

'We Have To Be Heard'



OHIO STATE FOOTBALL/TWITTER

KNEEL FOR NINE – Ohio State football players (from front to back) Jonathon Cooper, Thayer Munford and Haskell Garrett took part in a peaceful protest by kneeling for nine minutes outside of Ohio Stadium on June 2.

Ohio State Names 16th University President

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

State University of New York chancellor Dr. Kristina M. Johnson was officially named the next president of The Ohio State University during a board of trustees meeting on June 3.

"We are pleased beyond measure to welcome Dr. Johnson to Ohio State," board of trustees chairman Gary R. Heminger said during the meeting. "Her range of knowledge, service and accomplishments across sectors and throughout her career is nothing short of remarkable. She is uniquely positioned to make an immediate impact, building on Ohio State's momentum and advancing our mission to uplift lives through academic excellence."



Kristina Johnson

Johnson, who will begin her tenure with the university on Sept. 1, spent the last three years as the chancellor of the 64-college system known as the State University of New York, which boasts more than 1.3 million students and 30,000 faculty members and includes five academic health centers and three hospital networks.

Prior to that, Johnson founded and served as the CEO of Cube Hydro Partners, a clean-energy infrastructure company focused on building and operating hydro-power plants in North America. She also served as the undersecretary of energy for the United States Department of Energy under former president Barack Obama.

"Her credentials are long and impeccable, and her references are glowing," said Lewis Von Thae, the chairman of Ohio State's presidential search committee. "Everyone we talked to praised her boundless energy, unwavering integrity and keen ability to unite people around a shared vision. One person even went so far as to say I would bet my life on Kristina. To me, that speaks volumes."

Johnson earned her bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in electrical engineering from Stanford University, then participated in a postdoctoral fellowship at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. She began her academic career in 1985 as an assistant

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Ohio State Student-Athletes Speak Out Against Racism

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

Seth Towns graduated from the prestigious Harvard University on May 28. That honor did not matter much the next day when the Ohio State basketball grad transfer was detained by Columbus police amid a protest in response to the death of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer.

Towns and other protesters point to statistics from the Washington Post that show black people are over-represented among all those killed by police relative to the proportion of the population. According to the U.S. Census estimates, black people made up 12 percent of the population from 2015-19, yet they accounted for 26.4 percent of those who were killed by police under all circumstances.

Statistics like this are the reason Towns and millions more across the world chose to protest police brutality and racial injustice following the murder of Floyd.

"My name is Seth Towns. In a span of just 24

hours, I walked from a virtual Harvard graduation stage to the back of a police van – both of which, I am equally proud of," said Towns in a statement. "I, with so many others, met in downtown Columbus, Ohio, to peacefully protest the murder of George Floyd, and the long list of others who are failed by this country to fight for justice at the face of inequity, and to express our pain.

"True voice is not found in words spoken but in steps taken. These hurtful times call for us to come together and unite our voices to be true and fearless in our expression of compassion and take steps to create the change we seek – the change we need. The world needs to know that we are hurting. To those that are silent, speak up, use your voice. For one that fails to act on his truth is no one at all. And for those that are (speaking up), keep going. I'm right there with you."

While peacefully protesting, Towns was told to back up then handcuffed and led into a police vehicle. The Columbus native was detained by police for

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From The Message Board

Ohio State saw its players return to campus for voluntary workouts on June 8, as the NCAA appears to be preparing for a season this fall. With the upcoming campaign looking more and more likely, BSB asked members of the BSB Fan Forum which Buckeye they think could be a surprise key contributor this fall. Here are some of their responses:

"Tuf Borland. Everyone raved about him as a freshman. They have blamed every defensive failing on him during his sophomore and junior years. Now it's time for him to prove which one it is. A guy named Tuf who plays linebacker cannot fail."

– MCarr

"Teradja Mitchell. If he can work hard to realize his potential, he could pleasantly surprise all of us."

– AnthonyBuckeye

"Excellent question. My guess is that it will be someone who is such a surprise that I cannot name him in early June. Julian Fleming or Taron Vincent maybe?"

– Terrier Buck

"I'll say Sevyn Banks. I think he is ready to step up and from my understanding he was tearing it up in practice before it got cancelled."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"My answer is Marcus Hooker. I could not have been more impressed with him in the practice that we got to see this spring, and I think that he has the same athletic traits as his brother, who had a similar burst onto the scene in 2016. I think Ohio State

is likely to move back to a two-safety system this fall, which will help Hooker out as well."

– Patrick Mayhorn, BSB

"The defensive backs will need a new playmaker to step up, so I do really like Sevyn Banks and Marcus Hooker as options. I will go with Jameson Williams, who I think will get much more of an opportunity to shine in his second season and could get himself a sizable role behind Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson."

– Wyatt Crosher, BSB

"I'll say Josh Proctor, who was one of my favorite players in his recruiting class and has shown flashes of greatness in limited playing time behind Jordan Fuller. He's a playmaker just waiting to pick off a pass for six or make a devastating hit."

– Andrew Lind, BSB

"I like Marcus Crowley, though a bit less so now that Trey Sermon is on campus. I was touting him prior to the Master Teague injury and feel he is a better all-around back – shiftier in space and more elusive in the open field. He doesn't quite have Teague's power or downhill burst, but if healthy I feel he can really do some things."

– Mike Wachsmann, BSB

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1985

Archie Griffin was hired in May as a special assistant to Buckeye Director of Athletics Rick Bay.

The announcement meant that Griffin would rejoin the department after a brief stint with the Jacksonville Bulls of the United States Football League. He had attempted a last shot at professional football after taking a leave of absence from his role as acting assistant director of employment at Ohio State.

"I'm delighted about being part of the athletic department," Griffin said. "I feel really good about working here at the university. I've enjoyed the position that I've been in with personnel, but when this opportunity presented itself, it was something I couldn't help but pursue. I think it's going to make for a good relationship."

"It's going to be challenging working with fund-raising people, trying to help raise money for the athletic department so we can improve the facilities here at the university and also for the operating budget, which we need to do."

30 Years Ago – 1990

The Big Ten conference's Council of Ten agreed June 4 to allow Penn State to join the conference and, in the process, announced that a name change was in order. The name change was set to be made within 60 days. The Nittany Lions became the first new member of the conference since Michigan State was voted in back in 1949.

The earliest that Penn State would be allowed to start competing in the conference's major revenue sports, namely football and basketball, was projected to be 1995. The non-revenue sports would be incorporated into the league as soon as the 1991-92 season.

Illinois president Stanley Ikenberry said that the addition of Penn State to the league could only add more prestige to the already highly thought of conference.

"We're pleased with this outcome," Ikenberry said. "It has involved a good deal of planning, a good deal of work, both by faculty members, athletic directors, the presidents themselves and, of course, by our colleagues at Penn State."

25 Years Ago – 1995

Ohio State athletic ticket office director Richelle Simonson and her staff of nine full-time assistants and four part-time students were in the process of trying to squeeze as many fans as possible into Ohio Stadium for Ohio State's Sept. 30 matchup with Notre Dame.

With interest through the roof and just 89,960 seats available in Ohio Stadium, Simonson said that the task was massive.

"Nothing is even close to this," said Simonson, who was finishing her fourth year as OSU's ticket director. "This is more response

than we've ever seen even with Michigan. We have people who have worked here for 20 or 25 years and they've never seen anything like this."

OSU's ticket office was the eye of the hurricane regarding ticket mania for the Notre Dame game, Simonson said.

"The Notre Dame onslaught actually started over two years ago," she said. "People would call up and say, 'Hey, I see you've got Notre Dame on the schedule. Can I get a couple of tickets?'"

"Then, as we've gotten closer to the game, the interest has progressively moved higher in volume. We get calls from people all over the country who want to come in and see that game."

20 Years Ago – 2000

After years of planning, Ohio State finally had its one-stop shop for its Student-Athlete Support Services. That wing of the OSU athletic department, which specialized in academic counseling for the school's athletic department, had been scattered all over campus.

Most recently, the department had been housed in the basement of Rainey Commons. It had conducted its study table sessions in a side room in the Sullivant Hall library after years of holding those sessions in residence hall dining rooms.

Now, with the construction of the Younkin Success Center, everything was in one place.

"It's all in one place," university president William Kirwan said. "This really is state-of-the-art."

Built at a cost of \$10 million, the building housed several university departments to go along with the Student-Athlete Support Services, including the Academic Learning Lab, Career Connection, the school's Counseling and Consultation Service and the Faculty and Teaching Assistant Development offices.

15 Years Ago – 2005

The arrests of three active Ohio State football players within 10 days – kicker Jonathan Skeete on May 11 for marijuana trafficking, running back Erik Haw on May 18 for marijuana possession, and defensive lineman Tim Schafer on May 21 for disorderly conduct – placed a spotlight on Ohio State's program following spring practice. Outcry from the media and the public was loud enough to prompt head coach Jim Tressel to hold what the university deemed a "roundtable discussion" on May 25.

That discussion amounted to Tressel and five active senior football players – linebackers A.J. Hawk and Anthony Schlegel, offensive linemen Rob Sims and John Conroy and safety Nate Salley – convening in the meeting room of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center to represent the majority of the football team that had not been involved in any off-the-field incidents.

"The sad thing for me is our program is not like that," Schlegel said. "It just gives a bad perception. We know that something has to be done about it, and we're taking those measures. But for guys that love this program so much, it's just hard to feel that people are having a bad perception of us when we know we're a bunch of good guys and have good coaches."

10 Years Ago – 2010

Ohio State University president E. Gordon Gee had mentioned his desire to see the university contribute to the central Ohio community, and in late May, the school got the chance to do just that.

Ohio State signed a deal that would make it the manager of both Nationwide Arena and the on-campus Schottenstein Center, to help make the NHL's Columbus Blue Jackets more financially stable while saving money for both entities.

"One of the things we believe strongly, and if you've heard our president in the last couple of years you've heard it over and over, is that we need to contribute and be partners with Ohio across the board," Xen Riggs, associate vice president of OSU's office of administration and planning, told BSB. "This is our way of helping the situation down there with some of (the Blue Jackets') financial issues."

The Blue Jackets were reportedly dealing with a \$12 million yearly deficit, which the deal would work to alleviate.

