

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 39, No. 7

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Oct. 26, 2019



ANDREW LIND

TOTAL DOMINATION – Ohio State defensive end Chase Young recorded yet another sack against Northwestern, bringing his total to 9½ on the season, as the Buckeyes dominated the Wildcats in every facet of the game on their way to a 52-3 win on Oct. 18.

Ohio State Avoids Friday Night Trap At Northwestern

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Unlike the last two seasons when Ohio State lost at Iowa and Purdue, the Buckeyes' 2019 campaign will not be defined by an unexplainable loss at the hands of a Big Ten West opponent wearing all-black uniforms.

No, Ohio State's 52-3 thrashing of Northwestern on Oct. 18 actually played out more like the first six wins of the current season, as quarterback Justin Fields threw four touchdown passes, running back J.K. Dobbins rushed for more than 100 yards and the Buckeyes' defense held yet another opponent to a season low in both yards and points.

"I'm proud of the way our team came out and played," said Ohio State head coach Ryan Day. "I thought we played with really good energy in all three phases. Our staff did a good job all week, and we played fast the whole game. This

was a good way to start off the second half of the season."

The Buckeyes seemed determined from the opening kickoff to not repeat the failures of the past, driving 70 yards in 10 plays for a touchdown on their opening possession. And while the Wildcats showed some unexpected ability to move the ball early in the contest – in part due to Ohio State putting only 10 men on the field for its first defensive play of the game – they ultimately mustered only a meaningless field goal over the course of 13 drives on the evening.

"I thought we came out with great energy on defense," Day said. "You could feel it during warmups. They had a good two weeks of practice, and they brought that to the game."

Ohio State used a 24-point second-quarter explosion to break open the game that was only a four-point contest at the end of the first frame. The Buckeyes have now outscored their seven opponents by a combined total of 158-20 in the second quarter.

"It's kind of been the Buckeye onslaught," Northwestern head coach Pat Fitzgerald said. "You've got to be able to get off the field on third down against them."

Ohio State converted on five of its first six third-down attempts to keep the Wildcats from gaining any early momentum and 8 of 14 for the game.

With the win, Ohio State improved to 7-0 (4-0 in the Big Ten). The average margin of victory in those games is 41.7 points. But it's also worth noting that only one of those wins has come against a team currently ranking in the Associated Press top 25 (Cincinnati).

That said, Ohio State is set to welcome 13th-ranked Wisconsin to Columbus on Oct. 26 for a matchup that will be viewed nationally as a measuring stick for the Buckeyes. And the Badgers, who have shut out four of their first seven opponents, should give the Buckeyes their toughest test yet.

Continued On Page 8

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State answered many doubters with a convincing 52-3 victory at Northwestern. The BSB staff awarded Buckeye Leaves to some of the top performers for the Scarlet and Gray and asked for subscribers to post their selections in the Forum on BuckeyeSports.com.

Wyatt Crosher, BSB: Ohio State thoroughly dominated its opponent for the seventh straight week, and the offense really found a way to shine against a tough Northwestern defense.

Justin Fields was on his game, but he found the most success going to sophomore wideout Chris Olave, to whom I am giving my Buckeye Leaf.

Olave finished the game with five receptions for 60 yards and two touchdowns, all team highs. One of his catches also came on a crucial third down early on to allow the Buckeyes to really set the tone and take the Wildcats out of the game before any momentum could be found.

There wasn't anything particularly flashy from Olave in this game, but he did exactly what he needed to do to get Fields and the Ohio State offense in the groove, and he continues to show promise as a star receiver both now and in the future.

Joe Dempsey, BSB: Malik Harrison deserves a Buckeye Leaf for his stellar performance in the Buckeyes' 52-3 win at Northwestern. The senior linebacker made plays all over the field against the Wildcats, having an impact from the first drive of the game to his last series before giving way to the backups.

Harrison recorded nine tackles (seven solo), including a half tackle for loss along with one quarterback hurry.

The 6-3 linebacker from Columbus did not just jump on the pile

or chase ball carriers down the field for his production.

Harrison frequently met ball carriers near the line of scrimmage, with solo stops on gains of only 3, 2, 1 and zero yards. The Columbus Walnut Ridge product also teamed up with Davon Hamilton for a 1-yard stop and partnered with Robert Landers for a 1-yard loss.

Andrew Lind, BSB: Quarterback Justin Fields continues to impress in all facets of the game, whether it's making plays with his arm and his legs or in his overall decision making and efficiency.

Fields completed 18 of 23 passes for 194 yards and four touchdowns – matching his career high for scores through the air. He now has 22 passing touchdowns and 30 overall this season, which is one more than Dwayne Haskins had at this point last season, and Haskins went on to set the school single-season record with 54 touchdowns responsible for.

If Fields, who has thrown just one interception this season, continues to play this well down the stretch, it's hard to fathom any team on the schedule keeping up with the Buckeyes' offensive attack. And that will likely lead to a second straight Heisman Trophy ceremony appearance by an Ohio State quarterback.

Patrick Mayhorn, BSB: Things weren't always easy for J.K. Dobbins during Ohio State's 52-3 victory over Northwestern on Oct. 18. While his final stat line – 121 yards and a score on 18 carries – doesn't reflect it, Dobbins had some traction issues in Evanston, both literally and figuratively. On a slippery, seemingly wet field, Dobbins struggled with getting his footing early on, but once he did, there was no looking back.

A 68-yard run followed by a 5-yard touchdown run a play later served as a bit of a dagger for the Buckeyes early in the second quarter as it gave them a 21-3 lead against a hapless Wildcats offense.

Dobbins didn't just contribute on the ground either. Prior to his one-man touchdown drive, Dobbins gave Ohio State its 14-3 lead on a 19-yard reception, beating linebacker Blake Gallagher across the middle. Once he got his footing and some help from his offensive line, Dobbins was as dominant as ever and helped pace the Buckeyes on the way to another massive victory over a Big Ten foe.

BSB Subscribers

I give Buckeye Leaves to the entire TEAM. What a dominating performance by everyone in the white jersey.

– **mrbigbux**

I'm with bigbux above. I'd give one to the whole team for coming into the game with a great attitude and not looking ahead! What a dominating performance.

– **TiffinBuckeye**

You could pick Justin Fields or J.K. Dobbins every week. I'm going to go with Malik Harrison. He seemed to be in on all of the action vs. Northwestern, and I am sure the stats will bear me out. He is putting together an outstanding season and doesn't get the credit he is due.

– **Mcarr**

Justin Fields, throwing pinpoint precision TDs and displaying such strength and athleticism to break tackles and make plays! The two Buckeye No. 2s, Chase Young and J.K. Dobbins, are the best in the country at their positions. Malik Harrison, especially, and Tuf Borland, Pete Werner and Dallas Gant, the Silver Bullet linebackers. Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson, making us say, Mike Thomas, who? The amazing youth on the team in players like Master Teague and Garrett Wilson; can't wait for the future!

– **AnthonyBuckeye**



From The Message Board

Following Ohio State's 52-3 win over Northwestern on Oct. 18, Buckeye Sports Bulletin asked the readers on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as staff members, about their expectations for the looming game against Wisconsin on Oct. 26. Here are some of the responses:

"It may have been wishful thinking but very early in the season I said 'by the end of Nov, we may realize OSU was just 2 TDs better than everybody on the schedule. I won't be surprised if OSU beats Wisconsin by 14, but I would be more surprised if Wisconsin wins the game at Columbus."

– **Terrier Buck**

"I think people are thinking way too into it. Typical Wisconsin team. No QB (game manager) and good running game. They always have a good defense until they run into a team with better athletes. I don't think it will be close honestly. I doubt it will be 59-0 but I could see a 45-17 game."

– **Tiffin Buckeye**

"Wiscy has a young quarterback going into his first road test in a very hostile environment. I look for him to be a bit rattled. Thus the Buckeyes stop the run game and slowly dominate the Badgers. Final = 41-13 Buckeyes."

– **mrbigbux**

"I think Wisconsin is a good football team, but I don't think they will be able to match up with the overall team speed that the Buckeyes possess. I think Buckeyes win 34-17."

– **BRENT A GREATHOUSE**

"Ohio State would have gotten Wisconsin's best shot regardless, but after losing to Illinois, even more so."

– **Poster That Harley Built**

"I predict that Wisconsin will play better than they are. That still won't be enough to beat the Bucks. I think our team is confident without being cocky. It will be hard fought, but we will come out on top."

– **PeyoteBuck**

"I have Ohio State winning pretty handily, after pulling away late. I'm not quite as sold on the Wisconsin rushing attack as I was prior to their game against Michigan State, and if they can't dominate on the ground, they have no real shot to keep up with the Buckeyes.

I could see a close first quarter, perhaps even a close first half, but the Badgers just don't have the horses or the talent to play with Ohio State for four quarters."

– **Patrick Mayhorn, BSB**

"Like Ohio State, Wisconsin has not yet beaten a top-tier opponent. Unlike the Buckeyes, however, the Badgers dropped a game to a lesser foe in Illinois. Without a doubt, Wisconsin will give its best effort to bounce back, but that won't be enough against the Scarlet and Gray. Wisconsin's success comes from controlling the line of scrimmage, which will not happen in Columbus."

– **Joe Dempsey, BSB**

"I'm expecting Wisconsin to give Ohio State a real challenge, but not enough to make it come down to the wire. I'd pick the Buckeyes by two-plus scores."

– **Wyatt Crosher, BSB**

OSU Takes Schedule One Game At A Time



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When the 2019 Ohio State football schedule was released earlier this year, it didn't take long to find a Magic Marker and draw a big red circle around the Friday night game at Northwestern.

Because the defending Big Ten West Division champion Wildcats had given the Buckeyes about all they could handle in the conference title game last December, this year's contest practically screamed "Trap Game" for a variety of reasons.

In addition to playing at logistically challenging Evanston for the first time since 2013, OSU would have its normal gameday routine further knocked off-kilter by playing on a Friday during the regular season for the first time since a 17-0 loss at USC in 1959. Additionally, the game against Northwestern seemed like a potential land mine nestled between an off week and a home contest against powerful Wisconsin.

Then the Wildcats began the game playing defense like young men possessed, the Buckeyes futzed around on offense, and an upset suddenly didn't seem so out of the question. Quarterback Justin Fields threw incomplete on his first two pass attempts, although the first one was a perfect throw to wide receiver Austin Mack, who flat-out dropped the ball. Meanwhile, running back J.K. Dobbins – who entered the game as the nation's second-leading rusher – had exactly 22 yards to show for his first nine carries.

Trap game? You betcha. Holding a scant 7-3 lead after the first quarter against a team that was a 27-point underdog, Ohio State had its fans remembering nightmarish trips to Iowa and Purdue the past two seasons and holding their collective breath.

But then, almost as if a switch got flipped somewhere, the Buckeyes tromped on the gas pedal. Fields found Dobbins for a 19-yard touchdown pass early in the second quarter, Dobbins ripped off a 68-yard run to set up a score on OSU's subsequent possession, and Fields threw for another touchdown before the end of the first half.

Then, when junior kicker Blake Haubeil powered a 55-yard field goal through the uprights on the final play of the opening half to give Ohio State a 31-3 lead – a kick that would have been good from 60 yards and probably even a little bit more – it became exceedingly apparent that the Buckeyes were not going to fall into any traps at Northwestern.

By the end of the third quarter when OSU head coach Ryan Day decided to call off the dogs, the Buckeyes were well on their way to another blowout victory, and a game that was supposed to be fraught with peril became just another tuneup for what should have been – and still might be – the best contest the Big Ten has had to offer so far in 2019. Wisconsin will be wounded after its inexplicable 24-23 loss at Illinois – the Illini were 30½-point underdogs in that one – but expect the Badgers to play the Buckeyes tough. They nearly always do.

After their somewhat slow starts at Northwestern, Fields and Dobbins finished with performances that have become customary – at least for them.

Fields completed 18 of 23 attempts for 194 yards and four touchdowns, a tidy evening of work that seemed almost effortless. Northwestern worked hard on defense, trying to make the 6-3, 223-pound sophomore QB at least a little uncomfortable in the pocket, but the Wildcats sacked him only once as Fields often shed would-be tacklers to keep plays alive.

That Fields failed to top the 200-yard mark for only the second time this season, or that he failed to score a rushing touchdown for the first time

as a Buckeye, might cost him some Heisman Trophy votes among those not paying close enough attention. But the fact is that his four TD passes against Northwestern mean Fields has accounted for 30 touchdowns in his first seven games, one more than Dwayne Haskins had generated at the same point last season.

While Fields was dissecting the Northwestern secondary, Dobbins was slicing his way through the front seven of the Wildcats. After his first nine carries netted those 22 yards, the junior running back rolled for 99 yards on his next nine attempts to finish the game with 121 yards on only 18 carries.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

When Dobbins had finished his particular brand of punishment, redshirt freshman Master Teague took over, delivering the knockout punch at the 7:46 mark of the fourth quarter with a 73-yard touchdown run. Teague (who is the Big Ten's fifth-leading rusher despite being a backup) finished with 96 yards on only seven carries, and the Buckeyes piled up 279 yards on the ground against a Northwestern defense that had been allowing only 142.8 rushing yards per game.

And before you summarily dismiss Northwestern because of its 1-5 record and 0-4 conference mark this year, you might want to know the Wildcats limited the powerful Wisconsin running game to only 130 yards during a 24-15 loss at Camp Randall Stadium in late September. The Badgers averaged just 3.6 yards per attempt in that game and had no runs longer than 15 yards. The Buckeyes averaged 7.5 yards per rush against the Wildcats and had three runs of 50 yards or more.

Then, as if Ohio State doesn't possess enough offensive weapons, the Buckeyes can embarrass you with their special teams play.

Junior punter Drue Chrisman has become a lethal weapon, not only with length but with accuracy as well. In addition to dropping 11 of his 22 attempts inside the opponents' 20-yard line so far this year, Chrisman currently leads the Big Ten with an average of 46.9 yards per punt. Over the past 30 seasons, only three Ohio State players have led the conference in punting – Brent Bartholomew (1997), Andy Groom (2002) and Cameron Johnston (2013 and 2016).

And what more can you say about Haubeil? Deadly accurate on PATs (he has never missed an extra point in 83 career attempts), the 6-3, 230-pound junior has been decidedly less reliable on three-pointers. But the strength of his leg has never been in question, and that 55-yarder against Northwestern represented the longest field goal for an Ohio State kicker since Mike Nugent booted one from 55 yards during a 24-13 loss against Wisconsin in 2004.

It was also the longest field goal on the road for an OSU kicker since Tom Skladany set the program record with a 59-yarder during a 40-3 win at Illinois in 1975.

Defense Exploits Mismatch

It was no secret that Northwestern entered the game with a struggling offense. The Wildcats ranked 128th of 130 teams nationally in scoring offense, so despite the trap-game implications, it was always difficult to see any path to an upset against an Ohio State team that featured the country's No. 4

scoring defense.

Junior defensive end Chase Young didn't take long to run his consecutive game streak of at least one sack to nine, dumping Northwestern QB Aidan Smith on the Wildcats' second offensive play of the game. That wound up being the lone sack of the night for OSU, and the Buckeyes totaled only five tackles for loss.

But they rendered the Northwestern passing game practically nonexistent. Smith felt pressure almost every time he dropped in the pocket, and he barely escaped with his life a couple of times, finishing with just six completions in 20 attempts for 42 yards. That was the lowest passing total for an Ohio State opponent since Illinois managed only 16 yards through the air during a 52-14 romp by the Buckeyes in 2017.

Smith was also intercepted once, as was his backup, sophomore Andrew Marty, who was picked off by OSU cornerback Amir Riep on what was the first attempt of Marty's college career. The Buckeyes now have 10 interceptions after seven games this season. They totaled only 11 picks in 14 games all of last year.

To be honest, it was difficult to gauge just how well the Buckeyes played on defense against Northwestern since it was such a physical mismatch at most positions. At the risk of repeating myself, I still notice OSU linebackers either out of position or having trouble getting off blocks, leading to the fact that the Wildcats enjoyed most of whatever limited success they had with interior running plays.

And it was more than a little mysterious to me why fifth-year senior cornerback Damon Arnette (and his injured right wrist) was still on the field in the second half long after the outcome had been decided.

Still, any team that can engineer a 52-3 blowout in what was supposed to be a trap game should be able to mask whatever deficiencies it might have.

Besides, after seven games during which Ohio State has bludgeoned seven opponents and outscored them by a combined 292 points, it's entirely possible we're grasping at straws in terms of trying to determine the weakness of this team.

As for trap games, well, ask Wisconsin.

A Few Degrees Of Separation

Heading into the 2000 season, Northwestern was coming off a 3-8 record and second-year head coach Randy Walker was seeking to revamp his offense.

Walker dispatched offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson (yes, that Kevin Wilson) to Clemson, where Wilson was to study the up-tempo, no-huddle spread offense the Tigers were using under offensive coordinator Rich Rodriguez (yes, that Rich Rodriguez).

When Wilson returned to Evanston, it took more than a little coaxing for Walker to adopt the hurry-up philosophy. But when he did, the Wildcats went from averaging 12.8 points per game in 1999 to 38.6 points per contest in 2000, an offensive explosion that earned Northwestern a share of the Big Ten championship.

Walker and Wilson didn't know it at the time, but the offensive coordinator at Division I-AA New Hampshire liked what he saw and, with the blessing of longtime head coach Bill Bowes, began tailoring the UNH offense after what he was witnessing at Northwestern. That New Hampshire offensive coordinator's name was Charles Kelly (you know him better as Chip Kelly), and his quarterback at the time was Ryan Day (yes, that Ryan Day).

So, believe it or not, the offensive machine you enjoy watching these days at Ohio State can trace its roots – at least in part – to Northwestern.



Wisconsin Set For Noon Kick

In what could be the biggest game of the season so far for Ohio State, the Buckeyes are set to square off with No. 13 Wisconsin at noon on Oct. 26. This isn't a big surprise, given Fox's new Big Noon Saturday that seeks to put the best Big Ten or Big 12 game on TV at noon each week rather than dropping them into the traditional primetime slot.

The matchup will serve as Ohio State's fourth noon kickoff, with the first three coming in the first three weeks of the season against Florida Atlantic, Cincinnati and Indiana. FAU and Indiana were both featured on Fox's Big Noon Saturday, while Wisconsin has been featured once, for its 35-14 win over Michigan on Sept. 21.

Ohio State On BTN Because Of Weather Delay

Ohio State's Oct. 18 win over Northwestern in Evanston, Ill., was moved off of Fox Sports 1 and onto Big Ten Network as a result of a weather delay that pushed game four of the American League Championship Series from Wednesday onto Thursday, and game five Thursday into that Friday night spot. With a wrestling event on the main Fox channel, Ohio State-Northwestern would have had to either move to Fox Business or Big Ten Network, and BTN was ultimately the choice.

Everything else about the broadcast remained the same, save for the pregame, post-game and halftime shows, which moved over from the Fox crew to the Big Ten Network crew, featuring former Buckeye Joshua Perry. The move pushed Indiana-Maryland men's soccer and Illinois-Wisconsin volleyball onto FS2.

Buckeyes Up In AP Poll, Stagnant In Coaches

Fresh off a 52-3 road win over Northwestern on Oct. 18, Ohio State is making a move in one poll but standing pat in the other.

The Buckeyes moved from fourth to third in the AP poll, jumping over Clemson, who dropped to fourth after a 45-10 win over Louisville. The rest of the top five remained the same, with Alabama at No. 1, LSU behind it and Oklahoma at No. 5. Penn State moved up a

spot to No. 6 after its 28-21 win over Michigan, Florida is up two spots to No. 7, Notre Dame sits at No. 8, Auburn is at No. 9 and Georgia rounds out the top 10. The coaches poll looks similar, though the Buckeyes remained at No. 4, unable to jump No. 3 LSU.

Alabama and Clemson sit in the top two, Oklahoma sits at fifth followed by Penn State, Notre Dame, Florida, Georgia and Auburn.

The Big Ten placed six teams in both polls. The Buckeyes lead both, followed by Penn State. Wisconsin checks in at No. 13 in both polls, followed by Minnesota at No. 16 in the AP poll and No. 17 according to the coaches. The final spot in the conference is the only point of contention, because the AP has Iowa at No. 19 and Michigan at No. 20, while the coaches flipped that.

Jordan Fuller Named Lott IMPACT Quarterfinalist

Ohio State safety and captain Jordan Fuller has been named a Lott IMPACT quarterfinalist. The Lott IMPACT award, named for Ronnie Lott, recognizes the player who has the largest impact on his team on and off the field. IMPACT stands for Integrity, Maturity, Performance, Academics, Community and Tenacity. The winner receives an award and \$25,000 to his school's general scholarship fund.

Fuller is tied with linebacker Malik Harrison for the team lead in tackles through seven games with 37, is a two-time captain and was recognized by the Big Ten as an Academic All-American last year. He would be the second Buckeye to win the award, with James Laurinaitis the first in 2008.

Katie Smith Fired From New York Liberty

Former Ohio State forward Katie Smith is out of a job as of Oct. 16. It was officially announced by the New York Liberty that her contract would not be renewed and that the team would be moving in a different direction as part of a full rebuild.

"On behalf of the entire Liberty organization, we want to thank Katie for her time with our franchise," said general manager Jonathan Kolb. "These decisions are never easy to make, but we felt it necessary to move our organization forward in a new direction. We wish her all the best."

Smith went 7-27 in her first year as head coach and 10-24 this past season. She took over for Bill Laimbeer in October of 2017 after he accepted the head coaching position with the Las Vegas Aces.

A member of the Basketball Hall of Fame, Smith is one of the greatest women's basketball players of all time and an Ohio State legend. She averaged 20.8 points during her four years in Columbus, leading Ohio State to its only Final Four, and won a WNBA title in 2008 with the Detroit Shock.

Haskins' Head Coach Gruden Fired

Former Buckeye quarterback Dwayne Haskins has had a shaky start to his NFL career. After an impressive preseason with

2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2019 Record
Aug. 31	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	W, 45-21	FOX	4-3 (2-1 Conference USA)
Sept. 7	CINCINNATI*	W, 42-0	ABC	6-1 (3-0 American Athletic)
Sept. 14	at Indiana	W, 51-10.	FOX	5-2 (2-2 Big Ten)
Sept. 21	MIAMI (OHIO)	W, 76-5	BTN	3-4 (2-1 Mid-American)
Sept. 28	at Nebraska	W, 48-7	ABC	4-3 (2-2 Big Ten)
Oct. 5	MICHIGAN STATE*	W, 34-10	ABC/ESPN	4-3 (2-2 Big Ten)
Oct. 18	at Northwestern*	W, 52-3	BTN	1-5 (0-4 Big Ten)
Oct. 26	WISCONSIN*	12 p.m.	FOX	6-1 (3-1 Big Ten)
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	TBA	TBA	3-4 (1-3 Big Ten)
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	1-6 (0-5 Big Ten)
Nov. 23	PENN STATE*	TBA	TBA	7-0 (4-0 Big Ten)
Nov. 30	at Michigan*	12 p.m.	FOX	5-2 (3-2 Big Ten)
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

* 2018 bowl team
** at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

Predictions Will Get Tougher With Wisconsin

If you are a fan of Buckeye Sports Bulletin's popular Staff Predictions, posted each game day at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, this will be the week for you as the picking gets harder with what appears to be Ohio State's toughest game to date against Wisconsin on Oct. 26.

All staffers saw a blowout over Northwestern, though none was particularly close to the exact final score. Andrew Lind was closest in terms of margin of victory with his 56-13 prediction.

BuckeyeSports.com is more than just staff predictions, however. It is a great way to keep up to date with all the Ohio State sports news between your print issues of BSB. Don't miss news from Ryan Day's Tuesday press conferences or practice during the week. Also enjoy Reprint Thursdays, with stories from the BSB archives.

The BuckeyeSports.com website 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. Subscribers can also read the entire print issue of BSB before it has even hit the post office.

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Washington, he was named a backup to Case Keenum and rode the bench for each of the Redskins' first three losses. When he finally got the start in game four, he struggled greatly, tossing three interceptions and completing just 9 of 17 passes in a 24-3 loss to the New York Giants.

After the team suffered a 33-7 loss to the Patriots in week five, head coach Jay Gruden was relieved of his position. Washington promoted offensive line coach Bill Callahan to interim head coach and promptly won its first game, 17-16, over the winless Miami Dolphins, though Haskins did not play. Callahan has said that the rookie will play some moving forward.

"I talked about Dwayne being the future of this franchise," Callahan said on Oct. 11. "I think it's always invaluable that a quarterback is ready and prepared. It heightens his awareness. We've got a package of plays for him going into this game (against the Dolphins), so that will allow us to focus on bringing him along and also groom him futuristically."

Day Not Interested In Washington Opening

With that Washington job officially open, there were of course rumors that came with it, including some that included Haskins' former offensive coordinator and current Ohio State head coach Ryan Day. Day was said to be a top priority for the Redskins, but the Buckeye head coach has said that Washington did not reach out. He also made a stronger statement, not just about Washington about his job prospects in general.

"I don't really ever want to talk about any of that stuff," Day said. "I love it here, and this is where I want to be."

Day also mentioned the toll that being in the NFL took on him and, more importantly, on his family.

"That's the thing that I don't know if people realize," Day said. "You have to move your family - we have a young family. When you're moving them all over the place, it is the worst thing to go home to your family and tell them we've got

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From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

Keith Byars had his name put up alongside Archie Griffin's in 1983 when he rushed for 1,199 yards, which made him only the second sophomore – Griffin was the first – to rush for more than 1,000 yards at Ohio State.

Byars' best game was a 174-yard performance against Wisconsin, well off Griffin's single-game rushing mark of 246. But Byars didn't think Griffin's record was out of reach.

"Over the summer, I had a copy of a program that showed all the records," the 6-2, 233-pound speedster said before the season. "I never wanted to break it, but it's a goal – if you are a running back – that you always want. If one person could do it, I was sure another one could do it."

"Bramble," as his teammates called him because of what they thought was a combination of Jim Brown and Earl Campbell, got that record in Ohio State's thrilling 45-38 win over Illinois in Ohio Stadium, picking up 274 yards on 39 carries.

"I didn't break the record," Byars said of eclipsing Griffin's single-game mark. "I just happened to be the person running the football. I think the whole team broke the record."

30 Years Ago – 1989

Ohio State's defensive unit, on the critical list for much of the 1988 season, was beginning to show signs of coming to life. The defense played a big role in Ohio State's 21-3 homecoming victory over Purdue.

The unit held an opponent to a single field goal for the first time in 26 games. The last time had been a 24-3 victory over West Virginia in the 1987 season opener.

Purdue was held to 330 total yards, OSU's best defensive effort since the 1989 season-opening victory against Oklahoma State, when the Cowboys put up just 259 yards.

25 Years Ago – 1994

On a team seemingly lusting for production, Ohio State found a somewhat unlikely candidate to provide the kind of spark it had been lacking.

Productive but still criticized in the early part of the 1994 season for being a little too anxious, junior tailback Eddie George energized the Buckeyes with an electrifying 76-yard touchdown run and provided the impetus for a 23-7 Big Ten road victory over Michigan State.

OSU head coach John Cooper had been lamenting the lack of big plays during his team's run of poor play, which included a lackluster 17-15 squeaker over Northwestern and a somewhat embarrassing 24-10 loss to Illinois a week prior to the battle with MSU.

20 Years Ago – 1999

Jim O'Brien called it "nice," while Andy Geiger just saw it as sensible, if not shrewd.

However it was viewed, O'Brien, the Big Ten Coach of the Year in 1998, was going to be the Ohio State men's basketball coach well

into the upcoming millennium. Geiger was relieved.

"I didn't want him to ever consider other things," said Geiger, who brokered a deal to have O'Brien stay on for eight more years at more than \$800,000 per year. "I want him to feel at home."

It worked. In fact, O'Brien said at the press conference announcing his deal that he had hoped to be in Columbus for a long time when he decided to leave his alma mater, Boston College, after a very successful 1996-97 season that included a Big East championship.

The 1998-99 season, when OSU tied a school record with 27 wins and made the Final Four for the first time in 31 years, even went beyond his expectations.

"I was very optimistic that we'd be successful here," O'Brien said. "How long that would take, I really didn't know."

15 Years Ago – 2004

At a point in the season when most college football teams are beginning to hit their midseason stride, Ohio State was searching not only for answers to its first three-game losing streak in five years, but for a way to turn around a season that was suddenly on the brink of total collapse.

Eager to turn around their first 0-2 start in the Big Ten since 1999, the Buckeyes traveled to Iowa City, a place that had been friendly to them many times in the recent past. In fact, OSU hadn't lost to Iowa in Kinnick Stadium since 1983 and had beaten the Hawkeyes eight straight times overall.

But as its players and fans were quickly finding out, the 2004 season was becoming anything but ordinary for Ohio State.

A month that began with Ohio State's first loss at Northwestern in 46 years and continued with a home defeat at the hands of Wisconsin continued to be Black October for the Buckeyes when they absorbed a 33-7 whupping that looked and probably could have been much worse.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Four days before Ohio State hit the road to face Purdue, senior wide receiver Ray Small predicted an offensive explosion for his beleaguered unit.

Instead, what the Buckeyes delivered was simply offensive. Despite a furious late rally, OSU dropped its first Big Ten game of the season, 26-18, to a Purdue team that was previously winless in the conference.

A desperation heave from quarterback Terrelle Pryor that fell harmlessly to the grass with 2:16 remaining positioned the Buckeyes firmly in their own coffin, and a face-mask penalty on senior team captain Doug Worthington on what would have been a third-down stop for the OSU defense hammered in the final nail.

There was plenty of blame to go around.

"We had all the confidence in the world coming in and we expected them to play great," Worthington said. "They did at times but (our) special teams, defense or offense didn't get the job done."

Five Years Ago – 2014

After a soft four-game stretch, Penn State showed Ohio State that things would not always be so easy.

The Nittany Lions, who entered as two-touchdown underdogs in Happy Valley, climbed out of a 17-point halftime deficit to force a tie with nine seconds left before falling 31-24 in double overtime. Joey Bosa's walk-off sack saved the Buckeyes, when he pushed Penn State running back Akeel Lynch into quarterback Christian Hackenberg on fourth-and-6.

It was Ohio State's fifth straight win, but the Buckeyes didn't post as impressive a winning margin as they had in their previous four games, a dominating stretch that might have quickly raised expectations for a young team.

"I tried to keep telling you guys," Ohio State offensive coordinator Tom Herman told the media. "You guys wouldn't listen. We certainly are a work in progress, like I said. We're playing with a quarterback (J.T. Barrett) that now has seven games under his belt, and we're playing with a few guys up there that this was really their first road test in a ridiculously hostile environment."

"Hats off to Penn State. They played their tails off, and obviously their crowd is a big factor in what they do. It was exciting to see us keep responding, keep responding, keep responding. Although it took some time, at the end of the day our guys pulled it out when they needed to."

One Year Ago – 2018

Damon Arnette came into the 2018 season with a lot of hype after receiving honorable-mention All-Big Ten honors as a sophomore in 2017. Sports Illustrated even named Arnette a preseason All-American.

The lofty expectations for Arnette came with the reputation of Ohio State producing elite NFL cornerbacks. Former Buckeye standout corners Eli Apple, Marshon Lattimore, Gareon Conley and Denzel Ward had all been selected in the first round of the previous three NFL drafts.

"It's pressure, but you can't really focus on that because if you focus on it, you're not going to be really able to play to the first-round talent that's expected," Arnette said when asked about living up to the standard set by Ward and Co. "And they wouldn't still have the standard for the group of guys we have now if they didn't know that we are capable of meeting that standard."

"So, at the end of the day, you just go out there and play, have faith in God and the coaches, and we'll be able to uphold the standard."

Through six games, Arnette had partially lived up to his own expectations, tied for second in tackles on the team with 19, but wanted more in coverage.

"We're getting hands on dudes, we're battling the dudes all the way up until the ball is being caught by the receiver," Arnette said after a 49-26 win over Indiana. "So just as far as getting our head around, looking back for the ball and taking it out of the air – that's just something I feel like has to get better."

to move again. They've got to be the new kid again and your wife has to figure out a new set of friends again. It's just not good."

Nick Bosa Named Defensive Player Of The Week

While one former Buckeye is off to a rough start to his NFL career, another could not have started much better. Defensive end Nick Bosa has acclimated quickly to the NFL and showed that in week five, when he was named NFC defensive player of the week.

The award came on the heels of a big performance, racking up two sacks, two tackles for loss, five quarterback hits, a forced fumble and a fumble recovery in a 31-3 49ers win over the Cleveland Browns on Oct. 7. He capped his performance with a sack of Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield and celebrated with a mimic of Mayfield's trademark flag-plant.

"He doesn't just jump off the screen all the time, you know, with just his speed and everything, but he beats that tackle almost every time," 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan said of Bosa. "Finally, he was healthy enough to keep him out there longer, and he didn't disappoint."

Bosa had 16 tackles, four sacks and one

Continued On Page 6

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OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

forced fumble on the season through six games. His 49ers sit at 6-0 on the season as one of the best teams in the NFL.

Nine Former Buckeyes In XFL Draft Pool

With the XFL set to kick off its inaugural season in 2020, a few former Buckeyes are on the move into the new league, including some familiar faces from the 2014 national title run.

