to go. I haven't really focused on it too much, to be honest."

BSB: Physically, how have you been able to keep active, playing basketball almost nonstop since last fall?

Mitchell: "Honestly, it's just been for the whole love-of-the-game attitude. I'm trying not to think too much about all of the tiredness, the tired days and just keep focusing on how much you enjoy it and how much it makes you happy."

BSB: What did you gain from your latest experience with Team USA?

Mitchell: "It was definitely a learning experience in a positive way. I got a chance to meet and talk to people like (Minnesota Lynx guard) Seimone Augustus and (Minnesota Lynx center) Sylvia Fowles and Diana Taurasi on a personal level. I just got to interact with them, get to know one another. On the court, it's the same way. I got to witness some of that greatness."

BSB: After the early exit from the NCAA tournament, how difficult was it to watch the Final Four take place in Columbus without Ohio State in it?

Mitchell: "It was definitely a heartbreaking moment, only because you work so hard trying to get there. For four years, you try to repeatedly make it. All you want is to be one of those teams. You want to bust the bracket, but then you just don't meet that requirement. Knowing it was my senior year, it could have been one of the best memories ever had we made it to the Final Four. But we didn't, so you just chalk it up for what it is and learn from it."

BSB: Reuniting with former Ohio State forward Stephanie Mavunga, whom the Indiana Fever selected with the 14th overall pick in the second round of the 2018 WNBA draft, what has that been like?

Mitchell: "Me and Steph, man, we are total opposites. But we balance each other out because we are opposites. And with that being said, we kind of balance each other out from an on-and-off-the-court perspective. She helps me. I help her. If she misses something, she lets me know. If I miss something, I let her know. I think it's made us closer, and I'm happy, definitely, to be on this journey with her."

BSB: Among the accomplishments you have had on and off the court, what does graduating from Ohio State mean to you?

Mitchell: "I can put that into so many words. All I can say is at this point, I'm grateful. Before four years, I could've easily just said, 'I'll come back and get my degree, I'll come back and do this,' but I chalked it up for what it was and I was definitely happy that I could attend graduation and have my family come and support me. I was able to have people such as my parents and my grandparents, the ones who made all of these sacrifices, come and see me walk across the college stage. So it was definitely a grateful moment. It was just enjoyable, to be honest."



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OSU Sprung Csuri To Success Beyond Football

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Charles “Chuck” Csuri initially became known at Ohio State for his years on the gridiron, but the career paths he pursued after football brought him groundbreaking success.

As a child of the Great Depression, Csuri weathered the upbringing of poverty and served for the United States in World War II before his breakthrough began on campus in Columbus. With an aggressive motor to offset his undersized stature, Csuri developed into a multiyear starting offensive tackle for the Buckeyes. He was voted MVP by his teammates, team captain and an All-American in 1942 when OSU won the program’s first national championship, going 9-1 overall and 5-1 in the Big Ten.

While he has since been recognized for that season and the accolades it brought on the field, Csuri became best known for pioneering in the field of computer graphics, computer animation and digital fine art. Considered by Smithsonian Magazine to be the “father of digital art and computer animation,” Csuri graduated from Ohio State in 1947 with his bachelor’s degree in education, followed in 1948 with his master’s degree in fine art.

Csuri is a professor emeritus of art education and computer and information science at Ohio State, where he established the Advanced Computing Center for Arts and Design (ACCD) as one of the world’s first computer art, animation teaching and research programs. With an intellectual curiosity for computers and technology coupled with his art background, Csuri intertwined his work with art and computer science in the 1960s, beginning his creation of computer graphics and computer-animated films in 1965. Between 1971-87, Csuri also founded the Computer Graphics Research Group and the Ohio Super Computers Graphics Project. He co-founded Cranston/Csuri Productions (CCP), which was one of the world’s first computer animation production companies.

Born in West Virginia and raised in Cleveland before he came to Ohio State, Csuri still resides in Columbus today. He recently

discussed his trailblazing journey from football to war and arts and computers in a conversation with BSB.

BSB: Your successful careers across multiple fields started at Ohio State, where you also happened to play football. Ultimately, what led you to the university?

Csuri: “I went out for football my sophomore year (of high school at Cleveland West Tech) because my older brother played football – so that’s what younger brothers do. And then I got cut from the squad because I was too small. Then the next year, over the next year, I gained about 30 pounds. So my junior year I played football and did reasonably well. In my senior year, I started putting things together. My high school coach was the brother of the assistant football coach at Ohio State, and I had never even considered going to college. I didn’t even think it was possible. He saw me play in high school. Although I didn’t get any awards as a player – I didn’t make all-city or anything like that – he said, ‘You know, I think you could make it at Ohio State,’ I said, ‘Really? OK.’

So he set it up that I could get to Ohio State and that’s how I got to Ohio State – because of coincidence, just sort of being at the right place at the right time with the right person. Then when I got to Ohio State, I was very apprehensive about what was going to happen to me because here I was, born in West Virginia. I lived there until I was 10 years of age. It was coal-mining country. My father was a coal miner and there was a lot of poverty. I really was a child of the depression, as were many of my teammates, and so I didn’t know what to expect. It was a bit overwhelming for me. The high school I went to wasn’t particularly a good high school, where the kids were primarily there for vocational education and the idea of college wasn’t something very remote. Only the wealthy kids got to go.

“But I’ll never forget the first day I had the scrimmage. Within five minutes, I knew I

could make the (Ohio State) team because of the way contact was made and I knew that I could handle whatever I was faced with, so it gave me a lot of confidence. As time went on, especially in academia, my first two years were a bit difficult. I had to play catch-up because I didn’t really have a good educational background. By my junior year, I was up to full speed and did really well. I made A’s my junior, senior year and from that point on I was OK. But it was, academically, a battle the first two years. But it was a time when you had no help like the kids get today, have tutors and everything like that. You were on your own. But anyway, that’s sort of where it started.”

BSB: You played for the legendary Paul Brown, who was the head football coach at Ohio State from 1941-43. What do you remember from your experience under him? What was he like on a daily basis?

Csuri: “Paul Brown was one of these people that when he walked into the room, he had this presence – he had an aura about him. You had the feeling he was important, even before he opened his mouth. So there were very few people like that, but he was one of them. He was very organized, very innovative, very imaginative and a great psychologist in a way that related to players. He knew how to push the button to get me to work, so I was very impressed by him as a person. I immediately had respect for what he had to say and his so-called authority. It was a great experience.

“I remember we were going to go to Los Angeles. In those days, you went to Los Angeles by train. You didn’t fly. We took the train called the Super Chief from Chicago all the way across the country. It was one of the greatest trips of my life because I’d never been out of Ohio and here we were on all of these cars going all the way across the country. We had private dining cars, sleeping cars and it was an ideal way to travel. We didn’t stop anywhere any more than we had to, so we weren’t picking up passengers or anything like that and the team went all the way to Los Angeles. It was a fantastic trip. I loved it. It was a way to see the country.

“But the week before we went, Paul started talking to me about this tackle I was going to play opposite of. I was very light as a tackle. I only weighed about 210. I was the lightest tackle in the Big Ten. The only reason I played tackle was because they needed somebody that was aggressive.

“Even though I was brought in as an end, I was apparently able to show signs of aggression that they liked in somebody that could play tackle. So at tackle – I really wasn’t big enough to play tackle, but I learned how to play it – (Brown) told me I was going to go up against a guy who weighed 250. In those days, that was big. I was really scared that I was going to get killed by this guy. I worked my butt off all week going into the game. When I got into the game, I really clobbered the guy. I just let loose and I let him have it. I hit him so hard I knocked him out of the game. That’s one of the nicest things that’s happened to me playing football. It was against the University of Southern California in 1941 (a 33-0 win by Ohio State on Oct. 4 at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum).

“It’s a joke that I went up against him. I was a peewee. There was a ceremony here in Columbus honoring the 100 best players from Ohio State somewhere in downtown, 2007 or 2005. We had to go up on stage by position and

when they called for tackles, I walked up on the stage and all of the guys standing and waiting said, ‘Are you sure you’re in the right place?’ I was with these guys who were 300 and sometimes 400 pounds because they gained weight. They looked at me, this peewee, like, ‘What are you doing here? You’re in the wrong place.’ The game, it is such a different deal. We played both ways, we didn’t have a face mask and blocking was different. The way people block today would be considered illegal when I played.”

BSB: You played for Brown, but Woody Hayes was a legend in his own right when he was the head football coach at Ohio State from 1951-78. Did you ever compare the two? What did you think about Hayes?

Csuri: “Well, he was a complicated person for me because the feelings I had about him were that he had a temperament that I could not relate to. I didn’t particularly like him. On the other hand, I met many of his former players over the years. They were very high on him and they thought a great deal of him. So I had very mixed feelings, more based upon impressions of former players and my own personal impression, because I just didn’t like that kind of personality. He had a kind of bravado, very emotional and I thought it was kind of silly. But anyway, that was my impression. I’m not saying I had the accurate impression. That’s just the way I felt about it.”

BSB: So Brown wasn’t really like Hayes? How was he different?

Csuri: “He was the calm person. He didn’t get outrageous. He didn’t jump up and down and curse and yell. I mean, he would just give you a dirty look or give you a gesture. It was a totally different style of coaching. Way different.”

BSB: After you were on Ohio State’s first national championship team in 1942, you and your teammates had successful careers beyond football. How much did Brown factor into the development of his players on and off the field?

Csuri: “I think there were circumstances that it was more like the following – most of the guys on my team, mostly all of them graduated from college except one on the entire squad. Most of us were children of the Great Depression. This was the depression where there was about 25 percent unemployment. We were poor, so the opportunity to go to college was just fantastic – at least for me, but I think it was the same with these other players. Our primary focus I think really was one of college education and career, and we didn’t think in terms of football. Nobody thought about going and playing professional football. It was just something that happened after World War II and especially when television became the medium of the society. It’s the same as everything. The idea of professional football, it was something that was remotely in people’s backgrounds. But I don’t think anybody even thought about it after World War II. A few of them on my team did play professional football.”

BSB: As the first Ohio State player in program history to win the Heisman Trophy in 1944, Les Horvath was one notable member of the team. What was it like playing with him?

Csuri: “I know that, but on the other hand, he was a second-stringer on our squad because there were other players that were better than him. He went to dental school, so he was able to play football. He didn’t go into the war. On our squad, he was a second-string player. There was a guy named Paul Sarringhaus who was a better halfback than Les Horvath, but he never made Heisman. (Horvath) just





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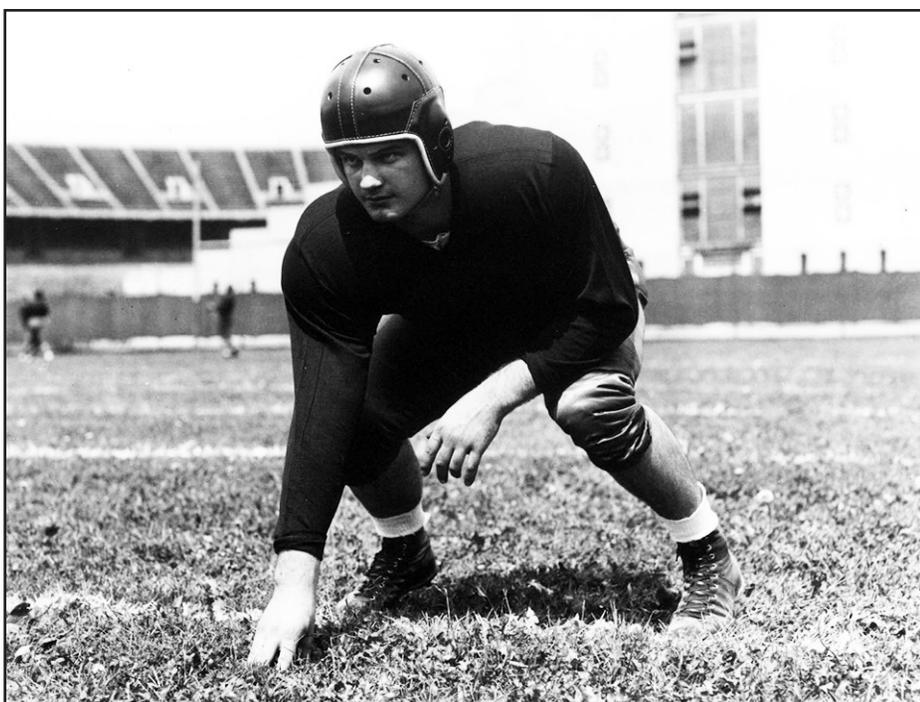


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COURTESY OF OSU ATHLETICS

HISTORIC SUCCESS – Charles “Chuck” Csuri was team captain and MVP when Ohio State won its first national title in 1942.

happened to decide to go to dental school and that’s just the way that it worked out for him. Same thing with Don Steinberg, who was on our team – he went to medical school.

“Regarding Les, I could tell you a story. This is one of my treasured stories. Les Horvath’s father and Gene Fekete’s father and my father were all Hungarians. They came from Hungary and all spoke Hungarian. My brother arranged for my father to attend an Ohio State-Pittsburgh football game in 1942. They seated our fathers on the sidelines.

“At one point in the game, we were close to them – somewhere on the 20-, 25-yard line – and (former fullback/linebacker) Gene Fekete in Hungarian yells to his father, ‘Hey, pop. Watch this play.’ Here are these Hungarians – my father had never seen a football game in his entire life. He had no idea what the hell was going on. He was sitting there smoking cigars – all three of them were smoking the cigars – and Fekete yells and says to watch him. Dammit, he runs for one of the longest plays from the line of scrimmage for a touchdown (89 yards, the longest OSU play from scrimmage until Kenny Guiton connected with Devin Smith for a 90-yard touchdown in 2013). You couldn’t have written a better script. It was just fantastic. I just treasure that story, that experience.”

BSB: Are there any other stories that come to mind when you remember playing at Ohio State?

Csuri: “One story was one of those crazy things when you block a kick. I’d never blocked a kick in my entire life except for the Michigan game (a 21-7 win over the then-No. 3 Wolverines on Nov. 21, 1942). I blocked one kick in my entire career, (blocking it at the UM 35 and setting up the Buckeyes’ first scoring drive of the game) and it made me famous. Six inches, one way or another, and I wouldn’t have been famous (laughs). That was another high point.”

BSB: Was the rivalry between Ohio State and Michigan as big then as it is now?

Csuri: “It was intense. Oh, yeah. It’s probably gotten more intense because of the media hype, but it was pretty intense. We didn’t need any special motivation. We just knew it was an important game, and we just were up to it. That’s all.”

BSB: Looking around at your team, did you think those guys would become so successful after football? A lot of you did.

Csuri: “No, not really, not really. I don’t

think I even thought in those terms. I didn’t have that type of vision, not at that age. There were people I liked very much. There was a camaraderie that was fantastic and that was great, and that went on for a very long time. But as to whether they would be successful – a lawyer or doctor – I never thought about those terms. I wasn’t that forward thinking when I was that young. I really wasn’t.”

BSB: Don Steinberg, who was a teammate of yours as you mentioned, wrote “Expanding Your Horizons: College Football’s Greatest Team,” featuring you and your teammates’ lives on and off the field. Five pages were exclusively on you. Did you know that former Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel (2001-10) used to make his teams read that book?

Csuri: “I know Jim very well. I know the book very well, yes. I guess Tressel did, I understand he did and I know a lot of people still read it. I keep getting people coming and calling for me to sign the book. I don’t know where they’re getting copies of it, but somebody does and it seems to have a life of its own.”

BSB: When you still have people calling and asking you to sign that book, what does that mean to you?

Csuri: “It’s nice, it’s very flattering and you like it. Once in a while, it gets to be a nuisance. But that’s mainly because of depending on what I’m doing and the time I have. Sometimes people hit me at the wrong time and it’s a little awkward, but most of the time it works out well.”

BSB: On the 1942 national championship team, the ethnic diversity was so much different than it is today. Back then, it was such a predominantly white game. From your perspective, what was it like?

Csuri: “(Offensive tackle) Bill Willis was the only black player. He was fantastic, he was a great guy and he was a great personality. I related very well to him. I think mostly everybody did. But in hindsight, as I think about it, he had an enormous amount of pressure because he was the only black player on the team. He had to be Mr. Nice Guy. In other words, he couldn’t swear, he couldn’t act like the rest of us because he was black. I mean, he had a rule that was different. When we went on a road trip, he couldn’t go to the hotel with us. They had to find special housing for him. In hindsight, I don’t know how the hell he did that. And what the coaches had to deal with, with the kind of prejudice that was prevalent at

the time. But Bill was a person that was super. That guy, I really liked him.”

BSB: Was he someone you and your team collectively embraced?

Csuri: “Oh, yes. I think, across the board, everybody liked Bill. Bill had such a fantastic, natural athletic ability. In fact, he was so quick and strong – that was one of his problems. He would overcharge. He had to be taught to restrain himself to play the game more efficiently. It was kind of weird, but he was super strong.”

BSB: Willis went on and played professionally with the Cleveland Browns. How influential was Brown, who coached there from 1946-62, in presenting that opportunity?

Csuri: “I really don’t know the particulars of that situation at all. I know Brown asked me if I would play pro football for him and I told him I wasn’t interested in playing. I wanted to go to graduate school. I was affected by the war. After World War II, World War II dissipated whatever macho I had before World War II. After going into combat and seeing the consequences of war, I just did not have the same mind-set. I played my senior year because of social pressure, but I really did not want to play football. I was finished. It was enough.”

BSB: World War II is a tough time to draw from your memories, but what do you remember? How difficult was the transition from war to football when you went back to Ohio State?

Csuri: “I think it’s the regimentation, the discipline of war and military life that is so different from anything you’ve ever experienced. So that’s a real adjustment, trying to get used to that. But in my case, I was luckier than some people. I went to basic training in Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and even to this day, I remember my army serial number. Which is bizarre, but I do and that’s the way it goes – 15307118 is my army serial number.

“But then they decided we needed some more engineers, so I went to engineering school. Here I had the art background, but the military decided I’d be a good engineer. So I was sent to the Newark College of Engineering (one of the oldest and largest professional engineering schools in the country, now named the New Jersey Institute of Technology) and I was there for a little over a year while I was in the military service, taking calculus, analytical geometry, physics and stuff like that.

“In hindsight, I was very lucky because it turned out to be a great education for me (while training to become an officer). It helped me in terms of career choices and things I wanted to do. After, then they decided, ‘No, time’s up, we need more people in Europe,’ so they suspended the program and they shipped me off to Europe into combat. So my career to be an officer was circumvented by the war and that’s what happened to me.”

BSB: After World War II, you go from veteran to football player and then artist. Did you ever anticipate doing what you did as a career?

Csuri: “No, not really. I didn’t really think it

through. When I think about what could have happened to me, what could have happened to me is I could have graduated with an art degree and then discovered that I couldn’t make a living and then I would have ended up selling cars. I probably would have been a car salesman. But it turned out for me – luckily, for me – that I had the ability to communicate to people about art so the faculty decided to add me as a teacher. So I was given the opportunity to teach at Ohio State. Fortunately, I was able to take advantage of that and my career turned out very well.