Five Years Ago – 2015

The Ohio State football team was set to begin its national title defense with some Monday night football. It was announced in mid-May that the Buckeyes' season-opening game at Virginia Tech would kick off at 8 p.m. on Sept. 7.

The trip served as a chance to avenge Ohio State's lone loss from 2014 in its first trip to Lane Stadium in Blacksburg. It was also the first time the Buckeyes were marked to open the season with a true road game since 1998 when they traveled to West Virginia.

One Year Ago – 2019

The Ohio State board of trustees approved Buckeye head football coach Ryan Day's contract on May 31.

Day's five-year, \$4.5 million deal – which officially began on Jan. 2 – was set to pay him a yearly base salary of \$850,000, \$2.39 million in media, promotions and public relation obligations, \$1.25 million in apparel/shoe/equipment, and \$10,000 in Coca-Cola appearance payments.

Day's contract would run through the 2023 season and included retention payments of \$250,000 if he remained employed by the university on Jan. 31 of 2022 and 2024.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin (USPS 705-690, ISSN 0883-6833.) is published 24 times a year (weekly September through November, biweekly mid-March through May and January through early March and monthly June through August and December) by:

Columbus Sports Publications
1350 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 30
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
(614) 486-2202
bsb@buckeyesports.com

Periodical class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Subscription rates: \$99.95/year.

PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
Mark Rea

PRINT PRODUCT COORDINATOR
Andrew Lind

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
Kevin Dye Josh Winslow
Andrew Lind

CONTRIBUTORS
Wyatt Crosher Patrick Mayhorn
Bob Roehm David Breithaupt
Bill Conley Mark Schmetzer
Joe Dempsey Steve Siegfried
Rich Exner Jeff Svoboda
Mike Wachsman Craig Merz

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Jan Jager Dave Tebay
Ron Friedman

2019-20 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 39)			
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No. 12	Dec. 7		

The next issue (July cover date) will be mailed on July 16.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin is a privately owned newspaper and is not affiliated directly or indirectly with The Ohio State University.

Wachsman Elite Donor:



BSB is a charter member of the College Sports Publishers Association.

Still, No One Knows If There Will Be Football

As we barrel toward whatever pomp and circumstance this year's Fourth of July celebration affords us during the ongoing pandemic, it seems college football still has no concrete plan regarding how to stage its 2020 season.

By the time you read this, it will be approximately 11 weeks until Ohio State is scheduled to host Bowling Green in the 2020 season opener – fewer than 80 days to determine how to get hundreds of players, coaches, support staff and stadium workers as well as thousands of fans into Ohio Stadium and ensure their health and well-being.

One would think the NCAA, university presidents, a blue-ribbon panel or some combination of all three would have spent the last 90 days formulating a plan for moving forward. After all, many of us have spent the last three months staying at home, binge-watching TV shows, catching up on home improvement projects or gaining back the 20 pounds we painstakingly lost over the winter.

Yet there seems to be a mass twiddling of thumbs where major-college football is concerned.

To be brutally honest, the lack of leadership is as disappointing as it is frustrating. No one has a plan? No one is willing to offer a way forward based upon the information we currently have, admitting the plan could change as the information changes?

Medical experts might have a much better handle on the COVID-19 virus by November, allowing for stadiums to be filled at capacity. On the other hand, the virus that had by mid-June affected more than 8 million people worldwide and killed nearly 120,000 in this country alone could come roaring back with a vengeance.

No one can predict the future, of course, but the college football powers-that-be are compounding the problem by wringing their collective hands and waiting for someone else to come up with a plan to move forward.

Outgoing Ohio State president Michael Drake said in a June 3 news release, "Regarding football, our hope and intention is to safely have a football season, with an audience spaced out in our stadium, but we haven't made any final decisions."

That statement came two weeks after OSU athletic director Gene Smith told reporters that limited Ohio Stadium capacity to him meant somewhere "south of 30,000 – probably between 20,000 and 22,000." That was before the university announced it had sold 44,000 season tickets for the 2020 season.

Then four days after Smith talked about limited capacity attendance, Michigan president Mark Schlissel told the Wall Street Journal that he had "some degree of doubt as to whether there will be college athletics (anywhere), at least in the fall."

In the absence of any solid plan being set forth, the doomsday narratives are endless.

On June 1, the first day some schools began on-campus training for fall sports, Marshall University announced that two athletes and a staff member had tested positive for coronavirus and were being quarantined.

The University of Houston on June 12 suspended its voluntary workouts after six players in various sports tested positive for the coronavirus. That came amid a surge in positive tests in the area, a spike that caused the Houston mayor to consider a new shelter-in-place order for the fourth-largest city in the United States.

That same day, Clemson reported three student-athletes – two football players and one men's basketball player – had tested positive for the virus, while Iowa State reported 10 positive tests, including two football players. Meanwhile, before its voluntary workouts even began, the University of Texas reported two football play-

ers had tested positive while a third tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

SEC members Alabama, Texas A&M, Mississippi State and Auburn were among myriad other schools reporting at least three positive cases.

For each major-college football program to regularly test players, coaches and support staff as well as keep locker rooms, weight rooms and equipment properly sanitized through the season has been estimated at anywhere between \$300,000 and \$1 million.

Some schools have toyed with the possibility of shortening the schedule or perhaps postponing the season until next spring. Ohio State is scheduled to play Sept. 12 at Oregon, but Oregon Gov. Katie Brown announced back in May that she would ban large gatherings in her state until a treatment or vaccine that can prevent spread of the virus is created. Are the Buckeyes really going to fly across the country to play in an empty Autzen Stadium?

Some university presidents have indicated that if students are not back on their campuses and in classrooms in the fall, there can be no student-athletes or sports for them to play. The California State University system announced in May that it would continue online classes throughout the fall, but that its campuses would remain closed. That system includes Fresno State, San Diego State and San Jose State, each of which play football in the Mountain West Conference.

The Big Ten features 14 campuses, many of them in smallish cities where the coronavirus has not been as rampant. But Rutgers, Maryland and Northwestern are located near so-called "hotspots" where confirmed cases and death tolls have been highest.

Is there some scenario whereby those teams would play a truncated season? Or perhaps no season at all? And what would canceling the 2020 season do to those football programs? Would it be tantamount to a self-imposed death penalty? Would they still get their share of the conference's television revenue even if they fielded no teams in 2020?

As the death toll from the coronavirus pandemic continues to climb, so does the financial toll. More and more college athletic departments are cutting sports programs, but even the wreckage so far would pale in comparison to what might happen should the entire 2020 football season be canceled. Some estimate the revenue loss at \$4 billion – with at least \$1.2 billion of that due to lost ticket revenue – just for the Power Five schools, a development that would likely alter the college sports landscape forever.

Perhaps the reason no one has come up with a coherent plan for everyone moving forward is because the previously mentioned financial scenario terrifies them too much. But the ostrich plan of sticking one's head in the sand and hoping the bad things magically disappear isn't going to work.

I realize the NCAA is supposed to work hand-in-glove with university presidents and athletic directors toward the singular goal of protecting their student-athletes. At least, that was the goal back in the day. Today's reality, however, is that the NCAA and its member institutions are at loggerheads. That strained relationship was on full display when the NCAA

arbitrarily decided to cancel March Madness without bothering to consult with the universities, and it has been on display time and again for the past three months as contradictory statements get passed back and forth through various media outlets.

But the time for rhetorical conversation is at an end. The 2020 football season is rapidly approaching, and whatever passes for leadership in college athletics these days needs to come to the fore.

Are we going to have college football or not? And if so, how? Someone needs to step up to the microphone. Now.

What Happened In Miami?

In the absence of live sports during the shutdown, several outlets televised games and events from the past.

MLB Network revisited several postseason games from the past decade (each of which always seemed to feature the Yankees or Red Sox, and sometimes both) while CBS rebroadcast several PGA Tour events with live commentary from lead announcer Jim Nantz and pro golfers including Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson providing analysis from their homes.

ESPN also got into the act, airing a host of historic college football games, perhaps none more seminal than the Fiesta Bowl between Ohio State and Miami (Fla.) to decide the 2002 national championship. The double-overtime thriller has lost none of its luster over the past 18 years – although you would likely get an argument about that from Hurricane fans.

Watching the game again, as I have done many times since it was played, always provides a chance to marvel at the talent that was on the field that night in Tempe. Nearly a dozen future All-Pros and almost that many future Super Bowl champions were on display in one of the most exciting games in college football history.

Somewhat lost in the euphoria of that upset victory by the Buckeyes was the fact that it signaled the beginning of the end of Miami's dominance of the game.

Before Howard Schnellenberger got to Coral Gables in 1979, the Hurricanes had posted only two winning seasons in the previous 11 years – and both of those were 6-5 finishes. Schnellenberger went 5-6 during his first season in 1979, but just four years later, Miami won its first national championship.

How did that happen so quickly for a program that hadn't finished among the top six ranked teams in the nation since 1956? Well, let's just say the Hurricanes suddenly adopted what could be generously described as creative recruiting practices.

The university campus at Coral Gables is located only about 15 miles from all the glitz and glamour of South Beach, but it might as well be a million miles away. Picturesque would not be one of the adjectives one would use for the Miami campus, yet the Hurricanes managed to lure enough talent there to win four national championships during a nine-year period between 1983 and 1991 as well as a fifth in 2001.

Since the Buckeyes ended their 34-game winning streak that January 2003 night in the Arizona desert, however, the Hurricanes have burned through six head coaches and are working on a seventh. Just over the past decade, the team has a 75-53 record (just a .586 winning percentage) with its highest finish in the final rankings coming in 2017 at No. 13.

Miami hasn't finished among the top 10 teams since 2003, when it was fifth, and has lost nine of its last 10 bowl appearances.

What would it take to make the Hurricanes viable again on the national stage? Absent those aforementioned creative recruiting practices, it's anyone's guess.



Buckeyes Return To The Woody Hayes Athletic Center

After nearly three months away, Ohio State's football players returned to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on June 8, marking a major step toward the upcoming college football season kicking off as originally scheduled.

Players began arriving as early as 6:30 a.m. for the first set of voluntary workouts, with the arrival times staggered by position group to assure that social distancing guidelines were followed.

Workouts were scheduled from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with nine players permitted to work out together at a time and four separate areas for the players to exercise, allowing 36 players in the building at once.