While eight total Buckeyes were in the draft pool, just five were selected, headlined by national championship-winning quarterback Cardale Jones, who was picked by the Washington D.C. Defenders during the quarterback round of the draft.

Jones is joined in D.C. by three other former Buckeyes: offensive lineman Chase Farris, drafted in the ninth round of the offense line section, Tracy Sprinkle in round five of the defensive line section, and Doran Grant in the fourth round for defensive backs.

Dante Booker is the fifth Buckeye drafted, selected by the Seattle Dragons in the open section of the draft.

While running back Bri'onte Dunn, defensive tackle Robert Rose and safeties Christian Bryant and Damon Webb were all in the draft pool, none were selected.

Pryor Takes Visit To Notre Dame

Former Ohio State four-star safety Isaiah Pryor appears to be nearing a decision on his next school. According to a report from Irish

Illustrated writer Tom Loy, Pryor took an official visit to Notre Dame for its primetime win over USC on Oct. 12.

Pryor had been recruited by the Fighting Irish back in 2017 when he was coming out of high school and actually chose the Buckeyes over a final group of Georgia, Notre Dame and Oklahoma.

After Pryor's departure, Day made a short comment during his Sept. 24 press conference.

"There wasn't much of a conversation, but we wish him nothing but the best," Day said. "We're obviously extremely disappointed he would leave the program four games into the season, but we wish him well. There are no hard feelings, and he left amicably. We hope he gets his degree, and we wish him well in the future."

Micah Potter Deemed Ineligible

Former Buckeye center Micah Potter will have to wait a little bit longer to make his debut at Wisconsin, where he transferred prior to the start of the 2018-2019 campaign. On Oct. 10, the NCAA denied Wisconsin's request for immediate eligibility for the junior, stating that he would have to sit out the first semester because he transferred during it last year. That means that Potter's first game is delayed until Wisconsin's Dec. 21 matchup with Milwaukee.

"I'm disappointed in the decision from the NCAA," Potter said in a statement released by Wisconsin. "I tried to stay at Ohio State through a coaching change, but ultimately felt it was in my best interest to find a new opportunity. In doing so, I have already sat out a full season of competition. I don't understand why I am being punished additionally for doing what is encouraged of a student-athlete. The penalty of a third semester to what I have already sat out seems unjust."

Potter played sparingly during his time at Ohio State, averaging just 4.1 points and 2.8 rebounds in 12.1 minutes per game. He started in 16 of his 59 games in Columbus, though all but four came during his freshman season, as he was passed up a bit in 2017 by Kaleb Wesson.

"Micah has done everything asked of a student-athlete, including sticking it out for an entire season with a new coaching staff at Ohio State, and he has acclimated remarkably well to our academics and our campus," Wisconsin head coach Greg Gard said. "It feels unfair to ask him to sit three semesters. Student-athletes have such a limited window to compete as it is,

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it's a shame that he is being denied some of this opportunity and valuable time."

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Haubeil's Kick Among Longest In Program History

Continued From Page 1

"We know we have a huge challenge next week," Day said. "We know what we have in store there, so it's going to be a really tough week, tough preparation, tough game. I know the kids are going to be excited to play it."

Haubeil Sets Career Mark

With just 59 seconds left to play in the second quarter, Ohio State junior Drue Chrisman pinned Northwestern at its 1-yard line with a 54-yard punt. And while the Buckeyes could have been content heading into the locker room with a commanding 28-3 lead, Day was aggressive and countered three straight Wildcat runs with three time-outs of his own.

That forced Northwestern to punt out of the back of its own end zone and gave Ohio State the ball at the 36-yard line.

The goal from there was to get in field-goal position for junior Blake Haubeil, whose previous career high of 47 yards came during last season's 30-14 win over Minnesota. But a holding penalty against Thayer Munford on the first play of the drive pushed the Buckeyes back near midfield.

An 8-yard gain on a screen pass to Dobbins followed by a spike from Fields with four seconds left on the clock put Day in quite the predicament – throw a Hail Mary in hopes that a receiver came down with it in the end zone or ask Haubeil to attempt a career-long 55-yard field goal. He chose the latter, and Haubeil drilled the kick between



ANDREW LIND

PLENTY OF LEG – Ohio State kicker Blake Haubeil hit a 55-yard field goal as time expired in the first half to give the Buckeyes a 31-3 lead.

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the uprights as his teammates erupted on the sidelines.

"We had to make a decision," Day said. "He made one before the game, so we said we'll give him a shot to make it. It was good to see the team rally behind him like that."

"It goes to show you the confidence the team has in him and also just the chemistry of our team in general. I think it kind of put an exclamation point on the whole half."

Although Ohio State put up 24 points in the second quarter, the field goal – and the sequence that preceded it – may have been the defining moment of the game.

As for Haubeil, he is now tied with Mike Nugent (who hit a pair of 55-yard field goals in 2004) for the second-longest field goal in school history. He trails only Tom Skladany, whose 59-yarder against Illinois in 1975 may be among the program's most unbreakable records.

"For Coach Day to put us out there as a unit, that definitely says a lot about the trust and faith he has in us," Haubeil said. "I absolutely love the fact that he put us out there. It is a blessing."

Munford's Delayed Start

Ohio State redshirt freshman Nicholas Petit-Frere made his first career start at Northwestern in place of junior left tackle Thayer Munford, who was listed as a game-time decision leading up to the contest. But Munford, who was dealing with a lingering yet undisclosed injury, entered the game in the second quarter – just one drive after Petit-Frere was called for a hold.

On the first play from scrimmage with Munford back along the offensive line, Dobbins ripped off a 68-yard run. He then ran it in from 5 yards out on the very next play, putting the Buckeyes up 21-3.

"Thayer is an amazing lineman," Dobbins said. "He's one of my best buds on the team. You know all those linemen, they block so well. And they're tough, too. Thayer's been hurt – banged up – and he still tries to come out there and help the team. That's what I appreciate about him."

Browning Unavailable

Ohio State was without the services of junior linebacker Baron Browning, who did

not make the trip to Northwestern after suffering an undisclosed injury in practice during the week.

Browning – who is typically listed as a co-starter at middle linebacker alongside junior Tuf Borland but usually plays a majority of the snaps – has recorded 23 tackles, five tackles for loss and 2½ sacks in six games for the Buckeyes this season.

Ohio State struggled to defend the run early on against Northwestern, and Browning's return will be key if the Buckeyes hope to stop Wisconsin running back Jonathan Taylor (957 yards and 15 touchdowns) on Oct. 26.

"We'll see when we get home, but we do expect him to be ready for next week," Day said.

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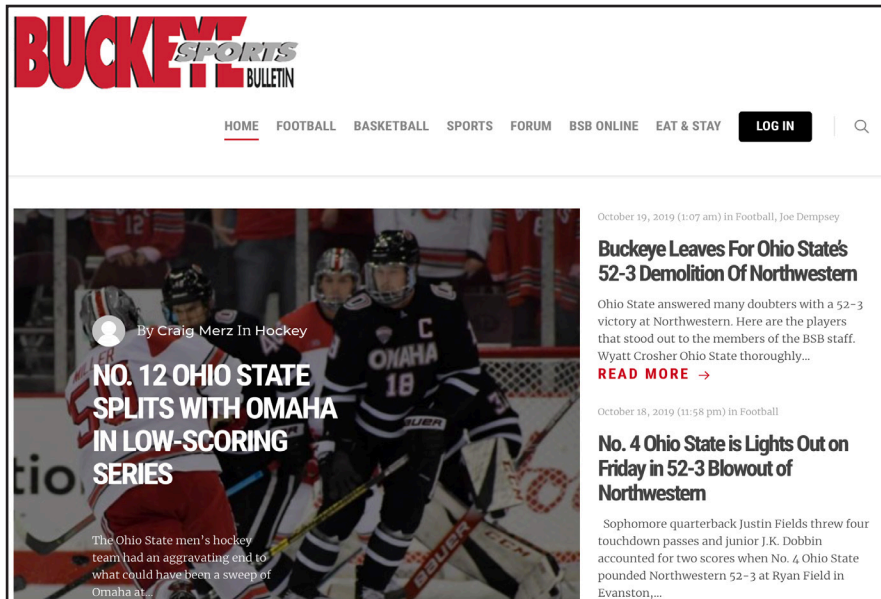
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OHIO STATE VS. NORTHWESTERN

Defense Limits Big Plays

Ohio State came out and dominated an outmatched Northwestern team on both sides of the ball en route to a 52-3 win that took away any doubt of a potential upset. But after scoring on their first drive of the game, the Buckeyes did not have the start on defense they were hoping for, at least on the very first play of the game for the Wildcats' offense.

important to us and to the team," Hafley said. "You could see the older guys were excited, and the young guys went and did that."

Ohio State has not allowed more than 10 points to a single team since week one and has allowed only seven points in the second half in that same span. The Wildcats were just another step in the Buckeyes' dominant start defensively, which has shown a stark difference to the games in 2018.

For Hafley, there's a reason he said just a few weeks ago that this is the most fun he has ever had in his coaching career.

"The only thing that we really care about right now is the winning and the playing good defense and playing good team football. This is why you take a job here," Hafley said. "I love the guys we coach, I love the coaches we work with, and they're doing a really good job."

GAME NOTEBOOK Wyatt Crosher

"The first play we had 10 on the field, so that wasn't a good start," said Ohio State head coach Ryan Day. "They had two weeks to prepare for us. They do a good job. They're very well-coached, and they've got good players. I thought their backs ran hard at times."

The lack of 11 players on the defense resulted in a 13-yard run for Northwestern running back Kyric McGowan. That would end up being tied for the third-longest offensive play of the game for the Wildcats.

After giving up a significant amount of big plays as a defensive unit a season ago, the Buckeyes have limited those significantly in 2019. Coming into the game, Ohio State had allowed only four plays of 30 yards or more, down from 20 at that point in the season in 2018. The Buckeyes did not give up a play longer than 16 yards on the day against Northwestern.

"Everybody's out there playing freely," said fifth-year senior cornerback Damon Arnette. "We're not worried about giving up a play or making a play. We're just out there playing football."

On the day, Northwestern amassed 199 yards and only a field goal for its efforts while putting up a paltry 2.9 yards per play. In contrast, Ohio State finished with 480 total yards and ran five fewer plays than the Wildcats' offense, averaging 7.6 yards per play.

Co-defensive coordinator and secondary coach Jeff Hafley said that he knew his defense was ready to play after seeing the mood of the team heading into the matchup.

"I saw last night ... how focused we were in yesterday's practice, and when we woke up this morning, they had a look in their eye, and then in the locker room before I addressed them and yes, I felt pretty good about it," Hafley said. "This group is special. They have an edge. They play with a chip on their shoulder, and it's fun to be around them."

Some of the typical defensive stars came out and performed well for the Buckeyes. Junior defensive end Chase Young still has a sack in every game this season, earning one early in the first quarter to set the tone. Linebacker Malik Harrison led the team with nine tackles and impressed in shutting down the Wildcats' offense.

But there were also some players who made the most of their opportunities. Junior cornerback Amir Riep earned his first interception since his freshman season, while sophomore Sevn Banks recorded the first pick of his collegiate career. Both of those came in the fourth quarter and helped secure the third game this season that Ohio State did not allow a touchdown to its opponent.

"We always have a goal to get a fourth-quarter shutout, and that's really

Run Game Shows Depth, Big-Play Ability

As the defense continued to display consistency, the running game did the same. Ohio State finished with 279 rushing yards on 7.5 yards per carry. While Fields added eight of the net yards on the ground, the vast majority of the rushing totals came from a trio of backs.

J.K. Dobbins continued his 2019 dominance that is on pace to far surpass what he even accomplished in his impressive freshman campaign. In his first season with the Buckeyes, Dobbins finished with 1,403 yards and seven touchdowns on an impressive 7.2 yards per carry.

After barely surpassing 1,000 yards while splitting carries with Mike Weber last year, Dobbins has flourished in the primary back role once again. The junior back has nearly matched his yards per rush number from his freshman season, averaging 7.1 yards a carry for 947 yards, and already matching his seven scores on the ground.

Against Northwestern, Dobbins finished with 121 yards on 18 carries and one touchdown, while also adding three receptions for 30 yards and another score through the air.

But Day knows that Dobbins still has another level of his game that he can reach.

"I know he has even more to give," Day said. "It's the way he has been practicing since early August. He's been running hard. He worked really hard with his body. He does a great job with (running backs coach) Tony Alford preparing for the games. When you practice that way, that's how you play."

When looking back at what he's accomplished compared to his level of play this season, Dobbins agrees that there have been clear improvements to his game that have translated into his results.

But still, Dobbins agrees with his head coach that he is far from reaching his ceiling. He knows that, even with his best numbers yet, this is still not the peak of what he can do while at Ohio State.

"This year I feel like I'm stronger," Dobbins said. "Today, I didn't feel as fast, but I feel like I'm faster for sure. I just feel like I'm overall better now. I just have to have an amazing game. You know I have to do amazing things. I feel like I haven't done that yet."

In the process of his fifth 100-yard game of the season, Dobbins surpassed Braxton Miller (3,315 yards) and Beanie Wells (3,382 yards) to move into No. 5 all time on Ohio State's career rushing yard list. With 3,403 career rushing yards, he is 150 yards away from tying Tim Spencer for fourth on the list.

But Dobbins is focused on moving up to

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

Northwestern came into the matchup as the No. 30 team in the NCAA in points allowed, giving up only 19.8 points per contest. The Wildcats were even more successful in not giving up a lot of yards, as their 320.0 yards allowed per game ranked No. 27. But none of that mattered to Ohio State's offense, which piled on 52 points and 480 yards of total offense.

This was helped along by three runs of 50 yards or more, one by each of a trio of running backs: J.K. Dobbins for 68 yards, Master Teague for 73 and Marcus Crowley for 53. Those were the major highlights from a ground game that put up 279 yards on 37 carries, good for 7.5 yards per rush.

Through the air, the Buckeyes were equally efficient. Justin Fields completed 18 of 23 passes for 194 yards and four scores, two of which were to sophomore wideout Chris Olave. Backup quarterback Chris Chugunov also added a score in the fourth quarter to give the Buckeyes five touchdowns through the air on the game.

The offense had the tougher task going up against the strong Wildcats D, but the Buckeyes also took control on the defensive side of the ball against a Northwestern offense that has consistently struggled all year. Northwestern put up only 199 yards on the game, and only 42 of those came through the air. Starting QB Aidan Smith completed only six of his 20 attempts and threw an interception, while backup Andrew Marty from Cincinnati added another pick on his only pass attempt for the game. The Wildcats averaged only 2.9 yards per play on the evening.

What Didn't Work

Another week, another game that is difficult to find some-

thing wrong in Ohio State's performance. But again, some problems could be seen in the early parts of the first quarter as the Buckeyes began to get situated after the off week. Ohio State started former top prospect Nicholas Petit-Frere at left tackle for Thayer Munford, who has been battling a lingering injury.

The result was a lackluster start for the offensive line, allowing some pressure on Fields early, as well as not allowing holes for the run game to exploit. But once Munford came in for Petit-Frere, those holes seemed to open up quickly. On defense, Ohio State started the game with some missed tackles that felt reminiscent of the 2018 season. None of them was turned into a big play, and tackling will likely be a key focus heading into Wisconsin next week.

Play Of The Game

The play that really broke the game open early came with Ohio State holding a 14-3 lead early in the second quarter. Munford had just come in for Petit-Frere with the ball at Ohio State's 27-yard line.

Fields handed the ball off to Dobbins for a routine run up the middle, and the offensive line gave Dobbins a hole. The junior running back used the gap to explode into the open field, making a terrific move on the players in Northwestern's secondary to turn it into more than just a 15-yard run. Instead, Dobbins broke for the sideline, getting 68 yards in the process and setting up the Buckeyes with first-and-goal.

The next play, Fields gave the ball to his primary back again, and Dobbins punched it in for a touchdown. The run was Dobbins' fourth run of more than 50 yards this season.

– Wyatt Crosher

the No. 2 spot that is 558 yards away.

"It's a blessing for sure. You know, I didn't know during the game that I was moving into the top five, but it's really a blessing," Dobbins said. "My goal is to pass one of the people that made me come to Ohio State, and that's Ezekiel Elliott, so I mean I'm appreciative of that, but I'm going to keep going."

Dobbins was not the only running back to impress in the game for Ohio State.

Redshirt freshman Master Teague continues to shine when his name is called, this time breaking out on a 73-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter that really showcased the backup running back's speed in the open field.

Teague finished with seven rushes for 96 yards and a touchdown. Even as the clear backup to Dobbins, Teague is averaging 99.3 yards per game in Big Ten play so far for the Buckeyes.

The big runs didn't stop there. True freshman running back Marcus Crowley came in late in the fourth quarter, and though he ran the ball only twice, he broke the second one for 53 yards.

There's a lot of reasons Ohio State ranks No. 3 in the country with 287.61 rushing yards per game heading into the pivotal matchup against Wisconsin, and while Dobbins and a strong offensive line may be major ones, the Buckeyes' depth at the position has also been a major factor.

Chrisman Continues Impressive Consistency

Through six games of the season, junior punter Drue Chrisman had not been called upon much to give the Buckeyes a spark on special teams.

Heading into the off week, Chrisman had booted only 17 punts on the year, averaging 46.8 yards per punt and pinning eight of the kicks inside the opponent's 20-yard line.

Chrisman was still performing, but only on less than three punts a game, which showed the strength of Ohio State's offense but did not let the Ray Guy Award Watch List member shine his stuff.

That changed in the Northwestern game, as Chrisman punted five times for Ohio State, the most he has had in any game yet this season. The third-year punter made the most of his extended opportunities, averag-

ing 47.4 yards per punt, including three that landed inside the opposing 20, and three that went for 50 yards or more with a long of 56 yards.

Chrisman's masterpiece on the day came in the second quarter. After an Ohio State three-and-out that ended at its own 45, Chrisman boomed a punt that bounced perfectly toward the Wildcats' goal line while also being slow enough to allow the ball to be downed at the Northwestern 1-yard line with 59 seconds to go in the first half.

Following the 54-yard punt, the Wildcats managed to gain only a single yard, and since Ohio State used all three timeouts, the Buckeyes were able to get the ball back and capitalize on a career-long 55-yard field goal

from Blake Haubeil that made the score 31-3 in favor of the Buckeyes by halftime.

The Haubeil kick earned the majority of

the attention, and fairly so, but Ohio State would not have been in that position without the assistance of Chrisman's pin.

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Friday Night Lights Out: Buckeyes Tame Wildcats

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State was unaccustomed to playing other than on a Saturday, but otherwise nothing changed as the No. 4 Buckeyes recorded another blowout with a 52-3 thrashing of Northwestern on Oct. 18 at Ryan Field in Evanston, Ill.

Sophomore quarterback Justin Fields threw four touchdown passes and junior J.K. Dobbins accounted for two scores in the rare Friday game before a crowd of 47,330 that decidedly favored Ohio State.

The Buckeyes (7-0, 4-0 Big Ten) upped a 7-3 lead after one quarter to 31-3 at halftime and cruised the rest of the way in just their fifth regular-season game on a Friday, the last being Oct. 2, 1959, at USC.

Fields was 18 of 23 for 194 yards and has 22 TD passes against one interception this season while also running for eight touchdowns.

Dobbins rushed 18 times for 121 yards and a score and caught three passes for 30 yards and a TD. Sophomore Chris Olave tied his career high with five catches for 60 yards and two first-half touchdowns.

Northwestern quarterback Aidan Smith was 6 of 20 for 42 yards and an interception, and the Wildcats had 199 total yards.

More Second-Quarter Magic

The Buckeyes took a 7-0 lead after taking the opening kickoff. An illegal procedure penalty on NU put the ball on the 30, and OSU went 70 yards using 10 plays and 4:18 off the clock as Fields found Olave open down the middle for

20 yards for the score.

OSU needed a pair of third-down conversions at the start to keep the ball moving. The first was a 10-yard scramble by Fields to the OSU 43. The second was Dobbins carrying the ball seven yards into NU territory at the 47.

Two plays later, Fields connected with Olave for 16 before hitting freshman Garrett Wilson for another 11 to the 20. Olave then faked a slant from the left side and cut upfield to make the catch.

The Wildcats made it 7-3 with 3:05 left in the first quarter when Charlie Kuhbender made a 33-yard field goal at the end of a nine-play, 4:21, 44-yard sequence.

Running back Isaiah Bowser from Sidney, Ohio, who has been injured most of the season, had runs of 11 and 12 yards and Smith had a 10-yard scamper to the 22, but the drive died at the 15. Bowser would end up with 16 carries for 65 yards.

On the ensuing OSU possession, redshirt freshman left tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere, playing for the injured junior Thayer Munford, was called for holding to set up a first-and-20 at the Buckeye 25. They got out of the jam on third-and-15 when Fields stepped away from the rush and passed 20 yards to senior K.J. Hill at the 50 to end the first quarter.

Hill now has a catch in 41 straight games.

Needing 8 yards on third down, Olave had a 14-yard reception to the 34. Wilson caught the ball for 13 to the 21, and a 2-yard flip to Olave set up a 19-yard TD pass to Dobbins for a 14-3 lead at 12:44 of the second quarter. Dobbins had come out of the backfield and made the catch through the middle at the 12 to complete



SONNY BROCKWAY

RAREFIED AIR – With 121 yards against Northwestern, junior J.K. Dobbins is just 53 yards shy of joining Archie Griffin as the only running backs in school history to surpass 1,000 yards in three straight seasons.

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OHIO STATE VS. NORTHWESTERN

the 75-yard drive in 12 plays and 5:21.

The Buckeyes were successful on five of their first six third-down opportunities and finished 8 of 14.

"The key was Justin making some third-down conversions early on, staying in the pocket and delivering the ball," OSU coach Ryan Day said. "That kept us going. That kept the drives alive."

After an NU punt, Dobbins made quick work – 40 seconds to be exact – to put the Buckeyes up 21-3 at 9:36. He blew through the line for a 68-yard run to the 5 and went around the left end to score on the next play. He has four runs of over 50 yards this season.

The Wildcats blew themselves up late in the quarter when a bad snap on a punt was smothered by the Buckeyes at the NU 15. Redshirt freshman Master Teague carried the ball for seven and Fields on second down tossed an 8-yard scoring strike to the right corner to Olave with 3:45 left to make it 28-3.

Later in the second, junior Drue Chrisman had his punt downed at the 1, and Day used his three timeouts to force a Northwestern punt from its 2 as time waned. A 33-yard punt and a return of negative-1 yard by Wilson set the Buckeyes up for a career-long 55-yard field goal by junior Blake Haubeil as the clock expired to extend the lead to 31-3. It tied with Mike Nugent (2004) for the second-longest field goal in school history to a 59-yarder by Tom Skladany in 1975.

OSU has outscored opponents 158-20 in the second quarter.

"If we get a couple of stops on third down, it might be a different feel going into halftime," Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald.

No Letdown To The Finish

After Northwestern stalled at the Wildcat

44 on the drive to open the second half and Daniel Kubiuk had just a 15 yard punt, it was the Austin Mack show as the Buckeyes increased the score to 38-3 at 9:45. The senior did not have a catch through two quarters but had four for 50 yards, including a TD reception of 23 yards to complete a series of seven plays, 65 yards and 2:20 consumed.

Backup QB Chris Chugunov had a touchdown pass of seven yards to sophomore tight end Jeremy Ruckert with 9:20 to play in the fourth quarter to make it 45-3 as the temperature fell from 52 degrees at kickoff.

The score was made possible after sophomore cornerback Sevyn Banks had an interception at the NU 11. Teague ran for four and Chugunov missed a pass to Ruckert before finding him off the next snap.

Teague zipped his way to a 73-yard TD with 7:46 remaining to make it 52-3. He had 96 yards on seven carries for the contest.

True freshman Marcus Crowley became the third Buckeye back with a long run when he scampered 53 yards to the Northwestern 31-yard line late in the game. OSU took three knees back to the 37 to end the game.

Numbers And Notes

The Buckeyes had 480 total yards (201 passing, 279 running). ... They have outscored opponents 231-31 in the first half and outgained them 2,256-710. ... Senior linebacker Malik Harrison had nine tackles (seven solo), a half TFL and a QB hurry. ... The Buckeyes are 10-7 on Fridays, 3-2 in the regular season. ... Dobbins needs 53 yards vs. Wisconsin on Oct. 26 for 1,000 on the season, which would make him the first player in school history to have 1,000 yards as a freshman, sophomore and junior.

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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 52, Northwestern 3

Senior defensive end Jonathon Cooper on what the Buckeyes have shown through seven games: "We've shown that we are one of the best teams in the nation, that we have a lot of opportunities to do a lot. But we all show we still have a big chip on our shoulders. We still feel like we have something to prove. Every single day, every single practice, we have something to prove. And we have to go out there and prove that we are who we say we are, and that's what we do every single week."

Cooper on why he feels like the team has a chip on its shoulder: "Especially with last year, a lot of people were talking about our defense. From the defense's perspective, we had to go back and be ourselves and just remember who we are. And then even preseason stuff – they labeled us fourth to win the Big Ten. We didn't like that because we realized how hard we worked. We realized all the effort and time that we put in, and we expect to be the best. We just want to make sure that we show out every single week, that we get our respect."

Redshirt freshman offensive lineman Nicholas Petit-Frere on offensive line coach Greg Studrawa yelling at him after Ohio State scored to go up 45-3: "It's what I need. Coach Stud already told me last year, 'I'm going to coach you as hard as I can.' He said that to everybody, because he says, 'I'm not just going to let you be mediocre and be average and not really have you be the best player that you can be.' It's not just because it was in a game. We do this during practice, we do this during film. We're critiquing everything we can to make sure we're the best. At our position, we've got to make sure that we are perfect, we are crisp, we know what we're doing on every single play."

Petit-Frere when a reporter told him it didn't make sense that he would get chewed out with the game out of reach: "Oh, it does. It really does. I mean, that's the mentality of people who just kind of let things happen. This year we're not trying to let that happen."

Sophomore wide receiver Chris Olave on getting open for his first touchdown: "It was a scheme (head coach Ryan) Day ran. He schemed up and we practiced it all week, so we got that perfect coverage for the game and it turned out well."

Olave on his second touchdown reception: "It was a kind of naked play. I motioned in, tried to get the corner to fall off me. We got that, and (QB Justin Fields) threw a perfect ball."

Olave when asked if he planned on giving a high five to an Ohio State fan in the stands after his second TD: "No, I just wanted to get my balance and I saw his hand out there. I didn't want to leave him hanging, so I had to give him one."

Olave on what is clicking for the Scarlet and Gray: "Our chemistry. Our chemistry is crazy. Even off the field, we all hang out together. Our toughness and our focus. Our focus going into the week was we wanted to be 7-0, and we got that win. We've got to move onto next week and prepare."

Junior defensive end Chase Young when asked if the Buckeyes would take their normal 24 hours to celebrate before preparing for No. 13 Wisconsin: "I already talked about it with Coach Mick (Marotti) on the sideline about the third quarter, so our focus is definitely shifting to Wisconsin."

Young when asked if he allows himself to enjoy the win or if he treats it like business: "That's the mentality I have. I just know we can't have any fluke losses or it's going to mess up what we're going to do. Even if, God willing, we make it to the playoffs, that's going to be another game of business, too. That's my focus."

Young on the upcoming matchup with Wisconsin and Heisman Trophy candidate Jonathan Taylor: "We have one of the best defenses in the country, so just as much as we get ready for him, he will get ready for us."

Fifth-year senior cornerback Damon Arnette when asked about what people should think about Ohio State heading into Wisconsin: "That we're going to win that game. They're a good team, but we're going to keep taking each week the same way and we're going to come out and fight. I know they're a tough team. They're built off toughness, just like we are, but we're going to put that ball in the dirt and play football."

Arnette, who proclaimed on Sept. 17 that the Buckeyes would win the national title, when asked if the fact he hasn't made the College Football Playoff gives him extra motivation: "I've already said what we're going to do, what we're going to win. It's definitely out there. Each week, us going into the games thinking that we've got something to prove, that's what's keeping that chip on our shoulder. Because no matter how well we're playing, we still hear the doubters. We still hear them, and slowly they're turning into believers. We're just going to keep on taking each week the same way, preparing for each team the same way and go play some good football next week."

Arnette on what Ohio State has done to turn the doubters into believers: "We've been dominating. And that's clear. We're just going to keep our routine going."

Arnette on the pain in his wrist while playing with a cast on: "I've been in the cast all year. It's just been covered up. This game I had to play in a bigger cast. I had a little procedure done last week, so it was just a little bit more sore than normal today."

Arnette when asked if his performance means more to him because he's succeeding with an injured wrist: "I really haven't even thought about it for real, because I just feel if I go down, I'm letting my teammates and my brothers down. Whatever happens to me is just a small thing in the bigger picture."

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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 52, Northwestern 3

Oct. 18, 2019 – Ryan Field; Evanston, Ill.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE (7-0, 4-0)	7	24	7	14	52
NORTHWESTERN (1-5, 0-4)	3	0	0	0	3

First Quarter

OSU – Olave, 20 yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick), 10:42; 10 plays, 70 yards, 4:18 TOP.
NU – Kuhbander kick, 33 yards, 3:05; 9 plays, 44 yards, 4:21 TOP.

Second Quarter

OSU – Dobbins, 19 yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick), 12:44; 12 plays, 75 yards, 5:21 TOP.

OSU – Dobbins, 5 yard run (Haubeil kick) 9:36; 2 plays, 73 yards, 0:40 TOP.

OSU – Olave, 8 yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick), 3:45; 2 plays, 15 yards, 0:25 TOP.

OSU – Haubeil kick, 55 yards, 0:00; 3 plays, -2 yards, 0:31 TOP.

Third Quarter

OSU – Mack, 23 yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick) 9:45; 7 plays, 65 yards, 2:20 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Ruckert, 7 yard pass from Chugunov (Haubeil kick) 9:46; 3 plays, 11 yards, 0:26 TOP.

OSU – Teague, 73 yard run (Haubeil kick), 7:46; 1 play, 73 yards, 0:12 TOP.

Att. – 47,330

Weather – 52 degrees, clear; wind SE 7 mph.

Team Statistics

	NU	OSU
First Downs	14	23
Rushing	10	8
Passing	1	12
Penalty	3	3
Rushes-Yards	47-157	37-279
Passing Yards	42	201
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	6-21-2	19-26-0
Offensive Plays	68	63
Total Net Yards	199	480
Third Down Efficiency	5-18	8-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-3	0-0
Punts-Avg.	8-38.0	5-47.4
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties	8-76	5-58
Time of Possession	32:22	27:38

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **NU**: Bowser 16-65; Anderson 13-39; Smith 11-33; Marty 2-16; McGowan 2-14; Moten 2-(-1); Gillikin 1-(-9). **OSU**: Dobbins 18-121; Teague 7-96; Crowley 2-53; Fields 6-8; McCall 1-7; TEAM 3-(-6).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **NU**: Smith 6-20-1-42-0; Marty 0-1-1-0-0. **OSU**: Fields 18-23-0-194-4; Chugunov 1-2-0-7-1; TEAM 0-1-0-0-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **NU**: Lees 3-19; McGowan 1-13; James 2-10. **OSU**: Olave 5-60; Mack 4-50; Dobbins 3-30; Wilson 3-28; Hill 2-19; Ruckert 1-7; Victor 1-7.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **NU**: Kubiuk 7-37.4-45; David 1-42.0-42. **OSU**: Chrisman 5-47.4-56.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **NU**: Lees 2-12. **OSU**: Wilson 2-3; McCall 1-(-1).

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **NU**: Lees 1-18. **OSU**: None.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – **NU**: None. **OSU**: None.

FORCED FUMBLES – **NU**: None. **OSU**: None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds) – **NU**: None. **OSU**: None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **NU**: None. **OSU**: Banks 1-0; Riep 1-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – **NU**: Gaziano 1.0-5. **OSU**: Young 1.0-9.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **NU**: Gaziano 1.0-5; Fisher 1.0-1; Gallagher 0.5-1; Leota 0.5-1. **OSU**: Young 1.0-9; Hilliard 1.0-3; Borland 1.0-1; Jackson 1.0-1; Harrison 0.5-1; Landers 0.5-0.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – **NU**: Gallagher 2-9-11; Fisher 6-2-8; Newsome 7-0-7; Gaziano 3-2-5; Bergin 2-3-5; Miller 1-4-5; Ruiz 3-0-3; Leota 1-2-3; Whillock 1-2-3; Pace 0-3-3; Jackson 1-0-1; Niro 1-0-1; Hampton 1-0-1; McGowan 1-0-1; Mitchell 1-0-1; Joseph 1-0-1; Spivak 0-1-1. **OSU**: Harrison 7-2-9; Fuller 5-0-5; Borland 5-0-5; Gant 2-2-4; Werner 2-2-4; Jean-Baptiste 2-2-4; Togiaj 1-3-4; Arnette 3-0-3; White 1-2-3; Pope 0-3-3; Young 2-0-2; Cornell 2-0-2; Jackson 2-0-2; Garrett 1-1-2; Landers 1-1-2; Hamilton 0-2-2; Young 1-0-1; Cooper 1-0-1; Smith 1-0-1; Hilliard 1-0-1; Proctor 1-0-1; Wade 0-1-1; Friday 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **NU**: Offense, Slater, Urban, Thomas, Gerak, Vogel, McGowan, Lees, Chiaokhiao-Bowman, Johnson, Bowser, Mangieri. Defense, Gaziano, Miller, Kent, Miller, Gallagher, Fisher, Bergin, Newsome, Ruiz, Pace, Whillock. Reserves, Kuhbander, Bergin, Smith, Finison, Sermons, Williams, Holman, James, Anderson, Marty, Link, Campbell, Hampton, Jefferson, Washington, Joseph, Kubiuk, Moten, Mitchell, Jackson, Niro, Bullock, Rivers, David, Mueller, McIntyre, Blake, Wiederkehr, Heald, Goens, Saunders, Spivak, Brown. **OSU**: Offense, Fields, Dobbins, Mack, Victor, Hill, Farrell, Petit-Frere, Jackson, Myers, Jackson, Alabi. Defense, Young, Hamilton, Cornell, Cooper, Werner, Borland, Harrison, Arnette, Okudah, Wade, Fuller. Reserves, Berry, Harris, Olave, Crowley, Teague, McCall, McCullough, Chugunov, Wilson, Williams, Jean-Baptiste, Riep, Smith, Banks, Gant, Williamson, Wint, White, Brown, Hooker, Harrison, Rossi, Pope, Young, Proctor, Hilliard, Jackson, Friday, Landers, Togiaj, Munford, Ruckert, Chrisman, Garrett.

