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SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS/TWITTER

BAY AREA BOSA – Ohio State defensive end Nick Bosa (center) is introduced to the media by San Francisco 49ers general manager John Lynch (left) and head coach Kyle Shanahan on April 26. He was selected with the No. 2 overall pick.

Ohio State Great John Havlicek Passes At 79

By JEFF RAPP
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Long before "Havlicek stole the ball!" or had a hand in hoisting banners in Boston Garden, his hustle and deftness on the basketball court already were legendary at Ohio State, where, as a sophomore, he helped the Buckeyes win the school's only basketball title in 1960.

His beloved OSU coach, Fred Taylor, and college teammates such as Jerry Lucas, Mel Nowell and Bobby Knight often would describe Havlicek as one of the most dedicated and best all-around players they had ever seen. Opponents marveled at his energy level.

Of course, his true basketball fame came as an NBA all-time great during a remarkable career with the Boston Celtics, winning championships in half of his 16 years in green and white.

When news spread recently that Havlicek had passed away, the basketball world mourned the death of an all-time great and one of the true gentlemen of the game. Havlicek died in Jupiter, Fla., on April 25 at the age of 79. The family did not offer a cause of death, but several reports confirmed that he had become increasingly incapacitated by Parkinson's disease.

"I saw him a couple years ago at the function in Zanesville (to name a high school gymnasium after Taylor), and I had noticed how much he had slowed down," former Buckeye Bill Hosket told BSB. "It was one of those unspoken things but I could tell a difference.

"Still, it has been a hard thing for me to accept these last few days. John was a tireless force on the basketball court, and he never changed off of it. It's just hard to believe he's gone."

Hosket grew up in the Dayton area as the son of Wilmer Hosket Sr., who also played at Ohio State. Therefore, he already was an ardent follower of the Buckeyes. But when Taylor successfully recruited Lucas, Havlicek, Nowell, Knight and Gary Gearhart to OSU in 1958, young Hosket was completely hooked.

"When I was in junior high, it was amazing watching those guys," he said. "Coach Taylor built the program beginning with that group, won a national championship, made it to two other title games and won five straight Big Ten championships, which has never been equaled. Yeah, that had an impression on

Nick Bosa, Dwayne Haskins Among Nine Buckeyes Drafted

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When the dust settled on the 2019 NFL draft, Ohio State had nine players from last year's team selected. The Buckeyes finished second among all schools in total draft selections behind only Alabama (10).

Though Oklahoma quarterback Kyler Murray was the first prospect off the board to the Arizona Cardinals, the San Francisco 49ers selected Ohio State defensive end Nick Bosa with the No. 2 overall pick.

"It means everything," Bosa said. "It's a storied franchise, they know how to win and I think they're on the right track, so I'm excited to be a part of it."

Bosa became just the ninth Buckeye ever to be selected among the top three picks and second No. 2 overall pick, joining quarterback/halfback Jim McDonald, who was the program's first-ever first-round pick in 1938.

Quarterback Dwayne Haskins was most often linked to the New York Giants heading into the draft, but the team selected Duke quarterback Daniel Jones with the No. 6 overall pick. Haskins – who watched the broadcast with family and friends at the local bowling alley, Bowlmor Rockville, in Gaithersburg, Md. – fell to the Washington

Redskins with the No. 15 overall pick.

"To be honest, I'm more motivated now than ever," said Haskins, who played his high school ball just 25 minutes west of the Redskins' facility in Landover, Md. "There's a bigger chip on my shoulder. The league done messed up ... All these people right here are right down the street. Just to think that I started here in high school and I didn't have a chance to go to Maryland, and now I'm going to come back to the area. We're going to do it right this time."

Bosa and Haskins became the 80th and 81st first-round picks in Ohio State's storied history, which tied the Buckeyes with USC for the most first-round picks in NFL history – a mark the Trojans have held for more than 50 years.

Ohio State had three more players selected during the second day of the draft, including wide receiver Parris Campbell to the Indianapolis Colts with the No. 59 overall pick (second round); defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones to the Denver Broncos with the No. 71 overall pick (third round); and wide receiver Terry McLaurin to the Redskins with the No. 76 overall pick (third round), which reunites him with Haskins in Washington.

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From The Message Board

On April 25, we asked our readers and staff members to share their thoughts on the 2019 NFL draft on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum. Here are some of the responses:

"Duke quarterback Daniel Jones at No. 6 is the biggest joke I've ever seen. I feel for Giants fans."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"To pick Daniel Jones ahead of Dwayne Haskins seems ludicrous to me. I'm going out on a limb here — not really — but I think Haskins has a much, much, much better career than Jones."

– Mark Rea, BSB

"The Bosa parents might want to buy a house in California halfway up the coast. Maybe Joey and Nick can buy it for them!"

– Mcarr

"Can there possibly be 58 players better than Parris Campbell in this draft? I'm no expert, but I am not sure there were 18 better.."

– Terrier Buck

"It would be great if the Dwayne Haskins-Terry McLaurin combo showed up frequently on SportsCenter. You can't teach chemistry."

– Windy City Buck

"Looks like I'll be watching some Redskins games this year."

– PeyoteBuck

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

Ohio State capped camp April 28 with its spring game, held at Dayton's Welcome Stadium, where the Scarlet downed the Gray, 31-27, a win fueled by the big play.

Led by Dayton native Keith Byars (24 carries, 118 yards, three TDs), the Gray ran off 82 plays to only 42 for the Scarlet. But the winners, with Mike Tomczak at quarterback, scored on Terry White's 44-yard interception return, Tim Coleman's 102-yard kickoff return and Tomczak's 70-yard connection with Jay Holland, which was the annual scrimmage's game-winning touchdown pass. He completed 10 of his 14 passes (71.4 percent) for 208 yards and did not throw an interception.

The Gray also had a 53-yard reception by John Wooldridge and a 37-yard punt return by Holland.

30 Years Ago – 1989

Ohio State lost a member of its athletic department in April when assistant athletic director Dan Meinert was hired as Minnesota's associate athletic director.

Meinert, 41, became the second in command for the Golden Gophers under athletic director Rick Bay, who also came from the Buckeyes as a former athletic director in Columbus.

A Grafton, Wis., native, and Wisconsin-LaCrosse graduate, Meinert started working part time at OSU in 1983. He was scheduled to begin his tenure May 1 in Minneapolis.

25 Years Ago – 1994

Ohio State's search for a new athletic director ended as the calendar flipped from April to May in 1994, when the Buckeyes replaced the retiring Jim Jones with Maryland's Andy Geiger.

While there were only seven men who had occupied the AD post since 1912, Geiger marked OSU's fifth since 1970 and third since 1984.

Geiger came to Columbus after athletic directorships at two different Ivy League schools, including an 11-year stint at Stanford.

Several former athletes – Rex Kern, Archie Griffin, Bill Hosket and Dutch Baughman – had also been considered.

20 Years Ago – 1999

Despite ankle and fibula surgery, junior wide receiver Vaness Provitt hoped to be back with Ohio State at some point during its 1999 season.

"It's been mentally challenging for me," said Provitt, whose latest setback came after a multitude of injuries

throughout his first three campaigns in Columbus. "But I'm real strong, and I'm going to work through it and just overcome it and go from there."

After the Warren, Ohio, native spent an entire academic year at Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy in 1995, he suffered a high ankle sprain early on and red-shirted the 1996 season. As a redshirt freshman in 1997, Provitt's only injury-free campaign led to six receptions for 56 yards in eight games.

Following a 1998 fall camp where head coach John Cooper left impressed with Provitt as one of the team's top surprises, the 6-3, 200-pounder's dislocated hip caused him to miss the year. After he recovered by February 1999, a rolled ankle during a practice in spring camp revealed the worst, his broken ankle and fibula.

15 Years Ago – 2004

Ohio State exited spring camp with its annual scrimmage April 24, leaving more questions at quarterback as a three-way competition ended without a starter.

After the Buckeyes' signal callers – Justin Zwick, Troy Smith and Todd Boeckman – combined to complete 29 of 52 passes (55.8 percent) for 251 yards and an interception, head coach Jim Tressel thought the group needed work going into fall camp.

"We wanted them to stand in and either deliver or unload," Tressel said. "We thought we needed a little work on that."

Zwick held a narrow edge over Smith, while Boeckman remained in the mix after both of them. Tressel reiterated that if there had been an actual game the day of the spring game, Zwick would have started and Smith would have played significantly.

"I really don't pay a whole lot of attention to that," Zwick said. "I think that's more for other people to worry about. We're all just here trying to get better and make this team better."

10 Years Ago – 2009

Heading into his second season as Ohio State's starting quarterback, Terrelle Pryor showed marked improvement April 25 in the Buckeyes' spring game. The 6-6, 235-pounder capped his spring by completing 13 of 18 passes (72.2 percent) for 191 yards and a 42-yard touchdown in the Gray's 23-3 win over the Scarlet before 95,722 at Ohio Stadium.

Labeled as more of a runner than a passer, Pryor set out to prove doubters wrong before he entered his second campaign under center for OSU.

"We're going to get touchdowns all year," the sophomore said. "We don't care about the critics and analysts

saying stuff about me. That's not a big deal to me. I can throw the ball, and that's what I wanted to do today.

"There's a lot of things that come at you that I learned from last year that if I had known these things (then), it would've been so much easier."

Five Years Ago – 2014

Upon the departure of senior center Corey Linsley, head coach Urban Meyer exited spring camp unhappy with the offensive line, but Ohio State boosted its depth in the trenches April 22 when the Buckeyes landed Alabama graduate transfer Chad Lindsay. In a text message to BSB, the Crimson Tide center/guard confirmed his final year of eligibility would be spent with OSU.

"It's true," he said.

The former three-star recruit from Woodlands, Texas, had started four games for 'Bama in 2013. He was a member of the Tide's BCS national championship teams in 2012 and '13.

The 6-2, 302-pounder possessed ability to play any spot on the interior part of the line, where several starting spots were unresolved. The only starters confirmed by Meyer after spring camp were left tackle Taylor Decker and right guard Pat Elflein.

The Buckeyes needed to replace four starters in the trenches.

Lindsay chose OSU over California, Louisville, Oklahoma and Michigan.

One Year Ago – 2018

On April 20, Earle Bruce died at the age of 87 due to complications of Alzheimer's disease. Five days later, Ohio State honored its former head football coach (1979-87) with an April 25 memorial open to the public inside St. John Arena, where Meyer headlined several speakers at the event. Also speaking were Tressel (2001-10), running backs coach Tony Alford and wide receivers coach Zach Smith, Bruce's grandson.

At the helm for nine seasons, Bruce led OSU to an 81-26-1 record and a 57-17 mark in conference play with four Big Ten titles. In each of his first eight years, he won nine or more games. Ohio State fired Bruce after a 5-4-1 start in 1987, but he went out with a 23-20 win over Michigan to end his coaching career in The Game at 5-4.

Before he moved up the ranks to head coach, Bruce was an assistant under Woody Hayes (1951-78), and after his retirement from coaching he became a popular Columbus radio personality.

In 2017, his family revealed Bruce had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Fields' Far-Reaching Impact On QB Room



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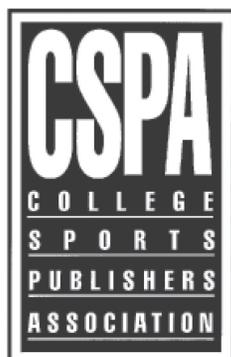
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Charter Member

You have to hand it to Justin Fields. He has yet to throw a meaningful pass or run for a single yard at Ohio State but still has had as much impact on the football program as any incoming player in recent memory.

When Fields decided to avail himself of the NCAA's new free agency rule (also known as the transfer portal) and make a seamless transition from Georgia to Ohio State, it affected the lives of several other quarterbacks from around the country.

Remember how Tate Martell talked about his eagerness to take the reins of the Buckeyes? At least he talked a good game until Fields' arrival in Columbus was imminent. That's when Martell suddenly felt his eagerness shift to Miami (Fla.) – where, if he doesn't improve upon a mediocre spring showing, he could wind up as the second- or third-string quarterback for the Hurricanes.

Then there was Matthew Baldwin, playing this spring's version of Joe Burrow while Fields was starring as Dwayne Haskins.

Although I have already suggested neither Baldwin nor Fields performed all that well in this year's spring game, an argument could be made that Baldwin played the better of the two. It is the same argument that could have been used last spring to describe the battle waged between Burrow and Haskins.

But, as with last year, the so-called competition for the starting position was already predetermined, and Burrow decided that going to LSU and contending for the starting spot there was preferable to another year of mop-up duty with the Buckeyes.

Apparently, Baldwin viewed his future at Ohio State in much the same way since he entered free agency – I mean the transfer portal – shortly after the spring game.

Baldwin's decision impacted not only his future but that of Chris Chugunov, who likely did not have the grandiose aspirations held by Martell or Baldwin when he came to Ohio State as a graduate transfer after three seasons at West Virginia. Be that as it may, Chugunov is now the No. 2 quarterback on the depth chart, meaning that should anything happen to Fields, fans had better get used to pronouncing CHUG-uh-nahv.

That is, of course, if former Kentucky quarterback Gunnar Hoak doesn't come in and beat out Chugunov next fall to become Fields' backup. Hoak is another free-agent QB who used the graduate transfer rule to leave the Wildcats and return to his hometown. He was a three-star prospect coming out of Coffman High School in nearby Dublin when he signed with Kentucky in 2016.

That adds up to a lot of young lives being impacted because of Fields, and I haven't even mentioned Dwan Mathis, the four-star quarterback prospect who flipped his original commitment from Ohio State to Georgia while Fields was going the other way. And then there's three-star prospect JP Andrade, who has committed to Ohio State as a preferred walk-on.

What does all of this really mean? Well, almost nothing if Fields becomes the kind of quarterback nearly every recruiting analyst believes he will be. Then again, Fields is a dual-threat quarterback, meaning he is going to run the ball quite a bit. Remember how that kind of offensive attack affected both Braxton Miller and J.T. Barrett?

Yes, Ohio State won the national championship not that long ago with a third-string quarterback. But before anyone gets too giddy about any of these backups, I'm sorry, but I don't see a single Cardale Jones in the bunch.

Chugunov (6-0, 208) played in five games at West Virginia in 2017, including two starts

in place of injured starter Will Grier, and completed 43 of 90 attempts (47.8 percent) for 536 yards, three touchdowns and two interceptions.

Hoak, listed at 6-4 and 212 pounds, appeared in five games as a backup at Kentucky last season and was 13 for 26 (50.0 percent) in the passing department for 167 yards, two touchdowns and one interception.

What about Andrade? Well, he did throw

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

for almost 10,000 yards and 82 touchdowns at his high school in suburban San Diego. But despite the fact one recruiting service labeled him as the most underrated quarterback prospect in the 2019 class, Andrade had scholarship offers only from the likes of Fordham, Morehead State and South Alabama – not exactly a who's who of potential College Football Playoff programs.

Then again, Joe Germaine had only one scholarship offer coming out of high school, and that was to play defensive back. So, I guess you never know.

Speaking Of The NCAA

This whole idea of the transfer portal is a joke – unless, of course, the NCAA wants to get something right for a change and declare open free agency in college sports.

The rules governing the transfer of scholarship athletes have always been leveraged toward coaches and their programs. Coaches can switch schools at the drop of a hat with no penalty, but athletes have typically had to give up a year of their eligibility should they want to start over elsewhere.

Those regulations were relaxed a bit a couple of years ago with the advent of the graduate transfer rule whereby an athlete who had already completed degree work at his original school could move to another school without having to sit out a year. Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson was one of the first players to take advantage of the graduate transfer exception when he wound up at Wisconsin in 2011 after spending the previous four seasons at North Carolina State. Burrow took advantage of the same rule when he transferred to LSU last year.

Now, the NCAA has offered the transfer portal with the caveat that immediate eligibility is available if the athlete experienced some kind of hardship at his or her original school. And this is where things get murky – even by NCAA standards.

Fields was reportedly the victim of racial epithets hurled at him during a football game on the Georgia campus. He felt endangered by epithets, giving him a solid argument for hardship status. Martell had a much weaker case in that he claimed his hardship was due to the retirement of Urban Meyer, the coach who recruited him from Las Vegas to play at Ohio State. Hardships, I guess, are in the eye of the beholder because Martell was granted immediate eligibility at Miami.

If Baldwin wants to pursue that same line of thinking, it stands to reason he would be eligible at his next stop. So what if he competed in spring ball at OSU and then discovered he wasn't going to beat Fields for the starting position?

To be honest, I usually side with the player in matters such as these. I couldn't find much

fault with Nick Bosa making a business decision to sit out the rest of the 2018 season after his injury. Likewise, I have never begrudged any player who wants to leave school early for the pros if he thinks he's ready.

This just seems different, though.

Baldwin eagerly accepted a scholarship from Ohio State even though he was damaged goods. He received a free year of education, not to mention state-of-the-art medical and rehab treatments. He accepted those things with the knowledge that he would likely be behind Haskins and Martell on the depth chart. But then things changed. Haskins and Martell each left the program, and maybe Baldwin thought he was going to be gifted the starting position. But when Fields came aboard to challenge him for that starting quarterback position, he suddenly decided Ohio State was no longer the place he wanted to be.

If that's the way the kid wants it, fine by me. But if Baldwin is granted immediate eligibility at his next stop, the NCAA might as well set fire to its transfer rules and declare open free agency for college players.

And Then There's This

Under the guise of protection for its student-athletes, the NCAA football rules committee has approved several rule change proposals for the 2019 season, including the strengthening of targeting rules and another meant to limit the potential for too many overtimes.

The changes to targeting make it a "progressive penalty," meaning players that commit three targeting fouls during the same season could face a one-game suspension. Under the current rules, players who commit targeting are ejected from that game and are required to miss the first half of the next game if the penalty occurred in the second half. There is no further suspension when the penalty occurs in the first half.

Additionally, referees will be required to review replays of all targeting calls to confirm all elements of targeting were present. If the targeting penalty cannot be confirmed by video review, the call on the field will not stand.

"We believe the targeting rule has made the game better," Arizona State athletic director Ray Anderson told reporters. "It's had a change in behavior. But not enough ... and that's what we're continuing to try to push."

Coming up with a clear interpretation of exactly what constitutes targeting and whether or not it was intended might also be a good thing for the NCAA to pursue, but I digress.

The rules committee also approved a change to overtime – perhaps one of the most ridiculous changes in recent memory.

Under the rule change, if a game reaches a fifth overtime, teams will no longer trade starts at the opponent's 25-yard line. Instead, teams will run alternating two-point conversion attempts until a winner is determined.

According to Anderson, the new rule came in the wake of last year's seven-overtime thriller between Texas A&M and LSU, a game the Aggies eventually won by a 74-72 final score.

"That was a four-hour-plus game," Anderson said. "The health and safety of players is paramount. So the concern is, you are (already physically) spent in the normal course of a four-quarter game."

Of course, the rules committee could have required teams to go for two-point conversions beginning with the first overtime period, but that apparently made too much sense.



Johnson Denies Player Payment Allegations

The federal trial on corruption in college basketball took a surprising turn on April 23 when Marty Blazer, a former financial advisor, testified he arranged payments to football players and/or their families at Alabama, Michigan, Northwestern, Notre Dame, North Carolina, Penn State and Pittsburgh.

According to Yahoo Sports' Dan Wetzel, Blazer told the court a former assistant coach encouraged him to pay \$10,000 to former Nittany Lions defensive end Aaron Maybin (2006-08) with hopes he'd return to school for another year instead of entering the 2009 NFL draft, where he was selected by the Buffalo Bills with the No. 11 overall pick. And though Blazer did not specifically name Ohio State associate head coach and defensive line coach Larry Johnson, he said the son of the coach in question was an NFL player and one of his many clients.

Larry Johnson Jr. starred at Penn State and played in the NFL for nine seasons with the Kansas City Chiefs, Cincinnati Bengals, Washington Redskins and Miami Dolphins, and his father was the only person on the

Nittany Lions' staff at that time who meets that description.

Johnson Sr. adamantly denied the allegations, however.

"That is not accurate at all," Johnson - who is entering his sixth season at Ohio State and was promoted to associate head coach in January - told Wetzel. "That is absolutely false. I would never, ever ask anybody to do that. That is not me.

"Why is it that something like that comes out and nobody says anything to me? This is the first call I've gotten. All of a sudden this Marty Blazer guy can just say whatever he wants? That is absolutely amazing. Wow."

According to Wetzel, the allegation is "highly unlikely" to attract the attention of the NCAA, even with Johnson still coaching at Ohio State. Johnson served as an assistant coach at Penn State from 1996-2013 before he joined the Buckeyes' staff in 2014.

Chargers, Cowboys Exercise Options On Bosa, Elliott

The Los Angeles Chargers and Dallas Cowboys on April 24 picked up their fifth-year options on former Ohio State defensive end Joey Bosa and running back Ezekiel Elliott, respectively. That means their rookie contracts will be extended by one year, keeping them with the teams that drafted them through the 2020 season.

Bosa, the No. 3 overall pick in the 2016 NFL draft, was named the league's defensive rookie of the year after he compiled 41 tackles, 19 tackles for loss and 10½ sacks in just 12 games. He made the Pro Bowl for the first time in 2018 and was named All-AFC by the Professional Football Writers of America after setting career highs in tackles (99), sacks (12½) and forced fumbles (four) while leading the Chargers to the playoffs.

Elliott was taken one pick after Bosa and was named the NFL's offensive rookie of the year after leading the league in rushing. He has rushed for 4,048 yards and 28 touchdowns in three seasons with the Cowboys,



CLEVELAND INDIANS/TWITTER

HOT-DOGGING - Former Ohio State wide receiver Parris Campbell threw out the ceremonial first pitch ahead of the Cleveland Indians game on April 20.

though he missed six games during the 2017 season for violating the league's personal conduct policy following a lengthy investigation into domestic violence claims made by an ex-girlfriend.

Per league rules, teams have until May 3 to exercise the fifth-year options on their 2016 first-round draft picks. Other former Buckeyes eligible include New Orleans Saints cornerback Eli Apple (No. 10 overall), Detroit Lions offensive tackle Taylor Decker (No. 16 overall) and New York Jets linebacker Darron Lee (No. 20 overall).

Sprinkle Earns Another NFL Opportunity

Former Ohio State defensive tackle Tracy Sprinkle has been invited to participate in the Kansas City Chiefs' rookie minicamp, his agent announced on April 28.

The 6-2, 239-pound Sprinkle will audition for a roster spot alongside the team's draft picks, undrafted free-agent signings and other tryout players.

A team captain for the Buckeyes as a fifth-year senior in 2017, Sprinkle signed a free-agent deal with the Carolina Panthers following the 2018 NFL draft. After being released by the team, he started a clothing line, How She Gone Eat, with former Buckeye teammates Jalyn Holmes, Tyquan Lewis and Michael Hill.

Sprinkle was not out of football long, playing for the now-defunct Alliance of American Football's Atlanta Legends. The league began play in February, and though it folded in April

after just eight weeks of play, Sprinkle's performance likely played a role in his upcoming tryout.

Bengals Waive Adolphus Washington

The Cincinnati Bengals announced on April 23 that they had waived former Ohio State defensive tackle Adolphus Washington after just one season with the team. The 6-4, 295-pound Washington was a third-round pick of the Buffalo Bills in 2016 and recorded 3½ sacks in 31 games (21 starts) in three seasons with the team.

The Bills released Washington last September, and he was quickly signed by the Cowboys. Washington, a Cincinnati native, was then signed by the Bengals off the Cowboys' practice squad. He played in four games and totaled six tackles and a sack before landing on injured reserve with a knee injury on Nov. 23.

Campbell Throws Out 1st Pitch In Cleveland

Former Ohio State wide receiver Parris Campbell threw out the ceremonial first pitch before the first game of a doubleheader between the Atlanta Braves and Cleveland Indians on April 20. Unfortunately, his pitch bounced a few feet in front of the plate.

Campbell, who was all-state in football and track at nearby Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary, was selected by the Indianapolis Colts in the second round (No. 59 overall) of the 2019 NFL draft. This was the second time

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PLAYERS ON THE SPOT

he'd thrown out a first pitch this offseason, tossing a ball just a bit off the plate before the Cincinnati Reds' 2-1 win over the Miami Marlins on April 10.

Ohio State Gymnast Wins NCAA Title

Ohio State gymnast Alec Yoder closed his collegiate career with a national title on the pommel horse at the NCAA Individual Championship on April 20 in Champaign, Ill.

Yoder – a 5-9 senior from Indianapolis Northpoint Homeschool – is a four-time All-American and two-time Big Ten champion in the event. He's also earned All-America honors in the all-around (three times), parallel bars (twice) and rings, bringing his career total to double digits.

"I am very proud of Alec and everything that he accomplished in these four years," head coach Rustam Sharipov said. "This was a great day for him, and for our program. To win a national championship and earn another All-American honor, it speaks to the impact he's had on this team over his four years."

Though the Buckeyes fell short of the overall team competition, senior Joey Bonanno (floor), freshman Jesse Tyndall (floor), sophomore Trevor Cummings (pommel horse) and sophomore Max Andryushchenko (rings) also qualified for the NCAA individual championships. Cummings earned All-America honors on the pommel horse with a fourth-place finish.

Meyer Tees It Up In Charity Event

Former Ohio State head football coach and current assistant athletic director of athletics initiatives and relations Urban Meyer teamed up with former OSU running back Jeff Logan (1974-77) for the 13th annual Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl Challenge charity golf tournament on April 28-30.

Results for the two-man scramble were not available as of press time, but Meyer and Logan competed for their share of \$650,000 – with any winnings benefiting the Urban and Shelley Meyer Fund for Cancer Research.

This year's field included Auburn's Gus Malzahn, Clemson's Dabo Swinney, Florida's Dan Mullen, Georgia's Kirby Smart, Notre Dame's Brian Kelly and North Carolina's Mack Brown.

"We're honored to have some of college football's biggest names compete in this year's event, all in the name of scholarship and charity," Peach Bowl president and CEO Gary Stokan said. "It will be intriguing to see some of the sport's biggest rivalries shift from the gridiron to the green with this year's pairings."

Since its creation in 2007, the event – held at the Reynolds Lake Oconee resort golf course near Atlanta – has contributed a total of \$7.6 million toward scholarships and various charities.

Before the start of spring football, Buckeye Sports Bulletin identified several players who were "on the spot." Here's how they fared:

• **Sophomore quarterback Justin Fields:** Fields' highly anticipated appearance in the spring game was somewhat of a mixed bag, as he completed just 4 of 13 passes for 131 yards and one touchdown in the Gray's 35-17 win over the Scarlet.

But what set Fields apart from redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin – who has since announced his intention to transfer from the program – was his dual-threat ability. Though the defense was not allowed to tackle, Fields showed glimpses of something that was missing from Ohio State's offense last season by rushing for 38 yards and another score.

It's still clear Fields is learning a new offense after transferring from Georgia only a few months ago, but he'll get more comfortable in time and with continued repetitions. The addition of Kentucky transfer Gunnar Hoak means that he'll be forced to compete for the job this fall rather than have it handed to him, which will only help his development, too.

• **Junior running back Demario McCall:** With established starter J.K. Dobbins taking it easy this spring, there was an opportunity for McCall to cement his place as the second-string running back. He was instead limited in practice and missed the annual spring scrimmage with a nagging calf injury, which allowed redshirt freshman Master Teague and early enrollee Marcus Crowley to take valuable first-team reps in his place.

Teague has progressed tremendously since we saw him in small doses last fall, and he has earned a spot in the rotation this season. His continued emergence will no doubt take some of the weight off Dobbins' shoulders, and his running style feels more complementary to Dobbins' than McCall's.

If Teague is ultimately the second-string running back, McCall will likely return to the hybrid role as a situational receiving back – in addition to his role on special teams – rather than a between-the-tackles runner.

• **Sophomore center Josh Myers:** The 6-5, 310-pound Myers entered the spring as one of several names who could start the season opener, but it appears he's firmly taken control of the role that anchors the offensive line with a tremendous spring.

The Buckeyes have successfully converted a different offensive guard to center in each of the last three seasons, and all three (Pat Elflein, Billy Price and Michael Jordan) went on to earn All-America

honors. Myers – who began his career as a tackle – admitted some apprehension to the move initially but has taken advantage of the opportunity.

Redshirt freshman Matthew Jones and incoming freshman Harry Miller, who notably used FaceTime to attend meetings and talk with coaches despite being on a mission trip to Nicaragua, are certainly talented enough to play. But they'll battle for second-string behind Myers this fall and add much-needed depth in the trenches.

• **Junior linebacker Pete Werner:** Though he's one of three returning starters at linebacker, Werner – much like senior Malik Harrison and junior Tuf Borland – won't be simply handed the spot once again this fall by new linebackers coach Al Washington. Werner ran with the first-team defense ahead of sophomore K'Vaughan Pope and played well in limited duty (11 snaps) during the spring game. That's an encouraging sign because Pope is a talented player in his own right and someone eager to make his mark beyond special teams.