Ohio State released a statement on June 5 detailing the rules and restrictions in place to allow for safe workouts for all players and to avoid any issues regarding the COVID-19 pandemic that had put the Buckeyes out of action since March 12.

"The organized and safe return to campus is based on the guiding principles from the Ohio State COVID-19 Transition Task Force and its Safe Campus and Scientific Advisory Subgroup," the statement explains. "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Ohio Department of Health, on-campus partners, the NCAA and the Big Ten Conference also guide our decision-making.

"The principles include education and communications, a student code of conduct,

COVID-19 testing and surveillance, systems for tracking, isolation and quarantine, physical distancing, personal protection, mental health, and cleaning and disinfecting."

Prior to their first workouts, all players were required to follow a five-step program to certify their health. First, players underwent "a physical examination administered on campus by Ohio State team physicians and athletic trainers."

Next, players were provided "education through modules and videos to ensure an understanding of safe physical distancing practices," and "additional education on wearing appropriate face coverings, transportation, hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfecting at home."

After "COVID-19 testing and quarantine for 24 to 48 hours or until test results were available," players finished the protocol by "viewing an online video walk-through of the facility."

The players also took part in daily temperature screens and symptom survey checks upon arrival; physical distancing required of at least six feet from others; and daily equipment cleaning to ensure safety. While coaches are not permitted at the workouts, they have been allowed in the WHAC offices since May 15 and are expected to follow similar guidelines.

Ohio State has laid out plans in the case of a positive test for coronavirus as well.

"If a student-athlete tests positive for COVID-19, they will self-isolate for at least 14 days and receive daily checkups with Department of Athletics medical staff, under the direction of team physician Dr. James Borchers," the statement continues. "Student-athletes living alone will isolate in their residence. If they have roommates, they will self-isolate in a designated room on campus."

The move to allow players back to the facility came after the NCAA's Division I Council voted on May 22 to allow schools to reopen their athletic facilities starting on June 1.

"We encourage each school to use its discretion to make the best decisions possible for football and basketball student-athletes within the appropriate resocialization framework," said Penn athletic director M. Grace Calhoun, chair of the Division I Council.

"Allowing for voluntary athletics activity

2020 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time (ET)	TV	2019 Record
Sept. 5	BOWLING GREEN	TBA	TBA	3-9 (2-6 Mid-American)
Sept. 12	at Oregon*	TBA	TBA	12-2 (8-1 Pac-12)
Sept. 19	BUFFALO*	TBA	TBA	8-5 (5-3 Mid-American)
Sept. 26	RUTGERS	TBA	TBA	2-10 (0-9 Big Ten)
Oct. 10	IOWA*	TBA	TBA	10-3 (6-3 Big Ten)
Oct. 17	at Michigan State*	TBA	TBA	7-6 (4-5 Big Ten)
Oct. 24	at Penn State*	TBA	TBA	11-2 (7-2 Big Ten)
Oct. 31	NEBRASKA	TBA	TBA	5-7 (3-6 Big Ten)
Nov. 7	INDIANA*	TBA	TBA	8-5 (5-4 Big Ten)
Nov. 14	at Maryland	TBA	TBA	3-9 (1-8 Big Ten)
Nov. 21	at Illinois*	TBA	TBA	6-7 (4-5 Big Ten)
Nov. 28	MICHIGAN*	TBA	TBA	9-4 (6-3 Big Ten)
Dec. 5	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	TBA	

* 2019 bowl team
** at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

July Issue Slated For July 16 Mailing Date

The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, the July issue, is scheduled to be mailed on July 16. The July BSB will be the annual Interview Issue, one of our most popular publications of the year.

Between now and then, we suggest you keep up with any Buckeye activity at our website, BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB subscribers. Any updates on the status of football season and Ohio State athletic activities will be posted immediately at the site. The BSB staff will continue its electronic recruiting coverage, daily stories and updates, as well as presenting reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives to fill the Buckeye information void.

Additionally, staff members will be manning the BuckeyeSports.com Forum, interacting with subscribers as we all get through this situation together.

If you are not already taking advantage of BuckeyeSports.com, BSB's 24/7 website, simply email your name, address and preferred email address to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send back simple instructions on how to access the site. Don't forget, subscriptions@buckeyesports.com is our email address, not the website. We will send you directions on how to access the site.

If you are a current subscriber and have been unable to access all features on the site, please give us a call at (614) 486-2202 and we will help you gain access.

Readers who have been experiencing postal delivery problems can also read the complete edition of each issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin online at BuckeyeSports.com immediately upon completion. Your copy of the paper will still arrive in your mailbox at its usual time.

If you have any questions about BuckeyeSports.com, the upcoming print schedule or your mail service, feel free to call us at the above number.

acknowledges that reopening our campuses will be an individual decision but should be based on advice from medical experts."

Several teams on Ohio State's 2020 schedule, including Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, Nebraska, Oregon and Penn State, have seen similar returns of players to campus. Rutgers and Bowling Green will return on June 15 and 22, respectively, while Buffalo has not announced a date of return as of publication of BSB.

Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith spoke at length on May 20 about the NCAA Division I Council's decision to allow for a return to voluntary workouts in June.

"We feel that the facilities that we have, with the protocols that we can put in place relative to symptom checks and cleanliness and all those types of things, is the best-protected environment," Smith said during a teleconference. "Obviously, there's a lot of health clubs and workout places, spas, gyms that will do an excellent job. But some of our young people are not in environments where they have access to those best facilities. They're not. And so we want to provide them the opportunity to have access to the state-of-the-art equipment that we have, but also our medical people, our trainers. And we want to continue to make sure that they're in the safest environment possible.

"We feel pretty confident that through our symptom checks and our hygiene implementations, we should be fine. Now obviously, if someone gets sick, again, we turn to our medical staff, and they'll give us guidance on what to do next. It may be that they decide they should shut it down, so it depends. We have to rely on them, and we go from there."

While confident, Smith was quick to mention that Ohio State is still going to take things slowly to forestall any avoidable mishaps or issues.

"We want to crawl before we walk and run, and football of course makes sense to start with," Smith said. "We hope that what we learn by having football in the facility will allow us to come up with a strategy for the other sports down the road and possibly open up other facilities down the road. But we're not going to rush it."

He also looked ahead to the season on the horizon, offering guarded optimism while explaining that there are still obstacles to

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consider in the present.

"We're talking about the future, but we're also living in the moment," Smith said. "We continue to work on scenarios for the future and get feedback from across the country with what they're talking about. It's very difficult, because every school is in a different state, doesn't have clarity and certainty about their schools and whether there will be school in the fall. So it's very difficult. But the reality is, most of us are trying to live in the moment."

Smith's concerns appear warranted after it was reported on June 15 that former Ohio State running back Ezekiel Elliott had tested positive for coronavirus upon his return to the Dallas Cowboys' facility.

Ohio State Eyeing Limited Crowds

While optimism for the upcoming college football season appears to be growing among decision makers around the NCAA, plenty of questions remain regarding who will be allowed in the stadiums to see those games kick off. One of the leading voices in those conversations in recent weeks has been Smith, who spoke on May 20 about the possibility of limited capacity at Ohio Stadium this fall.

After questioning the possibility of hosting fans in Columbus this fall back in April, saying that "it seems inconsistent to me that we could say it's unsafe for the fans to be in the stands but it's safe for the players to be in that gathering environment," Smith seems to have changed his tune in recent weeks.

"Obviously that's still a conversation that all of us are having in the Big Ten and across the country, and I struggled with it at the beginning," Smith said. "As I continue to have conversations, I'm becoming more comfortable that if that is where we end up – and I'm optimistic that we won't – but if we do end up there, then I think we can accommodate it. It's still, for me, an interesting challenge to think that we could create an environment where our players who are in contact physically can be safe but we couldn't come up with a strategy to create a safer environment for X number of fans."

"So, I still struggle with that concept. However, I could get there if that is ultimately what we do."

As part of that assessment, Smith explained that Ohio State has looked further into what a socially distanced Ohio Stadium would look like, estimating that there could be anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000 allowed in, depending on what state guidelines recommend when September rolls around.

"We've played with that a little bit as a framework to start as we move forward and think about what we ultimately will be allowed to do," Smith said. "We've played with it a little bit, and of course we played with other scenarios as well."

"Obviously, we're fortunate to have 100,000 seats in the stadium. So could we implement the current CDC guidelines, the state guidelines around physical distancing, mask requirements and all those types of things in an outdoor environment and have obviously significantly less fans than what we are used to? I think it's possible. I just feel like we have the talent, skill and space capacity to provide an opportunity for a certain number of fans to have access to our particular stadium."

"Of course, that wouldn't be true across the country because of capacity. But I think we can get there."

President Michael V. Drake echoed those sentiments in a June 3 statement.

"Regarding football, our hope and intention is to safely have a football season, with

an audience spaced out in our stadium, but we haven't made any final decisions," Drake said.

Still, Smith expressed some concern with the way that things are moving, again pushing the desire to take any moves slowly.

"People are losing their lives, and that's just unsettling," Smith said. "I certainly wouldn't want to have an event where we're putting people in a situation where we're going to stress our medical system because we weren't being responsible. So I think we have to be thoughtful about the human part of this whole thing, first and foremost. It's just who I am. It's just the way I operate."

"I'm not 100 percent comfortable yet. I am cautiously optimistic that I'm going to reach 100 percent comfort level, but I'm not there yet. Just like I'm not there 100 percent with fans in the stands. I think we have to be sensitive to the fact that our medical experts – not athletic directors or commissioners or everyone else – have to give us the proper environment and operations in that environment that will allow us to play the game. And we haven't had that in-depth conversation yet. And frankly, it's a little early, because we still are studying the virus."

In a follow-up tweet shortly after the teleconference ended, Smith clarified the sort of numbers that Ohio State could be looking at this fall.

"Just want to clarify," Smith's tweet reads. "The number of fans we could host in Ohio Stadium this fall under physical distance guidelines could be as low as 22k but also may be as many as 40-50k if guidelines are relaxed."

Smith also said that a system for determining which fans would be allowed in has been considered but would need further thought before any official plans are put forth.

"We would obviously have to look at our point system, for example, that we have in place," Smith said. "We do have a diversity in constituency throughout our stadium, so we have to make sure that we look at each individual group, faculty, staffs, students, donors, Varsity O, parents of athletes, all those different constituencies, media."