But had it not been for that, I don’t know what would have happened to me. My life would have been totally different. It would have been a different story – and not a very pretty story, I don’t think, because I don’t think I could have made it as an artist, not in Columbus, Ohio. If I had been more knowledgeable, I might have moved to New York but not Columbus. Especially in the ‘40s and ‘50s, it simply was not the place to be.”

BSB: What made you want to pursue art? After that, what compelled you to get involved in computers?

Csuri: “The art thing came very naturally. I found out that I had an itch for art when I was extremely young, when I was 10 years of age. I had a brother that was 11 years older than me. He saw that I had a great interest in art, so he arranged for me to go to Cleveland Art School Saturday morning classes when I was 10 years of age. So for two, three years, I went to Saturday morning classes and I used to wander around the art museum. So my interest in art came very early and when I came to Ohio State, I had to decide on a major and I knew that’s just what I liked so that’s how I happened to end up in it.

“The computer is a different story. When I was on faculty at Ohio State – you have to remember, back in the ‘50s, Ohio State was more like 20,000 students. There were 25 (thousand) at the most. It was smaller, a different kind of environment. It was easier to connect with people, other faculty members. Among the people I connected with was Jack Mitten, who was a professor in industrial engineering. He and his family and my family became very close.

“I’ll never forget, it was sometime in the ‘50s, Jack, we were visiting him and he came home and he said, ‘Damn, the computer went down.’ I said, ‘The computer? What fell down? What’s a computer? It does what?’ I thought it was some kind of creature that I had never heard of. Then I said, ‘Well, what does it do? How does it do that?’ One question after another. Those questions weren’t answered in a day.

“But over 30 years, I would have this dialogue about a computer and what it does. In the early years, computers did not do graphics. There was no graphics output. People hadn’t even thought of it. But over a period of years, because of my dialogue and exchanges with Jack Mitten, I got a conceptual background and framework for how the computer works and what it could do. We thought about the computer as being an intelligent machine, a philosopher but not as an artist.

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Csuri Pioneered Computer Graphics After Football

Continued From Page 15

"Then one day I was looking at The Lantern, the student newspaper. There on the front page was a picture of a computer, processed by a computer through some engineering student who had taken a special typewriter that had nine grade-level keys and they figured out a way to make it type keys representing points on a surface that looked like a face.

"When I saw that, it just blew my mind. I saw the implications immediately because I had this background. The combination I had – some background in mathematics, nothing serious but enough – and my dialogue and background and discussions with Jack made me realize that this had great potential. So I went to the electrical engineering department and met with the students, they walked me through the process of what they did and I learned a great deal.

"I came home after this and I said to my wife, 'I'm going to study computer programming.' My wife, who's an artist, said, 'What? You're out of your mind. OK, go ahead.' So I signed up for computer programming and there was one computer on the entire campus, one mainframe, and that was how I began."

BSB: It was such an unknown. What was it like, the thrill of not knowing what you were getting into?

Csuri: "It was pretty bizarre. It was crazy because at the time, I made that decision. I was a full-time professor, I had tenure and I was the only faculty member that hadn't chosen New York City. I had a gallery deal at the time. So in a way, I had some leverage. I was very isolated. There was nobody I could talk to about it. I could not get into a dialogue with anybody. I had to make up fantasy questions and ask myself, 'Why are you doing this?' So I had to play games with my own mind on why I was

doing something because there was nobody to talk to and I did this for a long time.

"With some help, some computer programmers at the computer center, I made some pictures. Then, quite by accident, I discovered a magazine article about somebody in Germany who made a picture with a computer. I went, 'Oh, my God. Somebody else is really the greatest in the world.' I then submitted a picture to a publication and they reproduced it. Then things just sort of snowballed after that.

"But I couldn't tell you what it was like. It was just something that I can't communicate, what it was like to be in that place in time when you come up with an idea that nobody understands but you believe it has good potential and people think you're crazy to do it. But to do it in spite of that, you believe it, and that's what I did because I was convinced this way the way it was going to go."

BSB: Let's go back to 1942 right now.

Could you even conceive the idea of a computer?

Csuri: "There was no way. I wouldn't say anybody could. Things were ongoing in the underground, so to speak, with the military and with people trying to figure out how to interrupt the German communication system. So there were computer ideas beginning to take place during World War II, but it didn't in academia until after World War II. I don't know exactly what year, but it had to be in the '50s."

BSB: When you look at the way computers and technology have advanced since then, how crazy has that been for you to see?

Csuri: "It's fantastic. I mean, there are things I thought that would happen and were going to happen. There were other things that I didn't anticipate ever in this world. It never occurred to me that there would be an Internet or there would be cellphones. That was something that was just beyond my thinking.

"But I knew that computer graphics would have an implication on society, especially in animation. That I was convinced of, and in that case, I think I was right on the money on that one. But I also knew that it would be a very powerful communication tool and that people would start using graphical communication more and more to communicate. It's continued to be. Now, what we're going to see is the role that artificial intelligence is going to play with everything.

"Right now, we're working on a project involving eye tracking where the computer tracks your eyes and what you're looking at. Have you ever heard of the IBM watch and intelligence system? It's an artificial intelligence system that IBM has developed. They're putting it into the public domain and people could have access to it. So we're trying to figure out how to use voice commands and artificial intelligence to make pictures and graphics and animation. I'm presently working on a project with a former student of mine – it's not a big project, it's pretty minor because we don't have any real funding and he's living in San Francisco and I'm in Columbus so we have to communicate by email and telephone.

"That's what I'm saying, I'm still doing basic research in that area. Nothing serious, nothing that I consider very important, but I still have enough intellectual curiosity that I like to see how it works and by doing something."

BSB: How are you doing in your health? You turn 96 on July 4.

Csuri: "I'm still walking, but I have had serious problems. I had two total hip replacements. I go into the gym now with a walker and everyone looks at me strange as hell. Here's a guy coming in with a walker and trying to do weight lifts (laughs). I go to a gym in Powell, Ohio, the YMCA has a nice facility and I just try to work with what I can work out and get in my car and come home."

BSB: How much of Ohio State do you still watch during football season in the fall? What do you think about the team going into 2018?

Csuri: "I watch the games. Yeah, I watch Ohio State games. But I really don't think about it too deep in those terms anymore. It's just simply Ohio State football. I watch it and that's it. I'm told by the paper they're supposed to have a good team, but I don't know what that means. I don't go through the trouble to analyze players and the best player. Occasionally, I will think about and wonder about quarterback controversy and something like that. Like the thing with (Joe) Burrow and the kid (Dwayne Haskins) they finally made the quarterback. I wondered who was the better one, and I had no opinion about it."



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Time At Ohio State Still Vivid In Dials' Memory

By RYAN McGLADE
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Terence Dials witnessed and accomplished a lot during his five years as a member of the Ohio State men's basketball team.

A product of Boardman High School in Youngstown, Ohio, Dials was on the OSU squads that won Big Ten regular-season titles in 2002 and 2006 and the league tournament crown in 2002. As for individual achievements, he was named the 2006 Big Ten Player of the Year after averaging 15.3 points and 8.0 rebounds per game while starting all 32 contests in his final season as a Buckeye. For his collegiate career, he appeared in 132 games (97 starts) and averaged 11.9 points and 6.6 boards per outing. In the midst of all of that was a coaching change, in which he had a significant role. After Ohio State, Dials played professional basketball overseas for nine seasons.

Now three years removed from his career as a basketball player, Dials took some time with BSB to discuss his playing days at the collegiate and professional levels and life beyond the hardwood.

BSB: What do you remember about your recruitment?

Dials: "Obviously, the AAU circuit is where you get seen and the recruitment really happens. They don't really come to your high school to recruit. They catch you on the circuit. I played with some very good basketball players. Jawad Williams, who went to North Carolina, a lot of coaches would come to see him. I happened to be his teammate, so my recruitment started like that.

"I wasn't a big name initially. I joined his team and, because he was so recognized and such a great player, coaches started to notice me as well. I had narrowed it down by the time my senior year came around. I had every school in the Big Ten offer me a scholarship besides Indiana. I probably didn't fit the Bob Knight

mold – whatever that is. I also had offers from Southern California, Pittsburgh and a lot of the MAC schools.

"I committed to Ohio State the summer going into my senior year, July of 2000. It was one of those things where Ohio State had three scholarships available at the time. I think Brandon Fuss-Cheatnam committed first, then Matt Sylvester committed like a day after Brandon committed, and they had one scholarship left. It was one of those things where I think they offered it to a couple people at the time, but Coach (Jim) O'Brien had told me they were waiting on me to make a decision but they couldn't wait long because recruiting is kind of crazy.

"I remember actually being in Detroit when I committed to Coach O'Brien over the phone. I was at my sister's house. My dad, my sisters and that whole side of the family lives in Detroit, Mich., still, so I visit every summer and a lot of the holidays. I always remember being at her house committing to Coach O'Brien."

BSB: Why did you choose Ohio State over the other schools that had offered you?

Dials: "I kind of did it geographically. It was basketball-wise too, but I figured my family in Detroit and my family in Youngstown – it's about 2½ hours from Youngstown and 3½ from Detroit. So it was kind of right in the middle where both sides of my family could see me play without having to catch a flight or anything like that. At the time, Ken Johnson was leaving. He had just graduated, and I felt like I had an opportunity to play right away as a freshman. My best friend from my childhood, who's two years older than me, he was already down at Ohio State, so it just worked out perfectly for me."

BSB: Though you didn't play much your second year at OSU (2002-03) because of a back injury, probably the most memorable game that season was the famous 'Charles Bass Off The Glass' against Michigan State in the semifinals

of the Big Ten tournament where Charles Bass banked a foul shot off the backboard in the final seconds to give Ohio State a 55-54 win. What do you remember about that game?

Dials: "I remember it very well. I didn't travel with the team. I was home watching the game. He was like the worst free-throw shooter we had on the team at the time. Him going to the line, we just kind of knew it was over. Then he surprised us with the off-the-glass shot, which is probably the second-biggest shot I've been a part of while on the team behind Matt Sylvester's big shot against Illinois (see below)."

BSB: After your third year at OSU (2003-04), Jim O'Brien was fired for NCAA violations. How difficult was that for the players on the team?

Dials: "It was a very difficult year. Coach O'Brien had offseason throat surgery entering that year, and his first time being with us was on the flight to go to San Francisco (for the season opener). He missed all of the first month of basketball. We recorded practice and he would watch the videos.

"We also had two new players – Tony Stockman and J.J. Sullinger, who were very, very good at their previous schools (Clemson and Arkansas, respectively) but struggled their very first year playing at Ohio State. We had high expectations for the team just because of those two coming in, me returning from injury, Matt Sylvester returning from injury, so there was a lot of excitement around the program.

"But Coach couldn't really yell at us and couldn't really speak because of his throat. It was a very difficult time and we struggled big time initially. You could kind of see the writing on the wall – from J.J. and Tony struggling, to the whole team struggling, with Coach O'Brien struggling speaking. We finished 15-17, and that was the year he got let go.

"We all met at Randy Shrout's house. He was the director of basketball operations at the time. We met at his house, and Coach O'Brien came out and told us, 'I'm going to get fired today. I just wanted to let you know it's been a pleasure coaching you. I hope you guys do big

things going forward.' It was tough because that's the guy who recruited me, that's who I came to Ohio State to play for. But they couldn't have made a better hire with Thad (Matta). He came in with a lot of energy and changed the program around big time."

BSB: Did you ever consider transferring once O'Brien was fired?

Dials: "No. It wasn't on my mind at all. I never thought for one second to transfer. Quite honestly, I didn't know where to transfer to even if that thought came in my mind. Normally, you want to see who the coach is first before you think about transferring. At the time, I really didn't know Thad. He came out of nowhere from Butler, two years at Xavier, then Ohio State. I didn't even get a chance to learn about him throughout college basketball and watch him. I

was just like, 'You know what, it's a chance for us to start fresh, start new. He doesn't know me, I don't know him, let's go for it.' Staying was the best decision I could've made."

BSB: How did you first meet Matta?

Dials: "I was fortunate enough to be on the hiring committee. They let me sit in on all of the interviews with the coaches and sit in on all of the meetings because I was the captain at the time, and it was an experience. I got to kind of see from step one all the way to the end how you finish the hiring process. I got to see the behind-the-scenes part of it."

BSB: Was there anything from Matta's interview that you still remember?

Dials: "It's kind of a blur, the interview process. I do remember his excitement. He actually revealed what type of coach he would kind of be if he got the job. He was my choice. He was young and youthful at the time and was very energetic. He came to the interview with a laid-out plan. I just remember him saying he's going to own Ohio as far as recruiting. That was big for all of the other people on the hiring committee. You always want to own your state, and that was (Matta's) biggest thing. I think he said he wanted to do what (then-Ohio State football head coach Jim) Tressel was doing, in terms of getting all of the top recruits in the state of Ohio first."

BSB: Obviously, Matta's first year at Ohio State included Matt Sylvester's three-pointer to beat No. 1 Illinois, 65-64. How exciting was it to play in that game and hand the Illini their first loss of the season?

Dials: "It was super exciting. To this day, I never saw more media in the building. It looked like an NBA Finals game almost where the baseline had cameras. Every media outlet you could think of was there. It's hard not to get excited for those types of games when you see everybody on the sidelines and baselines with their cameras and news reporters.

"I just remember us being down early and kind of just fighting back and then having that opportunity at the end where Matt can take us home with that big shot. I just remember the crowd rushing the floor. Obviously, that's the biggest game I've probably played in and the most exhilarating game."

BSB: What was the huddle like in the timeout before Sylvester's game-winning shot?

Dials: "We were down two going into the timeout. We were walking to the huddle and Coach Matta was like, 'We're going for the win!' The whole bench and the players in the game, we got so pumped up that it was hard for us to pay attention to the play he was drawing up



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because we were just so hyped. He drew up an excellent play.

“But what I remember most is – my point guard at the time was Brandon Fuss-Cheatham. We’re walking out on the floor after Coach Matta just drew up this great play. We get on the floor and Brandon, who was just in the huddle with me, was like, ‘What am I supposed to do?’ I’m like, ‘What? Dude, we just went over the play. Just stand right there.’ I remember watching everybody’s spots (while Matta drew up the play) because that’s the type of player I was. I just wanted to know where everybody was.

“I remember watching where (Fuss-Cheatham) was, so I was able to tell him where he was supposed to be. I was like, ‘It shouldn’t be like this. You’re the point guard. You should know where everybody is.’ It was vice versa. He was so nervous he couldn’t even think straight.”

BSB: What are your thoughts about how things ended between Ohio State and Matta last year?

Dials: “At first, I was a little bit bitter. I’m not going to lie. I love Thad. That’s my guy. He didn’t recruit me, but we ended up having a great relationship. We still text from time to time now, we’re still in communication. His family was great. I knew his wife and daughters. It was like a family, so, of course, I’m going to be upset.

“It was just a weird timing. At one moment, they say he’s going to coach one more year, he’s going to be extended or whatever. Then the very next day or two hours later it was like Thad is fired or resigned or something like that. I’m like, ‘What? I literally just got a message saying he’s going to coach this year. Now they’re saying he’s not?’ I didn’t like how it went.

“If you’re going to fire someone or force him to resign, do it in a timely manner. That was in June, and they were like, ‘OK, now we can fire

him.’ Most coaches you probably wanted to go after are gone at that time. It was peculiar timing. I still don’t know behind the scenes what was going on and why they decided to do it at that time instead of maybe in March right after the season was over with.”

BSB: You and many other former OSU players gathered at Matta’s house last summer after he was let go and threw a surprise party for him. How did that idea come about?

Dials: “We all put it together. After he got fired, we were like, ‘Let us have one more get-together as a group, as guys, as boys. That’s our guy.’ He didn’t know anything about it. His wife worked hard with us to get it going. We tried to make sure every player he coached was in town at the time. That’s the toughest thing, trying to get all of the players who played for him in one place at one time. You’ve got guys overseas, you’ve got guys in the NBA doing different things and everybody has family. So that was the most difficult thing, getting everybody together. After that, it was awesome.

“We were going to take a picture, and he told us to hold on. He goes in the house for like five minutes and comes out with all of these rings and said, ‘Now we can take the picture.’ He looked like (11-time NBA champion) Bill Russell with all the rings. It was a cool moment.”

BSB: Do you think Matta will get back into coaching?

Dials: “Personally, no. That’s my personal opinion. I have not spoken with him about that, so I don’t know. I just think coaching took a toll on him physically and mentally. Thirteen years at one place. He’s got more than enough money to where he can just chill and watch his daughters run track and cross country. One daughter is already in college at Butler.

“I know it’s under his contract he has to actively seek a position for him to get paid. I

think that’s part of the clause. So when you see his name float around, I honestly don’t think it’s all that serious. I just think he has to do that for his buyout or whatever the case was.”

BSB: Moving to Matta’s successor, what are your thoughts of Chris Holtmann after one year?

Dials: “I love the guy. I love his demeanor, his attitude, his personality. He has a quiet confidence about himself. He’s not very loud. But he’s a very confident guy and very mellow when he needs to be.

“He did a fantastic job with the group that we had coming back this past year. I think he exceeded everyone’s expectations in Columbus and outside of Columbus. I don’t think anyone would have thought that team would have done what it did.

“I’m very hopeful for the future. I’m looking forward to it, especially once he starts to get his guys in there, the guys that he recruited, the guys that he sees a vision for. I think it will be very good for the program.”

BSB: After your Ohio State career, you played professional basketball overseas for nine years in Europe and China. What was that like?

Dials: “Two different games. The Chinese game is more about entertainment and fits more of the NBA mold. European is just basketball at your purist sense. It’s all about ball movement, getting stops. It’s not really a show-boat type of league.

“The Chinese league, they love dunks, they love crazy three-pointers, crazy passes. They give you bonuses in your contracts for dunks and stuff like that, that’s how important it is to them and the fans. Very much different, even the living.

“In Europe, you get a house or an apartment, you get a car and you’re on your own. China, you live in a very nice hotel, you have a driver

and you have a translator with you because not one person speaks English over there. It’s just a little bit different.”

BSB: What have you been doing since you retired from basketball?

Dials: “I’m in sales for a compounding pharmacy called Shields. I call doctors and speak to doctors about using our services as a compounding pharmacy. I like the gig because I’m on the road, I make my own hours, I’m not stuck in a chair all day and I’ve got some flexibility. I coach my daughter’s basketball team as well. So if I were to have a 9-5 job, that would be difficult.”

BSB: Obviously, you have a family. Do you still live in the Columbus area?

Dials: “We’re in Gahanna. My daughter is going into her freshman year of high school. I have another daughter going into her sixth-grade year of middle school. It’s a very big year because they’re both starting new schools. It’s like a transition year for us.”

BSB: Looking back, how beneficial was it for you to go to Ohio State?

Dials: “I couldn’t have picked a better school. The fan support that you have here at Ohio State is just top-notch. Then the support afterwards. I still get recognized in public here in Columbus, and it’s kind of weird to me that they still remember me because I haven’t played in so long.