Season Statistics

2019-20 Game-By-Game			
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Aug. 31	(5) FLORIDA ATLANTIC	45-21	103,228
Sept. 7	(5) CINCINNATI	42-0	104,089
Sept. 14	(6) at Indiana	51-10	47,945
Sept. 21	(6) MIAMI (OHIO)	76-5	103,190
Sept. 28	(5) at Nebraska	48-7	89,379
Oct. 5	(4) MICHIGAN STATE	34-10	104,797
Oct. 18	(4) at Northwestern	52-3	47,330
Oct. 26	(3) WISCONSIN (13)	12 p.m.	
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	TBA	
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	TBA	
Nov. 23	PENN STATE (6)	TBA	
Nov. 30	at Michigan (20)	12 p.m.	

OSU's gameday AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	191	102
Rushing	98	50
Passing	76	40
Penalty	17	12
Average Per Game/Rush	287.1	92.7
Average Per Game/Pass	239.6	136.3
Total Offense	3687	1603
Total Plays	502	449
Average Per Game	526.7	229.0
Average Per Play	7.3	3.6
Penalties-Yards	37-352	42-380
Fumbles-Lost	11-5	13-5
Third Down Efficiency	46-28	28-108
Percentage	56%	26%
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-3	5-10
Percentage	66%	50%
Sacks-Yards	29-182	14-78
Time Of Possession Avg.	30:15	28:59

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	73	158	66	51	0	348	49.7
Opponents	11	20	10	15	0	56	8.0

Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
J.K. Dobbins	134	947	7.1	7	68
Master Teague	73	512	7.0	4	73
Justin Fields	63	291	4.6	8	51
Marcus Crowley	17	155	9.1	0	53
Steele Chambers	10	79	7.9	1	15
Demario McCall	11	44	4.0	0	10
Amari McMahon	1	10	10.0	0	10
Gunnar Hoak	1	-7	-7.0	0	0
TEAM	7	-21	-3.0	0	0
OSU Totals	317	2010	6.3	20	73
OPP Totals	254	649	2.6	2	56

Passing Comp. Att. Pct. Yds. TD-INT Effic.

J. Fields	116	164	70.7	1492	22-1	190.20
Chris Chugunov	12	16	75.0	111	3-0	195.15
G. Hoak	3	3	100	74	1-0	417.2
TEAM	0	2	0	0	0-0	0
OSU Totals	131	185	70.8	1677	26-1	192.25
OPP Totals	101	195	51.8	954	3-10	87.71

Receiving Rec. Net Avg. TD Long

K.J. Hill	29	294	10.1	4	53
Chris Olave	21	318	15.1	6	39
Binjimen Victor	19	355	18.7	3	60
Austin Mack	15	207	13.8	2	38
Garrett Wilson	13	129	9.9	3	38
J.K. Dobbins	10	74	7.4	2	19
Jeremy Ruckert	7	73	10.4	3	25
Jaelen Gill	4	13	3.3	0	9
Jameson Williams	2	74	37.0	1	61
Master Teague	2	45	22.5	0	28
Luke Farrell	2	37	18.5	1	21
Demario McCall	2	11	5.5	0	7
Rashod Berry	1	16	16.0	0	16
Elijah Gardiner	1	10	10.0	0	10
Jake Hausmann	1	9	9.0	0	9
Marcus Crowley	1	7	7.0	1	7
Jaylen Harris	1	5	5.0	0	5
OSU Totals	131	1677	12.8	26	61
OPP Totals	101	954	9.4	3	49

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Blake Haubeil	-	46-46	-	-	6-8	64
J.K. Dobbins	9	-	-	-	-	54
Justin Fields	8	-	-	-	-	48
Chris Olave	6	-	-	-	-	38
K.J. Hill	4	-	-	-	-	24
Master Teague	4	-	-	-	-	24
Garrett Wilson	3	-	-	-	-	18
Jeremy Ruckert	3	-	-	-	-	18
Binjimen Victor	3	-	-	-	-	18
Austin Mack	2	-	-	-	-	12
Damon Arnette	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jameson Williams	1	-	-	-	-	6
Steele Chambers	1	-	-	-	-	6
Marcus Crowley	1	-	-	-	-	6
D. DiMaccio	0	0-1	-	-	-	0
OSU Totals	47	46-47	-	-	6-8	348
OPP Totals	5	4-4	-	-	1-1	56

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Blake Haubeil	1-1	2-4	2-2	1-1	6-8
OSU Totals	1-1	2-4	2-2	1-1	6-8
OPP Totals	4-5	2-3	0-0	0-0	6-8

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Drue Chrisman	22	1032	46.9	0	59
OSU Totals	22	1031	46.9	0	59
OPP Totals	55	2249	40.4	2	70

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Jeff Okudah	3	0	0.0	0	0
Jordan Fuller	2	26	13.0	0	26
Damon Arnette	1	96	96.0	1	96
Tuf Borland	1	42	42.0	0	0
Josh Proctor	1	0	0.0	0	0
Amir Riep	1	0	0.0	0	0
Sevyn Banks	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	10	164	16.4	1	96
OPP Totals	1	34	34.0	0	34

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Demario McCall	7	51	7.3	0	35
K.J. Hill	5	38	7.6	0	16
Garrett Wilson	4	57	14.2	0	52
Chris Olave	1	18	18.0	0	18
Sevyn Banks	1	5	5.0	0	5
OSU Totals	18	169	9.4	0	52
OPP Totals	6	16	2.7	0	6

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Demario McCall	7	155	22.1	0	26
Chris Olave	1	15	15.0	0	15
OSU Totals	8	170	21.2	0	26
OPP Totals	18	284	15.8	0	30

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Malik Harrison	23	14	37	9.5-33	3.5-22
Jordan Fuller	28	9	37	-	-
Pete Werner	16	10	26	4.0-8	-
Baron Browning	12	11	23	5.0-14	2.5-11
Chase Young	16	7	23	10.5-72	9.5-70
Tuf Borland	13	7	20	2.0-4	-
Jashon Cornell	12	7	19	5.0-20	2.5-10

Offense Firing On All Cylinders At Midway Point

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

Ohio State's open date on the schedule served as a natural halfway point in the season, so the staff of Buckeye Sports Bulletin handed out midterm grades to each unit of the football program in advance of the Buckeyes' 52-3 win over Northwestern on Oct. 18.

Up first is the offense, which entered the game against the Wildcats scoring 49.3 points per contest, good for third in the country behind only Alabama (51.0) and LSU (50.0). Ohio State has been particularly dominant in the first half, too, outscoring opponents by 172 points before halftime (200 to 28). Statistics are through the first six games unless otherwise noted.

Quarterback

Sophomore Justin Fields has been nothing short of spectacular in his first six games as a starter, throwing for 1,298 yards and 18 touchdowns compared to just one interception while also rushing for 283 yards and eight more scores.

His 26 total touchdowns are the most of any player in the Football Bowl Subdivision this season, which is even more impressive when you consider he's still learning the offense after transferring from Georgia back in January.

Fields hasn't made as many spectacular plays with his arm as his predecessor Dwayne Haskins did last year. But he's incredibly efficient (187.5 passer rating), and his ability to extend plays with his legs adds a dimension to Ohio State's offense that was practically nonexistent with Haskins behind center.

"I think Justin can make a throw anywhere on the field, at any point, whether it's in the pocket or when he goes to escape," head coach Ryan Day said. "There's not really an area of the field he can't get the ball to. And a lot of times it's not even with his feet under him. He can get away with some of that stuff – all things that we're cleaning up in terms of technique and getting the ball out in time – but he's very talented."

Day, offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson and passing game coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich have kept

Fields out of harm's way for the most part. He has taken a few shots, though, and his ability to bounce right back has impressed both his coaches and teammates.

"He's growing every day," Day said. "He knows what he needs to work on, but his leadership and his toughness have shown. I think the guys in that locker room are appreciative of that. I think they see it. He's got a lot of areas to grow, a lot of things to work on, but if he continues to lead, if he continues to be tough, if he continues to be a leader in that locker room, then a lot of good things are going to happen."

The biggest question mark when it comes to the quarterback position is where Ohio State would turn if anything were to happen to Fields.

Backups Chris Chugunov and Gunnar Hoak are unproven and have seen the field this season only in garbage time. To think either would be able to replicate Fields' production would be foolish – even with the overall level of talent at running back and wide receiver.

As long as Fields stays healthy, though, the Buckeyes have nothing to be concerned about.

BSB Midterm Grade: A

Running Back

Junior J.K. Dobbins has bounced back from a 2018 campaign that he deemed a personal failure to become one of college football's best and most consistent running backs.

Through six games, Dobbins ranked second in the country with 826 yards, which trailed only Oklahoma State sophomore Chuba Hubbard, who had 1,094 yards. Dobbins was just 227 yards shy of the total he had in 14 games as a sophomore last fall, as well.

"He's running hard," running backs coach Tony Alford said of Dobbins, who topped 100 yards in four of Ohio State's first six games this season after eclipsing the century mark just three times last fall. "He's putting his foot in the ground. He's finishing runs. He's running violently. He's very definitive in the decisions that he's making in the run game."

Now Dobbins is on the cusp of becoming just the second running back in program history to rush for 1,000 yards in three straight seasons, something only Archie Griffin (1973-75) has accomplished.



ANDREW LIND

LEADING THE CHARGE – Quarterback Justin Fields commands the nation's third-best scoring offense at a record-breaking pace of 26 touchdowns responsible for.

The Buckeyes also went into the season without a true backup running back, but red-shirt freshman Master Teague has assumed that role with an impressive start of his own.

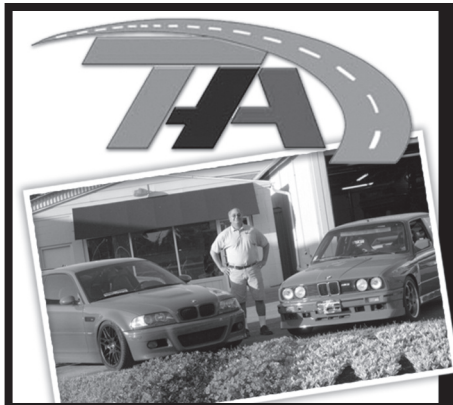
Teague carried the ball 66 times for 416 yards and three touchdowns, which was good for fifth in the Big Ten through six games. And though he has yet to see playing time in an important late-game situation, his powerful running style complements Dobbins well and allows him to get a breather from time to time.

"Master's fast," Day said. "He's a big guy,

but when he runs, gets behind his pads, he's a load. When there's contact made and he's falling forward for 4 yards, that makes a huge difference."

True freshmen Marcus Crowley and Steele Chambers have also shown flashes of their potential in mop-up duty this season, which certainly gives the staff confidence in its depth for the future or if Dobbins or Teague goes down with an injury.

Junior Demario McCall, meanwhile, has seen his role in the backfield reduced in recent



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MIDTERM EXAMS: OFFENSE

weeks. He's taken only a handful of snaps at running back over the last four contests heading into the halfway point and is primarily used in the return game. It will be interesting to see how his role evolves in the second half of the season.

BSB Midseason Grade: A

Offensive Line

Though Ohio State returned just one full-time starter from last season in left tackle Thayer Munford, the offensive line has been one of the team's biggest strengths this fall.

The unit – which typically deploys Jonah Jackson at left guard, Josh Myers at center, Wyatt Davis at right guard and Branden Bowen at right tackle – has consistently paved the way for Dobbins while buying time for Fields. They allowed just 13 sacks on the year, despite facing numerous blitz-happy defenses early in the season.

“When you look at what (offensive line coach Greg Studrawa) and (Wilson) have done, and then when you look at what the guys are doing, taking ownership. They've all taken a lot of pride in what they're doing,” Day said. “We talked about being tough and running the ball, and they're embracing it.”

The Buckeyes have dealt with their fair share of adversity along the offensive line this season, as well.

Bowen – who missed the final eight games of the 2017 season and all of the 2018 campaign while recovering from a broken leg that required multiple surgeries – also sat out the 48-7 win over Nebraska on Sept. 28 with back spasms. Fifth-year senior Joshua Alabi played well in his absence and even earned offensive player of the game honors for his effort. He also started against Michigan State on Oct. 5 but struggled and was ultimately replaced by Bowen just six

plays into the game.

While Alabi may not be talented enough to be a full-time starter, he provides the Buckeyes with depth at both left and right tackle. The same can be said of redshirt freshman Nicholas Petit-Frere, who battled with Bowen for the starting right tackle spot throughout fall camp.

True freshman center Harry Miller has also been impressive in limited action this season, and the coaching staff would have no hesitation in trotting him out there should anything happen to Myers.

“He's very capable and able to play right now,” Wilson said.

BSB Midseason Grade: B+

Tight End

Sophomore tight end Jeremy Ruckert caught two touchdown passes in Ohio State's season-opening win over Florida Atlantic, which once again prompted the question, “Is this finally the year the position plays a bigger role within the Buckeyes' passing game?”

But since then Ruckert, Luke Farrell, Rashod Berry and Jake Hausmann combined to catch just nine passes for 119 yards and three touchdowns in five games.

That doesn't mean the tight ends haven't played an important role within Ohio State's offensive game plan, though. They continue to excel as blockers, helping the Buckeyes rush for an FBS-leading 2,028 yards this season.

“It's one of our more experienced groups,” Day said. “When you're a tight end, you have to be able to do a lot of things. You have to be able to protect, run routes, run block and do all those things. And to do that takes a special guy.”

Ohio State rotates all four players at the position, and though Ruckert receives the bulk of the attention in the passing game, Farrell is

arguably the most complete tight end of the bunch.

“He's doing a great job in pass (protection) and does really well in perimeter,” Wilson said of Farrell. “He's our most consistent guy. I'm really challenging him. As good as he's playing, I think he can have that physical, dominating presence you want. I think he can really help us.”

That goes for any of the tight ends, who are arguably the unsung heroes on the offensive side of the ball.

BSB Midterm Grade: B+

Wide Receiver

It would be understandable if upperclassmen such as Austin Mack, Binjimen Victor and K.J. Hill were frustrated by their lack of targets this season.

After all, they bided their time in the program and figured to play a prominent role within Ohio State's offense this fall following the departure of Parris Campbell, Terry McLaurin and Johnnie Dixon. But the emergence of sophomore Chris Olave and true freshmen Garrett Wilson and Jameson Williams, coupled with six games that weren't all that competitive in the second half, has their individual statistics somewhat lacking.

Through six games, Hill had a team-high 27 catches for 275 yards and four touchdowns; Victor had 18 receptions for 348 yards and three scores; and Mack had just 11 catches for 157 yards and one touchdown. By comparison, Olave had hauled in 16 passes for 258 yards and four scores; Wilson had 10 catches for 101 yards and three touchdowns; and Williams had added two catches for 74 yards and a score.

“It's like I tell these guys: It's OK to get frustrated (with the lack of targets),” said

wide receivers coach Brian Hartline. “When guys work their tails off and it is blood, sweat and tears every day, all season long and they don't get what they want out of it, it's OK to be frustrated. What you can't do is let it affect your teammates or your team or your future play. Get frustrated. It's OK. It's a passionate response. I'm good with that. If you didn't get frustrated, I almost look at you sideways.”

“We've had some younger guys step up which has added depth. Guys are working hard and, overall, I think they have been very unselfish.”

Digging a little deeper, it's worth noting Ohio State relies heavily upon its wide receivers to block as part of the rushing attack. It's a situation where Mack, specifically, excels. It's also a physically demanding style of play where the Buckeyes benefit from having a six-man rotation.

Blocking is a point of pride for a unit that collectively understands their individual contributions combine to put Ohio State in a position to win games and chase a national title.

“The numbers maybe aren't as high,” Day said. “But I think those guys understand (the bigger picture), and their time is coming real fast.”

There are several other players who could crack the rotation by year's end, including fifth-year senior C.J. Saunders, who has yet to play this fall after suffering an undisclosed leg injury. Junior Jaylen Harris and redshirt freshman Jaelen Gill were expected to see time, as well, but that had not materialized through six games.

BSB Midterm Grade: A-



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Silver Bullets Return In Dominant Fashion

By **JOE DEMPSEY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ohio State defense ranked No. 53 in scoring defense (25.5 points allowed per game) in 2018, failing to live up to the Silver Bullet standard. Enter co-defensive coordinators Jeff Hafley and Greg Mattison, and as fifth-year cornerback Damon Arnette proclaimed before the season: "The Silver Bullets are back."

After one of the worst defensive seasons in program history, when the Buckeyes gave up 51 points in a one-point victory at Maryland and surrendered 49 points in a 49-20 loss at Purdue, they have become one of the most imposing defenses in the country this season.

Ohio State allowed opposing offenses to frequently break off long runs or gash its defense on deep passing plays last season. The defense allowed 39 plays of 30 or more yards from scrimmage, tying for No. 118 in the nation.

Through the first six games, the Ohio State defense allowed only four such plays, tying for No. 1 in the country. Hafley confirmed that he and Mattison made limiting backbreaking long gains a priority when they seized control of the defense.

"It's a credit to our players and the staff," Hafley said. "It goes into a lot of things. Schematically, the No. 1 thing we talk about when we put in new calls, when we talk about anything – and we'll say it over and over again – we want to eliminate explosives."

Arnette has enjoyed the best season of his five-year Buckeye career, largely due to the alleviated pressure in the new defensive scheme.

"I feel like the explosives went down a lot because everybody is out there just playing freely," Arnette said. "We're not really worried about giving up a play or making a play. We're just out there playing football, and what comes with that are the results that you see. But a lot of hard work goes into that, and it's just starting to show up on the field."

A major factor in limiting explosive plays is the tackling ability of a defense. Hafley and Mattison made sound tackling an emphasis in the offseason.

"We worked really hard on tackling, so credit to the players and the staff on that," Hafley said. "Our scheme allows multiple guys to get to the football at the same time, which nowadays with the way everybody creates space, you don't want one-on-one, it's scary. If you miss one tackle and it goes for 50, that's hard."

"We also want to look at how can we have coverages, pressures, scheme that in space we're going to have multiple people around the ball. That's what we try to look at, everything we can do. It's a combination of a lot of things, but that's good to know. Because if we can continue to do that and not give up explosives, we have a chance to be a good defense."

Hafley may have undersold the potential of the Ohio State defense, which ranked fourth in the country in scoring defense (8.8) and second in total defense (234.0 yards allowed per game) through the first six games, after giving up 404.0 per contest a year ago.

The Buckeyes also excel in red-zone defense and on third downs, ranking third in the country in both statistics. The opposition reached the red zone 15 times, coming away with only four

touchdowns and four field goals, scoring just 53.3 percent of the time. Opposing offenses had also converted on third down only 25.6 percent of the time (23 of 90).

The resurgence of the Silver Bullets has been a collective effort, but BSB broke down the defense and evaluated the defensive line, linebackers and secondary separately for midterm grades. All statistics are through six games.

Defensive Line

The Ohio State defensive line has established a reputation as one of the best units, if not the best, in the nation every year. Larry Johnson's 2019 defensive line has lived up to the lofty standard set in years prior.

Junior defensive end Chase Young has led the way for the Buckeye defensive front, pacing the team with 8½ sacks, 9½ tackles for loss and three forced fumbles through six games. Young was leading Buckeye defensive linemen with 21 tackles (14 solo). Second among the unit was fifth-year defensive tackle/end Jashon Cornell with 17 stops (10 solo).

Cornell has been a pleasant surprise, living in opposing backfields with five TFL and 2½ sacks and one forced fumble.

Fifth-year defensive tackle Davon Hamilton does not have stats that jump off the page but the 6-4, 310-pound defensive tackle has held down the center of the Ohio State defense. Hamilton had three tackles for loss for the Buckeye defense, which ranked sixth in the country in rush defense, allowing only 82.0 yards per contest.

Junior Haskell Garrett, fifth-year senior Robert "B.B." Landers and sophomore Tommy

Togiai have also been staples of the interior defense, helping shut down opposing rushing attacks. Their consistency has been especially important with talented sophomore Taron Vincent, who has yet to play this season, recovering from an undisclosed injury.

At defensive end, Ohio State missed senior starter Jonathon Cooper for the first five games of the season. Sophomores Tyreke Smith and Tyler Friday, who dealt with injuries of their own, filled in during Cooper's absence, along with freshman Zach Harrison and redshirt freshman Javontae Jean-Baptiste.

Harrison and Jean-Baptiste each posted 1½ sacks through six games, while Smith and Friday recorded one apiece in three and four games, respectively.

Finally healthy for the Buckeyes' 34-10 thrashing of Michigan State, Cooper indicated the best is yet to come for the Silver Bullets.

"There are still a lot of things we can get better at," Cooper said. "There are a lot of things we can still do, and we're taking the necessary steps each and every week to reach our potential, but I don't even feel like we've scratched the surface yet."

BSB Midterm Grade: A

Linebackers

The Ohio State linebacker corps may be the most improved unit on the entire team.

Senior Malik Harrison and juniors Tuf Borland, Baron Browning and Pete Werner all returned as the top 'backers from the woeful 2018 campaign. In linebackers coach Al Washington's first season in charge, the linebacker foursome looks like a completely different group.

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MIDTERM EXAMS: DEFENSE

After often finding themselves out of position and missing tackles a season ago, the Buckeye linebackers swarmed to the football with cohesion and ferocity through six outings.

Malik Harrison, a Columbus native, sets the tone for the linebacker unit. He led the group with 28 tackles (16 solo) and nine tackles for loss, 3½ sacks and two fumble recoveries. His position coach has been extremely impressed with his versatility and intelligence, as well as his work ethic.

"Malik has a chance to be the best in the country, and I'll tell him that," Washington said. "I'm honest. I think he has the ability, but you've got to exercise that ability every day."

"I do know that every game he's in there, he's got to make his play speak for itself. He has to give that much effort. It really just comes down to effort, and he's done that. He's given great effort. And I think if he does that, everything else will take care of itself."

Browning is second among the 'backers with 23 tackles (12 solo), adding five tackles for loss and 2½ sacks. Right behind him is Werner, who may be the most improved Buckeye, with 22 tackles (14 solo) and four TFL.

Washington has helped turn the Ohio State linebacker unit around, but he thinks he inherited a lot of talent within the group.

"All I do is if you have a spark, then I'm going to pour gas on it," Washington said. "And hopefully it turns into a blaze."

BSB Midterm Grade: B+

Defensive Backs

Another drastically improved group for the Ohio State defense has been the Hafley-led secondary. The Buckeyes returned senior safety Jordan Fuller, Arnette and junior corners Jeff Okudah and Shaun Wade from the shaky 2018 defense, losing only corner Kendall Sheffield to the NFL.

Hiring Hafley as secondary coach and co-defensive coordinator proved to be a smashing success through the Buckeyes' first six games.

Ohio State allowed only 152.0 passing yards per game, ranking third in the FBS. This stat is

even more incredible when considering the fact that Ohio State held massive leads in each game, often resting starters against offenses who were throwing the ball in attempt to catch up.

Fuller led the team with 32 tackles (23 solo), and in addition to leading the team in solo stops, the two-time captain recorded two interceptions and one pass breakup. The surest tackler on the team prefers when he isn't the only Buckeye swarming to the football.

"Our tackling has gotten better," Fuller said. "Our pursuit to the ball – you don't feel like you're making a one-on-one tackle as much. When you have other guys surrounding the ball, you feel like you can really just take your shot. That's helped us, just having more eyes on the ball and stuff like that, getting to the ball carrier."

Okudah, who is projected to be a first-round pick, led the unit with three picks while contributing 17 tackles (14 solo). The South Prairie, Texas, product also added three pass breakups, one TFL and one forced fumble.

Wade has been one of the biggest playmakers on the Ohio State defense, padding the stat sheet with 14 tackles (11 solo), three TFL, two sacks, one forced fumble, one quarterback hurry and a team-high five pass breakups.

Wade spends most of his time in the slot, guarding shifty H-backs and bigger tight ends and supporting the run as well. Head coach Ryan Day was asked about the value of Wade in that position.

"I don't know how I could really put any kind of commentary on how valuable it is, but that's big," Day said. "You see a lot of guys in college football try to get the ball to the slot receiver, whether it's RPOs or throws or whatever it is, that's the guy they target."

"The guys on the outside, they're a little bit longer throws. In college, that (slot) guy gets targeted a lot. You have to be multitasking. You have to be able to play the run. You have to be tough. You have to be able to play blitz and play coverage and man-to-man on a deep ball."

"You have to be able to do all those things to be really good at that position. Otherwise

you have to keep moving different body types in there based on what you're seeing. What Shaun gives us is great versatility because he has all those skills."

Arnette has been the most effective defensive back in pass coverage, allowing completions on just 32.1 percent of balls thrown his way. The Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas product totaled 14 tackles (10 solo), three pass breakups and one forced fumble. Against Indiana, Arnette intercepted a pass and weaved through would-be tacklers for a 96-yard touchdown.

Sophomore safety Josh Proctor flashed despite not playing much, making an intercep-

tion and breaking up two passes. In limited action, junior safety Brendon White, who was the Rose Bowl MVP last season, posted 11 tackles (10 solo), two TFL, one sack and one pass breakup.

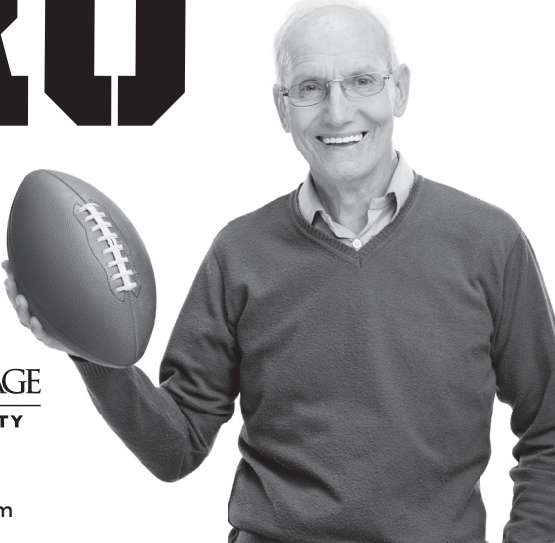
Florida and LSU players recently took to Twitter to debate which school produces the best defensive backs in the FBS. Okudah does not agree with either program.


"We saw that, but we don't really entertain that," Okudah said, "just because we feel like we're BIA (Best in America). Everyone else claims DBU (Defensive Back University), but we just claim BIA."

BSB Midterm Grade: A

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Special Teams Highlighted By Blocks, Coverage

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Special teams has long been a focal point for Ohio State, and in Ryan Day's first season as head coach, the emphasis on the kicking and return game has continued to hold a premium importance.

First-year special teams coordinator Matt Barnes is well aware of the high standard set by former Ohio State head coaches Jim Tressel and Urban Meyer, who continually stressed the importance of that phase of the game.

"The culture here has been excellent for special teams for quite a while," Barnes said. "I think it's just trying to keep on pace with the precedent that's been set here."

Through six games, the Buckeyes' performance on special teams was highlighted by blocked kicks, excellent punting and outstanding coverage on both punts and kickoffs.

A major component of their success has been the willingness of the offensive and defensive starters to participate on special teams and how it has become expected.

"Those guys want to be on it," Barnes said. "Chase Young is in my ear almost every day about what he wants to do on field-goal block, and Tuf Borland's in my ear every day about what he wants to do on punt and things like that. I just think that speaks to the culture that's been established here."



ANDREW LIND

Punt Block, Field-Goal Block

The Buckeyes blocked two punts and one field goal through six games, but their rushing presence has forced botched punts and missed kicks.

Sophomore cornerback Sevyn Banks and sophomore wideout Chris Olave blocked punts against Indiana and Miami (Ohio), respectively. Standout defensive end Chase Young blocked a field-goal attempt against Cincinnati.

A change made by Barnes is the development of different lineups for blocking field goals. Instead of just leaving the defense on the field, Ohio State makes substitutions and switches up its strategy

TURN THE TIDE – Ohio State has enjoyed success in its mission to block more kicks, ranking third in the nation with three blocks (two punts and one field-goal attempt) through six games.

on a week-to-week basis.

One of the most intriguing substitutions came in the Cincinnati game, when 6-8, 360-pound freshman offensive tackle Dawand Jones took the field for the Bearcats' lone field-goal attempt of the game, freeing up Young to block the attempt.

The appearance against Cincinnati marked Jones' first time with the field-goal block unit, and not because the Buckeyes wanted to preserve his redshirt. Ohio State changes its lineup each game to match up most effectively with the opposing kicker and the opposition's

protection scheme.

"It just depends on what you're getting," Barnes said. "There's a little bit more to field-goal block than what meets the eye. A lot of it is how much lift the kicker gets on the ball and if it's a kicker that doesn't get much lift on it, then you think you can get it with a longer guy. That's where Dawand fit in the Cincinnati game plan. And a little bit's based off the protection as well. It's sort of a week-to-week thing."

The Buckeyes' three blocked kicks tied them for third in the FBS through six games.

Day has been impressed with his team's ability to block kicks and explained that he felt like his guys came close to blocking a couple more kicks.

"We've been solid," Day said. "We missed two blocked field goals by, I mean, as close as you could possibly miss a blocked field goal."

"The second one, Chase is right there. And I don't know how it maybe just slid by his fingers and he missed it. If he kicks it down the middle, we're probably blocking it. We've done a good job with the punt blocking, field-goal blocking."



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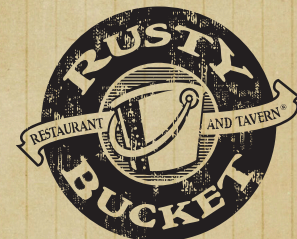
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MIDTERM EXAMS: SPECIAL TEAMS

Coaching special teams remains a collaborative effort at Ohio State, but Barnes is the leader of that important part of the game. Day has been pleased with Barnes, whose goal was five blocked kicks, and the progress of the units to start the season.

"He's the leader of the units, and he's somebody that wanted to come in and have a bunch of blocks this year, and he's off to a good start," Day said. "He's had good scheme."

BSB Midterm Grade: A

Punt Team

Through six games, Drue Chrisman showed why he is one of the best punters in the country.

Though the Cincinnati native is among the nation's leaders in a few different statistical categories, he puts a premium on the team's net average, which ranked No. 11 in the country at 43.0.

"The net," Chrisman said earlier in the season. "We play a big role. We put a lot of emphasis on the net. A lot of guys look at the average, but we want zero return yards. We gave up a couple last game (Florida Atlantic), so I'm kind of upset about that, but definitely the net – we want zero return yards."

The Buckeyes have allowed a total of only four yards on 17 punts, which is eighth in the country. Opponents average only 0.2 return yards per punt.

"I think our punt game has been solid," Day said. "I think Drue's doing a good job, I thought we did a good job (against Michigan State) covering. I think we had zero return yards. Overall, pretty solid."

Before the season, Ohio State needed to find a replacement for Terry McLaurin at gunner. He was one of the best at racing

down the field and either forcing fair catches or downing the ball deep inside enemy territory. While Chrisman admitted McLaurin's presence was a significant one, he expressed confidence in the team's other gunners.

"We've got a lot of returning guys," Chrisman said Aug. 4. "I am going to miss Terry. He was the best of the best. I mean, you see him at the Redskins now. I see some videos every now and then of him covering a punt or something. He's surely going to be missed."

"But every year we have the best gunners in America. There's no doubt. We put a lot of emphasis on that. We'll have the guys out there, and we'll find them. Plus, we have a number of guys returning from last year like Chris Olave, and they'll do a great job. I've just got to get the ball up, and they'll get them down. I know they'll take care of that."

Chrisman's confidence proved to be merited through six games as Olave and Banks have excelled in punt coverage on the outside.

The fourth-year junior punter was asked what it meant to have so many talented players on punt team, particularly at gunner. In addition to McLaurin, former first-round pick and NFL Pro Bowler Denzel Ward shone at gunner as well as likely first-round selection of the future Jeff Okudah.