"So, we have to look at those and come up with some strategies within those groups. Our point system has held the test of time, so that would probably be one. Then of course, the parents and the guests of our student-athletes and coaches would be a high priority. We'd come up with a strategy. We haven't nailed that down."

The numbers game for Ohio State could be muddied further by a significant demand for season tickets, as evidenced by an open-records report issued to The Columbus Dispatch that indicate that 87.1 percent of season tickets, or 44,320, were renewed this spring.

"Our donors continue to be as engaged as ever with the department of athletics, and perhaps even more so," the athletic department's said in the statement to The Dispatch. "It is abundantly clear that their love for Ohio State teams, coaches and student-athletes is as strong as ever."

With so many fans expecting a seat in the stands this fall through those season-ticket renewals, Ohio State may need to get creative to accommodate while complying with state and country regulations.

The athletics department issued a statement on May 28 outlining the plan in the case of a shortened season, though it has not made a statement on the potential inability to meet season-ticket demand.

"If, for any reason, any portion of the 2020 football schedule does not take place, season-ticket holders will have the option to receive a refund for the canceled game

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tickets, receive a credit toward a future ticket purchase, or donate their season or individual game ticket payment(s) to support student-athlete scholarships," the statement reads. "This guarantee will apply to all ticketed athletic events."

"These changes are aimed to be helpful and provide a level of confidence as you invest in our programs. The Department of Athletics will continue to follow the advice and directives of the Governor, University leadership, health experts and medical officials. We are dedicated to protecting the health, safety and well-being of our student-athletes, staff and fans."

NCAA Recommends Six-Week Return

The NCAA's Football Oversight Committee passed a recommendation on June 11 that states that coaches should be allowed to work with their players beginning on July 13. The NCAA Division I Council is set to meet on June 17 and will vote on the recommendation.

The NCAA released a full statement on its recommendations, including guidelines for practices. According to that statement, "student-athletes may be required to participate in up to eight hours of weight training, conditioning and film review per week (not more than two hours of film review per week) from July 13-23," assuming that their team's first game is on Sept. 5.

It also establishes rules for the two weeks following that 10-day period, which would then lead into a traditional four-week pre-season practice period.

"Then, from July 24 through Aug. 6, student-athletes may be required to participate in up to 20 hours of countable athletically related activities per week (not more than four hours per day) as follows: Up to eight hours per week for weight training and conditioning; up to six hours per week for walk-throughs, which may include the use of a football," and "up to six hours per week for meetings, which may include film review, team meetings, position meetings, one-on-one meetings, etc."

The usual 29-day practice period is not adjusted under this system.

"This is the culmination of a significant amount of collaboration in our effort to find the best solution for Division I football institutions," said Shane Lyons, chair of the committee and director of athletics at West Virginia. "Our student-athletes, conference commissioners, coaches and health and safety professionals helped mold the model we are proposing."

"Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the country, we believe this model provides institutions and their student-athletes flexibility to prepare for the upcoming season."

The six-week model is very similar to that proposed by several college coaches in the last few weeks, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day included.

"I think the starting point as coaches sounds like about six weeks," Day said on April 10. "Whether it's more or less, that's what we have to work through. When are we

Continued On Page 6



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allowed to put pads on? How much time do we need leading up to putting pads on and actually practicing?

"I think six weeks is a good starting point to start the conversation, and as time goes on we need to clean all that up."

OSU Will Hold In-Person Classes Starting Aug. 25

Questions regarding the college football season and all sports will likely carry through the summer, but Ohio State is sure about at least one plan regarding the upcoming fall. According to the June 3 release from President Drake, Ohio State will be hosting students for in-person classes this fall, starting on Aug. 25.

"Today I'm pleased to share our plans to resume in-person classes for the autumn semester," Drake said. "This will include a combination of the use of appropriate face coverings, physical distancing, hand hygiene, limited density in indoor spaces, control of the flow of traffic into and around buildings, continued employee teleworking when possible, testing, symptoms tracking and contact tracing. We will be developing an approach to teaching and learning that combines in-person and distance methods, and our academic calendar will be adjusted accordingly."

The in-person classes for the first semester will end on Nov. 25, one day before Thanksgiving, though the actual semester

won't end until Dec. 4.

This marks a slight change from the original fall semester plan, which stated that the fall semester would end on Dec. 17, with autumn commencement set for Dec. 20. Drake added that the new commencement date will be announced at a later time.

OSU is also using a phased return, which means that several operations on campus are already beginning to resume, while others will hold off on a return until Aug. 25 nears.

"We are dedicated to continuing our core mission, including providing the best possible college experience for our students while operating under a set of circumstances that no one has experienced before," Drake said.

"The response of our university community to the pandemic has been exemplary, and we will continue to rely on students, faculty and staff to remain flexible and embrace the changes necessary to keep one another safe. We are counting on Buckeye Nation to be at its best."

Ohio State also stressed in the release that all plans are subject to change, due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic.

"One important thing to remember as a community is that what we know now may not hold a day from now or a month from now," said Amy Fairchild, dean of the College of Public Health and co-chair of the Safe Campus and Scientific Advisory Subgroup.

"Conditions could change in ways that cause us to tighten up or relax. No one should be surprised by a change in recommendations – that is a reflection of rigorous and ongoing consideration."

NCAA To Adopt New Transfer Rules

The NCAA Division I Council announced on May 20 that it had approved a resolution to adopt "a comprehensive legislative package creating uniform, modernized rules governing eligibility after transfer for student-athletes in all sports" by January.

This comes after the NCAA's Transfer Waiver Working Group proposed a change to the waiver process that would allow a one-time transfer waiver for all athletes. Instead of approving that, the council has approved a legislative approach to reach that same goal.

"The transfer environment has long been an issue of much discussion in Division I," Calhoun said. "The Division I Council is com-

mitted to a uniform and equitable approach to transfer rules that considers student-athlete well-being and the opportunities available after transfer. We will not simply change the rule, but we will consider a comprehensive package designed to address the multiple complexities involved."

The statement goes on to explain the reasoning behind a legislative approach, with a primary focus on making sure that all sports are following the same easy-to-understand rules: "Currently, Division I rules permit student-athletes in all sports except baseball, men's and women's basketball, football and men's ice hockey to immediately compete after a first transfer. Reliance on the waiver process for student-athletes in those five sports has put enormous strain on a historically collaborative process built to handle extenuating circumstances."

The resolution called the waiver process "an unsustainable method to achieve lasting stability, consistency and transparency within the transfer environment" and declared it was "never designed to accommodate sustained requests for relief from a rule without actually changing the rule."

"The comprehensive package will address issues that impact transfer, including academic requirements, roster management considerations, transfer notification dates, accountability measures for schools that accept transfer students, and additional education on the transfer rules and process. The Committee on Academics will provide its guidance to any academic aspects of the package."

The Transfer Working Group has offered its assistance in creating the legislation. Proposals must be offered by Nov. 1 to be considered for the January adoption deadline.

Young Wins Big Ten Male Athlete Of The Year

Former Ohio State defensive end Chase Young was selected on June 11 as the Big Ten Male Athlete of the Year for 2019-2020, joining Wisconsin volleyball player Dana Rettke, who won Big Ten Female Athlete of the Year.

Young, who was selected No. 2 overall in the NFL draft in April by the Washington Redskins, is the ninth Ohio State athlete to win the award since its inception in 1982.

In the men's category, he joins Eddie

George (football) in 1996, Blaine Wilson (gymnastics) in 1997, Evan Turner (basketball) in 2010, Logan Stieber (wrestling) in 2015 and Kyle Snyder (wrestling) in 2017 and 2018.

There have also been three Buckeyes who have been recipients of the Female Athlete of the Year: Laura Davis (volleyball) in 1995, Jessica Davenport (basketball) in 2007 and Christina Manning (track and field) in 2012. He's the first football player to win the award since Wisconsin halfback Ron Dayne in 2000.

Young had 46 tackles, 21 tackles for a loss and 16.5 sacks in just 12 games in 2019.

OSU Teams' APR Is Third Best In Big Ten

Ohio State got some good news with the May 19 release of updated multiyear Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores for all athletics programs, with an average score of 995/1000 for all Buckeye teams.

"This was a remarkable year for the Buckeyes in the Academic Progress Rate, a key measure of student-athlete academic success," faculty athletics representative Dr. John Davidson said. "The most recent single-year statistics show that 21 Ohio State teams received all the points possible for academic eligibility and retention, and our athletics programs as a whole averaged an amazing 995/1000 – by far the highest in recent memory."

APR is based upon the academic progress of each student-athlete on scholarship, and it considers academic eligibility, retention and graduation.

The football team saw a slight dip in its four-year average, dropping from 987 to 985, though the latter is still good enough for third in the Big Ten, trailing only Northwestern (995) and Wisconsin (986). Nationally, Ohio State is tied with Middle Tennessee State for No. 18.

Chris Holtmann's basketball program is heading in the right direction as well, jumping from 940 (worst in the Big Ten) in 2019 to 965 in 2020, though that is still in the bottom half of the conference. Much of Ohio State's trouble comes from the exodus of transfers in the 2015-2016 academic season, which will cycle out next year. Holtmann's program posted a perfect 1000 score in the 2018-2019 academic season.

Men's cross country, men's and women's golf, women's gymnastics, women's soccer and men's tennis all posted perfect scores.

Buckeyes Receive Continued Recognition

The Ohio State football team earned some acclaim in recent weeks, both for individuals and as a team, as outlets shut the door on the 2019 season and look ahead to 2020.

As a team, Ohio State was selected for the top spot in the 247Sports 2020 preseason top 25, edging out Clemson, Alabama and Georgia. The Buckeyes were joined in the grouping by four other Big Ten Schools: Penn State (No. 5); Wisconsin (No. 10); Michigan (No. 17); and Minnesota (No. 18).

"Heisman Trophy finalist Justin Fields is back for his junior season, and he'll throw to a wide receiver room that projects to be among the best in the country," the assessment of the Buckeyes reads. "Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson are known commodities, and incoming five-star freshmen Julian Fleming and Jaxon Smith-Njigba won't take long to become so. The offensive line is led by three returning starters, left tackle Thayer Munford, center Josh Myers and right guard Wyatt Davis, all of whom are All-American candidates. One potential problem? Running back depth following Master Teague's off-

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season Achilles injury. Oklahoma transfer Trey Sermon is the likely starter there as the Buckeyes attempt to replace J.K. Dobbins.