The implementation of the "Bullet" position will force Werner's position (strongside linebacker) off the field in certain situations, which means he'll have to make the most of his playing time. It will also hide his deficiency, which was covering athletic running backs, wide receivers and tight ends from spread offenses in coverage. On the other hand, Werner will now play a bigger role against power run teams and in short-yardage situations – and he should thrive in such a capacity.

• **Fifth-year senior cornerback Damon Arnette:** The media and fans alike were surprised when Arnette opted to put off the NFL and return to school for one final season. He had generally underperformed to this point in his career, and with a bevy of talented underclassmen pushing for playing time behind him, it just made sense for Arnette to move on and test his luck at the next level.

That decision could turn out to be a blessing in disguise for Ohio State's much-maligned secondary. And we saw signs of why this spring.

Arnette notably got in a fight with junior wide receiver Jaylen Harris during a full-team scrimmage in front of the media, which head coach Ryan Day seemingly encouraged so long as the scuffle did not become reckless. After all, football is a violent game and emotions run high.

That style of play – physically and verbally antagonizing the offense – could easily backfire on Arnette, especially with the touchy nature of the targeting rule. But if he can keep his own emotions in check while frustrating the offense, Arnette may turn out to be the leader the Buckeyes' defensive backfield sorely lacked last season.

– Andrew Lind

Men's Tennis Wins Another B1G Title

The Ohio State men's tennis team captured its fourth consecutive Big Ten tournament championship on April 28 with a 4-1 victory over Illinois. The top-ranked and top-seeded Buckeyes have now won nine tournament titles.

Ohio State won the doubles point as J.J. Wolf and Martin Joyce defeated Illinois' Alex Brown and Aleks Kovacevic, 6-4, and Alex Cobalt and Kyle Seelig claimed a 6-3 victory over Vuk Budic and Guy Gomes. In singles, Joyce defeated Clark, 6-2, 6-4; Seelig topped Siphosothando Montsi, 7-6, 6-2; and Kobelt knocked off Keenan Mayo, 6-4, 6-2; to give the Buckeyes the conference's automatic berth in the NCAA championships, which will take place May 16-25 at the USTA National Campus Collegiate Center in Orlando, Fla.

Continued On Page 6

2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2018 Record
Aug. 31	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	TBA	TBA	5-7 (3-5 Conference USA)
Sept. 7	CINCINNATI*	TBA	TBA	11-2 (6-2 American Athletic Conference)
Sept. 14	at Indiana	TBA	TBA	5-7 (2-7 Big Ten)
Sept. 21	MIAMI (OHIO)*	TBA	TBA	6-6 (6-2 Mid-American)
Sept. 28	at Nebraska	TBA	TBA	4-8 (3-6 Big Ten)
Oct. 5	MICHIGAN STATE*	TBA	TBA	7-6 (5-4 Big Ten)
Oct. 18	at Northwestern*	TBA	TBA	9-5 (8-1 Big Ten)
Oct. 26	WISCONSIN*	TBA	TBA	8-5 (5-4 Big Ten)
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	TBA	TBA	5-7 (3-6 Big Ten)
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	1-11 (0-9 Big Ten)
Nov. 23	PENN STATE*	TBA	TBA	9-4 (6-3 Big Ten)
Nov. 30	at Michigan*	TBA	TBA	10-3 (8-1 Big Ten)
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

* 2018 bowl team

** at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

Last Print Edition of BSB Until June 4

This issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin marks the end of our spring biweekly publishing schedule. The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, the June issue, will be mailed on June 4.

However, our electronic BuckeyeSports.com is available 24/7/365 with all the breaking news posted, including the latest in recruiting, and then discussed by readers and staff on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum. There is no need for BSB readers to wait five weeks to get their news of the Buckeyes.

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Continued From Page 5

Women's Golf Off To NCAA Championships

The Ohio State women's golf team won the 18th Big Ten championship in program history on April 21, tallying a season-best final-round 281 Sunday at TPC River's Bend in Maineville, Ohio.

As a team, the Buckeyes finished 1-under par and finished three strokes ahead of Illinois, Indiana and Purdue to punch the conference's automatic NCAA championships berth ticket. This marks a conference-record 11th title for the program under head coach and director of golf Therese Hession.

"This would be one of the most unlikely championships," Hession said. "I knew in my heart we had it in us, but we had to put it all together. It's ironic how the week worked with Jack (Nicklaus) coming in and talking to the team about how to win before we came out and did this over the weekend. We stuck to the game

plan and minimized our mistakes. I'm so proud of this team."

Senior Niki Schroeder carded a bogey-free career-low 6-under par 66 in the final round of the tournament to earn co-medalist honors.

Jobst, Winters Receive B1G Medal of Honor

Ohio State men's hockey forward Mason Jobst and track and field athlete Harrington Winters were named the Buckeyes' winners of the 2019 Big Ten Medal of Honor on April 23.

The Big Ten Medal of Honor, which is considered the most prestigious award in the conference and the first of its kind in intercollegiate athletics, recognizes academic and athletic excellence. It was first awarded in 1915 to one student-athlete from the graduating class of each university who had "attained the greatest proficiency in athletics and scholastic work."

Jobst, who became just the second player in program history to be named a two-time All-American, led the Buckeyes to their first Frozen Four appearance in 20 years in 2018 and the program's first Big Ten title in 2019. He was the school's fifth Hobey Baker Award finalist and a three-time All-Big Ten honoree, as well as a three-time Scholar-Athlete and two-time academic all-conference selection.

Following the season, Jobst agreed to terms on a two-way contract with the New York Islanders.

Winters, meanwhile, is the president of the university's student-athlete advisory council. She holds three records at Ohio State, including the 600-meter run (1:27.60), the 4x400-meter relay (3:31.23) and the distance medley relay (11:02.12).

A five-time All-American, Winters has claimed 24 event titles throughout her distinguished career.



OHIO STATE MEN'S HOCKEY/TWITTER

AWARD SEASON – Ohio State forward Mason Jobst is flanked by his teammates, forwards Brendon Kearney (left) and John Wiitala, during the Scarlet and Graymies award ceremony on April 23.

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There will also be special private sales on tickets, dining and travel throughout the year, and other benefits are sure to be added.

"I am frequently asked how long we will continue publishing the print version of Buckeye Sports Bulletin," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "The readers will decide that."

"Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers are a family, and the VIP Program will help us hold the line on subscription rates as more and more of our readers find themselves on fixed incomes but still enjoy reading the print edition of BSB and struggle to meet the rising costs. Those who can afford to do so can help those who are less fortunate but share the same passion for Buckeye Sports Bulletin."

With the \$50 VIP upgrade, Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers will have their names and cities listed in the annual Football Preview issue and the Michigan issue as supporters of BSB. Those who add \$100 to their subscription will have their names and cities listed in all 24 issues each year as BSB patrons. Those who donate \$125 or more will be designated as Elite patrons in each issue, and the four largest Elite donors to the Buckeye Sports Bulletin VIP program will have their names listed in each issue in the credit box on page 3 as a Wachsman Donor, in honor of the late BSB assistant publisher, Karen Wachsman.

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"Your Head to Toe Buckeye Source"

Havlicek Led Buckeyes To 1960 National Title

Continued From Page 1

me.”

Taylor’s five-man class had to sit out the 1958-59 season as freshmen to comply with NCAA rules, but the following year that group joined forces with Joe Roberts, Larry Siegfried, Dick Furry and other veterans to post a 25-3 record and steamroll to the national championship. Lucas was a sensation that season, averaging 26.3 points per game and 16.4 rebounds per game. Havlicek started on the wing and averaged 12.2 ppg and 7.3 rpg.

It was more of the same throughout their time together in scarlet and gray. Lucas went on to be named a two-time National Player of the Year with career averages of 24.3 ppg and 17.2 rpg, but Havlicek also proved to be invaluable while putting up 14.6 ppg and 8.6 rpg in three seasons and serving in a role of shutdown defender.

“All those guys in that (1958) class were basically 30-point scorers in high school,” recalled Hosket, who led the Buckeyes to the Final Four in 1968. “John said, ‘We have plenty of offense, I’ll make it on the defensive end.’ That’s where he really made the biggest impact.

“It’s a tribute to a coach to take all that talent and mesh all those personalities into a great team, and John fit that perfectly. He just did what needed to be done.

“It’s no wonder John and Fred were particularly close. John always talked about being an Ohio State player. He always considered himself that, and that meant doing the right things on and off the floor.”

Ohio Boy Finds Superstardom

While Lucas was the centerpiece of OSU dominance in the early 1960s, Havlicek was the glue. That led to one of the great runs of success in NBA history, although Havlicek’s athletic path could have gone in other directions.

Born in Martins Ferry, Ohio, in 1940, Havlicek was a humble youngster despite being a standout in many sports. His father was a Czech immigrant butcher who tried to push young John into soccer. His mother was of Croatian descent. At Bridgeport High School, Havlicek excelled at everything he touched.

He lived across the street from eventual Major League pitchers Phil and Joe Niekro. Phil said Havlicek, who hit .440 in high school, undoubtedly would have reached the majors, too, if he had pursued the sport professionally. Havlicek did play briefly for the Ohio State baseball team as a first baseman, but it was evident during freshman practices he could be a key piece for the basketball squad and thrive in Taylor’s system, which was based on smarts, fluidity and effort.

Taylor required all of his players be able to run an under-six-minute mile on the hills of the OSU Scarlet golf course, but that wasn’t much of a challenge for Havlicek, who was a tireless athlete.

“Fred would have a member of the cross country team take us out and run a five-minute pace so we could stay somewhat in range and make six minutes,” Hosket said. “We were always told that John ran a 4:21 or something ridiculous like that. The story was John

ran with the pacer and when he could see the finish, he just ran away from him.

“When I played in the NBA, it was the same. John was as fine a conditioned athlete as I’ve ever seen.”

Ohio State faced Cal, the defending national champs, in the 1960 title game at the Cow Palace near San Francisco. The Bears’ Hall of Fame coach, Pete Newell, was in awe of Havlicek’s stamina then and years later when he served as general manager of the Los Angeles Lakers. In fact, he once portrayed Havlicek as a “roadrunner taking you through every ditch, every irrigation canal, barbed-wire fence and cattle guard. You’ve had a trip over the plains when you’ve played him for a night.”

New York Knicks center Willis Reed used to ask his teammate Hosket after facing the Celtics, “How many Havliceks did we play tonight?” since the swingman seemed to cover every possible square of the Boston Garden parquet floor.

Havlicek always was in search of ways to round out his game and find an advantage. He had a built-in one growing up in eastern Ohio, where he learned to cut on a dime and run through thick woods as a kid. On the court, he wasted no movement, dribbling only when he needed to and laying the ball in instead of dunking to preserve energy.

It was later discovered that Havlicek famously was blessed with oversized lungs that couldn’t fit into the same X-ray frame.

He also spoke with a slight lisp, which added to his mild-mannered appeal. Still, he teammates fed off his focus and desire to win. They also saw a young man with appreciable toughness. When

Nowell met him at a high school all-star event, the point guard thought Havlicek resembled John Wayne and called his future teammate “Hondo,” a nickname that stuck for the rest of Havlicek’s playing career.

After winning 78 of 84 varsity basketball games at Ohio State and being named a consensus All-American, Havlicek was destined for the NBA, or so it seemed. Celtics president and GM Red Auerbach nabbed him with the seventh overall pick, but Havlicek was underwhelmed by the organization’s initial contract offer and decided to chase another dream instead.

He tried out for the Cleveland Browns and, thankfully for the world of roundball, was the final cut in preseason camp in 1962. The Browns opted to hang onto Gary Collins of Maryland, equally tall at 6-5 and a dual threat as a punter.

Havlicek was on his way to Boston, and his willingness to defend and do whatever was required made him a perfect heir apparent for sixth-man extraordinaire Frank Ramsey.

“He couldn’t have been drafted by a better team,” Hosket said. “The Celtics were all about winning, and that’s what John was about.

“That sixth-man mantra was something they developed in Boston, and it made them a great team. I remember when I played with Dave DeBusschere in New York, he would talk about how it almost wasn’t fair, the depth they had. They would start (Bob) Cousy and (Bill) Sharman at guard, and their big men were guys like Bill Russell and Tom Heinsohn.

“When other teams subbed, they brought in their third guard and maybe a backup



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forward. The Celtics would bring in guys like Ramsey, John, K.C. Jones and Sam Jones. You'd be down like nine points at the end of the first quarter, and then they'd bring those guys in and you'd be looking at a 20-point deficit at halftime."

Beantown easily fell in love with Havlicek, a 6-5 dervish of continuous motion who was an All-Star 13 times and inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in nearby Springfield, Mass., in 1984.

"Havlicek was a perfect guy to play on a fastbreak team," Heinsohn said in a recent television interview. "His rookie year he averaged like 14 points a game, and I don't think he took a shot of more than 10 feet."

The Celtics won the title that season and captured six rings in Havlicek's first seven years with the team. By the 1970s, Heinsohn was his coach and "Hondo" was an out-and-out star.

He averaged more than 22 points per game every season from 1969-70 to 1973-74, including a career-best 28.9 ppg – along with 9.0 rebounds and 7.5 assists per outing – in 1970-71. He led the league that season by averaging an astonishing 45.4 minutes per game.

Symbol of Constancy, Consistency

At the time of his retirement, Havlicek was the NBA career leader in games played with 1,270. With the Celtics a perennial powerhouse throughout his career, he played in another 172 contests during the postseason – the equivalent of more than two regular seasons – averaging 22.0 ppg in the playoffs. He still ranks 16th in all-time scoring with 26,395 points (20.8 per game). He also mixed in 8,007 career rebounds (6.3 per game) and 6,114 assists (4.8 per game).

Just like in his developing years and those at Ohio State, Havlicek amazed the professional sports world with his constant motion and indefatigable spirit. He also had a knack for making the most important play of the game.

In fact, Havlicek's hustle and instincts led to one of the most famous plays in NBA history. Facing rival Philadelphia in the 1965 Eastern Conference finals, the Celtics were clinging to a 110-109 lead in the decisive seventh game and needed a defensive stop to clinch yet another berth in the NBA Finals.

Havlicek was guarding star forward Chet Walker when the ball was handed to Hal Greer. He lunged with perfect timing at the inbound pass, tipping it to Sam Jones, who dribbled out the clock and set off one of the most euphoric moments in the famed Garden.

The play was immortalized by the call of longtime Celtics broadcaster Johnny Most, who shrieked in his trademark scratchy voice, "Havlicek stole the ball!" Fans mobbed Havlicek and pulled his jersey from his back. The moment lives in all-time sports highlight lore to this day.

April 9, 1978 – the day after his 38th birthday – Havlicek put on a virtuoso performance in his final professional game, scoring 29 points in a victory over the Buffalo Braves. It was the last time a Celtic wore No. 17. The organization already had decided to retire his jersey number, which now hangs in the rafters of TD Garden.

On April 27 of this year in that building, a moment of silence was observed prior to the NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs game between the Columbus Blue Jackets and Boston Bruins. The Celtics also were planning to pay homage to Havlicek when Boston hosts an NBA playoff game against the Milwaukee Bucks on May 3.

Havlicek leaves behind a legacy and career that will be treasured forever. In 1997, he was selected as one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History by a panel of journalists, players, coaches, executives and general managers. He also was named the 14th-best player of all



OHIO STATE ATHLETICS/TWITTER

IN THE RAFTERS – John Havlicek is one of just five former Buckeyes to have his number retired at Ohio State.

time in Bill Simmons' "Book of Basketball."

Russell often said Havlicek was the finest teammate he ever had, which may be the highest of all compliments.

Well after he retired to a quiet life in Florida, Havlicek continued to receive plaudits for his amazing accomplishments. In 2006, he was inducted into the College Basketball Hall of Fame. The following year, the Bridgeport High School gym was renamed the "John J. Havlicek Gymnasium."

Ohio State even relaxed a policy that only former National Players of the Year could be honored with a retired jersey and eventually raised No. 5 to the rafters.

Havlicek is survived by his wife, Beth (Evans), whom he met at Ohio State and married in 1967; their son, Chris, who played basketball at the University of Virginia; their daughter, Jill, who married former MLB player Brian Buchanan; plus many other relatives, friends and loved ones.

Hosket began a deeper friendship with the family when they moved into the same neighborhood, Wellington Woods, on the east edge of Columbus.

"Great family," he said. "Great people.

"He was a guy whose motor never stopped, and he had the utmost respect from his teammates and competitors. But I think about John as much as a person. He was very regimented, always did things a certain way. He always hung up his clothes on the road. He was always appreciative of his opportunities and what he accomplished.

"John never changed."

Reaction To Havlicek's Passing

Ohio State fans, Boston Celtics fans and the entire world of sport mourned the death of John Havlicek. BSB gathered reactions from across the country:

Matt Schudel, The Washington Post – "Mr. Havlicek came to Boston in 1962, after a stellar college career at Ohio State, where he helped lead the Buckeyes to a national title in 1960 and two other appearances in the NCAA's championship game.

"He had a relentless, unselfish style of play, highlighted by constant movement and tenacious defense. He joined the Celtics at a time when the team, coached by Red Auerbach, was a seemingly unbeatable dynasty. From 1957 to 1969, the Celtics won 11 NBA championships.

"The first time Auerbach saw Mr. Havlicek

in a practice session with the Celtics, he was flabbergasted at what Havlicek was showing us. Here he was, not having touched a basketball for months and he was far and away the best man on the court.

"When Mr. Havlicek was growing up in a small town in Ohio, his parents did not give him a bicycle. As a result, he ran everywhere, building up remarkable stamina and speed. It was a skill that proved invaluable on the basketball court, where he was utterly tireless and never seemed to break a sweat."

Harvey Araton, The New York Times – "While Havlicek was at first glance no imposing specimen on a basketball court, he had the sinewy look of the long line of mine workers on his mother's side. In a 2009 interview with The New York Times, he scoffed at the notion that his era's best would struggle athletically against the more high-flying modern-era players.

"The game, he said, was still about executing fundamental basketball skills and the willingness to run opponents into submission.

"I certainly think we could compete, and given the same latitude' as modern players – 'wraparound dribbles, three or four steps to the rim – we would be even better,' he said. 'For every dunk they'd get on us, we'd probably get two backdoor layups on them.'"

... "According to (former Ohio State teammate Jerry) Lucas, Havlicek worked diligently at everything, including his college studies. He was bewildered by Lucas's reliance on his memory skills, fearing that his roommate would become academically ineligible and 'ruin our team.'

"As a professional, Havlicek was so focused on avoiding body fat that he typically arrived at training camp slimmed down and had to 'eat his way back to his playing weight,' (former Boston teammate Tom) Heinsohn said.

"'But he could do things like that because he was so darned disciplined,' he added.

"Havlicek was a man of such preparation and routine that he folded his socks on a hanger in the locker room before slipping into his game uniform."

Matt Dollinger, Sports Illustrated – "The NBA has lost one of the greatest, and most beloved, players in its 72-year history.

"Havlicek was best known for his hustle and his heart. 'Hondo' was known as the 'perpetual motion machine' during his heyday with the Celtics, hounding opponents on the floor and wearing them down. His

most famous play came in the 1965 Eastern Conference finals when he stole the inbounds pass to seal the victory, and Boston's play-by-play announcer Johnny Most exclaimed: 'Havlicek steals it! Over to Sam Jones! Havlicek stole the ball! It's all over! It's all over! Johnny Havlicek is being mobbed by the fans!'"

Bill Russell, NBA Hall of Famer via Twitter – "It is getting difficult each time I hear about another contemporary that passes! What is harder is when we lose guys like John Havlicek, he was not just a teammate and a great guy, but he was family. That is how our Celtics teams were. R.I.P. Hondo."

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, NBA Hall of Famer via Twitter – "I met John Havlicek at the same time and place that I met Red Auerbach and Bill Russell at my high school gym in Autumn of 1961 – my freshman year. He was still playing when I entered the league and our friendship grew... #17 will always be class act! R.I.P."

Jerry West, NBA Hall of Famer – "The thing with John, he competed against you at the highest level and he wanted to win badly. But he was always a really nice person. I don't think that I ever heard anyone say a bad word about John.

"Playing in Boston, with so many great teams and so much success winning titles, the legend of John grew. He improved a lot through his career. It was a sign of how hard he worked at his game. Toward the end of his career, he became a terrific scorer."

Bill Bradley, former U.S. Senator and two-time NBA champion – "For 10 years, John Havlicek was my toughest opponent in the biggest rivalry in the league. Night after night he was the epitome of constant motion. He only needed half a step to beat me, which he usually did. He was the quintessential Celtic – unselfish and loyal – and through the players' union he helped make the game more just by ending the reserve clause. The only thing he loved more than the game was his family. He'll always be with them."

Adam Silver, NBA Commissioner – "John Havlicek was a wonderful friend who represented the best of the NBA. He described himself as a man of routine and discipline – a humble approach that produced extraordinary results, including eight NBA championships with the Boston Celtics, 13 All-Star selections and some of the most iconic moments in league history. A trusted teammate who prioritized winning, John's passions and energy endeared him to basketball fans and made him a model for generations of NBA players. We send our deepest sympathies to John's wife, Beth, his son, Chris, and his daughter, Jill, as well as the entire Celtics' organization."

Mike Lupica, member of National Sports Media Hall of Fame, MLB.com columnist via Twitter – "With the passing of John Havlicek we lose one of the great gentlemen in all of sports history."

Bob Ryan, sports columnist emeritus for the Boston Globe via Twitter – "This is an immense personal loss, as well as professional. If all professional athletes carried themselves as well as he did, sport would be a far better place."

Chris Holtmann, Ohio State men's basketball head coach – "All of us associated with the men's basketball program are saddened to learn of the passing of Ohio State legend John Havlicek. Anyone who grew up around the game of basketball like I did marvels at what John accomplished throughout his career.

"He led an Ohio State team recognized as one of the most accomplished in the history of the collegiate game before beginning his legendary career with the Boston Celtics. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and teammates."

Young Defensive Ends Eager To Make Mark

By **CRAIG MERZ**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Two of the newest members of the Ohio State football team aren't lacking in confidence even before playing their first game.

Freshmen defensive ends Zach Harrison from nearby Lewis Center Olentangy Orange and Noah Potter of Mentor, Ohio, were early enrollees who started school Jan. 7 and went through spring practice, enabling them to get head starts in making the rotation among a deep and talented line.

The Buckeyes lost Nick Bosa and Dre'Mont Jones to the 2019 NFL draft but still boast stand-out defensive ends in senior Jonathon Cooper and junior Chase Young and fifth-year senior defensive tackle Robert Landers.

There's strength in numbers behind them, and the BSB depth chart after the April 13 spring game lists Harrison (6-6, 255) behind Young and sophomore Tyreke Smith on the right end, while Potter (6-6, 252) is backing up Cooper, sophomore Tyler Friday (6-3, 260) and redshirt freshman Javontae Jean-Baptiste (6-5, 245) on the other side.

Nonetheless, the freshmen are undeterred in their beliefs that they will be impact players sooner rather than later.

"Me and Zach, we're going to wreck some offensive tackles for the next couple of years," Potter said. "I'm excited because he's a great player. Me and him together, we're going to do some damage."

Harrison, the top-rated player in Ohio and 12th nationally for the 2019 class in the 247Sports composite rankings, was asked how he envisioned his career at Ohio State would go.

"When it's all said and done, I want to leave a legacy here," he said. "People will be like, 'Zach Harrison, he was one of the greatest to come through Ohio State.'"

"I don't think I've scratched the surface. I have a long way to go, which is exciting. I'm decent right now but I'm waiting for it to take off."

Strong words from them, but the OSU coaches like players who are self-assured and willing to put in the effort.

"Noah Potter is a guy who has already shown he's going to work really hard, kind of a guy who we expect to challenge in the spring," head coach Ryan Day said before drills began.

Potter, a four-star recruit and the 247Sports composite's ninth-best player in Ohio, committed to the Buckeyes on April 16, 2018, but there was some question if he would sign his letter of intent after former head coach Urban Meyer announced his retirement on Dec. 4.

That came a month after Potter's brother, Micah, announced he was leaving the OSU basketball team (he transferred to Wisconsin).

Three days after the Meyer news, Noah Potter got a visit from Day and defensive line coach Larry Johnson. Potter signed on Dec. 19.

"I was kind of nervous what's going to happen," Potter said. "When Coach Day said Coach Johnson is staying and not going anywhere, I was fine after that."

Johnson, in his sixth season at Ohio State after 18 with Penn State, has coached 14 Big Ten defensive players of the year or defensive linemen of the year in the past 22 years.

In his time with the Buckeyes, Joey Bosa was named defensive lineman of the year in 2014 and '15 and defensive player of the year in 2014, Tyquan Lewis was defensive lineman of the year in 2016, and Nick Bosa won the same honor in 2017.

With credentials like that, it was hard for Potter and Harrison to pass on opportunities to learn from Johnson

"Coach J's my guy. I've known him for four years now," Harrison said, going back to his recruitment. "I've got a lot of trust in him. He trusts me so we have a pretty good relationship."

"When he's watching you, you don't want to let him down. You don't want to disappoint him. You work that much harder knowing he's coached some of the best D-linemen at Ohio State."

Johnson said having come to know Harrison has helped in coaching him.

"One thing that is really good is that we had a great relationship before he got here," Johnson said. "That has really carried over. That's what I think has made the difference. So he's taking the coaching really well. He's really bright, always coming into the office saying, 'Let's watch the videotape. How can I get better?' And that's what you love about him."

As much as Johnson and the hometown Buckeyes were a lure for Harrison, he seriously considered Michigan because of the bond he had built with Wolverines coaches Al Washington (linebackers) and particularly Greg Mattison (defensive line).

Harrison signed with the Buckeyes on Dec. 19.

"When he committed to Ohio State I was bummed out," Washington said. "I was, I guess, pretty upset, but I understood."

In a twist that seems surreal, both Washington and Mattison were later hired by Day.

"When Coach Matty was at the team up north, we had a real good relationship," Harrison said. "I love Coach Matty. Now that he's here, it was like Christmas when I heard he was coming. I've got two of the guys I love the most during the recruiting process in the same place (Mattison and Johnson). Same thing with Coach Washington."

"I know Coach Mattison. He's been around for a minute. He knows a lot of football. He's good at what he does. Coach Washington has energy about him as a young coach. He's a family guy. He's got a lot of energy, a lot of juice. You can tell he really loves his players and the guys he works with."

Johnson cautions that Harrison and Potter, as talented as they are, still are in the embryonic stage.

"It's what you'd expect from your young guys trying to transition to college football. It's a faster pace for them right now, and their eyes are big and wide," the coach said. "I'll tell you what I like about them, they're working at it and that's all I ask. Just play hard, keep learning. It will come to you. That's what's happening right now."

Potter appreciates that his teammates are willing to help him get acclimated.

"They've really embraced me," he said. "They haven't treated me like a freshman. They treat me like another player, especially Chase Young, Robert Landers, Jonathon Cooper. They've all been helping me out."

Harrison stood out in the spring because he and fellow freshman receiver Garrett Wilson had their black stripes removed from their helmets, signifying they're full members of the team.

"When I tell him things, he pays attention, down to the tee," said Young, who is mentoring Harrison. "Technique-wise, getting off the block, he tries to use his hands, technique every day. Zach's doing real good."

A good spring doesn't guarantee a good fall, but Johnson likes the moxie of Harrison and especially Potter, who asked to wear No. 97.

Those digits belonged most recently to Joey Bosa, the third pick in the 2016 draft by the Los Angeles (then San Diego) Chargers, and Nick

Bosa, who went No. 2 to the San Francisco 49ers in this year's draft.

"Sometimes I have flashbacks watching 97," Johnson said. "The guys who wear that jersey have been great football players, really outstanding players. Noah's just got to be himself. He

can't follow those guys. Those are special guys."

By the way, Harrison wears 33. Among those who previously had it was former NFL player James Laurinaitis, who was inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame in September.

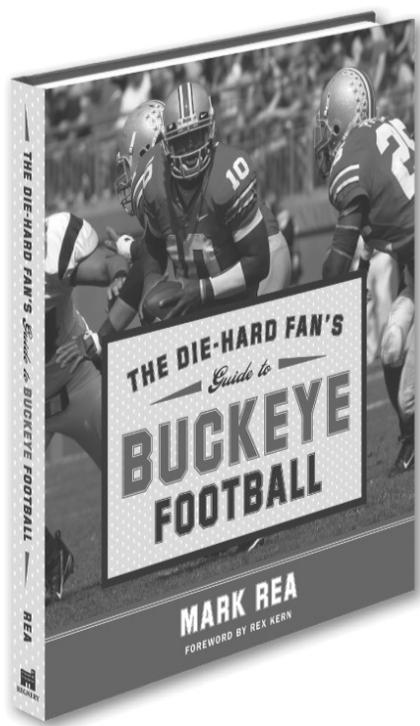


TIM MOODY

BIG SHOES TO FILL – Early enrollee defensive end Noah Potter is wearing the No. 97 made famous at Ohio State by Joey and Nick Bosa.