"That means a lot," Chrisman said. "We say it all the time, we put our best athletes on special teams. We put an emphasis on that, a premium placed on coverage. We're going to have our best athletes running down the field and causing that fair catch. It gives you a lot of confidence when you see those guys on the outside, knowing if you hit a low hang-time punt, they're still going to be right in their face. It takes a lot of pressure off me."

Chrisman has shown a propensity for a

long boot when backed up in his own territory as well as the ability to drop balls inside the 20-yard line when facing a shorter field. He booted seven punts of 50 or more yards while downing the opposition inside the 20 on eight occasions.

The Cincinnati La Salle product was asked about his favorite thing to do as a punter.

"Pinning them inside the 10," Chrisman said. "That's what I really strive for. As close as I can get them to the goal line, I know our defense is going to stop them and we'll get the ball back around midfield. That's just the plan to win right there, playing downhill all the time. Anytime I can get them pinned back and on their heels, that's when I love it."

BSB Midterm Grade: A

Kickoff Return Defense

It is not surprising that Ohio State is among the nation's best in kickoff return defense because of all the talented players on the kickoff unit. Most of the athletes on the Buckeyes' kickoff unit could be starters on offense or defense at other FBS schools.

The Scarlet and Gray ranked eighth in the country in kickoff return defense, surrendering just 15.6 yards per return. With the prolific Ohio State offense scoring points at a torrid clip, the kickoff team takes the field more than every team ahead of it across the country.

BSB Midterm Grade: A

Punt, Kick Return

While the Scarlet and Gray have been proficient at blocking kicks, they have left more to be desired in the return game.

Primary punt returners Demario McCall and K.J. Hill have struggled to gain much traction on punt returns, averaging 8.7 yards per return and 7.6, respectively, through the first half of the season.

True freshman Garrett Wilson impressed the most on punt returns, tallying a 27.0 return average and posting the longest punt return for Ohio State in five years with a 52-yard run back against Miami (Ohio). Wilson had another long return, but it was called back for a penalty.

The Buckeyes fared better on kick returns through six games but hadn't blown anyone away. Ohio State averaged just 21.3 yards per return, which was No. 65 in the FBS, on eight returns.

"Our return game has just been OK," Day said. "I think our return game can be better. But overall special teams has been solid."

BSB Midterm Grade: C-

Field Goal, PAT

For the most part, junior kicker Blake Haubeil put together solid performances through six games. The Buffalo, N.Y., native nailed 5 of 7 field-goal tries for the Buckeyes, with a long of 46.

Haubeil connected on both of his attempts of 40 or more yards but misfired on two of his four attempts from distances in between 30 and 39 yards.

He has been consistent from close range, connecting on his one attempt in between 20 and 29 yards and drilling all 39 of his point-after attempts. Freshman Dominic DiMaccio missed his lone point-after attempt.

BSB Midterm Grade: B-

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The Rise, Fall, Then Rise Of OSU's Defense

By WYATT CROSER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It was no secret that Ohio State's defense struggled in 2018. It was also no secret to Greg Mattison, the newly named co-defensive coordinator heading into 2019.

But Mattison came into the new position after leaving Michigan without much thought into whatever production issues there were in the season prior.

"I would never judge what they did last year on defense," Mattison said before the start of the season. "The coordinator was a great coordinator. They had a great staff. You know, stats are stats. I'm not a big stat guy."

"The only stat that I ever really look really, really close at are points, giving up points. That's the bottom line. I didn't even look at what it was last year. It doesn't matter to me. The thing that I know what we are going to do is we are going to be an aggressive defense that runs to the football, and everybody on our defense believes in that."

Mattison may not want to look at all the stats, but the one number he did say he was concerned about, points allowed, ended with the worst collegiate ranking for an Ohio State team in recent memory.

On defense in 2018, Ohio State finished No. 53 in scoring defense, allowing 25.5 points per game, and finished No. 72 in total defense, giving up 404.0 yards per game. The Buckeyes hadn't finished outside of the top 15 in either category over the past three seasons.

So far in 2019, Ohio State ranks No. 2 in both of those defensive categories.

The statistical difference is stark and can be traced back to a lot of things. But first, it is important to understand where Ohio State's defense placed prior to 2018, even prior to Urban Meyer's takeover of the team.

End Of Tressel Era, Enter Fickell: 2010-11

In Tressel's final season at the helm before

being forced to resign because of Tattogate, he led Ohio State's defense to a typically stout level that ranked among the best in the NCAA. The Buckeyes gave up 14.3 points per game, fifth best in the country, and the fourth-fewest yards per game at 242.2.

That team finished with a 12-1 record, including a 31-26 victory in the Sugar Bowl against Arkansas.

Following Tressel's resignation, Luke Fickell stepped up from co-defensive coordinator into the interim head coach spot, and while the team suffered many setbacks at various levels of the game, the defense remained a strong point.

The Buckeyes finished No. 27 and No. 19 in scoring and team defense, respectively, in Fickell's only season as head coach, using his experience at various defensive coaching positions to keep Ohio State impressive on the back end.

Where Ohio State suffered was on offense, where it finished No. 81 with 24.5 points per game. That led to a 6-7 record and the end of the Fickell era before it truly began.

Urban Getting His Footing: 2012-14

Meyer became Ohio State's head coach for 2012, and in a season that was without the possibility of bowl eligibility, Meyer coached the Buckeyes from a record below .500 to 12-0.

In doing so, the Buckeyes actually regressed slightly on the defensive side, going from 21.0 points per game allowed in 2011 to 22.8 a game in 2012, which was No. 31 in the NCAA.

That number stayed relatively stagnant under the first three seasons of the Meyer era at Ohio State. The Buckeyes ranked 27th and 26th the next two seasons in scoring defense and also remained good but not great in giving up yardage.

In the first three years of Meyer's tenure, Ohio State never ranked lower than 45th in

total defense but never ranked higher than 19th.

Of course, that impressive but not elite defense was enough in 2014 as the Buckeyes went 14-1, winning 13 straight games on their way to a national title in the first ever College Football Playoff.

'They Might Have Had The Best Defense In The Country': 2015-17

The 2015 season was when Meyer and co-defensive coordinators Fickell and Chris Ash really flourished. It all started from a former Ohio State coach, Mark Dantonio, and the success he was having at a different Big Ten school in Michigan State, which led Meyer to copy some of the same ideals, according to The Athletic's Bill Landis.

"My understanding of it is that they were playing a lot of zone coverage," Landis told Buckeye Sports Bulletin of Meyer's early Ohio State defenses. "I don't think they were ever particularly sound in that, so they gave up a lot of big pass plays. I think a lot of plays were called underneath, and then there were run and catch stuff, and I think it drove Urban crazy."

"He saw what Michigan State was doing, basically stole their defense, at least the back end, playing press man coverage and really having nobody in the deep middle of the field, and it worked for them really well."

The results came fast.

In the 2015 season, the year following the championship run, Ohio State jumped from No. 24 to No. 3 in scoring defense, allowing only 15.1 points per game. The Buckeyes were also stifling in allowing yards, giving up only 311.3 yards per contest, ninth in the NCAA.

While the new scheme certainly made a difference, Ohio State also benefited from a dominant, talented secondary that included Eli Apple, Malik Hooker, Gareon Conley, Marshon Lattimore, Denzel Ward and Tyvis Powell, all of whom ended up in the NFL, that combined to give up the 16th-fewest passing

yards per game.

"They had the personnel for it," Landis said. "You just had this really great talent on an individual personnel level that allowed them to do that, and then that sort of became a hallmark of what they wanted to be."

After the best statistical defensive showing of the decade, Ohio State followed it up with an even better campaign in 2016.

With all of the major pieces of the defense coming back, the Buckeyes stayed at third in college football in points allowed but improved to sixth in yards allowed, giving up 300.2 yards per game.

It was seasons like this that showed former Ohio State assistant Bill Conley what a Meyer-led defense is really about.

"Aggressive. Physical. They'd run to the ball, big play-making defense, and good at getting the ball back for the offense," Conley told BSB. "They weren't on the field very long, and that's what you want in the defense."

To Landis, the defense in 2016 was truly a special one.

"They were awesome," he said, "2016, I think they might have had the best defense in the country."

The following year was much of the same defensively. Ohio State gave up 19.0 points per game and 300.9 yards per game, good for No. 15 and No. 9 in the nation.

But 2018, that was a different story altogether. "It falls off a little bit (in 2017,) but it didn't really fall off until last year," Landis said. "What it ended up being I think was unprecedented."

The Worst Statistical Defense In Program History: 2018

After three seasons of ranking in the top 15 in both major categories, the defense fell off a cliff, ending in the bottom half of the NCAA in yards allowed, which was not helped by giving up 39 plays of 30 yards or more.

"I think there was a change in defensive philosophy," Conley said. "I think there became more of an emphasis on man coverage instead of a mix of zone and man, and it became a little bit more predictable for opposing offenses, and the problem is you can be aggressive with a man-to-man defense, but at the same time, there's a potential of giving up big plays."



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Along with the switch to more man coverage, former Ohio State linebacker Brent Johnson said a lot of the troubles came down to coaches getting too much into their own heads.

"I thought defensively we overthought it," Johnson told BSB. "I thought we were just entirely too aggressive. We kept blitzing when we did not need to blitz. There was entirely too much film of us doing the exact same thing. People knew that we were going to be really aggressive."

Going with the defense being overly aggressive was the decision of Meyer and defensive coordinator Greg Schiano to bring the linebackers up on the line of scrimmage on a wide variety of plays, leaving plenty of open space in the middle of the field for even the most mediocre of offenses to pick apart.

And pick the Buckeyes apart, they did. According to Landis, it started with a season-ending injury to defensive end and future No. 2 pick in the NFL draft Nick Bosa, but not just because Bosa's talents were left off the field.

"It seemed to me what happened was they structured the defense around Nick Bosa, which makes total sense because he's your best player, but then you lose him, and then they didn't really change, they just sort of kept doing the same thing, which is why you always saw the linebackers up on the line," Landis said. "You put the linebackers up on the line so that Nick Bosa doesn't get double-teamed on every single play, but then he's gone, and then your linebackers are still up on the line and everybody just gets sort of washed out of the play and then teams hit you for big run plays."

"I thought the way that they would move around when teams motioned just really left them susceptible to getting outleveraged outside, so I didn't see any of that coming. They were statistically the worst defense they've ever had, and I don't think anybody would have guessed that coming into the year."

Nobody may have guessed that Ohio State's defense would get torched for 49 points in a loss to Purdue or for 51 points in a near loss to Maryland at the beginning of the season.

But Johnson, after seeing a lack of adjustments from the Buckeyes, said he was not stunned at all by the amount of issues the Buckeyes had stopping the ball.

"It was no surprise to me that they kept

struggling because when we're blitzing six and seven people, that means we have six and seven people across the other side of the line of scrimmage, so even if they completed a 1-yard pass, they're already 8 yards ahead of most of our defense," Johnson said. "It was not a surprise to me at all."

Some of the blame can be put to a lack of depth at some key positions, including the loss of Denzel Ward at corner and Jerome Baker at linebacker.

But to Landis, the fault has to be put back on the coaching staff for struggles on the defensive side of the ball that had not been seen in Ohio State's history.

"I always put it on the coaches, especially in college," he said. "I mean there are guys in that room who will tell you they could have played better, they should have played better last year, but I think the No. 1 thing you have to do in college is assess your personnel and then put those guys in the best positions to be as successful as the possibly can, and I don't think Ohio State's coaches did that very well last year."

The result of the subpar defense was still success. Ohio State went 13-1, won the Big Ten with a 45-24 victory over Northwestern, and defeated Washington in the Rose Bowl.

But as Day took over for Meyer following that Rose Bowl victory, the message was clear: Change was happening on the defensive side of the ball.

In the weeks that followed the Washington game, Mattison was signed as co-defensive coordinator, as well as Jeff Hafley, both replacing Schiano. Hafley would also coach the secondary with Matt Barnes, replacing Taver Johnson and Alex Grinch. Al Washington, who came from Michigan with Mattison, became the linebackers coach, replacing Bill Davis. Only defensive line coach Larry Johnson remained from the 2018 season's defensive staff entering this season.

A Complete Defensive Turnaround: 2019

With an almost completely new staff to fix the defensive woes, the results came almost immediately.

After giving up 21 points to Florida Atlantic, much in garbage time, Ohio State shut out Cincinnati 42-0 and has not given up more than 10 points since. That includes holding an Indiana offense that ranks in the

top 40 in scoring to just 10 points on the Hoosiers' home field. Last season, Indiana put up 406 yards in a year when it ranked No. 88 in scoring in the NCAA.

That also includes stuffing Nebraska's offense, led by quarterback Adrian Martinez, early and often in a 48-7 rout. As a true freshman, Martinez torched the Buckeyes for 338 yards and three touchdowns in 2018.

Day has attributed the improved success to players having a better understanding of the location of their teammates on the field.

"No defense wants to give up big plays," Day said. "But I think we've done a good job of teaching where everybody fits into the defense. If you know where everybody is, when you go to track the ball, I think that's important. You can play with a little bit more confidence knowing maybe you're not on an island, you have guys that are coming with you, swarming to the ball, and I think that's helped."

The difference has been shown in the scheme.

Ohio State has moved away from being a primarily man-defense team, and it has allowed for its more-than-capable defensive players to begin to stand out.

"You're basically always having a six- or seven-man box all the time, and that's part of the structure, and then you're playing more zone coverage so that guys in the secondary can rally to the ball, too," Landis said. "I don't think the position coaching outside of defensive line was very good last year, and this year I think it's up across the board, and it helps that their players are older, more experienced and they were always talented."

Statistically, through seven games of the season, Ohio State is right back to playing like the elite defense of old, one that immediately poses a matchup problem to any team that it faces,

much like the one from three seasons ago.

And while the schedule ahead should really test just how impressive the defense truly is, Landis said the defense's dominance in 2019 reminds him of how strong the 2016 unit was, but that group this year is doing it in a different way.

"It's sort of flipped I suppose," Landis said. "In 2016, they were really hard to throw against, and that was by design. They were really strong at defensive end, they were really strong at cornerback, and it was a really hard time throwing against them. The way they stop the run (this season), the way that everyone's involved in the run game, and it's a byproduct of a lot of things, it's the fundamentals."

"They're essentially taking away half of what teams want to do offensively, so I think it's similar in that they're forcing you to be one-dimensional."

Regardless, Ohio State has flipped a switch from quite possibly the lowest of low points that the program has seen on defense and has done it in just one season.

The new coaches and coordinators are certainly among the reasons for the sudden change, but one of those new faces, Hafley, doesn't want to focus on the negatives of the past.

"Forget last year, and that's my message today too because a lot of people are bringing that up," Hafley said following the win at Nebraska. "This is a new team, it's a new attitude. Not knocking last year, but that talk's over."

This is a new team, and it is showing a level of control on both sides of the ball that makes the Buckeyes a title contender in 2019. The defense is proving itself up to the task so far, something that did not seem reasonable to think only months ago.



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Another option is to send the attached application with your credit card information or check made payable to The Sportsmanship Club of Columbus at:

The Sportsmanship Club of Columbus
436 Fallis Road
Columbus, OH 43214

All tickets will be held in will call and can be picked up the night of the event. Reservations are accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Should you have any questions please contact Phil Pini at 614-581-4768 or by e-mail at ppini@aol.com.


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Readers Share Fond Memories Of OSU Legend

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Buckeye Sports Bulletin asked readers to share their memories of Ohio State great Howard "Hopalong" Cassady, who passed away on Sept. 20.

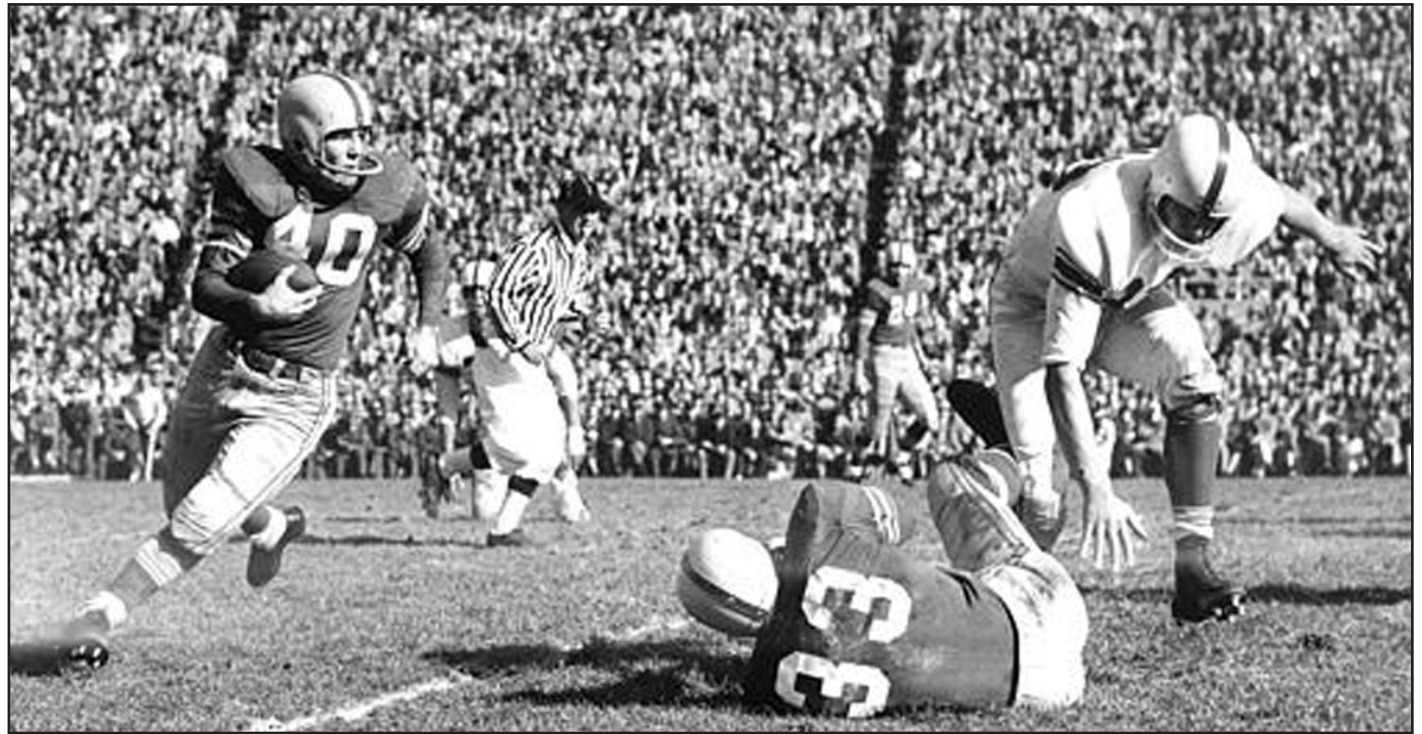
The following is a sample of the responses:

I was a 12-year-old boy sitting in the C deck of the "Shoe" in 1954 (before, I think, it was really called "the Shoe"), ready to watch the Ohio State-Wisconsin game. My recollection is that both teams were 4-0. It was a big game with two undefeated teams, halfway through the season. Wisconsin had Alan 'The Horse' Ameche, No. 35, as their featured running back, who won the Heisman Trophy later that year.

Ohio State won that day, 31-14 as I recall, but the highlight for me was Hop Cassady intercepting a pass on, I believe, the 12 yard line, and returning it for a touchdown -- 88 yards. He was "hit" on about Wisconsin's 10 yard line, and either broke the tackle or carried the Wisconsin player into the end zone! So, this recollection about Hopalong Cassady isn't about his rushing prowess or yards gained as a halfback, but about his skills as a defensive back at Ohio State. He played both ways. That play "broke the game open" that led to the OSU victory, and later on the National Championship.

– Ben Perks
Northfield, Ill.

My dad & his best friend played in the Brookside Invitational (circa 1970) & drew Hop and a partner as opponents. My dad & his partner (15 handicappers +/-) had them behind all day and were up



FILE PHOTO

UNFORGETTABLE – Former Ohio State running back Howard "Hopalong" Cassady made numerous highlight plays on the way to winning the Heisman Trophy, including this run against Indiana in November 1955.

on Hop & his partner by 3 with 4 holes left. Hop & his partner, thanks to some clutch shots and putts by Hop, won 1 up. At least my Dad could say he took him to the brink but, of course, lost in the end to a Heisman winner and the first Buckeye hero I can remember.

– Charlie Learned
Worthington, Ohio

Several years ago OSU had "picture" days for the team and all the Heisman winners were supposed to be there. I bought an autograph football down to get their signatures on it. I secured Archie, Horvath, Janowicz but Hop was a no show. I shared that story

with a few people and one of them said they'd reach out to him. They got me his phone number and address in Tampa. I contacted Hop who told me to ship him the ball and he'd sign it. He then called me and said it was signed and to have UPS pick it up which I did. I have since added Eddie and Troy to this beloved ball. I met him after this happened and he said he remembered doing this."

– Doug Blair
Columbus

In 1954 at age 9 growing up in Columbus and being an avid Ohio State fan, my sports "hero" Howard "Hopalong" Cassady, produced great

memories for me, including a big win over arch-rival Michigan, a national championship and a Rose Bowl win. The following year I remember attending a game in Ohio Stadium and witnessing a standing ovation when Coach Woody Hayes took senior Cassady out near the end of his last home game. So surprised by the event I vividly recall to this day him taking his helmet off sporting a big grin.

Upon learning of his death and nostalgically researching Cassady's history, much to my surprise I found a photo of Coach Hayes shaking the helmet-toting Cassady's hand on the sidelines which likely was taken moments after the scene I describe above (and still have the

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HOWARD CASSADY (1934-2019)

photographic image in my mind after all these years!).

For Florida State fans, (I live in Tallahassee, Florida) coach Bobby Bowden kept an OSU helmet in his office autographed by Cassady.

Rest in peace, Hop.

– **Jim Spalla**
Tallahassee, Fla.

As a 7-year-old growing up in Cleveland, I was a big sports fan due to the success of the Cleveland Indians and my mom's love of sports. I was a regular reader of the sports pages in the Press and Plain Dealer, even at that young age. With essentially no TV coverage of college football at the time, I really had not latched on to the sport or to the Buckeyes. Then I started reading about some guy named Hopalong Cassady at Ohio State.

Based on what I read, he seemed amazing and I started following all of the stories I could read about Ohio State. I loved the way the Sunday Plain Dealer included pictures from the games that showed the formations of the plays and how they developed. I quickly became a dyed-in-the-wool Buckeye fan and have never stopped being one.

I eventually became a proud Buckeye for my two final years of undergraduate work. After 43 years of living in that state up north, my

Buckeye allegiance has continued to grow, and a lot of it is attributable to my early admiration for Hop.

– **John Sajovec**
Southfield, Mich.

My Dad passed away a number of years ago and he and his brothers grew up in "the bottoms" – and were always in fights. According to my Uncle John (who was Hop's age) – he whooped every single person on the West Side, so Hop must have been one of his victims!

I remember Dad (who was a few years older than Hop) telling me about how he always used to sneak into the stadium. One year (he was probably in high school), he had a redhead join him and together they snuck into several games. Dad didn't know the kid's name – he just called him "Red". A few years later, he recognized "Red" on the sidelines, and then realized that his "partner in crime" had been the great Hop Cassady.

– **Paul Ford Jr.**
Springboro, Ohio

What I recall as a ten-year-old in the visitor stands of the old Central High Field when West High played Central of Howard Cassady was how bright his red hair was. Even from the stands you felt the excitement of his intensity of play. I remember playing outside in the street on Brinker Ave in October of 1954 when a roar echoed from every house

as Cassady returned the interception for 88 yards against Wisconsin. Many people insisted that they heard Bill Corly, the great Buckeye announcer, lose it completely and exclaim "look at that son of a bitch run." It may be apocryphal, but a memory that seems ingrained to the moment. Such was Hoppy for every Buckeye fan of that era.

– **Thomas Rossetti**
Columbus

I remember when Hop intercepted a pass against Wisconsin at a crucial time. The Bucks were underrated as Wisconsin had Alan Ameche and a couple other great offensive players. The pick came at a crucial point of the game and we won handily. Hop was a great baseball player as well.

– **Ron Kegarise**
Canton, Ohio

I was in Tampa in 2014 for the last year of my orthopedic surgery training when I heard that Hopalong Cassady lived there. There is a small bar down the street from Tampa General Hospital called Anchor Bar. We would go there as a team after work some days. We were sitting outside one day and a couple walked into the bar past our table. One of my colleagues said "do you guys know who that is?" I did not get a good look at the couple

and everyone else as well as I said no. He said, "that is a Heisman Trophy winner". We all were surprised and I said "who is it? Hopalong Cassady?"

Everyone was impressed, but then went about their conversations. As a born and bred Buckeye, I of course was super excited and got up immediately. I walked in the bar and went over to the sweet couple at the end talking to the bartender. I introduced myself to Mr. and Mrs. Cassady and was honored to be able to talk with them a bit. Later on that year I went back to Tampa for my bachelor party with my brothers and good friends. I had to take them to this bar for a surprise. Like me, they are all huge Buckeye fans and I knew they would love meeting Hopalong Cassady. We went in and luckily the Cassadys were there. The guys were all so happy to meet him and we enjoyed some drinks and conversation together.

Hop was nice enough to get a picture with us. That is still one of my favorite pictures of my brothers and friends and I know we will always cherish the day we hung out with Howard "Hopalong" Cassady.

– **Michael Doarn**
Columbus

If you would like to share your personal memories of Howard "Hopalong" Cassady for potential publication in a future edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, please send them to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com.



Reynolds Travel "On the Road Again" for 2019 Ohio State Football Away Games

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.

Bengals vs Steelers in Cincinnati: Nov. 24 – same day to Cincinnati via motorcoach with game tickets in Club Level Section \$205-299 per person.

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Badgers Serve As Buckeyes' Biggest Test Yet

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

To say that Ohio State wasn't tested or that the Buckeyes played a poor level of competition through their first seven games would be unfair to both Ohio State and to Ohio State's opponents. There's a glaring lack of top-15 competition in Ohio State's seven wins, but to say that the Buckeyes haven't faced real challenges ignores the legitimate quality of teams such as Cincinnati and Michigan State and the specific strengths of Nebraska (offense) and Northwestern (defense).

Those are legitimate opponents, and Ohio State deserves credit for dispatching all of them so convincingly. However, it would be fair to say that Ohio State has yet to face a team that could truly threaten it and could stand toe to toe with what is generally considered the leader in the Big Ten.

Ohio State's matchup with Wisconsin is unique, because for the first time all season, the Buckeyes are tasked with beating a team that lacks obvious weaknesses. Despite a shocking 24-23 loss to Illinois that dropped Wisconsin to 6-1 on the season, the Badgers are still easily Ohio State's toughest opponent to this point in the season. The Badgers struggled with conservative play calling against the Fighting Illini but still look like one of the most talented and successful teams in the Big Ten.

Most of that success, at least offensively, can be chalked up to junior halfback Jonathan Taylor. A three-year starter, Taylor is considered by many to be the best running back in the country, and perhaps even a Heisman contender. His stats back it up. Through seven games, Taylor has rushed for 957 yards on 157 carries, racking up 15 touchdowns. He paces the Badger offense and serves as the workhorse of all workhorses. When he's on, Wisconsin's offense is one of the best in the country.

Unlike in years past, however, the Badgers are not entirely dependent on their dominant halfback to move the football. They certainly take a large step back when their star struggles, but quarterback Jack Coan has been a significant improvement over Alex Hornibrook (now at Florida State). After a challenging first season as a part-time starter in 2018, the junior has come into his own in 2019 after beating out blue-chip freshman Graham Mertz for the starting job.

He isn't a playmaker of Justin Fields' level, and he doesn't exactly have a cannon for an arm, but Coan is an impressive game manager. In the past, Wisconsin has been at its best with a quarterback who can keep

the offense ahead of or on schedule while avoiding mistakes, and Coan is very much that kind of player.

Despite the loss of four starters from last season, Wisconsin's offensive line remains one of the best in the Big Ten, thanks in large part to the leadership and ability of the one returner, center Tyler Biadasz. The junior was a first-team All-Big Ten selection in 2018 and has carried that momentum into 2019, serving as the most dominant and consistent player up front. He's started 34 games for the Badgers and will be the biggest test for the Buckeye front seven.

Around Biadasz, Wisconsin is lacking returning starters but not lacking in experience. Left guard Jason Erdmann has played in 47 games in his career but started in just eight, and left tackle Cole Van Lanen has played in 34 games but started eight. The right side is less experienced but very talented, led by a sophomore duo of Josh Seltzner at guard and Logan Bruss at right tackle, though a third sophomore, Kayden Lyles, rotates in for Seltzner and Erdmann and should be considered as well.

Those six players serve to make Wisconsin the most talented and deepest line the Buckeyes have faced yet and will be a real test for a defensive line that has really blown past every opponent so far.

Defensively, the Badgers are as good as ever. Led by defensive coordinator Jim Leonhard, Wisconsin looks a whole lot like it has for the better part of the last two decades. The Badgers are led by four excellent linebackers in Jack Sanborn, Chris Orr, Zack Baun and Noah Burks, behind a defensive line with plenty of talent and even more size, with the three starters averaging 291 pounds.

As usual, Wisconsin's pass rush is elite and led not by that line but by blitzes off the edge by Baun and Burks. The three linemen and two middle linebackers are primarily responsible for run stuffing and do an excellent job of it, as the Badgers allow just 58.4 rushing yards per game.

In the defensive backfield, Wisconsin is again not doing anything new. There's still a lot of man coverage, despite inexperience at cornerback with two sophomore starters in Deron Harrell and Faion Hicks, while safeties Reggie Pearson and Eric Burrell patrol the back end, generally dropping into either cover 2 or cover 3.

If there is a weakness on this Badger team, it's probably in that backfield. All four starters are talented, and both corners started last season as freshmen, but along with Pearson, there are three underclassmen in the backfield. Burrell is a junior and has played plenty, but this was a group that really struggled last season. It has

Get To Know ... Wisconsin

About Wisconsin

- **2019 record:** 6-1 (3-1)
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Pro; Defensive Formation – 3-4; Starters Returning – Offense 5, Defense 6, Specialists 2.
- **Head Coach:** Paul Chryst, 48-13 in five years at Wisconsin, 19-19 in three years at Pitt.
- **Series History:** 83rd meeting, Ohio State leads 59-18-5.
- **School Facts:** Location – Madison, WI; Enrollment – 43,820; Nickname – Badgers; Color – Red; Conference – Big Ten (West Division); Stadium – Camp Randall Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity – 80,321).

Top Offensive Returners

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Jonathan Taylor	157	957	6.1	15
Nakia Watson	55	247	4.5	2
Garrett Groshek	23	110	4.8	1

Passing	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Jack Coan	127-167	76.0	1,383	9-2

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Quintez Cephus	24	353	14.7	3
Jake Ferguson	20	242	12.1	2
Danny Davis	20	168	8.4	0

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game	– 39.7
Rushing Yards Per Game	– 253.4
Passing Yards Per Game	– 208.3
Total Offense Avg. Per Game	– 443.7

2019 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Aug. 30	at USF	W, 49-0
Sept. 7	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	W, 61-0
Sept. 14	MICHIGAN	W, 35-14
Sept. 21	NORTHWESTERN	W, 24-15
Oct. 5	KENT STATE	W, 48-0
Oct. 12	MICHIGAN STATE	W, 38-0
Oct. 19	at Illinois	L, 24-23
Oct. 26	at Ohio State	12 p.m.
Nov. 9	IOWA	TBA
Nov. 16	at Nebraska	TBA
Nov. 23	PURDUE	TBA
Nov. 30	at Minnesota	TBA
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.

Top Defensive Returners

Def. Leaders	Solo-Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Jack Sanborn	23-17	40	6.5-31	3.5
Chris Orr	20-18	38	8.0-62	8.0
Zack Baun	19-11	30	11.0-50	6.5

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Eric Burrell	2	13	6.5	0	16
Noah Burks	1	68	68.0	1	68
Jack Sanborn	1	39	39.0	0	39

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed	– 7.6
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed	– 58.4
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed	– 135.4
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed	– 193.9

been better in 2019, allowing 135.4 yards through the air per game as opposed to 189.1 in 2018, but there are certainly some question marks around this group.

Players To Watch

Taylor is the obvious choice and will draw most of Ohio State's defensive attention. Wisconsin schemes for him to carry the ball about 30 times per game, and he may see upwards of that total against the Buckeyes because of how good Ohio State's pass rush is. The Buckeye linebackers and defensive tackles will need to show up in a big way, because if they don't, Taylor could run free.

Wisconsin has four true receiving threats, with wideout Quintez Cephus serving as the most dangerous of the bunch. He's reeled in 24 catches, 353 yards and three touchdowns out of Wisconsin's version of the slot and will threaten Ohio State vertically with his speed more than anyone else on the roster.

Danny Davis is a familiar face for Buckeye fans, because the Springfield (Ohio) High School product very nearly headed to Ohio State back in the class of 2017, when he was ranked the 230th-best player in the country. The Buckeyes never offered the Ohio product, however, opting instead for Trevon Grimes (now at Florida), Jaylen Harris and Elijah Gardiner.

For the Badgers, Davis serves as another speedy threat, though he spends much of his time gashing defenses horizontally, racking up 168 yards on 20 receptions. He isn't a big-play threat, but the Badgers will dink and dunk with him all day if Ohio State isn't ready for it.