"Defense is where questions arise as top-five picks Chase Young and Jeff Okudah exit along with five additional starters off the nation's No. 1 overall unit. Don't forget the group's main architect, Jeff Hafley, is now Boston College's head coach. Still, Ohio State does not lack for potential standouts. Cornerback Shaun Wade returns to anchor the secondary as the Buckeyes' next likely first-round DB, and rising sophomore Zach Harrison projects as the team's next star edge rusher."

Penn State received ample praise as well and is being lauded as the primary challenger to Ohio State's Big Ten crown.

"This might be the year Penn State breaks through and reaches the CFP Playoff," the article continues. "The Nittany Lions return nine starters on offense. Losing speedy receiver K.J. Hamler is unquestionably a huge blow – he was the instant offense in Happy Valley. But Penn State will feature one of the best running back groups in the country (Journey Brown, Noah Cain, Devyn Ford) alongside a QB (Sean Clifford) and O-line built to run the ball. In some ways bringing in Kirk Ciarrocca, a purveyor of a zone-heavy run system, is going to fit the offense even better than the team's previous principles that often required the line to pull. Expect plenty of RPOs and longer developing downfield routes, which fits some of the Nittany Lions' unproven receiving pieces.

"Penn State's losses are much heavier on defense (Yetur Gross-Matos, Garrett Taylor and a few other starters). Yet the Nittany Lions are going to be fine defensively thanks to a mix of elite recruiting and linebacker Micah Parsons, who will be on the short list of the best defensive players in college football next season."

Individually, Ohio State guard Wyatt Davis and Day earned some praise as well.

Davis was named by Pro Football Focus on May 23 as the most valuable guard returning to college football in 2020, thanks in large part to his jaw-dropping pass protection stats in 2019, according to PFF: 459 pass-blocking snaps, zero sacks.

The first-team AP All-American earned some praise from one of his coaches as well, as Ohio State offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson took to Twitter to agree with PFF's assessment, while complimenting another Buckeye lineman as well.

"Yes, he is," Wilson said of Davis being named the most valuable returning guard. "FYI his buddy at center (junior Josh Myers) is the best center in college football (and) it's not close!! These two guys are the best I've been around – glad they are great Buckeyes – excited to see these two maulers play ball – go Bucks!!"

Along with the PFF acknowledgment, Davis was also included in a more traditional media ranking, as he was named a first-team preseason All-American by the Walter Camp Football Foundation on June 11. Quarterback Justin Fields and cornerback Shaun Wade were both named to the second team.

Davis and Fields were each named second-team All-Americans by the Walter Camp Football Foundation after the 2019 season.

Day was named the No. 10 Power Five coach by CBS Sports in its annual coach rankings, marking a significant jump from his first appearance on the list last season at No. 45.

"He climbs higher than any other coach in the rankings this year, moving all the way up to No. 10 from No. 45," CBS Sports college football writer Tom Fornelli writes of Day. "Considering the season he had in his first

full year as Ohio State's coach, it's not hard to understand why. Still, this might be a little too high. I had Day at No. 15 on my ballot. I respect and appreciate what he did last year, but it's not like he inherited a bad situation. Urban Meyer built quite the team. I'm more interested in seeing how things look two or three years from now. If Ohio State's still where it is now, Day will deserve to be ranked a lot higher than this."

With that massive jump, Day moved all the way up to second among all Big Ten coaches, sitting behind James Franklin (No. 9 nationally), but ahead of Michigan's Jim Harbaugh (No. 12), who Fornelli describes as one of the most "polarizing coaches in the country." Day was No. 10 in the conference in 2019.

Behind Harbaugh is Iowa's Kirk Ferentz (No. 14); Minnesota's P.J. Fleck (No. 15); Wisconsin's Paul Chryst (No. 17); Northwestern's Pat Fitzgerald (No. 21); Nebraska's Scott Frost (No. 34); Rutgers' Greg Schiano (No. 39); Purdue's Jeff Brohm (No. 44); Indiana's Tom Allen (No. 46); Illinois' Lovie Smith (No. 54); Michigan State's Mel Tucker (No. 55); and Maryland's Mike Locksley (No. 61).

The 14 Big Ten coaches finished with an average rank of 30.8, behind only the SEC, which averaged 28.2.

Gill Lands With Hafley At BC

Former Ohio State wideout Jaelen Gill announced his intention to transfer to Boston College on May 19, just under a month after he declared that he had entered the transfer portal and would finish his college career elsewhere.

Gill, a former four-star from Westerville (Ohio) South, managed just seven catches for 62 yards and one touchdown in two seasons as a Buckeye. He was expected to compete for the starting role in the slot in 2020 with sophomore Garrett Wilson.

At Boston College, Gill will find several familiar faces, including head coach Jeff Hafley, as well as linebackers coach Sean Duggan, special teams coordinator Matt Thurin and strength and conditioning coach Phil Matusz. Hafley was the defensive coordinator at Ohio State in 2019, while Duggan and Thurin served on the support staff in Columbus.

Gill is expected to sit out the 2020 season and will have two years of eligibility remaining once he can take the field in 2021. He's one of four players that Hafley has plucked out of the portal this spring, along with safety Deon Jones (Maryland), quarterback Phil Jurkovec (Notre Dame) and defensive tackle Chibueze Onwuka (Buffalo).

Meyer Reminisces On 2014 Title Team

Former Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer served as the keynote speaker for a televised commencement special that aired on WBNS-10TV and other local networks on June 6. During his speech, Meyer reflected on Ohio State's 2014 national title team, from quarterback Braxton Miller's injury in the preseason to the final whistle in the title game against Oregon.

"As I held his hand, tears fell from his face, realization hit: Our best player was out," Meyer said of Miller. "I remember calling my wife, Shelley, and telling her about Braxton's injury, and we were headed for a very difficult season. I told her there was a chance we were looking at a 7-5 season, which in Columbus, Ohio, means a new coach will soon be in place. She was very positive, as she always is, and as a staff and team, we went back to work."

After touching briefly on the quarterback battle that followed to take over for Miller, Meyer went on to describe Ohio State's "terrible loss" to Virginia Tech in week two, 35-21, which the head coach felt at the time confirmed his fears for what could happen to a "very talented, yet inexperienced team."

Then, as Meyer says, things started to shift into place as players came into their own.

"We began to see this young, talented team grow up," Meyer said. "Mike Thomas became Mike Thomas. Zeke Elliott became Zeke. Joey Bosa became Joey Bosa. And our freshman quarterback (J.T. Barrett) broke Drew Brees' Big Ten record for touchdowns."

Still, the Buckeyes weren't without more strife, with Barrett suffering a season-ending injury against Michigan.

"Our quarterback, our leader, breaks his leg right in front of me. Same story. As I go out and hold his hand on the field, with tears rolling down his face, reality sets in: Our third-string quarterback, with issues, was now our starter," Meyer said.

"As I put my hand on (Cardale Jones') shoulder, I looked in his eyes, he looked like a young man getting ready to take a physics test where he never studied for it," Meyer said. "However, my job as a coach is to encourage him. I looked him in the eye and said, 'Cardale, I know you can do this,' as I hit him on the rear and told him to go in and play the game. In my heart, I'm thinking, 'There's no way he can do this.'"

"So, Cardale Jones goes in, he just plays OK. Zeke Elliott breaks a fourth-down run for a touchdown; Darron Lee picks up a fumble, returns it for a touchdown. We beat our rivals at home."

With a third-string quarterback set to lead the Buckeyes into the Big Ten title matchup with Wisconsin, Meyer said that Ohio State set out to keep the game plan simple.

"We wanted Cardale to keep the ball outside on all pass plays," Meyer said. "That means a freshman quarterback or a new quarterback making his first start, there's a lot of anxiety, he's very nervous. The adrenaline flows, you have a tendency to overstride, and the ball will go high down the middle of the field. That's why we wanted to keep the ball out wide."

Jones, however, had different plans, sailing a ball into the middle of the field early in the game, nearly tossing an interception.

"I'm going to meet him out at the hashmark, I'm so upset. As he comes off the field, I hear Cardale Jones tell me, very loud because it's a very loud environment, he goes, 'Coach, that was my fault. That was my fault,'" Meyer said. "I stepped back. I looked at Cardale, in three years of coaching I've never heard him take responsibility or never take ownership of his actions. He made a mistake, and he let me know that. I thought, what a great opportunity to show your teammates, especially the most important people – the offensive line – let's let them know that

you just owned your mistake.

"So, we went over to the offensive line, once again a very loud environment, Cardale Jones yells at the offensive line and says, 'Guys, that was my fault.' I watched our players look at Cardale Jones, their quarterback, that was also the first time they heard him take ownership of his performance. I saw instant respect. I saw love. I sat back and I thought to myself, 'This is about to get very good.' I knew we had a good team, but once you have the two qualities of love and ownership, that can become an elite team."

After the Buckeyes sneaked into the College Football Playoff as the No. 4 seed, set to face Alabama, Meyer said that Ohio State's preparation went to another level.

"The preparation was impeccable. Cardale Jones showed leadership, our team rallied around him, and that team got closer and closer," Meyer said. "We don't play well in the first half (against Alabama), a couple turnovers, yet we're dominating the line of scrimmage. The second half is all Buckeyes. We go on to beat a very talented Alabama team, and it's onto the national championship game against Oregon at Jerry Jones' stadium in Dallas, Texas. Cardale Jones plays fantastic, the team plays great, we played very well and we beat Oregon handily, and we are now the national champions of college football in the first-ever College Football Playoff."

Meyer recounted one more moment with Jones from the day after that game, when he asked the quarterback about his newfound leadership ability.

"I head downstairs to go have breakfast as we prepare to leave and head back to Columbus, Ohio, as national champions," Meyer said. "I walk in the breakfast room, there's Cardale Jones sitting with a couple players. I head over and sit down. I just stare at Cardale, and I said, 'Cardale, what was that? What happened? Explain to me your transformation to be the leader you became to go down in history as a national champion quarterback.' He looked me right in the eye, two tears started to roll down his cheeks, and he said, 'Coach, I finally figured out how to solve the mystery. The mystery is how do I put others ahead of self? I figured that out. I never wanted to let my brothers down, I could not let my brothers down, Braxton Miller and J.T. Barrett.'"