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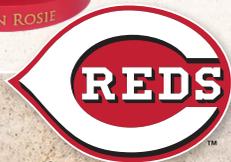


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True Freshman WR Wilson Shines In Spring

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State first-year head coach Ryan Day was recently asked which offensive player who had not yet played a lot made significant progress in the spring to be in the picture come fall.

"On offense, it's probably Garrett Wilson," Day said, "seeing him make plays, day in and day out down the field."

Wilson (6-0, 188) was made available to the media just once since enrolling at Ohio State in January, and he was asked what his biggest strengths were as a wideout.

"Going up and getting the ball, contested catches," Wilson said Feb. 6. "I'd say that's what I do best. I'm a smaller receiver, but I do best when the ball is above my head – go up and get it."

He is a confident young man, but not cocky. And in this case, he was simply answering the question posed by a reporter. Just a couple of months later, Wilson would prove to be self-aware and, in a sense, prophetic.

Facing 1st-and-10 from the 18-yard line in the spring game, redshirt freshman quarter-

back Matthew Baldwin tossed a pass down the right sideline into the crowded corner of the end zone.

Wilson went up for the jump ball with sophomore cornerback Sevin Banks draped all over him but still hauled in the football, maintaining possession and keeping both feet in bounds for the touchdown (although one foot will do, for now).

The big-time playmaking ability of Wilson has not gone unnoticed by his teammates, particularly fifth-year senior H-backs C.J. Saunders and K.J. Hill.

"That one today was pretty sweet," Saunders said of Wilson's touchdown catch after the spring game. "I can't wait to watch that on film or on TV. He's just a guy who can go up and control his body like one of the best I've ever seen."

"He's made a couple one-hand, ridiculous plays. But his ability to go up over a DB – that's something he does much better than me. I like being able to watch him do that in practice and games."

Saunders added that the team already has a substantial amount of trust in the true freshman due to a high completion percentage on his targets.

"We know that, when you throw it up to him, there's a good chance that he's coming down with it," Saunders said of Wilson.

Although Wilson is naturally gifted as a receiver, Saunders was impressed with the progress he made throughout the spring, displaying precise attention to detail.

"He's a phenomenal player, a great kid," Saunders said. "I mean, you guys saw today, his ability when the ball's in the air to go get it is something that I haven't seen and I haven't seen here, especially in a guy so young. And the sky's the limit for him. But he's definitely made a ton of strides, he's working a lot of releases now, he's using his hands a lot better clearing hands, as far as fundamentals at receiver. And I think as he keeps focusing on the details, he's just going to become an unbelievable receiver."

As the highest rated prospect in Ohio State's 2019 class – the 247Sports composite's No. 20 overall prospect, No. 2 wide receiver and No. 3 player from Texas – Wilson enrolled early with extremely high expectations. After all, Wilson, a five-star recruit, did record outstanding numbers while at Austin (Texas) Lake Travis. As a junior, he amassed 98 catches for 1,774 yards and 32 total touchdowns, while leading the Cavaliers to the Class 6A Division I state title game. Despite missing games during his senior season, Wilson still posted 1,151 receiving yards and 19 touchdowns. Hill was aware of Wilson's natural ability on the football field but has been most impressed by the mentality of his new teammate.

"I've seen a lot of growth from Garrett from the day he walked in, in the offseason, winter training to spring football," Hill said April 13. "I feel like the main thing he developed as is, as a person, he's growing up already from a little boy to a man, and I feel like that's why he's making those plays. So he's humble, he's soaking up everything he can, he's learning – that's all he wants to do is learn – and he's coachable."

Wilson worked ahead of schedule throughout the spring, earning reps with the first-team offense during an April 5 scrimmage and getting his black stripe removed following an April 8 practice. Then, he capped his spring debut with an excellent performance in the spring game, snagging four receptions for 44 yards and the 18-yard touchdown. Back on Feb. 6, Wilson was asked if he expected to play as a true freshman.

"I mean, I expect to do everything that I can to put myself in position to play," Wilson responded. "So, I can't say I expect to play, that's not up to me. I'm going to do everything that I can to put myself in position to play."

What must Wilson do to see the field as a true freshman?

"Just be coachable," he said. "Absorb the playbook, learn it. Build a relationship with the coaches, that they can trust me. I feel like if I do that, I'll give myself a chance to play."

While Wilson has already earned the trust of his teammates such as Saunders and Hill, a coach's trust can be more difficult to earn. Ohio State wide receivers coach Brian Hartline has been around an abundance of talented wideouts in his career, having played in the NFL for seven years after a successful stint as a Buckeye. To Hartline, what separates Wilson is his humility and willingness to be taught.

"My best compliment to him, I told him, 'You don't act like a freshman,'" Hartline said March 27. "When he first got in, he'll tell you, it was kind of a culture change. The kid should still be in high school. He's just doing a phenomenal job, whether I'm throwing him at 'Z' at 'X' – his mental retention is really good. He really wants to learn from the guys. He's buying into the culture. So everything he's doing right now is on the right track, and I'm excited for him to continue to take small steps."

Those small steps might just lead to some big plays come fall.

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Okudah Aims To Be OSU's Next Great Corner

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Two hours into day one of the 88th annual Ohio State football clinic April 11 at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center indoor field, Jeff Hafley's presentation on defensive back techniques took center stage on the 50-yard line before several hundred high school coaches.

As he worked his way through slides and videos of NFL cornerbacks – namely all-pro defensive backs Darrelle Revis (2007-17) and Richard Sherman (2011-present), whom he coached while in the league – Hafley broke down press-man fundamentals and, in addition to the pros, first-year co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach referenced current Buckeye Jeffrey Okudah.

Hafley, who coached Revis in 2006 at Pittsburgh and 2013 with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers before mentoring Sherman in 2018 with the San Francisco 49ers, has seen tons of talent throughout his first 17 years as a defensive backs coach from 2002-18. Upon his arrival in Columbus on head coach Ryan Day's retooled defensive staff, Hafley went to work as he looked to polish OSU's talented but inconsistent secondary.

The coaching started with Okudah – whose 6-1, 200-pound frame fits Hafley's philosophy perfectly – in trying to get the most out of the former five-star talent from Grand Prairie (Texas) South Grande Prairie.

"Jeff Okudah, for example, last year, Jeff Okudah, (when he would line up in coverage) he would drop his hands," Hafley said. "But now we've got him where he steps, he punches. ... We're sitting there at a tight release and then he kicks out to 45 degrees, thinking about an outside-release cutoff."

While he has experience from his first two years in Ohio State's three-man rotation of cornerbacks – beginning late in 2017 with four tackles and solid coverage in the 24-7 Cotton Bowl victory against Southern California as a freshman, when then-junior Denzel Ward (2015-17) declared for the 2018 NFL draft and sat out the game – Okudah has developed into arguably the defense's top cover man.

In 13 games, Okudah's sophomore season featured 34 tackles, a tie for a team-high eight passes broken up and a fumble recovery. He made his mark on special teams, too, opposite wide receiver Terry McLaurin (2014-18) as an ace punter for the Buckeyes' punt coverage.

With appearances in 14 contests under his belt, Okudah follows the footsteps of OSU's great cornerbacks before him as he projects as a potential first-round pick for the 2020 NFL draft, but progress remains to be made under Hafley and special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes.

"Going from (Greg) Schiano and (Taver) Johnson to Coach Hafley and Barnes, I feel like, me, at first, it was unfortunate to have your third coach in three years," Okudah said March 27. "But at the end of the day, it's like, you realize how smart of a coach Coach Hafley is. Coach Day told us, when he hired him, that he'd be like one of the best coaches we ever had, and so far, it seems like that'll be the case. He's really high-energy guy, his energy's actually pretty contagious and just the drills he's implemented so far – everyone's getting better, every single day."

Going from Kerry Coombs (2012-17) to Johnson (2018) and now the Hafley/Barnes split, Okudah adjusts as the Buckeyes' two new assistants restructure the secondary.

With both coaches overseeing the cornerbacks and safeties, rotating between the position groups throughout periods of practice during spring camp, the goal is to keep everyone on the same page.

As the projected starter at right cornerback, opposite fifth-year senior Damon Arnette (6-0, 195), Okudah enters fall camp among the veterans in OSU's secondary while working with senior free safety Jordan Fuller (6-2, 205), sophomore strong safety Shaun Wade (6-1, 194) and junior "Bullet" Brendon White (6-2, 215) on the projected first-team defense.

"I think the biggest point is that you understand the bigger picture," Okudah said. "My first two years, we were all separated, so we kind of have to communicate on the fly. So now, having the secondary together, we understand what each other are trying to do, and it kind of makes the positions more interchangeable because (Hafley and Barnes are) going over the same terminology in front of everybody."

One member gone from Ohio State's secondary in 2017 and '18 is Kendall Sheffield, who declared for the 2019 NFL draft after his junior season before he landed April 27 with the Atlanta Falcons as a fourth-round pick and 111th overall selection.

Sheffield started over Okudah but split time in the three-man rotation with Arnette, completing the 2018 campaign with mid-round stock before becoming the Buckeyes' sixth cornerback drafted over the past five years.

Along with Arnette, Okudah might be on the fast track to join former OSU cornerbacks such as Sheffield, Ward (Cleveland Browns, 2018), Marshon Lattimore (New Orleans Saints, 2017), Gareon Conley (Oakland Raiders, 2017), Eli Apple (New York Giants, 2016) and Doran Grant (Pittsburgh Steelers, 2015), who were all drafted in the first or fourth rounds since 2015.

"That's like my son. That's my brother," Arnette said of Okudah after the Jan. 1 Rose Bowl. "I just love to see him do well and we feed off of everybody's energy. He's a very emotional player and it's really easy to feed off of that positive energy that he brings to us."

With an entire offseason still to sort through as Ohio State's spring semester wraps up and summer workouts soon begin, Okudah is months away from even thinking about joining the list.

Hafley and Barnes have a whole fall camp awaiting Okudah and the defensive backs after the Buckeyes completed 15 days of spring practice.

On-field comparisons to Revis and Sherman will be determined when the pads are strapped up Aug. 31 against Florida Atlantic and beyond, but Hafley likes what he sees in his potential rising star and Okudah feels good about the new defense's opportunities.

"It definitely gives us a chance to make more plays on the ball," Okudah said. "But as far as the cornerbacks, we might get zone. It's zone in certain scenarios, but it's also man. You can get a zone concept with some man in there. So I feel like it's pretty good balance, as far as what we're trying to do."



TIM MOODY

BEST IN AMERICA – Cornerback Jeffrey Okudah appears to be the next man up in Ohio State's long line of first-round cornerbacks.

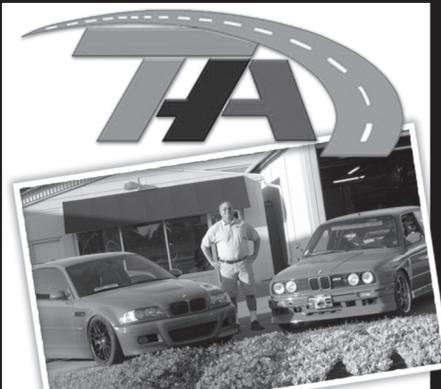


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Key Storylines Emerge Following Spring Practice

With Ohio State's annual spring game in the rearview mirror, Buckeyes Sports Bulletin staff writers Joe Dempsey, Andrew Lind and Garrett Stepien sat down with Bucknuts staff writer Steve Helwagen to share their thoughts on Ohio State's quarterback situation and what they expect to see from the Buckeyes during the upcoming season.

Here's what they had to say:

What are your thoughts on redshirt freshman quarterback Matthew Baldwin's decision to transfer from the program?

JD: I think Baldwin is a good guy who wants to play football, and I can't knock him for that. However, when he decided to transfer, it made me wonder about the state of college football in regard to the transfer portal.

It is against the nature of football to lose a position battle and then join another team. While I understand that Baldwin did what he thought was best for him, the trend of backups leaving for other schools is concerning.

AL: I was quite surprised at the timing of Baldwin's decision, since it comes just a few weeks after head coach Ryan Day praised him for his loyalty to the program. No matter where he sat on the depth chart this fall, it seemed like his loyalty would eventually be rewarded upon Justin Fields' departure in a few years – presumably following his junior season. That would give Baldwin two years to start, a situation somewhat similar to how he waited his turn at powerhouse Austin (Texas) Lake Travis, where he waited until his senior season to play.

On the other hand, nothing is guaranteed in today's college football landscape. What's to say in two years another five-star transfer quarterback won't be on the market? Would Baldwin

– who would be entering his fourth year in the program – be put in the same position as Tate Martell was this offseason when he was expecting to compete for the starting position only to have his world flipped upside down with Ohio State's addition of Fields? Not to mention, the Buckeyes are bringing in one of the nation's top-rated signal callers next recruiting cycle in Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral 2020 four-star Jack Miller. There would surely be an open competition, rather than Baldwin being handed the spot ahead of the 2021 season.

That said, I don't blame Baldwin for his decision, which is surely the combination of playing time and homesickness – not one or the other. If he can find a situation where playing time is readily available and it's closer to home, that is an opportunity he has to take.

GS: Right before I boarded my flight home for Easter weekend the evening of April 18, I published an article (on BuckeyeSports.com) on Baldwin's growth and development out of spring camp. So let's just say I wasn't expecting, upon landing, to see the redshirt freshman quarterback announce his transfer from Ohio State an hour or two later.

I agree with Andrew as to why Baldwin left. He has every right to seek out a situation closer to home, somewhere with a quicker path to the field. But his decision was still a stunner. Head coach Ryan Day wasn't blowing smoke about Baldwin's ability, and he's going to be an immediate-impact player where his next step is, assuming he gets his eligibility straightened out if it's a situation closer to home. But it will be fascinating to see where he lands while his former program sorts through its quarterback depth before the fall.

SH: I think it is terribly unfortunate for Ohio State. The timing could not have been worse because now they were forced to find a graduate transfer on short notice to rebuild the depth for one year.

It really is a sad statement on the state of college football and loyalty. Ohio State was Baldwin's best offer, and they helped him rehab his knee all last year. They needed him to stay for one more year, then he could go and do whatever. But that was too much to ask, I guess.

What do you think Ohio State accomplished in its first spring under Day?

GS: Day had his first taste as Ohio State head coach in the fall for three game days when he was acting for the suspended Urban Meyer, but spring camp gave him a chance to truly take the reins. Meyer attended a couple of practices, but 15 days in, Day truly established his positioning as Ohio State's new leader.

Much will remain the same, from the foundation of culture Meyer built in 2012 to the offense Day ran previously between 2017 and 2018 as Ohio State's offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach. But this was a chance for Day to take control, and from the hires he made to his recruiting – highlighted by the April 12 recommitment of Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy 2020 four-star defensive back Lejond Cavazos – it's safe to say he's put his foot down.

AL: I have been wholeheartedly impressed with how Day has handled the transition and seemingly changed the program for the better in just a few months as head coach.

Along the same lines as what Garrett said, he's carried over most of Meyer's traditions and many key cultural aspects of the program, all of which are things that have made the Buckeyes among the most successful teams in the country year-in and year-out. But he also immediately dropped any assistant coach who wasn't living up to the standards we've come to expect from Ohio State, which is something that Meyer had a difficult time doing given his relationships with some members of the staff like Zach Smith and Bill Davis.

In the handful of opportunities the media had to watch practice or meet with the coaches and players, it was clear there will be a renewed sense of energy and intensity on defense thanks to the wholesale changes on the staff. And with-

out Day in charge, I'm not sure things would be heading in a positive direction on that front.

SH: It seems obvious to me the defense will be much improved. They may still give up some points, but it won't be because of big plays like it was last year. I think the overall energy surrounding the program was strong. I sense Ohio State is in for another big season.

JD: I agree Ohio State made a smooth transition from Meyer to Day in his inaugural spring as head coach. The Scarlet and Gray remained strong in recruiting in the state of Ohio and nationally, as well.

I think there were concerns that recruits wanted to play for Meyer and that the Buckeyes would drop off in recruiting. But Day has answered those concerns by retaining nearly all 2019 recruits and bringing in a bunch of top-end talent for the future.

What position group are you most confident in following spring practice?

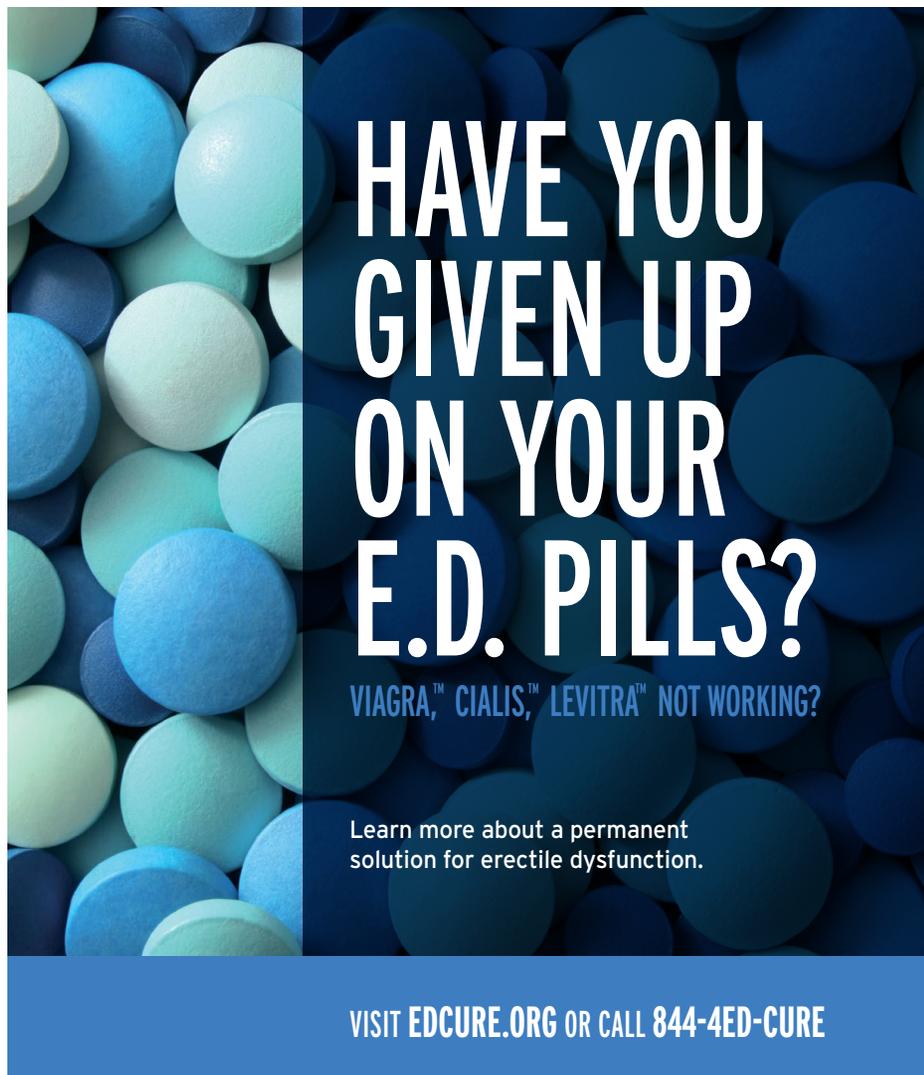
SH: Probably the defensive line. They seem to run three deep at all four positions. The defensive ends seem capable of putting heat on the passer. Once Robert Landers gets back in there at tackle, the middle will be solid as well.

GS: I second that, Steve. There's just no way you can say anything but defensive line. From the experienced veterans to rising stars, sophomores and early enrollees, the unit is once again stacked as guru Larry Johnson enters his sixth year as Ohio State's defensive line coach.

Beyond the obvious of defensive ends Chase Young and Jonathon Cooper among those leading the position group, the development of Tyreke Smith and Zach Harrison stand out as X factors. Smith seems to be following in the footsteps of Young, while Harrison is way ahead of schedule as an early enrollee.

That's just the tip of the iceberg, with Jashon Cornell back to defensive tackle and bolstering the depth inside with Davon Hamilton, Tommy Toggiai and Taron Vincent, among others. Robert Landers needs to get (and stay) healthy, but the defensive line is double digits deep and the surest thing on Ohio State's depth chart.

AL: If you look at Ohio State's depth chart, there are unproven starters penciled in at almost every position outside of defensive line and running back, though there is not a ton of depth at the latter behind junior J.K. Dobbins.



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Sure, the defensive line lost Nick Bosa, who was picked No. 2 overall in the 2019 NFL draft by the San Francisco 49ers. But the Buckeyes essentially played all of last season without his services, which allowed players such as Cooper and Young to take a significant step in their own respective careers last fall. Their continued development will, in my opinion, ultimately dictate how well Ohio State's defense plays this upcoming season.

As mentioned, the depth at the position is astounding, as well. All the credit has to go to Johnson, who is one of the best recruiters in the country. That, as well as his knack for turning his players into first-round draft picks on a yearly basis, is among the many reasons he was the only defensive assistant retained by Day.

JD: I'm going to go with a different answer than the rest of you and say I am most confident in the tight ends.

Luke Farrell, Rashod Berry and Jeremy Ruckert offer a lot of experience as well as versatile skill sets. Farrell is an excellent athlete who has proved to be capable as a blocker and as a pass catcher. Berry may be the most athletic of the group and has shown he can be trusted in big moments. Ruckert is a converted receiver who might have the most potential of the trio.

On the other hand, what position group concerns you most?

AL: Despite center Michael Jordan and offensive tackle Isaiah Prince being good enough to get drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals and Miami Dolphins, respectively, there's no denying Ohio State's offensive line was a hot mess last season. So much so that the staff considered starting redshirt freshman Josh Myers at center and moving Jordan to guard late in the season because he constantly had issues snapping the ball.

Luckily, Myers steps into that role on a full-time basis this fall – provided he can hold off incoming five-star freshman Harry Miller – and classmate Wyatt Davis found his groove at right guard after replacing the injured (and now departed) Demetrius Knox. Those two, as well as junior starting left tackle Thayer Munford, will pave the way for the Buckeyes' offensive line this season. But that said, there are two positions still up for grabs. And while red-shirt freshman right tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere had an impressive spring, I'm concerned about the battle between incoming Rutgers graduate transfer guard Jonah Jackson and fifth-year senior Branden Bowen.

Bowen actually won a starting guard spot two seasons ago before he suffered a massive leg injury that kept him on the sidelines for more than a year and a half, and if he's fully healthy and capable, I think the job should be his. But the staff brought in Jackson for one reason, and I'm curious to see how the man who doesn't emerge handles being a backup.

SH: They had trouble pass protecting in the spring game, too. But once Thayer Munford gets back in there and Jackson arrives, it should be a solid group. Andrew. I look for Jackson to start at guard and Bowen to be out at right tackle, though. Add in Davis at guard and Myers at center, and I think that's a good five-man group.

JD: The linebacker unit concerns me most. The linebackers struggled significantly last season, and they have a lot to prove. With a new coach, Al Washington, and a bevy of young 'backers champing at the bit, it will be interesting to see which linebackers take the field with the starting defense come fall.

Tuf Borland, Malik Harrison and Pete Werner return with in-game experience, but Baron Browning, Teradja Mitchell and Dallas Gant did not come to Ohio State to sit.

GS: Day left the April 13 spring game with the offensive line and quarterbacks atop the list, and that remains the case two weeks later. Between the two, I'll say quarterback is still the biggest concern.

I get that Ohio State lost four starters in the trenches from 2018, but there's talent to replace them and versatile depth coming in. That's where I disagree with Andrew. Beyond Fields, Ohio State has a major lack of depth where Day needs it most.

Fields should be fine in Ohio State's offense, but how much confidence can you have in either of fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov or junior Gunnar Hoak when neither of them played much at their previous stops? One twisted ankle and you're still rolling the dice, when there'd be a lot more confidence in someone you recruited out of high school – such as Baldwin – being next in line.

Of Ohio State's six early enrollees, who do you believe will have the greatest impact for the Buckeyes this season? Which do you see having the greatest career when it's all said and done?

JD: I think Garrett Wilson will have the greatest impact this season. He is a stud. Not only does Wilson possess the physical gifts to be an elite receiver, but he has the right approach to the game. As a hard worker who is always striving to get better, the sky's the limit for Wilson, especially working with wide receivers coach Brian Hartline.

Although I expect that Wilson will have a great career, I think Zach Harrison has the opportunity to have an even better career in Columbus. Harrison enrolled early at Ohio State with insane expectations, and he somehow looks ahead of schedule. He is an athletic freak, but I initially had concerns about his size and strength as a true freshman. After watching him throughout the spring, I expect Harrison to have an impact sooner than later.

AL: I, too, believe that Wilson will have the greatest impact as a freshman, though impact first-year receivers have been virtually nonexistent in recent years at Ohio State. You'd have to go all the way back to David Boston, who caught 33 passes for 450 yards and seven touchdowns in 1996, to find a receiver who stepped on campus and made his presence felt. But Wilson has all of the physical tools (length, catch radius, route-running and body control) to become one of Fields' favorite targets – assuming he does win the starting quarterback job this fall.

Wilson will enter the fall behind Binjimen Victor at the X (split end) receiver position but will have plenty of opportunities to make a name for himself as the two rotate throughout games. And if he continues to show tremendous skill in the red zone, he'll likely find himself on the field in critical situations.

I think Wilson has a chance to rewrite the receiving record books at Ohio State, while someone like Harrison will have to work his way into playing time with numerous upperclassmen ahead of him on the depth chart.

GS: I'll also say Wilson will make an immediate impact, but I think Harrison has the best Ohio State career. Give him three years under Johnson and he'll be on the path to hearing his name called like Nick Bosa in the top five overall picks when the 2022 NFL draft rolls around. He can be that good if his development stays on course. I was personally surprised by how quickly he caught on throughout his first spring camp in Columbus, and I think he's just getting started.

SH: I will say none of the early enrollees seemed to be out of place. They all seemed to be practicing, staying healthy and doing what the coaches wanted them to do. Wilson does seem like he could be a big star, maybe as soon as this year. I'd say he and Harrison are primed for great success at the college level. I think I'll also say Wilson this year and maybe Harrison in terms of best career – unless somebody else in the group has a better overall four-year career. Hard to predict that now, though.

Are there any returning players you feel are poised for a breakout season given their performance this spring?

GS: Plenty of talk has centered on Demario McCall back at running back, and rightfully so with the way Ohio State coaches and players have talked him up, but don't sleep on Master Teague.

While McCall continued to nurse his nagging calf injury, Teague saw an uptick in reps and took full advantage of the bigger stage with the first-team offense. He complements J.K. Dobbins as a physical, north-south runner with an underrated burst of speed.

There might be room for all three with Dobbins as the lead back and McCall as a change of pace, but Teague has the tools to be an impactful second running back.

JD: I agree that Teague is poised for a breakout season after an excellent spring. Teague redshirted as a freshman but showed signs of a powerful runner in limited action. He had a great offseason, appearing stronger and faster. With Mike Weber headed to the NFL, there will be opportunity for touches behind Dobbins in the depth chart. Teague has the ability to be a powerful complement to Dobbins in the Buckeyes' backfield.

AL: I'm going to go back to the defensive line and single out sophomore defensive tackle Tommy Togiai as someone whom I fully expect to break out in his second season under Johnson's tutelage.

You may recall Togiai was the first member of the 2018 recruiting class to shed his black stripe, as well as one of only four early enrollees ever to accomplish that feat. And though he played in parts of 12 games last season, Togiai never quite found his footing in the defensive line rotation.

With Landers out this spring with an injury and Davon Hamilton limited as a fifth-year senior who doesn't need as many reps as some of the underclassmen, Togiai took most of the first-team reps at nose tackle this spring. That's been significant for his development. The overall depth at the position might not allow him to make a significant impact on the stat sheet, but he'll be called upon as a part of the rotation – and maybe even more than expected if Landers doesn't return to full strength.

SH: Maybe Teradja Mitchell at middle linebacker, since he didn't do too much as a freshman. He has to battle Tuf Borland and Baron Browning to see the field, but he could be one to watch.

Of Ohio State's new assistant coaches on the defensive side of the ball, who do you believe has the most difficult job in turning around their unit?

AL: I don't think co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley or linebackers coach Al Washington will have their hands full with turning around their respective units simply because of the sheer amount of talent at each position.

I do believe their biggest challenge will be to unteach – if you will – what their predecessors ingrained into the minds of the young players over the last few seasons. For example, former cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson did not want his defensive backs to look for the ball in coverage. That's something Hafley has been adamant about changing.

Former linebackers coach Bill Davis, meanwhile, made his linebackers play too close to the defensive line, which oftentimes got them tangled up with linemen when pursuing a ball carrier or slot back in the open field. Playing off the line, as well as the implementation of the "Bullet" position, will help alleviate many of those issues.

Sometimes, it's as simple as a scheme issue – and getting rid of stubborn coaches who employ said schemes.

SH: I'll say Washington. They need to settle on the scheme and then find the guys who fit it the best and play them in spite of who or what somebody did in the past. The veterans in the secondary seemed to come a long way in the

spring and perform at a higher level, so I will say the linebacker group.

GS: Washington and co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison have to figure out the best three linebackers to start in Ohio State's retooled defense, but Hafley and assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes have to get the most out of their talented defensive backs.