The third and fourth options – wideout A.J. Taylor (158 yards on 16 receptions) and tight end Jake Ferguson (242 yards on 20 receptions) – complement each other as well as any duo in the conference, and Wisconsin often uses one to set up the other. Because Taylor is another smaller, speedier player (only 5-11), he's able to slip around in the backfield, and the Badgers can and will use Ferguson as a

screeener of sorts for him. If Taylor can get established, defenses tend to leave Ferguson open, which can create moments like their game against Central Michigan, when Ferguson caught just three passes, but racked up 49 yards as a big-play threat down the middle of the field.

Defensively, end Matt Hennings (12 tackles, three for a loss, two sacks) is probably the player who will make the most tangible plays, because he's the best pass rusher on the line, though he technically sits behind Isaiahh Loudermilk (eight tackles, three for a loss, one sack) on the depth chart. Nose tackle Bryson Williams has just five tackles on the season because of injury troubles but will be disruptive in the middle.

The real stars are at linebacker, as mentioned. Sanborn is a tackle machine at middle linebacker, similar to players like Michigan State's Joe Bachie and Northwestern's Paddy Fisher. He isn't a great athlete, but it's hard to argue with 40 tackles through seven games. Baun is the playmaker of the bunch and the best pass rusher on the team, with 30 tackles and 6½ sacks. Orr (38 tackles) serves as the middle point between the two, because he isn't quite as dangerous as Baun, but he is more consistent, like Sanborn.

Burrell is the best player in the backfield and will show up at least a few times in Ohio State's backfield on some creative blitz packages. He isn't amazing in coverage, but he isn't someone to pick on either. Hicks is the better tackler of the two starting corners, but Harrell will likely draw whoever Wisconsin decides is Ohio State's No. 1 receiver. With Harrell's size (6-2, 182), there's a good chance that choice is Binjimen Victor.

Wisconsin is deep, talented and well-coached, but ultimately, it is a team without truly elite athleticism. Taylor can beat anybody, but if he doesn't get going, Wisconsin likely doesn't have the firepower to keep pace with the Buckeyes, even with a very solid defense that should keep them in the game.

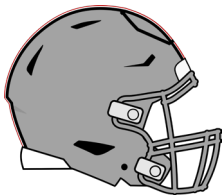
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Projected Depth Charts

How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. WISCONSIN RUSH DEFENSE

Does everything that was about to be written about this game go out the window after Illinois stunned Wisconsin 24-23. Maybe, but the fact is the Badgers are going to be angry and more focused than ever, and the Buckeyes will be favored by an unreasonable margin. OSU fans know all too well the past two seasons that a very good team can suffer an embarrassing loss then rebound. It should be a treat to see how J.K. Dobbins and the Buckeyes handle what was the top rush defense in the nation (44.7 yards per game) before the Illini posted 141 on the ground. Dobbins has 947 yards and seven touchdowns on 7.1 yards per carry average. His 135.3 yards per game is nearly triple what Wisconsin was giving up. The not-so-secret weapon for the Buckeyes is backup (in name only) Master Teague. As the coaching staff trusts him more, his chances of being a factor in the first half with meaningful carries to spell Dobbins increases. The Buckeyes need to establish the run game to allow quarterback Justin Fields to operate. **EDGE: EVEN**

WISCONSIN RUSH OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

Have you heard? The Badgers are good at carrying the ball. Next to cheese, downhill running backs might be Wisconsin's biggest industry. Jonathan Taylor is the latest and greatest. He entered the Illinois game of Oct. 19 second nationally in rushing yards per game (137.5), a spot ahead of Dobbins, and rambled for 132 yards vs. the Illini. He has 15 rushing TDs. The Buckeyes are no slouches against the run, and the return to health of defensive end Jonathon Cooper in recent games helps. OSU is a top-10 rush defense (92.7 yards per game) but hasn't seen anyone like Taylor this season. Even in the loss to Illinois, Wisconsin had the ball for 40:49 and will try the same strategy vs. OSU. **EDGE: EVEN**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. WISCONSIN PASS DEFENSE

The game may come down to how well Fields can handle the No. 1 scoring defense in the nation that already has four shutouts and had allowed only 29 points all season until last week. The Badgers' pass defense is still the best (135.4 yards per game) after yielding 174 yards to Illini, and they have eight picks. Fields' 22 passing TDs (plus eight more on the ground) have come at the expense of only one interception. A key will be left tackle Thayer Munford, who has been hobbled lately but was badly needed when Northwestern offered resistance on Oct. 18. The line needs to protect Fields and give him time to survey his array of talented receivers. The Badgers have 27 sacks (OSU is second nationally with 29), which ranks seventh. Fields was sacked once against Northwestern, but only his athleticism prevented two or three more. **EDGE: EVEN**

WISCONSIN PASS OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Jack Coan has been an efficient and effective QB thanks in part to taking advantage of Taylor. Wisconsin is six in third-down conversion at 52.0 percent (OSU is tops, 56.1), and one reason is the Badgers need an average of just over five yards on third down to move the chains. That gives them the option of battering with Taylor or popping high-percentage short passes, which also negates OSU's sack attack. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Buckeyes have a maestro in punter Drue Chrisman and his ability to change field position. Kicker Blake Haubeil started the Northwestern game poorly with an out-of-bounds kickoff but made up for it with a career-long 55-yard field goal. It's perfect timing for his confidence with all the big games still ahead. Wisconsin's Zach Hintze has been strong on kickoffs, and Aron Cruickshank has averaged 28.2 yards per kick return. Punter Anthony Lotti averages 40.0, and Collin Larsh made a season-best 44-yard field goal vs. the Illini. He made 3 of 4 in the game. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

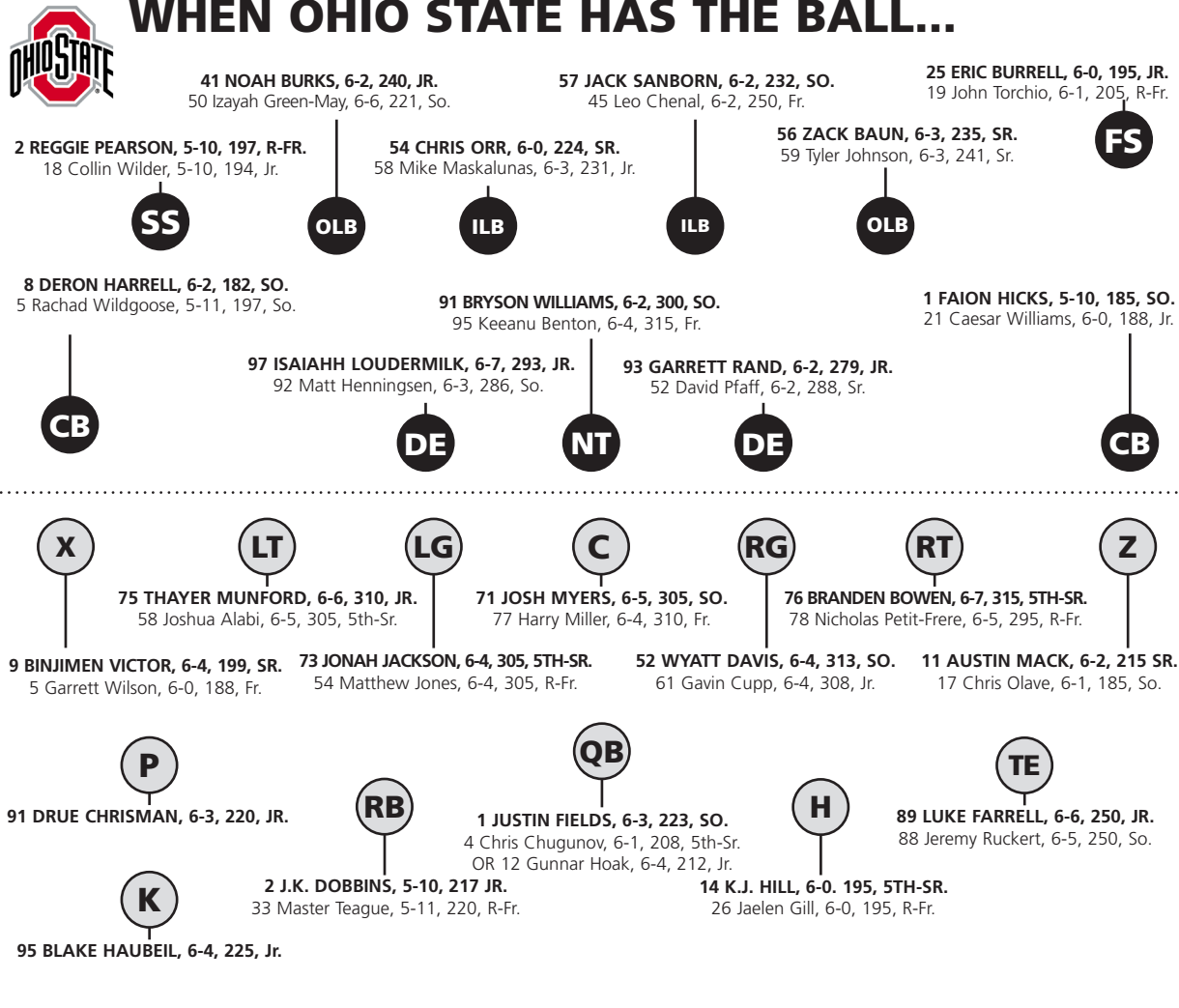
INTANGIBLES

It's hard to find fault with the Buckeyes in any area, but slow first-quarters – seven points or fewer in five of seven games – belie their 158-20 advantage in the second quarter. At some point a team is going to make OSU pay for its early snoozing. The Buckeyes have not faced any adversity after the opening 15 minutes this season, and the Badgers are intent on making the Buckeyes sweat and see how they respond. Will the Buckeyes' confidence in their ability to turn on the jets when they need to lead to complacency, or, will they be ready for the bitter Badgers? **EDGE: WISCONSIN**

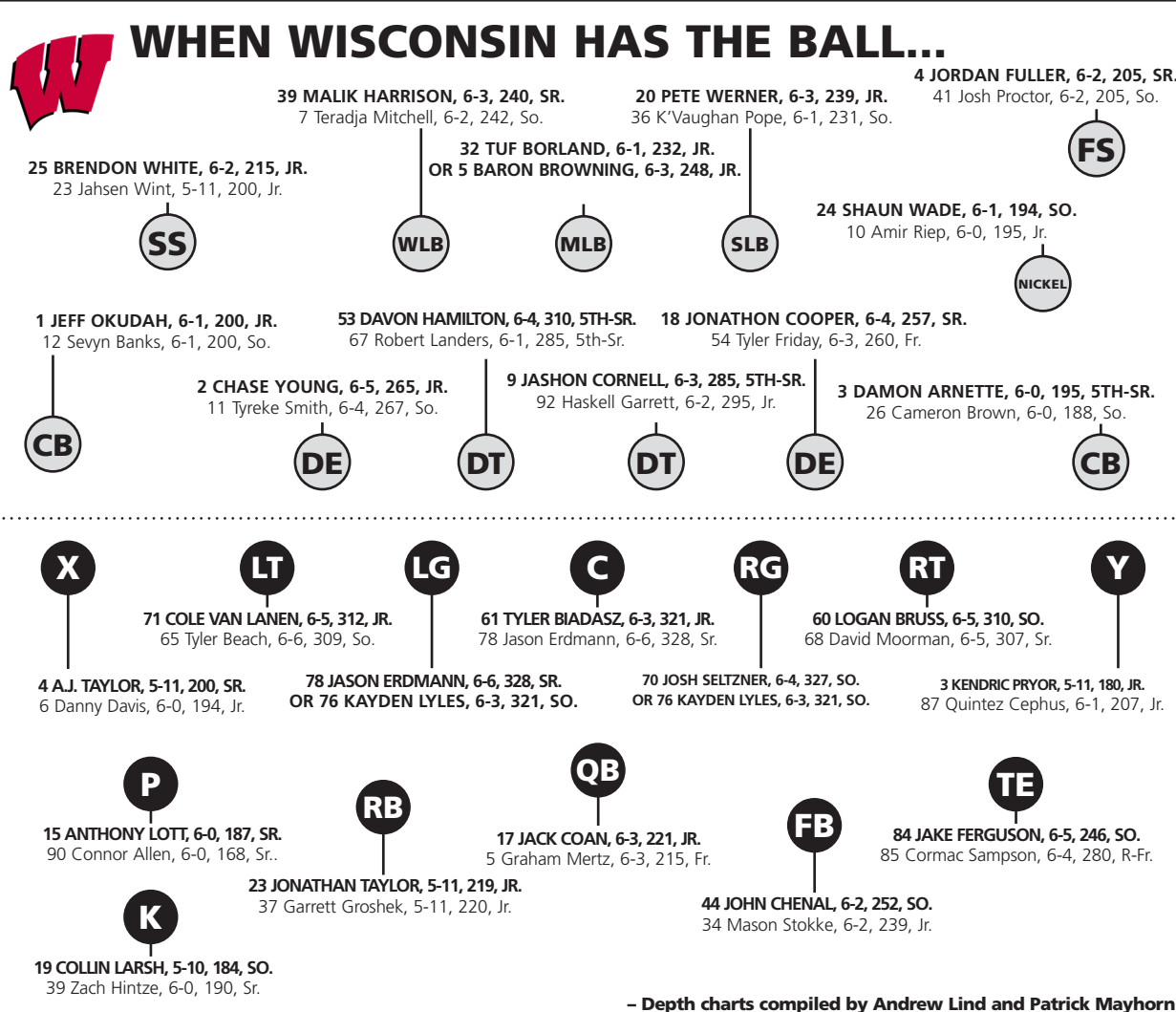
STAFF PREDICTION

Even with the loss to Illinois, if this game were being played at night in Madison, it might be a pick'em at worst. It's not and it won't be. What was going to be a classic top-six battle now seems like a letdown, but OSU coach Ryan Day won't see it that way and neither will his team. **OHIO STATE, 27-14**

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



WHEN WISCONSIN HAS THE BALL...



- Depth charts compiled by Andrew Lind and Patrick Mayhorn

Texas Cornerback Watts Commits To Buckeyes

On Oct. 13 – roughly a week and a half after he decommitted from Oklahoma – Little Elm, Texas, four-star cornerback Ryan Watts announced his commitment to Ohio State.

The 6-3, 187-pound Watts, who is considered the 19th-best cornerback and No. 258 prospect overall in the class of 2020, had been committed to the Sooners since April. However, Buckeye head coach Ryan Day and co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley had maintained contact with Watts in hopes of flipping him from his pledge.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Andrew Lind

Watts took a clandestine unofficial visit to Columbus in June, which showed the staff he was serious about his interest in Ohio State. His official visit for the 76-5 win over Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 21 only ramped up the speculation of a potential flip.

With programs such as Penn State and Texas A&M also pushing for an official visit, Watts reopened his recruitment on Oct. 2.

“I want to make it evident that I have nothing but love for head coach (Lincoln) Riley, (defensive coordinator Alex) Grinch and (cornerbacks coach Roy) Manning, as well as the entire University of Oklahoma,” Watts said in a statement on Twitter. “I’ve

developed relationships and an overall feel for OU, one that I can’t say I could ever have for many other places.

“To the fans and overall community, I want to thank you for all the support throughout. I have nothing but respect and admiration for everything Oklahoma football represents, and I wish the best of luck to its players, coaches and program in its entirety.”

Watts initially planned to announce his commitment to Ohio State in the following days but delayed a few days after his grandmother passed away.

With his decision, Watts became the 24th member of Ohio State’s 2020 recruiting class, joining La Habra, Calif., four-star cornerback Clark Phillips; Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star cornerback Lejond Cavazos; and Tucson (Ariz.) Salpointe Catholic four-star safety Lathan Ransom in the Buckeyes’ secondary. Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco four-star athlete Kourt Williams and Muskegon, Mich., four-star athlete Cameron Martinez are also likely to be defensive backs at the next level.

Such an influx of talent will be needed in the secondary next year, as the Buckeyes are set to lose safety Jordan Fuller and cornerback Damon Arnette to graduation. Cornerbacks Jeff Okudah and Shaun Wade will be draft-eligible and could potentially leave for the NFL after this season, as well.

While Day can’t directly discuss recruits – committed or not – due to NCAA rules, he did acknowledge he and the rest of the staff believe a player like Watts, who will graduate early and enroll in classes in January, could contribute to the team immediately upon his arrival.

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

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

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Paris Johnson	OT	6-8	295	★★★★★	Cincinnati Princeton
Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Luke Wypler	OC	6-4	285	★★★★	Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	6-1	188	★★★★	Rockwall, Texas
Gee Scott Jr.	WR	6-3	207	★★★★	Sammamish (Wa.) Eastside Catholic
Jakob James	OG	6-5	275	★★★	Cincinnati Elder
Trey Leroux	OT	6-8	355	★★★	Norwalk, Ohio
Lejond Cavazos	CB	6-1	190	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy
Julian Fleming	WR	6-2	199	★★★★★	Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia
Jake Seibert	K	6-1	190	★★★	Cincinnati La Salle
Grant Toutant	OT	6-7	320	★★★	Warren (Mich.) De La Salle
Ty Hamilton	DE	6-3	250	★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) Central
Clark Phillips	CB	5-11	178	★★★★★	La Habra, Calif.
Cody Simon	OLB	6-1	218	★★★★	Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter’s Prep
Darrion Henry	DT	6-5	279	★★★★	Cincinnati Princeton
Joe Royer	TE	6-5	225	★★★	Cincinnati Elder
Mitchell Melton	OLB	6-3	235	★★★	Olney (Md.) Good Counsel
Cameron Martinez	ATH	6-0	183	★★★	Muskegon, Mich.
Josh Fryar	OL	6-6	305	★★★	Beech Grove, Ind.
Mookie Cooper	WR	5-9	193	★★★★	St. Louis Trinity Catholic
Lathan Ransom	S	6-1	193	★★★★	Tucson (Ariz.) Salpointe Catholic
Kourt Williams	ATH	6-1	216	★★★★	Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco
Jacolbe Cowan	DT	6-5	262	★★★★	Charlotte (N.C.) Providence Day School
Ryan Watts	CB	6-3	187	★★★★	Little Elm, Texas

Players in the class of 2021 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jack Sawyer	DE	6-6	220	★★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) North
Kyle McCord	QB	6-3	204	★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph’s
Jayden Ballard	WR	6-2	175	★★★★	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Ben Christman	OT	6-6	299	★★★★	Richfield (Ohio) Revere
Reid Carrico	LB	6-3	225	★★★★	Irontown (Ohio)

“When you’re looking to recruit somebody, typically you look at them like, ‘Hey, this is a guy that we project that can come in and make a difference right away,’” Day

Continued On Page 30

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Nov 2 - Second Bye Week
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Nov 16 - at Rutgers Scarlet Knights
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Nov 30 - at TTUN
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J6-3



J6-8



J6-10

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ASK AN ANALYST

With Lettermen Row's Jeremy Birmingham

Ohio State landed a commitment on Oct. 13 from 2020 Little Elm, Texas, four-star cornerback Ryan Watts. What does he bring to the class on the field, and why was landing his pledge a priority for co-defensive coordinator and secondary coach Jeff Hafley?

"The biggest thing you see with Watts (6-3, 187) is elite length at the cornerback position, a trait that the Buckeyes absolutely love. He's the fifth defensive back in the class for Ohio State and, because of his frame and physical tools, a player that should compete early for playing time with the Buckeyes. He adds versatility and depth to a defensive back haul that needed both."

The Buckeyes welcomed 2020 Lancaster, Texas, four-star running back Kevontre Bradford (5-11, 193) to campus for an official visit for the 34-10 win over Michigan State on Oct. 5, and the staff is still looking for their first commitment at the position. Where does Ohio State stand with Bradford following his trip to Columbus?

"Right now, it seems the Buckeyes are still in the evaluation process with Bradford as well as other running back targets like Cincinnati Winton Woods three-star Miyan Williams (5-10, 210); Dallas Jesuit

four-star E.J. Smith (5-11, 199); and Dalton, Ga., four-star Jahmyr Gibbs (5-11, 194).

"Bradford's official visit – his first visit of any kind to the school – was really more of an in-person interview as he and the Ohio State coaching staff work to get to know each other better. All indications coming out of that visit were very positive as to Bradford's opinion of the Buckeyes, but there's no hurry in Columbus to make a final decision until a chance to perform a similar 'interview' occurs with other targets."

Ohio State offered a scholarship to 2020 Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., four-star quarterback C.J. Stroud shortly after his unofficial visit for the win over the Spartans. Seeing as the Buckeyes are looking to add a second quarterback this cycle to pair with Scottsdale, Ariz., Chaparral four-star Jack Miller, how do you see Stroud's recruitment progressing from here?

"The expectation is that Stroud – who has risen up the recruiting rankings in recent months – will still take a few more visits, including an official visit to Ohio State, before making any kind of decision."

"The Buckeyes have been slow to decide if they were going to make a second quarterback a priority in 2020, but when they decided to go all in on that

choice, it was clear Stroud was the guy they wanted. I think they'll get him eventually, but it's not likely to be a quick decision."

The Buckeyes added to their defensive line with a commitment from 2020 Charlotte (N.C.) Providence Day four-star defensive tackle Jacobbe Cowan on the eve of the Michigan State game (Oct. 4) but also hosted Knoxville (Tenn.) Catholic four-star defensive end Tyler Baron that weekend with the hope of adding one more player at that position in the current recruiting haul. Do you think the Buckeyes can overtake the heavily favored home-state Volunteers in his recruitment?

"Baron's father, Patrick Abernathy, works for Tennessee football, and that is one of the things really worth monitoring from here because it seems that as long as he's employed in Knoxville, the expectation is that Baron will end up playing for the Volunteers."

"If something goes awry, though, the Buckeyes and the Kentucky Wildcats have each put themselves into a position where they could end up the beneficiary. Baron has already made his official visit to each school and, after initially planning a late-October decision, has decided to delay his choice. I think that's because of potential instability in Knoxville."

Continued From Page 28

said during his press conference on Oct. 14. "He's further along in his process, and so we have those conversations. You've got to come in here ready to play."

Day Credits Staff For Big Recruiting Weekend

Ohio State's 34-10 win over Michigan State on Oct. 5 was arguably the biggest recruiting weekend of the season thus far, as the Buckeyes hosted dozens of the nation's top prospects – and even broke out black alternate uniforms to mark the occasion.

Of course, Day was thrilled with his team's effort on the field. He was also impressed with how his staff balanced mingling with recruits while also remaining focused on the game at hand.

"That's why you work so many hours and you have so many people who do a great job within the staff here," Day said during his midweek press conference on Oct. 8. "There was a lot going on here. I don't know the total number (of prospects) we had, but it was a ridiculous amount of people that were here. I thought (director of player personnel Mark) Pantoni and his staff did a great job organizing that and handling it well."

"I think recruits and their families understand that on game day they're not going to get as much time face to face with the coaches or anything. They come for the atmosphere and they understand that, and all the feedback we got was that it was a home run."

Ohio State is expecting a similar turnout for the upcoming home games against Wisconsin (Oct. 26) and Penn State (Nov.

23), though a noon start against the Badgers will present quite a different atmosphere from a night game. Kickoff for the game against the Nittany Lions has yet to be announced, but it's likely to be a noon or 3:30 start, as well.

"It's great to have all those guys come visit us on Saturday night and get a feel for what the gameday atmosphere was like, which was awesome," Day said. "We had so many recruits in."

Renewed Focus On In-State Talent

Ohio has long been considered one of the deepest states in the country when it comes to high school football talent. But unlike California, Florida, Georgia and Texas – where elite programs have to compete with other in-state schools for said talent – Ohio State is the only Power Five

program within its state's borders.

Since Urban Meyer arrived in Columbus in 2012, however, the Buckeyes' recruiting approach has been more national than local. His final full class (2018) featured just five in-state prospects – Westerville South four-star all-purpose back Jaelen Gill, Cleveland Heights four-star defensive end Tyreke Smith, Huber Heights Wayne four-star athlete L'Christian "Blue" Smith, Toledo St. John's Jesuit four-star linebacker Dallas Gant and Pickerington North three-star defensive end Alex Williams. By comparison, Jim Tressel's final class in 2009 had 14 prospects from Ohio.

There's no denying part of that disparity was because of a decline in topflight talent locally, while landing five-star prospects from outside the state actually helped Ohio

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Ohio State Offers California Quarterback Stroud

Continued From Page 30

State achieve its goals on the field more than an in-state three-star prospect might have, for example. But the Buckeyes also missed out on a number of players, as well, including Cincinnati Elder five-star offensive tackle Tommy Kraemer and Cleveland St. Ignatius four-star offensive tackle Liam Eichenberg (both Notre Dame) in 2016 and Fairfield five-star offensive tackle Jackson Carman (Clemson) in 2018.

No matter the reason for the lack of Ohioans in Meyer's recruiting hauls, Day has taken a different approach than his predecessor.

Ohio State's 2021 recruiting class – which will be the first without any commitments attached to Meyer's tenure – currently sits at five total pledges.

Four of them are from Ohio, including Pickerington North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer, Richfield Revere four-star offensive tackle Ben Christman, Massillon Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard and Ironton four-star linebacker Reid Carrico.

"In recruiting, our foundation is Ohio and the Midwest, and then we supplement it with national guys," Day said on Oct. 8. "But when you have so many talented guys in the state of Ohio that are right down the street, it's huge for us."

Unlike those above-mentioned states – where, for example, one kid may have grown up rooting for Texas while his neighbor may have liked Texas A&M –

Day knows most of the kids in Ohio have dreamed of playing for Ohio State.

"If somebody is from the state of Ohio, then we're going to have a leg up on anybody else in the country in recruiting because this is their home state and they grew up being Buckeyes. That matters," Day said. "I think there's so many (talented) guys in Ohio right now that want to stay home to be a part of this."

Ohio State Offers Another Quarterback

Although Ohio State privately extended a scholarship to Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., four-star quarterback C.J. Stroud several weeks back, he waited until after his unofficial visit for the game against Michigan State to announce it publicly on social media on Oct. 8.

The 6-3, 194-pound Stroud – who is considered the fourth-best pro-style quarterback and No. 138 prospect overall in the class of 2020 – attended the game with his personal quarterback coach, Quincy Avery, who has notably worked out with former Buckeye signal caller Dwayne Haskins and current starter Justin Fields in the past.

Stroud has been on the Buckeyes' radar since June, but interest in him finally intensified when Day and passing game coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich decided they wanted to pursue a second signal caller this cycle for depth purposes.

"I think the ideal quarterback room is four quarterbacks and young guys that you're developing who want to get on the



ANDREW LIND

LOOKING FOR ANOTHER ARM – Four-star quarterback C.J. Stroud took an unofficial visit for Ohio State's 34-10 win over Michigan State on Oct. 5.



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A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1989

Talking to Akron Buchtel star running back Ricky Powers left one with the impression that he wasn't feeling any pressure at all. The recruiting, the media attention – it was all a real yawner for him.

The 6-1, 205-pound back's speed, size and versatility were having the opposite effect on college recruiters, however. Considered by most recruiting publications to be one of the top-rated high school running backs in the Midwest, Powers possessed the kind of rare talent that could help him have an immediate impact in the college ranks. That's why Florida State, Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Penn State, UCLA and USC were all interested in him.

"Many scouts are split on whether Powers or Euclid's Robert Smith is the top back in the Midwest," said recruiting analyst Tom Lemming. "(I think) he may just be the country's best back. He is a strong runner with great speed, vision and the ability to cut on a dime."

25 Years Ago – 1994

Dayton Meadowdale wide receiver Peerless Price may have been without equal when it came to Ohio's finest prep receivers. A 6-3, 185-pound ball of speed, Price caught 29 passes in 1993, averaging 20 yards per catch, and scored seven times. He also added two more end-zone appearances via punt returns, his true forte.

"I like being a big-play guy," Price said. "Punt returns are especially fun. They're crazy, though. You have to field the ball, and you see 11 guys coming at you. Make a move here and there and you can make them look really bad."

Price was the latest of the Dayton pipeline to find his way onto recruiting lists far and wide, joining Keith Byars, Martin Bayless and Dan Wilkinson, among others, as coveted players from the area. His talent drew interest from Florida, Illinois, Notre Dame, Ohio State and Tennessee.

20 Years Ago – 1999

Andrew Lee and Terry Glenn may have been very different players, but they were permanently tethered because of their experiences as wide receivers at Columbus Brookhaven High School,

and their commitments to Ohio State. However, Lee's head coach, Greg Miller, advised against those kinds of comparisons.

"They're totally different people," cautioned Miller, referring to Glenn and Lee, an Ohio State commitment for the 2000 season. "But the one thing they have in common is their speed and their tremendous vertical leap."

15 Years Ago – 2004

Following the 2004 season, the Ohio State football team was going to be thin on tailbacks. True freshman Tony Pittman was the only back set to be on the roster who had game experience, with seniors Lydell Ross and Maurice Hall exhausting their eligibility and freshman Erik Haw redshirting.

It was clear that the Buckeyes would be scouring the nation for running backs in their 2005 class, and the top name appeared to be Jacksonville (Fla.) Sandalwood's Maurice Wells.

A shifty 5-9, 177-pounder, Wells was considered by Rivals.com to be the nation's No. 3 all-purpose back and the No. 14 overall player. He had also long been the holder of an OSU offer and had a history in the Columbus area, living there for a short time when he was very young and coming back to visit relatives in the area occasionally.

Wells knew when his next trip to Columbus would be too: for the annual showdown with Michigan that November.

"That's a big game for sure, so I want to see the atmosphere and everything," Wells told BSB.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Ohio State was in need of a space-filling, run-stuffing defensive tackle in the 2010 class, and Detroit Southeastern product Johnathan Hankins looked like the best bet.

The problem, however, was that it appeared that the 6-2, 300-pound Hankins had a long way to go before becoming academically eligible. He was reportedly deficient in both a qualifying test score and grade-point average.

As a junior, Hankins earned all-city honors after recording 87 tackles including 13 for loss and five sacks.

In addition to OSU, Hankins held offers from Minnesota, Oklahoma and Wisconsin, as well as interest from Illinois and Virginia.

Five Years Ago – 2014

The night before camping at Ohio State, Macedonia (Ohio) Nordonia three-star cornerback Denzel Ward wasn't nervous.

Confident in his game, he formulated a plan of attack for the camp that would likely determine whether he'd ever receive a scholarship from the team he grew up watching. He already had the attention of the Ohio State coaching staff, which had increasingly been monitoring him as a prospect, but Ward wanted to attack every little detail – even when it came to make sure he was the first in line for drills.

As the day unfolded, uncertainty set in. Sometimes everything clicks for athletes, and some days are a battle. For Ward, his Ohio State camp experience had been the latter.

"I wasn't quite sure," he told BSB in October. "I didn't have my best day, and I knew I had a lot of stuff to work on, so I wasn't real sure where the coaches were at their point of view. I thought I could have done way better."

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer and cornerbacks coach Kerry Coombs had seen enough, though. Coombs pulled Ward off the field and moved him into a room where Meyer offered him a scholarship. Ward accepted on the spot, giving Ohio State their ninth commitment in the 2015 class.

One Year Ago – 2018

In light of Avon, Ind., four-star running back Sampson James' flip from Ohio State to Indiana, the Buckeyes were evidently leaving no stone unturned at the position as they looked to fill their new void in the 2019 class.

OSU offered Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy three-star Marcus Crowley, who had been committed to Miami (Fla.) since Dec. 6, 2017.

The 6-1, 200-pounder came from the same high school as a pair of OSU players in freshman cornerback Tyreke Johnson and redshirt freshman defensive back Shaun Wade.

Also at Trinity Christian were a pair of 2020 cornerbacks offered by Ohio State in five-star Fred Davis and four-star Miles Brooks.

Crowley became the latest potential option to replace James. Ohio State's other offers to uncommitted running backs included the Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy duo of five-star Trey Sanders and four-star Noah Cain.

field and understand how much they love Ohio State and the program and want to be here forever and work through it," Day said on Oct. 14. "Even if they're not the starter, they still want to be here and love their teammates and all those things.

"Unfortunately, that's hard right now, and so I've come to grips with that. As much as we'd like to have four, we're going to keep working recruiting four and work as hard as we can to make sure we have those guys in here. But also knowing that in today's day and age, especially the way that we develop quarterbacks here, a lot of guys are going to feel like they can go somewhere else and play. I get that.

"When we recruit guys, we tell them you're going to be recruited here and you're going to be coached at the highest level in all of football in terms of the style that we're going to be running on offense, different protections, the different coverage structures and the whole style. I think they love that, and I think that's why guys want to come here."

As it stands now, Ohio State will have just three scholarship quarterbacks on the roster next fall in Justin Fields, Gunnar Hoak and Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star commit Jack Miller. And Stroud – who is close friends with wide receiver commits Julian Fleming, Gee Scott and Jaxon Smith-Njigba, as well as the previously mentioned Cavazos – is reportedly unfazed by the potential competition that would await him in Columbus should he eventually choose to commit to the Buckeyes.

Sources from within the program have told Buckeye Sports Bulletin they're confident in Ohio State's chances of landing Stroud. However, he's expected to take several official visits this fall – including a

return trip to Columbus with his mother in November, though which game remains up in the air – before making a final decision.