Meyer also shared words of encouragement for the class of 2020, offering wisdom in what he described as a world that is "as complicated as ever."

"Each generation of our country's history has had significant challenges to overcome. This is your time, this is your generation and this is your country," Meyer said. "The issues are very complicated and serious. I, we believe in you. We ask you to step up to the challenges, find solutions and help our nation build a culture of respect for all.

"Respect all, make a difference and let's do our best for our state to make the great state of Ohio proud in all that you do."

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Buckeyes Band Together Following Floyd's Death

Continued From Page 1

approximately five hours, though he was not arrested or charged.

"As soon as I enter this stage of adulthood after college – literally the day after – I'm in handcuffs," Towns said. "It was unbelievable, but it was so symbolic of the effort that we all need to take immediately in changing this emergency that has been suppressed for so long.

"One day I'm celebrating one of the biggest accomplishments of my life, and the next day I'm in handcuffs in the back of a police car. I don't even know how to put that in words.

"I don't regret anything. We have to be heard. This is a very serious issue and I won't stop."

The former Ivy League Player of the Year had an eventful week, completing his sociology degree from Harvard with a virtual graduation ceremony just one day prior to his detention.

"Two things really stuck out to me," Towns said of his time in the back of the police van. "One, the solidarity I felt – the pain I felt, amongst all of the other protesters. There was no malice involved, they were just out there expressing their pain and demanding justice, which, again, is their duty.

"The second thing, looking in the eyes of those police officers, each one standing in the front line, to many, it was just another day on the job, and they felt no remorse. They felt no empathy, no sympathy for the people who were struggling out there painfully protesting, and then the others, who were also very scared. You could tell. You could look in their eyes and tell. There were many police officers who did not want to be there."

Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann offered his wholehearted support of Towns for standing up for what he believes and partaking in the peaceful protest.

"Last night we were made aware of a situation involving one of our incoming players at a protest here in Columbus," Holtmann said in a statement May 30. "I wanted to

give Seth Towns time to release his personal statement before we commented. We fully support our players' right to peacefully protest. In the time I've gotten to know Seth, it's clear that he has a heart for social justice. As I said in my statement yesterday morning, we will continue to openly discuss this within our program. We pray for safety in our city, state, and around the country."

Prior to Towns' engagement in the protest and eventual detention, Holtmann had already posted a statement to his Twitter account in response to the murder of Floyd. The head coach indicated he was affected by the killing of black people by police, regardless if his players were involved in protests or not.

"I continue to be shocked and saddened by the senseless violence to unarmed and defenseless black men," Holtmann posted on Twitter May 29. "I'm the head coach of a sport where I coach young black men. I have three staff members who are black and raising black children. I love that sports unify us in ways very few things can.

"As we have the last few years in our locker room, we will continue to listen to each other and have healthy conversations around race. I'm very grateful our University and local law enforcement have been so open and available with our team. Based on our past dialogue, few topics are as relevant to our team as this one. Will there be a day these conversations are unnecessary? God, I hope so."

Along with his statement, Holtmann, who is entering his fourth year at the helm of the Ohio State men's basketball program, included a quote from civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

Also quick to offer his support of Towns was his former coach at Harvard, Tommy Amaker. Towns helped guide Amaker's 2017-18 squad to an Ivy League regular-season championship, earning the conference's Player of the Year honor as a sophomore after averaging 16.0 points and 5.7 rebounds per game.

"I am aware that recent graduate Seth Towns was detained last night at a rally in Columbus, Ohio. I fully support, and am proud of, Seth in his continued fight for social justice, a cause that has been near and dear to his heart since he arrived on campus four years ago," Amaker said. "We, as a program, always encourage our players in their efforts to stand up for their beliefs and for what is right."

Amaker had a large influence on Towns, who missed the past two seasons due to knee injuries before transferring to Ohio State over Duke.

In addition to his coaches, Towns received support from fellow graduate transfer Abel Porter, who joined the Buckeyes via Utah State this offseason.

"Today, it's important we know where people stand," Porter posted on Twitter. "I stand alongside my brother and everyone else out fighting. We must change, and it's going to take compassion, empathy, and understanding. Justice won't be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are."

The desire to stand up against police brutality and racial injustice was not limited to the Buckeye basketball program. Ohio State head football coach Ryan Day and



OHIO STATE FOOTBALL/TWITTER

FIGHT FOR A CHANGE – Ohio State head coach Ryan Day joined several members of the football team in a video urging fans to fight racism.

many of his players were also quick to speak up, posting a video on Twitter where they finished each other's sentences.

"Don't ignore George Floyd. His senseless killing at the hands of law enforcement has shaken this nation at its core. His death, along with countless others, has once again brought these injustices to the forefront of our society," several Buckeyes said in the video. "For far too long, black Americans have suffered under systems of racism and oppression. This time, it's different. This time we've had enough.

"As members of the Ohio State football team, we have a platform not only in central Ohio, but around the globe. With this platform, it is our duty to promote awareness and evoke change. We will no longer stand silent as these issues continue to plague our friends, citizens, neighbors, and teammates. We stand in solidarity with the black community and equal rights for all. This is not white vs. black. This is everyone against racism."

Day concluded the video saying, "As a team, we've committed ourselves to fight for change. And now, we're asking for you to join us."

The Black Lives Matter movement has met opposition from some who interpret its message as saying that other lives do not matter, prompting responses like "All Lives Matter" or "White Lives Matter," and from some who have downplayed racial issues in America.

Another Ohio State student-athlete who is well-aware that racial issues transcend politics is wide receiver C.J. Saunders. The Dublin, Ohio, native took part in protests near campus, where he was arrested for violating a 10 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew on June 1. Saunders posted bond the following morning, but his activism did not stop there.

In response to Floyd's murder at the hands of police, countless Ohio State student-athletes and staff members, including Saunders, came together in a "Kneel for Nine" demonstration June 2. The gathering featured a nine-minute kneel in remembrance of Floyd, who was killed by police when an officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

After gathering his thoughts, Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith backed his student-athletes in their activism and stance against hate and racism.

"Our student-athletes have expressed a desire to engage in the Black Lives Matter movement that has grown from Minneapolis, across the nation, and around the world," Smith said in a statement June 7. "The department will continue to support our student-athletes as they participate in activities to eradicate hate and racism in our society. Recently, student-athletes have been active on social media platforms denouncing racism, participating in attention and awareness videos promoting Black Lives Matter, holding peaceful demonstrations (such as Kneel for Nine) and participating in video calls with their teammates and others.

"The Ohio State Department of Athletics supports the Black Lives Matter movement. We will continue to support our student-athletes as they participate in driving positive change in America so that every person is respected regardless of the color of their skin."

Buckeyes such as Towns have remained unwavering against police brutality and racial injustice and feel obligated to take action.

"We have to be true to who we are and true to our voices, we have to use those voices to impact people, and there is a huge dilemma in this country right now that needs to be addressed," Towns said. "I won't shut up. I won't stop. I will continue to use my voice to speak out for the people that are unheard, and that's what I did.

"A voice is so important. When I say voice, I'm not talking about speaking, per se, I'm talking about actions, I'm talking about going out and protesting and doing your duty as a member of this democracy.

"Athletes have a unique platform, to speak up for what's wrong, to speak as a voice of the people," Towns said. "People look up to athletes for several reasons, and with this platform, you have a responsibility. Athletes absolutely have a unique opportunity, but everyone has a responsibility in this."

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MARRIOTT

No Shortage Of Credentials On Johnson's Résumé

Continued From Page 1

professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Colorado, where she co-founded the National Science Foundation's Engineering Research Center for Optoelectrical Computing Systems and served as its director from 1994-98.

Named the dean of the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University in 1997, Johnson helped establish new research programs that resulted in an increase of undergraduate enrollment, graduate students and research expenditures, as well as the development of the Fitzpatrick Center for Interdisciplinary Engineering, Medicine and Applied Sciences. She also worked closely with the university to increase the percentage of female faculty.

Johnson became the senior vice president for academic affairs at Johns Hopkins University in 2007. During her term, she led a university-wide strategic planning process that introduced new research and graduate programs; created an initiative to recruit under-represented faculty; and managed the university's 10-year accreditation review.

"Dr. Johnson is a widely recognized scholar and inclusive leader," said Susan Olesik, professor of chemistry and biochemistry and co-chair of the president search advisory subcommittee, which was tasked with collecting input from students, alumni and faculty. "She brings deep academic experience, expertise and incredible vision to Ohio State."

Johnson has received many awards and honors over the course of her career, including the John Fritz Medal – which is considered to be the highest honor in the engineering profession – in 2008. She was also inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2015 and holds more than 100 domestic and international patents in 3D film technology, digital mammograms and screenings for cervical cancer.

"Kristina has had a remarkable career, and she has demonstrated accomplished leadership in academic, corporate and government settings," Von Thier said.

Johnson, who will become just the second female president in Ohio State history (Karen Holbrook, 2002-07), has an extensive background in sports, as well. She played field hockey at Stanford and created the Cardinal's club women's lacrosse team, which was promoted to a varsity sport in 1995. Her wife, Veronica Meinhard, was a four-time All-America swimmer at Florida who also spent time as the senior associate athletic director at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she oversaw athletic fundraising operations.

Though Johnson was born in St. Louis and grew up in Denver, she has significant family ties to Ohio. Her grandfather played right guard for the football team and graduated from Ohio State in 1896, while her roots trace back to the first families in the state.

"Ohio State has always been a special place to me, well beyond its standing as one of the most respected teaching, research and patient-care institutions in the world," Johnson said. "I am humbled to be selected to lead this great land-grant university, and I look forward to meeting with students, faculty and staff to begin our work together."

Johnson replaces Dr. Michael V. Drake, who announced in November that he would retire at the conclusion of the 2019-20 academic year after six years in his position and assume the role of president emeritus.



COURTESY OF THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP – Dr. Kristina M. Johnson (right), pictured with her wife, Veronica Meinhard, has a long list of accomplishments in academia, government and the private sector.

A recent tour of campus is ultimately what sold her on being Drake's successor.