“Sometimes I’ll hear whispers, ‘I think that’s Terence Dials.’ They’re supposed to be whispering but I can hear them. It’s like, ‘How do you even know it’s me? I haven’t played on TV in so long.’ Those are the true Buckeyes, those are the ones who really follow the program and followed everything that the basketball team did. I appreciate those types of fans. The love that we receive from them, it was great. Getting an education at Ohio State, you can’t get a better one. It was a win-win situation.”

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Grimmer Made Most Of 2nd US Open Chance

By **TIM MOODY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Every golfer dreams of teeing it up in the U.S. Open, but most never get the chance. Ohio State's Will Grimmer, though, has had that rare opportunity twice already, and he's not even done with his collegiate career.

Grimmer, a senior-to-be for the Buckeyes, advanced through local and sectional qualifying to earn his spot in the 2018 U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills in South Hampton, N.Y., marking his second trip to America's national championship. He previously qualified for the 2014 U.S. Open at Pinehurst No. 2 before he had even arrived in Columbus.

While he missed the cut in his first attempt at the U.S. Open, Grimmer shot rounds of 3-over 72 and 2-over 72 at Shinnecock to make the cut before struggling on the weekend with rounds of 78 and 80 to finish in 66th place and third among amateurs in the field.

Grimmer made the cut ahead of one of his childhood favorites, Tiger Woods, and other superstar golfers such as Rory McIlroy, Jordan Spieth and Columbus-area resident Jason Day.

A few days after the U.S. Open concluded, Grimmer, a Cincinnati native, took some time to speak with BSB about his experience playing at golf's highest level, his start in the game and his future plans after his Ohio State career comes to an end.

BSB: How did you get your start in golf?

Grimmer: "So I started when I was about 4, 5, 6, just being around my dad growing up watching on TV and just – we'd go out to the course on the weekends and the afternoons. I always just really liked and was drawn toward the game and just picked it up at a very early age."

BSB: Were there any golfers in particular you looked up to when you were younger?

Grimmer: "Tiger for sure, Phil (Mickelson) for sure. Once I got to probably like 10, 12, a little older, definitely Matt Kuchar and some others. But as a really young kid, watching Tiger and then Jack Nicklaus as well and Arnold Palmer, even though they were before my time, I saw highlights and stuff of what they've accomplished."

"Some of the former players to look up to but then the current players when I was growing up, Tiger was definitely my favorite."

BSB: At what point did you realize you could play golf at a pretty high level?

Grimmer: "That's kind of been a progressive thing with me. Growing up it was kind of making it out of the region and playing in stuff like the U.S. Kids World Championship was a huge deal. And then it was playing in the (American Junior Golf Association tournament) ... it was those different things as a junior."

"It was kind of realizing that by the time I got to middle school and into high school that I could play at the collegiate level and then now as I'm progressing at the collegiate level realizing that now I can play at the professional level. It's kind of just been a progressive thing for me. I wouldn't say there was any one point where I was like,

'Yeah, I can do this.' I just feel like I've continued to get better and continued to have more and more belief in my game and where I'm going."

BSB: Do you have an earliest memory of watching the U.S. Open?

Grimmer: "I don't know if it would be one in particular but I remember being 5 and 6 years old and watching, like Bethpage Black in 2002, I was probably like 5 then. Just because with Tiger winning that, that was like the peak of his dominance. I can't say I remember any specific shot that he hit, but I just remember being young, being kind of drawn to the game and just the fact that Tiger was kind of the center of attention in the golf world and that was cool to me and he was cool. So I think that that's what kind of really drew me at a young age, watching that and watching him and his dominance."

BSB: What was your recruiting process like and what made you settle on Ohio State?

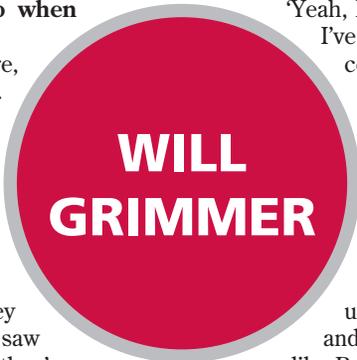
Grimmer: "Actually, my very first college

visit was the spring of my freshman year of high school. I went up and met with Donnie Darr, who was the coach at the time, and we had lunch up at Ohio State Golf Club and we sat behind the 18th green and watched the guys come in, they were having a qualifier that day, and we just sat and talked probably for about an hour and got to know him, walked around the course and the facility that day.

"I ended up visiting a lot of schools over the next several years and had a lot of really good opportunities, but there's something about Ohio State that just kind of always really attracted me. The golf course was impressive and the program. I really liked the school and I remember going up for a football game for the first time and that was an incredible experience. They were playing Wisconsin at night back when Braxton Miller was still there, and that was a really good game. Just so many things about it that really drew me to it."

"I thought I always wanted to go south when I was younger because of the warmer weather and have the opportunity to play year-round, but Ohio State built that facility, which was right as I was going through the recruiting process and getting close to making my decision. That really impressed me, and aside from everything else that Ohio State had to offer, having the facility where I'd be able to practice year-round was the ultimate sell for me as far as choosing to be a Buckeye."

BSB: You first qualified for the U.S. Open in 2014. Was that the first time you tried to go through the process?



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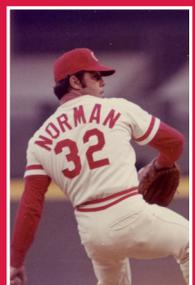
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NATIONAL STAGE – Ohio State senior golfer Will Grimmer competed in the 2014 and 2018 U.S. Opens.

Grimmer: “It was not. I tried the previous two years. That was my third time trying to qualify. I was a junior going into my senior year of high school. I made it through – I was the last spot in locals that year – made it in a three-for-one playoff just to get in sectionals. “So that was my first sectional qualifier and went up and shot 70-65, 5-under par and got the second spot and ended up making it to the Open, which was a very cool experience.”

BSB: What was your first impression when you first got to Pinehurst that week?

Grimmer: “It was surreal. At the time, still in high school, obviously still playing a lot of high level junior golf, but at that point I hadn’t seen anything remotely close to something of that stature and magnitude. It was an amazing week that week, the amount of fun we had, and I got to play with some very cool people, got to meet some great people, just had an absolute blast.

“No matter how many more U.S. Opens I go to, there will still never be something quite like getting to be there as a 17-year-old. It was a really cool experience and something I’ll remember and cherish for a long, long time.”

BSB: Were you able to play practice rounds with any notable golfers that week?

Grimmer: “In the practice rounds I got to play with like Rickie Fowler, Justin Rose, Kenny Perry, Brooks Koepka, so I got to play with a lot of really cool people that week.”

BSB: Even though you missed the cut the first time around, what did you take out of the 2014 tournament?

Grimmer: “At that point the fact that I was there at 17 and obviously I did struggle but the biggest thing I took away from it was that first round I made five birdies and felt like at times – I shot a 35 on the front nine, which was my back nine in that first round, I felt like overall my game needed to get stronger, needed to get better. It was still a long, long ways from ultimately being where I need to be, but I felt like in spots I really kind of proved to myself and a lot of others that I could compete and I knew that if I kept working hard I had a great opportunity moving forward.

“So it definitely gave me some motivation

to continue to work hard the rest of my junior career and then especially these last few years at the collegiate level.”

BSB: How much confidence did that give you to have that experience under your belt before you even started your career at Ohio State?

Grimmer: “Oh, a ton of confidence. Really, it put my name out there a little bit. It helped give me some exposure and also it did give me some confidence to know that I played at that level and played in the Open, it definitely gave me a little bit of added confidence going into freshman year and feeling like I was ready to compete and play in college.”

BSB: You picked up your first collegiate win a couple of years ago back in your hometown at the Bearcat Invitational. What was that experience like?

Grimmer: “That was really cool, too. That was special. Fall of sophomore year, I was playing really well, kind of had a good summer that year, too, and just felt like my game was in a good spot and that was the first year – my freshman year we didn’t play in that, it wasn’t a tournament – so that was the inaugural Bearcat Invitational.

“So to be back in my hometown, I was excited to be back in Cincinnati, excited to be playing down there and to win that even on a course I was very familiar with was really very cool. Especially to have family and friends that were out there, it was a special week for sure.”

BSB: What are some of the top highlights from your Ohio State career so far?

Grimmer: “Big Tens the last couple years have been great. I finished fourth this year, and I finished runner-up last year – I lost by a stroke. Baltimore Country Club, it was a really cool spot, and I’ve really enjoyed going there the last several years.

“There have been – Pebble Beach, getting to play there, that’s been really special. We got to play there the last three years. That’s been really special memories for us.

“From a playing perspective, for me, a lot of my favorite memories in college golf have just been some of the places we’ve gotten to go and just the fun that I’ve had with my teammates and the experiences we’ve gotten to share together, which has been a lot of fun. That’s what college golf is all about.”

BSB: What was the qualifying process for the U.S. Open like this year? Was it any different for you since you had done it before?

Grimmer: “It was definitely a goal of mine to get back to the U.S. Open this year. Not that it wasn’t the last few years, but I really felt like this was the year to go do it and felt really good about my game. Really from like mid-April up until this point I felt like I was making a lot of progress with a lot of things I was working on and just had a very calm, confident feeling going into locals and went out and played really solid.

“I didn’t have anything between locals and sectionals so it gave me a really great opportunity to work on a lot of things and get rested and get a lot of good practice in and then went up to sectionals and just got off to a hot start. I was 4-under through eight holes and just played really solid golf the rest of the way to win the qualifier there.

“I just felt very calm and confident, I think the year after I made the Open I put a little bit of added pressure on myself because I so badly wanted to get back that I started being a little hard on myself in that qualifier and it didn’t really do me any good. And then I think even the last couple years at locals I just started pressing too hard when I was down or behind the eight-ball a little bit.

“This year I said, ‘Hey, if you make it, it’s great, but if you don’t, I haven’t made it the last couple years, it’s not a big deal.’ I just really went out and played really good golf.”

BSB: What was your first impression of Shinnecock Hills during the practice rounds?

Grimmer: “It was incredible. I was just floored.

“I heard so many good things, it’s a top-five course in the world, but it’s like anything – rankings are still an opinion so everyone’s got different impressions of different places. I just wasn’t quite sure what to expect, but the second I was on the property I just fell in love with it. It’s one of my favorite golf courses if not my favorite course I’ve ever played. I’d put it right up there with just about anyplace.

“Just gorgeous views, spectacular greens, just a great layout. Everything about it is just phenomenal. I loved it.”

BSB: Did you have a chance leading up to the tournament to meet anyone that really stood out to you?

Grimmer: “I’d met him before, but it was really cool to actually have a few minutes with him more personally, with Jack Nicklaus. I got to spend some time with him on Tuesday afternoon in the Fox Sports booth. And that was really cool, especially with Jack being an Ohio State alum and being from Ohio. I’d met him with our team, we’ve met him a couple times before, but the group setting you don’t really get the chance to actually talk with him or really get to know him or ask him questions. He’s more just kind of talking to the group.

“So it was really cool to get to go in and for him to congratulate me on qualifying again and being there but then also just to kind of talk, and he shared some stories about playing at Shinnecock or just some bits of advice.”

BSB: You had an afternoon tee time during the first round – did you get up early to watch the morning wave on TV?

Grimmer: “Me and my buddy, he caddied for me, we were kind of laughing because we were at our house and sitting up in the loft and we’re watching it and we were just almost kind of laughing because guys like Bubba (Watson) and Jason Day, all these guys were struggling out of the gate. I’m like, ‘Jeez.’

“I played in the practice rounds and I’m feeling pretty confident about being able to go play this course, but then I’m like, ‘These are some of the best players in the world and they’re struggling to break 80 out here.’ And I’m like, we better not be laughing too hard because we’re about to go out and play this thing this afternoon.

“Then I went out and just played really steady the first two rounds and made some great putts and made the cut.”

BSB: You mentioned Woods was one of your idols growing up. What was it like to play in the same tournament as him for the first time?

Grimmer: “It was cool, I was really excited. I remember when the pairings came out a couple days before I got there and saw he was going to be four groups ahead of me off the same tee, that was cool because as a kid, like I said, you grow up looking up to Tiger and the Tiger effect and the crowds. He completely changes the game from a lot of standpoints, from TV, spectators, a whole slew of elements.

“But he’s 21 years older than me. I’m 21 and just trying to get my career rolling over the next couple years, and he’s 42 and still got some time left, but the reality is he’s walking out and I’m walking in, so you don’t know how many chances you’re going to have to be in the field or even play with him. So, yeah, to be there playing in the U.S. Open with him, and then to beat him, is pretty cool.”

BSB: What’s it like to make the cut when guys like Tiger and McIlroy and Jordan Spieth all missed it?

Grimmer: “It was cool. I felt confident in my ability to make the cut going into the week because I knew I was playing really good golf, but at the same time it is the U.S. Open and you are playing against the best players in the world and guys who have won countless TOUR events and major championships. So it was a very gratifying and humbling experience to see myself ahead of some of the bigger names in the game.”

BSB: Once you turn pro after this year, do you have a plan laid out for the best way to do that?

Grimmer: “It’s a process that I’ve been talking out with coaches and my family and everything else, and my plan is just to stay amateur through next summer and play the U.S. (Amateur) next year. And then next fall to go to Web.com Q-school and try to make it on (the Web.com Tour) next fall for 2019.

“And then things can change, opportunities can arise. Playing well in other events will yield other opportunities. But at this point I’m just focusing on what’s in front of me right now.”

BSB: We’ll cap things off with a few quick hitters. First, how old were you when you first shot under par?

Grimmer: “When I first broke par? Maybe 10 or 11 maybe. Again, on a shorter course obviously, and in a few local junior events I shot one or two under par. Probably right around 10 or 11.”

BSB: What’s your lowest competitive round?

Grimmer: “Fifty-nine. I shot 59 in 2013 at the North and South Junior Amateur.”

BSB: Did you win?

Grimmer: “I actually did not. A three-day event, but I did shoot 59.”

BSB: Do you have one course that’s your favorite?

Grimmer: “One that’s my favorite? No, but if I had to kind of give a couple that are in my top few as far as I’ve played tournaments, I’d say Winged Foot, Pinehurst No. 2, Shinnecock and Pebble Beach. I’d put those as my top four courses I’ve played, for sure.”

BSB: Those are all U.S. Open courses.

Grimmer: “(laughs) That’s right.”

Romanoff's OSU Career Spanned 6 Decades

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Larry Romanoff era at Ohio State, which spans six decades, thousands of events and immeasurably more student-athletes, will end Aug. 31 upon his retirement.

As the ultimate behind-the-scenes-guy, Romanoff's involvement at the university began in the late 1960s when one of his duties as student-manager was having replacement eyeglasses at the ready for Woody Hayes when the fiery coach smashed his own in a moment of rage.

Romanoff began a 44-year full-time career at OSU in 1975 in the ticket office before joining the academic counseling division. He was an assistant athletic director in that department and eventually the assistant AD for academics.

Those are just fragments of the work he has done over the years in a variety of areas with the goal of making life better for those he came in contact with, whether it was the athletes he helped or fans attending games on campus.

Among other titles were director of development and director of external Relations for football. He currently is the assistant director for event management.

As he settled into another day of work recently, Romanoff talked to BSB about his many years at Ohio State and what is ahead for the Toledo native.

BSB: How did you get started as a football student manager in 1969?

Romanoff: "When I was in high school I played football as a freshman and I was the smallest guy on the team. They didn't even have a uniform small enough hardly to fit me; 5-foot-1, a hundred and some (pounds). I went out for the team anyway.

"After that my parents said, 'Look, you're too small. You can play baseball and be a manager for the football team.' So I became a manager and when I was a senior in high school I wrote a letter to (coach) Bump Elliott at Michigan. I wrote a letter to Woody Hayes at Ohio State asking if I could be a manager. I never heard from Bump Elliott and he ended up getting fired (to be replaced by Bo Schembechler).

"Woody and his assistant coach, Dave McClain, both wrote me very nice letters saying that they would love to have me come as a manager. My father, who went to Michigan, said, 'Looks like we're rooting for Ohio State from now on.'

"It wasn't a hard choice even though I grew up rooting for That Team Up North."

BSB: What was it like being around the team in 1969 coming off the national championship the previous season when the Buckeyes were led by the "Super Sophomores?"

Romanoff: "What I was amazed by was that there were so many nice guys – Ron Maciejowski, Rex Kern, all them were amazingly nice guys. I could go on and on, John Brockington was very nice. Jack (Tatum) never talked. He just kind of grunted."

BSB: At that point in your life could you ever foresee spending so much time working at Ohio State?

Romanoff: "Not a chance. When I came to school I really wanted to be a child psychologist and talking to people they said you have to do this and go somewhere else to get a master's, then you've got to go somewhere else to get a PhD or you're nothing without it.

"I said I'd go to law school instead so I became a history major with a poli sci and geography minor and started working toward that. I had no idea I'd get into athletics until I my first senior year, I had two senior years, and I heard about Ohio University's sports administration program.

"It was extremely selective. I went out and got 12 letters of recommendation. I was supposed to get three, I sent in 12. I had letters from (sportswriters) Paul Hornung and Kaye Kessler and Woody Hayes, people like that that I'd been around and liked me.

"I got in. That turned me toward athletics. I had always loved athletics. I was a baseball stats junkie and other stuff. I really liked the college scene although my original goal was to get into professional baseball.

"I went down to spring training with the Detroit Tigers in Lakeland, Fla., for a few weeks to work in the ticket office. I said 'Wow, this is so impersonal I'm not doing this.' I wanted to go the college route so I sent out letters and came back and talked to (former athletic administrators and directors) Jim Jones and Hugh Hindman at Ohio State and they both said they want me up here.

"That's how I got started. I went into the ticket office in June of '75 and started running study tables for Jeff Kaplan, who was the academic coordinator. I ran study tables at night for him and worked during the day in the ticket office."

BSB: You've been in different departments and jobs at the university. How has that helped you be a better professional?

Romanoff: "I appreciate and understand all these areas and how hard they're working. A lot of people have no idea what the people in the ticket office do or what the people in academics do or the people in compliance and development and all these other areas do.

"People come to games and they have no idea all the planning that goes into it beforehand and the timing sheets and organization that went on way before the (football) game.

"We're there six hours before the game; on a night game we're there sometimes 12 hours before the game starts. We're there an hour and a half to two hours after the game's over."

BSB: Through all the years I'm sure you've seen many changes in athletics, but first, what's the same? What's been the same thread throughout?

Romanoff: "The student-athletes. We wouldn't have a job if it wasn't for the student-athletes, none of us would. That's the most important resource, the most important asset we have."

BSB: Now, what's changed?

"Social media is one. That's huge. When I came things weren't reported or nobody knew about them. You didn't know who the people were.

"Also, our department was small. We had three assistant ADs and an AD, a ticket director, a business manager. We didn't have marketing. We didn't have development. You didn't have events management help run the games. Our department is 10 times as big as it used to be."

BSB: With more and more technology involved in your work, what's the importance of keeping that personal touch?

Romanoff: "That's what I'm about, totally. I

go to things. I go to practices and events just so I know who the people are and what they're doing and they know me. That's important to me."

BSB: You're mainly associated with football and obviously baseball is a passion, but what other sports do you really enjoy getting out of the office to see at Ohio State?