Baylor and Oregon are two programs high on Stroud's list that are likely to land official visits, as well.

Staff Checks On Miller

Naturally, questions about the strength of Miller's pledge began to swirl on social media immediately following Stroud's announcement. It's worth noting, however that his pinned tweet on Twitter says he's 100 percent committed to Ohio State, just as he's been since July 2018.

The 6-4, 210-pound Miller, who is considered the 10th-best pro-style quarterback and No. 240 prospect overall in the 2020 recruiting class, has been kept in the loop when it comes to the Buckeyes' pursuit of a second signal caller this cycle. Holding onto his pledge remains among the staff's top priorities, too, which is one reason Yurcich traveled to Arizona on Oct. 9 to meet with Miller and his family.

The visit also gave Yurcich a chance to see Miller – who missed four games with a bruised shoulder but returned to practice that afternoon – in action for the first time since he suffered the injury on Aug. 30.

Miller will return the favor when he takes his official visit for the Wisconsin game on Oct. 26. It will be his first time on campus since he attended Ohio State's 62-39 win over Michigan last November.

Buckeyes Visit Georgia Tech Running Back Commit

The open week on Ohio State's schedule gave the coaching staff a chance to hit the road and spend time with some of their top

recruiting targets, which is why running backs coach Tony Alford was in Dalton, Ga., on Oct. 8.

There, he spent time with Georgia Tech four-star running back commit Jahmyr Gibbs, who is set to take an unofficial visit with the Buckeyes for the Maryland game on Nov. 9. He'll be accompanied on that trip by his godparents.

Sources close to the program indicated the visit went well, as Alford and Gibbs discussed his potential role on the field as well as life off it.

The 5-11, 194-pound Gibbs – who is considered the nation's eighth-best all-purpose back and No. 292 prospect overall in the class of 2020 – has been committed to the Yellow Jackets since May. He landed an offer from the Buckeyes on Sept. 5, though, and is among the staff's top targets as they look to potentially add two running backs in the current cycle.

Other running back targets include Lancaster, Texas, four-star Kevontre Bradford; Dallas Jesuit four-star E.J. Smith; Dublin (Ohio) Coffman four-star Michael

Drennen; and Cincinnati Winton Woods three-star Miyan Williams.

Commit Cooper Deemed Ineligible

This offseason, Ohio State four-star wide receiver commit Mookie Cooper transferred from St. Louis Trinity Catholic to Maryland Heights (Mo.) Pattonville so that he could graduate early from high school and enroll in college courses in January.

Like many private institutions around the country, Trinity Catholic doesn't allow student-athletes to graduate early. However, the school – which won the state championship in football last fall – objected to Cooper's transfer on athletic grounds.

The Missouri State High School Activities Association deemed Cooper ineligible as a result, and now his senior year and high school athletic career are over.

Thankfully for Cooper, the decision in no way impacts his standing with the Buckeyes. He plans to work out at least five times a week to stay in shape as he hopes to contribute as a true freshman next fall.




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BIG TEN NOTES

Joe Dempsey

"(This) is a terrific way for us to continue to reach out to our community through our Badgers Give Back program," said Wisconsin athletic director Barry Alvarez. "I am proud of our student-athletes for their continuing involvement in initiatives like this, and I am very appreciative of our partners at Under Armour for their assistance."

The Wisconsin Shoe Project involves a Badger student-athlete presenting a pair of size-appropriate Under Armour shoes to a child selected by one of Wisconsin Athletics' seven community partners at each of 50 preselected Wisconsin home athletics events in 2019-20. The experience will include tickets to the game, parking and food.

"Under Armour is thrilled to be involved in The Wisconsin Shoe Project and help extend the already strong connection Wisconsin Athletics has forged with the community," said Suzanne Williams, Under Armour's senior director of collegiate sports marketing. "Like Wisconsin athletics, we believe the power of sport can bring communities together and be an inspiration to many."

Big Ten Softball Standouts To Represent Team USA

Two softball standouts who graduated from Big Ten schools will represent the USA as members of the 2020 U.S. Olympic softball team.

Michigan's Amanda Chidester was chosen

for the elite 15-player roster, while Nebraska's Taylor Edwards is one of three replacement athletes for the American squad. Team USA earned its berth in the Olympic tournament more than a year ago as the winner of the 2018 World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) World Championship.

Chidester was dominant for the Wolverines, earning two All-America nods, Big Ten Player of the Year twice (2011, 2012) and first-team All-Big Ten three times (2009, 2011, 2012). The Big Ten Medal of Honor recipient led the Maize and Blue to four Big Ten titles and a berth in the 2009 NCAA Women's College World Series.

Chidester recently earned National Pro Fastpitch (NPF) Player of the Year, Offensive Player of the Year and Home Run Award winner after leading the Chicago Bandits to the NPF Championship Series this past summer.

Edwards was a two-time All-American and two-time first-team All-Big Ten selection as well as the 2014 Division I Catcher of the Year while at Nebraska, helping the Cornhuskers to a share of their first-ever Big Ten title in 2014, as well as a spot in the NCAA Women's College World Series in 2013.

Two other Big Ten softball graduates – former Minnesota pitcher Sara Groenewegen and former Wisconsin infielder Kelsey Jenkins – could also be headed to Tokyo as members of the Canadian Senior National Team, which secured its Olympic invitation with a runner-up finish at the 2019 WBSC Softball Americas Championship.

The final Canadian roster is expected to be announced later this year.

Next year will mark the first Olympic softball competition since 2008, with the United States having earned gold medals in 1996 (Atlanta), 2000 (Sydney) and 2004 (Athens) before finishing as the silver medalist at the 2008 Beijing Games.

The United States and Canada will be joined in next year's Olympic tournament by the host country, Japan (the 2008 gold medalist), as well as Australia, Italy and Mexico. The tourney will take place July 22-28, 2020, at Fukushima Azuma Baseball Stadium and Yokohama Baseball Stadium.

BTN To Provide Record Coverage Of Big Ten Wrestling

With the Big Ten seeking its 14th consecutive wrestling national championship, BTN will bring fans along for the ride with the most wrestling coverage in network history – a 40 percent increase from last season.

BTN's schedule begins with a nonconference matchup as No. 17 Virginia Tech travels to Columbus on Nov. 17 at noon ET to take on the No. 4 Buckeyes.

The action-packed schedule includes the Big Ten championships, a Super Saturday dual between Rutgers and No. 7 Michigan from Madison Square Garden, a rematch between the top-two team finishers at the 2019 NCAA tournament in No. 1 Penn State and the fourth-ranked Buckeyes and a primetime matchup between the top-ranked Nittany Lions and No. 2 Iowa on Jan. 31 at 9 p.m.

"The Big Ten is home to the most dominant wrestling programs in the country, and that distinction has made wrestling the fourth most-watched sport on BTN," BTN president François McGillicuddy said. "Our goal is to continue to showcase and amplify Big Ten wrestling, including an increase in our live event broadcasts, a commitment to original storytelling and an investment in on-campus digital content."

BTN will debut a new wrestling-centric episode of "The B1G Story," a documentary-style program produced by the Emmy-nominated BTN Originals team. At 10 p.m. ET on Sunday, Dec. 1, "The B1G Story: Alex & Eli" will delve into the bond between Iowa wrestler Alex Marinelli and former Wisconsin wrestler Eli Stickley.

According to FloWrestling's rankings, the Big Ten has nine teams ranked in the top 25. Four-time defending national champion and No. 1 Penn State seeks its ninth title in the past 10 seasons but will face stiff competition from No. 2 Iowa, No. 4 Ohio State, No. 5 Wisconsin, No. 7 Michigan, No. 9 Nebraska, No. 11 Minnesota, No. 16

BIG 2019 Standings

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Ohio State	4	0	1.000	7	0	1.000
Penn State	4	0	1.000	7	0	1.000
Michigan	3	2	.600	5	2	.714
Indiana	2	2	.500	5	2	.714
Michigan State	2	2	.500	4	3	.571
Maryland	1	3	.250	3	4	.429
Rutgers	0	5	.000	1	6	.143

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Minnesota	4	0	1.000	7	0	1.000
Wisconsin	3	1	.750	6	1	.857
Iowa	2	2	.500	5	2	.714
Nebraska	2	2	.500	4	3	.571
Illinois	1	3	.250	3	4	.429
Purdue	1	3	.250	2	5	.286
Northwestern	0	4	.000	1	5	.167

Oct. 18 Score
Ohio State 52, Northwestern 3

Oct. 19 Scores
Iowa 26, Purdue 20
Illinois 24, Wisconsin 23
Indiana 34, Maryland 28
Minnesota 42, Rutgers 7
Penn State 28, Michigan 21

Oct. 26 Games
Illinois at Purdue, 12 p.m.
Liberty at Rutgers, 12 p.m.
Iowa at Northwestern, 12 p.m.
Wisconsin at Ohio State, 12 p.m.
Iowa at Northwestern, 12 p.m.
Indiana at Nebraska, 3:30 p.m.
Maryland at Minnesota, 3:30 p.m.
Penn State at Michigan State, 3:30 p.m.
Notre Dame at Michigan, 7:30 p.m.

Northwestern and No. 24 Illinois.

Additionally, BTN Plus will carry nearly 100 matches, which also marks a new record. A portion of those streamed events will be televised on delay on BTN as part of the Student U initiative.

All televised matches and "The B1G Story" can be streamed exclusively on the FOX Sports app.

Buckeye Sports BulletinBoard

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BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (7-0, 5-0)

Aug. 31 FLORIDA ATLANTIC, W 45-21.
Sept. 7 CINCINNATI, W 42-0; **14** at Indiana, W 51-10; **21** MIAMI (OHIO), W 76-5; **28** at Nebraska, W 48-7.
Oct. 5 MICHIGAN STATE, W 34-10; **18** at Northwestern, W 52-3; **26** WISCONSIN, 12 p.m.
Nov. 9 MARYLAND; **16** at Rutgers; **23** PENN STATE; **30** at Michigan, 12 p.m..
Dec. 7 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis, 8 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Oct. 30 CEDARVILLE (exhibition).
Nov. 6 CINCINNATI, 8:30 p.m.; **10** UMASS-LOWELL, 4 p.m.; **13** VILLANOVA, 7 p.m.; **18** STETSON, 8:30 p.m.; **22** PURDUE FORT WAYNE; **25** KENT STATE, 6:30 p.m.; **29** MORGAN STATE, 9 p.m..
Dec. 4 North Carolina; **7** PENN STATE; **15** Minnesota, 6:30 p.m.; **17** SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE, 7 p.m.; **21** Kentucky at Las Vegas, 5:15 p.m.; **29** West Virginia at Cleveland, 12 p.m.
Jan. 3 WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; **7** Maryland, 7 p.m.; **11** Indiana, 12 p.m.; **14** NEBRASKA, 6:30 p.m.; **18** Penn State, 12 p.m.; **23** MINNESOTA, 6:30 p.m.; **26** Northwestern, 6:30 p.m.
Feb. 1 INDIANA, 12 p.m.; **4** Michigan, 7 p.m.; **9** Wisconsin, 1 p.m.; **12** RUTGERS, 7 p.m.; **15** PURDUE 12 p.m.; **20** Iowa, 7 p.m.; **23** MARYLAND, 4 p.m.; **27** NEBRASKA, 9 p.m.
March 1 MICHIGAN, 4 p.m.; **5** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.; **8** Michigan State, 4:30 p.m. **11-15** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Nov. 3 Urbana (exhibition); **10** Valparaiso in Springfield, Ohio; **13** Cincinnati; **17** OHIO, 2 p.m.; **21** Kent State; **24** UCONN, 3 p.m.; **29** South Dakota in Las Vegas; **30** Northern Iowa in Las Vegas.
Dec. 5 LOUISVILLE, 8 p.m.; **8** RADFORD, 2 p.m.; **15** Stanford; **17** Sacramento State, 10:05 p.m.; **28** PURDUE; **31** Minnesota.
Jan. 6 Maryland; **9** MICHIGAN, 6 p.m.; **12** PENN STATE, 2 p.m.; **16** Michigan State, 6 p.m.; **19** ILLINOIS, 2 p.m.; **23** Iowa, 8 p.m.; **30** MARYLAND, 6:30 p.m.
Feb. 2 Nebraska; **6** Illinois, 8 p.m.; **9** WISCONSIN, 2 p.m.; **13** MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **16** Indiana; **19** NEBRASKA, 7 p.m.; **22** Rutgers; **25** NORTHWESTERN, 6 p.m.; **29** Purdue.
March 4-8 Big Ten Tournament in Indianapolis.

CROSS COUNTRY

Aug. 30 Miami (Ohio) at Oxford, Ohio, Men 2/5; Women 1/5.
Sept. 14 Commodore Classic at Nashville, Tenn., Men 7/15, Women 2/20; **28** Ohio State Invitational at Columbus, Ohio, 4/8.
Oct. 18 Wisconsin Invitational at Madison, Wisc., Men 4/8; Women 13/36.
Nov. 3 Big Ten Championships at Columbus, Ohio; **15** NCAA Regional Championships at Madison, Wisc.; **23** NCAA Championships at Terre Haute, Ind.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (2-1-1)

Oct. 6 WESTERN (exhibition), W 5-2; **11** Western Michigan at Toledo, T 2-2; **12** RIT at Toledo, W 3-1; **18** OMAHA, W 3-2; **19** OMAHA, L 2-1; **25-26** Mercyhurst, 7 p.m.
Nov. 1 MICHIGAN, 7 p.m.; **2** MICHIGAN, 5 p.m.; **8-9** Notre Dame; **22-23** Penn State; **30** MICHIGAN STATE, 5 p.m.
Dec. 1 MICHIGAN STATE, 2:30 p.m.; **6** MINNESOTA, TBA; **7** MINNESOTA, 8 p.m.; **27** COLGATE, 7 p.m.; **28** COLGATE, 5 p.m.
Jan. 3 Cornell at Las Vegas; **4** Army at Las Vegas; **10-11** Wisconsin; **17** NOTRE DAME, 6 p.m.; **18** NOTRE DAME, 5 p.m.; **24-25** Minnesota; **31** Michigan.
Feb. 1 Michigan; **7** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **8** PENN STATE, 5 p.m.; **21-22** Michigan State; **28** WISCONSIN, 6 p.m.; **29** WISCONSIN, 8 p.m.
March 6-8 Big Ten Tournament First Round; **14** Big Ten Tournament Semifinals; **21** Big Ten Tournament Championship.

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (4-2-2, 2-2-2)

Sept. 27-28 ST. LAWRENCE, W 4-1; W 3-2.
Oct. 4 St. Cloud State, W 5-2; **5** St. Cloud State, W 6-2; **11** WISCONSIN, L 3-0; **12** WISCONSIN, L 3-1; **18** Minnesota State, T 1-1; **19** Minnesota State, T 3-3; **25-26** MINNESOTA.
Nov. 1-2 Bemidji State; **15-16** MINNESOTA DULUTH; **22-23** Colgate; **29-30** CORNELL.
Dec. 14-15 Princeton at Las Vegas;
Jan. 10-11 MINNESOTA STATE; **17-18** Minnesota; **24-25** QUINNIPIAC; **31** BEMIDJI STATE.
Feb. 1 BEMIDJI STATE; **7-8** Minnesota Duluth; **15-16** Wisconsin; **21-22** ST. CLOUD STATE; **28-29** WCHA First Round.
March 1 WCHA First Round; **7-8** WCHA Final Faceoff; **14** NCAA Quarterfinal; **20** NCAA Frozen Four; **22** NCAA Championship.

FIELD HOCKEY (6-8, 1-5)

Aug. 17 OHIO (exhibition); **25** at Michigan (exhibition); **30** UMASS, W 7-0.
Sept. 2 BOSTON, W 3-2; **6** at James Madison, W 3-0; **8** at Virginia, L 2-1; **13** CENTRAL MICHIGAN, W 11-0.; **15** LOUISVILLE, L 2-1; **20** NORTHWESTERN, L 4-1; **27** at Iowa, L 3-1; **29** at Indiana, W 6-2.
Oct. 6 at Ohio, W 6-1; **11** MICHIGAN, L 2-1 (OT); **13** STANFORD, L 3-1; **18** RUTGERS, L 1-0; **20** MARYLAND, L 3-0; **25** at Penn State, 6 p.m.; **27** at Kent State, 1 p.m.
Nov. 2 at Michigan State, 1 p.m.; **7** Big Ten Tournament Quarterfinals at Penn State, TBA; **8** Big Ten Tournament Semifinals at Penn State, TBA; **10** Big Ten Tournament Championship at Penn State, TBA.

MEN'S SOCCER (6-7-1, 1-3-1)

Aug. 17 XAVIER (exhibition), T 1-1; **20** MT. VERNON NAZARENE (exhibition), W 7-1; **24** at Butler (exhibition), L 2-1; **30** WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. CSUN, L 4-3.
Sept. 1 WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. UIC, W 1-0; **6** Dayton Classic vs. Dayton, W 1-0; **8** Dayton Classic vs. EIU, W 3-2; **13** at Bowling Green, W 2-1; **17** at South Florida, W 2-0; **21** PENN STATE, L 2-1; **24** WEST VIRGINIA, L 4-1.; **27** at Northwestern, T 0-0.
Oct. 2 MICHIGAN, L 2-0.; **6** at Rutgers, W 1-0; **12** CLEVELAND STATE, L 3-2; **16** at Kentucky, L 1-0; **19** at Michigan State, T 1-1; **25** MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **29** at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Nov. 3 WISCONSIN, 3 p.m.; **9** Big Ten Tournament Play in Game, TBA; **10** Big Ten Tournament Quarterfinals, TBA; **15** Big Ten Tournament Semifinals, TBA; **17** Big Ten Tournament Final, TBA.
WOMEN'S SOCCER (4-8-1, 2-4-1)
Aug. 22 LOUISVILLE, L 2-1; **25** MISSOURI, L 3-1; **28** at UCF, T 1-1.
Sept. 1 at South Florida, Cancelled; **6** at Texas A&M, L 1-0; **8** at TCU, L 3-2; **13** MIAMI (OH), W 1-0; **15** OHIO, W 3-1; **19** MICHIGAN STATE, W 1-0; **22** MICHIGAN, L 2-1; **27** at Wisconsin, postponed; **29** at Minnesota, L 1-0.
Oct. 3 MARYLAND, W 1-0; **6** PENN STATE, L 3-2; **10** at Purdue, T 0-0; **13** at Indiana, L 1-0; **17** NORTHWESTERN, T 1-1; **20** ILLINOIS, T 0-0; **27** at Iowa, 2 p.m.
SWIMMING & DIVING
Oct. 18-19 Texas A&M, Men, L 153-147; Women, L 174-124.

Nov. 1 Virginia Tech at State College, Pa.; **2** Penn State; **8** KENYON & AKRON, 6 p.m.; **15** DENISON, 6 p.m.; **21-23** OHIO STATE INVITATIONAL.
Dec. 4-7 AT&T Winter National Championship at Atlanta.
Jan. 3-4 KENTUCKY; **18** MICHIGAN; **24-25** Shamrock Invitational at South Bend, Ind.; **31** Pittsburgh.
Feb. 14-16 OHIO STATE WINTER INVITATIONAL; 19-22 Women's Big Ten Championship at Iowa City, Iowa **26-29** Men's Big Ten Championship at Bloomington, Ind.
March 1 LAST CHANCE MEET (women's); **8** LAST CHANCE MEET (men's); **14-16** CSCAA National Invitational at Cleveland & NCAA Zone Diving at West Lafayette, Ind.; **19-21** NCAA Championships (women's); **25-28** NCAA Championships (men's).

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (10-10, 3-5)

Aug. 30 LEHIGH, W 3-0; TEXAS TECH, L 3-2; **31** VCU, 3-1.
Sept. 6 at Pittsburgh, L 0-3; **7** vs. Duquesne at Pittsburgh, Pa., W 3-0; vs. Green Bay at Pittsburgh, Penn., L 3-1; **13** vs. Tulane at Bowling Green, Kent., L 3-1 2 p.m.; vs. Western Kentucky at Bowling Green, Kent., L 3-0.; **14** vs. Bowling Green at Bowling Green, Kent., W 3-1.; **19** MIAMI (OH), W 3-0; **20** ILLINOIS STATE, W 3-0; DAYTON, W 3-1; **25** at Maryland, W 3-1; **29** at Michigan, L 3-0.
Oct. 4 MICHIGAN STATE, L 3-0.; **6** MICHIGAN, L 3-0; **11** at Rutgers, W 3-0; **12** at Penn State, L 3-0; **16** IOWA, W 3-0; **19** PURDUE, L 3-2; **23** RUTGERS, 6 p.m.; **26** at Illinois, 6 p.m.; **30** at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Nov. 2 MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **8** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; **10** MINNESOTA, Noon; **15** at Purdue, 7 p.m.; **16** at Indiana, 7 p.m.; **22** NORTHWESTERN, 7 p.m.; **24** ILLINOIS, 1 p.m.; **29** at Iowa, 8 p.m.; **30** at Nebraska, TBA.
WRESTLING
Nov. 2 Michigan State; **10** STANFORD; **15** Pittsburgh; **17** VIRGINIA TECH.
Dec. 1 CORNELL; **6-7** C.K. Invitational at Las Vegas.
Jan 3-5 ARIZONA STATE; **10** RUTGERS; **17** Wisconsin; **19** ILLINOIS; **24** Iowa; **26** Minnesota; **31** MARYLAND.
Feb. 2 Nebraska; **9** NORTHWESTERN; **15** Penn State.
March 7-8 Big Ten Championship; **19-21** NCAA Championship.

Top Performers Across The Big Ten Conference

While Ohio State rested up in preparation for Northwestern during its off week, plenty of Big Ten teams faced off in conference matchups.

Purdue quarterback Jack Plummer earned Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week, completing 33 of 41 passes for 420 yards and three touchdowns in the Boilermakers' 40-14

blasting of Maryland on Oct. 12.

Plummer's favorite target was wide receiver David Bell, a former Ohio State recruit, who hauled in nine catches for 138 yards and two touchdowns and earned Big Ten Freshman of the Week honors. The true freshman kept his hot hand in a 26-20 loss to Iowa, hauling in 13 catches for 197 yards and one touchdown the following week.

Minnesota running backs Rodney Smith

and Mohamed Ibrahim carried the undefeated Golden Gophers to back-to-back victories against Nebraska and Rutgers.

In the Golden Gophers' 34-7 win against the Huskers, Smith ran for 139 yards and one score, while Ibrahim scored three touchdowns with 84 rushing yards. In Minnesota's 42-7 victory at Rutgers, Smith gained 111 yards on the ground with two touchdowns, while Ibrahim pitched in 62

yards and a score.

Antoine Winfield Jr., son of the former Ohio State standout, picked off two passes for the Gophers against Rutgers and returned one for a touchdown.

Penn State wideout K.J. Hamler starred for the Nittany Lions in their 28-21 victory against Michigan on Oct. 19. The sophomore snagged six passes for 108 yards and two touchdowns.



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Jallow's Injury Leaves Buckeyes Shallow On Wing

The regular season doesn't begin until Nov. 6 when Ohio State hosts Cincinnati at Value City Arena, but the Buckeyes already suffered a loss when junior forward Musa Jallow underwent an arthroscopic procedure on his right ankle on Oct. 18.

With Jallow (6-5, 200) out indefinitely according to a team spokesman, the Buckeyes are a little thin behind senior Andre Wesson (6-6, 220).

COURT REPORT

Craig Merz

"The wing position, after Andre, we're trying to figure out," coach Chris Holtmann said two days before Jallow's surgery.

Jallow had missed preseason training with an undisclosed injury but had returned shortly after the first official practice on Sept. 26 in a noncontact capacity and participated in drills on Oct. 16 during a 15-minute segment that was open to the media.

He played in all 35 games last season with 13 starts and averaged 2.9 points and 2.9 rebounds in 15.0 minutes per game. He shot 42.4 percent from the floor and 33.3 percent on three-pointers.

Sophomore Justin Ahrens (6-5, 180) would be expected to pick up some of the minutes in the absence of Jallow, but he

herniated two disks in the offseason and he was limited in what he could do over the summer, although he has now been cleared to practice.

"I think he'd be the first one to tell you that he is not what he was last year," Holtmann said of Ahrens on Oct. 16, "certainly not what he was in the spring. He had a terrific spring. What percentage he would be, I don't know, but he's clearly not physically at full strength."

True freshmen Alonzo Gaffney (6-9, 198) and E.J. Liddell (6-6, 236) could also spell Wesson, especially early in the season.

The catch there is that Liddell also missed about two weeks at the start of official practices with an undisclosed injury. He seems to have made up for lost time upon his return, said sophomore guard Luther Muhammad.

"He's been catching onto the plays fast, not really making many mess-ups, catching the ball, keeping it high," Muhammad said. "That's something I've noticed in the past week."

Holtmann said Liddell, a two-time Illinois Mr. Basketball from Belleville who led his team to state titles as a junior and senior, reminds him of Penn State's Lamar Stevens because of his versatility.

"He's one of those guys that is just a difficult matchup when he's really playing well, and he's going to go through some ups and downs and bumps and bruises," the coach said of Liddell. "What we loved about him was his ability to obviously impact the game on both ends, but really

he's got a unique skill set at that size. He's one of those guys that they're kind of wired to score. They can roll out of bed a little bit and score, and that's what E.J. can do."

Watch And Learn

The Buckeyes are expected to hand the point guard duties to redshirt junior C.J. Walker (6-1, 195) and true freshman D.J. Carton (6-2, 190).

Walker sat out last season per the NCAA transfer rule after playing two seasons at Florida State. The Indianapolis native said he picked up pointers during his downtime from another C.J. who was in similar situation.

C.J. Jackson was a senior guard for the Buckeyes last season, completing three seasons with Ohio State following his transfer from Eastern Florida State after the 2015-16 season.

"I was able to learn from him, what he was able to do to get through it when you're not playing," Walker said. "I learned how he took coaching from Coach Holtmann, how he took control of the team. He did what he could every day, gave everything he had."

Walker admitted not being able to contribute last season was tough.

"It was a roller coaster," he said. "It had its ups and downs. The good outweighed the bad. I was upset I wasn't playing and wanted to be out there, but that was selfish of me because it wasn't my time."

"I made the decision to transfer, and I knew what came with that. I had to mature and be patient. Those are the biggest things I got from sitting out a year."

His unique position of being around the team but not on the court for games gave him an insider's look but an outsider's perspective on last season when the Buckeyes went through a rough patch in January before rebounding to make the NCAA Tournament for a second straight season.

"Last year we hit a wall at the beginning of the conference," Walker said. "It was a lesson in how tough it is to win. To pull through that and make the NCAA Tournament was big because at that point a lot of teams would have given up."

"A lot of teams would have wanted to stop, wished the season was over, be selfish, but the team last year was willing to stick together and work through all the problems we had. To make it to the second round meant a lot. This year we're willing to take that and have even more passion and more dedication."

Being exposed to the Big Ten last season after playing in the ACC will help him.

"It's different from the fan base to the pace of the game," he said. "The physicality is definitely different. The ACC was much faster from my perspective. I feel I can adjust to that really well. Coach Holtmann is going to put me in the right situations."

On The List

The expectations continue to grow for junior Kaleb Wesson as he was named Oct. 17 as one of 20 preseason candidates for the Karl Malone Award presented by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. It is given to the top power forward in college basketball.

As the OSU release noted, Wesson – who's still listed as carrying 270 pounds on his 6-9 frame but told reporters last month he's down to 255 – will play center so he could be eligible for the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award given to the top center.

As a sophomore, Wesson averaged 14.6 points and 6.9 rebounds.

The list for the Malone will be narrowed to 10 in Mid-February and cut to five in March. The winner will be announced April 10.

Buck Shots

The Buckeyes play an exhibition vs. Cedarville at 7 p.m. on Oct. 30 at Value City Arena ... With the 2020 class set at two commitments and two of four spots taken in 2021, recruiting has slowed down, but it never stops. The Buckeyes hosted Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary 2021 four-star combo guard Malaki Branham (6-4, 175) and 2021 four-star power forward Efton Reid (6-11, 245-pound) from Richmond (Va.) Steward School the weekend of Oct. 5.

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Greene Has No Regrets About Flip To Ohio State

On Nov. 18, 2018, four-star guard Madison Greene, along with a variety of other student-athletes at nearby Pickerington Central, as well as Pickerington North, signed her letter of intent.

Greene was heading into her senior season, fresh off winning a state championship after being bounced in the first round of the tournament two straight seasons.

That letter of intent was to Penn State, a

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

program that she fell in love with because of the campus at State College and the players on the roster but also the coaching staff, which was led by Coquese Washington, the Nittany Lions head coach.

But after a 12-18 record, which included a 5-13 record within the Big Ten, Washington and Penn State parted ways after 12 seasons. From there, Greene revoked her letter of intent and began the process over again.

"It was still between Penn State and Ohio State where I was going to go," Greene told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "I talked with my family and some of my coaches, and they really helped influence me with my decision and everything, so we just felt like staying home was the better option."

Staying home gave the Buckeyes their seventh and final commitment for the 2020 class and was a nice surprise addition for head coach Kevin McGuff's team heading into a new season with primarily underclassmen.

"I was interested to see what her interest level would be with us, and when she was interested, I was excited because I knew she could be a great addition to the group that we already had in place," McGuff said. "I've always loved her game and appreciated how hard she played, and I really like the fact that she really makes other people better. And then, having her here now, I've really gotten a chance to know how great of a kid she is and how hard of a worker she is."

"She's been a great addition, I really like her and I'm happy she's here. I think she's going to have a very bright future for us."

Greene called deciding between schools "literally the hardest decision" she has ever had to make, but just over five months removed from her decision to commit to Ohio State on May 11, Greene said she has no regrets about the path that she has chosen.

"I feel like this is a good program for me to be at, and I'm glad I made this decision because, man, I can't imagine me being all the way, six hours away from my family," Greene said. "That would have been really hard. If I had gone to

Penn State, things would have been completely different than they are now, but I'm very happy with where I'm at right now."

Greene developed her passion for the game of basketball at a very young age due to the love of the game expressed by her father, Anthony, even though he played only through high school. His lack of higher-level experience meant nothing to the young Madison Greene, who was dribbling around her house close to the same time she learned to walk and talk.

"My dad always had me in basketball, like since I was 2. He had me dribbling the ball, had a little mini basket in the house and I would shoot and stuff," Greene said. "He just loved the game so much, and he wanted to bring that to me and just show me how great this sport is, so I'm glad he did."

Before leading Pickerington Central to the state title, there was a moment in Greene's youth basketball career that stands out to the incoming freshman guard. While at an AAU tournament, Greene was left the task of winning the game for her team.

She said she remembers the game clock counting down from 10 and driving to the top of the key in an effort to get off a game-winning shot. Greene got there, made a step-back move and hit a three-pointer to win the game and advance to the championship.

Though she doesn't believe that her team ended up winning that tournament, Greene will always remember that moment in the spotlight.

"That was probably one of the most memorable moments in my basketball career because that was my first ever game-winner," she said. "It was just crazy."

Eventually, Greene made her way to Pickerington Central, and in her freshman and sophomore seasons, the years ended with exits in the first round, both by one possession and both on buzzer-beaters.

The second of those defeats came against Dublin Coffman, a team that was led by an eventual five-star guard and an eventual Ohio State commit in 2019, guard Jacy Sheldon.

Both Sheldon and Greene were highly touted from the central Ohio area but did not often play against each other due to playing in different conferences.

"It was kind of a big game honestly," Greene said. "We were both (wearing) No. 4, both one of the top girls in our area and everything and got a lot of comparisons and stuff, but it was a fun game."

Dublin Coffman took the 71-68 win, with the victory coming off a buzzer-beater three from Sheldon on the fast break coming off a Pickerington Central turnover.

"We both had a lot of respect for each other, so it was just fun," Sheldon said. "We both knew each other's games a little bit, so it made it more fun for using moves and stuff against each other. It's fun because we make each other better. She's a great defender, so I loved going against her."

After winning it all in her third season, Greene said the mentality within the team did not change for her senior year, but the talent levels did, even if it was only slightly.

The lesser amount of talent still resulted in a second straight trip to the state championship game, but this time, Pickerington Central was defeated by Mount Notre Dame, 52-31.

"We had a few less pieces, we were a little smaller, so we had to change how we played and everything and had to step up our defense even more," Greene said. "Unfortunately, we came up a little short. We just had a bad game that game, but it happens all the time, so I'm just proud of how far we made it those past two years."

McGuff said the success Greene showed with her team in high school is certainly a factor that comes into play when it comes to recruiting.

"It's great when you can get kids who come from winning programs," McGuff told BSB. "They're used to winning, they're used to making winning plays, and they've already kind of gone through the process of committing to the team rather than making it about themselves, so that's another thing I love about her."

Ohio State's head coach said he expects Greene to be a great piece for the team and that he loves her ability on the defensive side of the ball, as well as how much of a hard worker she has proved to be.

As far as giving Greene a sales pitch once she rescinded her commitment to Penn State, McGuff simply vouched for the group he was building in 2019.

"Just that I thought we were on the verge of really bringing in a great class and putting this program in position to be really special in the coming years and that she could be a part of that, and I think she wanted to be a part of something like that," McGuff said of his pitch. "I'm really happy she decided to come, and like I said, I think she'll be a great contributor to this program."