"We admired everything we saw, from the West Campus Innovation District to the Wexner Medical Center, the Wexner Center for the Arts, the Thompson Library, it was

all amazing. But for me, the most amazing part was when we finally stopped at the Oval," Johnson said. "I realized that I had come back to Ohio State University and was seeing it again for the first time. What I saw was the foresight of its founders 150 years

ago to choose this beautiful spot on campus and its early leaders to leave that magnificent Oval forever green space. That tells you something about the Buckeye Nation DNA. There is enormous vision, and an appetite for realizing greatness."

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Arizona Defensive Back Commits To Ohio State

Ohio State signed a pair of players from Arizona last cycle in Scottsdale Chaparral four-star quarterback Jack Miller and Tucson Salpointe Catholic four-star safety Latham Ransom, so it should be no surprise to see the Buckeyes have gone back to that well once again, landing a commitment on May 24 from Scottsdale Saguaro four-star defensive back Denzel Burke.

The 6-0, 189-pound Burke is considered the seventh-best athlete and No. 183 prospect overall in the class of 2021, as he hauled in 12 passes for 313 yards and four touchdowns at wide receiver while adding two interceptions as a cornerback in seven games for the Sabercats last season. Ohio State plans to use him exclusively on defense at the next level.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Andrew Lind

Burke – who picked the Buckeyes over finalists Colorado, Oregon, USC and Washington – has never been to Columbus but has grown extremely close with defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs since he landed an offer from the staff in January. His planned visit in March was canceled amid the coronavirus pandemic, so he recently went on a virtual tour of campus and the football facilities with his parents, and that seemingly pushed Ohio State over the top.

Offensive Tackle Target Commits To Crimson Tide

Though he was considered a heavy Ohio State lean for most of his recruitment, Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy five-star offensive tackle J.C. Latham committed to Alabama on June 12.

The 6-6, 305-pound Latham – who is considered the fifth-best offensive tackle and No. 17 prospect overall in the class of 2021 – had been on the Buckeyes' radar for quite some time, as he attended the program's student appreciation day in March 2019 alongside teammate and eventual Ohio State cornerback signee Lejond Cavazos. He landed an offer from offensive line coach Greg Studrawa in September then returned to campus for another unofficial visit during the Buckeyes' 28-17 win over Penn State in November.

The Waukesha, Wis., native spent a considerable amount of time on that visit with Studrawa and Day, which led to a number of 247Sports crystal ball predictions being placed in favor of Ohio State.

The Buckeyes hoped to welcome Latham back to Columbus on June 12-14 as part of a large official visit weekend that included nearly two dozen top targets and commitments, but that was canceled after the NCAA extended the current recruiting dead period through the end of July amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The Crimson Tide made their own push through video meetings and other virtual elements, meanwhile.

Alabama's main recruiting pitch to Latham included having an offensive tackle taken in the first round of the last two NFL drafts in Jonah Williams and Jedrick Wills while also pointing out how

the Buckeyes are seemingly set for the future with three offensive tackles in 2020 signee Paris Johnson, 2021 Richfield (Ohio) Revere four-star Ben Christman and 2022 West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Tegra Tshabola already in the fold. Sources indicated to Buckeye Sports Bulletin that one side of his family also preferred the Crimson Tide, while the other half wanted him to choose Ohio State.

So where does Studrawa turn now that Latham is off the board? The answer isn't so simple.

The Buckeyes could very well call it a day at offensive tackle and fill out the class by addressing needs elsewhere. The existing depth allows the staff to be selective with its remaining targets, and they won't sign a prospect if they don't believe he has the elite characteristics needed to start at Ohio State.

However, there are a few players who fit that profile, though the Buckeyes have some work to do in their respective recruitments.

That list includes Fairfax (Va.) Robinson Secondary five-star Tristan Leigh, who made his way to campus for an unofficial visit last November but is considered a Clemson lean at the moment.

Lititz (Pa.) Warwick five-star Nolan Rucci has been to Columbus on an unofficial visit, as well, but Penn State is considered the favorite in his recruitment since his father also played for the Nittany Lions.

Clarkston, Mich., four-star Garrett Dellinger recently included Ohio State in his top four, but LSU is widely expected to land his pledge on June 24 – and sources have told Buckeye Sports Bulletin that his commitment video has already been filmed.

That leaves Oak Park, Mich., four-star Rayshawn Benny as the only other uncommitted offensive tackle who currently holds an offer from the Buckeyes and has been to campus in the past. He'll be hard to pull away from the home-state Wolverines, and Ohio State hasn't had the greatest luck at his high school in recent years, including efforts with former quarterback commit D'Wan Mathis and former offensive guard target Justin Rogers.

Buckeyes Remain In Mix For Nation's Top Cornerback

Virginia Beach (Va.) Princess Anne five-star cornerback Tony Grimes revealed his final four schools on May 31, listing Ohio State alongside Georgia, North Carolina and Texas A&M.

The 6-0, 180-pound Grimes – the cousin of Buckeye junior linebacker Teradja Mitchell – is considered the top-rated cornerback and No. 7 prospect overall in the class of 2021, recording 48 tackles and four interceptions to lead the Cavaliers to the state playoffs last fall.

Grimes landed an offer from Ohio State in May 2019, and he made his first and only trip to Columbus a few weeks later. He and his father spent a considerable amount of time that weekend with linebackers coach and area recruiter Al Washington, whom he's known since the Buckeye assistant was at Michigan, and then-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley.

That visit coupled with the significant improvement from Ohio State's defensive backs under Hafley's direction last season seemingly put the Buckeyes at the forefront of Grimes' recruitment. But then Hafley's decision in mid-December to accept the



COURTESY OF DENZEL BURKE

WHEN YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW – Although he's never been to campus, Arizona four-star cornerback Denzel Burke committed to Ohio State on May 24 following a virtual meeting with defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs.

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

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
Tunmise Adeleye	DE	6-3	240	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy
Jayden Ballard	WR	6-2	175	★★★★	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Denzel Burke	CB	6-0	189	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro
Reid Carrico	LB	6-3	225	★★★★	Ironton, Ohio
Ben Christman	OT	6-6	299	★★★★	Richfield (Ohio) Revere
Jantzen Dunn	CB	6-2	178	★★★★	Bowling Green (Ky.) South Warren
Michael Hall	DT	6-3	290	★★★★	Streetsboro, Ohio
Marvin Harrison	WR	6-3	190	★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep
Sam Hart	TE	6-5	225	★★★	Aurora (Colo.) Cherokee Trail
TreVeyon Henderson	RB	5-11	195	★★★★★	Hopewell, Va.
Donovan Jackson	OG	6-4	308	★★★★★	Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal
Jakailin Johnson	CB	6-0	168	★★★★	St. Louis De Smet Jesuit
Jaylen Johnson	S	6-1	200	★★★	Cincinnati La Salle
Kyle McCord	QB	6-3	204	★★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep
Jesse Mirco	P	6-3	200	N/A	Fremantle, Western Australia
Evan Pryor	RB	5-10	190	★★★★	Cornelius (N.C.) W.A. Hough
Jack Sawyer	DE	6-5	220	★★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) North
Devonta Smith	CB	6-0	185	★★★	Cincinnati La Salle
Andre Turrentine	CB	6-0	175	★★★★	Nashville (Tenn.) Ensworth

Players in the class of 2022 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jyaire Brown	CB	6-0	165	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West
C.J. Hicks	ATH	6-4	215	★★★★	Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter
Tegra Tshabola	OT	6-6	320	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West

ASK AN ANALYST

With Buckeye Scoop's Marc Givler

Ohio State remains very much in the running for Virginia Beach (Va.) Princess Anne five-star cornerback Tony Grimes, even if the Buckeyes are perceived to be sitting fourth in the race behind Georgia, North Carolina and Texas A&M. What has to happen before his Dec. 1 commitment date in order for Grimes to end up in Columbus?

"They absolutely have to get a visit or this isn't even worth paying attention to. There's a chance that could happen in the fall when things open back up and it's something to revisit at that point, but right now this isn't going to go anywhere for Ohio State until Grimes and his family get back to Columbus. North Carolina is in the driver's seat right now."

Of Ohio State's top remaining targets, Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic four-star defensive tackle Tywone Malone is discussed the least. That's just as much his own doing, since he doesn't conduct many interviews, but where do you gather the Buckeyes stand in his recruitment, and which schools are the biggest threat to land

his pledge?

"I think Ohio State leads right now and has a lot of factors working in its favor from relationships to development to depth chart. Malone doesn't appear to be in a hurry, however, and this could go into the winter. Rutgers is trying hard to keep him home, and I could see schools like Alabama, Michigan and Penn State being official visit destinations for him this fall."

With Gunnar Hoak set to exhaust his eligibility and Justin Fields likely to forgo his senior season, Ohio State will have just three scholarship quarterbacks on the roster next fall in 2020 signees Jack Miller and C.J. Stroud and 2021 commit Kyle McCord. Do you think the Buckeyes consider signing a second quarterback this cycle, or is it more likely head coach Ryan Day looks to add a fourth signal caller through the transfer portal?

"I tend to think they will stay put with McCord in 2021. Perhaps they would look at a graduate transfer like Chris Chugunov previously for depth, but

anything that would discourage this talented young stable of quarterbacks would be counterproductive in my opinion."

Speaking of quarterbacks, Ohio State is typically able to evaluate its top targets in any given cycle during summer camps. But with this year's camps canceled amid the coronavirus outbreak, how has first-year quarterbacks coach Corey Dennis been able to identify targets from the class of 2022, and who are the players at the top of the list?

"You're going to see September and October turn into glorified camp season with more coaches on the road and an added emphasis on early-season film evaluation, assuming all is back to normal at that point. I think it's too early to be speaking in terms of having top targets, but they certainly like Southlake (Texas) Carroll four-star Quinn Ewers, Gardena (Calif.) Junipero Serra four-star Maalik Murphy and Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic three-star Steven Angeli. They'll also be looking at Centerville, Ohio, three-star Chase Harrison this fall."

head coaching job at Boston College forced Grimes to reassess his options.

Although Ohio State head coach Ryan Day knew all along he wanted to replace Hafley with Coombs, the Buckeyes had to wait several weeks before they could hire him away from the NFL's Tennessee Titans. That allowed other programs, particularly the other finalists, to make a move in Grimes' recruitment.