Romanoff: "Quite a few, actually. As I told, you, I'm a sports junkie. I've helped with soccer over the years, and I've really enjoyed seeing the young ladies come in as freshmen and grow and grow as people and get better and better and then seeing them go on and do great things.

"Then, there's the men's volleyball program. The coaches are as good as you'll find anywhere in the country. They're awe-

some people. They've obviously been very successful (NCAA titles in 2011, '16 and '17) and I've had a close view of that because I've been running their events for a number of years.

"I can go back to the golf team when I got to know Joey Sindelar and John Cook. I've not had as much to do with pistol and rifle, although as good as pistol is, I should have more to do. Our fencing team, I've had several fencers I've gotten close to but not as many as I'd liked.

"Baseball, I know all the players as they've come through, all the football players as they've come through, all the basketball players as they've come through until the last 10 years. I don't know them as well now because I don't deal with them as often.

"Going back to the '91 basketball team and some of the guys on that team, I had a direct effect on the fact that some of them were playing because of the work I did with them (as an academic adviser)."

BSB: How rewarding is that for you?

Romanoff: "You see student-athletes that come in that are poorly trained and have no confidence in themselves when they come in, and you put them in a class with kids that went to outstanding high schools and very good ACT and SAT scores. They're sitting next to a student who understands the teacher and you don't know what's going on.

"You sit with them and say, 'Look, you don't have the same training but you can do this. You play in front of 100,000 people and make split-second decisions when a linebacker is coming at you. You can do that. You memorized an entire playbook. They can't do that or haven't done that.'

"I would sit down every night with people and say, 'You can do this. I know you can do this. Work with me.'

"With certain kids I actually had to go to class with them and teach them how to take notes because they've never done that before in their life. I taught them how to take notes out of their books while they were waiting, how to prepare for an essay test, how to prepare for a multiple-choice test.

"Then, to see them have success was the reward. Seeing them finish and graduate. It's amazing now that some of the ones I was a – I'll use my own word – jerk to because I was on their case every single day and yelling at them are the ones that come back and see me.

"They're the ones that come back and say they wouldn't have made it without me and they have their sons or daughters there and say, 'Look, he's the reason I got through school. He's the reason I got this job. He helped me with my resumé.'

"I haven't done academics since 1994 but I still help kids write résumés and cover letters and help them prepare and go out and get a job."

BSB: What are your plans after retiring?

Romanoff: "That's the big question. I can't go from 60, 70, 80 hours a week to nothing. What am I going to do? I can't sell used cars or be a starter at a golf course.

"My daughter, Jennifer, has taken care of that. She's got us involved in a franchise which will be coming to Columbus sometime next year called Chicken Salad Chick. We will be owners of these franchises if everything goes right.

"If it does, I'll be back to working 70 hours a week. My daughter is the brain power here, and I said I would assist her. That will keep me very busy."

BSB: Will you still get a chance to attend sporting events, football games?

Romanoff: "She is fully aware that every Saturday I'm not working at Chicken Salad Chick if there's a home game. That's her own words. She knows how important it is to me.

"I told some of the girls on the soccer team this year I'll still come to their games, don't worry. I told the baseball guys I'll still come to their games because I've built up some pretty good relationships with a lot of the kids over the years and that's important to me.

"Even the visiting teams, the umpires and the red coats that I had at all these events. My baseball red coats and my soccer red coats and my volleyball red coats, I built relationships with them.

"The visiting teams coming into football games are constantly writing letters back saying you treat us better than any school in the country here and that's because I treat them like I want to be treated at their place.

"The umpires call us the gold standard for the way we treat them at baseball. That's important to me and that's the way Mike Penner (senior associate athletic director, internal operations) and Ericka Hoon (assistant athletic director, event management) want it to be. When visiting teams come in you treat them well and give them everything they need."

BSB: How would you describe your time at Ohio State?

Romanoff: "It's been a great run here. You look at the people with Woody and Earle and Coop and Tress and Urban and Randy Ayers. I mean I go back to Fred Taylor. I dealt with Fred and Eldon (Miller) and Gary Williams. That's an amazing thing, just the people I've dealt with.

"Jim Jones who helped me get started and Jeff Kaplan who hired me way back in '75 to be his assistant, and all those people I owe so much to and are still friends with like the Archie Griffins of the world. Can you find a better person than Archie Griffin? I started his senior year doing academics and I'm still close to Archie.

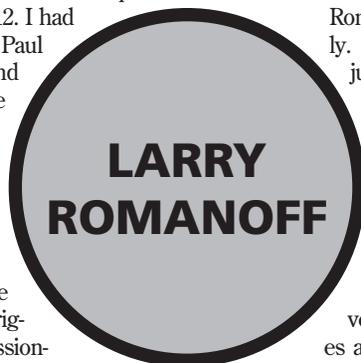
"I was lucky. I learned so much from Woody Hayes even though I got fired once a month. Part of the reason I'm so close to kids is because Woody made you do it every day. Your job was to make sure you were close enough to the kids every day and helping them every day, 6 a.m. to 10 o'clock at night. You learn that.

"Then you meet a guy like Jim Tressel, who's a phenomenal person, I'm not just talking about coaching. That's been the great thing here."

BSB: After hearing all this, you've got to write a book, right?

Romanoff: "Several people have mentioned it to me. I'm certainly not a writer so I would have to have someone assist me.

"I don't know that I'm ready to move out of town if I tell all the stories (laughs)."



Larry Romanoff

Walk-On CB Overcame Rocky Recruiting Road

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

At the end of the day, all Alex Badine wanted was an opportunity. And for the past three years, the blue-collar cornerback from Brooklyn, N.Y., spent his days doing anything he could to create one.

Now in Columbus, Badine is living out a childhood dream as an unlikely member of the Ohio State football team. But the path he took to become a Division-I athlete – let alone a Buckeye – wasn't without its trials and tribulations.

"It's a long story," Badine told BSB on June 4 after he announced his commitment to Ohio State that afternoon.

One devastating injury, two junior colleges and thousands of emails later, Badine finally hit his breakthrough with OSU. How he got from the Big Apple to Ohio's capital, though, is a story Badine hadn't previously shared.

"I can't dwell on the past anymore," Badine said. "All I have to do is look forward because right now, the situation that I'm in is great – I'm in a great atmosphere. Besides that, I have a great opportunity, and I'm just honored and blessed to be in this situation."

"I can't look back. The past is the past now. All I can do is stay motivated. Other than that, I just can't go back to it. It's just like a bad, dark dream."

The Beginning

When Badine began his senior season at Brooklyn (N.Y.) Grand Street in 2015, the status surrounding his recruitment was a much different discussion.

"I had Miami (Fla.), Indiana, Maryland, Syracuse," Badine said of the schools interested in him. "A couple DI-AAs like Stony Brook, Albany. I also had Boston College, UConn, UMass and Rutgers."

K.J. Stroud, who coached Badine at Grand Street in 2015 and is now the offensive coordinator at Brooklyn (N.Y.) Erasmus Hall, knew Badine had the tools to play at a big-time program.

"He definitely had the speed and pretty good size as a corner to play at the big-time level," Stroud told BSB. "He was actually doing a couple things for us – he was our kick returner, he was our punt returner, we lined him up at receiver to do some certain things. But he was definitely a next-level athlete."

As a senior in 2015, everything changed when Badine tore his ACL. Almost all of the programs backed off, but one stayed in the picture. The only catch, though, was it pulled his scholarship offer.

"I got offered from Rutgers first, but then because I wasn't able to recover from my ACL injury, they pulled (the scholarship) and they offered me as a preferred walk-on," Badine said. "I couldn't enroll that January of 2016 because my injury was a seven-, nine-month (rehabilitation). Once I couldn't do that, I left to go JUCO which was my only choice."

Initially, his detour kept him in Brooklyn at ASA College. As a freshman in 2016, he played for then ASA head coach and current Tennessee running backs coach Joe Osovet. Badine then transferred to Bronx (N.Y.) Monroe College in 2017 for his sophomore season, where he recorded one pass breakup and two tackles (one for loss) in three games.

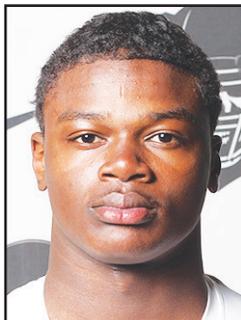
During his detour to the two schools, Badine

worked tirelessly to make something click. Such a tedious process still resonated with him when he recounted the numbers.

"I believe I reached out to 340 colleges – Division-I (FBS and FCS) – and sent 1,753 emails," Badine said. "About two got back to me, which were OSU and Stony Brook."

Although he never reached Rutgers as originally planned, Badine's bond with a member of its 2015 staff paid off in the long run.

When head coach Urban Meyer hired defensive coordinator Greg Schiano in December of 2015, he brought along Bob Fraser shortly after.



Alex Badine

Most recently, Fraser was the linebackers coach at Rutgers in 2015 with then-head coach Kyle Flood. Prior to the one-year stint with the Scarlet Knights, Fraser was a longtime assistant to Schiano.

When Schiano was a head coach at Rutgers (2001-11) and then the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2012-13), Fraser was his assistant from 2006-11 and 2012-13 before becoming a defensive analyst for Ohio State in 2016.

When Ohio State teamed up with Rutgers and Temple at a New Jersey satellite camp in 2016, Badine jumped on his opportunity to gain exposure.

"Meyer met me and I kept in contact with them," Badine said. "So I ran my 40, I clocked a (time of) 4.48 (seconds) at that camp and then Coach Fraser was also there. So I just kept in contact with them, mostly, over the time."

Also to his advantage, Badine had built a bond back in high school with two recruits from his class who ended up becoming Buckeyes.

Starting quarterback Dwayne Haskins and safety Jahsen Wint, now both third-year sophomores at OSU, grew up with Badine.

Haskins is a Potomac (Md.) Bullis product but is originally from South Brunswick, N.J., while Wint played at Erasmus Hall against Badine and Grand Street in New York City's Public Schools Athletics League (PSAL).

"Dwayne Haskins, when he was getting recruited hard by Rutgers, Dwayne was considering Rutgers and I kept Dwayne in contact," Badine said. "I told him where I was going to go after my injury, but I just kept talking to him. Also, I'd been speaking to dudes like Jahsen Wint. He also grew up in New York, he graduated from Erasmus Hall and I just communicated with them."

As Badine kept in contact with Ohio State, former assistant director of player personnel Eron Hodges, who in April became Purdue's director of player personnel, convinced the Buckeyes to take a chance on the player.

After special teams coordinator and cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson joined OSU in February, he saw enough then to agree with Hodges and ultimately bring Badine aboard.

"I knew that I was going to come here in February," Badine said. "I was there (April 14) for the spring game. I was on the field talking to (former H-back) Curtis Samuel from Erasmus Hall. He was talking to me, just telling me about the Ohio State ways. I was hanging out with Jahsen Wint, who was also showing me the place since he's been here 2-3 years now, freshman center) Matt (Jones), who also came in this past year."

"So those guys and Curt were just telling me to do what I've got to do, no matter if I'm a walk-on or a scholarship player, everybody has the same opportunity."

Looking Forward

About a month into his summer enrollment at Ohio State, Badine has embraced the chal-

Who Is The Greatest Quarterback In Ohio State History?

The Options:

- J.T. Barrett _____
John Borton _____
Greg Frey _____
Joe Germaine _____
Cornelius Greene _____
Kirk Herbstreit _____
Bobby Hoying _____
Stanley Jackson _____
Cardale Jones _____
Jim Karsatos _____
Rex Kern _____
Craig Krenzel _____
Tom Matte _____
Braxton Miller _____
Terrelle Pryor _____
Art Schlichter _____
Troy Smith _____
Mike Tomczak _____
Don Unverferth _____
Other _____

Instructions:

Number your picks 1-10 (feel free to write in any players we left off the list) and mail this ballot to Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, OH 43212. Lists can also be emailed to bsb@buckeyesports.com or subscribers can vote on the forum at BuckeyeSports.com. Please provide your name, age and any additional comments regarding your ballot. Copies of the ballot are accepted and voters are welcome to attach additional paper if more space for comments is needed.

Comments:

lenge ahead to better the Buckeyes and himself – on and off the field.

Coming from junior college with two years of eligibility remaining, his previous academic success paid off when he earned an academic scholarship at OSU.

"I've got a full academic (scholarship) right now," Badine said. "So that's being taken care of because at Monroe and ASA, I've been on the Dean's List every semester since I came into college. So I've got four, five semesters I've been on the Dean's List with a 3.6-3.8 GPA."

"So I was top-5 percentage of that coming into Ohio State as a transfer, so Coach Meyer and Coach Hodges did their thing to see what they could do for me. With that being said, it's been an honor to have the opportunity."

While his adjustment to the Ohio State grind is a task of its own, Badine's stops at ASA and Monroe prepared him for the next step.

"Mostly, it's like a 5:30 a.m. start," Badine said of his new schedule. "We've got weight room at 6 a.m., so we've got to be at it around 5:15-5:30 a.m. before it starts. We have check-ins, weight room and then checkouts. After checkouts, we have lunch. After lunch, we've got meetings. After meetings, we've got class. After class, we've got team runs. After team runs, we've got more meetings. After those meetings, we've got dinner. That's about it."

"But getting adjusted to it from JUCO, I really think I'm already adjusted because the classes and courses, I'm already having a sense of what to expect. The only thing I have to get adjusted to is the time schedule, from the mornings to the evenings. That's really about it. Other than that, with football wise, I'm already

comfortable with everything because of the JUCOs."

Life under someone like strength and conditioning coach Mickey Marotti makes the curve harder for most, but Badine feeds off his energy.

"He's an intense guy, very exciting guy," Badine said of Marotti. "He gets you motivated. He watches everybody in the weight room. He's on your ass every time. So he's an exciting person. He wants to make sure you're ready to work."

Although Badine enters a deep position group with returning starters such as juniors Damon Arnette and Kendall Sheffield, in addition to sophomore Jeffrey Okudah and others rounding out the depth chart, Stroud believes Badine's story speaks for how he could improve the unit.

"It just shows that he knows how to handle adversity," Stroud said. "Especially being at a place like Ohio State, you definitely go through some adversity with the competition and having to adjust to playing in the Big Ten and the speed."

"One thing you will know is he's a fighter and there won't be any quit in him. As a football coach, that's something that you can't really teach. That's something that you're born with. So to know that he's a fighter and he won't quit, that's something that can be a plus for a team."

Regardless of his role, Badine hopes to bolster the unit as much as he can. With nothing to lose now after he almost lost everything, part of Badine is just happy to be here.

"Now that I'm here, it's just a blessing," Badine said. "It's been a long process, but it's finally a process that's over."

Buckeyes Add 7 Commits For Next 2 Cycles

After gaining three commitments in two days at the end of April, Ohio State had to wait six weeks before securing its next.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Ryan McGlade

That next pledge, though, triggered an avalanche of commitments for OSU. From June 10 to the time BSB went to press on July 2, the Buckeyes added seven verbals – four of which came in the span of one week – from the 2019 and 2020 recruiting classes combined. Four prospects from the 2019 cycle announced their intentions to play college football at Ohio State, while three did so from the 2020 haul. Urban Meyer and his staff were able to lock up their quarterbacks for the next two cycles as well. OSU now has 13 total commits in 2019 and four in 2020.

Here is a look at each of the seven players who committed since BSB last went to press in chronological order of their commitment, starting with the 2019 class and then moving to the 2020 group. To hear about the commitments as they happen, however, be sure to frequent us on our new 24/7 full-service website, www.BuckeyeSports.com, which is a free service for Buckeye Sports Bulletin

print subscribers. If you are not signed up to enjoy this service, email your name and address to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com to receive simple instructions.

Harry Miller

Two days after visiting Ohio State, Buford, Ga., four-star offensive lineman Harry Miller announced his commitment to the Buckeyes on June 10, which was a little sooner than he originally had planned.

Miller, who was in Columbus on June 8 for an unofficial visit, does mission work in Nicaragua each summer. He was planning to visit the Central American country this year in early July and go public with his college decision there. But with protests currently taking place in Nicaragua, it was deemed too risky for Miller to make the trip.

Nevertheless, Miller chose OSU out of a top five that also included Clemson, Georgia, Notre Dame and Stanford. He received an Ohio State offer last June and took an official visit the weekend of the Buckeyes' spring game on April 14.

The 6-4, 310-pounder is the No. 37 overall prospect and No. 2 center in the 247Sports composite rankings for the 2019 recruiting class. He is the second-highest commitment for OSU in 2019 behind Austin (Texas) Lake Travis prospect Garrett Wilson, the No. 12 recruit regardless of position and the fifth-best wide receiver in the cycle.

Miller is the third offensive lineman in OSU's 2019 haul as well, joining four-star

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2019 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jordan Battle	S	6-1	187	★★★★	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas
Steele Chambers	ATH	6-2	215	★★★★	Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic
Ronnie Hickman	ATH	6-1	200	★★★★	Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic
Ryan Jacoby	OT	6-5	270	★★★★	Mentor, Ohio
Sampson James	RB	6-1	211	★★★★	Avon, Ind.
Dwan Mathis	QB	6-4	197	★★★★	Oak Park, Mich.
Harry Miller	C	6-4	310	★★★★	Buford, Ga.
Doug Nester	OT	6-5½	295	★★★★	Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley
Noah Potter	DE	6-5	250	★★★★	Mentor, Ohio
Bryson Shaw	S	6-2	175	★★★	Potomac (Md.) Bullis School
Cade Stover	OLB	6-4	225	★★★★	Lexington, Ohio
Garrett Wilson	WR	6-0½	181	★★★★★	Austin (Texas) Lake Travis
Craig Young	ATH	6-4	200	★★★★	Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne

Players in the class of 2020 who has issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Lejond Cavazos	S	6-0	186	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy
Paris Johnson	OT	6-7	285	★★★★★	Cincinnati (Ohio) St. Xavier
Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Jake Wray	OT	6-5	290	★★★★	Marietta, Ga.

tackles Ryan Jacoby from Mentor, Ohio, and Doug Nester of Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley.

Miller, the No. 8 player in the state of Georgia, is the second 2019 prospect from the Peach State to pledge to Ohio State. Roswell Blessed Trinity Catholic four-star athlete Steele Chambers issued a verbal to the Scarlet and Gray in April.

Craig Young

Fort Wayne, Ind., three-star athlete Craig

Young committed to Ohio State on June 15, three days after garnering all sorts of attention from OSU coaches at the university's second one-day camp of the summer.

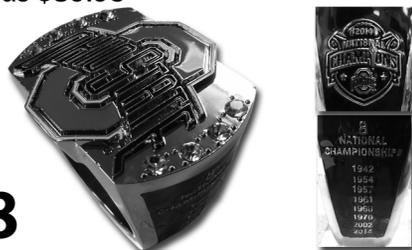
Young, who was recruited by some schools as a wide receiver, worked out at all three levels of the defense at the Buckeyes' camp. He started the day with the defensive backs under the direction of cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson. Young then moved to work out at linebacker alongside 2019 Lexington, Ohio, four-star outside lineback-

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Mich., with accommodation at the Soaring Eagle Casino Resort and Hotel in Mt. Pleasant with daily meal allowance and casino credit and game tickets. See website for pricing.