Ohio State has too much talent and athleticism, from a rising star in junior cornerback Jeffrey Okudah to a proven leader in senior safety Jordan Fuller, to not be a lockdown secondary in 2019. With junior safety Brendon White's move to "Bullet," figuring out how the rest of the defensive backfield rotates will be interesting to see.

Barnes and Hafley have to be on the same page and pick this position group back up because it simply underperformed in 2018 under Johnson, Greg Schiano and Alex Grinch.

JD: I agree that Washington faces a difficult situation in turning around his unit because of the elite standard of linebacker play at Ohio State, as well as because of what transpired last season.

The Buckeyes got embarrassed on defense on multiple occasions last season, and the linebackers were a big reason why. They often appeared out of position or too slow to the ball when trying to stop the run, and they looked even worse in pass coverage at times.

Ohio State brings in four- and five-star recruits every year, so the talent is there. It will be up to Washington to get the best unit on the field on Saturdays.

Several players missed the spring with various injuries. Of those, which player are you most looking forward to seeing return this fall, and why?

SH: Munford, just because left tackle is so critical. Fuller at safety is also a big deal, so I'm not sure anybody really pushed to unseat him this spring. His return is critical. Luckily, the injury bug was not too bad this spring.

JD: I am most looking forward to seeing McCall in action.

We have all heard much about McCall's play-making ability, but he hasn't seen the field much in the past. Each spring it seems like the buzz is that this is the year for McCall to carve out a role in the offense.

Once again, he received high praise in the spring. However, he was limited during spring practices and did not partake in the spring game. I think McCall has game-changing ability with his elite speed and elusiveness, but will this be the year we finally see it?

AL: Even though he was projected as a potential breakout player throughout his career at Ohio State, senior wide receiver Austin Mack has failed to live up to those expectations for various reasons.

Mack caught a career-high 26 passes for 331 yards and a touchdown in eight games last season but broke the fifth metatarsal in his left foot during the Buckeyes' loss to Purdue and missed the rest of the season.

Mack has moved to the "Z" (flanker) wide receiver position. And with team captains Parris Campbell, Terry McLaurin and Johnnie Dixon off to the NFL, he'll be relied upon to fill a leadership void for Ohio State this season.

GS: Justin Hilliard, the former five-star recruit from Cincinnati St. Xavier in Ohio State's 2015 class, was finally healthy from 2017-18 before he had surgery on his injured Achilles. The linebackers are crowded – particularly in the middle, where he fits best – but Hilliard was personally turning the corner. Whether the production comes on the first-team defense or special teams, Hilliard brings an edge to Ohio State on the field. Hilliard's return from separate biceps injuries in his first two years was really starting to show, and it'll be nice to see if he can come back and live out that potential at some point in 2019.

Buckeyes Add 2 New Quarterbacks

By **ANDREW LIND**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State found itself in a pinch at the quarterback position when redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin at the conclusion of spring practice announced his intention to transfer from the program, leaving sophomore transfer Justin Fields and fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov as the only scholarship signal callers on the roster and sophomore walk-on Danny Vanatsky as the third-string option.

That's not an ideal situation for first-year head coach Ryan Day, whose goal is to have at least four quarterbacks heading into the season. So the Buckeyes added a pair of signal callers on April 27 and 28, respectively, in the form of Kentucky transfer Gunnar Hoak and La Verne (Calif.) Bonita three-star J.P. Andrade, who will join the program after accepting a preferred walk-on offer.

The 6-4, 212-pound Hoak was a three-star prospect in the 2016 recruiting class from Dublin (Ohio) Coffman but has appeared in just five games in three seasons with the Wildcats, completing 13 of 26 passes for 167 yards, two touchdowns and

an interception.

Not only did Hoak grow up just 20 minutes north of campus, but his dad, Frank, played under former Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce; his uncle, Fred Pagac, played under legendary coach Woody Hayes and was an assistant coach with the Buckeyes from 1978-2000; and his cousin Fred Pagac Jr. played linebacker in Columbus from 1999-2003.

Hoak camped at Ohio State and was in contact with former co-offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Tim Beck and co-defensive coordinator/linebackers coach/area recruiter Luke Fickell in high school but did not land a scholarship offer from the Buckeyes. He then chose Kentucky over scholarship offers from Bowling Green, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Kent State, Syracuse and Toledo.

With Wildcats junior starter Terry Wilson returning for another year, Hoak was set to be the backup once again this fall. He played well in the program's annual spring game, though, completing 23 of 30 passes for 262 yards and a touchdown, which made him an attractive option to Ohio State following Baldwin's sudden departure on April 18.

Hoak will be a redshirt junior this fall and have two seasons of eligibility remaining. And while most assume Fields to be the starter for the Buckeyes this fall, Hoak will be given every opportunity to win the starting job in preseason camp.

The 6-3, 205-pound Andrade, meanwhile, picked Ohio State over scholarship offers from Fordham, Morehead State and South Alabama, as well as a preferred walk-on offer from Florida.

Andrade is considered the 57th-best pro-style quarterback and No. 1,729 prospect overall in the class of 2019 but opted not to sign with a school during the Early Signing Period or National Signing Day for various reasons. He visited Columbus twice this spring, including for the spring game on April 13, in hopes of securing an opportunity with the Buckeyes.

Andrade rewrote school passing records as a three-year starter at Bonita, where he threw for 9,423 yards and 83 touchdowns. His addition provides some much-needed depth behind the aforementioned quarterbacks but does not tie up a scholarship moving forward and will allow Ohio State to pair another signal caller with Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star commit Jack Miller next recruiting cycle.

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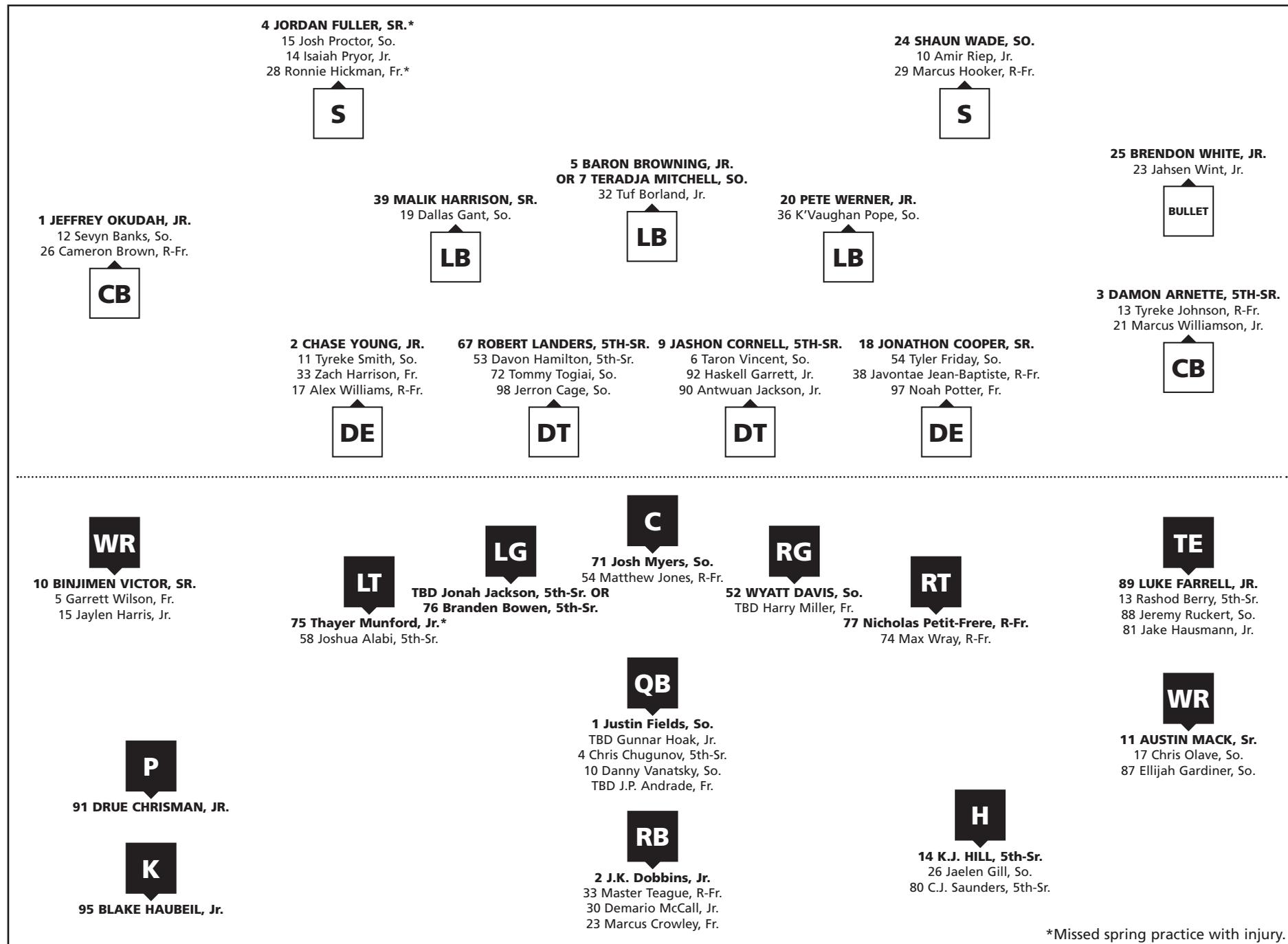
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2019 SEASON DEPTH CHART PROJECTION



2019 COLUMBUS CLIPPERS SCHEDULE

APRIL						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
				IND 6:05	IND 6:05	IND 6:05
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
IND 2:05	LOU 6:05	LOU 6:05	LOU 11:35 AM	@DUR 6:35	@DUR 7:05	@DUR 6:35
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
@DUR 5:05	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 11:00 AM	@LOU 7:00	@TOL 7:05	@TOL 5:05
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
@TOL 2:05		NOR 6:35	NOR 6:35	NOR 11:35 AM	DUR 7:15	DUR 7:15
28	29	30	Dime-A-Dog Mondays and Selected Tuesdays			
DUR 2:05	@IND 7:05	@IND 11:05 AM				

MAY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
STAR WARS NIGHT May 25						
			1	2	3	4
			@IND 1:35	@TOL 6:35	@TOL 7:05	@TOL 5:05
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
@TOL 1:05		CHA 6:35	CHA 6:35	CHA 6:35	SYR 7:15	SYR 7:15
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
SYR 2:05		@PAW 6:05	@PAW 6:05	@PAW 11:05 AM	@SYR 6:35	@SYR 1:05
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
@SYR 1:05		TOL 6:35	TOL 6:35	TOL 11:35 AM	IND 7:15	IND 7:15
26	27	28	29	30	31	
IND 2:05	IND 2:05	@NOR 6:35	@NOR 6:35	@NOR 12:05	@DUR 7:05	

JUNE						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Celebrate our Clippers 10th season Anniversary All-Star Team at Huntington Park on Bobblehead Tuesdays						
						1
						@DUR 6:35
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
@DUR 5:05	TOL 7:05	TOL 7:05	TOL 7:05	NOR 7:05	NOR 7:15	NOR 7:15
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
NOR 2:05		@ROC 7:05	@ROC 7:05	@ROC 12:35	@LHV 7:05	@LHV 6:35
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
@LHV 1:35		ROC 7:05	ROC 7:05	ROC 12:05	LHV 7:15	LHV 7:15
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
LHV 2:05	TOL 7:05	TOL 7:05	@IND 7:05	@IND 7:05	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 6:30
30	#ClipShow					
@LOU 2:00						

JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	@TOL 7:05	@TOL 7:05	@TOL 7:05	LOU 7:05	LOU 7:15	LOU 7:15
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
LOU 2:05				IND 7:05	IND 7:15	IND 7:15
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
IND 4:05	@SWB 7:05	@SWB 7:05	@SWB 12:05	@SWB 7:05	@BUF 7:05	@BUF 6:05
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
@BUF 1:05		SWB 7:05	SWB 7:05	SWB 12:05	GWN 7:15	GWN 7:15
28	29	30	31	Celebrate Military & First Responders Every Tuesday		
GWN 4:05	@IND 7:05	@IND 7:05	LOU 7:05			

AUGUST						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Every Wednesday are \$1 days on special items						
				1	2	3
				LOU 7:05	@IND 7:15	@IND 7:05
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
@IND 1:35		PAW 7:05	PAW 7:05	PAW 12:05	BUF 7:15	BUF 7:15
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
BUF 4:05		@GWN 7:05	@GWN 7:05	@GWN 7:05	@CHA 7:04	@CHA 7:04
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
@CHA 5:05	LOU 6:35	LOU 6:35	LOU 6:35	LOU 6:35	TOL 7:15	TOL 7:15
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
TOL 4:05	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 7:00	@IND 7:15	@IND 6:05

SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	THIS SHIP ROCKS!				
@TOL 6:05	@TOL 1:05					
<input type="checkbox"/> HOME <input type="checkbox"/> Copa de la Diversión \$5 Fridays <input type="checkbox"/> AWAY <input type="checkbox"/> DIME-A-DOG <input type="checkbox"/> FIREWORKS!! *Game times listed are subject to change						
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 June 24 July 23 August 6 August 19

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 July 13 July 27 August 10 August 24

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 May 24

"Field of Dreams" 30th Anniversary Celebration
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 July 7

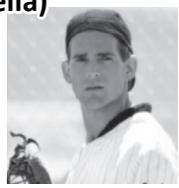
Russian Bar Trio - June 22
 ZOOperstars - June 7, August 9

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Offensive Line Unsettled As Spring Concludes

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ryan Day's first spring as Ohio State's head football coach concluded without a clear picture of what the starting offensive line looks like, but figuring out a final five was never the expectation when camp started.

Day and offensive line coach Greg Studrawa used the spring to develop their more inexperienced linemen while evaluating each player's strengths and weaknesses before deciding who fits best at each spot.

The Scarlet and Gray lost four starters to the NFL, with Michael Jordan being drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals, Isaiah Prince being selected by the Miami Dolphins and Malcolm Pridgeon and Demetrius Knox signing as undrafted free agents with the Houston Texans and Seattle Seahawks, respectively.

The lone returning starter is junior left tackle Thayer Munford, and he sat out the entire spring with a lower back injury. Injuries have set the Ohio State offensive line back in recent years, but missing Munford (6-6, 310) for the spring is much better than in the fall.

"With Thayer being out this spring again, that's another blow to the guys," Studrawa said. "But the good news is that those young kids get a ton of reps, and that's what we had this spring is a chance to get those guys as many repetitions as they can get to get better."

"Then we'll get Thayer back in the fall and move forward."

Fifth-year seniors Branden Bowen (6-7, 315) and Joshua Alabi (6-5, 305) and red-shirt freshman Nicholas Petit-Frere (6-5, 295) took the majority of first-team reps at tackle, while redshirt freshman Max Wray (6-7, 300) also competed.

Petit-Frere added a lot of size and strength to his athletic frame during the offseason, impressing fellow players and coaches.

"He's getting better every day," Alabi

said of Petit-Frere. "He's getting way better. He's getting stronger. He's gaining weight. He's developing as a real good player."

Petit-Frere came to Columbus with high expectations as the highest-rated player in the Buckeyes' 2018 recruiting class, ranked as the 247Sports composite's No. 7 overall prospect, No. 1 offensive tackle and No. 3 player in Florida.

When he arrived at Ohio State last June, Petit-Frere weighed 268 pounds, which is quite light for a Division I offensive lineman. Although he was able to tack on mass quickly, it has not been easy for the former five-star recruit.

"It's been so hard," Petit-Frere told BSB. "Because you've got to eat. I have a really fast metabolism. I have to eat like 8,000 calories a day. It's basically six meals a day – huge meals – waking up in the middle of the night, eating something else."

With added weight and strength, Petit-Frere played faster and with more confidence throughout the spring. His rapid progress has been remarkable, but he is not satisfied.

"Master the craft – that's the biggest thing," Petit-Frere said. "I've been learning the game. I've been studying, watching film. I've been showing a lot of effort. Coach Stud's been saying I've been giving a lot of effort, but I've got to master the craft."

"I've got to be able to go out to the field, call every single blitz out. I've got to be able to go out to the field, know every single look, know every single rifle, know what the team's expecting for this week, be prepared for the team coming up next week. I've got to master my steps and everything about that. There's so much to really being prepared and ready to go, so just master my craft."

Even though the emergence of Petit-Frere could really bolster the offensive line, Ohio State still lacks experience up front.

"When you look at guys coming back, guys have played, but we don't have a lot

of guys who have starting experience," Day said. "Four guys in the front we lost, but (sophomore right guard) Wyatt (Davis) came and played a little bit for us, which was huge. Branden Bowen is coming back off an injury, he has experience. So we do have some guys with experience, but solidifying up front is going to be really important for us."

Bowen is the most-experienced returner among the remaining offensive linemen, having started at right guard in 2017 before suffering a season-ending injury. The road to recovery was brutal for Bowen, missing all of the 2018 season after undergoing three surgeries in less than one year.

"I think we're as close now as we've been," Studrawa said of Bowen's recovery. "I really see some things. I think it still tends to get sore on him as we go, but I think right now I've seen him move, strike, drive his legs, like the old Bowen before that injury now."

Bowen worked primarily at right tackle throughout the spring but shifted over to guard when needed. After what he's been through, Bowen couldn't care less which position he plays, as long as he plays.

"I kind of just look it as an opportunity," Bowen said. "I've been through so much worse, and there's not much more you can do to me to set me back. So I just know – no matter what – I'm going to fight through whatever comes up, and I'm going to be the best me."

If Petit-Frere emerges as the starter at right tackle opposite Munford during fall camp, then Bowen may find himself in a position battle at guard with Rutgers graduate transfer Jonah Jackson (6-4, 305).

Jackson was a captain for the Scarlet Knights as a junior and earned honorable-mention All-Big Ten honors, but he will have to earn a spot on an inexperienced yet talented Ohio State O-line.

At center, sophomore Josh Myers impressed his teammates and coaches with his confidence and performance.

"I've seen everything with his men-

tality, just the way he carries himself on the field, he has this swagger about him that he's really confident," Davis said of Myers. "He knows exactly what's going on, he knows what to do in certain situations, and he just plays with overall confidence."

Myers admitted to initial apprehension about learning the center position but said he was not upset because he just wanted to play, regardless of position. He said center is already his favorite position.

"A guy who's coming to work every day," Day said of Myers. "He understands what's going on, he makes the calls. He's been in the system now for a couple years. I think he feels comfortable there. He's tough, he's shown toughness. He's got to bring it every day now, and he's got to be a veteran."

In addition to Myers, Jackson has shown the ability to play center in the past, as well as 2019 five-star freshman Harry Miller (6-4, 310), who does not enroll until June.

Despite not going through spring camp, Miller kept up with his workouts, putting up 26 reps on the 225-pound bench press. The Buford, Ga., native also participated in offensive-line meetings via FaceTime, where he can watch Studrawa's instructions through a video chat.

"He's really smart," Studrawa said of Miller, who spent time in March on a mission trip in Nicaragua. "The fact that he's down there (in Georgia and Nicaragua) rating the plays, studying the film, calling me at night, 'Coach, what happened on play 19 in period six?' That tells me he's got a chance (to immediately compete)."

With a mix of many fresh faces and few battle-tested veterans, the Ohio State offensive line was still in flux at the end of spring camp. The competition will heighten once Jackson and Miller enroll, and each Buckeye will get his chance to compete for a starting job.

"All of those guys are going to be thrown into the mix in preseason," Day said.



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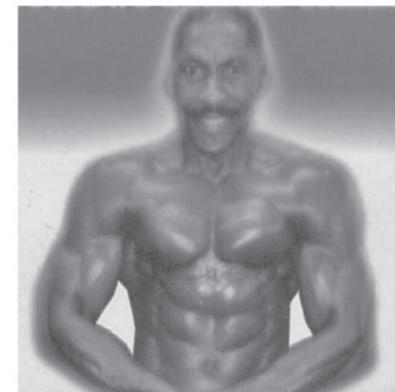
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LBs Coach Washington Welcomes Competition

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Once he stepped into his post as Ohio State's new linebackers coach on Ryan Day's restructured defensive staff, Al Washington immediately heard the outside criticism about the unit's 2018 performance.

While the two-year tenure of linebackers coach Bill Davis ended with the position group not playing up to par, Washington all but wiped the slate clean when the Buckeyes started spring camp.

Through 15 practices, OSU's three starting linebackers are ultimately unresolved, but the first-year position coach who came to Columbus from Michigan saw one common denominator through March and April.

"It's competition," Washington said. "It's kind of like 'next man up' right now. We have so many guys. We've got to roll them, try to put them in the right spots, but they've been competing."

"I've been pleased with that part of it. Everybody's been learning everything, which is great. It helps you in terms of trying to put people in positions to play. So it's been competitive. Guys are working. It's awesome."

Before signees from the 2019 recruiting class such as Cleveland St. Ignatius four-star Tommy Eichenberg (6-3, 225), Lexington, Ohio, four-star Cade Stover (6-4, 225) and Wayne (Ind.) Fort Wayne three-star athlete Craig Young (6-4, 200)

arrive for summer enrollment in June, Ohio State's returning linebackers took the first steps under Washington throughout the spring.

The starting trio of Tuf Borland (6-1, 232) in the middle with Malik Harrison (6-3, 245) and Pete Werner (6-3, 239) on the outside held throughout the Buckeyes' puzzling 2018 season despite being gashed at the second level by big-play runs and returns.

Top reserves Baron Browning (6-3, 248) and Justin Hilliard (6-1, 235) are also back, while only Dante Booker graduated from the position group. In addition, Washington welcomed competition from sophomores Teradja Mitchell (6-2, 242), Dallas Gant (6-3, 232) and K'Vaughan Pope (6-1, 231), but to a degree.

"You've got to (have equity)," Washington said. "A guy like (Harrison), he's shown that. He's worked his tail off. He's been a leader."

With Harrison entrenched at weakside linebacker, that leaves only the middle and strong side up for grabs, although Washington raved about the development of Gant, who will enter fall camp behind a potential All-America candidate.

"Malik Harrison, for example, he's a fourth-year guy – senior – clearly he's not on the same level as a freshman," Washington said. "So when I say that nobody's comfortable, Malik Harrison has earned enough equity in his body of work. He's an excellent talent."

Despite his placement on the sec-

ond-team unit, Gant got after a second spring in Columbus after he enrolled early last year, fitting with the aggressive approach Washington and first-year co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison want from the front seven.

"The scheme is just a little bit different," Gant said. "He's just trying to play faster than last year. Not really any specifics to talk about, but it's just Mike, Will, Sam, just playing the ball better."

"It's just getting back to playing fast, how linebackers are supposed to play – downhill, fast, hard. He just keeps preaching that, and we're going to do that."

"We have great personnel in the linebacker room, and we're playing really hard and fast every time we practice – every time."

Borland (knee) and Browning (hamstring) were banged up in the spring, with both juniors limited for OSU's March 23 scrimmage during the fifth practice of spring camp, allowing Mitchell to take extended reps as a starter.

The taste of first-team snaps added fuel to Mitchell's fire, although Day noted in April that the competition at middle linebacker would continue into August.

Borland missed the April 13 spring game, bumping Browning to starting middle linebacker for the time being while Mitchell manned the second team, but all three are in the thick of the battle and welcoming the competitiveness.

"That's why we came here – we came here to compete," Mitchell said. "We knew everybody was good. So it helps us get better. (Wondering who's playing), that's not the thought process we're going through. We're just going out here every day, working to get better and the best plays."

Only the injury to Hilliard, an Achilles that required surgery in March and leaves him hopeful for a midseason return by October, has shaken up the pecking order.

Otherwise, the upperclassmen have responded to the surge brought by Ohio State's sophomores, including Pope's push behind the junior Werner at strong-side linebacker.

How the three starters and overall rotation ultimately turn out by Aug. 31 against Florida Atlantic in the 2019 season opener remains to be seen, but with Washington leading the way, iron is sharpening iron among the Buckeyes' linebackers.

"Those guys, man, I'll tell you – Pete Werner, Justin Hilliard, Baron Browning – those guys have been here," Washington said. "They've got equity. So you respect that and that stuff matters."

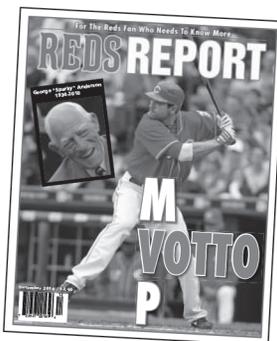
"But honestly, (the underclassmen have) just kind of have bought in and gone to work. Everything's new because you've got a new scheme. So I think that's tied into it. But there's no resistance."

"You make a mistake – you're very rarely making it twice. So I think they've taken to (the new coaching)."

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Ohio State Fields Visitors, Staff Hits Road

While spring camp concluded April 13 with Ohio State's spring game at Ohio Stadium, marking an end to hosting recruits for Columbus practices and scrimmages with the Buckeyes in action, OSU's coaching staff is just getting started on the trail.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Garrett Stepien

The spring evaluation period started April 15 and runs through May 31, which means head coach Ryan Day and Ohio State's 10 assistants are on recruiting's front lines with the goal of prioritizing and building the 2020 and 2021 classes.

As a result, action for the Buckeyes after the annual scrimmage – which drew an abundance of top targets and priority prospects for 2020 and 2021, noted by BSB in the last issue and online at BuckeyeSports.com – has been heavy on offers and visits across both cycles.

Tyler Baron Makes Ohio State Visit

After he camped at the Under Armour All-America series April 14 in Cincinnati, Tyler Baron made his return April 15 to Ohio State. The 2020 four-star defensive end from Knoxville (Tenn.) Catholic visited the Buckeyes.

In possession of an OSU offer since May 3, 2018, Baron surpassed the 30-scholarship plateau throughout the past year. Before Ohio State, he visited Virginia Tech (April 6) and

Tennessee (March 30). His latest trip to see the home-state Volunteers came on the heels of junior day Jan. 19 at UT. Ole Miss is also recruiting him hard.

Previously of Nashville (Tenn.) Ensworth, Baron is among the Buckeyes' top targets in the trenches for the current cycle. On top of his four-star rating in the 247Sports composite, he is considered the No. 147 overall prospect, No. 9 strongside defensive end and No. 7 player in Tennessee for 2020.

Buckeyes Offer Local Standout For 2020

Shortly after he received his 20th offer April 11 from Wake Forest, Rickey Hyatt broke through April 16 with a scholarship offer from Ohio State. The 2020 three-star safety from nearby Westerville (Ohio) Central added bids April 10 from Louisville and Penn State.

The 6-2, 187-pounder competed March 31 at The Opening Regional Canton at Massillon (Ohio) Washington and clocked a time of 4.68 seconds in the 40-yard dash. Following his camp performance, Hyatt took an April 4 trip to West Virginia, where he has an offer from the Mountaineers.

Hyatt is the 247Sports composite's No. 619 overall prospect, No. 39 safety and No. 20 player in Ohio for 2020.

OSU Extends Offer To Top LB

Committed to both the All-American Bowl and Polynesian Bowl in January, Noah Sewell is among the current cycle's top prospects. As a 2020 four-star athlete from Orem, Utah, he primarily plays quarterback but projects to become a linebacker at the next level.

The 6-2, 266-pounder continued to pick up

momentum April 17 ahead of his senior year when he announced an offer from Ohio State.

The Buckeyes marked the 30th bid for the 247Sports composite's No. 77 overall prospect, No. 6 athlete and No. 1 player in Utah for 2020.

The younger brother of Oregon sophomore offensive lineman Penei Sewell, Noah Sewell has the Ducks among his preferred destinations while he locks in official visits. OSU aims to enter the mix with Oregon (April 4 unofficial visit) and Texas A&M (March 22 unofficial visit) among his top suitors.

He is also considering Nevada and Utah despite an offer list that includes Alabama and Georgia atop the multitude of powerhouse programs involved. Sewell's brothers, senior linebacker Gabriel Sewell (6-0, 250) and junior defensive back Nephi Sewell (6-0, 205), play for Nevada and Utah, respectively.

On April 25, linebackers coach Al Washington stopped by Orem's spring practice to inquire about Noah with head coach Jeremy Hill.

Ohio State Hosts Rylie Mills For OV

Ohio State hosted its first visitor for 2020 in an official capacity April 26-28 when Rylie Mills returned to Columbus.

The 2020 four-star defensive end from Lake Forest, Ill., saw the Buckeyes after official visits to Notre Dame (April 5-7) and Wisconsin (April 12-14) earlier in April. It was his third trip to OSU after he earned an offer May 14, 2018.

"I'm really looking forward to hanging out with the players and seeing what life is like outside of football," Mills told BSB before the visit.

The 6-5, 275-pounder previously took trips to Columbus when Ohio State still had former head coach Urban Meyer (2012-18) involved.

Since Meyer retired, Mills has maintained

tight relationships across the board – mainly between sixth-year defensive line coach Larry Johnson and fourth-year offensive line coach/area recruiter Greg Studrawa – as he builds his bond with Day.