Greene said the strong recruiting class did influence her decision and that the group of seven freshmen has bonded both on the court and off it throughout training camp and into official practices.

Currently, Greene has been dealing with a



OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

LION TO BUCKEYE – Freshman guard Madison Greene became the final piece of Ohio State's 2019 class after she flipped from Penn State.

lingering ankle sprain that hasn't gone away after four weeks, which left Greene in a boot on Oct. 9, but it is not an injury that is expected to carry into the season.

With Greene officially situated at her school, she comes in ready to make a difference for Ohio State, and she is not coming with expecting any immediate setbacks with a lack of experience on the team.

"Win as many games as we possibly can," Greene said for her season expectations. "We're not trying to lose at all. That's the mindset that we're trying to come into this season."

The Fresh Seven is a seven-part series on the seven freshman players joining the Ohio State women's basketball team in the upcoming season.

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Morrow, McGuff Reunite

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Carla Morrow has had a long career in coaching at both the college and the professional level and finds herself back working with head coach Kevin McGuff for the second time following the announcement that she would be coming in as an Ohio State women's basketball's assistant coach.

Before that, she was a college basketball star, becoming the first player in Tulsa history to score 1,000 points and 600 rebounds over her career and the first Golden Hurricane to sign a WNBA contract, signing with the Seattle Storm as a free agent in 2002. But before ever coaching or ever breaking any records, Morrow was born into becoming a coach.

"Growing up, my dad was a coach, so when I was younger, I would come to his games," Morrow said. "I would sit on the bench with him and his team. I just kind of got the coaching itch and the feel at a young age. I knew I wanted to play basketball, I knew I wanted to play sports but also knew I watch the game differently. I didn't just watch it as a player, I watched it from a coach's perspective."

That perspective did show up in her game as a player, but at first, it came only through her play on the court and not her ability to round up the team through words of encouragement.

"I guess I was a leader by example," Morrow said. "I never wanted to be the vocal leader, but one of my coaches was really on me about, 'You're leading by example, you need to be able to lead using your voice.'"

"The more I was there, the more I grew up, the more I led, not only by example, but by my words as well."

Stepping into that vocal role started in summer camps during college. There, Morrow said she really started to bring that coach-like attitude that came from her dad and implement it into her game. It was at this point in her development as a leader that her true passions as a coach came to fruition.

"This is what I wanted to do," Morrow said. "I always planned my sessions, tried to work with my team like I would as a coach, probably took it a little bit too serious, but I knew that coaching is what I wanted to do, and that was a chance to practice."

What drew Morrow to Tulsa in the first place was the ability to build up the program. She said that the program had been reinstated two years prior to her arrival and that the money and resources being put into the program gave her hope that she could be the start of something special within the university.

While she didn't turn the Golden Hurricanes into a powerhouse, by her final season she helped Tulsa get to 17-13, only the second winning record in the program's 17 seasons and the most wins by a Tulsa team ever until a 19-12 season two years later.

"I liked the fact that I could kind of set a standard, set goals, set records with a program just starting out again," Morrow said.

She is now joining a team that is made up of players who are incredibly scarce on college experience but incredibly loaded with talent and potential, giving her another opportunity to set the standard, set goals and maybe even set some records again.

But this is far from her first coaching experience. Her first job came as director of basketball operations at Missouri State with a team that made the NCAA tournament in 2004 then won the Women's NIT in 2005.

She then headed to Colorado for the same position with the Buffaloes. After two years there, Morrow was hired by McGuff to become an assistant coach on his staff at Xavier. In the four seasons that McGuff and Morrow worked together, the Musketeers made four NCAA tournaments going all the way to the Elite Eight in 2010 on a 30-4 record.

The duo helped to build a team that combined for a 108-23 record. McGuff said that history of success may have played a part in both his decision as well as Morrow's in working together again.

"We have a relationship having worked together before, and that went really well first time around," McGuff told BSB. "She's got a really sharp basketball mind, and she'll also be an outstanding mentor to the young women in our program."

Morrow – who spent a total of 10 seasons with the Xavier program – comes to Ohio State following three seasons as an assistant with the WNBA's Chicago Sky. While there, she helped to turn the team around after the first two seasons ended with a combined 25-43 record.

This past season, that was improved to 20-14, which led to a playoff appearance.

Of all the places that Morrow has been prior to her first stop in Columbus, she said those three seasons at the professional level are what stand out as the moment that changed her as a coach.

"Everywhere that I've been as a coach, there's been learning experiences, but going to the WNBA was huge because every day you're working with players that are the best," she said. "You know they're one of the best 144 players, and just having to be on it every day, just having to bring it every day to practice, from a coaching standpoint, from a mental standpoint and then just developing and being there to help them develop, you have to be on it. You have to know what you're talking about, because they know."

So why leave coaching some of the best players in the world to come back to a college team with loads of inexperience?

"That's a great question," Morrow said. "I had a great experience in the WNBA. It's something that I will miss, for sure, because it is a different game, but I also wanted the opportunity to come back and help players develop to get there."

McGuff said he had to give somewhat of a sales pitch to his former co-worker in order to get her to join his coaching staff.

"She obviously had a great situation that she really enjoyed and was thriving in, but I think she saw this as a unique opportunity," he said. "I'm happy that she made the decision to come join our program."

Morrow joined the team on Sept. 30, and her experience will be needed to help a group of 10 underclassmen who are expected to do the vast majority of the scoring.

With her work at the college and pro levels, history with playing at the collegiate level and the desire to become a coach that started with sitting on the bench during her dad's practices, Morrow is ready for the challenges that are ahead of her this season.

"The task of building a team, developing players is – I don't think it's ever daunting – I just think it's part of your job," she said. "They seem like really good, relaxed players. They seem like they enjoy the game. They enjoy being here and working together. I'm just encouraged, just to see how much better they get from the first couple weeks of practice to March, it will start setting the stage for the future."



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How Swede It Was For Westlund To Host Teammate

Gustaf Westlund has spent the better part of the past four years in the United States pursuing his dream of playing hockey.

The time away from his native Sweden has been tough at times, so it was nice over the summer that the sophomore forward was able to show an Ohio State teammate his childhood home in Stockholm after senior forward Carson Meyer went overseas to spend about five days with Westlund in early June.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

"I make the effort to see him over here all the time, so I guess it was his turn to return the favor," Westlund joked.

The two built their friendship through somewhat similar circumstances because each was new to the OSU program last season. Westlund came to Columbus from two seasons of junior hockey in Lincoln, Neb. Prior to that, he spent 2015-16 playing for The Gunnery prep school in Washington, Conn.

Meyer had transferred from Miami (Ohio) after two seasons with the RedHawks, but he was in familiar surroundings having grown up in the Columbus suburb of Powell.

"He's a teammate but he's also a really good friend to me," Westlund said. "It was really nice. He was one of those guys that took care of me when I came in as a freshman. I really appreciated that."

"It was kind of the same thing for him. He came in from Miami and had to adjust as well, but he knew some guys and had gone through the process."

Having Meyer visit him was a bonus because Westlund was just happy to get home.

"Especially for me being so far away and my family being so far away, it's really helpful to go home for my mind and body and see my family and friends I hadn't seen in nine months, or whatever it was," he said.

Meyer said Westlund was a good host.

"It was awesome. I loved it," he said, "He showed me around the city. We hung out with his friends from back home. That was special for him. He doesn't get to see them very often."

Westlund wanted Meyer to experience the Swedish culture, and Meyer was eager to embrace it, going as far as making an attempt to speak the language.

"We were roommates on the road last year, so he downloaded Rosetta Stone and started teaching himself Swedish," Westlund said.

There was one place that he made sure Meyer saw.

"The most important part was the rink I

grew up at," he said. "We're both hockey fanatics, obviously. The rink is really simple, really old-school. It's been there forever, probably 40 years."

They worked out twice with a local skating coach at the Stockhagens IP. The rink has earned a reputation for developing young players in the Swedish system that sees professional teams overseeing the youth programs.

The North American concept of combining schooling and athletics is something that Westlund often must explain to his friends in Sweden.

"Back home you go to school then you have separate hockey teams," he said. "You don't have a dialogue between the two. People are aware of the possibility to go to school and play a sport, but they don't know what level it is here. It's pretty high."

Westlund's transition to college hockey took some adjustment, but he was named to the Big Ten All-Freshman Team after finishing eighth on the Buckeyes with 19 points (five goals, 14 assists). The numbers are impressive considering he missed 11 games in the second half of the season because of an upper-body injury.

He did not have a goal before the Christmas break, but he scored his first two goals and had an assist in the Jan. 4 game vs. Michigan State.

Westlund sat out two games the next weekend against Michigan because of injury but had three goals and a pair of assists in the following series against Penn State. However, he played only once over the next six weeks.

"The middle of the year I thought I really got going then I got injured," Westlund said. "It was unfortunate."

Now that he is healthy, Westlund (6-0, 175) has high hopes for this season.

"Everybody that goes into their second year wants to exceed the expectations they had from the previous year," he said. "I've set the bar higher for myself this year, and I believe the coaching staff has as well."

Others see the potential as well. He participated in the Florida Panthers' development camp in the summer of 2018 and the Vegas Golden Knights' development camp this summer as a free-agent invitee.

"I'm excited for him," OSU coach Steve Rohlik said. "He's one of those players that can bring an offensive threat to the game, and on special teams he's the key to our power play."

Going Home

Playing in and winning the Ice Breaker Tournament Oct. 11-12 in Toledo had added meaning for senior defenseman Gordi Myer from nearby Sylvania, Ohio.

"It means a lot," Myer said prior to the two games. "Being able to go home and play in front of everyone, there's going to be a lot of people who have been part of my journey. To be able to open my senior year and share it with them will be special."

His mother, Kim, hosted a dinner for the team the night before the tourney at Shade Rocks Farm just on the other side of the border in Ottawa Lake, Mich.

Myer never played in the 10-year old Huntington Center in downtown Toledo while growing but did play in the old Toledo Sports Arena that was razed in 2007.

Claiming The Hardware

The No. 12 Buckeyes advanced to the championship game of the Ice Breaker with a shootout win against No. 14 Western Michigan after the game was officially recorded as a 2-2 tie for NCAA purposes after 60 minutes plus a five-on-five overtime on Oct. 11.

A five-minute three-on-three didn't produce a winner, but the shootout ended in the fifth round when junior Tommy Nappier made a save and sophomore Quinn Preston scored.

OSU then defeated the Rochester Institute of Technology 3-1 as senior captain Ronnie Hein scored twice.

"We didn't play our best," Rohlik said. "We still have a lot of things to clean up. But when you're playing for a championship and you win a trophy like this, it's always a great feeling."

Nappier had a career-high 44 saves vs. Western Michigan and 24 the next game to earn the first star of the week by the Big Ten.

The Ice Breaker was OSU's first in-season tournament title since the 2016 Florida College Classic. That championship is seen as the turning program for the program.

The Buckeyes were 3-11-0 when the tourney began three days after Christmas and they stunned No. 4 Boston College, 3-2, and No. 9 Cornell, 8-0, on successive nights.

The freshmen in that OSU class would make the NCAA tournament their final three years (including the 2018 Frozen Four) and win the 2019 Big Ten regular-season title.

For a complete recap of Ohio State's series against Omaha on Oct. 18-19, go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

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Allessie Providing Goals, Energy For Buckeyes

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Ohio State field hockey head coach Jarred Martin needed a spark. In his first two years at Ohio State, the Buckeyes had shown obvious signs of improvement and moved much closer to the kind of program he was hoping to build – the kind of program he had spent 10 years around during his decade as an assistant at Duke, one of the most prestigious field hockey schools in America. A 10-9 season in year one followed by a solid 12-8 in year two showed proof of concept, but Martin still knew that the Buckeyes needed more to take the step from good to great.

Even if it doesn't show right away, he found his spark in freshman attacking midfielder Mackenzie Allessie.

Allessie's journey is not that of a stunning breakout player. The Mount Joy, Pa., product has been dominant for years, and her billing upon her arrival at Ohio State was that of one of the best young players in the country.

Depending on whom you ask, or the metrics you use, it may be fair to call Allessie one of the best young players in the country. Her record-setting scoring numbers in high school and her title as youngest player ever selected to the United States Women's National Field Hockey Team indicate that she's all alone at the top of her class.

While Allessie may not be willing to declare that, she's certainly shown her worth through just 14 games in Columbus. She leads the Buckeyes in goals with 12, nearly twice as much as the next highest total and points, with 29. She's been adorned with Big Ten freshman of the week honors and heaps of praise from her coaches and teammates.

After putting up national records in single-season goals (124), career goals (351) and career points (858) in high school, Allessie has slid effortlessly into the college game. She attributes her early success to her time with the United States National Team.

"It definitely has really helped that I have the National Team experience," she said. "Coming off of the Pan-American games – which is probably one of the highest levels, fastest field hockey games you can play – that was a nice transition into the speed of college because it's just much faster than high school."

Martin thinks that her time with the team really shaped the way Allessie is approaching the day-to-day nuances of college field hockey.

"I think she was put in an environment, around very high achieving, elite athletes that are playing for their country, playing for potential Olympics, things that she'd be able to learn, day in and day out," Martin said. "What does it mean when you're in the weight room, how do you approach a day, how do you commit to the full life mantra of being your best, trying to compete at your best? Bringing that into an Ohio State environment, where it's a similar mentality – we have some of the best student-athletes in the country and in the world. As a freshman though, I think it definitely helped acclimate her into being successful."

Allessie isn't just focused on scoring, however. When asked about the future and what she thinks she can help build at Ohio State, the answer immediately goes not to points, but to leadership.

"I think all of us (in the freshman class) are really strong leaders and can have a really strong impact in the future, especially on new girls coming in," she said. "We can be such good role models for them and help bring the whole team level up another notch."

While her innate ability to score has already proved invaluable to the Buckeyes in what has been a challenging 2019 campaign, it could be that leadership and where-withal that serve as Allessie's most important contributions during her four years in Columbus. Ohio State is working with a very young team, featuring 13 underclassmen on a 22-person team. With five seniors departing following the season, including the second-highest points scorer – Esther Clotet Alsina – those young players are going to have to truly take over next season.

They'll need a leader, and while sophomores such as goalie Aaliyah Hernandez and forwards Jessica Hourihane and Tess Maloney have all shown an ability to contribute as starters, points and success on the field aren't necessarily everything. That's where Martin thinks that Allessie's experience with winning could truly come in handy.

"I think it's showing on the field, in competitive games, she wants to compete, she wants to win and she wants to be a big force on our team," the coach said. "You see her on the field, she's helping her team out, coaching them, but then off the field, it gives her a knowledge of what she thinks she can do to help this team be the best. If it's encouragement, she's a great personality off the field. She's very mindful of connecting with her teammates and feeling a part of it, which I think sometimes is tricky as a freshman. You're coming in, there's a lot of transition, it's not natural for you to want to step in and take ownership of situations right off the bat. For her to step in and lead by example so early is a testament to the experiences she's had so far."

While Allessie certainly looks like the future at Ohio State, and as exciting a young star as the sport has, she would be the first to say that she has plenty of growing left to do. She wants to improve her passing, work harder, find even more goals. She's already seen improvement during just a few months at Ohio State, but she wants more.

Above all else – the personal accolades, development, awards, records, whatever it may be – Mackenzie Allessie wants wins. She wants championships, Big Ten and national. She wants to match what she did in high school, when she led Donegal High School to four PIAA District 3 championships and three section and two league championships, along with a PIAA State AA Championship in her senior season.

"I really want to win the championships," she said. "I want the team to grow and to be able to say, 'We did it,' and that we are right there with every other top team. We have been losing by one, so we are right there – just being able to push through one more

notch and get to winning."

In Allessie, and in the rest of the three-person freshman class of Leanne Bough, Delaney Lawler and Sarah Charley, Martin sees the potential for heights never before seen at Ohio State.

"They're used to winning, they're used to competing, they're used to being successful and really challenging themselves to find new levels, new standards that they can attain," he said. "(It's good) to have that come into a program where we're working on that. In the past couple of years since I've been here, we've competed with these teams (in the top 25), we're in the mix with these teams and that gap is closing. There are definitely times where it's frustrating, like the 2-1 overtime loss to Michigan on Oct. 11, but it's one of those moments where you see from a youthful group what they can do, where they can go. I think their four years here, you're going to see a really awesome transition for Ohio State field hockey for the better."

For now, however, Allessie and the Buckeyes have more work to do. They sit at [x-x] on the season, a record that makes more sense when looking at the opponents Ohio State has played: top-10 foe after top-10 foe, road bouts with teams such as Virginia and Iowa, challenging homestands against Louisville, Michigan, Northwestern and Stanford. The Buckeyes, who sit in the top 25 themselves at 6-8 overall and 1-5 in the Big Ten, have faced nine top-25 teams in 14 games and still have three solid opponents left in Penn State, Kent State and Michigan State.

To Allessie, those losses are new. She was accustomed to blowouts in high school and very rarely had to play late into games because of it. While she obviously wants to win, she says that she appreciates the losses. They're fresh. It's a new challenge for a player who has spent years doing essentially whatever she wants on the field.

"I actually think it's more exciting being in college (rather than high school), because you can see our improvement, you can see our growth and you can see everybody wanting to win, putting in the extra work, putting in the extra time," Allessie said.

"We want to be better for the next game and want to win the next game. We might only lose by a goal, only lose in overtime, which is nice to see because we can see the growth, unlike at Donegal, where we just won a lot. It's really nice being able to see us grow as a team and just taking it game by game. Freshman year, I'm just trying to build off every season, build off every game to be better, and win those games that are a one-goal difference, or win those games that we're losing in overtime, win those that we're losing in the last few minutes."

Those challenges aren't likely to go away for the Buckeyes. Martin approaches scheduling as any top team would. He wants to test his young team. When Ohio State is ready, the wins will come. If everything goes according to plan, it will be Allessie leading the way, and in many ways, it already is.

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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To all Buckeye seniors,

When stepping out onto the field this season, take a moment to stand quietly and look out into the crowd, look to your teammates, to your coaches and to your fellow seniors. Remember the way these moments make you feel, as these are memories you will treasure for the rest of your life.

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Columbus Serves Variety Of Food Options For Fans

Whether you're hosting the big game-watch party, joining up with friends to watch on a big screen or looking for good eats before or after the game, Columbus has something for everyone. *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* once again offers its suggestions as to where fans can eat on game day or any day.

• An all-occasion steak tavern that glows with sizzle and warmth, **The Avenue** serves fine steaks and tavern fare in Grandview's historic Bank Block neighborhood and in Historic Dublin. The Avenue – a Cameron Mitchell restaurant – features incomparable appetizers such as shrimp dejonghe and oysters Rockefeller followed by mouth-watering entrées including veal Milanese with mozzarella, arugula and linguine; Atlantic salmon with spinach, fennel and chardonnay butter sauce; or a selection of USDA prime steaks and chops. The Avenue also features a wide array of beverages, including local favorites such as classically inspired cocktails and a carefully selected collection of Old and New World wines.

Visit the Grandview location at 1307 Grandview Ave. (614-485-9447) or The Avenue in Dublin at 94 N. High St. (614-591-9000). For reservations, call or go online at theavenuesteaktavern.com.

• Enjoy all of your brunch favorites any day of the week at **BLunch – An Urban Cafe** in Clintonville, featuring elevated breakfast favorites, the best pancakes in town, sandwiches and salads. The full bar service offers the mi-MOST-a, local craft draft cocktails, an outstanding house-made Bloody Mary and local brews. Dine in a bright, casual and lively atmosphere. Reservations accepted for parties of six or more. BLunch is open daily from 7:30

a.m.-2:30 p.m. but closed Tuesdays. Parking is available. Visit them at 2973 N High St. or online at www.blunchcolumbus.com. Call (614) 641-7501.

• **Cap City Fine Diner & Bar**, created by Cameron Mitchell Restaurants, offers a dining experience you won't soon forget. You can expect a menu that will satisfy the most discriminating palate. Try the weekend brunch from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. for classic eggs Benedict, French toast, torta, eggs on hash, spinach quiche, smoked salmon and bagel, four-egg omelet, breakfast burrito or the "diner" steak and eggs special with your favorite drink. Or meet up with friends for Happy Hour Monday through Friday from 4-6:30 p.m. for specially priced appetizers and drink specials in the bar. Choose from a variety of fresh salads and selections such as balsamic chicken or pecan-crust pork chops, or try one of the delicious diner sandwiches or desserts. There are three locations, at 1299 Olentangy River Road (614-291-3663), minutes from Ohio Stadium; 1301 Stoneridge Drive in Gahanna (614-478-9999); or 6644 Riverside Drive in Dublin (614-889-7865).

• Count on **Champps** at 1827 Olentangy River Road for a delicious menu in a fun atmosphere just a long punt from Ohio Stadium. Whether you are in the mood for soup, salad or burgers, you can find it here. Try an appetizer like the legendary loaded nachos or prime rib quesadilla. Or enjoy an entrée like the vodka chicken pasta or beer-battered fish 'n' chips. Don't miss the blackened chicken alfredo or miso-glazed salmon. Want a burger? Order a traditional cheeseburger or try the Truffle Mushroom Wagyu Burger. Enjoy a mojito or margarita or a domestic or craft beer with your meal. Also available are meatless Beyond

burgers and great desserts too. Champps is also perfect for your next event for 10 to 100 people. Their experienced event coordinator can help you plan your event. Stop by online at www.champps.com or call them at (614) 298-0833.

• The **Chocolate Café** at 1855 Northwest Blvd. has the cure for your cravings with a delicious menu of treats. Their lobster bisque is served daily along with an amazing array of specialty sandwiches including their BMT flatbreads, Greek pitas and Cajun chicken paninis. Grilled cheeses are a specialty, and be sure to order a soup and salad too. Choose from an extensive dessert menu including real hot chocolate, chocolate dipped strawberries, hand-dipped Buckeyes, assorted ice cream flavors, fondue and over 50 assorted candies. Visit them online for details at www.chocolatecafecolumbus.com or call (614) 485-2233.

• Hometown favorite **City Barbeque** has been feeding Buckeye fans since 1999. Load up your tailgate party with their award-winning brisket, competition-quality St. Louis-cut ribs, Texas smoked sausage and classic pulled pork. There's a full roster of made-from-scratch classic sides, from collards and corn pudding to mac & cheese and potato salad. City Barbeque makes game day simple for groups of all sizes – just pick the Party Pack that fits your crowd. Check out citybbq.com or download the city bbq app for \$5 off your first order.

Of the eight City Barbeque joints in Columbus, the original Upper Arlington location is closest to Ohio Stadium: 2111 W. Henderson Road, (614) 538-8890. Visit their website for other convenient locations.

• Cancel those airline tickets to Mexico and head for **Cuco's Taqueria** at 2162 W. Henderson Road instead. If you are in the mood for some authentic Mexican cuisine, you will love their extensive menu, from starters such as fresh ceviche or queso fundido with melted Chihuahua cheese and chorizo to main entrées like carnitas and steak ranchero. Try their signature tacos, and choose from a variety of soups and salads. Don't miss the fajitas platter, the enchiladas or tamales either. Stop by for breakfast too.

Cuco's Taqueria has a full bar with an extensive selection of margaritas, so stop by for Happy Hour from 4-7 p.m. Monday-Friday. Visit them online at www.cucostaqueria.com or call (614) 538-8701.

• Part of Cameron Mitchell Restaurants' Short North Collection, **Del Mar** offers the best of Southern California-inspired dishes and cocktails. The restaurant team is fanatical about freshness and uses only the best fare from the farm, garden and sea.

Del Mar is open Sunday-Thursday from 4-10 p.m. and Friday from 4 p.m.-midnight. The restaurant is also open for Saturday brunch from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and dinner from 3 p.m.-midnight, as well as Sunday for brunch from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and dinner from 3-10 p.m. Del Mar is located at 705 N. High St. in the Short North Arts District (614-300-9500).

• Stop in and try the tasty Mexican menu items at **El Vaquero**, within walking distance of Ohio Stadium and the hotels on Olentangy River Road north of OSU. Choose from a variety of fresh, authentic cuisine selections such as the queso fundido with grilled shrimp, onions, mushrooms and melted cheese. Try one of the many salads or order a bowl of Sopa Azteca and have a frosty, crafted margarita from the bar. El Vaquero offers Happy Hour from 4-8 p.m. daily. Sample the fresh guacamole and bring the family for a great time. A kids menu is available too. No game tickets, no problem. Watch on the big-screen projector. Come celebrate another Buckeye victory at 3230 Olentangy River Road

or call (614) 261-0900 for information.

• **Grandad's Pizza** is a family-owned and -operated pizzeria located in Grandview Heights. They offer pizzas, old-school subs, sandwiches and more at affordable prices. Whether you're in the mood for a traditional pizza with fresh toppings or a specialty pizza like the chicken bacon ranch pizza, you're sure to find something to please everyone. Complete your meal with a fresh Italian or Caesar salad or boneless or traditional wings with your choice of 10 different sauces. Located at 1254 West 3rd Ave., Grandad's also offers discounts to businesses with advance ordering and features daily lunch specials. Call (614) 488-9700 or visit www.grandadspizza.com. Visit their new location at 4093 Trueman Blvd. in Hilliard (614-767-3020).

• **The Guild House** is an artisan eatery featuring creative American cuisine available for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. The chefs at The Guild House collaborate to create seasonal offerings that are regionally and globally inspired, all with artistic technique in an energetic and inviting space. Located in the Short North Arts District (624 North High St., 614-280-9780), The Guild House offers Happy Hour seven days a week from 3-6 p.m. in the bar with half-price featured wines, cocktails, beers and selected items from their chef-inspired menu.

• **Harvey & Ed's** is a Modern American restaurant where traditional noshes are honored with an upscale contemporary twist – focusing on fresh ingredients, simple preparations and familial hospitality. Irresistible lunch and dinner menu favorites include homemade matzo ball soup, popular deli-style sandwiches, fish towers and a broad range of nostalgic, chef-driven entrées. Throwback desserts such as cheesecake, chocolate babka and black & white cookies are baked fresh daily.

Harvey & Ed's serves brunch every Saturday and Sunday at 10 a.m. and is open for lunch and dinner daily with Happy Hour seven days a week from 3-6 p.m. Harvey & Ed's features counter service for carryout orders, catering and delivery and is located in the Short North Arts District just a short distance from campus at 698 N. High St. (614-641-4040).

• The menu at **Hudson 29** is nothing short of an expansion and redefinition of American cuisine, taking it to new heights through simple preparations that allow the flavors of the expertly sourced ingredients to shine through. You'll savor this simplicity throughout the menu, a familiar and hearty collection of starters, prime steaks, roasted chicken and knife-and-fork sandwiches.

The bar has been raised in similar fashion. The focus is on wine, with an artfully composed list of 100 bottles. Cocktails crafted with house-made mixers and fresh-squeezed juices and an ever-changing list of craft beers round out the selection. Hudson 29 serves lunch and dinner daily with weekend brunch. Enjoy Happy Hour at Hudson 29 Monday through Saturday featuring special prices on appetizers, hand-crafted cocktails, wines by the glass, draft beers and ales. There are two locations, at 1600 W. Lane Ave. (614-487-0622) minutes from Ohio Stadium, and 260 Market St. in New Albany (614-859-2900).

• Looking for a very special dining experience to commemorate an anniversary or occasion, or simply to enjoy an excellent meal you won't soon forget? **Jeff Ruby's Steakhouse** at 89 East Nationwide Blvd. in the downtown Arena District, one block south of the Convention Center, was voted Best New Restaurant in Columbus in 2018 by readers' polls from (614) Magazine, Columbus Monthly, Columbus Alive and CityScene Magazine. One stop will tell you why. Try the USDA prime steaks, including

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WHERE TO EAT ON GAME DAY

the Japanese A5 Wagyu, amazing scallops and seafood, or full raw bar and sushi. The impeccable service, live entertainment and attention to detail are just some of the reasons your visit will be a memorable one. Peruse their extensive wine list, after-dinner menu and cigar menu, and be sure to take advantage of special gift card promotions on Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Jeff Ruby's Steakhouse serves dinner Monday-Thursday 5-10 p.m. and Friday-Saturday 5-11pm. Reservations are recommended but not required. Call (614) 686-7800 or visit www.JeffRuby.com/Columbus.

- With a retractable roof and a fire pit, **Lincoln Social** is a cool rooftop oasis and the ideal spot for guests to sip, savor and surround themselves with the cityscape. Enjoy the sweeping city views with a cocktail in hand at **Lincoln Social**, part of Cameron Mitchell Restaurants' Short North Collection. Located on the ninth floor above Del Mar SoCal Kitchen, Lincoln Social is an energetic gathering place complete with a flower wall to grab the perfect Instagram picture. Guests are invited to elevate their evening Tuesday-Thursday from 4 p.m.-12 a.m., Friday from 4 p.m.-1 a.m., Saturday from 1 p.m.-1 a.m., and Sunday from 1-10 p.m. Lincoln Social is located at 711 N. High St. in the Short North Arts District (614-300-9494).

- **Los Guachos** is the place to head when in the mood for authentic Mexican food. And they just opened their third brick-and-mortar restaurant in Dublin, located at 7370 Sawmill Road, which has a full-service bar, in addition to their other two locations: 5221 Godown Road and 1376 Cherry Bottom Road. Los Guachos has been named one of America's best taco spots by Yahoo and voted one of the best taco spots by the Food Network. Also, it was recognized by Every Day with Rachel Ray and Maxim Magazine as having some of the best tacos in the country, among other mentions within the Columbus press.

Visit them for tasty Mexican dishes including their famous Gringas, Juanas and original Tacos al Pastor. Open Sunday-Thursday 11 a.m.-midnight and Friday and Saturday 11 a.m.-1 a.m. at their Columbus locations and every day from 11a.m.-11 p.m. in Gahanna. Call ahead for carry-out at (614) 538-0211 (Godown Road), (614) 471-4717 (Gahanna) or (614) 726-9185 (Sawmill Road). Stop by online at losguachos-taqueria.com

- Make **Mackenzie River Pizza** your HQ for delicious food in a fun atmosphere. They are located at 1515 Polaris Parkway, at the first light off I-71 on the corner of Lyra Drive and Polaris Parkway. Choose from a selection of sandwiches and pasta along with their original thin-crust pizza. See if you can finish the Cowboy Nachos and check out the state-of-the-art Ice Bar which will keep your craft beer cold. Amazing soups and sandwiches are available including a list of specialty burgers like the "Grizzly" or "Bleu Onion BBQ." Look into a pulled pork sandwich or Rustler's Reuben, one of many to choose from, and wash it down with one of their 16 craft beers or extensive bourbon list. Still hungry? Try the Buffalo mac 'n' cheese, Cajun chicken alfredo or other pasta choices. Ask about the daily specials and don't forget dessert. Stop by for Happy Hour Monday-Friday, 3-6 p.m. Mackenzie River Pizza is open Monday-Thursday from 11 a.m.-10pm, Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-11 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Call them at (614) 840-9466 or visit www.mackenzie-riverpizza.com.

- Try a longtime Buckeye fan favorite at **Minelli's Pizza and Next Door Tavern** at 1189 N. Wilson Road. Enjoy Minelli's thin-crust pizza, Italian specialties from manicotti to chicken parmesan, subs, sandwiches and salads while catching the Buckeye action on one of 14 large-screen TVs at the Next Door Tavern. Test your Buckeye knowledge with the collection

of Ohio State photos, and don't miss any of the game with the Big Ten Network and NFL Sunday Ticket.

Take the family to dine at the old-fashioned pizzeria or meet your friends next door at the Tavern and enjoy your favorite beverages with great food from Minelli's. Quench your Buckeye fever at the Tavern's seven-hour Happy Hour. Too good to be true? Call them at (614) 279-3344 and find out.

- Whether you're in town for the game or live in Columbus year-round, treat yourself to the specialty cocktails and extensive menu at **MODA Restaurant and Bar**, located at 3100 Olentangy River Road in the recently renovated Marriott and Residence Inn. From gastropub small bites at the MODA bar to juicy hand-blended Angus beef burgers and fresh fish flown in daily, MODA has something for everyone. Try the Aukra salmon fillet with ginger glaze, Shiitake sticky rice and pickled Asian slaw, or check out the Chef's Perfect Sandwich, a house-made short rib pastrami on a pretzel bun. MODA's friendly staff serve up great food and specialty cocktails in an open and modern atmosphere.

MODA serves Sunday Brunch from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., or socialize with friends and fans at Happy Hour weekdays 4 p.m.-7 p.m. MODA is open daily from 6:30 a.m.- midnight and also offers gameday specials for Buckeye fans. Call (614) 447-9777 or visit www.ModaColumbus.com.

- You're sure to find something for everyone at **Paul's Fifth Avenue**, a Grandview tradition for over 50 years. Open for breakfast and lunch seven days a week, Paul's features an eclectic mix of cuisine. Enjoy all your favorites at breakfast, including eggs made-to-order, omelets, waffles, pancakes and home fries. Be sure to try Paul's famous Callahans, your choice of toppings on a bed of home fries.

At lunch, try one of the traditional sandwiches such as the Reuben or a burger made from fresh-ground short rib and beef round paired with Paul's famous Italian wedding soup. Or treat yourself to one of the traditional Italian favorites including Mama Panzera's lasagna and chicken or veal parmesan. With ample parking and located at 1565 W. Fifth Ave. in Grandview just five minutes from campus, Paul's is a convenient option for dining before the game. Phone (614) 481-8848 or visit www.paulsonline.com.