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ASK AN ANALYST

With CBS Sports Network's Tom Lemming

Every year, Ohio State caps its camp circuit and hosts Friday Night Lights. From your perspective, how big is the annual event as a recruiting tool?

"Urban Meyer did it at Florida also. It's very successful to make a big deal about it and make it special for the kids that they try to structure it as invite-only. I think it's very productive for Ohio State and other schools that do different stuff. When they were down in Florida, they made it something special and then continued that at Ohio State where the players feel great about being invited, knowing that it's made to be close to an invitation-only thing. The guys that Ohio State's really interested in are invited. It makes the players feel special. So it is a unique thing. Other schools get different names to it, but it's a similar thing."

Due to the impact that the early signing period had on recruiting last December, recruits are able to take official visits earlier in the year. For example, Ohio State hosted a handful of top prospects June 20-22. What do you think of this approach?

"I think it's great. It locks them up with potentially getting committed, although the kids could get out of that because it's nonbinding. But I think it really benefits the kid also because very seldom did you see a kid taking all five official visits – because they didn't have all that time. Now I think it frees them up to take five official visits. It also can free the colleges up to get their lists down, so the coaches can spend more time with their team in the fall. When you take them in the spring or summer, obviously, you can put more focus on the current ballplayers. There are no games being played and it's more of a relaxed time, (so) you can really show them a great time and really build their recruiting weekends because the kids get 48 hours."

"It's more important to a program like Pittsburgh than a school such as Ohio State. Ohio State can get them anytime they want. Pitt still has to deal with Ohio State, Penn State and Notre Dame – schools that recruit Pittsburgh real hard. So it's good for them to get the kids on their radars really early when it comes to an official visit."

er and Ohio State commit Cade Stover. Young also received one-on-one training from defensive line coach Larry Johnson, practicing moves coming off the edge as a defensive end.

At the conclusion of camp, Young told reporters that the Ohio State coaches were transparent with him on how he performed, which he admired.

"They told me what I need to work on," said Young, who landed an OSU offer in late January. "They told me what they like. They just kept it real with me. They didn't sugarcoat anything. They said, 'You need to bust your butt in the classroom. If you don't, we're pulling (the offer) away.' They weren't giving me the big head. They were just telling me straight up. That's what I like about Ohio State."

Young has been a force on offense for his high school team as a wideout. Checking in at Ohio State's camp at 6-4 and 212 pounds, however, his size piqued Ohio State's interest in his abilities on defense.

Should he be used on that side of the line of scrimmage for OSU, he said he'll have no qualms about no longer playing on offense.

"The college I choose, it will be a good choice for me," Young said. "Anything to help my school, anything to help my team win, that's the main priority. I wouldn't be hurt about it if I played on the defensive side of the ball."

"I could see myself playing on the defen-

sive side of the ball. I could really probably be a dog on the defensive side of the ball because everything came natural to me today and I felt good about it."

The No. 551 prospect in America and No. 50 athlete chose the Scarlet and Gray out of a top five that also featured Indiana, Iowa, Michigan State and Purdue.

Young has multiple ties to Ohio State, one of which is a hometown connection with wide receiver Austin Mack, who also is from Fort Wayne and attended Bishop Luers High School. Mack was one of many current Buckeyes who helped work the camp on June 12.

Young said Mack, who will be a junior in the fall, shared with him a few characteristics about the Ohio State program.

"The coaches are real," Young said of what Mack told him. "They don't sugarcoat anything. Everything they do is – it's a winning program. You can't fail here. You've got to come and bust your butt. He told me a lot. They're going to be on you. That's what I want. I want them to be on me."

Dwan Mathis

Certainly the most compelling development for Ohio State recruiting since BSB last went to press was Oak Park, Mich., four-star quarterback Dwan Mathis deciding to flip his commitment from Michigan State to the Buckeyes on June 24.

Mathis had been committed to Michigan

State since September before taking a surprise official visit to Ohio State the weekend of June 22-24 for the program's annual Friday Night Lights camp.

Mathis, who had had been to Ohio State three times prior to his official, told The Detroit News that his most recent trek to Columbus sealed the deal.

"I took my official visit this past weekend, talked to the coaches about the offense, and it's a perfect fit for me, like with the way they use the quarterback and the stuff that they do with him," he said June 25. "I talked to Coach Meyer and (offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Ryan) Day, told them I was committing to them when I was there."

Landing Mathis, who also was an Iowa State pledge from February-June of last year, was critical for Ohio State. Before Mathis' latest college decision, the Buckeyes had offered 14 signal callers from the 2019 cycle, 11 of whom committed elsewhere.

Ohio State offered Mathis (6-4, 197), the No. 252 overall prospect and No. 9 pro-style quarterback, on May 3. Two days later, he competed at The Opening Regional Canton on May 5. In an interview after the camp at Massillon (Ohio) Washington's Paul Brown Tiger Stadium, he explained how Meyer and Day "were going to come harder than they ever did" as they re-entered his recruitment.

Jordan Battle

The fourth prospect from the 2019 class to

commit to Ohio State during this stretch was Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star safety Jordan Battle on June 29.

Battle chose the Buckeyes over more than two dozen other offers from programs such as Clemson, Florida, Georgia, LSU, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas and Virginia Tech.

Battle officially visited Ohio State the weekend of June 22-24, as did a handful of other top targets in the current class. Battle's high school teammate, four-star outside linebacker Derek Wingo, who is an Ohio State target in the 2020 cycle, told BSB the official went very well for Battle.

"He loved it," Wingo said. "I know he had a good time hanging with the players and talking with Coach (Taver) Johnson."

The Buckeyes extended an offer to Battle, the No. 171 prospect in the country and No. 12 safety, in February and held off a late push from Miami, which hosted him on an official visit the weekend of June 14-15.

With Battle in the fold, Ohio State now has three players in its 2019 haul who could play safety. Potomac (Md.) Bullis School three-star Bryson Shaw is classified as a safety, and Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic four-star Ronnie Hickman is listed as an athlete but has played safety in high school.

Either Battle, Hickman or Shaw may make the move to cornerback, given that OSU does not have a corner in the 2019 batch yet. Should it be Battle, he would follow in the footsteps of former Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy five-star Tyreke Johnson, who was originally listed as a safety but switched to corner upon arriving in Columbus. At 6-1, 187, Battle fits Ohio State's recruiting strategy of going after taller corners.

Battle also continues Ohio State's pipeline to St. Thomas Aquinas. Cornerback Damon Arnette, defensive ends Joey and Nick Bosa, and wide receiver Trevon Grimes, who transferred to Florida in December, are recent examples of former Raiders who signed with the Buckeyes.

Lejond Cavazos

Moving to the 2020 class, Bradenton

Continued On Page 26

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4-Star Battle Could Play Safety Or CB For Buckeyes

Continued From Page 25

(Fla.) IMG Academy four-star safety Lejond Cavazos declared to the Buckeyes while at the Rivals100 Five-Star Challenge in Atlanta on June 27.

"I know I'm just a sophomore, but this is the place I want to be," he said. "And further, I'd like to end my recruiting process and announce that I'm committed to The Ohio State University. Go Bucks."

Cavazos is rated by the 247Sports composite as the No. 198 overall player and No. 10 safety but tweeted moments after announcing that he will play cornerback at Ohio State.

His college decision came about two weeks after traveling to Columbus for a two-day unofficial visit, capped by participating in the same one-day camp Young attended.

Ohio State offered Cavazos (6-0, 186) on April 14, 2017, when he made his initial unofficial visit to campus the weekend of the spring game. He came back to Columbus for an unofficial visit the weekend of Oct. 28 to see the Buckeyes knock off Penn State, 39-38, at Ohio Stadium, followed by a return trip for this year's spring game the weekend of April 14.

After Cavazos' fourth and latest venture to OSU for that camp on June 12, in which he and his family exclusively met with multiple coaches inside the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, the defensive back subsequently took unofficial visits to Georgia and Oregon.

Cavazos, who is originally from Seguin, Texas, and transferred to IMG Academy

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

25 Years Ago – 1993

The 1993 recruiting class in the state of Ohio provided a good crop of solid Division I prospects, and the 1994 cycle appeared to be no different. The state's top offensive lineman was tackle Orlando Pace of Sandusky.

A starter at both offensive and defensive tackle in 1992, Pace (6-8, 300) was being compared favorably to OSU lineman Corey Stringer.

Pace was already bench pressing in excess of 300 pounds. A star on the basketball court, he also averaged 18 points and 20 rebounds during the 1992-93 season for Sandusky.

The top linebacker in the state was Jerry Rudzinski (6-2, 215) of Kettering Alter. One of the top athletes in the state, he played both quarterback and linebacker. Some scouts believed he could also be a strong safety in college.

20 Years Ago – 1998

Between the three sessions of camp and the June 26 seven-on-seven tournament, the Ohio State football coaching staff hosted roughly 2,300 high school players.

One of those prospects was Shaker Heights, Ohio, offensive lineman Adrien Clarke, who said he expected and got the pressure treatment to become a member of OSU's recruiting class.

"The whole time I was there they were trying to get me to commit," Clarke (6-6, 315) said. "I had a couple of conversations with John Cooper where he said, 'We have to keep Ohio's best in Ohio.'"

"All the coaches knew my name and were trying to get me to commit. They said they had offered scholarships to all of Ohio's best and they had nine commitments. They said I was the missing link."

15 Years Ago – 2003

While much of the focus in recruiting was on the 2004 class, Ohio State was already involved with a handful of prospects from the 2005 haul. Most notable in that group was Mansfield (Ohio) Senior defensive back Jamario O'Neal, who had been offered a scholarship by OSU on Feb. 22 and promptly committed.

O'Neal (6-1, 190) was a two-year starter on defense for his high school team. He also started at wide receiver and tailback as a sophomore.

"This is an excellent place," O'Neal said of returning to Ohio State in June for one of the Buckeyes' summer camps. "I really like (OSU coach Jim) Tressel. He always has something to talk about."

10 Years Ago – 2008

Ohio State entered its annual one-day senior advanced camp on June 20 with 17 verbal commitments for its 2009 class. The Buckeyes then landed six more in a five-day span beginning with the aforementioned camp.

The half-dozen prepsters who pledged with the Buckeyes were Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas wide receiver Duron Carter (6-3, 185), the son of Ohio State great Cris Carter; Naples, Fla., running back Carlos Hyde (6-0, 225); Louisville (Ky.) Male cornerback Justin Green (5-11, 180); Monroeville (Pa.) Gateway corner Corey Brown (6-1, 185); Dublin (Ohio) Scioto corner Bradley McDougald (6-1, 190); and Cleveland Glenville defensive end Jonathan Newsome (6-2½, 240).

Five Years Ago – 2013

After going almost a month without a

commitment, Ohio State notched five in June, four of which came in the span of a week.

The Buckeyes earned a verbal from Buckner (Ky.) Oldham County kicker Sean Nuernberger (6-2, 220) on June 11. OSU head coach Urban Meyer struck again June 20 when he landed a pledge from defensive end Jalyn Holmes (6-5, 235) of Norfolk (Va.) Lake Taylor, which started a wave of momentum that carried over to the following day when quarterback Stephen Collier (6-4, 210) of Leesburg (Ga.) Lee County issued his commitment to the Buckeyes.

After Collier's announcement, Ohio State added Indianapolis Cathedral wide receiver Terry McLaurin (6-0, 175) on June 23 before finishing out the month by grabbing Chicago De La Salle offensive tackle Jamarco Jones (6-5, 285) on June 27.

One Year Ago – 2017

With Seffner (Fla.) Armwood running back Brian Sneed and Westerville (Ohio) South all-purpose back Jaelen Gill already in the fold, Ohio State added more ball-carrying depth to its 2018 class when Murfreesboro (Tenn.) Blackman tailback Master Teague committed to OSU on June 11.

"I feel relieved and great about my decision," Teague said. "Ohio State is the best place for me to grow as a person and player."

Teague (5-10½, 194) added that he was ecstatic about the prospect of playing for Meyer.

"I'm excited about the opportunity," Teague said. "He's a legendary coach, and we've built a great relationship. I feel really comfortable around him and know he'll keep having success. Overall, he's a great coach – one of the best."

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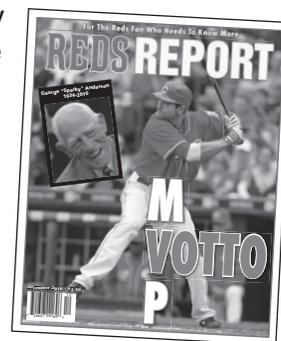
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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

before the 2017 season, had his heart set on the Buckeyes, though.

"I picked Ohio State just because the tradition they have there is like (second) to none," he said. "I don't know any other school who produces DBs like that and they're polished in the NFL. And aside from the football aspect, they're after life for football is really amazing – they have Real Life Wednesdays. So I know aside from football, I'm going to have a job after."

Paris Johnson

Ohio State locked up the No. 8 overall prospect in the 2020 recruiting class when Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson committed June 28. He chose OSU from a lengthy offer list that included schools such as Alabama, Clemson, Michigan, Notre Dame, Penn State and many others.

The 6-7, 285-pound Johnson has been on OSU's recruiting radar since Dec. 8 when he received an offer from his home-state school during an unofficial visit to campus. He made multiple return trips to Columbus with the latest coming on the weekends of March 30 and April 14.

Not only is Johnson one of the country's top recruits, he is the second-best offensive tackle in the nation and is the top-rated player from the state of Ohio in the 2020 cycle. He gives Ohio State two commits at offensive tackle so far in the 2020 haul, accompanying Marietta, Ga., four-star Jake Wray – the younger brother of OSU freshman OT Max Wray.

Johnson has football pedigree instilled in him as well. His father, Paris Johnson Sr., earned first-team All-MAC honors as a strong safety at Miami (Ohio). Johnson Sr. then was a fifth-round selection of the Arizona Cardinals in the 1999 NFL draft. He also played for the Miami Dolphins, Carolina Panthers and Dallas Cowboys. He is currently the assistant director of player personnel at Pitt.

For those wondering how firm the younger Johnson's pledge is to the Buckeyes, he tweeted this four days before revealing his college decision: "When I commit, I'm committed. No decommitting or flipping."

Jack Miller

Nine days after he returned to Columbus

with his family for Friday Night Lights, Jack Miller shared his plans to continue honing his craft in college at OSU.

The four-star quarterback from Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral took to Twitter on July 1 to announce his commitment to Ohio State.

Miller (6-4, 210) obtained an offer from the Buckeyes in May 2017. The No. 47 overall player and No. 3 pro-style quarterback followed that up by visiting OSU three times before his latest unofficial to Columbus. He attended a one-day camp in June 2017 prior to visiting for the Penn State game last year and the spring game this year.

That familiarity with the Buckeyes played a role in Miller pledging with them, said Brent Barnes, who was hired as Chaparral's head coach in February.

"I just know from the time that I've been on board and been around him that Ohio State was on (Miller's and his family's) list for many reasons," Barnes told BSB. "They just had a comfort factor from the very beginning. Obviously, you have to have a lot of respect for Coach Meyer and what he's done everywhere he has been. I'm sure he's potentially a Hall of Fame coach. I think

anybody that is offered by a school like that is going to seriously consider that. There's probably a number of reasons (Miller chose OSU), but clearly, (Miller and his family) felt comfortable."

Miller recently took three trips elsewhere. He unofficially visited Michigan (June 20) and Michigan State (June 21) before he arrived June 22 in Columbus and swung south to Alabama (June 23).

"(Miller and his family) did everything they could – at least in my conversations with them – in everything they were doing and going around to really evaluate each school for itself," Barnes said. "They were very open to making sure they found the right place. I think every time he went somewhere, somehow, he ended up comparing it back to Ohio State. It just felt like that was where he was most comfortable in the end."

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On June 26, Maryland introduced Damon Evans as its new athletic director. Evans, whom the university initially hired in December 2014 as its chief financial officer, took on the additional title of executive athletic director in 2016.

BIG TEN NOTES Garrett Stepien

In April, he assumed the role of acting athletic director after the Terrapins parted ways with eight-year athletic director Kevin Anderson.

"It is a great honor to be chosen to lead at the University of Maryland," Evans said. "Since the day I arrived, I have been inspired by the student-athletes, coaches and support team that strive for success in Maryland athletics, and I look forward to many successes ahead in our Big Ten era. I'm guided by the principle that we learn from our wins and losses, and I am eager to lead an athletics department that ultimately achieves greatness together."

Anderson spent six months on sabbatical from his post, starting with an announced leave of absence in October and culminating with his resignation in April. UMD president Wallace Loh led the national pursuit of Anderson's permanent replacement with help from Turnkey Search – which the university hired for \$120,000, according to The Washington Post. Ultimately, though, the process circled back to Evans.

"Throughout his tenure here, Damon has demonstrated visionary, transparent, compassionate and ethical leadership," Loh said in a statement. "The candidates invited for interviews had impressive credentials and accomplishments. In the end, a senior leadership search is not only about capabilities. It is also about institutional fit and interpersonal trust and chemistry. In Damon, the University of Maryland has the right person at the right time."

According to The Baltimore Sun, Evans

was one of the three candidates considered for the job. In addition to Evans, Maryland reportedly interviewed Temple athletic director Patrick Kraft and former Tennessee athletic director John Currie.

Prior to the start of his tenure with the Terrapins four years ago, Evans was the athletic director at Georgia – where he became the first African-American athletic director in Southeastern Conference history – from 2004-10. His six-year tenure with the Bulldogs ended via resignation in July 2010, shortly after Evans was arrested and charged with driving under the influence. After he parted ways with UGA, Evans eventually found his way back to college athletics.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Evans spent August 2010 through February 2013 as vice president of business development at Markley Group, a Boston-based company that provides data center facilities and cloud computing services. Evans then worked a short stint in 2013 as vice president of college development at IMG, a sports marketing company based in New York, from March to December.

Evans started in January 2014 as managing director at sports marketing and consulting company Evolution Sports Partners in Morristown, N.J., before heading to College Park.

Evans, who was a four-year letter winner at Georgia, earned his bachelor's degree in finance (1992) and a master's degree of education in sports management (1994).

His first official day as Maryland's full-time athletic director was July 2.

UMD OL Dies After Collapsing

As Evans was transitioning to Maryland's full-time athletic director, the Terrapins were dealing with the loss of a member of their football program.

While Evans was still in his previous role as acting athletic director, Jordan McNair was hospitalized May 29 after the redshirt freshman offensive tackle collapsed during a team workout. McNair died June 13 at the age of 19.

"We are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of one of our student-athletes, sophomore

football player Jordan McNair," Evans said in a statement. "Jordan was a tremendous athlete, student, teammate and friend, and he will be sorely missed. We offer our deepest condolences to his parents, family and friends."

McNair's death prompted Maryland to conduct an external review through sports medicine consulting firm Walter Inc., which remains in the process of examining all of the university's policies and protocol. The review could take up to 90 days.

Evans initially briefed reporters on the situation in a June 14 press conference, but many questions asked about McNair's cause of death went unanswered.

At his introductory press conference, he said the football program was back to conducting offseason workouts, but on a voluntary basis.