New co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison is also familiar with Mills after recruiting him as Michigan's defensive line coach (2015-18).

"I like Coach Johnson a lot," Mills said. "He's a really good guy, and I like how he's honest, as well as his intensity with his players. I think he really knows how to develop players."

With a decision in mind for May, Mills is also considering Alabama, among others. Mills is the 247Sports composite's No. 120 overall prospect, No. 7 strongside defensive end and No. 2 player in Illinois for 2020.

Buckeyes Enter Early Mix For 2021 RB

Ohio State is involved with top prospects at running back for 2020, but the Buckeyes are already onto 2021 as well. OSU running backs coach Tony Alford's efforts on the trail for the next cycle resulted in an April 17 offer to Lilburn (Ga.) Parkview's Cody Brown.

The 2021 running back's scholarship offer from Ohio State was his 10th bid, adding to a list that includes Georgia, Georgia Tech and Penn State since January. The 6-0, 210-pounder picked up an offer April 23 from Kentucky.

According to 247Sports, Brown is a four-star recruit – the No. 114 overall prospect, No. 7 running back and No. 10 player in Georgia for 2021.

OSU Hosts Local Phenom On Visit

Kaden Saunders is a name to know in Ohio State recruiting, evidenced by his April 19 visit with the Buckeyes when he met multiple mem-

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A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

bers of Day's coaching staff. The list of OSU assistants included wide receivers coach Brian Hartline, co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hailey and Washington.

Saunders is already on recruiting radars for an abundance of Power Five programs. He reported his first offer Feb. 17 from Michigan State, following with Penn State (March 16) and West Virginia (April 16). Following the Ohio State visit, Saunders announced an April 22 offer from Indiana.

The 5-10, 155-pounder plays at nearby Westerville (Ohio) South – which produced redshirt freshman H-back Jaelen Gill (6-0, 195) – starring as a freshman for the Wildcats while playing for the varsity team. The 2022 athlete rushed 27 times for 203 yards and recorded 12 receptions for 229 yards, adding seven punt returns for 161 yards and 16 kick returns for 303 yards.

A three-sport athlete, Saunders also runs track and plays baseball. His personal-best time of 7.13 seconds in the 60-meter dash showed the straight-line speed he plays with on the football field.

4th Ohio State Commit Pledges To All-American Bowl

Before they team up next fall for Ohio State's 2020 season, four of the eight commitments from the Buckeyes' current recruiting class are slated to cap their high school careers together.

Jaxon Smith-Njigba (6-1, 188) became the latest OSU pledge to declare his all-star decision, announcing April 17 in favor of next year's All-American Bowl.

"I want to thank God for blessing me to play this game," Smith-Njigba said. "I want to thank my family, teammates and coaches for pushing me and turning my dreams into reality."

With the choice, the four-star wide receiver from Rockwall, Texas, joins three familiar players.

He follows Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson (6-7½, 295), Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic four-star wide receiver Gee Scott (6-3, 211) and Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional four-star offensive guard/center Luke Wypler (6-3½, 285) as OSU's fourth commit set to play in the annual all-star game.

The All-American Bowl kicks off Jan. 4 at noon ET on NBC from the Alamodome in San Antonio.

Buckeyes Venture North For 2021 Offer

Ohio State has made a habit of raiding Michigan for top talent through the years, targeting its latest prospect April 18 with an offer to Rayshaun Benny.

The 6-4, 260-pounder and two-way lineman is considered an offensive tackle and defensive end for the next level.

The scholarship offer from the Buckeyes marked his sixth after he racked up bids from West Virginia (April 18), Kentucky (April 1), Bowling Green (Feb. 21), Toledo (Feb. 21) and Central Michigan (Jan. 21) after Benny's 2018 season at Oak Park, Mich.

According to 247Sports, Benny is a three-star recruit – the No. 300 overall prospect, No. 30 offensive tackle and No. 9 player in Michigan for 2021.

Safety Target Announces Commitment Elsewhere

In possession of an Ohio State offer since Nov. 5, Brian Branch emerged as a top target for the Buckeyes late last fall. But between staff changes for OSU and a strong push by other suitors, Branch announced his commitment elsewhere April 19 when he pledged to Alabama.

The 6-0, 182-pounder moved quick on OSU's

30 Years Ago – 1989

With Ohio State having a need in the secondary, Sarasota (Fla.) Riverview 1989 defensive back signee Foster Paulk (5-11, 172) brought immediate-impact ability to the Buckeyes.

The path to playing time was one of Paulk's reasons for picking the Buckeyes over Georgia and Florida, the two other finalists in his recruitment.

"It's exciting to think I might have a chance to play for Ohio State right away," he said. "I look at that as a challenge, and I'm ready to accept it."

25 Years Ago – 1994

With the Sunshine State chief among its recruiting pipelines, one of Ohio State's latest pickups from Florida was Jeff Wilson. The 6-4, 260-pound lineman out of Deerfield Beach gave the Buckeyes' 1994 class two-way potential as he approached his summer enrollment in June. Wilson said he chose the Scarlet and Gray over regional options such as Georgia Tech and South Carolina.

"I was real comfortable when I visited Ohio State, and I liked the atmosphere around the campus," Wilson said. "The people around Ohio State were great. I feel like I can fit in with the team. They're nice guys."

20 Years Ago – 1999

Ohio State ended April with momentum in recruiting, adding two more prospects to its 2000 class as Lima (Ohio) Senior defensive lineman Alphonso Townsend and Toledo Whitmer defensive back B.J. Barre committed.

Townsend (6-6, 280) pulled the trigger four days after the Buckeyes' junior day festivities, while Barre (6-1, 185) followed suit while on campus for OSU's spring scrimmage.

Townsend picked Ohio State over offers from much of the Big Ten, including Michigan, Michigan State and Penn State, among others. Barre chose the Buckeyes while considering Michigan.

"When I look at Ohio State, I see that they put a lot of players into the

league," Townsend said. "Plus, you have a chance to win the national championship. It's an easy decision when a school like that wants you."

15 Years Ago – 2004

Ohio State's early offer to Jim Cordle made things easier for the Lancaster, Ohio, offensive lineman. As he considered his options after the April 1 scholarship bid, the 6-5, 280-pounder wasted no time and committed to the Buckeyes.

Cordle took unofficial visits to Notre Dame and Illinois, who had not offered but were each showing strong interest, and Cincinnati, which was his first offer.

Each program had high points, but Cordle kept circling back to Columbus.

"The way I felt was that if your No. 1 school comes through with an early offer, then why not commit early?" said Cordle, who also accumulated offers from Boston College, West Virginia and Kentucky.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Ohio State's late-April spring game in 2009 ended with the commitment of Cleveland St. Ignatius 2010 outside linebacker Scott McVey.

The 6-1, 217-pounder made up his mind hours before the Buckeyes kicked off their annual scrimmage April 25 when they hosted a record crowd of over 95,000 at Ohio Stadium.

McVey picked OSU over Boston College, Michigan, Michigan State and Iowa.

"It's definitely one of the better programs in the country," McVey told BSB. "I'd love the opportunity to play under Coach Tressel. I've always been an Ohio State fan, and just going into the recruiting process, I've always kind of favored Ohio State but I tried to keep an open mind. I realize Ohio State is the best place for me."

Five Years Ago – 2014

Before they embarked on their

careers at Ohio State, two signees for the Buckeyes' 2014 class completed their high school tenures April 26 when they competed in the Ohio North-South Classic at Dayton's Welcome Stadium.

In the Division IV-VII contest, Columbus Bishop Ready offensive tackle Brady Taylor helped the South team to its 28-27 overtime victory against the North.

The second matchup, the Division I-III game, featured Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary running back Parris Campbell, who caught a 62-yard touchdown pass to boost the North past the South 23-14.

Both players looked forward to summer enrollment, set for the first week of June.

"I'm just going to go in with the mind-set to work hard," Campbell said.

One Year Ago – 2018

Five commitments joined Ohio State's 2019 class and the Buckeyes added one prospect to their 2020 group as the Buckeyes ended April on a recruiting roll.

OSU had its 2019 cycle balloon with Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic four-star athlete Steele Chambers (6-2, 215); Mentor, Ohio, four-star defensive end Noah Potter (6-5, 250); Potomac (Md.) Bullis School three-star safety Bryson Shaw (6-2, 175); Lexington, Ohio, four-star outside linebacker Cade Stover (6-4, 225); and Austin (Texas) Lake Travis five-star wide receiver Garrett Wilson (6-0, 185) coming aboard.

And for 2020, Ohio State secured its first commit with Marietta, Ga., four-star offensive tackle Jake Wray (6-5, 290), the younger brother of 2018 early enrollee offensive tackle Max Wray.

"When I went to Ohio State last year, I got this feeling that I haven't felt at any other place," Jake Wray said. "I haven't had any ups and downs with that feeling. It's always been up. Me and my family feel like it's the best place to succeed and play at the next level."

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Continued From Page 21

offer and visited Columbus the weekend of Nov. 24 for the 62-39 win over Michigan at Ohio Stadium. He had been slated to return March 31 and watch the team's practice April 1 but never made his trip.

The four-star recruit from Tyrone (Ga.) Sandy Creek is slated to play in next January's 2020 Under Armour All-American Game. Before his decision, he unofficially visited Florida on April 5 before officially visiting Oklahoma the weekend of April 12-14, choosing the Crimson Tide after unofficially stopping by March 28.

Branch is the 247Sports composite's No. 225 overall prospect, No. 18 safety and No. 25 player in Georgia for 2020.

Ohio State Offers 2020 Arizona OT

Though the Buckeyes have four offensive linemen committed to their 2020 recruiting class – including three tackles in Johnson, Cincinnati Elder three-star Jakob James (6-5, 275) and Norwalk, Ohio, three-star Trey Leroux (6-8, 355) – they are pursuing another massive target with likely two spots left for the current cycle.

On April 19, Ohio State offered Gilbert (Ariz.) Williams Field's Noah Nelson. The 6-8, 295-pounder's scholarship offer from OSU marked his 20th. He previously made unofficial visits to Michigan (March 22), Northwestern (March 16) and Oklahoma (March 14).

Nelson set two of his five official visits, making the first the weekend of April 12-14 when he checked out Michigan. The three-star recruit is slated to see Oklahoma the weekend of May 3-5, sorting through other potential destinations among the 20-offer mix. Nelson is the 247Sports composite's No. 551 overall prospect, No. 47 offensive tackle and No. 13 player in Arizona for 2020.

Buckeyes Host Safety Jordan Morant

Jordan Morant's string of unofficial visits through the Midwest continued April 22 when he made his trip to Ohio State. The visit marked his first since he was offered May 10, 2018, by the Buckeyes, and it came on the heels of trips to Notre Dame (April 17) and Michigan (April 18) the previous week.

The 2020 four-star safety from Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic has been atop OSU's board for the past year. He cut his 26-offer list down April 3, including Ohio State in the trim to 10. Morant is the 247Sports composite's No. 112 overall prospect, No. 8 safety and No. 3 player in New Jersey for 2020. He comes from the same high school as redshirt freshman defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste (6-5, 245).

"I have a pretty close relationship with Jordan Morant," Jean-Baptiste told BSB. "He's the type of kid you want on your team. He's a hard worker, and he's just ready to work at it, every day."

OSU Offers 2021 OT At Arizona Power

Ohio State returned to Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguario with an April 23 offer for 2021 offensive tackle Bram Walden. The 6-4, 270-pounder's 11th offer came after recent bids from Colorado and Brigham Young. According to 247Sports, Walden is a four-star recruit – the No. 106 overall prospect, No. 17 offensive tackle and No. 2 player in Arizona for 2021.

Those followed an offer explosion in January with Oklahoma State, Oregon, Louisiana State, Auburn and Utah entering the equation. He added his 12th scholarship bid April 23 from Texas A&M.

Walden hails from the same high school as two top targets for the Buckeyes. Also at Saguario, a frequent stop for OSU coaches, are

2020 five-star cornerback Kelee Ringo (6-2, 205) and 2021 defensive end Quintin Somerville (6-3, 230).

Ohio State Eyes 2021 Georgia OLB

Ohio State swung southeast April 23 for one of its latest 2021 targets on defense with an offer to Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett's Barrett Carter. The Buckeyes extended a scholarship to the 6-1, 205-pound outside linebacker, joining Notre Dame as the second school doing so that day.

The bid from OSU was Carter's seventh. After he picked up his first offer from Temple last May, Carter saw his recruitment start to take off in January when Kentucky and Vanderbilt entered the mix, followed by Appalachian State (March 16) and Duke (April 3). According to 247Sports, Carter is a four-star recruit – the No. 210 overall prospect, No. 37 outside linebacker and No. 17 player in Georgia for 2021.

Buckeyes Pull Trigger On 2020 WR

Five months after he visited the weekend of Nov. 3 for Ohio State's 36-31 win over Nebraska at Ohio Stadium and left without an offer, Muhsin Muhammad III received his long-awaited scholarship tender.

The 2020 four-star wide receiver from Charlotte (N.C.) Myers Park picked up his Buckeye bid April 23. The offer marked Muhammad's 30th overall, coming on the heels of Georgia Tech (April 12) and Arizona State (April 19) announcements.

The 6-0, 185-pounder traveled to Columbus in November with high school teammate and 2021 quarterback target Drake Maye. The 6-4, 200-pound signal caller added an offer from OSU shortly after the Nov. 3 visit, but the wide-out remained without one.

In the time since then, Muhammad's recruitment has exploded throughout the spring. After he unofficially visited Tennessee (April 4) and N.C. State (April 6), Muhammad made the first of his five official visits the weekend of April 12-14 at Texas A&M.

Muhammad is a Michigan State legacy as the son of former Spartan (1992-95) and long-time NFL wide receiver (1996-2009) Muhsin Muhammad II, who spent 11 years with the Carolina Panthers. The younger Muhammad is the 247Sports composite's No. 145 overall prospect, No. 27 wide receiver and No. 8 player in North Carolina for 2020.

OSU Targets 2021 OLB From Maryland

Demeioun Robinson's recruitment started in January with his first offers from Rutgers, Massachusetts and Syracuse, but he saw things truly pick up during an eight-day stretch in April.

After he added scholarship offers from Virginia (April 16), Cincinnati (April 17) and Pittsburgh (April 22), four more Power Five programs pitched him bids April 24, starting with Ohio State. Following the Buckeyes were Michigan, Penn State and Kentucky, all in the same day.

The 6-4, 210-pounder from Gaithersburg (Md.) Quince Orchard played left defensive end in his high school team's 3-4 scheme, but he has the length and athleticism to drop back into coverage as a linebacker at times, hence the outside linebacker projection by multiple scouting services.

Ohio State Offers California DB Duo

Ohio State's late-April action in the Los Angeles area started April 24 with an offer to Pasadena (Calif.) Muir 2021 cornerback Jamier Johnson (6-0, 160) – his seventh scholarship bid overall – but he was just the tip of the iceberg.

ASK AN ANALYST

With CBS Sports Network's Tom Lemming

The Buckeyes continued to search Southern California for defensive backs April 25 when they extended offers to two underclassmen at Santa Ana Mater Dei in 2021 cornerback Jaylin Davies (5-11, 165) and 2022 safety Domani Jackson (6-1, 180).

After he ended his 2018 season with the Monarchs, Davies picked up bids from Oklahoma, Florida and Michigan, adding to Arizona, Utah and Oregon.

Jackson is already on recruiting radars nationwide with OSU as his 14th offer. He also holds scholarships from Southern California, Oregon and LSU, among others. Jackson clocked a laser-timed 40-yard dash of 4.51 seconds Feb. 10 at The Opening Regional Los Angeles.

Buckeyes Welcome Back Top 50 RB/ATH

One year and five days after April 20, 2018, when he last set foot in Columbus, Ramsey (N.J.) Don Bosco Prep 2020 four-star running back/athlete target Jalen Berger returned to campus April 25 and visited Ohio State. The 6-0, 187-pounder is the 247Sports composite's No. 50 overall prospect, No. 5 athlete and No. 1 player in New Jersey for 2020.

Much has changed with the Buckeyes since he took his last trip through the Midwest. Gone is defensive coordinator/area recruiter Greg Schiano (2016-18), who hosted him on the previous visit, but familiar faces such as former high school teammate and sophomore defensive end Tyler Friday (6-3, 260) remain. Berger holds nearly 30 offers and has visited Michigan (April 24) and Pittsburgh (April 23) previously.

For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers, daily.

In the wake of redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin's decision to leave Ohio State, how difficult has quarterback recruiting become for head coaches such as Ryan Day with the transfer portal such a frequent destination?

"Quarterback is the one position where, I think, a lot of the kids come in and expect to play immediately. A lot of times, to get great players, you've got to sell them on being the starter sooner than later. Once they're not, like a Tate Martell, then they're going to leave. And that's every school. It's not unique to Ohio State. It's everyone. That's why you see so many quarterbacks bouncing around and leaving.

"The real good ones have no problem. The ones that are sort of borderline, they're lucky to get a school. That's why I think, a lot of times, (the potential transfers) should send out feelers (to other programs) before they leave. If you're a quarterback at Ohio State, someone's going to come after you if you want to leave. So ever since the transfer portal, it's something that's been happening everywhere. Just about everyone's lost a quarterback, so it's tough. Sometimes you gain one, like how Ohio State gained Justin Fields. So it's going to happen.

"But what's going to happen at the great programs and just about all the programs – you're going to have to have guys

that are loyal to the program, because you're going to need backups. But a lot of times, the quarterback and wide receiver are the two ego positions. If they're not playing, they're going to leave and all of a sudden, the depth at a lot of schools hurts. You're going to see that a lot this coming year, where guys have left and if there's injuries involved, then the school's going to be in trouble.

"You're going to have to be real. If they want to play, they're not coming to Ohio State. So you're going to have to bring in a guy who thinks he's better than what the college is – if he's at a smaller school and wants to prove himself and get better and say, 'Hey, maybe I can go there and if Justin gets injured, maybe I can play.' So you're going to have to go after a guy who has that kind of mentality. Now, no one wants to go and sit on the bench if you're a good player, so that's what I mean. It's a tough situation. Like I said, it's not unique to Ohio State.

"A lot of people are in that problem now where they've lost their numbers. And now you have to bring in two next year, and what will happen is, the one who does better than the other one, the other one will transfer. It's like one perpetual problem now, but it's not going to go away."

Ohio State has an enormous need for defensive backs in the 2020 recruiting class, specifically at cornerback, but got a big boost April 12

when Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star Lejond Cavazos (6-1, 190) recommitted. How critical is Cavazos to building the secondary going forward?

"He's a true four-star athlete. He can run. He's a real good ballplayer. Football is in his blood, so he was a big catch for them. He's one of the best DBs in the country. Also, it never hurts to bring in guys from IMG. There's so much talent at that school that if he's friends with some of these other guys, that can help down the line, too. But he's a premier player, so they're off to a good start."

Muskegon, Mich., four-star athlete Cameron Martinez is one of 2020's notable names rising through the cycle. Recruited by Ohio State as a wide receiver and defensive back as he wraps up his string of April visits in the Midwest, how does Martinez stand out as a prospect?

"A lot of people came late to the recruiting table there for him. He was a guy that, at the end of last season, wasn't getting a whole lot of attention. He was getting some, but not the kind that he's getting now. Schools are realizing the kind of athlete he is. He can play a number of positions, too. He's versatile. He's one of the guys who truly should be listed as an athlete. It will depend on whatever position he wants to play. That's what you've got to recruit him at until you get him."

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Lifelong Fan Leroux Leads Buckeyes' Ohio Build

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In Columbus for Ohio State's second practice of spring camp March 8 at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, Trey Leroux looked around the facility and imagined what his next four years would be like as he walked through the building.

After the three-star offensive tackle from Norwalk, Ohio, and his family toured the renovated west end of the Buckeyes' football headquarters with assistant player personnel director Weston Zernechel, he had a life-changing offer waiting for him in head coach Ryan Day's office.

The 6-8, 355-pounder picked up his dream scholarship from OSU – the team he rooted for while growing up – and had to pinch himself.

Three days later, Leroux wasted no time and made his future in scarlet and gray a reality March 11 when he committed to Ohio State's 2020 recruiting class.

Leroux tallied 13 offers as he started to see his process pick up steam into the spring, but he can now focus on one goal – being a Buckeye.

"It's been great, being committed," Leroux told BSB. "So I know that I'm set on Ohio State and I'm working on one goal, just to be a Buckeye and being ready to be a Buckeye. The process was actually rather short. I got the offer and three days later I committed, but that's because my family had already talked about it – if Ohio State offered what would happen? – and my family made that decision a long time ago that Ohio State was one of my top choices. It made the decision really easy."

Before he earned his OSU offer, Feb. 26 scholarships from Indiana and Rutgers marked Leroux's latest Big Ten bids, adding to Purdue (Oct. 15).

Michigan and Notre Dame also looked closely at Leroux as a junior in the fall, and he made multiple visits with the Wolverines (Nov. 17, Jan. 26) and Fighting Irish (Sept. 29, Oct. 13).

Beyond the blue-chip talents former

head coach Urban Meyer regularly evaluated, Ohio State quietly monitored Leroux, hosting him for two camps last summer – the one-day position camp June 9 and Friday Night Lights two weeks later June 22.

"The coaches are amazing," Leroux said. "They've always been honest with my recruiting process, which wasn't always the case (with other schools), but they were being honest and always told me where I was at, what I needed to do to get the offer, so I always knew what I was going for and it was nice to have."

Leroux returned Sept. 1 for the Buckeyes' 77-31 rout of Oregon State in the 2018 season opener at Ohio Stadium, reconnecting offensive line coach Greg Studrawa.

When the transition began from Meyer to Day in December, Leroux kept in contact with Studrawa before the recruiting calendar flipped its focus to the 2020 cycle after National Signing Day Feb. 6.

OSU targeted offensive line depth for 2020 after several swings and misses in 2019, and the Buckeyes first accepted Cincinnati Elder three-star Jakob James (6-5, 275) – who committed on the spot during his Jan. 21 visit when he received an offer – before switching gears to Leroux.

"As a group, we wanted to make sure we put an emphasis back into Ohio," Day said.

Kentucky (Nov. 28), Pittsburgh (Dec. 3) and West Virginia (Dec. 5) saw enough from Leroux's fall tape to extend scholarship offers before several MAC schools followed suit in the winter.

Once Ohio State finally pulled the trigger, though, Leroux had all he needed to make his mind up.

In the time since then, Leroux has built up his relationship with James and the Buckeyes' other 2020 O-line commitments – Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star tackle Paris Johnson (6-7½, 295) and Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional four-star center/guard Luke Wypler (6-3½, 285) – through football training to video



TREY LEROUX/TWITTER

FROM THE INSIDE OUT – Ohio State head coach Ryan Day has put a renewed emphasis on the state of Ohio, as evidenced by Norwalk, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Trey Leroux's commitment.

games.

"We have a group chat, we have workouts planned to do together, we play video games together," Leroux said. "So we have quite a good connection so far."

Leroux was OSU's only future offensive lineman to compete March 31 when The Opening Regional Canton took place at Massillon (Ohio) Washington, but he crossed paths with his soon-to-be teammates in the following weeks.

After he came back to Ohio State for the first time since his commitment at the April 13 spring game, reconnecting with Johnson and James, Leroux and James competed together the next day during the April 14 Under Armour Camp in Cincinnati.

With return plans featuring all of Ohio State's summer camps in June, Leroux

looks forward to being back around his future teammates and coaches frequently as he prepares for the next level.

"Coach Day, I love that he's really down-to-earth, but he's also a football genius," Leroux said. "He knows a lot and he can teach me a lot, and that's one thing I paid attention to."

"And Coach Stud, it's the same thing. He's very hard on his athletes, but that's something that I would like. So I'm really excited about it."

"As of right now, (Studrawa) just says to continue to work hard on what I'm doing. There's not necessarily much specifics. More specifics will come during the summer camps and things like that. So it's just starting with lift more, run more – just get conditioned and ready for everything to change."

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Continued From Page 1

"It's a blessing to be in this situation and play with my college teammate," McLaurin said. "He said he was going to push for me to be here."

Four Buckeyes were chosen on the final day of the draft.

The Atlanta Falcons selected cornerback Kendall Sheffield with the No. 111 overall pick (fourth round); the Cincinnati Bengals selected center/guard Michael Jordan with the No. 136 overall pick (fourth round); the Miami Dolphins selected offensive tackle Isaiah Prince with the No. 202 overall pick (sixth round); and the Dallas Cowboys selected running back Mike Weber with the No. 218 overall pick (seventh round), where he'll once again share a backfield with running back Ezekiel Elliott. Weber redshirted during Elliott's final season in Columbus.

"He helped me a lot at Ohio State," Weber said of Elliott. "It will be fun to be back there in the backfield with him."

Former Ohio State wide receiver Noah Brown and cornerback Jourdan Lewis, Weber's high school teammate at Detroit Cass Tech, also play for the Cowboys.

The nine selections are tied for the third most in school history since the draft was shortened to seven rounds in 1994. The Buckeyes had 14 selections in 2004, 12 in 2016 and nine in 2006.

Four additional Buckeyes did not hear their names called during the three-day draft but will still have a shot to make an NFL roster after signing undrafted free-agent deals.

Wide receiver Johnnie Dixon and left guard Malcolm Pridgeon signed with the Houston Texans, while right guard Demetrius Knox is heading to the Seattle Seahawks. Linebacker Dante Booker, meanwhile, will be reunited in Arizona with former linebackers coach Bill Davis, who accepted the same position with

the Cardinals this offseason after not being retained this offseason by first-year head coach Ryan Day.

Kicker Sean Nuernberger, who worked out in front of personnel from all 32 NFL teams at Ohio State's pro day, remains on the market.

Former Buckeyes Announce Draft Picks

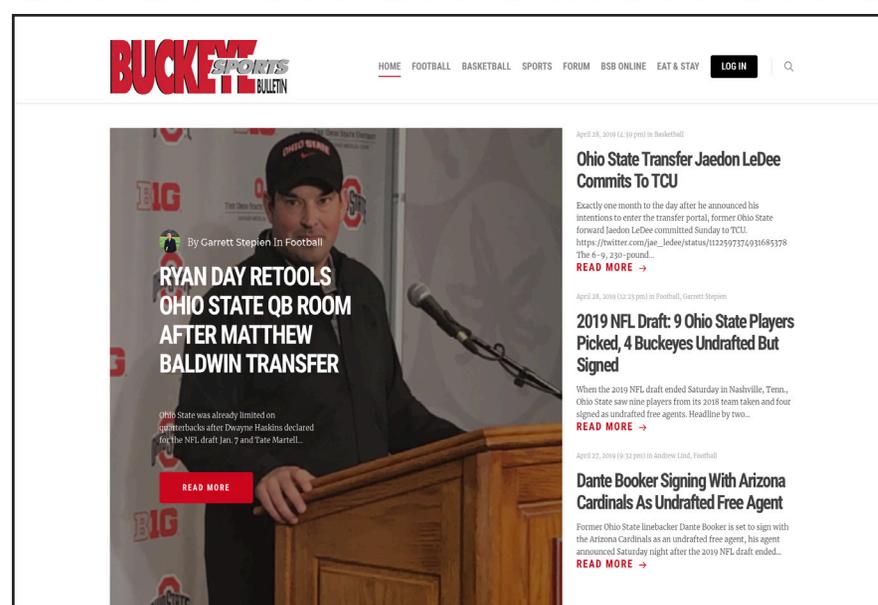
While NFL commissioner Roger Goodell announced the selections for the first round of the draft, the league invited former players and other special guests to share the remaining picks.

Former Ohio State running back Eddie George (1992-95) announced the No. 51 overall selection for the host Tennessee Titans (Ole Miss wide receiver A.J. Brown); offensive tackle Orlando Pace (1994-96) announced the No. 61 overall selection for the Los Angeles Rams (Washington safety Taylor Rapp); wide receiver Santonio Holmes (2003-05) announced the No. 66 overall selection for the Pittsburgh Steelers (Toledo wide receiver Diontae Johnson); and center Nick Mangold (2002-05) announced the No. 67 overall selection for the New York Jets (Florida defensive end Jachai Polite).

Additionally, former safety Roger Harper (1990-92), Columbus Recreation and Parks Department director Tony Collins and executive director of the Greater Columbus Sports Commission Linda Logan announced the No. 185 (Toledo cornerback Ka'Dar Hollman, Green Bay Packers), No. 193 (Elon offensive tackle Olisaemeka Udoh, Minnesota Vikings) and No. 194 (Notre Dame running back Dexter Williams, Packers) picks from the Ohio History Center as part of the NFL's 100-year celebration.

The Columbus Panhandles (1901-26) were among the league's inaugural teams, so the city was one of eight outside the current NFL market to host a live telecast to announce a draft pick.

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Ohio Native Jake Diebler Named Assistant Coach

What follows are notes and quotes to put a close to the 2018-19 season as we remember the life of Ohio State great John Havlicek.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

Here And Now

Chris Holtmann is keenly aware of where the men's basketball program stands in the hierarchy of Buckeye fans. No matter how successful he might be, the program will always be second to football.