- There are days when nothing will do but a donut. Or two. Visit **Peace Love & Little Donuts** for a taste treat and bask in their '70s-themed atmosphere at one of their two locations in the Columbus area. Relax in a colorful setting with tie-dye and music and grab a coffee with your selected donut(s). Choose from dozens of flavors for your donut cravings for an experience you won't soon forget. They're open Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturday 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Visit Peace Love & Little Donuts of Upper Arlington at 2110 W. Henderson Road or call (614) 725-4100, or stop by the Worthington location at 656 High St. in Worthington (614-396-6503). Visit them online at www.peaceloveandlittledonuts.com.

- **The Pearl** is an urban and cozy tavern that showcases made-from-scratch food, classically inspired cocktails and an exclusive selection of ales, lagers and stouts. Start off with the creamy clam chowder with chorizo dust. For raw bar aficionados, The Pearl offers oysters and clams on the half shell, or try the N'Awlins baked oysters or the Shellfish Tower featuring oysters, clams, peel 'n' eat shrimp and Louie dressed colossal crab. Entrées include classics such as Southern fried chicken with a cinnamon sticky bun and cider-braised greens, Great Lakes fish 'n' chips or the braised short rib with horseradish mashed potatoes.

The Pearl's brunch stands out from the bunch and is served every Saturday and Sunday beginning at 10 a.m. Or hook up with friends for Happy Hour weekdays from 4-6 p.m. The Pearl

is located at 641 N. High St. in the Short North Arts District, just a short distance from campus, and is open daily at 4 p.m. Call (614) 227-0151.

- One great option for affordable family dining in Grove City, just south of Columbus, is **Plank's On Broadway**, which features a wide variety of sandwiches and entrées in addition to the ever-popular pizza. Favorites include burgers, grilled chicken salad and, of course, good cold beer. Patrons can enjoy a large works pizza for four for about \$18 or a burger, fries and a beer for about \$9.

Plank's is located at 4022 Broadway, off I-270 west of I-71. For more information, call (614) 875-7800.

- For great food and atmosphere, try **Press Grill** at 741 N. High St. in the Short North (614-298-1014) and **Press Pub on 5th** (614-817-1198) in Grandview at 1505 W. 5th Ave. Their large menu includes the shrimp Po Boy, the pesto chicken sandwich and the famous Press Burger with fried egg. Choose a craft beer from the well-stocked bar and sample the daily specials: Mondays, Nathan's all-beef hot dogs, two for \$5; Tuesdays, 85-cent wings; Wednesdays, \$1.50 tacos. And don't miss Thanksgiving dinner every Thursday night for only \$12. Visit www.presscolumbus.com to find out more.

- Bring your appetite to **The Red Brick Tap and Grill** located at 292 East Gates St. in Columbus. Whatever your mood they have it with a variety of burgers, dogs, gyros, pizza, calzones and salads. Peruse the amazing list of bottled and draft beers (more than two dozen rotating taps) and wine selections. Happy hour is weekdays from 3-7 p.m. and The Red Brick serves brunch from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Ask about the daily specials, and visit their site for special events at www.theredbricktapandgrill.com. Call today at (614) 444-2742.

- **The Red Door Tavern** has been a Columbus favorite since 1964 and is easy to find at 1736 W. Fifth Ave. in the Grandview area. Treat yourself to some comfort today with a range of menu items guaranteed to satisfy. Start with one of their delicious appetizers such as the fried cheese ravioli or fried calamari or one of their many hearty soups. Signature sandwiches include the Red Door Famous Reuben, the best in town Red Door Club and the famous Twisted Pelican, voted one of the top sandwiches in Columbus. Or try one of their delicious entrées, including the shrimp and chicken linguine, chicken and broccoli fettuccine alfredo or fried shrimp. The Red Door also features pork sliders and delicious veggie wraps with fresh cucumber, tomato, red onion, banana peppers, mixed greens, provolone cheese and Italian dressing wrapped in a sun-dried tomato basil tortilla.

The Red Door Tavern is open Sunday-Wednesday 11 a.m.-midnight, Thursday 11 a.m.-1 a.m., and Friday and Saturday 11 a.m.-

2:30 am. Visit them at www.reddoortavern.com or call 488-5433.

- Make **Roosters** your headquarters to watch the Buckeyes while enjoying great wings and good times – before, during and after the games. Locally owned and operated, Roosters is open seven days a week with multiple area locations. Voted best wait staff and best wings by 614 Magazine, Roosters invites you to come watch the game in a casual atmosphere while enjoying the selection of wings, burgers, pizza, salads and a ton of appetizers. If you're watching the game at home, call Roosters for catering or carryout.

Look for the Roosters Food Truck at Ohio State home games in the Fanfest area between St. John Arena and the Ice Rink. Roosters is the Official Wing Sponsor of Ohio State Athletics. Visit www.roosterswings.com for locations and hours.

- **Rusty Bucket** is a casual American restaurant and tavern, a gathering place where people come to share laughter, smiles and great conversation over food that makes everyone happy. Satisfying and familiar, the menu is classic American fare, thoughtfully prepared from scratch by their executive chef. Cocktails are considered a craft, made-to-order by highly skilled bartenders. From barrel to glass, no shortcuts are taken with the carefully selected beer list. The perfect draft is guaranteed. Stop by for lunch, meet family and friends for dinner, or stop in before or after the game. Rusty Bucket's motto is great food, great drinks, great people – the Bucket Life.

Large party reservations, online waitlist and private dining are available. Visit one of their 10 Columbus locations today, available at www.MyRustyBucket.com.

- A longtime central Ohio destination restaurant remains the anchor of historic downtown Canal Winchester as **Shade on the Canal** (19 S. High St.) continues to be a gathering place for locals and visitors alike. And now the Shade brand has expanded with Shade on State Street in Athens (994 E. State St.) and Shade on 30th Street (850 S. 30th St.) in Heath.

Shade's, as it is popularly known, offers the best in casual dining and sports pub atmosphere with a friendly staff, flat-screen TVs, upbeat music and walls lined with local black and white photos. You'll find great food including award-winning pizza, great wings, fresh cut salads, sandwiches, tasty appetizers, homemade soups and more. Are you planning a special event? Check out Shade's historic Pine Room at the Canal Winchester location. For information or carry-out orders call the Canal Winchester location at (614) 837-9873, the Athens location at (740) 566-1009 or the Heath location at (740) 788-9287.

- Since opening in 1995, **Starliner Diner**

Continued On Page 44



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Great Dining Always Around Corner In The 614

Continued From Page 43

inspired menu also includes American and Southwestern influences and features popular dishes such as Creole Macaroni and Huevos Rancheros. Starliner Diner is frequently recognized as one of the best breakfasts in town, and it's no wonder why.

Starliner offers a wide selection of omelets, from the traditional ham and cheese to the Mexican chorizo with peppers, onions, garlic, jack cheese and cilantro. Or try the enormous breakfast burrito or chilibuiles Southwestern scramble. For lunch, check out the fish Po' Boy or Cuban sandwich, or choose from a wide variety of dinner entrees.

Starliner Diner is open seven days a week and features a full bar with Sunday alcohol sales. It is located at 4121 Main St. in historic old Hilliard. Call (614) 529-1198 or visit starlinerdiner.com.

• Come celebrate 90 years of Italian dining tradition with **TAT Ristorante di Famiglia**,

located at 1210 South James Road. Family-owned and -operated since 1929, TAT brings you four generations of cooking experience, available for dining in, takeout or catering, with homemade pasta and sauces. Stop in before or after the game. They can fill all your tailgating needs. Choose from an array of appetizers, salads, soups and entrées including deep-fried calamari, chef salads and special lasagna with homemade noodles.

Specialty cocktails, beer, wine and champagne are also available. Whether in the mood for freshly made gnocchi, polenta or breaded veal, you will find menu items to satisfy your cravings. And don't forget to leave room for dessert! TAT Ristorante is open Sunday-Thursday 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday 11 a.m.-10 p.m. and Saturday 9:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Call today at (614) 236-1392 or visit them at www.tatitalianrestaurantcolumbus.com.

• **The Whitney House** at 666 High St. in the heart of downtown Worthington serves made-from-scratch, American comfort food.

Have a seat in the dining room and escape the gameday hustle or embrace the energy in their tavern, which features three TVs.

Noon kickoff? Stop by before or during the game for a piece of blueberry coffee cake with a side of candied bacon, biscuits & gravy with eggs your way, or their Ohio Burger made with Ohio beef, ground in-house daily. If you're looking to booze up your meal, start with a boozy cereal or one of their hand-crafted brunch cocktails.

Dinner starts promptly at 4 p.m. Begin with something small from the selection of snacks or starters, such as the fried goat-cheese balls with tomato jam. Enjoy a variety of salads and main dishes, which can accommodate dietary restrictions. Try the seared ruby red trout with purple-potato hash, bacon, wilted greens and Tabasco butter sauce or the hanger steak with greens, a potato cake and seasonal butter. The Whitney House family looks forward to serving yours. The Whitney House serves brunch Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., lunch

Monday-Friday 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and dinner seven days a week starting at 4 p.m. Call 614-396-7846 for more information.

• **Z Cucina**, in the heart of the popular Grandview area at 1368 Grandview Ave., offers modern and traditional Italian fare in a warm and inviting atmosphere. The menu offers flavorful and well-seasoned small plates, salads and main courses. Among the items made in-house from scratch are the ricotta and mozzarella cheeses, sausage, breads and desserts, and the menu includes handmade ravioli and tortelli, as well as other pastas. Z Cucina is known for its well-crafted, artisan wine list, and there is a full bar for your enjoyment. Z Cucina also offers full-service catering for functions both on and off site. Z Cucina is open Monday-Saturday at 5 p.m., with Happy Hour weekdays from 5-7 p.m. Visit Z Cucina's newest location in Dublin's Bridgepark District at 6584 Riverside Dr. For reservations or more information call (614) 486-9200 (Grandview) or (614) 916-9200 (Dublin).

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It's Time To Talk About The Heisman Trophy

It was the same song Friday night, Oct. 18, just in a more quaint location of Ryan Field in Evanston, Ill. The Ohio State Buckeyes revved up their engines the first quarter then put the pedal to the metal and left the Northwestern Wildcats in the dust. A 24-point second-quarter output by the explosive Buckeye offense put Pat Fitzgerald's outmatched team in a hole they couldn't dig themselves out of by halftime.

COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

As has been the norm this season, by the fourth quarter Ryan Day was able to empty the bench and play everyone but the equipment manager. Ohio State had three plays of 50 yards or more while Northwestern didn't have a run or pass over 20 yards for the entire game. Even the Wildcats' Gothic uniforms or the slippery natural grass of Ryan Field couldn't slow down the Buckeye scoring machine.

Pat Fitzgerald has done an outstanding job as the head coach at Northwestern. The former All-America linebacker is a good coach, an excellent recruiter and a man who gets the most out of the talent he has at a place where it is tough to win on a regular basis. This season his team has experienced a slew of injuries, especially at offensive skilled positions, that has resulted in their offense being all but inept in the ability to score points. Northwestern has had to rely on its defense to even stay in games this season, but when two of its defensive linemen went down Friday night, the curtains all but went down on any chances of the Wildcats pulling an upset of Ohio State.

Heisman Hopes

There is little chance of any Buckeye winning the Heisman Trophy this year even though three players have earned the right to be in the discussion. Unfortunately, winning the trophy is often more of a popularity contest than the body of work that is actually taking place on the field.

Quarterbacks Tua Tagovailoa of Alabama, Jalen Hurts of Oklahoma and Joe Burrow of LSU along with running back Jonathan Taylor of Wisconsin are the midseason favorites to win the coveted prize. Tagovailoa, Hurts and even, to a lesser extent, Burrow received a ton of pre-season hype, and with the slow start of Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence and Georgia's Jake Fromm, they are odds-on favorites to win the Heisman. The fate of Jonathan Taylor may well be determined Oct. 26 in Ohio Stadium.

All of these players have performed to a high level in their collegiate careers, but Justin Fields, Chase Young and J.K. Dobbins have proved they, also, are exceptional at their respective positions and deserve to be considered for the award.

Fields is the biggest surprise of the season so far in college football. He had never started a college football game prior to the opener against Florida Atlantic. Since that first start, Fields has been near perfect in every aspect of quarterback play. He has a strong arm and has shown the ability to fit the football into small windows in terms of his timing and accuracy. He can deliver the long ball and is getting better each week in terms of placement and touch on the deeper routes.

Fields has shown remarkable poise under pressure for a young quarterback and his decision making has been as good as a seasoned veteran. He has made few mistakes as proven by the fact he has thrown only one interception for the season.

One of Fields' strongest positives is how he distributes the football to the open, not a favorite, receiver. Statistically speaking, Fields can match up with any quarterback in the nation in terms of throwing the football. What sets him apart from others is his ability to slide and move instinctively in the pocket, extending plays and avoiding the rush. Once he turns upfield, he becomes a real running threat to the opposition. Like Jalen Hurts, he is both elusive and powerful with the football under his arm.

There is no doubt Fields will be one of the favorites to win the Heisman in 2020, but if he continues to have strong showings the rest of this season, he should be in the hunt for the trophy in 2019.

Dobbins will end his career as one of the top

five running backs in Ohio State history. His performance this year has been overshadowed only by the multiplicity of offensive skill talent around him. Dobbins is a slashing back who is a strong runner through the line and explosive when in the open field. He reads his blocks well and can lower his shoulders when necessary to get the extra yardage to sustain drives.

Dobbins is an extra threat out of the backfield as a receiver as proven against Northwestern by hauling in three receptions for 30 yards and a touchdown to go along with another 100-plus yards rushing. Dobbins has the speed, acceleration, running strength and versatility to succeed at the next level and deserves to be in the talk as the best running back in college football considering he hasn't had to play much in the second half of the games this season.

Dobbins' head-to-head match with Taylor this weekend is a major key in determining the best runner not only in the Big Ten, but in the nation as well.

Defensive end Chase Young leads the nation in sacks and is attempting to overtake Mike Vrabel as the Buckeyes' all-time leader in that category. That is a daunting task, but one thing is for certain: Chase Young is the most dominating defensive end in the all of college football this season.

Young is one of those athletes who plays as good as he looks. At 6-5 and 265 pounds, Young's stature intimidates opposing tackles even before the football is snapped. Young gets off the ball like a rocket, often being around the offensive tackle before they can get out of their stance. Young is excellent with his hands preventing opposing linemen the chance to get

locked into the frame of his body. He disengages from blocks immediately, and his cat-like quickness allows him to pursue to the football and even catch many plays from behind. He is an exceptional pass rusher who wins the vast majority of his one-on-one battles. He is so well respected by opposing coaches as a pass rusher that they often assign two players to attempt to block him and keep him off their quarterback.

When Young doesn't get to the quarterback, he still puts on tremendous pressure, forcing quarterbacks to throw the football early or force a higher release point due to his long arms. He is also a smart defensive lineman who is rarely fooled, as shown by his ability to snuff out draws and screens.

Young is not only the best defensive player in the nation, but many would argue the very best player in college football and deserving of the Heisman Trophy.

Fortunately for the Buckeyes, Fields, Dobbins and Young are unselfish individuals who put the team first. They do not want the attention on them, and that's a good thing. They perform at a high level each week to assure victory for the team, but as football analysts recognize their talents, individual postseason awards are sure to follow.

Known as one of the top recruiters in college football, Bill Conley was a national championship-winning coach and player at Ohio State who suited up for Woody Hayes and spent 17 years on the staffs of Earle Bruce, John Cooper and Jim Tressel. His column will appear throughout the season in BSB.

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Buckeyes Rain Terror Over Big Ten, Country

In the 1920s and '30s, the Chicago area was ruled by Al Capone. He put fear into the hearts of enemies, had little regard for the carnage he left and became famous – nay, infamous – well after he left this Earth.

Ohio State ruled the Chicago area – specifically Evanston – with an almost criminal extinguishing of host Northwestern in a rare Friday night contest. The Buckeyes were stealthy, determined and ready to take care of business – no Purdue hiccups here. And by the end of the night, the carnage was too much for all but the hardest souls left in attendance.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

The tone was set early – on Northwestern's second play no less – when Ohio State's all-world defensive end Chase Young easily got past NU right tackle Gunnar Vogel, strangely left alone in protection, and flattened Wildcats quarterback Aidan Smith. No one would have faulted Vogel for tapping out, for suddenly coming up with an injury. Anything to get away from Young and his jacked-up teammates.

OSU had a couple of lapses on defense but limited Northwestern to just 2.9 yards per play. You almost feel for Pat Fitzgerald, who has proved to be one of the best head coaches in the Big Ten after keeping Northwestern relevant for the bulk of his 14-year tenure. The Wildcats have gained the reputation as gritty, hard-nosed and able to impose their will on a lot of teams – many of whom they were inferior to in talent.

But there was none of that against Ohio State, who out-athleted the Wildcats across the board and, after a slow start that saw the Buckeyes lead just 7-3 after 15 minutes, fired the death blow with 24 second-quarter points.

Capone couldn't have been more precise or calculating or efficient.

"I thought we had an edge to us,"

Buckeyes boss Ryan Day said. "We could feel it in warmups, had a really good week of practice, and for two weeks they've been working at it. It was a slow build to the game. It wasn't all at once. I did bed check last night and just about everyone on that defense was going through their film. Very serious group there, with great leadership. The secondary and linebackers really complement the front well, but they're playing at a really high level right now because they're playing together and they understand where they fit in the defense."

Fit. An odd concept, isn't it?

Last year Ohio State was a beat slow and a tick late, and it led to opponents breaking off a ton of explosive plays. This year there's less thinking and more doing, and the Buckeyes have done it as well as just about anyone in the country. The Buckeyes are third in the FBS with just 15 plays of 20-plus yards allowed.

You know it's a good night at the office when fans need a program to identify the players on the field. Day was able to empty the bench and get valuable reps for the Buckeye backups, which is never a bad thing because there could be an occasion down the road when someone is thrust into unexpected duty.

"They were really excited about getting in there and playing and trying to put good film out there," Day said. "I think on the long run by Master (Teague) they got some really great movement right there, and some of those younger guys got good movement on their play. You know they were kind of on the sideline saying we want to score right here. They were looking at it as an opportunity, and it was good to see the guys compete like that."

While the defense was putting in work, the offense was making things look easy.

There is no more worthless stat – except maybe to the service academies, who want to possess the ball and grind you down – in college football than time of possession. Ohio State scored eight times, and five of the drives took less than a minute.

The first two scoring drives featured 22 plays, but the last six were just 18 plays. OSU had drives of two, two, three, seven, three and one play, proving it's more important

what you do with the ball rather than just how long you hang onto it.

OSU was magical on third down, converting 8 of 14, which included a number of third-and-long situations. The Buckeyes converted a pair of third-and-7s on their first drive and later made a first down on third-and-15 when Fields rolled right and found K.J. Hill hugging the sideline. You got the feeling it could have been third-and-Naperville and the Buckeyes would have converted.

A sharp contrast to the sometimes disjointed and hurried patterns of Urban Meyer, Day seems cool under pressure. He isn't afraid to go against convention – such as running on third-and-long if he thinks his team has an advantage – and he seldom runs the same thing twice. Too often under Meyer, the Buckeyes fell back on a couple of plays – usually a J.T. Barrett power run or a quick throw to the flat, in hopes the receiver would break a tackle. The playbook seems wide open with Day, and that's refreshing.

Fields has been wildly efficient this season, but he really reached a new level against the Wildcats. The stats may not scream out to you – 18 of 23, 194 yards and four touchdowns – but if you paid attention you saw his wondrous athleticism on display. And seeing it, you wouldn't be wrong in thinking that maybe, just maybe, he's actually an upgrade from Dwayne Haskins.

There's no way Haskins completes the aforementioned pass to Hill because he would have been swallowed up in the pocket by Northwestern defenders. Fields also had a throw in the second quarter where he rolled right, looked dead to rights, backtracked and threw it out of bounds, content to live another day. That's another one where Haskins would have been gobbled up by the rush.

Ohio State's second touchdown of the game – a 19-yard pass to J.K. Dobbins – may have been Fields' prettiest throw of the game. Dobbins was offset to the right, with two other receivers in tight on the same side. All three ran short routes, but Dobbins cut his to the middle – a play called F Angle, which was a staple of the St. Louis Rams offense during their run as the Greatest Show on Turf. Like Marshall Faulk, Dobbins

got inside leverage and ran free from the trailing linebacker, and Fields greased it into his hands. The rest was easy and started a 24-point second-quarter barrage that effectively ended the contest.

"They picked up some critical third downs which let them continue drives," Fitzgerald said. "We get those stops, I think it's different going into halftime. But then all of a sudden it came, I don't know what you call it – kind of the Buckeye onslaught. They've done it to everybody. It's either been the first quarter against most teams, or the second quarter against us and Michigan State. You have to be able to get off the field on third down against them. Those were momentum opportunities against, in my opinion, the best team in the country. And we missed them."

If there was any kind of worry that the Buckeyes would take Northwestern lightly, that was gone pretty quickly.

Ohio State was focused and on point and can now look ahead to what could be a still-dangerous Wisconsin team to close out October. The Badgers dropped the ball, somehow losing to perpetual sad sack Illinois on a game-ending field goal that dimmed the spotlight for the Buckeyes and Big Ten. This was set to be a top-five showdown, but Wisconsin didn't hold up its end of the bargain.

But there are still reasons to be wary.

Running back Jonathan Taylor is a gem who can make even the best defenses look Pop Warner-ish, and if the Buckeyes can't stop him, they can't win. And while Taylor is the focal point, first-year starting quarterback Jack Coan has upgraded the position. The missing piece for Wisconsin in recent seasons has been an inability to convert on third down because of liabilities under center. But Coan has completed 24 passes of 15 yards or more and has thrown just two interceptions all season, one against Illinois.

Being at home should help the Buckeyes, but it will be a test – the first real one of the season. Should they come out unbloodied, then the rest of the country will really need to worry. Because it means there's a new bully on the block, one that could end up ruling all of college football.

Dandy Dozen

There isn't a whole lot of movement among the top teams, though there does appear to be a pretty sizable gap between the top four and the rest of the field. The Buckeyes would be favored over anyone on a neutral field and are looking more formidable by the week. Navigate Wisconsin and things set up very nicely.

- Ohio State (7-0)
- Alabama (7-0)
- LSU (7-0)
- Oklahoma (7-0)
- Clemson (7-0)
- Penn State (7-0)
- Florida (7-1)
- Auburn (6-1)
- Oregon (6-1)
- Notre Dame (5-1)
- Utah (6-1)
- Georgia (6-1)

I am not yet a believer in Minnesota, even with the Gophers' unblemished record. Their games have taken strange turns, and they've won 4 of 7 by seven points or fewer. The schedule hasn't been great, either, ranking in the mid-80s. Teams should be applauded for winning all their games, but I am also a firm believer that you have to play someone if you want to be noticed.

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Ohio State's Chemistry Apparent In Dominant Win

As I drift between the easy win over Northwestern and what still should be Ohio State's toughest game to date with Wisconsin, I will call this my stream-of-consciousness column. I have a lot on my mind, little things that don't merit full-fledged notes or commentary. So I am just going to let it flow. Let's see where I end up.

On most weeks this football season, I have been sharing what I thought about each game heading into that particular Saturday (or Friday in this most recent case). While I thought Ohio State would beat Northwestern handily, I believed the Wildcats would put up a bit more of a fight. I envisioned something more along the lines of last year's Big Ten Championship Game, where Northwestern battled for much of the contest but Ohio State eventually wore the 'Cats down with superior talent and depth. (You may recall that Northwestern pulled to within three, 24-21, in the third quarter in Indianapolis before falling 45-24.)

Pat Fitzgerald's bunch, which was not up to last year's, did keep it close for a quarter, trailing only 7-3 after 15 minutes before Ohio State exploded for 24 unanswered points in the second quarter. Northwestern might have kept it even tighter than that in the first half if Justin Fields and his troops had not been incredible on third downs. The Buckeyes converted on two third-and-7s on their first scoring drive and a third-and-15 and third-and-8 on their second.

A stop in any of those situations and Northwestern would have at least slowed the Buckeye onslaught.

Fitzgerald said it better than I could after the game.

"They picked up some critical third downs which let them continue drives," he said. "We get those stops, I think it's different going into halftime. But then all of a sudden it came, I don't know what you call it - kind of the Buckeye onslaught."

By the way, there has been a debate going on for weeks on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum about where Fitzgerald ranks among college coaches. I believe him to be the ideal coach for his alma mater, Northwestern, and I think he would do just fine at most other schools. Is he up there with Dabo Swinney or Nick Saban (way too early to put Ryan Day with that pair)? I don't think so. I would see him more along the lines of a Mark Dantonio, who gets the maximum out of the players he is able to recruit at Michigan State and whose teams play with grit and toughness. Of course, we don't know how well Fitzgerald might recruit at a school with different academic standards than Northwestern.

If you have a thought on this, check in on the Forum. This Fitzgerald discussion has been going on for weeks, and I am sure it will still be there.

The highlight for me of a game with many highlights was Blake Haubeil's 55-yard field goal to end the first half. I don't know if Buckeye fans have ever felt completely comfortable with Haubeil. He hasn't had much of an opportunity to show his stuff because the Buckeyes score so many touchdowns. I think fan confidence will be greater after he drilled the second-longest field goal in OSU history (tied with Mike Nugent, Dan Stultz and Gary Cairns) straight down the middle with enough distance to make it from 60.

They were really meaningless points in a 52-3 game, so why was it such a highlight for me? To answer that, I have to remind everyone that kickers are off in their own little world when it comes to football teams. They usually practice by themselves and generally get more attention when they screw up than when they succeed.

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

The way the team celebrated Haubeil's kick really struck me and got me excited, and I think it says a lot about this Ohio State football team. I saw the celebration as a demonstration of the chemistry on this club. I've witnessed two championship football teams in my years at BSB - 2002 and 2014 - and spent quite a bit of time with members of the great 1968 team when I was on the organizing committee for their big 25th reunion.

One thing all three of those teams seemed to have in common was chemistry. I hope that bodes well for the 2019 Buckeyes.

Speaking of chemistry, the offensive line has been building it over the course of the season. Unfortunately, a couple of the big guys have been banged up, and the line looked much less cohesive as the game opened with the Wildcats. J.K. Dobbins had just 22 yards on his first nine carries against NU, and Fields was forced to run for his life on pass plays, which he did quite well, thank you.

Ultimately, big Thayer Munford entered the game, the line stabilized and the Buckeyes were off and running.

Dobbins used a nifty 19-yard touchdown catch to get untracked, and on Ohio State's next possession he ripped off a 68-yard jaunt to set up his own 5-yard scoring run to make it 21-3.

As I said, this is stream of consciousness, and Dobbins' slow start and eventual big run made me drift back to 2015 and that Michigan State game that still annoys me. Ezekiel Elliott got off to a slow start against the Spartans, and Urban Meyer and his offensive brain trust pretty much abandoned him. After carrying 10 times for just 30 yards and a long of seven with a score in the first half, he was given the ball just twice in the second half for three yards.

The Spartans scored 10 unanswered points in the fourth quarter for the 17-14 victory. The Buckeyes, banking on the arm and legs of J.T. Barrett, gained just 27 yards on nine plays in the final stanza.

Elliott famously complained publicly about his lack of carries.

You've got to keep giving guys like Elliott and Dobbins the ball, even if they start slow. When they are that good, they are ultimately going to break loose. If they don't, hats off to the other team. They stopped your best.

Which brings up a good question. Who is the better Buckeye running back, Elliott or Dobbins? That's a little bit like asking who was the better Buckeye back, Keith Byars or Eddie George. I'll go with Zeke, at least for now. If Dobbins has a playoff run the likes of Elliott, I'll reconsider.

Byars or George? I'll say Byars because he was more versatile, even able to occasionally throw a pass.

Great running backs? I'll take all four of them.

This is the issue where we pass out our midterm grades for each of Ohio State's position groups. Normally, when we get to the editing process, I have to lower some of the grades passed out by staff members. This year I left the grades "as is." It's hard not to give the Buckeyes a high grade at every position.

One of the few areas where I can question the team's production is on kick and punt returns. Kick returns are tough to gauge right now because of what I consider the bizarre fair catch rule. But the Buckeyes seemingly have

struggled with punt returns for some time now. You would think with the vast number of athletes on the club over these last few years, somebody could consistently return punts. I admit, however, that it takes a special player to be looking up in the sky for punts while knowing a bunch of fast and furious opponents are roaring straight at you.

One of the players who has spent time back there is Demario McCall. He has returned seven punts for 51 yards and a 7.3-yard average. McCall is a player I have been really rooting for, and I thought he was going to have a breakout season in 2019. Instead, he seems to be fading into the woodwork, though he did have a carry against Northwestern for seven yards and lost a yard on a punt return.

McCall started the season as a viable contributor to the Ohio State offense.

He had two carries for 11 yards and a catch for seven in the opener against Florida Atlantic, while returning two punts, including one for 35 yards, and two kickoffs for 26 yards each. That earned him five carries against Cincinnati, but that may be where his fate started to turn as he gained just 11 yards. He had two carries for five yards at Indiana, and we haven't seen much of him since. His carry against the Wildcats was his first tote since carrying once for 10 yards against Miami, and even his punt returns seem to have lessened.

For the season, McCall has carried 11 times for 44 yards (4.0) and caught two passes for 11 yards to go along with his team-leading seven punt returns. McCall has seven of Ohio State's eight kickoff returns, good for a 22.1-yard average.

I'm still rooting for you, Demario!

Which brings us to the Wisconsin game. True, the Badgers' loss to Illinois takes a bit of the luster off the matchup with the Buckeyes, but this is a huge game for Ohio State nonetheless.

I didn't see the Illinois game, but I can pretty much bet that the Badgers were looking ahead to the big game in Columbus. The upset should remind us all that the Big Ten is a tough conference and you have to come ready to play every week. Good for former Buckeye assistant coach Lovie Smith to lead his team to victory and give the Illini some hope. The program is not down to the Rutgers level, but it has a long way to go to compete in the Big Ten West. The huge upset will give the program a boost.

If anything, the loss to the Illini is going to make Wisconsin a tougher out for the Buckeyes as the Badgers try to prove that the defeat was a fluke and work their way back into the Big Ten championship picture and possibly back into the playoff discussion, which most certainly will require one, if not two, victories over the Buckeyes.

The previously unbeaten Badgers didn't suddenly sink to the level of the Illini. They will be the best team Ohio State has faced so far, and the Badgers have convincing wins over Michigan and Michigan State to prove it.

I have longed maintained that after Michigan, Wisconsin is Ohio State's biggest rival, dating back to the days when Heisman winners Alan Ameche and Hop Cassady squared off against each other, through the '80s when former Buckeye assistant Dave McClain cost Earle Bruce at least a couple of Rose Bowls, through the successful Barry

Alvarez years at Wisconsin and on into today.

Look for a rock'em, sock'em game with the subplot of who is the better running back, Dobbins or Jonathan Taylor.

I think the Buckeyes have the better players, but Wisconsin had better players than Illinois.

I love big football games. I'm ready.

Who Was The Heisman Winner?

OK, the consciousness stream has dried up. Let's get to a legitimate note.

It's hard to believe it has been 35 years since Keith Byars' electrifying game against Illinois, where he led the Buckeyes back from a 24-0 deficit and set the Ohio State rushing record at the time with 274 yards in a 45-38 victory.

For all of those 35 years I have insisted to anyone I could insist to that Byars should have won the Heisman Trophy that year and that Boston College's Doug Flutie won the coveted award based on one Hail Mary pass late in the season that defeated defending national champion Miami (Fla.) at the final gun. If Byars had had his shoeless 67-yard run against the Illini late in the season and Flutie had thrown his miracle pass in week six, the Heisman voting might have had a different outcome.

But for all those years, I have to admit that I have never compared Byars' statistics to those of Flutie, though I have been pleading Byars' case as gospel.

So I finally took a look.

In 1984, Byars ran for 1,764 yards on 336 carries, both tops nationally, for a 5.3-yard average with 22 touchdowns, the nation's top mark for rushing TDs. He caught 42 passes for 479 yards (11.4 average) and another two scores, giving him the most overall touchdowns in the country and the most points at 144. If all that wasn't enough, he had a 35-yard touchdown pass, giving him 25 TDs responsible for, sixth best, and returned eight kickoffs for a 24.8-yard average.

Flutie was 246 of 423 passing for 3,634 yards (third in the country) and 30 TDs (second) against 13 interceptions with a 58.2 completion percentage (16th). His passing efficiency rating of 147.6 was sixth. He also ran 66 times for 379 yards for a 5.7-yard average and three scores, giving him 4,013 total yards, tops in the country. His 33 TDs responsible for were second in the nation.

Both were impressive seasons. You be the judge.

At the time the voting wasn't even close, with Flutie almost doubling up Byars. He had 678 first-place votes for a total of 2,240, while the Buckeye back had 87 first-place votes and 1,251 total.

Stories from the Oct. 20, 1984, BSB recapping the famous Ohio State-Illinois game were reprinted at BuckeyeSports.com as part of our Reprint Thursdays on Oct. 17 and are archived for your enjoyment.

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