"At the end of the day, you don't want a young man to go out on that field if he is not really ready," Evans said. "Let's provide them with the counseling, the support that they need. ... We're going to slowly ramp it back up."

According to a GoFundMe fund created to help his family with financial support, first responders airlifted McNair to R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore, where he was "fighting for his life" and eventually underwent a liver transplant. Through the crowdsourcing website, the GoFundMe's goal of \$20,000 was successfully raised – in fact, it was surpassed at \$29,525 by 433 people in the first 22 days since its June 5 creation. The link to support McNair's family remains active at <https://www.gofundme.com/jmcnair-family-support-fund>.

The 6-4, 325-pound McNair was redshirted his freshman year with the Terrapins. He played in one game, making his collegiate debut Sept. 9 in UMD's 63-17 win over Towson.

McNair, from Randallstown, Md., developed into a four-star recruit at Owings Mills (Md.) McDonogh. Ranked the No. 287 overall player, No. 29 offensive tackle and No. 7 in-state prospect, McNair was a trailblazing commitment for the Maryland's 2018 recruiting class. He pledged to the Terrapins in May 2016 over Ohio State, Penn State and others on his list of national suitors.

"Our team is heartbroken with the loss of Jordan McNair," head coach DJ Durkin said. "Jordan was an incredible young man, and his passion and enthusiasm made him an invaluable and beloved member of our team. Jordan was a hard worker, and he always had a smile on his face. He was an extremely talented football player and a humble and genuine human being. He embodied the essence of what it means to be a teammate."

"Jordan was a fighter. Over the past few weeks, Jordan never gave up with his family, friends and team by his side. Our team will continue to be inspired by the spirit of this brave fighter. Please continue to pray for Jordan's family during this difficult time."

PSU OL Medically Retires

Four days into Penn State freshman offensive tackle Nana Asiedu's collegiate career, he had tragic news to share regarding his future in football.

Asiedu arrived June 23 in State College, Pa., from Stafford, Va., ready to embark on his next chapter with the Nittany Lions after he signed Dec. 20 as a member of their 2018 recruiting class. However, Asiedu announced in a June 27 statement published on his Twitter account that he could no longer continue his football career and was forced to

medically retire because of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, a genetic heart condition.

"This hurts because football was my everything," Asiedu wrote in a tweet, "but God has other plans for me."

According to the American Heart Association, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy occurs when heart muscle cells enlarge and thicken the walls of the ventricles. It is a common cause for cardiac arrest in young people, including athletes.

While Asiedu's life goes on without football, PSU confirmed that it would honor his scholarship through a medical hardship.

"It has been determined Nana Asiedu is not able to play football for Penn State University due to medical reasons," Penn State said in a statement. "We will honor his scholarship as he pursues his degree from Penn State. While this is difficult news, we are excited to have Nana continue to be a major part of our Penn State football family."

NCAA rules allow a football player with a medical hardship to remain on scholarship without applying to the team's 85-person scholarship count. Asiedu will remain with the program in a role to be determined at a later date.

"This is one reason I chose Penn State because of the security and they'll never go back on their word," Asiedu said.

The Nittany Lions officially entered Asiedu's recruitment with an offer April 28, 2016, and he committed April 22, 2017, while on an unofficial visit to PSU the weekend of its spring game. Asiedu chose Penn State over Clemson and a long list of other national programs.

Rated a four-star recruit by the 247Sports composite – which ranked him the No. 116 overall player, No. 8 offensive tackle and No. 3 player in Virginia – Asiedu was a 2018 U.S. Army All-American from North Stafford High School before he joined the Nittany Lions.

According to his Penn State player profile on gopsusports.com, Asiedu plans to major in business or communications and hopes to pursue a career as a sports analyst.

Former RU DB Dead At 26

Former Rutgers defensive back Jonathan Aiken (2011-14) died June 22 in a single-car crash in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., according to a report from Local10.com in Florida.

Aiken was driving shortly before 3 a.m. when he lost control of his Toyota near the eastbound on-ramp from Interstate 595 to northbound Interstate 95 in Fort Lauderdale, the report said.

Florida Highway Patrol Lt. Alvaro Feola said that Aiken hit an overhead light pole, guardrail and palm tree before his car came to a rest in the grassy shoulder.

Aiken, a resident of Jacksonville, was reportedly rushed to nearby Broward Medical Center where he was pronounced dead at the age of 26. The cause of the crash remained under investigation when BSB went to press.

The 5-11, 190-pound Aiken made an impact for the Scarlet Knights during their inaugural Big Ten season. In 2014, Rutgers finished 8-5 overall and 3-5 in conference play after it posted a 40-21 victory over North Carolina in the Quick Lane Bowl. The Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Chaminade product played all 13 games of his senior campaign at Rutgers with eight starts at free safety, compiling a career-best 51 tackles.

After he racked up seven tackles and recorded a forced fumble in the Scarlet Knights' season-opening win Aug. 28, 2014, against Washington State, Aiken was named Big Ten Defensive Player of the Week. With the honor, he became the first player in Rutgers athletics history to earn a Big Ten weekly award.

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2018 COLUMBUS CLIPPERS SCHEDULE

REGULAR SEASON GAME PRICING

Ticket Type	Adults	Yth/Sen
BOX SEATS (Advance)	\$14	\$14
(Day of game)	\$16	\$16
RESERVED SEATS	\$10	\$7
BLEACHERS, LAWN, STANDING	\$7	\$5

(Youth age 12 & younger; Seniors age 60 & over)

JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 IND 2:05	2 @TOL 7:05	3 @TOL 7:05	4 TOL 7:05	5 TOL 7:05	6 @IND 7:15	7 @IND 7:05
8 @IND 1:35	COLUMBUS HOSTS TRIPLE-A ALL-STAR WEEK		11 ALL-STAR GAME	12 @LOU 7:00	13 @LOU 7:00	14 @LOU 6:30
15 @LOU 6:00	16 LHV 7:05	17 LHV 12:05	18 LHV 7:05	19 SWB 7:05	20 SWB 7:15	21 SWB 7:15
22 SWB 4:05	23	24 @PAW 7:05	25 @PAW 7:05	26 @PAW 11:05AM	27 @LHV 7:05	28 @LHV 6:35
29 @LHV 1:35	30 IND 7:05	31 IND 7:05	Columbus Hosts Triple-A All-Star Week July 9-10-11			

COMING IN JULY!



GET YOUR TICKETS NOW BY CALLING (614) 462-2757

MAY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 @LOU 6:30	2 @LOU 11:00AM	3 CHA 6:35	4 CHA 7:15	5 CHA 7:15
6 CHA 2:05	7 @TOL 6:35	8 @TOL 10:35AM	9 @TOL 6:35	10 @TOL 6:35	11 @IND 7:15	12 @IND 7:05
13 @IND 1:35	14	15 GWN 6:35	16 GWN 6:35	17 GWN 11:05AM	18 CHA 7:15	19 CHA 7:15
20 CHA 2:05	21 TOL 6:35	22 TOL 6:35	23 TOL 6:35	24 TOL 11:05AM	25 @GWN 7:05	26 @GWN 6:05
27 @GWN 1:05	28 @GWN 6:05	29 @BUF 6:05	30 @BUF 6:05	31 @BUF 10:35AM		

AUGUST						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
7 Fireworks Shows						
1 LOU 4:05	2	3 @DUR 7:05	4 @DUR 7:05	5 @DUR 7:05	6 @NOR 7:05	7 @NOR 7:05
8 @NOR 4:05	9 ROC 7:05	10 ROC 7:05	11 ROC 12:05	12 SYR 7:05	13 SYR 7:15	14 SYR 7:15
15 SYR 4:05	16	17 @IND 7:05	18 @IND 7:05	19 @IND 7:05	20 @TOL 7:05	21 @TOL 7:05
22 @TOL 4:05	23 @TOL 6:35	24 LOU 6:35	25 LOU 6:35	26 LOU 6:35	27 LOU 6:35	28 TOL 7:15

2018 PROMOTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS DIME-A-DOG NIGHTS:

(All Monday Night Home Games)

May 21 June 25 July 16
July 30 August 13 Sept. 3



FIREWORKS FOLLOW THE GAME!!!

May 19 June 16 July 4
July 21 August 18 Sept. 1

GREAT ENTERTAINMENT

Jake the Diamond Dog - May 17, June 17, July 18, August 19

"The Sandlot" 25th Anniversary Night with Chauncey Leopardi (Squints)- June 8



Russian Bar Trio - June 9

Visit Pittsburgh Clippers Youth Jersey Giveaway- June 16

ZOOperstars - June 29, August 3

WWE Legend "Hacksaw" Jim Duggan - June 30



LEGO "Let's Play" Tour- July 20-22

Quick Change - August 4

Breakin' B-Boy McCoy - August 17

Super Hero Night - August 18

"Rookie Of The Year" 25th Anniversary Night with Thomas Ian Nicholas (Henry Rowengartner)- August 31

And much, much more!

JUNE						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Kids Eat FREE on WEDNESDAY Nights!						1 @SYR 7:05
						2 @SYR 7:05
3 @SYR 1:05	4	5 NOR 7:05	6 NOR 7:05	7 NOR 12:05	8 BUF 7:15	9 BUF 7:15
10 BUF 2:05	11 @LOU 7:00	12 @LOU 7:00	13 @LOU 7:00	14 @LOU 7:00	15 IND 7:15	16 IND 7:15
17 IND 2:05	18	19 @CHA 7:05	20 @CHA 7:05	21 @CHA 7:05	22 @GWN 7:05	23 @GWN 6:05
24 @GWN 1:05	25 LOU 7:05	26 LOU 7:05	27 LOU 7:05	28 IND 7:05	29 IND 7:15	30 IND 7:15

SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Columbus Hosts the Gilman Triple-A National Championship Game on Tuesday, September 18						
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OSU's Jackson Transitioning Into Leadership Role

Last summer, C.J. Jackson assumed the responsibility as the Ohio State men's basketball team's starting point guard in the wake of JaQuan Lyle's exit.

This summer, after three seniors (Andrew Dakich, Jae'Sean Tate and Kam Williams) and one fourth-year junior (Keita Bates-Diop) departed the program, Jackson has been tasked with emerging as a leader for the team in his final year as a Buckeye.

COURT REPORT Ryan McGlade

To help Jackson become a leader of the squad in 2018-19, second-year head coach Chris Holtmann had him attend a retreat coordinated by Athletes in Action, a ministry that helps sports-minded people think and live biblically, in early June.

"The coaches sent me (on the retreat) to basically be a leader for this team," Jackson said June 13. "I really liked the experience. To hear other guys' perspectives at other schools, it was kind of interesting to see how they perceive things on their teams and how I can bring it back to our team."

Through his first two years in Columbus, Jackson has been known to have a quiet demeanor. He said going on the retreat in Xenia, Ohio, however, has given him the urge to break out of his shell.

"Probably just to get out of myself a little bit," he said of why it was important for him to go on the trip. "I've kind of been – I wouldn't say taking a back seat – but kind of just not really been vocal in practice and off the court. So that helped me kind of see where my strengths are as being a leader and what I need to work on."

Jackson's veteran presence this coming season will be critical for the Buckeyes, as they have welcomed six new players to the team this offseason. The additions are Wake Forest graduate transfer guard Keyshawn Woods, Florida State transfer guard C.J. Walker, who will have to sit out the 2018-19 season to satisfy NCAA transfer rules, and four freshmen – forwards Justin Ahrens and Jaedon LeDee and guards Luther Muhammad and Duane Washington.

With so much turnover, Jackson said it is imperative that he and the other returning upperclassmen do their part to guide the new group.

"This year, we have a completely new team," Jackson said. "There are a lot of guys that kind of don't know what it means to be in this program. So not only myself, but a couple other guys who have been here are just trying to be a little more of a leader. We don't have to do it individually. We can do it collectively."

OSU To Play Nonconference Game At St. John Arena

Ohio State released the nonconference portion of its 2018-19 schedule on June 19, and the Buckeyes will play a game in the building that was the previous site of their home affairs.

After an exhibition against the University

of North Carolina at Pembroke on Nov. 1 in Columbus, Ohio State opens the season with a trip down Interstate-71 for a game at Cincinnati on Nov. 7.

Four days later, OSU will hold its home opener at Value City Arena against Purdue University-Fort Wayne. The Buckeyes will then travel to Omaha, Neb., to face Creighton on Nov. 15 as part of the 2018 Gavitt Games (Big Ten vs. Big East) before returning home for meetings with South Carolina State (Nov. 18), Samford (Nov. 20) and a contest at legendary St. John Arena the day after Thanksgiving against Cleveland State (Nov. 23). The games against Purdue University Fort Wayne, South Carolina State, Samford and Cleveland State are all part of the Buckeye Basketball Classic, a four-game event staged entirely in Columbus.

The last time Ohio State played a regular-season game at St. John Arena was on Dec. 12, 2010, an 82-60 win over Western Carolina. The Buckeyes have played five regular-season games in the venerable hall since the last full season there in 1997-98.

Following the Cleveland State matchup, which comes on the eve of the Ohio State-Michigan football game that will be played at Ohio Stadium, the basketball Buckeyes welcome Syracuse to town on Nov. 28 for the annual Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

For the second straight year, Ohio State will start its Big Ten season in late November or early December. Two conference games, one home and one away, will be played between Nov. 30 and Dec. 5. Exact dates, opponents, times and TV designations will be announced at a later date. This year, the conference schedule has been expanded to 20 regular-season games, up from 18 games played since the 2007-08 season.

Ohio State will resume nonconference action with home tilts against Bucknell (Dec. 15) and Youngstown State (Dec. 18) before a neutral-site encounter vs. UCLA in the CBS Sports Classic on Dec. 22 in Chicago.

The Buckeyes close the 2018-19 nonconference slate at Value City Arena on Dec. 29 against High Point, a team coached by former Minnesota head coach Tubby Smith, who will be in his first season coaching his alma mater.

Prior to the season starting, Ohio State will take a summer trip to Spain from Aug. 1-11. Holtmann's club will play three games on the trip, one each in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona.

The aforementioned exhibition against UNC Pembroke will have a familiar face on the visitor's bench. The NCAA Division II program is coached by Ben Miller, son of former Ohio State head coach Eldon Miller. Eldon, who coached the Buckeyes from 1977-86, is a volunteer assistant coach with the Braves.

Ohio State's 2018-19 nonconference schedule features four opponents that played in the NCAA Tournament last season. Cincinnati was bounced in the second round by Nevada, 78-73. Creighton was eliminated in the opening round by Kansas State, 69-59. Syracuse made it to the Sweet 16 before falling to Duke, 69-65. UCLA played in the First Four games in Dayton and fell to St. Bonaventure, 65-58.

"We are excited about the challenge of this nonconference schedule," Holtmann said. "Our hope is that it prepares us for the grind of a 20-game Big Ten season. We believe the schedule includes many exciting matchups that will be tremendous tests and games Buckeye Nation will enjoy."

2019 Georgia PG Includes Ohio State In Top 8

Kyle Sturdivant, a four-star point guard from

Norcross, Ga., mentioned Ohio State when he released a list of his top eight schools via Twitter on June 20. Joining the Buckeyes were California, Clemson, Florida, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Ole Miss and USC.

Sturdivant is the No. 122 overall prospect and No. 14 floor general in the 247Sports composite rankings for the 2019 class. The 6-3, 190-pounder received an offer from the Buckeyes on Oct. 26, two days before he took an unofficial visit to OSU.

Ohio State has only one commit in the 2019 cycle thus far in Garfield Heights, Ohio, four-star small forward Alonzo Gaffney, who is ranked No. 27 nationally and No. 7 among those who play his position.

OSU Offers 2020 Five-Star PF

Also dedicating time to the 2020 cycle, Ohio State offered Huntington (W.Va.) Prep five-star power forward Jaemyn Brakefield on June 16.

The No. 15 player in the country, Brakefield (6-8, 210) has garnered overtures from more than 20 programs, some of which include Kentucky, Florida, Georgetown, Illinois, Kansas, UCLA, Wake Forest, West Virginia and Xavier.

Brakefield, the third-best power forward in the 2020 haul, visited Ohio State in early March of 2017. However, Thad Matta was still the head coach then. Brakefield has yet to visit OSU since Holtmann was hired last June.

Bates-Diop Picked By T-Wolves In 2nd Round Of NBA Draft

Bates-Diop was selected by the Minnesota Timberwolves with the 48th overall pick in the 2018 NBA draft on June 21.

A native of Normal, Ill., Bates-Diop was named the 2018 Big Ten Player of the Year last season when he averaged 19.8 points and 8.7 rebounds per game. He also was a first-team All-Big Ten pick by both the coaches and media, along with being a second-team All-America selection by The Sporting News, the National Association of Basketball Coaches and the U.S. Basketball Writers Association.

After sitting out all but nine games in 2016-17 with a stress fracture in his left leg, Bates-Diop scored in double figures in 32 of 34 contests last season while recording 13 double-doubles. He shot 48.0 percent (247 of 515) from the field and 35.9 percent (66 of 184) from three-point range.

Bates-Diop is the first Buckeye chosen in the draft since D'Angelo Russell was taken second overall by the Los Angeles Lakers in 2015.

2 Teams Featuring Former Buckeyes To Compete In 2018 TBT

The Basketball Tournament – the \$2 million, winner-take-all summer basketball event that is now in its fifth year – announced its bracket for this year's tournament on June 6, and the two teams featuring former Ohio State players made the cut.

Coached by former Buckeye point guard Scoonie Penn, who is currently OSU's director of player development, and former Ohio State forward Evan Turner, the 2010 National Player of the Year, Scarlet & Gray will be the No. 1 seed in the Midwest Region after winning said region in last year's event.

Former Buckeyes returning for Scarlet & Gray are William Buford, Aaron Craft, Jon Diebler, Dallas Lauderdale, David Lighty and Evan Ravenel.

Byron Mullens, who went by B.J. Mullens during his one season at OSU (2008-09), joins the club this year as well. He played seven seasons in the NBA with four different teams (Oklahoma City, Charlotte, the Los Angeles Clippers and Philadelphia).

ON THE ROAD

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OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Accompanying Scarlet & Gray in the Midwest Region is fourth-seeded Big X, a team that includes former Ohio State and Michigan players, in addition to alums from other Big Ten schools. Dakich, who transferred from Michigan to Ohio State last summer, Tate and Williams have teamed up with former Wolverines Mark Donnal, Stu Douglass, Jon Horford and Duncan Robinson. The other Big Ten products on Big X are Vitto Brown (Wisconsin) and Nnanna Ekwu (Illinois).

Columbus will host the first two rounds of the Midwest Region at Capital University's Capital Center. Scarlet & Gray will play on July 21 at 4 p.m. against the winner of the play-in game between Charlotte Chess Center and the West Virginia Wildcats. Big X will face the 13th-seeded Chattanooga Trenches on July 21 at 10 a.m. All-day passes for games at Capital University on July 21 and 22 are on sale and can be purchased at <https://www.freshstix.com/organizations/thetournament>. Should Scarlet & Gray and Big X win their first- and second-round

games, they would square off in the Super 16 in Atlanta on July 26.

If that were to happen, Ohio State junior center Micah Potter reluctantly said he'd pull for his former teammates.