It's that way at many large schools, but it doesn't mean they can't coexist and thrive. For example, Michigan basketball under coach John Beilein has had far more success than the football Wolverines, but he is less well known – though it can be argued more respected – than Jim Harbaugh.

It's in that context that Holtmann was asked at the NCAA Tournament how he's handled being in the shadows of football for his two seasons in Columbus after his time at Butler where basketball is king. The press conference was in Tulsa, Okla., prior to the March 22 first-round game vs. Iowa State, so the reporter framed the query by saying the same is often asked of the Oklahoma basketball coach, Lon Kruger.

How Holtmann responded showed his acceptance of the situation and his humor about it.

"Are you telling me we're at a football school?" he joked.

The reporter: "I've heard that."

"Breaking news," Holtmann said.

He then went on to say, "I've really enjoyed seeing a program (football) that has been so successful for so long, and we've tried to really embrace that and use it for what we believe the strengths that it can be for our program.

"I think that anytime you are working alongside programs that have achieved excellence, that can be inspiring, encouraging. That can be a real positive thing. That's how

we've chosen to look at it. That's how we'll continue to do that. We've really enjoyed it. Certainly, it's different."

Holtmann was then pressed if he, as is the case at Oklahoma, uses football Saturdays and engages the football staff for his recruiting purposes.

"I think part of that, part of embracing it is, in fact, doing that" he said. "Showing, whether it's facilities or, you know, a number of times where we've had recruits spend time with Urban (Meyer) in the past, and we'll do it with Ryan (Day) in the future.

"We have a tremendous AD in Gene Smith who I think recognizes, as we all do, how important football is. But also, I think he has an appreciation for what we can be as a basketball program, and that's all you can ask for."

Forget Me Not

Along those lines, Holtmann said at his April 10 press conference that one of the things he is most proud of since replacing Thad Matta in June 2017 is that the program is again getting recognition locally and nationally.

Matta had the Buckeyes in a prominent spot for years before suffering declining results and interest. Holtmann saw evidence of that when he was at a Barnes & Noble bookstore near campus prior to the start of his first season of 2017-18.

"In Columbus, in my neighborhood, the college basketball preview comes out and it has a team in our league that was at that time not even picked to finish in the top four or five, but none of our players were on the cover," Holtmann said. "To me, that was a significant statement about how relevant our program was at the time."

The Athlon Sports 2017-18 magazine had a photo of Indiana's Robert Johnson on the front and referenced new Hoosiers coach Archie Miller. Indiana was picked for ninth in the Big Ten, three spots ahead of the Buckeyes.

Not a single Ohio State player was projected to land on the first, second or third all-conference teams.

Holtmann returned to the store a year later – after the Buckeyes went 25-9 (15-3 Big Ten)

and Keita Bates-Diop was the conference player of the year – to check out the 2018-19 preview issue, and OSU's C.J. Jackson was on the cover. Again, Holtmann flashed his wit.

"I felt good, got warm and fuzzy inside," he said.

Hondo Recalled

As chronicled elsewhere in BSB, Havlicek died April 25 at age 79 after a lengthy bout with Parkinson's Disease.

A member of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and named one of the 50 greatest NBA players of all time, the Martins Ferry, Ohio, native is one of five men's basketball players to have his jersey (No. 5) retired by Ohio State, joining Jerry Lucas (11), Evan Turner (21), Jim Jackson (22) and Gary Bradds (35).

Havlicek was a starter on the 1960 national championship team and the teams that finished as runners-up to Cincinnati the next two seasons. He went on to help the Celtics win eight NBA championships.

And to think that Havlicek almost didn't become a Buckeye. That's what teammate Jerry Lucas told BSB in January 2010 at the 50-year reunion weekend honoring the program's only NCAA title.

"John didn't think he was good enough to play in the Big Ten so he was thinking of going to West Virginia," Lucas said. "We had to talk him out of that. What a great team it turned out to be."

Havlicek also excelled at football and baseball (his neighbors were future major league pitchers Joe and Phil Niekro) and was chosen by the Cleveland Browns in the 1962 NFL draft as a wide receiver.

Prior to that, he had to disappoint OSU football coach Woody Hayes when he committed to play basketball for Fred Taylor out of Bridgeport, Ohio.

"I visited three times for football, one for basketball," Havlicek said. "Woody Hayes spoke at my all-sports banquet to try and persuade me to play football. I was a quarterback. My mother persuaded him she didn't want me to get hurt.

"When I came to Ohio State, I was a little bit awed because I came from a small town. I

adjusted with my roommate, Jerry Lucas, the brainchild."

It was OSU teammate Mel Nowell who gave him the nickname "Hondo" that would last a lifetime because he resembled movie star John "Hondo" Wayne.

Havlicek always credited Taylor and assistant coaches Jack Graf and Frank Truitt for his success with the Celtics.

"I am telling you from the bottom of my heart I could not have become the pro that I became without the tutelage of Frank and Jack and Fred," he said.

Familiar Name

Since BSB last went to print, Jake Diebler was named an assistant coach on April 22 to replace Mike Schrage, who was hired as head coach at Elon University on April 5.

"Jake was highly recommended by those he has worked for as well as by many of our former players who are now playing professionally," Holtmann said in a release.

Diebler, from Sandusky, Ohio, was an assistant at Vanderbilt the past three seasons, and the three years before that he was video coordinator at Ohio State.

His brother, Jon, played for the Buckeyes from 2008-11, and their father, Keith, was an Ohio high-school coach for nearly 40 years.

"His Ohio roots and ties also were important in this process," Holtmann said. "The Diebler name certainly brings back great memories, and I know Jake will work extremely hard to create more in the future."

On The Trail

A pair of four-star prospects to watch for the next recruiting cycle are guard Jaylen Clark from Corona (Calif.) Centennial and power forward Justin Lewis of Towson (Md.) Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. OSU has two scholarships available so far but no commits for the 2020 class.

Clark (6-5, 200) is No. 57 nationally and the 13th-best shooting guard in his class according to the 247Sports composite. The site has his interest at "warm" for the Buckeyes along with California, UNLV and USC. Boise State is "cool."

Clark's mother, Denita Brooks, graduated from Ohio State, her mother lives in Cleveland, and he has an aunt and uncle living in Columbus.

Lewis (6-7, 225) on April 20 put the Buckeyes in his final 10 list that includes Marquette, Maryland, Purdue, Seton Hall, Tennessee, UCF, UConn, Virginia Tech and West Virginia.

He is ranked 133rd nationally and 23rd at his position. He averaged 17.3 points, 9.2 rebounds, 3.4 assists and 3.2 blocks per game last season when the Engineers won their third straight Class 3A state title.

LeDee Finds A New Home

On April 28, exactly one month to the day after he announced his intentions to enter the transfer portal, former Ohio State forward Jaedon LeDee committed to TCU.

The 6-9, 230-pound LeDee came to Columbus as a four-star prospect from the Kinkaid School in Houston. He played in 26 games (two starts) as a freshman last season and averaged 3.0 points and 1.7 rebounds per contest.

"Jaedon is a terrific young man," Holtmann said on March 28. "We appreciate the contribution he made to our team and wish him the best going forward."

Ohio State has since added seven-footer Ibrahim Diallo to its 2019 recruiting class, effectively replacing LeDee on the roster.

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OSU Bolsters Roster With Experienced Additions

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Garrett Stepien

While the Ohio State women's basketball team has been heavily pursuing prospects for the 2020 and 2021 cycles, sixth-year head coach Kevin McGuff grabbed two more late additions to the Buckeyes' 2019 haul in April.

On April 2, OSU went overseas and received its first commitment from Nitra, Slovakia, forward Rebeka Mikulasikova. Two weeks later, Oklahoma State guard and Kettering (Ohio) Alter product Braxtin Miller announced an Ohio State transfer April 16.

The Buckeyes confirmed each addition for the 2019-20 season April 18, adding both players to their incoming class that had ranked fourth nationally in the espnW HoopGurlz Class Rankings when they inked five letters of intent Nov. 16.

Mikulasikova and Miller join Canton (Ohio) McKinley five-star guard Kierstan Bell (6-1), Indianapolis North Central five-star point guard Rikki Harris (5-9), Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ the King five-star wing Kaelynn Satterfield (6-0), Dublin (Ohio) Coffman five-star guard Jacy Sheldon (5-7) and Pamplona, Spain, three-star forward Aixa Wone (6-2).

Miller Comes Home From Other OSU

Boasting the same name and hometown as former Ohio State quarterback and wide receiver Braxton Miller, who starred for the football Buckeyes from 2011-15 as a Dayton native and Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne product, Braxtin Miller makes her homecoming on the women's basketball team after she considered McGuff's squad out of high school.

"I thought, if there was ever a kid that was supposed to go to Ohio State, it was her," McGuff said with a laugh.

Then the No. 22 point guard as a three-star recruit in the 2017 class, Miller chose Oklahoma State over Ohio State and starred with the Cowgirls.

As she lit up her first two years in Stillwater, Okla., McGuff and his coaching staff watched the progress from afar in Columbus and knew what they missed out on.

"We recruited her out of high school – really liked her, loved the way she played," McGuff told BSB. "Oklahoma State kind of came in there and got her, but I really felt like we missed out on an opportunity to coach her the first time around. She's a great kid.

"Every time I looked at the box score and saw how well she was doing at Oklahoma State, I was happy for her – but ultimately, it made me sick to my stomach."

The 5-10 guard gave Oklahoma State an all-around asset on the floor, averaging 13.1 points, 3.8 rebounds and 2.8 assists in 62 games (59 starts) as a freshman and sophomore. She was a lethal three-point threat, also. Her 105 makes from long range rank ninth in Cowgirls history, with just two seasons of work.

Despite the accolades – she was a two-time Big 12 honorable mention, one-time Big 12 Player of the Week and unanimous Big 12 All-Freshman team selection – Miller sought an opportunity to play in front of family and

friends.

"First of all, I think she's had two really good years of growth, on and off the court, being away from home," McGuff said. "She's played extremely well in a great conference like the Big 12 at the highest level of women's basketball. But I think with all the success she's been having, she's also missed more of an opportunity to share that with family and friends. So that's why I think it really made sense for her to come back here.

"We've had a lot of success, but just last year, graduating a whole bunch of people and now we're kind of retooling things and she can come in here and I think she'll be able to have a really big impact for us and help us do some great things."

Ohio State welcomes seven newcomers, and six currently have immediate eligibility. The Buckeyes will inquire with the NCAA about Miller, whose status for the 2019-20 has not been determined, but are prepared to go on if she misses her first year in Columbus.

"When we get her here, we may go through some things," McGuff said. "We're not counting on it, but of course, we'll examine (a hardship waiver) and if there's anything that will fall into the realm of what the NCAA deems as possible, situations happen. So we'll kind have the conversations, but we'll kind of see what happens."

European Pipeline Reopens For Ohio State

Since Ohio State imported Dorka Juhasz from Pecs, Hungary, late in the 2018 cycle, McGuff's coaching staff has gone back overseas twice throughout the past 12 months for two more prized gems out of Europe.

Before the Buckeyes developed Juhasz into an all-conference player with 11.7 points and 9.0 rebounds averaged in 27 game (25 starts) who was named to the All-Big Ten freshman team and All-Big Ten second team by the coaches, McGuff gained a commitment in May 2018 from Wone.

As the continent became a hotbed for talent, McGuff and associate head coach Patrick Klein kept going back, resulting in OSU's latest catch when Mikulasikova committed and signed.

"We've gotten a little more into international recruiting, obviously, with some of the kids we've brought in," McGuff said. "A lot of how this started was that there are more USA teams going overseas and playing in tournaments, and we've been watching. So you've got 12 of the top kids in the U.S. going into play on a team and they're going to Europe, so that's kind of how we got going on seeing some of these kids.

"My assistant, Patrick, he kept in touch and followed through on (Mikulasikova). Rebeka graduated a year ago from high school, and she spent this year in kind of a postgrad year. She's getting on top of things and did a really good job because a lot of people thought she may just stay over there and go pro.

"But she wanted to come over because we stayed on her and we got her, and she's really good. She reminds me of Dorka, except she's a little bit bigger and more physical around the basket. Maybe not as developed away from the basket, but she's certainly working on those skills."

Mikulasikova, 20, spent the past three seasons playing for Piestanske Cajky as an amateur in the 16-team European Women's Basketball League (EWBL). She

averaged 7.1 points, 4.4 rebounds and 1.1 assists in her first nine games of the 2018-19 season.

Along with Wone – who originally committed to the 2018 cycle but reclassified for the 2019 haul – Mikulasikova starts summer enrollment in May, providing an enormous boost in the paint next to sophomores such as Juhasz (6-4) and Aaliyah Patty (6-3) after graduating Makayla Waterman (6-2).

"Rebeka, she's a little bigger and a little stronger around the basket than Dorka," McGuff said. "She's a little more physical, so I think she'll give us a little more physical presence defensively and with rebounding. Dorka's probably a little more skilled away (from the basket), although Rebeka is developing there – and she'll eventually be very good on the perimeter as well – but like I said, Dorka is probably a bit more perimeter-oriented right now. Rebeka's a little more around the basket with her size and strength. So I do think they'll complement each other very well."

Coaching Staff Reshuffles

After just one season as an assistant for McGuff, joining Ohio State last May following five years at Missouri State, Jennifer Sullivan left to reunite with her mentor April 15 when she was announced on Kellie Harper's Tennessee staff.

"Jennifer possesses great character, has a tremendous way with people and is very intelligent and efficient in how she goes about her work," Harper said.

Seven days after the Lady Vols hired Harper away from the Bears (2013-19), Sullivan followed her former boss at Missouri State (2013-18) to Knoxville, Tenn., leaving an opening for McGuff.

In the meantime, the Buckeyes are operating on the recruiting trail with special assistant to the head coach Ericka Haney as the acting third assistant, sources told BSB.

During the evaluation periods – which are scattered across April 19-23, April 26-28 and May 17-19 in the spring – college programs can bring a maximum of four coaches to recruiting events, such as nonscholastic tournaments.

After Sullivan's departure, Haney joins McGuff, Klein and assistant Carrie Banks as Ohio State's fourth coach on the road.

Haney enters her third year on McGuff's staff for the 2019-20 season after she joined the Buckeyes before the 2017-18 campaign as special assistant to the head coach. She played for McGuff at Notre Dame (1998-2002), when he was an assistant coach (1996-2002) as a member of the Fighting Irish's first national championship team in 2000-01.

Following her one year (2002) of playing professionally with the WNBA's Detroit

Shock and overseas in Sweden, Haney returned to the States on Chicago State's staff (2003-06) before becoming Louisiana Tech's director of operations (2006-07) and Florida Gulf Coast's recruiting coordinator (2007-09). From there, she spent her next eight years (2009-17) as a director of girls basketball for four different Florida high schools.

One name to watch is Tamika Jeter, who is from Dayton and spent six seasons at Ohio State, a source told BSB. Before she became an assistant coach at Penn State for the 2016-17 campaign, Jeter started on the sideline with the Buckeyes as a graduate assistant (2002-03) and moved into a full-time role (2004-08). Jeter's coaching resume includes assistant stops at Kansas (2009-10) and Kentucky (2015-16) with a four-year gap (2011-15) in the private sector, contributing to ESPN as a women's basketball analyst on top of other positions.

Making an assistant hire is atop McGuff's May to-do list as he balances his recruiting while preparing for summer workouts after the 2019 class arrives in full for June enrollment.

"The spring is so short with our current players, just because when finals roll around, we can't do anything," McGuff said. "So we didn't do a lot but got with the returning players and really, we've done a lot in terms of recruiting, obviously, so that's been a big point of emphasis.

"And then we've spent a lot of time planning our summer. With so many new people and a lot of talented kids, we've really got to get acclimated to the program. We've spent a lot of time just making sure we're ready to hit the ground running when these kids show up."

Bell, Satterfield Compete In All-Star Game

Before they embark on their Ohio State careers, Bell and Satterfield had one more scholastic game to play April 20 with the 2019 Jordan Brand Classic. During the all-star game at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, Bell paced Team White with 17 points, but Team Black won 87-82.

McGuff looks forward to getting both blue-chip Buckeyes on campus in the near future.

"We've been in contact," McGuff said. "We've been in contact, kind of just hammering out the details. They'll be here in June, which is when they'll start summer school – that's with the other freshmen (arriving in May), outside of the Europeans.

"(Bell is) excited, we're excited to get her here and she played well in both the McDonald's All-American Game and the Jordan Brand Classic. So we can't wait to get her here, just get her acclimated to the program and get rolling with it."



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Big Ten Well-Represented In 2019 NFL Draft

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

Former Ohio State defensive end Nick Bosa became the first Big Ten player to be drafted when the San Francisco 49ers selected him No. 2 overall. Read more about the former Buckeyes who were selected on pages 1 and 25.

Around the Big Ten, former Iowa tight end T.J. Hockenson went to the Detroit Lions with the eighth overall pick, making him the first player selected at his position. Hockenson emerged as the go-to target for the Hawkeyes as a third-year sophomore, catching 49 passes for 760 yards and six touchdowns in 2018. Hockenson's All-America season was capped by winning the 2018 John Mackey Award as the top tight end in the nation.

Former Michigan linebacker Devin Bush became the third Big Ten player selected in the top 10 when he was chosen by the Pittsburgh Steelers at No. 10 overall. Bush was stellar in Ann Arbor, averaging 7.3 tackles per game during his sophomore and junior campaigns. He also recorded identical 9½ TFL and five sacks in each of those seasons.

Another former Wolverine came off the board when the Green Bay Packers drafted defensive end Rashan Gary, who had referred to himself as the best player in the draft. While at Michigan, Gary totaled 137 tackles, 24 TFL and 10½ sacks in 35 games.

Former Ohio State quarterback Dwayne Haskins broke a 24-year streak when Washington chose him with the 15th overall pick. The record-breaking Buckeye gunslinger became the first Big Ten quarterback to be selected in the first round since Penn State's Kerry Collins was picked fifth overall by the Carolina Panthers in the 1995 NFL draft.

Iowa made history when the Denver Broncos chose former Hawkeye tight end Noah Fant with the No. 20 selection. Fant and Hockenson became the first pair of tight ends from the same school to ever be selected in the first round in the same draft. Fant caught 19 career touchdowns for the Hawkeyes, ranking fourth overall in school history and first among tight ends.

The Packers added more Big Ten talent when they drafted former Maryland safety Darnell Savage with the No. 21 pick. Savage averaged 53.3 tackles in three years as a starter for the Terrapins. He also totaled nine TFLs, eight interceptions and 22 pass breakups in his Maryland career.

9 B1G Players Selected On Day 2

After seven former Big Ten standouts were selected in the first round, nine more were chosen on day two of the draft.

Former Penn State running back Miles Sanders became the first taken April 26 when the Philadelphia Eagles took him at No. 53 overall. After backing up New York Giants running back Saquon Barkley for his first two seasons at Penn State, Sanders emerged in his junior season. Sanders averaged 98.0 rushing yards per game (1,274 rushing yards) and scored nine touchdowns in 2018.

A trio of former Buckeyes found new



TIM MOODY

TOP OF THE CHARTS – Ohio State defensive end Chase Young is widely expected to be one of the first players off the board in the 2020 NFL draft if he chooses to leave school following his junior season.

homes on day two of the draft as well, with H-back Parris Campbell heading to the Indianapolis Colts at No. 59 overall (second round), defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones being picked by the Broncos at No. 71 overall (third round) and wide receiver Terry McLaurin joining Haskins in Washington at No. 76 overall (third round).

The defending Super Bowl champion New England Patriots got in on the Big Ten action when they took former Michigan defensive end Chase Winovich with the 77th overall pick. Winovich was an effective pass rusher for the Wolverines, tallying 18 sacks in his final three seasons. In those three campaigns, he also recorded 183 tackles and 44½ TFL, including 18 TFL as a redshirt junior and 17 TFL as a fifth-year senior.

The Miami Dolphins snagged the first Big Ten offensive lineman off the board when they selected former Wisconsin guard Michael Deiter with the 78th overall pick. Deiter was a first-team All-America selection and won the Rimington-Pace Big Ten Offensive Lineman of the Year honor. The Curtice, Ohio, native started a school-record 54 games, ranking No. 2 all-time among Big Ten players behind Ohio State's Billy Price (55, 2014-17).

Former Michigan defensive back David Long became the fourth-straight Big Ten player selected when the Los Angeles Rams chose him with the 79th overall pick. Long recorded 38 tackles and two TFL in his last two seasons with the Wolverines. He was also impressive in pass coverage, snagging three interceptions and adding 17 pass breakups.

The Steelers added another Big Ten player to their defense when they drafted former Michigan State defensive back Justin Layne at No. 83 overall. Layne recorded 130 tackles, 4½ TFL, three interceptions

and 27 pass breakups for the Spartans. The Cleveland Benedictine product came on strong after recording 40 tackles and nine passes defensed as a sophomore, posting 72 tackles, 2½ TFL and 16 pass breakups in his junior season.

Former Penn State offensive lineman Connor McGovern was the final Big Ten player chosen on day two of the draft, with the Dallas Cowboys taking him at No. 90 overall. A three-year starter for the Nittany Lions, McGovern decided to bypass his senior season after earning third-team All-Big Ten honors in 2018.

Way-Too-Early 2020 Mock Drafts

With the conclusion of the 2019 NFL draft comes the inevitable way-too-early mock drafts for 2020.

BSB took a look at the first-round mock drafts from The Athletic, Bleacher Report, CBS Sports, NBC Sports, SB Nation and Sporting News.

The Big Ten was well-represented across the mocks, particularly among defensive linemen.

Ohio State players appeared on each mock draft, and while a couple of the Buckeyes were expected to be among the projected first-round talent, a couple of others may come as somewhat of a surprise.

Each mock draft was quite different, varying from projecting four Big Ten players to be picked in the first round to as many as eight players.

Only one Big Ten player was a consensus first-round pick in all six publications – Ohio State junior defensive end Chase Young.

The Athletic's mock draft had Young (No. 2), Iowa defensive end A.J. Epenesa (4), Iowa offensive lineman Tristan Wirfs

(7), Wisconsin running back Jonathan Taylor (19), Penn State defensive end Yetur Gross-Matos (25), Ohio State cornerback Jeffrey Okudah (28) and Michigan State defensive end Kenny Willekes (32).

Bleacher Report had just four Big Ten players going in the first round: Taylor (10), Gross-Matos (13), Young (16) and Epenesa (18).

CBS Sports featured eight Big Ten players in its first-round mock draft: Taylor (10), Young (11), Wisconsin guard Tyler Biadasz (14), Willekes (21), Northwestern linebacker Paddy Fisher (22), Ohio State junior running back J.K. Dobbins (23), Michigan quarterback Shea Patterson (29) and Ohio State senior linebacker Malik Harrison (31).

NBC Sports' mock draft included the following Big Ten players: Young (3), Epenesa (12), Taylor (18), Dobbins (21), Fisher (24) and Michigan wide receiver Tarik Black (30).

SB Nation tied CBS Sports with the most Big Ten players in its way-too-early mock draft. SB Nation included Young (2), Epenesa (5), Okudah (18), Gross-Matos (25), Iowa tackle Alaric Jackson (28), Willekes (29), Biadasz (31) and Purdue defensive tackle Lorenzo Neal (32).

Sporting News included six Big Ten players in its mock draft: Epenesa (6), Young (9), Taylor (18), Biadasz (22), Fisher (24) and Willekes (32).

In sum, 15 different Big Ten players were projected to be 2020 first-round picks by the six media outlets.

Ohio State had four different players featured in the mock drafts, marking the most in the Big Ten. Iowa and Michigan each had three players listed.



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State Balloons**
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\$6.95

**A1-68: Ohio State
Marching Band Uniform
TBDBITL Shirt**

Black.
S, M, L, XL,
2XL, or 3XL.

\$18.95
to \$20.95



**A5-38: Ohio State
"Shaw" Pullover Shirt***

Black-gray,
gray-black,
or gray-red.
S, M, L, XL,
2XL, or 3XL.

\$109.95



**A1-32: 3D Athletic O
"Resolve" Striped Polo***

Black-red.
S, M, L, XL,
2XL, or 3XL.

\$80.95



**B1-16: Ladies Script Ohio
Polyester Tee**

Black.
S, M, L,
XL, or 2XL.

\$34.95



**B1-22: Ladies Athletic O
Victory V Neck Top***

Black, red.
S, M, L, XL,
2XL, or 3XL.

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**B5-8: Ladies Athletic O
Shoreline Jacket***

Charcoal, red.
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2XL, or 3XL.

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**J2-36: Ohio State Athletic
O Stripes Flag**

Gray-red. 3' by 5'.

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Starting P Griffan Smith Earns B1G Accolade

Ohio State lefthander Griffan Smith earned Big Ten Pitcher of the Week honors for his performance at Maryland on April 21.

FROM THE STRETCH

Joe Dempsey

Smith (6-2, 210) was superb against the Terrapins, leading the Buckeyes to a series win with a complete-game performance. The Cincinnati native struck out a career-high 10 batters while allowing only one run on four hits and two walks in the 5-1 victory at Bob

"Turtle" Smith Stadium.

"It was an awesome start from Griffan Smith on Sunday, and it earned him pitcher of the week," head coach Greg Beals told BSB. "So kudos to him on that. It was exactly what we needed. With a doubleheader the day before, we were a little tapped in the bullpen, and we needed that. And we got it from Griff."

The weekly honor and the complete game were both firsts for Smith. Even though he fanned 10 batters, he was quick to credit his defense for getting the win.

"I felt like I executed all my pitches," Smith said. "The backbone – stayed low in the zone, got ahead in counts, had my defense behind me. It was incredible. I'm

hoping that we can keep the train rolling."

The sophomore was excellent at Maryland, but his success has not been limited to that one outing.

Smith held a 5-2 record and led Ohio State's starters with a 3.53 ERA through games of April 28. With 59 strikeouts in 63⅓ innings and an opponent batting average of .237, the Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy product has been hard to hit.

After a hot start in February, Smith struggled with his command, and his outings were not up to par. However, the first-year starter has since settled in and found a groove.

"I felt like after the first two weeks, I hit a little roadblock," Smith said. "I felt like I was having trouble trusting all my pitches and going out there and pitching with conviction. But I felt like these last three weekends, Northwestern, Michigan and Maryland, I feel like I've been pitching with the utmost trust in my pitches and my abilities, and so it's obviously paid off.

"I'm throwing my changeup and my slider with conviction, throwing them for strikes and I'm hitting my spots. I think that starts in the throwing program, and 80 percent of the game is between the ears. So I feel like I've continued to develop my mental maturity and toughness and that's really paid off in the game."

A week after his award-winning performance at Maryland, Smith took the hill against Iowa at Bill Davis Stadium on April 28.

With the Buckeyes hoping to avoid a sweep, Smith turned in a gritty start in cold and windy conditions. He allowed just one run on three hits and six walks, while striking out six Hawkeyes over six innings for the victory.

Ohio State improved to 24-20 overall and 7-8 in the Big Ten after the 5-1 victory against Iowa, and Beals got just what he wanted out of Smith.

Typically, teams will start their best two pitchers on Fridays and Saturdays, with

the worst of the three taking the mound on Sundays. Beals said his team does not have that particular dynamic this season.

Nonetheless, Beals is proud of how Smith has risen to the occasion and done whatever the team has asked of him.

"We felt like Griffan was going to be consistent and solid and give our ballclub a chance to win on Sundays," Beals said. "Sundays are critical days. They either mean sweep, get swept or win a series. So they're always deciding, critical games, and we like having Griffan in that role."

Former Buckeye Makes MLB Debut

Former Ohio State right-handed pitcher Travis Lakins made his MLB debut for the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park on April 23.

The Franklin, Ohio, native took the mound in the second game of Boston's home doubleheader. Lakins allowed just one run in 2⅓ innings of relief, while striking out two Detroit batters.

The highlight of Lakins' debut performance came when he faced runners on the corners with one out in the seventh inning. The former Buckeye struck out Jeimer Candelario swinging on a 94-mph four-seam fastball for the second out before retiring Nicholas Castellanos on a groundout to first base to end the threat.

Red Sox manager Alex Cora came away from the game impressed with Lakins' debut.

"He did an outstanding job," Cora said. "We pushed him hard. It's something we needed. You saw the fastball up, the cutter, the breaking ball. He slowed the game down, which is good."

Lakins said in a masslive.com article that he had found out he was being called up to the big leagues right after Triple-A Pawtucket finished its batting practice before its game against Lehigh Valley that same day.

"I called my wife (Alexis) and I was like, 'Hey, I'm going to the big leagues,'" Lakins said. "And she was like, 'No way.'"

Lakins had been selected in the sixth round of the 2015 MLB Draft by the Red Sox. As a Buckeye in 2015, he went 4-4 with a 3.75 ERA in 15 starts with 84 strikeouts in 96 innings pitched.

After the Red Sox moved Lakins to the bullpen last May, he excelled, posting a 1.21 ERA in 30 relief outings between Double-A Portland and Triple-A Pawtucket.

Lakins told masslive.com it was a dream come true to pitch in the big leagues.

"I've been playing ball since I was 4 years old and never experienced anything like this," Lakins said. "I never thought of being in this position. It's just hard to describe."

Lakins' former coach in Columbus, Beals, was like a proud parent when he received the news of his former player's promotion.

"It's an exciting time, no doubt about it," Beals. "I first got the text from (an Ohio State communications director) that he had gotten called up and then a text from Travis himself. And then he gets in the ballgame. The first day he's in the big leagues, he's in the game."

"Travis has worked hard and he's a great competitor. It doesn't surprise me, but it's never easy to make it to the big leagues. So he's had to fight to get there, but I'm really, really happy for him. It's an exciting and it's a rewarding time for a coach — because that's obviously these guys' dreams to play in the big leagues — so we were able to have one of our former Buckeyes realize that dream."

For recaps of all the Ohio State baseball game action, check out the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB subscribers, each Monday.

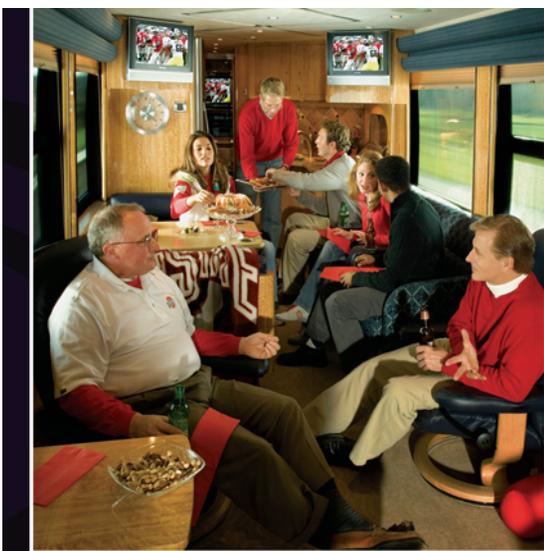
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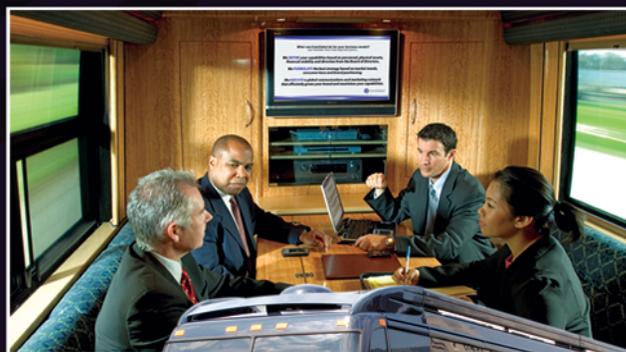
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Ohio State's Pete Hanson Leaves Lasting Legacy

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Legendary Ohio State men's volleyball coach Pete Hanson's historic tenure came to an end April 18 when he announced his retirement.

"Most of all, I'm just proud of the athletes that have been with me for the past 35 years and represented Ohio State, and I want to thank them," Hanson said. "And I want to thank my coaching staff."

Hanson inherited a rather underwhelming program in 1985, and he did not have success right away. In fact, early in his tenure there were conversations about removing men's volleyball as a varsity sport at Ohio State.

Men's volleyball maintained its varsity status because of Ohio State's commitment to giving opportunities, not taking them away. Hanson expressed his gratitude for that notion and explained why he chose to stay in Columbus for so long.

"From the day I walked onto campus 35, 36 years ago, everyone that I ran into made sure to send the message that, 'You're an individual. You're a special person at Ohio State. You're not just a number,'" Hanson said. "The way they treated me, I tried to make sure our players and the families that we recruited understood that message. And that become a part of what Ohio State volleyball is all about."

Hanson played collegiate volleyball at Kellogg Community College and Ball State as a nonscholarship athlete and wanted to help give others the same opportunity he had.

"A lot of it, for me, was about providing opportunities for guys like me," Hanson said.

Scholarships are scarce in men's vol-

leyball and were even harder to come by back in the mid-'80s when Hanson began coaching the Buckeyes. But there were still volleyball players who wanted to continue their careers in college, and Hanson wanted to provide the same opportunity that he was given.

"That's literally what drove me to keep going," Hanson said. "The satisfaction that I saw in those young men's faces, that, 'Hey, I put on an Ohio State uniform. I played in St. John Arena. I represented a great university while I was doing my sport.'"

A caring and passionate man, Hanson may have seemed like he'd never step down as head coach. He certainly was not going to be pushed out anytime soon.

So why would the Hall of Fame coach step down just a couple of years removed from back-to-back national championships?

"It was probably on one of those long bus rides home," Hanson said. "When you're sleeping in a seat and you try to get comfortable, and you roll into the parking lot at maybe 4 in the morning, it certainly isn't easy for an 18-year-old. But it's a lot harder for a 62-year-old."

While Hanson half-joked about the long bus rides, he was sincere in his reasoning for retirement.

"I can't give them the effort that I expect out of them, myself," Hanson said. "And that's not what our program is about, and that's not what I'm about."

Hanson won three national championships at Ohio State, snagged four National Coach of the Year honors and was inducted into three halls of fame (AVCA 2015, OSU Athletics 2017, USA Volleyball 2019).

Despite his success, Hanson still diverts all of the credit and attention to his players, assistant coaches and administrators. His

humility had a great effect on those around him, including former walk-on and senior captain Sanil Thomas.

"Coach Hanson embodies what the perfect leader should be," Thomas said. "I've always heard in leadership workshops, you would talk about servant leaders. And I think Coach Hanson is the epitome of that. He never puts anything about himself. You heard from the way he was answering the questions (at the retirement press conference), it was never about him, it was always about the athletes, the staff, the people that got him in this direction."

"He takes zero credit for everything that's happened. He puts it all on the athletes, so I think that's huge. He's so humble and selfless. The reason he's not doing this anymore is that he can't give all of himself, so he just wants the best for us. That's just amazing, honestly. If I could be any kind of leader, I'd definitely strive to emulate his style and his mantra."

Hanson concluded his career with an overall winning percentage of .665 (712-359) and a conference mark of 312-102 (.754). The 712 wins rank third all-time in NCAA history.

The Buckeyes were Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association (MIVA) regular-season champions in more than half (18) of his seasons and won 13 MIVA tournament titles as well.

In addition to all of the team success, Hanson helped turn many walk-ons into all-conference or All-America players. Fifth-year senior Blake Leeson started playing volleyball as a junior in high school and had no collegiate offers, but Hanson gave him a chance.

"He meant the world to me," Leeson said. "He gave me the opportunity of a

lifetime. I wasn't highly recruited. I started volleyball late. He gave me an opportunity to come and represent Ohio State, and I'm forever in debt to him for that and everything he's done for us.

"Getting a chance is an incredible opportunity so you want to do it justice and do everything you can for him in every way imaginable. He's done phenomenal things for this program for the past 35 years. I can't thank him enough for everything he's done for each and every one of us."

Hanson's success at Ohio State was not limited to the court, as the men's volleyball team earned more than 200 Academic All-Big Ten honors in his tenure. Five of Hanson's student-athletes earned the prestigious Big Ten Medal of Honor.

"His impact far exceeds the men's volleyball program, and even Ohio State Athletics, making a positive difference to collegiate volleyball across the country," said Janine Oman, deputy director of OSU athletics and men's volleyball administrator. "The development of young men has always been paramount to Pete, equipping them to lead successful lives."

There is no doubt that Hanson had a great impact on countless people in his time at Ohio State. Leeson will always be grateful for the opportunity that Hanson gave him and what he taught him along the way.

"He's definitely instilled this in me and has done so through his actions, that a chance or an opportunity is an incredible thing to waste," Leeson said. "When someone gives you that opportunity, that chance, it's your responsibility to bust your ass to the best of your ability to see that pan out and compete and perform to your full potential, to the best of your ability, because not everybody gets that chance."

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Nick Gray Breaks Jesse Owens' 83-Year-Old Record

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It took only 83 years, but Jesse Owens' record in the 100-meter dash was broken at Ohio State.

Senior Nick Gray from nearby Pickerington (Ohio) North was the one to do it, running the race in a blazing 10.17 seconds at the Gamecock Invitational, eclipsing Owens' time of 10.3 seconds.

BSB recently caught up with the speedster, and while he said he was honored to have broken the record of such a prestigious individual, he deflected the attention in the same breath.

"If you go here, you know who Jesse Owens is, he's everywhere all over campus and everything," Gray told BSB. "I think about all the greats that have come through here – for me to get it is – words can't describe how incredible that is. And I'm honored to do it.

"Although it was faster, it will be coming down really soon. There's a soph-

omore here, Eric Harrison, that if he doesn't get it this year, then next year, it's gone. I'm enjoying it, but I can't get too attached."

It is nice of Gray to support his teammates and encourage their likely success, but even if Harrison or another Buckeye were to break the record, he was the one to take down the 83-year-old mark.

"The kudos have to go to Nick," said Karen Dennis, director of track and field and cross country. "And that was a goal of his – to break Jesse Owens' record – and I think he is probably one of many students that have come here wanting to break Jesse Owens' record. But it didn't happen until Nick Gray did it."

Dennis beamed with pride in Gray, who is no stranger to success. The central Ohio native is an eight-time Big Ten champion, five-time first-team All-American and four-time second-team All-American. Dennis and sprints coach Joel Brown both mentioned what Gray's accomplishments mean to the program,

helping dispel myths that sprinters cannot run as fast if they train in Northern states.

Brown, who was a world-class hurdler, helped recruit Gray to don the scarlet and gray. He said he knew when Gray was in high school that he had the talent to not only do well, but to excel at the D-I level.

"Everybody knows Jesse Owens in track," Brown told BSB of Gray. "He's kind of like the pinnacle of track and field, so to break the record of Jesse Owens, it's big for Nick, for one, and it's big for the program."

Brown spends a lot of time with Gray, from indoor workouts at French Field House to outdoor workouts at Jesse Owens Stadium to long trips to meets. He was not surprised by Gray's historic feat.

"You have to start with Nick's parents, they gave him the right DNA," Brown said. "So that's where everything starts with. But Nick, his approach to training, he comes in, he's prepared every practice and he handles his business on and off the track. So I think that plays a big role in everything. And he wants to be good. He has the passion to be good in the sport."

Gray told BSB he has been blown away by how many people cared that he had broken Owens' record, with people of all ages congratulating him on the accomplishment. The past four years have been filled with medals and accolades for Gray, but not without a little luck. The Buckeye sprinter sticks to strict superstitions when it comes to race time.

"For prelim days, I wear these tights actually," Gray said as he pointed to his legs. "For the finals day, I have all-black tights that are thinner, easier to move. And I have to put on Icy Hot right after I warm up, no matter what, I don't care where I'm at. I have to put it on right after."

The soft-spoken Gray's personality shone through when he spoke about his superstitions. He flashed a picturesque smile when talking about the abundance of apples he eats on a regular basis. The apples have been a constant, but the smile had not.

"I had a gap in my teeth in eighth grade and I got Invisalign and closed it up," Gray told BSB. "And after that I was like, 'I'm going to be a dentist.' And from then on, that's what I wanted to do.

"Because I know that after it closed up, I felt like just confident and everything. I was like, I want to do that for other

people."

Studying biology with the hopes of becoming a dentist, Gray had quite the full plate for a young man in pursuit of records. But his success was not limited to the track, having earned Academic All-Big Ten honors and Ohio State Scholar-Athlete recognition.

"I think it's a tribute to Nick and his tenacity," Dennis said. "Because as a student who wants to be a dentist, the balance of athletics and academics wasn't always easy, and it's still challenging, but at the same time, he's managed to do both and do both in exemplary manner."

Being a world-class runner or studying biology at Ohio State to become a dentist are both difficult in their own regard, but Gray worked diligently to maintain a healthy balance.

"Being focused," Gray said of handling the rigors of both academics and athletics. "Track isn't everything, but also academics is not everything. I have to be able to manage both of them at a high level, so that means sacrifices.

"Going to practice, running to class, and then from class, running to practice and everything – it's a grind, for sure. It is not for the faint of heart. But my parents and coaches have taught me, 'You can't just put all your eggs in one basket. Have more to offer.' So that's what I'm trying to do."

While his historic race put a fitting cap on an excellent Ohio State career, Gray reflected on the significance of whose record he had broken and the lasting impact Owens had on him and others.

"You can do anything that you set your mind to," Gray said, "because he had a lot of obstacles to say the least. Coming here, at the time racism was huge, then he went over to Germany where there was obviously Hitler – you can do anything, and I mean anything if you set your mind to it and stay focused on the task at hand. But he had to go through – I don't think I'll ever have to overcome something that big – so if he can do that, I can do anything that I want to now, for sure."

In order to better introduce BSB readers to Ohio State's Olympic sports teams and athletes, we have shifted to more featured-oriented coverage of the various squads. Buckeye Sports Bulletin will provide a roundup of all games, matches and meets involving OSU's teams each Monday on our BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all print subscribers.

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2019 FOOTBALL (All Times TBA)

April 13 SPRING GAME, Gray 35, Scarlet 17.

Aug. 31 FLORIDA ATLANTIC.

Sept. 7 CINCINNATI; **14** at Indiana; **21** MIAMI (OHIO); **28** at Nebraska.

Oct. 5 MICHIGAN STATE; **18** at Northwestern; **26** WISCONSIN.

Nov. 9 MARYLAND; **16** at Rutgers; **23** PENN STATE; **30** at Michigan.

Dec. 7 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

MEN'S BASKETBALL (20-15, 8-12 BIG TEN)

Nov. 1 UNC PEMBROKE (exhibition), W 81-63; **7** at Cincinnati, W 64-56; **11** PFW, W 107-61; **15** at Creighton, W 69-60; **18** SOUTH CAROLINA STATE, W 89-61; **20** SAMFORD, W 68-50; **23** CLEVELAND STATE at St. John Arena, W 89-62; **28** SYRACUSE, L 72-62.

Dec. 2 MINNESOTA, W 79-59; **5** vs. Illinois at Youngstown, W 77-67; **15** BUCKNELL, W 73-71; **18** YOUNGSTOWN STATE, W 75-56; **22** vs. UCLA at Chicago, W 80-66; **29** HIGH POINT, W 82-64.

Jan. 5 (8) MICHIGAN STATE, L 86-77; **9** at Rutgers, L 64-61; **12** at Iowa, L 72-62; **18** (19) MARYLAND, L 75-61; **23** PURDUE, L 79-67; **26** at Nebraska, W 70-60; **29** at (5) Michigan, L 65-49.

Feb. 2 RUTGERS, W 76-62; **7** PENN STATE, W 74-70; **10** at Indiana, W 55-52; **14** ILLINOIS, L 63-56; **17** at (11) Michigan State, L 62-44; **20** NORTHWESTERN, W 63-49; **23** at (24) Maryland, L 72-62; **26** (22) IOWA, W 90-70.

March 2 at (14) Purdue, L 86-51; **6** at Northwestern, L 68-50; **10** (21) WISCONSIN, L 73-67 (OT); **14** Big Ten Tournament Second Round at Chicago vs. 9-seed Indiana, W 79-75; **15** Big Ten Tournament Third Round at Chicago vs. 1-seed Michigan State, L 77-70; **22** NCAA Tournament First Round at Tulsa, Okla., vs. 6-seed Iowa State, W 62-59; **24** NCAA Tournament Second Round at Tulsa, Okla., vs. 3-seed Houston, L 74-59.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL (14-15, 10-8 BIG TEN)

Oct. 28 IUP (exhibition), W 72-50.

Nov. 6 (22) USF, L 71-47; **9** DETROIT MERCY, W 55-41; **11** at (2) UConn, L 85-53; **16** at Sacramento State, canceled; **18** at Stanford, canceled; **29** NORTH CAROLINA, W 76-69.

Dec. 2 CINCINNATI, W 69-56; **5** at Washington, L 69-59; **16** FLORIDA at St. John Arena, W 46-41; **20** vs. Butler at West Palm Beach, Fla., L 66-53; **21** vs. Virginia Tech at West Palm Beach, Fla., L 81-73; **28** at Purdue, L 60-42; **31** NEBRASKA, L 78-69.

Jan. 5 at (4) Maryland, L 75-69; **10** (25) INDIANA, W 55-50; **14** (25) MICHIGAN STATE, W 65-55; **17** at Penn State, W 76-71 (OT); **20** at Michigan, L 62-58; **24** (11) MARYLAND, L 70-57; **28** at Minnesota, W 65-55; **31** ILLINOIS, W 78-70.

Feb. 3 at Northwestern, L 76-59; **6** PENN STATE, W 78-73; **10** (16) IOWA, L 78-52; **14** at (23) Rutgers, W 59-39; **17** WISCONSIN, W 70-68; **21** at Michigan State, W 77-70; **28** at Wisconsin, W 61-50.

March 3 RUTGERS, L 66-56; **7** Big Ten Tournament Second Round at Indianapolis vs. 13-seed Wisconsin, L 73-63; **20** WNIT vs. MOREHEAD STATE, L 71-61.

BASEBALL (23-19, 6-7 BIG TEN)

Feb. 15-17 Snowbird Classic at Port Charlotte, Fla., vs. Seton Hall, W 4-3; W 6-0; W 5-3; **18** at FGCU, W 2-0; **22** Kleberg Bank Tournament at Corpus Christi, Texas, vs. BYU, L 5-1; **23** Kleberg Bank Tournament at Corpus Christi, Texas, vs. Texas A&M Corpus Christi, L 8-7; **24** Kleberg Bank Tournament at Corpus Christi, Texas, vs. Oral Roberts, W 8-3; **25** Kleberg Bank Tournament at Corpus Christi, Texas, vs. Texas A&M Corpus Christi, L 3-2.

March 1-4 at Bethune-Cookman, L 4-3; W 6-0; W 16-9; L 8-3; **9** Greenville Drive 1st Pitch Invite at Greenville, S.C., vs. Michigan State, L 7-1; **10** Greenville Drive 1st Pitch Invite at Greenville, S.C., vs. Western Carolina, L 8-5; **11** Greenville Drive 1st Pitch Invite at Greenville, S.C., vs. Furman, L 11-10 (10 innings); **12** at Wofford, L 8-6; **15-17** LIPSCOMB, W 14-3; L 9-3; W 7-6; **19** NORTHERN KENTUCKY, W 10-8; **21-24** HAWAII, W 6-4; W 6-5; W 7-5; L 15-3; **27** TOLEDO, W 9-4; **29-31** at Rutgers, W 5-3 (11 innings); W 2-0; L 3-2 (15 innings).

April 3 CINCINNATI, L 9-5; **5-7** NORTHWESTERN, L 13-5; L 7-2; L 10-4; **9** at Ohio, W 10-8; **10** DAYTON, W 4-2; **12-13** MICHIGAN, W 10-5, W 10-4; L 6-2; **16** XAVIER, W 8-5; **19-21** at Maryland,

L 14-8; W 11-10 (11 innings); W 5-1; **26-28** IOWA, L 4-2; L 11-4; W 5-1.

May 1 at Miami (Ohio), 5 p.m.; **3-5** at Minnesota, 9 p.m.; 3 p.m.; 2 p.m.; **8** WRIGHT STATE, 6:30 p.m.; **10-12** PENN STATE, 6:35 p.m.; 3:05 p.m.; 1:05 p.m.; **14** at Youngstown State, 6 p.m.; **16-18** at Purdue, 6 p.m.; 6 p.m.; 1 p.m.; **22-26** Big Ten Tournament at Omaha, Neb.

MEN'S GYMNASTICS (6-7, 3-3 BIG TEN)

Jan. 12 Rocky Mountain Open at Colorado Spring, Colo., 4th/6 (398.500); **26** at (1) Oklahoma, L 423.950-395.400.

Feb. 2 at (4) Michigan, L 413.900-402.700; **15/17** Winter Cup at Las Vegas, NTS.

March 2 ARNOLD CHALLENGE vs. (6) PENN STATE, W 413.150-409.000; **8** MINNESOTA/NEBRASKA, 2nd/3 (405.550); **16** at (9) Iowa, L 400.650-396.400; **24** (4) ILLINOIS, W 406.600-404.000.

April 5-6 Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa, 6th (402.400).

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS (7-10, 3-7 BIG TEN)

Jan. 5 at (7) Georgia, L 196.600-194.900; **12** at (25) N.C. State, W 196.025-194.550; **19** at Penn State, W 196.075-194.850; **27** at Michigan State, W 196.200-195.225.

Feb. 2 IOWA, W 195.000-194.775; **8** at Maryland, L 195.950-194.250; **16** (17) NEBRASKA, L 196.400-195.750; **23** Big Five Meet at Toledo, Ohio, vs. Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois & Rutgers, 5th/5 (194.600).

March 2 (24) WEST VIRGINIA, W 196.850-196.100; TEMPLE, W 196.850-194.000; **9** BOWLING GREEN, W 195.875-194.875; **17** vs. West Virginia, Penn State & N.C. State at Morgantown, W.Va., 4th/4 (194.925); **23** Big Ten Championships at University Park, Pa., 7th/10 (195.775).

April 5 NCAA Regional Second Round, 4th (194.725).

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (20-11-5, 13-7-4 BIG TEN)

Oct. 12-13 at Arizona State, W 3-2; W 3-0; **19-20** MASSACHUSETTS, L 6-3; W 3-1; **26** (15) BOWLING GREEN, L 8-2; **27** at Bowling Green, T 2-2 (OT).

Nov. 2-3 at (5) Notre Dame, W 1-0; L 2-1; **9-10** at Colgate, W 3-0; W 1-0; **16-17** WISCONSIN, W 4-0; W 3-1; **23-24** (6) PENN STATE, L 4-3; W 5-2; **30-Dec. 1** at Minnesota, T 2-2 (OSU 3x3 OT Win); T 2-2 (OSU 3x3 OT Win).

Dec. 28-29 MERCYHURST, W 3-1; W 5-4.

Jan. 4-5 at Michigan State, T 7-7 (OSU 3x3 OT Loss); W 6-0; **11-12** MICHIGAN, L 2-1; W 4-2; **18-19** at (13) Penn State, W 4-1; W 6-4.

Feb. 1-2 (11) NOTRE DAME, W 4-2; W 2-0; **8-9** at Wisconsin, W 2-1 (OT); W 4-1; **15-16** MINNESOTA, L 4-3; L 4-3; **22-23** at Michigan, L 4-2; T3-3 (OT, 3x3 OT W).

March 1-2 MICHIGAN STATE, W 5-1; L 3-2; **17** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT SEMIFINALS vs. 4-SEED PENN STATE, L 5-1; **29-31** NCAA West Regional Semifinal at Fargo, N.D., vs. 2-seed Denver, L 2-0.

MEN'S LACROSSE (8-4, 1-4 BIG TEN)

Feb. 2 CLEVELAND STATE, W 12-9; **9** BOSTON, W 17-10; **16** at UMass, W 11-7; **23** BUCKNELL, W 16-13.

March 2 vs. Marquette at Dallas, W 13-9; **9** at Hofstra, W 14-8; **16** DENVER, Canceled; **23** at Notre Dame, W 11-10 (OT); **31** RUTGERS, L 14-6.

April 7 at Penn State, L 13-8; **14** at Johns Hopkins, W 14-13; **20** MARYLAND, L, 10-9; **26** at Michigan, L 13-10.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE (9-8, 1-5 BIG TEN)

Feb. 8 at Cincinnati, W 16-6; **10** DETROIT MERCY, W 19-5; **18** BROWN, W 15-14 (OT); **22** NOTRE DAME, L 19-10.

March 1 MARQUETTE, W 11-9; **3** NIAGARA, W 16-12; **9** BINGHAMTON, W 13-7; **11** vs. UMass at Deland, Fla., L 15-14; **16** at (2) Maryland, L 16-1; **21** (12) MICHIGAN, L 15-10; **24** SAN DIEGO STATE, W 16-10; **30** US Lacrosse at Sparks, Md., vs. Oregon, W 11-5.

April 4 at Penn State, L 21-5; **9** at Louisville, L 19-7; **13** JOHNS HOPKINS, L 12-7; **20** at Rutgers, W 11-7; **25** NORTHWESTERN, L 17-12.

May 3/5 Big Ten Tournament at Baltimore.

SOFTBALL (32-14, 15-5 BIG TEN)

Feb. 8 Friends of Jaclyn Tournament at Orlando, Fla., vs. George Mason, W 7-0; vs. Ole Miss, W

4-2; **9** Friends of Jaclyn Tournament at Orlando, Fla., vs. North Florida, W 3-0; vs. UCF, L 3-2; **10** Friends of Jaclyn Tournament at Orlando, Fla., vs. Ole Miss, canceled; **15** ESPN Elite Invitational at Clearwater, Fla., vs. Florida State, L 3-1; **16** ESPN Elite Invitational at Clearwater, Fla., vs. LSU, L 7-2; vs. Utah, W 10-2 (5 innings); **17** ESPN Elite Invitational at Clearwater, Fla., vs. Notre Dame, L 3-2; **22** Mary Nutter Classic at Palm Springs, Calif., vs. Army, W 4-0; **23** Mary Nutter Classic at Palm Springs, Calif., vs. Utah, W 2-0; vs. Duke, W 2-0; **24** Mary Nutter Classic at Palm Springs, Calif., vs. New Mexico State, W 5-1.

March 8 Husky Classic at Seattle vs. Seattle, W 6-4 (8 innings); vs. (6) Washington, L 3-0; **9** Husky Classic at Seattle vs. Seattle, L 3-0; vs. Idaho State, W 9-3; **10** Husky Classic at Seattle vs. NIU, W 3-2; **12** at Portland State, W 8-4; W 7-0; **15** GCU Invitational at Phoenix vs. Weber State, L 4-0; vs. Lehigh, W 2-0; **16** GCU Invitational at Phoenix vs. Lehigh, W 12-3 (6 innings); vs. Grand Canyon, W 8-7; **17** GCU Invitational at Phoenix vs. Grand Canyon, L 4-3 (8 innings); **22-24** (22) INDIANA, W 7-6; W 5-3; W 2-0; **27** at Kentucky, postponed; **29-31** at Maryland, L 3-2; W 10-1 (5 innings); W 15-3.

April 3 at Pittsburgh, W 5-2 (9 innings); **5-7** RUTGERS, W 2-0; L 8-6 (8 innings); W 8-0 (5 innings); **9** at Penn State, L 6-4; W 12-1 (5 innings); **12-13** MICHIGAN, L 10-3; L 6-2; W 2-1 (8 innings); **16** OHIO, W 4-3; **19-21** at Michigan State, W 15-6 (6 innings); W 3-2; W 11-1 (5 innings); **26-28** ILLINOIS, W 9-0 (5 innings); W 9-2; W 5-4.

May 3-5 at Iowa, 6:30 p.m.; 2 p.m.; 1 p.m.; **9-11** Big Ten Tournament at Bloomington, Ind.

SWIMMING & DIVING

Jan. 4-5 at Florida, Men: L 317.50-263.50; Women: L 403-178; vs. Kentucky at Gainesville, Fla., Men: W 336-245; Women: L 375-206; **19** at Michigan, Men: L 202-98; Women: L 196-104; **25-26** Shamrock Invitational at Notre Dame, Ind., Men: 1st/4; Women: 3rd/4.

Feb. 16-17 WINTER INVITATIONAL, NTS; **20-23** Women's Big Ten Championships at Bloomington, Ind., 3rd/12 (1,162.5); **27-March 2** Men's Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa, 3rd/10 (1,243.5).

March 3 LAST CHANCE MEET (women), NTS; **10** Last Chance Meet (men), NTS; **14-16** CSCAA National Invitational at Cleveland, NTS; NCAA Zone Diving at West Lafayette, Ind., NTS; **20-23** Women's NCAA Championships at Austin, Texas, 25th/44 (43); **27-30** Men's NCAA Championships at Austin, Texas, 9th/44 (124).

MEN'S TENNIS (28-2, 11-0 BIG TEN)

Jan. 7 COLUMBUS CHALLENGER, NTS; **20** CLEVELAND STATE, W 5-0, W 4-0; XAVIER, Canceled; **26** VCU, W 4-0; **27** ARKANSAS, W 4-1; TOLEDO, W 4-0.

Feb. 2 (9) STANFORD, W 6-1; **8** ARIZONA STATE, W 6-1; **10** (24) GEORGIA, W 4-0; **12** (5) SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, W 5-0; **15** ITA National Indoor Team Championships at Chicago vs. (19) Tulane, W 4-0; **16** ITA National Indoor Team Championships at Chicago vs. (13) Virginia, W 4-0; **17** ITA National Indoor Team Championships at Chicago vs. (6) Texas, W 4-0; **18** ITA National Indoor Team Championships at Chicago (Finals) vs. (1) Wake Forest, W 4-2; **20** KENTUCKY, W 4-0; **24** (12) NOTRE DAME, W 6-1.

March 1 at Penn State, W 4-1; **11** at Texas A&M, L 4-3; **14** at (4) Texas, L 4-1; **22** MICHIGAN STATE, W 7-0; **24** at (16) Michigan, W 6-1; **29** WISCONSIN, W 6-1; **31** MINNESOTA, W 7-0.