"That's tough," he said. "If I had to pick one, it'd probably be the guys that I actually played with, so it would probably be the Big Ten team. But then again, I grew up watching all of the guys on the Scarlet & Gray team. I don't know. It will be a fun game to watch. It will be competitive, I know that. It will be the young guys vs. the old guys. I think it should be fun."

Jackson, meanwhile, was noncommittal when asked which team he'd support.

"I don't care," Jackson said. "I just want everybody to do well."

As for a former Buckeye, Terence Dials, the 2006 Big Ten Player of the Year, told BSB he believes Scarlet & Gray would run away with the game.

"I actually wasn't aware of this second team (Big X) honestly," he said. "I had no idea. But if they play each other, I think it will be a 20-point

OSU Basketball Verbal Commitments

Player in the class of 2019 who has issued a verbal commitment to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Alonzo Gaffney	PF	6-9	190	★★★★	Cleveland Garfield Heights

game or a 30-point game. (Scarlet & Gray) just has too many studs, and the second team not enough studs. Jared (Sullinger) is not playing (for Scarlet & Gray this year), but they've got B.J. Mullens now playing and Greg (Oden) and Diebler. That's just too much firepower for one team."

The national quarterfinals will be held in Atlanta on July 29. The semifinals and finals will take place in Baltimore on Aug. 2 and 3, respectively. Last year, Scarlet & Gray was eliminated in the national semifinals by Team Challenge ALS in double overtime, 88-83.

Dials believes this year will end on a much higher note for Scarlet & Gray.

"If they stay healthy and Craft can stay out of

foul trouble, I honestly believe that they're going to win it," he said. "I was skeptical last year, but I honestly really believe this year they have the pieces now. They have another point guard in Talor Battle, who played at Penn State and is very good friends with Evan Turner. So we have that combination of a scoring point guard who can go get his own shot and Craft, who is a defensive stopper and can make assists and get some layups as needed. I do really believe that we're balanced. I'm looking forward to it."

For the latest in Ohio State basketball news, be sure to check BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers, daily. For easy sign-up instructions see page 5 of this issue

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HOF Induction Humbles OSU Legend Smith

Katie Smith spent a short weekend in Knoxville, Tenn., flying back north the morning of June 10 and coaching later that night in White Plains, N.Y., leading the New York Liberty to a 78-75 victory over the Indiana Fever.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Garrett Stepien

Smith, who is in her first season as a WNBA head coach, took a brief break from the sidelines June 9 when she was recognized for the first of her two Hall of Fame honors this year.

The legendary Ohio State Buckeye (1992-96), three-time Olympic gold medalist (2000, 2004, 2008) and longtime professional player (1996-2013) started the process that Saturday night when Smith was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

"One down, one to go," Smith said June 10. "It's an incredible honor. I'm really humbled. But ... to celebrate it with your women's basketball world - it just means a lot."

The Logan, Ohio, native is looking forward to her next ceremony Sept. 7 in Springfield, Mass., where Smith will be inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame as part of the 13-person class of 2018.

For the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, Smith highlighted a seven-member class of 2018. This year's group included former players Chamique Holdsclaw and Tina Thompson, along with former coaches Ceal Barry, Rose Marie Battaglia, Chris Dailey and Mickie DeMoss.

"It was a blast," Smith said of the induction. "Obviously, a lot of those folks are in our past. We're intertwined for our whole careers, so it was really a celebration of all of us and the game of basketball that we love."

Smith starred for four years at OSU, where she averaged 20.8 points on 46.9-percent shooting with 5.7 rebounds and 3.58 assists per contest in 124 games (all starts). Her tenure with the Scarlet and Gray started strong, bringing the program to new heights in 1992-93 when Smith as a freshman led the team to its first

and only Final Four appearance, reaching the national championship game before falling 84-82 to Texas Tech. At the end of her senior campaign in 1996, Smith was named Big Ten Player of the Year. In 2001, she became the first female athlete in Ohio State history to have her number retired.

Before transitioning to the sidelines in 2014 and spending four years as an assistant coach - the past two of which she was the associate head coach - with the Liberty, which promoted her last October to head coach, Smith played professionally for 17 years. She started in the American Basketball League, which existed only from 1996-98, with the Columbus Quest, winning both of the league's titles. Smith then spent 1999-2013 in the WNBA, averaging 13.4 points per game with five teams and winning league championships with the Detroit Shock. After the first title in 2006, Smith was named 2008 WNBA Finals MVP when the Shock won their second championship in three years.

From her four years with the Buckeyes all the way through to her Olympic and professional careers, Smith's playing days came full circle when she experienced her induction beside other pioneers and greats of the game.

"(The induction made me appreciate) the relationships and just the kind of journey of it all," Smith said. "Just how much this game's given to me and I think the pride that we feel and personally feel about giving back and making sure we continue to kind of grow this game (is what I realized)."

"But again, it's just such a celebration. When you're around women's basketball players, coaches, the history - you just soak it up and it's just energy about it. It was just a really nice weekend."

Buckeyes On The Ballot

While Smith's first season as head coach of Liberty resulted in a 4-8 start through June 25, other Ohio State alumni have played nearly two months into the 2018 WNBA regular-season slate.

In fact, the five former Buckeyes currently in the league are eligible to be selected into the 2018 WNBA All-Star Game.

The annual contest, which will be played July 28 inside the Minnesota Lynx's Target Center in Minneapolis at 3:30 p.m. ET on ABC, is open for voting until July 12 at this case-sensitive link: on.nba.com/2K05UNs.

Los Angeles Sparks center Jantel Lavender and Washington Mystics guard Tayler Hill headline the OSU products as veterans in the league. Lavender (2007-11) and Hill (2009-13) played together at Ohio State from 2009-11.

Three Buckeyes from the 2017-18 team - Indiana Fever guard Kelsey Mitchell, Chicago Sky guard Linnae Harper and Fever forward Stephanie Mavunga - also represent OSU on the ballot.

OSU Offers 2022 Ohio Prospect

Ohio State offered an in-state prospect June 23 when Cotie McMahon announced on Twitter that she had received a scholarship bid from OSU.

"Excited and blessed to have received an offer from Ohio State!" McMahon said in a tweet. "Go Bucks!"

McMahon, a 5-11 guard and forward who turned 14 in May, begins her freshman year of high school in Centerville, Ohio, in the fall. However, while she is the first recruit targeted by Ohio State in the class of 2022, the Buckeyes aren't her initial offer.

In fact, McMahon's process started Dec. 10 when Xavier extended an offer. She later added her second offer from Northern Kentucky on Feb. 22, followed by OSU and then June 26 by Miami (Ohio). As an eighth-grade student at the time, McMahon made a Jan. 27 unofficial visit to Ohio State.

Before she set her sights on high school basketball in the Greater Western Ohio Conference (GWOC), McMahon played in the GWOC's eighth-grade league in 2017-18 with Centerville Gold. She managed per-game averages of 22 points and 11 rebounds for Centerville Gold on its way to a runner-up finish in the gold conference, following a 37-35 loss to Centerville Black in the final, where McMahon scored 24 points.

In the meantime, she sharpens her all-around game on the AAU circuit with the Dayton Lady HoopStars Elite high school team.

Previously, she most recently competed on the HoopStars' eighth-grade team. Last summer in Kingsport, Tenn., McMahon helped her HoopStars squad to the seventh-grade AAU national championship after a 42-34 win over the Potomac Valley Vogues with 11 points in the title game.

2018-19 Slate Taking Shape

While Ohio State's complete 2018-19 schedule has yet to be released, the Buckeyes now know two more opponents for the upcoming campaign.

In addition to the Big Ten matchups announced April 19, OSU is penciled in for games against Connecticut and North Carolina on its nonconference slate.

UConn announced its own nonconference schedule June 20, making known the season opener against Ohio State. The Huskies host the Buckeyes on Nov. 17 at Harry A. Gampel Pavilion in Storrs, Conn., with a tipoff time and television network to be determined.

UConn presents a challenging contest for OSU after the Huskies went 36-1 overall and 16-0 in the AAC, cruising through the NCAA tournament to the Final Four at Nationwide Arena in Columbus, where Notre Dame knocked them off in a 91-89 heartbreaker on the Fighting Irish's game-winning shot from guard Arike Ogunbowale with one second left in a semifinal.

After Ohio State plays UConn in what is likely to be the season opener for both teams, the next known game on the docket for the Buckeyes falls on Nov. 29 at Value City Arena against North Carolina in the 2018 ACC/Big Ten Challenge. The conferences announced the women's basketball matchups June 11, including the ninth all-time meeting between the Buckeyes and the Tar Heels as the headliner.

UNC won the past two games and holds a 5-3 advantage in the series. OSU looks to snap the two-game skid after it dropped the most-recent matchups on a 72-63 home loss in 2008, followed by a 57-54 road loss in 2012.

Dates for the Big Ten schedule are to be determined, but Ohio State has its matchups announced. The Buckeyes host Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Nebraska in their single-game home contests. OSU goes on the road to Michigan, Minnesota, Northwestern and Purdue. As for mirror matchups, in which Ohio State plays home and away games, Maryland, Michigan State, Penn State, Rutgers and Wisconsin round out the conference slate.



Katie Smith



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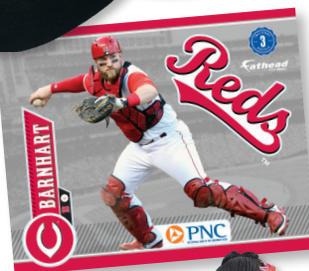
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BUCKEYE BRIEFS

Snyder Named Male B1G Athlete Of The Year Again

For the second straight summer, Kyle Snyder has been named Big Ten Jesse Owens Male Athlete of the Year.

The former Ohio State wrestler, who



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wrapped up the final campaign of his historic career as a Buckeye in 2017-18 when he went 17-1 overall with a third straight NCAA heavy-weight title, becomes the first two-time male recipient in conference history.

Snyder's repeat as the award winner after earning the honor in 2017 and 2018 means an OSU grappler has taken the achievement in three of the past four years, beginning in 2015 with former four-time NCAA champion Logan Stieber (2011-15).

On the other side of the award, Big Ten Female Athlete of the Year Indiana swimmer Lilly King joins Snyder as a repeat winner of the conference honor after also earning the accolade in 2017 and 2018.

King and Snyder were selected by a panel of conference media members among a deep field of nominees that included 10 national champions, 26 All-Americans, 16 individual Big Ten champions, 16 individuals with Big Ten Player of the Year honors and five with a National Player of the Year achievement.

Since the conference began the annual award for men (1982) and women (1983), Ohio State has taken nine Big Ten Athlete of the Year honors – six male and three female – which puts the Buckeyes in second place for the Big Ten's all-time count behind Michigan's first-place total of 10.

As one of the most successful collegiate wrestlers ever, Snyder is the only American in history to finish his career as a three-time NCAA champion, Olympic gold medalist and two-time world champion.

He compiled a 75-5 overall record and guid-

ed OSU to three Big Ten titles throughout his four seasons in Columbus, highlighted in 2015 by the NCAA team championship.

Snyder adds the latest achievement to his long list of accolades, which most recently included the 2018 AAU Sullivan Award, which is given annually to the most outstanding amateur athlete in the United States.

OSU's Bazile Wins Individual Title

While both the men's and women's Ohio State track and field teams competed at the NCAA championships on June 6-9 in Eugene, Ore., one Buckeye stood out above the rest.

Zack Bazile won the national championship in the men's long jump with a leap of 27 feet, 5½ inches, besting Akron's Jordan Latimer by more than a foot. In the process, the Montvale, N.J., native also set a new school record, breaking the previous mark of 26 feet, 9 inches set by Michael Hartfield in 2013.

The leap made Bazile one of just two Buckeyes – along with Hartfield – to top Jesse Owens' original program record of 26 feet, 8¼ inches.

The record puts Bazile in stellar company with Hartfield and Owens. The first was a 2016 Olympic alternate while the latter was a four-time Olympic gold medalist at the 1936 Berlin games.

"It's been a goal of mine since I was a freshman to jump a wind-legal 27 feet," Bazile said. "Finally hitting it isn't something I expected to achieve, so part of me feels like that's why it hasn't sunken in yet. I'm surprised, but I was

definitely happy that I ended my career on such a good note, especially at nationals on that stage.

"When I saw 27 feet, it was a relief that I finally achieved what I wanted to do since my freshman year. I was more relieved that it was wind-legal (i.e. the assistance a competitor receives from a tailwind is within acceptable parameters and therefor eligible for official collegiate records), so I was definitely happy, but I believe that I controlled my emotions well because I was still there to handle the business."

Bazile's victory marked Ohio State's first individual title since Chris Nelloms won the 200-meter dash in 1993.

Bazile also ran in the 4x100 meter relay with Eric Harrison Jr., Duan Asemota and Drelan Bramwell, where they registered a time of 38.67 seconds.

As a team, the Buckeyes finished in a tie for 12th place out of 69 teams that registered at least a point, marking their best finish at the NCAA championships since 2004.

On the women's side, the Buckeyes finished with just two points, putting them in a tie for 56th out of 68 scoring teams.

5 Buckeyes Make World Wrestling Championships

A total of five current and former Ohio State wrestlers earned the opportunity to compete in the senior, under-23 and junior world championships in the coming months.

Redshirt freshman Brady Koontz is set to compete at the junior world championships



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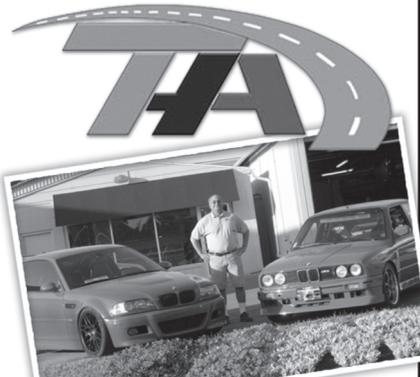
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Oct. 6 INDIANA, 3:30 OR 4 p.m.; **13** MINNESOTA, TBA; **20** at Purdue, TBA.
Nov. 3 NEBRASKA, TBA; **10** at Michigan State, TBA; **17** at Maryland, TBA; **24** MICHIGAN, Noon.
OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD
March 16-17 UCF Invite at Orlando, Fla., NTS; **23-24** Power 5 Trailblazer Challenge at Los Angeles, Men: 1st/5 (152); Women: 3rd/5 (103); **30** Raleigh Relays at Raleigh, N.C., NTS.
April 5-7 Jim Click Invite at Tucson, Ariz., Men: 3rd/6 (113); Women: 6th/6 (83); **12-14** Tennessee Invite at Knoxville, Tenn., NTS; **20-21** JESSE OWENS CLASSIC, NTS; **27-28** Drake Relays at Des Moines, Iowa, Men: T-3rd/21; Women: 2nd/23.
May 11-13 Big Ten Championships at Bloomington, Ind., Men: 1st/13 (109); Women: T-5th/13 (60); **24-26** NCAA East Preliminaries at Tampa, Fla., NTS.
June 6-9 NCAA Championships at Eugene, Ore., Men: T-12th (19); Women: T-56th (2).

in Trvana, Slovakia, on Sept. 17-23 in the Greco-Roman competition. The senior world championships will feature former Buckeyes Snyder and Stieber in Budapest, Hungary, on Oct. 20-28, with both competing in the freestyle competition. The U-23 championships are set for Nov. 12-18 in Bucharest, Romania, where current Buckeyes Myles Martin and Kollin Moore are set to compete in freestyle as well.

OSU Golfer Competes In LPGA Event

Ohio State's Jaclyn Lee, a rising senior, competed in the Meijer LPGA Classic from June 14-17 in Grand Rapids, Mich., going up against some of the top professionals in the sport.

Lee opened the tournament with a 4-under score of 68 before tacking on a 3-under 69 to make the cut. She followed with an even-par 72 and another 69 on the weekend to finish in a tie for 35th with a minus-10 score of 278. The event was won by South Korea's So Yeon Ryu at minus-21.

Lee earned her berth in the tournament by winning the Big Ten individual title, which included a sponsor exemption for the event.

Lee's appearance on the LPGA Tour made her one of two current Ohio State golfers to go up against the best in the game in June. Men's golfer Will Grimmer made the cut at the U.S. Open after advancing through sectional qualifying. For more on Grimmer's story, see page 20.

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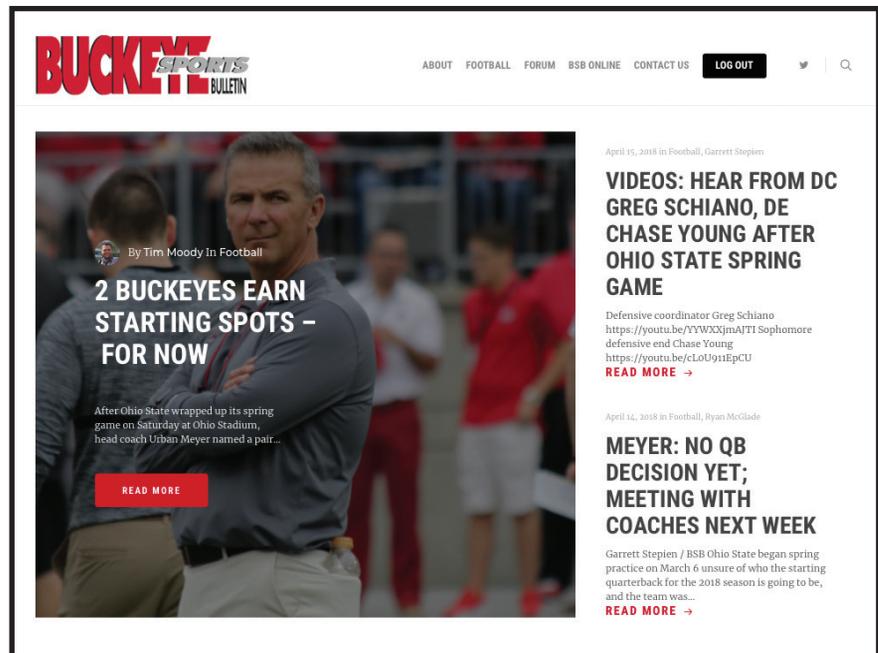
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Buckeyes Making An Impact In Minor Leagues

By DAVID DRIVER
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Tanner Tully wore casual jeans and a colored shirt earlier this season. It was a recent Wednesday afternoon, but Tully wasn't heading back to an office after a late lunch.

Instead the former Ohio State pitcher walked through the stands to the cramped visitor's clubhouse at Harry Grove Stadium, the home of the Frederick Keys.

Tully, a pitching prospect in the Cleveland Indians farm system, had just spent several hours charting pitches with a teammate for the Lynchburg Hillcats of the high Single-A Carolina League.

Drafted out of Ohio State in 2016, Tully has had nearly two years to adapt to the life of a professional baseball player.

"It is the same routine you take from college, expect from (pitching) every seven days

to five days," he said before a bus ride of about five hours to Salem, Va.

Tully, chosen in the 26th round by the Indians, has been part of the starting rotation with Lynchburg. In his first 14 starts he was 2-8 with a 5.06 ERA. On May 12 at Salem he went 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings and allowed just one unearned run while giving up four hits as he got the win.