April 5 at Nebraska, W 6-1; **7** at Iowa, W 4-1; **12** at Northwestern, W 6-1; **14** at Illinois, W 4-2; **19** PURDUE, W 7-0; **21** INDIANA, W 7-0; **26** Big Ten Tournament First Round vs. Minnesota, W 4-0; **27** Big Ten Tournament Second Round vs. Michigan, W 4-2; **28** Big Ten Tournament Final vs. Illinois, W 4-1.

May 3 NCAA First & Second Round; **10** NCAA Regional; **16** NCAA Championships at Orlando, Fla.

WOMEN'S TENNIS (19-6, 8-3 BIG TEN)

Jan. 19 Michigan Tournament at Ann Arbor, Mich., NTS; **26** ITA Kickoff at Atlanta vs. Georgia Tech, W 4-0; **27** ITA Kickoff at Atlanta vs. Kentucky, W 4-1.

Feb. 1 (6) TEXAS, L 4-3; **3** NOTRE DAME, W 6-1; **8** ITA National Team Indoors at Seattle vs. (4) Duke, L 4-3; **10** ITA National Team Indoors at Seattle vs. (10) Syracuse, W 5-2; **20** CLEVELAND STATE, W 7-0; AKRON, W 7-0; **23** at Arizona State, W 4-3; **24** vs. TCU at Tempe, Ariz., W 7-0; **28** YOUNGSTOWN STATE, W 6-1; W 7-0.

March 3 BAYLOR, W 5-2; **17** PENN STATE, W 6-1; **22** at Nebraska, W 5-2; **24** IOWA, W 5-2; **29** at Michigan State, W 4-1; **31** at Michigan, L 4-1.

April 5 WISCONSIN, W 6-1; **7** MINNESOTA, W 5-2; **12** PURDUE, W 4-2; **14** INDIANA, W 6-1; **20** at Northwestern, L 5-2.; **21** at Illinois, L 4-2; **26** Big Ten Tournament First Round vs. Northwestern, L 4-0.

OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

March 23 Power 5 Trailblazer Challenge at Miami, Fla., NTS; **28-30** Florida Relays at Gainesville, Fla., NTS; **29** Raleigh Relays at Raleigh, N.C., NTS.

April 5-6 All-Ohio Championships, NTS; **6** Battle On The Bayou at Baton Rouge, La., NTS; **12-13** Gamecock Invitational at Columbia, S.C., NTS; **19-20** Virginia Challenge at Charlottesville, Va.; **26-27** JESSE OWENS RELAYS.

May 10-12 Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa; **23-25** NCAA East Preliminary at Jacksonville, Fla.

June 5/7 NCAA Championships at Austin, Texas.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL (8-18, 3-9 MIVA)

Jan. 4 CHARLESTON, W 3-0; **5** PENN STATE, W 3-1; **10** at (5) BYU, L 3-0; **12** at (11) Stanford, L 3-1; **18** GEORGE MASON, L 3-1; **19** ERSKINE, W 3-1; **26** at Ball State, L 3-1.

Feb. 1 SAINT FRANCIS, L 3-2; **2** LINCOLN MEMORIAL, W 3-1; **5** at (15) Purdue Fort Wayne, L 3-0; **8** at (6) U.C. Santa Barbara, L 3-0; **9** at (1) Long Beach State, L 3-0; **15** at Lindenwood, L 3-0; **16** at Quincy, W 3-1; **21** LEWIS, L 3-2; **24** LOYOLA CHICAGO, L 3-0.

March 1/3 MCKENDREE, W 3-1; L 3-2; **8** at (5) UCLA, L 3-0; **9** at (11) USC, L 3-2; **15** LEES-MCRAE, W 3-0; **19** at Penn State, L 3-0; **22** LINDENWOOD, L 3-1; **23** QUINCY, W 3-0; **29** at Loyola Chicago, L 3-0; **30** at Lewis, L 3-0.

April 4 PURDUE FORT WAYNE, W 3-2.; **6** BALL STATE, W 3-2; **13** MIVA Quarterfinals vs. Loyola Chicago, L 3-1.

WRESTLING

(12-2, 7-2 BIG TEN)

Nov. 3 vs. Navy at Owings Mills, Md., W 28-9; **11** Ohio Intercollegiate Open at Cleveland, NTS; **16** at California Baptist, W 42-0; **18** at Arizona State, W 22-17; **30-Dec. 1** Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational, 1st/43 (148).

Dec. 9 (19) WISCONSIN, W 23-13.

Jan. 6 (4) N.C. STATE, W 26-10; **11** at Indiana, W 43-3; **13** MICHIGAN STATE, W 37-4; **25** (5) MICHIGAN, L 19-17.

Feb. 1 at Illinois, W 23-14; **3** at Northwestern, W 27-15; **8** (1) PENN STATE, L 28-9; **15** at Purdue, W 34-3; **17** (6) NEBRASKA, W 21-12; **22** at (7) Cornell, W 25-9.

March 9-10 Big Ten Championships at Minneapolis, 2nd/14; **21-23** NCAA Championships at Pittsburgh, 2nd/63 (96.5).

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Here's a chance for Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers who are also Cincinnati Reds fans to enjoy a year of Reds Report, BSB's sister publication covering the Reds, for just \$9.95, a \$33 savings over the regular \$42.95 rate. Take advantage of this special offer for BSB readers and we will also send you a voucher good for two free tickets to your choice of select Reds games this season.

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Rubbing Shoulders With Another Hall Of Famer

Growing up in eastern Ohio, there was no nearby team in the NBA to call our own. But for me and about anyone else I knew in the Ohio Valley who had at least a casual interest in the NBA, our favorite team was the Boston Celtics.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

This wasn't because the Celtics had piled up a lot of NBA titles. It wasn't because of the legend of Bill Russell. And it wasn't because of Larry Bird, who had yet to break into the league. It was because the Celtics had our boy – John Havlicek.

Hondo made the NBA local to those of us along the Ohio River, whether for people like me from Bellaire, those up the river a short piece in Martins Ferry or those in between in Bridgeport.

In 1997, the Bridgeport High gym was renamed the John J. Havlicek Gymnasium. But as hard as this may be to believe for a town of under 2,000 (about 4,000 when Havlicek was growing up), he might not be the most famous Bridgeport High School graduate.

One of his boyhood friends, a year older, was Phil Niekro, who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1997, 13 years after Havlicek entered the Basketball Hall of Fame.

After the news of Havlicek's death at the age April 25, Niekro reflected on their childhoods.

"If I wasn't eating or sleeping at his house, he was eating and sleeping at mine," Niekro told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "If you saw

John someplace, you saw me. ... If someone came looking for me to take me someplace, they were going to take John, too."

Imagine two future Hall of Famers running around together as kids in a tiny town of Lansing outside another small town of Bridgeport doing, as Niekro said, "Everything two best friends could possibly do."

Niekro played 24 seasons in the major leagues, calling it quits in 1987 after 318 wins. Havlicek lasted 16 seasons in the NBA, the last 13 as an all-star, and was named the MVP of the 1974 NBA finals. But before basketball in Boston, and before Havlicek was on Ohio State basketball teams that went to the NCAA finals in 1960, 1961 and 1962, there was talk of him playing football – not once, but twice. First Woody Hayes came calling, and then Paul Brown.

"Woody Hayes came down from Ohio State and said we have a full ride (to offer), and John said, 'I don't want to play football,'" Niekro said.

It didn't matter that Havlicek didn't play college football. The Cleveland Browns made him a seventh-round draft pick as a receiver in 1962. He went to Browns training camp, where another future Hall of Famer who grew up near Havlicek and Niekro was in the middle of his career with the Browns. That was Lou "the Toe" Groza, from Martins Ferry, a short distance run from Bridgeport.

There's little doubt that Havlicek made the right decision in giving up football to join the Celtics, who picked him in the first round (seventh overall) of the NBA draft.

I have to admit, I hadn't thought much about Havlicek lately. But when news of his death broke, it immediately brought back memories of watching Hondo and the Celtics when they were on TV (rarely) or even more so of tuning

the AM radio dial to 1030-WBZ out of Boston, where when the conditions were just right at night, I could hear Johnny Most through a crackly signal describing the play-by-play of Havlicek and his Celtics teammates.

Legendary Ohio Sports History

Every few years, I make the drive south about an hour from my Cleveland-area home to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton. My latest trip was in March, to check out renovations completed a few years ago.

This time I probably spent the most time in the area devoted to Ohio's football roots, Canton in particular. It's fascinating to learn about what pro football was in its early days and how central the state of Ohio was to the development of the league.

Fourteen teams played the first season in the American Professional Football Association, which in 1922 became the National Football League. There were the Akron Pros, Canton Bulldogs, Cleveland Tigers, Columbus Panhandles and Dayton Triangles. The undefeated Pros were awarded the trophy inscribed "world champions."

Displays at the Hall of Fame explain how Pennsylvania had been the hotbed of pro football, but by 1905 most teams had disbanded, and the game began to shift to Ohio.

A really cool piece at the Hall of Fame is a promotional poster from 1917, ahead of the founding of the league that became the NFL.

The big headlines on the poster:

- Massillon vs. Canton
- World's Professional Football Championship
- Brickley and his Den of Tigers
- Thorpe and his Cage of Bull Dogs
- First Game for World's Championship

- Myer's Lake Park Grounds, Canton
- Sunday, Nov. 25, 1917
- Game called at 2:00 o'clock sharp
- General Admission \$1.00; war tax 10 cents
- North End Grand Stand and Bleacher Seats 50 cents Additional; war tax 5 cents.

The displays explained that that the league that became the NFL was formed on Sept. 17, 1920, in Canton to combat issues that had arisen from the unstructured game of pro football – marred by rising salaries, players jumping from team to team and the recruitment of college players.

NFL Draft

The first NFL draft did not occur until 1936. Since then, 451 Ohio State Buckeyes have been drafted. That ranks Ohio State third all-time behind USC (505) and Notre Dame (504). Since 2000, Ohio State leads with 131 draft picks. Next are Alabama (118) and Miami (115).

The Buckeyes' highest picks over the last 10 years are Nick Bosa (No. 2 in 2019), Joey Bosa (No. 3 in 2016), Ezekiel Elliott (No. 4 in 2016) and cornerback Denzel Ward (No. 4 in 2018).

What's the big deal about draft position? It can mean millions, because rookie salaries are slotted per the league's labor agreement with the players union.

According to the salary-tracking website spotrac.com, quarterback Daniel Jones will receive a four-year contract worth an estimated \$25.6 million, including a salary bonus of \$16.6 million, after being picked sixth overall by the Giants.

Chosen by the Redskins at No. 15 overall, Dwayne Haskins' contract could be worth about \$14.4 million, including a signing bonus of \$8.5 million.

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FOR THE OHIO STATE FOOTBALL FAN

Reynolds Travel "On the Road Again" for 2019 Ohio State Football Away Games

OSU vs. Indiana: Sept. 13-15 – 2-night motorcoach trip with accommodations at the French Lick Resort and Casino, breakfast daily, game tickets and enroute to French Lick enjoy a cruise on the Ohio River in Louisville with lunch. \$699 pp based on two to a room. Land-only package available also.

OSU vs. Nebraska: Sept. 25-30 – 5-night motorcoach trip with 1 overnight in each direction: 1 night at Juner's Castle Casino in Rock Island, Ill.; 3 nights at the Embassy Suites in Omaha, Neb., with breakfast daily, city tour of Lincoln, game tickets and transportation; and 1 night on return at the Marriott Pere Marquette in Peoria, Ill. \$1,199 pp based on two to a room. **Also offering air trip Sept. 26-29** with roundtrip air from Columbus to Omaha and 3 nights at the Embassy Suites in Omaha with breakfast daily, game tickets and transportation, and city tour of Lincoln. \$1,449 pp. Land only package available for Omaha portion.

OSU vs. Northwestern: Oct. 17-20 – 3 nights motorcoach trip to Chicago with game on Friday nights permitting extra free time in Chicago with 3 nights in downtown Westin Magnificent Mile Hotel in the center of downtown Chicago with breakfast daily, game tickets and transportation and Mafia themed tour of Chicago. \$979 pp based on two to a room. **Also offering air trip Oct. 17-20** with 3 nights in Chicago at the

Westin Magnificent Mile Hotel in the center of downtown Chicago with breakfast daily, game tickets in Ohio State section with transportation, roundtrip airport transportation and Mafia themed tour of Chicago. \$1,289 pp based on two to a room. Land only package is available.

OSU vs. Rutgers: Nov. 14-17 – 3 night motorcoach trip to New York with 3 nights accommodations in the heart of Manhattan at the Sheraton Times Square with breakfast daily, Tour of Hudson River Valley, game tickets with transportation. \$1,149 pp based on two to a room. **Also offering air trip from Nov. 14-17** with 3 nights at the Sheraton Times Square with breakfast daily, airport transportation roundtrip, tour of the Hudson River Valley, game ticket and transportation. \$1,589 pp based on two to a room. Land only package is available.

OSU vs. Michigan, "Big Game in the Big House": Nov. 29-30 – 1 night motorcoach trip with accommodations for Friday night at the MGM Resort and Casino in Detroit including breakfast on Saturday and game ticket with return to Columbus after the game. \$609 pp based on two to a room.

Reds vs. Indians trip: July 6-7, 2019 – motorcoach trip and overnight in Cincinnati including two games with club seating. \$489 pp for two.

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New Transfer Rules Challenge Quarterback Depth

While looking through some old BSBs recently, I came across a trivia question which I will pose here: Who was the primary backup quarterback to Greg Frey each year when he started in 1988, 1989 and 1990? I'll give the answer later, but I will use the question as a lead-in to my column.

In the wake of transfers by quarterbacks Tate Martell and Matthew Baldwin, I got to thinking about the good old days, before the transfer portal shook up college football. I thought back to the late-'90s, when Ohio State recruited both Craig Krenzel and Scott McMullen. Both of them redshirted in 1999 and battled for playing time for the next four years, winning a national championship along the way.

Buckeye fans may forget – at least I did – that when incumbent QB Steve Bellisari was suspended for the Illinois game in 2001, it was McMullen who got the starting nod over his classmate. He struggled and Krenzel came on and fared better in the Buckeye loss, which may have helped set the pecking order for the rest of their careers.

While Krenzel eventually won the starting job, leading the Buckeyes to the national crown in 2002, McMullen stuck it out and was ready when or if needed. I'm sure he could have started elsewhere if he had chosen to pursue greener pastures.

McMullen started a pair of games in their senior season of '03 when Krenzel had a bum elbow and led the team to wins over Bowling Green and Northwestern. But the high point of his season – and probably his career at Ohio State – came later in the campaign when Krenzel was knocked out of the game at Penn State. McMullen rallied Ohio State from a 17-7 halftime deficit and was 7 of 7 on the game-winning drive, throwing a five-yard TD pass to Michael Jenkins with 1:35 to play for the 21-20 Buckeye victory.

Looking farther back in Ohio State's national championship history, where would Ohio State have been in the Super Soph era if Ron Maciejowski had transferred when he lost the starting job to fellow Super Soph Rex Kern? Maciejowski proved time and time again in that golden era of Ohio State football that he could have started virtually anywhere in the country with his play in place of the brittle Kern.

And that doesn't even take into account the presence of senior Bill Long on the 1968 championship team. Long had started the two previous seasons before taking a back seat to the two underclassmen. If ever there was a candidate for the then-nonexistent transfer portal, it was Long, who nevertheless scored a critical touchdown in the pivotal victory over powerful Purdue that season.

As I was reminded by readers on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum, those days are long gone and I need to get over it and embrace the transfer-portal era. It's a new frontier for college coaches, however, as they try to adjust to the comings and goings of their players.

This all got me to thinking about depth at quarterback for the Buckeyes in recent years. I tried to determine which Ohio State teams had the best and worst QB depth since Frey, who as a freshman came off the bench for a briefly injured Tom Tupa to complete a crucial pass in the historic 1987 Michigan game, started for those three seasons from 1988-90.

The Buckeyes had the benefit of two bona fide starters in 1996 and 1997 with Stanley Jackson and Joe Germaine. The results were not necessarily optimum at the time as John Cooper struggled to settle on a starter and Ohio State gave credence to the old adage that when you have two quarterbacks, you have no quarterback at all.

The team was also strong at quarterback in

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

2006 when it had the Heisman Trophy winner in Troy Smith, backed by former prep phenom Justin Zwick (another one who could have considered a transfer) and future starter Todd Boeckman.

But I am going to say the team that proved to have the most quarterback depth was a team of which no one would have predicted such depth before the season.

The Buckeyes headed into the 2014 campaign with the two-time defending Big Ten Silver Football winner Braxton Miller at the helm. He was knocked out of action on the eve of the season, and redshirt freshman J.T. Barrett came on and led OSU to the brink of the first College Football Playoff before going down in the Michigan game. Sophomore Cardale Jones came on and took the Buckeyes the rest of the way, including a program-making win over Alabama in the semifinal, to secure the team's first national championship since Krenzel and McMullen's 2002 squad.

All this after utter panic throughout Buckeye Nation when Miller was felled.

Miller was also part of what I deemed to be the least-deep QB room during the time frame examined. Miller was an inexperienced and untested freshman when he was forced to take over for an ineffective Joe Bauserman in the dysfunctional 2011 season. Bauserman had seen action as a reserve in previous seasons but was not up to the task of starting, and Miller was a long way from the superstar that he would ultimately become.

The 2007 team, which featured Boeckman as the starter, was also not among the strongest at quarterback. Boeckman led the Buckeyes to the national championship game but was not among the greats of the decade at that position, and his backups were sophomore Rob Schoenhof and redshirt freshman Antonio Henton.

How will the 2019 quarterbacks stack up to the assorted quarterback groups of the last 30 years?

Don't Forget Chugunov

One of the players who will help write the 2019 Ohio State quarterback chapter is fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov. Chugunov was clearly No. 3 in coach Ryan Day's pecking order this spring, behind sophomore Justin Fields and Baldwin. But before Buckeye fans completely ignore Chugunov's presence on the roster, remember he has done something that Fields, Baldwin, Martell or new reinforcement Gunnar Hoak haven't done. Chugunov has started a game for a Power 5 Conference team – in fact two of them for West Virginia in 2017.

The results weren't necessarily pretty, as evidenced by his 2017 passing line of 43 completions on 90 attempts for a subpar 47.8 completion percentage and 536 yards, though he did have three TD passes to just two interceptions. The Mountaineers lost both of the games he started.

What's interesting – and relevant in my mind – is whom he started against. His first start came when he traveled to Oklahoma, a national playoff team that year. He also started in WVU's bowl game, the First Responder Bowl.

West Virginia lost to the Sooners, 59-31, in a Big 12 shootout, but Chugunov was 10 of 20 passing for 137 yards with no TDs, but no interceptions. Not a bad outing for a 7-6 WVU team playing in Norman, Okla.

The bottom line is that if the forgotten

Buckeye reserve is forced into a game during the upcoming season, he won't be a stranger to big-time college football.

Another QB Phenom's Spring

Ironically, in light of Fields' first appearance in an Ohio State spring game, it was 10 years ago that another ballyhooed quarterback made his Ohio State spring debut. Terrelle Pryor was coming off a freshman year in which he seized the Buckeye starting job from Boeckman and showed promising results. His arm, however, was still in question when the team reconvened in the spring.

Pryor would go on to wow a then NCAA-record spring crowd of 95,722 by completing 13 of 18 passes for 191 yards and touchdown tosses of 44 and 42 yards.

"Critics who questioned the sophomore's arm strength didn't know what they were talking about anyway, but during the spring game Pryor may have shut them up for good," BSB editor emeritus Mark Rea wrote in the May 2, 2009, BSB. "His throw to Ray Small late in the second quarter was a 25-yard frozen rope into a gusting wind."

The speedy Small turned the pass into the 42-yard touchdown, and Pryor had tallied two TDs with only 30 seconds off the clock after his victorious Gray team successfully converted an onside kick following his 44-yard scoring pass to Taurian Washington.

Added columnist Rich Exner of Pryor, "He took his time in the pocket, ran when the opening was there and made accurate throws. It's hard to imagine him looking much better."

Pryor's 2009 spring exploits were chronicled through reprints from that issue of BSB as part of Reprint Thursdays on BuckeyeSports.com, posted on April 25. The reprints sparked a lively discussion on The Forum, with BSB readers discussing Pryor's career as a pro and unkind remarks toward him from former teammates Brian Hartline and Alex Boone.

Pryor may have been unpopular, but he was still the first pick when Ohio State had Jim Tressel's traditional draft for the spring game, which featured live contact on the QBs for two quarters (none of this touch-football stuff that limited Fields this spring).

"Once we figured out they were going to be live two quarters, we had to get Terrelle," said Gray captain Kurt Coleman. "He's made so many plays with his feet and with his arm. It was a no-brainer."

Remembering Havlicek

Ohio State sports lost one of its leading lights with the passing of John Havlicek on April 25. I can't really say that I was that familiar with Havlicek as a player. I was 8 years old when Ohio State won its only basketball national championship in 1960.

I didn't move to Columbus until 1976, leaving him toward the end of his illustrious pro career when I really started paying attention to Buckeyes past or present.

So let me just try to list some of his accomplishments to give you an idea of how great he was. While at Ohio State, all three of his teams (freshmen were not eligible then) made it to the Final Four. He continued his winning ways with the Boston Celtics upon entering the pros, and he won eight NBA titles, a figure topped only by teammates Bill Russell (11) and Sam Jones (10).

Havlicek was a winner.

Upon his arrival to the already budding Celtic dynasty, he established the importance of the "sixth man," now a staple in basketball at all levels. As his 16-season career continued, he became more of a focal point in the team's offense, peaking with 28.9 points a game in the 1970-71 season and 27.5 in 1971-72. When he retired after the 1977-78 season, his 26,395 career points were the third most in NBA history behind only Wilt Chamberlain and Oscar Robertson, and he was the leader in career games played.

He was a 13-time NBA all-star and was named to the league's 35th and 50th anniversary teams. In 1999, readers of Buckeye Sports Bulletin voted him the fifth-greatest Ohio State athlete of the 20th century behind only Jesse Owens, Jack Nicklaus, teammate Jerry Lucas and Archie Griffin. The BSB story written upon his selection to the All-Century team was reprinted and archived at BuckeyeSports.com, as well as another feature from March of 1990, when BSB celebrated the 30th anniversary of the 1960 national championship.

It's a pretty impressive resume, and the passing of Havlicek represents a huge loss to Buckeye Nation.

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Buckeye Sports Bulletin is introducing a new level of subscription with this issue, the VIP Subscription. In some ways, it's our version of crowd-funding with many of our readers on fixed incomes struggling to meet the \$99.95 subscription rate needed to maintain our efforts.

Those who are able are asked to upgrade to VIP status to help keep BSB vibrant. VIP subscribers will be recognized throughout the year in Buckeye Sports Bulletin and will also receive many perks, including 20 percent off all purchases of non-sale items at Conrads College Gifts for a year, 5 percent off football road trips sponsored by Reynolds Travel, a certificate for \$10 off dining at Rooster's and other exclusive specials on tickets, travel and dining. The VIP upgrade can quite easily pay for itself.

The four elite-level VIP subscribers who make the largest pledges will be listed in the BSB credit box on page 3 of each issue as Wachsman Elite Patrons, in honor of the late BSB assistant publisher Karen Wachsman.

For more information on the VIP subscription program, see the story on page 6 or go to buckeyesports.com/vip-memberships for information or to make your pledge.

Don't Miss Any Action

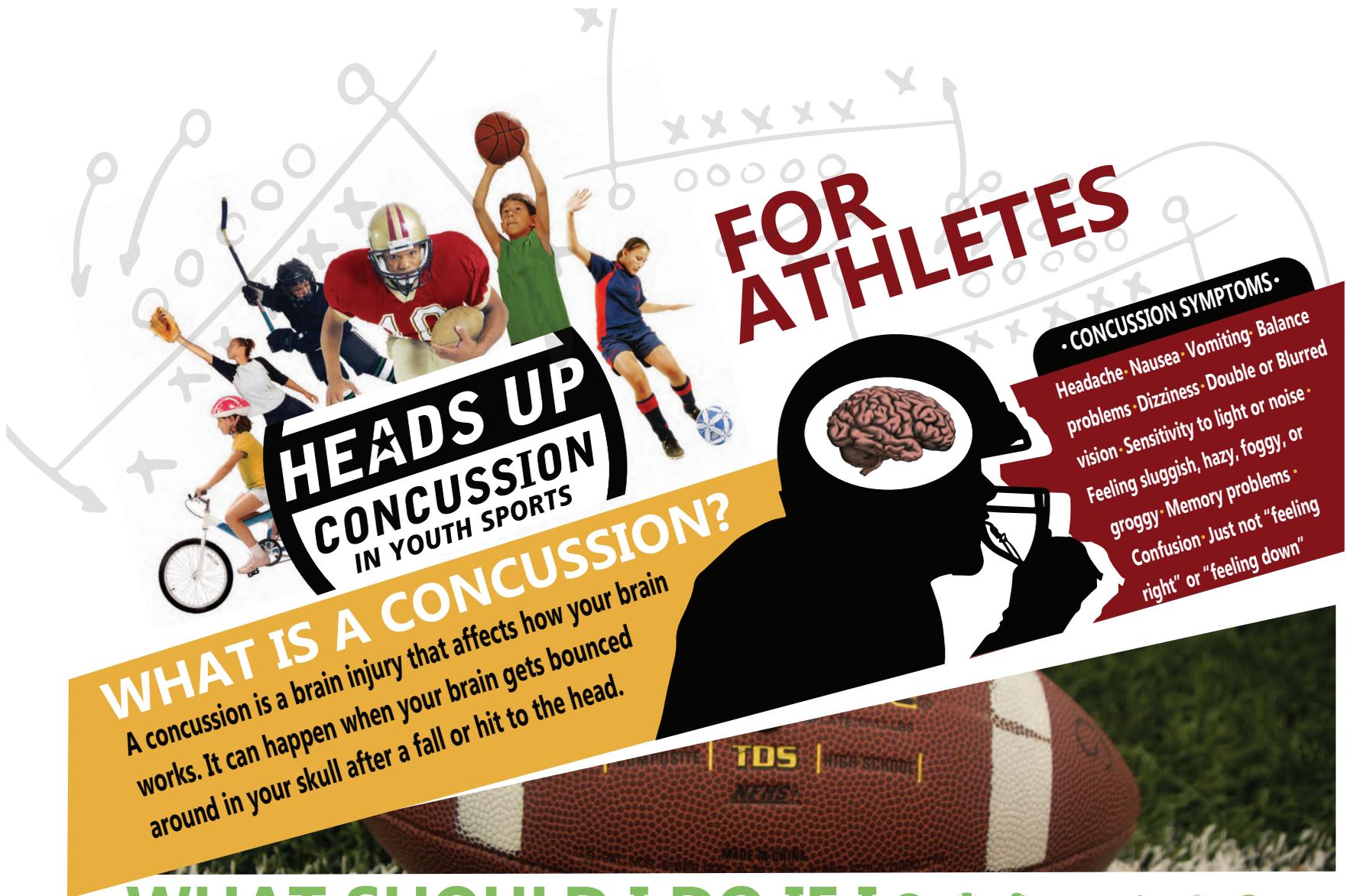
Following this issue, BSB goes on its monthly publishing schedule until the big Football Preview issue in August. There is absolutely no reason to miss any of the Ohio State sports news. Access to BuckeyeSports.com, our 24/7/365 full service website, is available to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff posts many stories each week, including the latest in football recruiting. Why wait until June 4, when we mail our next issue, to get the latest news? You can also enjoy – and participate on – the always informative and even more often entertaining BuckeyeSports.com Forum. Don't forget, if you see an item of Buckeye sports interest, to post it on The Forum. Our readers give us correspondents in all 50 states.

For information on accessing BuckeyeSports.com, see page 5 of this issue or give us a call at (614) 486-2202.

Greg Frey Trivia

Frey's backup in 1988 was John Wagoner, Kirk Herbstreit had the spot in 1989 and Kent Graham gave the Buckeyes depth in 1990.



HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

**FOR
ATHLETES**

- CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS:**
- Headache
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Balance problems
 - Dizziness
 - Double or Blurred vision
 - Sensitivity to light or noise
 - Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
 - Memory problems
 - Confusion
 - Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works. It can happen when your brain gets bounced around in your skull after a fall or hit to the head.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

REPORT IT. Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. It's up to you to report your symptoms. Your coach and team are relying on you. Plus, you won't play your best if you are not feeling well.

GET CHECKED OUT. If you think you have a concussion, do not return to play on the day of the injury. Only a health care provider can tell if you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to school and play. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

GIVE YOUR BRAIN TIME TO HEAL. A concussion can make everyday activities, such as going to school, harder. You may need extra help getting back to your normal activities. Be sure to update your parents and doctor about how you are feeling.

WHY SHOULD I TELL MY COACH & PARENTS ABOUT MY SYMPTOMS?

Playing or practicing with a concussion is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery.

While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. This can put you at risk for a more serious injury to your brain and can even be fatal.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON

<http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/concussion>



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