"Playing every day and getting used to coming to the field, sitting around and hanging out. You are making new friends and keeping the friends you already have keeping up with them," said Tully, 23, a lefty who is from Elkhart, Ind.

That has been easy for at least one of his former Buckeye teammates as he is not the only member of the 2016 draft class at Ohio State to appear in the Carolina League this season.

Ronnie Dawson, an All-American in 2016, was taken in the second round that year by the world champion Houston Astros. He was

playing in the Carolina League for Buies Creek and was hitting .246 with 23 steals in late June.

One former OSU star in the majors early in 2018 was outfielder JB Shuck, who broke into the big leagues with Houston in 2011. He was with the Miami Marlins this year and was hitting .195 in late June.

Other members of the 2016 draft class in the minors this season include two players at the Double-A level in the Eastern League: Detroit Tigers outfielder Troy Montgomery and New York Mets prospect Nick Sergakis.

Sergakis was taken by the Mets in the 23rd round and began this year with the Binghamton Mets of the Eastern League. He was approached about playing the outfield by the Mets at the end of spring training.

"Anything that gets me to the big leagues I will do," he said before a game. "For me I have a different perspective from playing every day (in college) to playing whenever I am in. You just have to have a positive mentality at all

times. You have to be ready when your name is called."

He was hitting .189 with Binghamton and also spent time with Triple-A Las Vegas.

Sergakis is a teammate of Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow, an outfielder who hit the first pitch he saw for a homer in April – the second time in two years he homered in his first at bat of the season in the minors.

"It is my second year playing with him," said Sergakis, who also played with him at high Single-A St. Lucie in the Florida State League. "He is a really good dude. He is a great teammate."

Montgomery was drafted in the eighth round by the Los Angeles Angels and spent the 2017 season with several minor league affiliates.

He was traded prior to this season to Detroit in a deal that sent major league veteran Ian Kinsler to the Angels.

Montgomery, an Indianapolis native, hit .227 in his first 48 games with the Erie Seawolves of the Eastern League before being sent to high Single-A Lakeland of the Florida State League.

Another former OSU player in the Eastern League is pitcher Travis Lakins, who began the year with the Portland Sea Dogs. He was 0-2 with a 3.12 ERA in his first 15 games, including six starts.

Lakins was drafted in the sixth round in 2015 by the Boston Red Sox out of Ohio State. From Franklin, Ohio, he did not allow a run in his first three games out of the bullpen for Portland this year.

The other former Buckeyes drafted in 2016 were Jacob Bosiokovic, taken in the 19th round by the Colorado Rockies, and Michael Horejsei, chosen in the 21st round by the Chicago White Sox.

Bosiokovic is a first baseman for Lancaster in the high Single-A California League. He was hitting .133 through June 27.

Horejsei last played in the minors in 2016 for a White Sox team in the low Single-A South Atlantic League.

Buckeyes who were drafted in 2017 were Shea Murray, taken in the 18th round by the Pittsburgh Pirates, Jalen Washington, drafted in the 29th round by San Diego, and Tre' Gantt, taken in the 29th round by Cleveland.

Washington, a catcher, was hitting .238 for Fort Wayne, a farm team of the Padres in the Midwest League. Gantt, an outfielder, played in the Arizona League for the Indians in 2017 and hit .197.

Murray did not play pro ball in 2017 or this year.

Two OSU products with big-league experience in 2017 were both in the bullpen with Triple-A New Orleans of the Marlins system in mid-May – Alex Wimmers and Drew Rucinski.

Wimmers was 0-0 with a 9.82 ERA in his first four games with New Orleans before being reassigned while Rucinski was 0-0, 2.52 in his first 14 games out of the bullpen before heading to the Marlins, where he was 2-1, 4.63 in his first seven appearances. As of late June, Wimmers was a free agent.

Other ex-Buckeyes who appeared in the majors in 2017 were catcher Eric Fryer and Brad Goldberg.

Fryer was on the voluntary retired list with the Philadelphia Phillies this spring. Goldberg was 0-0 with a 2.82 ERA in his first 17 games this season with Double-A Birmingham of the Southern League in the White Sox system. After that, Goldberg was traded to the Arizona Diamondbacks on June 3. Arizona assigned him to Double-A Jackson, where he had a 1.17 ERA in eight appearances through June 26.



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Haskins To Bring New Dimension To OSU Offense

I didn't get my choice at quarterback. That was Joe Burrow.

But my guess is that I'm going to be pretty happy with Dwayne Haskins.

What's not to like about the rocket-armed young player with three years of eligibility left who already has scored a relief victory over Michigan?

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

This guy clearly is a player. With Burrow transferring to LSU to play his final two seasons of college football, Ohio State coach Urban Meyer in mid-June finally made the obvious official – Haskins is now Ohio State's starting quarterback.

Haskins will be the 22nd Buckeye regular (excluding a few quarterbacks who started a handful of games) since Art Schlichter became Ohio State's first passing-era quarterback 40 seasons ago.

I expect by the time Haskins is finished at Ohio State, he'll be among the top 10, perhaps higher. True, we have not had extended opportunities to see Haskins play yet, but I believe it is a fairly sure bet that Haskins will be far better than mediocre. And he has the talent to be outstanding.

Start with his résumé out of high school, where he was the Maryland Gatorade Player of the Year and rated in the top five nationally

among pro-style quarterbacks in more than one rating of prospects.

As a backup at Ohio State a year ago, Haskins was an impressive 40 of 57 passing (70.2 percent), with 565 yards, four touchdowns and just one interception. Most of that was in mop-up duty.

But, of course, the day to remember was against Michigan. Subbing for an injured J.T. Barrett, with the Buckeyes down, 20-14, late in the third quarter, Haskins completed 6 of 7 passes for 94 yards (plus ran three times for 24 yards) in rallying OSU to a 31-20 victory.

On his very first drive, Haskins was 2-of-2 passing for 31 yards and ran twice for 24 yards to set up a J.K. Dobbins go-ahead TD. The signature play was a 27-yard completion to Austin Mack on a critical third-and-13.

On the next drive, Haskins completed another third-down pass to set up a field goal as OSU widened the lead to 24-20 before polishing the game off with a late touchdown run from Mike Weber.

The kid is ready to be the starter on a team with national championship aspirations.

A New Kind Of Quarterback

Unlike Braxton Miller (an outstanding runner and passer before injury) and Barrett (known as a great field general and runner), what we have seen of and heard about Haskins is that his skill set clearly revolves around passing.

That will make for an interesting twist to Ohio State's offense. With the exception of Cardale Jones, all of Ohio State's quarterbacks under Meyer have been treated as both passers and extra running backs.

Braxton Miller had rushing seasons of 715, 1,271 and 1,068 yards as a quarterback. Barrett had rushing seasons of 938, 682, 845 and 798 yards.

That limited the carries for some running backs.

In the loss at Iowa last year, Dobbins (a 1,403-yard rusher for the season) carried the ball just six times. Weber (a 1,096-yard rusher in 2016 and hobbled by injuries for part of 2017) had just five carries. Yet Barrett ran the ball 14 times.

In the other loss last year, to Oklahoma, Barrett carried the ball 18 times, Dobbins had 13 carries and Weber three.

In 2016, OSU lost two games. Against Clemson, Barrett carried 11 times, Curtis Samuel six times and Weber just five times (in the final game of his 1,096-yard rushing season). In the other loss, to Penn State, Weber had 21 carries and Barrett was close behind with 17.

And in 2015, OSU's lone loss of the season was to Michigan State. Barrett carried 15 times and Elliott Ezekiel (twice an 1,800-yard-plus rusher at OSU) had just 12 chances to run the football.

Notice a trend here? Ohio State has lost just five games over the last three seasons. And in four of the losses, the quarterback was the most often-used ball carrier.

I'm going to guess that is not going to happen this season.

Haskins is the passer. He can run if needed on occasion. But I expect more often we'll see the running load carried by Dobbins, Weber and perhaps others.

Elite Quarterbacks

As noted earlier, there have been 21 Buckeye quarterbacks to receive significant playing time as starters since Schlichter arrived on campus as a freshman starter in 1978.

I'm not going to rate them 1 to 21, but I will put Schlichter, Terrelle Pryor and Troy Smith in the top grouping.

Perhaps Braxton Miller could have gotten there as well, but injuries wrecked the end of his quarterback career. And there have been other good ones.

A lot of people will argue for Barrett. Joe Germaine was a splendid passer. Bobby Hoying put up some huge numbers. And Craig Krenzel, a national champion, deserves consideration for managing a team to the title.

I believe Haskins has the potential to end up in the conversation with the players listed above.

Good Luck, Joe

I'm rooting for Burrow to succeed at LSU. College football can be a tough thing on quarterbacks. Normally, only one at a time gets the opportunity to play. I liked everything I saw of Burrow at Ohio State, but if Haskins was the likely starter this season, Burrow made the smart move to look for another place to get an opportunity.

In two years, his college eligibility will be up. At Ohio State, he may never have become a starter.

There's no guarantee at LSU, but it sure looks like he's positioned to be the Tigers' quarterback come this fall. Again, good luck, Joe.



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Interview Issue Provides Unfiltered Perspective

I love Buckeye Sports Bulletin's interview issue. The key to its success is finding interesting subjects, and we seem to have found another such group this year. They join OSU athletic director Gene Smith, who is always candid with us as he gives BSB readers the equivalent of a "State of the Program" address. The thing about the Interview Issue is that the people participating are pretty much unfiltered. While it is true that we ask the questions, there is no selective choosing of which parts of a response to feature. This is really Buckeyes in their own words.

Often times, it is interesting to find that the subjects' views on matters are similar to your own.

For instance, while I was sad to see Joe Burrow leave after an intense battle with Dwayne Haskins for the starting quarterback role with the Buckeyes, by graduating in three years – a feat of which all Buckeye fans should be proud – he earned the right to do what was best for him and his future career. Smith seems to agree.

"I'm thinking Joey did the right thing for himself," said Smith, who admitted that he was as interested in the QB battle as your everyday fan. "He's got two years of eligibility, and he's a smart, smart young man. He's a perfect example of one that graduated early, taking advantage of summer school and maximizing his credit hours. I might be the athletic director, but I'm also a fan of sports so I was watching it like everybody else to see who was going to emerge. It was, I think, a good decision on Joey's part."

Or longtime OSU administrator Larry Romanoff talking about the mental rigors of major-college football and the academic demands on student-athletes who sometimes arrive in Columbus ill-prepared for college.

A longtime friend and business associate of mine used to say of a certain underappreciated former Ohio State quarterback, "You know what his problem is? He's dumb." I would always reply that if you were a quarterback at Ohio State, there was no way you were "dumb."

Romanoff tells of reminding players of their mental abilities.

"You see student-athletes that come in that are poorly trained and have no confidence in themselves when they come in, and you put them in a class with kids that went to outstanding high schools and have very good ACT and SAT scores," the longtime academic counselor explained. "They're sitting next to a student who understands the teacher, and (they) don't know what's going on."

"You sit with them and say, 'Look, you don't have the same training but you can do this. You play in front of 100,000 people and make split-second decisions when a linebacker is coming at you. You can do that. You memorized an entire playbook. They can't do that or haven't done that.'"

Ohio State lost one of my all-time favorite assistant football coaches when Kerry Coombs elected to join former Buckeye Mike Vrabel's staff with the NFL's Tennessee Titans. It was hard not to love Coombs' passion and enthusiasm. Admit it. You wonder, as do I, if that fervor will play on the professional level.

"I've heard that from a lot of people," Coombs admits to BSB. "It's hard for me to imagine that the day that a Marshon (Lattimore), a Gareon (Conley), Bradley (Roby), Denzel (Ward), any one of them, walk into a new facility six months after graduating from college that they all of a sudden choose to have a different demeanor about how they do their business. What I've learned is that players are players. They love to play football, and these guys (in the NFL) really love it."

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

"For me, I learned a long time ago to try to be who I am and not try to be somebody else. So I guess we'll all find out if it works or not. So far, I'm really enjoying coaching these guys, but you'd have to ask them about their reaction."

I think the key here is not trying "to be somebody else." Kerry Coombs is Kerry Coombs. His type of intensity would not work with, say, a Jim Tressel.

And speaking of people who were themselves, Romanoff talked about meeting the fabled Super Sophs when he joined the team as a student manager in 1969, one year after they had won the national championship, and he recalled them as good guys. One other famous Buckeye, who may or may not have been a nice guy, was definitely himself.

"What I was amazed by was that there were so many nice guys – Ron Maciejowski, Rex Kern, all them were amazingly nice guys," Romanoff said of the Buckeye greats. "I could go on and on. John Brockington was very nice. Jack (Tatum) never talked. He just kind of grunted."

I worked with members of the '68 team in helping plan their 25th anniversary celebration back in 1993. They really were nice guys. As for Tatum, the last time I saw him was at a charitable fundraiser before his death. He was graying and had but one leg, but he still looked like he could put the big stick on you. The "grunting" only adds to the legend of the man they called "The Assassin."

I think the interview with Ohio State national champion football star and computer animation pioneer Chuck Csuri is one of the more significant pieces we've run through the years. It is an interview – a story – not really about football, though such noted Ohio State grid figures as legendary coaches Paul Brown and Woody Hayes, legendary players such as Les Horvath and Bill Willis, and even current players like Burrow and Haskins are mentioned. It is more about one man and a vision and about changes in our world from the '40s to today that, when looked back on years from now, will be looked upon in the same way that the Industrial Revolution is looked upon by current scholars and historians.

While Csuri was an accomplished player on a significant team in the annals of Ohio State football, he quickly moved beyond the gridiron. Like many young men of his generation, he was deeply affected by World War II.

"My experiences in the war had completely altered my attitude toward football," Csuri recounted in Buckeye teammate Don Steinberg's 1992 book, "Expanding Your Horizons – Collegiate Football's Greatest Team." "Now football seemed infantile compared to the savagery that I had witnessed and encountered during my army service in Europe."

Thus, while some teammates ended up following Brown to professional football, Csuri, after feeling compelled to finish out his football career at Ohio State upon his return from the service, quickly moved on to art, education and later computers.

"It's fantastic," Csuri says of the computerized world of today. "I mean, there are things I thought that would happen and were going to happen. There were other things that I didn't anticipate ever in this world. It never occurred

to me that there would be an Internet or there would be cell phones. That was something that was just beyond my thinking."

"But I knew that computer graphics would have an implication on society, especially in animation. That I was convinced of, and in that case, I think I was right on the money on that one. But I also knew that it would be a very powerful communication tool and that people would start using graphical communication more and more to communicate. It's continued to be."

There is an anecdote in Csuri's interview that stands out to me, and it had nothing to do with computers or art and little to do, really, with football.

That 1942 championship squad featured players such as Steinberg, Dante Lavelli, Wilber Schneider, Don McCafferty and Bill Willis, the team's lone black player. The Buckeyes of various ethnic backgrounds were emblematic of the melting pot that the United States had become by the time of World War II. Csuri, along with others on the team, was the son of Hungarian immigrants.

"This is one of my treasured stories," Csuri recalled. "Les Horvath's father and Gene Fekete's father and my father were all Hungarians. They came from Hungary and all spoke Hungarian. My brother arranged for my father to attend an Ohio State-Pittsburgh football game in 1942. They seated our fathers on the sidelines. At one point in the game, we were close to them – somewhere on the 20-, 25-yard line – and Gene Fekete in Hungarian yells to his father, 'Hey, pop. Watch this play.' Here are these Hungarians – my father had never seen a football game in his entire life. He had no idea what the hell was going on. He was sitting there smoking cigars – all three of them were smoking the cigars – and Fekete yells and says to watch him. Dammit, he runs for one of the longest plays from the line of scrimmage for a touchdown. You couldn't have written a better script. It was just fantastic. I just treasure that story, that experience."

I treasure the story, too, because it made me think of my own grandparents, all four of whom were born in the "old country" and how bewildered they must have been upon their arrival in this new and fantastic world for which there was no way they could have been prepared and the joy they must have taken in seeing the success of *their* children in this land of opportunity.

In this turbulent and sometimes confusing time, I hope Csuri's tale helps us remember that, with exception of Native Americans – who have a proud heritage of their own – we are a nation of immigrants.

Which child of an immigrant will become the next Chuck Csuri or even the next Jack or Faye Moskowitz, my parents, the children of immigrants, and successful professionals (and parents) in their own right?

Salary Inflation

It was 15 years ago that then Buckeye football coach Jim Tressel was rewarded with a new contract after leading Ohio State to its first national championship in 34 years in 2002, as chronicled in our "From the Pages of BSB" feature on page 2.

The new pact gave Tressel \$1.309 million in the first year of the deal. That really wasn't that long ago and now *assistant coaches* are

making more than that. Ohio State's own Greg Schiano is scheduled to make \$1.5 million this year, and according to USA Today, there were four assistants nationally last season who made more than Tressel's post-championship salary. LSU defensive coordinator Dave Aranda made \$1.8 million in 2017, Clemson defensive coordinator Brent Venables made \$1.7 million, John Chavis made \$1.6 million as defensive coordinator at Texas A&M, and Matt Canada, former LSU offensive coordinator who is now with Maryland, made \$1.5 million.

In his BSB interview, Smith acknowledged that bumping Schiano's salary to its current rate and giving fellow assistant Ryan Day a cool million was in response to the salaries attained by these others.

"It was inevitable," the AD said. "I knew we'd get there, it was just a matter of what year, what time. In that window of time the year before, actually, the market went berserk. It was unbelievable – salary increases and coordinators. There already were some, but it really went berserk the year before. Urban and I talked about it for a long time, but the ones that we took to that level, they deserved to be at that level compared to their peers in their market performance."

These guys may have the salaries, but Tressel's got the rings – as head man, not an assistant.

Giving Praise When Due

I don't always praise our staff publicly because they routinely do such a good job – and are expected to do such a good job – that I would be praising them every day.

But I have to point out the vast amount of information that they have been posting on our BuckeyeSports.com website and especially on the Forum. If you are not taking advantage of this free service for BSB print subscribers, you are missing out on a big part of your subscription. This is especially true now, because we are entering a roughly seven-week period without a print edition before the Football Preview issue is published during the third week in August.

In that time, the BSB staff will be covering Big Ten Media Days, the Buckeyes' fall camp and, of course, recruiting. Don't miss any of the action.

While our BuckeyeSports.com numbers have been trending steadily upward, we remain a bit perplexed as to why more of you are not participating on the Forum. We see you looking, but you seem timid about jumping in. It occurs to me that some of you may be scared to express your opinion. Some of this may extend from other Forums, including a previous version of BuckeyeSports.com, where a faction of posters essentially bullied others.

Everyone's opinion is equal in the eyes of the BSB staff, and our byword is civility. We are committed to maintaining it.

Jump in. We're eager to hear what you have to say, and I know that so are the other readers.

Who Is The Greatest QB?

We are continuing our quest to determine the greatest quarterback in Ohio State football history. While we have had a huge response to our poll, we are trying to get as many ballots as possible so that we can truly determine this Buckeye great. The more readers who vote, the more different ages and backgrounds are represented.

The final results will be published in the August Football Preview issue so you still have time to participate. With this looming deadline, I will finally be forced to fill out my own ballot.

Let us know what you think with the ballot on page 23.



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