A trip to Georgia in January had the

Bulldogs trending for some time, while the Tar Heels have gained some momentum of late thanks to Grimes' growing relationship with cornerbacks coach Dre Bly, a nearby Chesapeake native who started at North Carolina before he played 12 seasons in the NFL.

The Buckeyes have tried to get back in the race for Grimes, with Coombs stopping by his high school just days after he was hired. He even invited Grimes back

to campus for an unofficial visit during a spring practice or the annual spring game, but that was canceled amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Nevertheless, Grimes doesn't plan to make his college decision until Dec. 1. That gives Ohio State plenty of time to get him on campus for an official visit – if not an additional time or two – and that could very well be enough to swing things back in the Buckeyes' favor.

Ohio State's top-rated recruiting class currently sits at 19 total commitments, including six defensive backs: the previously mentioned Burke; St. Louis De Smet Jesuit four-star cornerback Jakailin Johnson; Nashville (Tenn.) Ensworth four-star safety Andre Turrentine; Bowling Green (Ky.) South Warren four-star safety Jantzen Dunn; Cincinnati La Salle four-star safety

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ALWAYS WITH YOU

OSU Among Early Leaders For Kansas Linebacker

Continued From Page 11

Jaylen Johnson; and Cincinnati La Salle three-star cornerback Devonta Smith. The Buckeyes are looking to add one more this cycle, though, with Grimes, Clemson four-star cornerback commit Jordan Hancock and Monroeville (Pa.) Gateway four-star safety Derrick Davis among those under consideration.

If he does ultimately choose Ohio State, Grimes would also give the Buckeyes two of the top-rated players in the commonwealth of Virginia, joining Hopewell five-star running back TreVeyon Henderson.

California Cornerback Sets Commitment Date

Burke's commitment seemingly ended hope of Ohio State securing a commitment from Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei four-star cornerback Jaylin Davies, who plans to announce his college decision on June 19.

The 6-1, 165-pound Davies – who is considered the 12th-best cornerback and No. 139 prospect overall in the class of 2021 – included the Buckeyes in his top four in May alongside Arizona State, Oregon and USC. But he and Burke were being recruited by Coombs to fill the same role, which is why the Ducks are now trending in his recruitment.

Davies' looming decision should not impact Ohio State's pursuit of his teammate, 2021 four-star linebacker Raesjon Davis, an LSU commit who plans to take an official visit with the Buckeyes this fall.

NCAA Extends Dead Period

On May 27, the NCAA Division I Council Coordination Committee approved the extension of the current recruiting dead period for all sports through July 31.

The dead period went into effect in mid-March amid the coronavirus pandemic and has been extended several times over the last few months. The committee had most recently extended the period through May 31.

"The extension maintains consistent recruiting rules for all sports and allows coaches to focus on the student-athletes who may be returning to campus," council chair and Penn athletic director M. Grace Calhoun said in a statement. "The committee is committed to reviewing the dead period again in late June or early July."

Under normal circumstances, the college football recruiting calendar would already include a dead period from June 22 through July 24. This change means schools won't be able to host prospects on official and unofficial visits during the last week of July as they typically would.

Receiver Pledge Accepts Invitation To All-American Bowl

On May 30, Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard became the seventh Ohio State commit to announce his intention to play in the 2021 All-American Bowl.

The 6-2, 175-pound Ballard – who committed to the Buckeyes last June – is con-

sidered the 11th-best wide receiver and No. 68 prospect overall in the class of 2021. He hauled in 68 passes for 1,202 yards and 18 touchdowns while helping the Tigers to the state championship game last season.

Other commits set to participate in the All-American Bowl, which is considered the nation's premier high school showcase, include the above-mentioned Henderson and Jakailin Johnson; Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep five-star quarterback Kyle McCord; Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal five-star offensive guard Donovan Jackson; Cornelius (N.C.) William Amos Hough four-star running back Evan Pryor; and Ironton, Ohio, four-star linebacker Reid Carrico.

Ohio State is typically well-represented at the All-American Bowl and often leads the nation – or is near the top of the list – in the number of commits participating in the game.

Next year's game will be no different, as several of the Buckeyes' top remaining targets have already announced their intentions to play in the game, including Sannamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic five-star defensive tackle J.T. Tuimoloua; Steilacoom, Wash., five-star wide receiver Emeka Egbuka; Dallas (Ga.) Paulding County five-star linebacker Smael Mondon; and Derrick Davis.

Ballard, meanwhile, becomes the fourth Massillon Tiger to play in a national all-star game. That list includes former Michigan linebacker Shawn Crable (2003 Army All-American Bowl), former Michigan cornerback J.T. Turner (2008 Army All-American Bowl) and former Ohio State cornerback Gareon Conley (2013 Under Armour All-America Game).

The 2021 All-American Bowl is set to take place at the Alamodome in San Antonio on Jan. 9. It will be broadcast live at 1 p.m. ET on NBC.

Wide Receiver Target Commits To Clemson

Though Ohio State was at one point considered the favorite to land a commitment from Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Cardinal Gibbons four-star wide receiver Troy Stellato, he pledged his services to Clemson on June 5.

The Buckeyes were among the first programs in the country to show interest in Stellato, who is considered the 22nd-best wide receiver and No. 125 prospect overall in the class of 2021, welcoming him and his parents to campus for an unofficial visit during for the spring game in April 2019. He returned for another unofficial for a one-day camp in mid-June, at which time he worked directly with Ohio State wide receivers coach Brian Hartline.

Stellato finally landed an offer from Ohio State in September and then made his most recent trip to Columbus for the Buckeyes' 34-10 win over Michigan State on Oct. 5. He spent a considerable amount of time that weekend with Hartline and offensive quality control coach Kennan Bailey, who is also a South Florida native, and that seemingly put Ohio State at the forefront of his recruitment.

Clemson officially entered the race for Stellato when the Tigers coincidentally extended a scholarship offer that same day. He made his first trip to Clemson for the Tigers' 52-3 win over Wake Forest in November.

Stellato named a top six of Alabama, Clemson, LSU, North Carolina, Ohio State and USC in December then trimmed that

list to just the Buckeyes and Tigers following another trip to Clemson for the Tigers' Junior Day in March. His plan was to take his official visits in the spring before making a final decision, but that was put on hold amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Stellato tentatively set an official visit to OSU for June 12, which the Buckeyes had hoped to turn into a rather large recruiting weekend, but the NCAA's decision to extend the dead period through the end of July put an end to that. It was at that point that Stellato began to trend toward Clemson.

Ohio State currently holds commitments at wide receiver from Ballard and Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep four-star Marvin Harrison and hopes to add one more player at the position. Egbuka is far and away the staff's top target, and the Buckeyes hold 100 percent of the 247Sports crystal ball predictions as he heads toward a potential summer decision.

Stellato, meanwhile, is the fourth player to commit to Clemson after garnering significant interest from Ohio State. That list includes Suwannee (Ga.) North Gwinnett teammates, four-star linebacker Barrett Carter and Hancock, and Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco four-star wide receiver Beaux Collins.

Conversely, the Tigers had several of the Buckeyes' commitments on their list of priorities, including Carrico, Henderson and Jakailin Johnson.

Florida Tight End Reveals Top Schools

Tampa (Fla.) Carrollwood Day four-star tight end Michael Trigg included Ohio State among his top 10 schools on June 7 alongside Auburn, Illinois, Kentucky, LSU, Michigan State, North Carolina, Penn State, South Carolina and USC.

The 6-4, 230-pound Trigg is considered the fifth-best tight end and No. 153 prospect overall in the class of 2021 after hauling in 82 passes for 1,232 yards and 16 touchdowns to lead Seffner (Fla.) Christian Academy to the state semifinals last season. He reportedly transferred schools earlier this month after a fellow student made derogatory comments amid the nationwide protests over George Floyd's death while in police custody.

Trigg landed an offer from the Buckeyes when offensive coordinator and tight ends coach Kevin Wilson dropped by his former high school during the evaluation period in late January. He has not been to campus in the months since due to the pandemic, but the staff hopes he'll make his first trip to Columbus whenever the NCAA-mandated dead period comes to a close.

Ohio State already holds a commitment from one tight end in Aurora (Colo.) Cherokee Trail three-star Sam Hart, and the plan is to add another this cycle. The staff's top target at the position, Savannah (Tenn.) Hardin County four-star Hudson Wolfe, committed to the home-state Volunteers on June 15, which makes Trigg's interest in the Buckeyes all the more notable.

That said, other names to keep in mind include Grandview, Texas, four-star Dametrious Crownover; Littleton (Colo.) Heritage four-star Terrance Ferguson; and Bowling Green, Ky., three-star Jordan Dingle.

Cornerback Commit To Transfer High Schools

Ohio State four-star cornerback commit Jyair Brown announced on June 9 that

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A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1990

Ohio State's 1990 football recruiting class, already pared by one when linebacker Mick Barsala quit the team during spring practice, had half a dozen more members going down to the wire against Proposition 48.

The university would not officially release the names of those players who had not yet qualified for freshman eligibility under Prop 48, but Buckeye Sports Bulletin learned that six members of the 1990 recruiting class had yet to achieve minimum scores on the SAT or ACT.

Revisions in the NCAA's Proposition 48 required incoming freshmen to post a grade-point average minimum of 2.00 in a core curriculum as well as score a minimum of 18 on the ACT or 700 on the SAT.

BSB sources indicated that the impacted incoming freshmen were running back Jeff Cothran, defensive back Larry Kennedy, quarterback Johnny Mattress, defensive back Tim Patillo, tight end Craig Robinson and wide receiver Chris Sanders.

All six of the players had two more chances to achieve eligibility under Prop 48. All of them took the SAT again June 2, and each of them took the ACT again June 9. Test results were set to be available in four to six weeks.

20 Years Ago – 2000

Ohio State technically had just three verbal commitments in the class of 2001, but a fourth high school junior said that he intended to play his college football for the Buckeyes.

Columbus Brookhaven wide receiver Rodney Carter told BSB May 30 that he was set to commit to the Buckeyes. A day later, he contacted OSU recruiting coordinator Bill Conley and voiced those intentions.

But Carter was not yet being considered as OSU's fourth commitment because his scholarship was contingent on academic qualification.

"Ohio State did make an offer to Rodney a while ago, and Rodney did commit to them last night (May 31)," said Brookhaven coach Gregg Miller. "He's decided that if everything falls into place and he is able to get all of his academics in line, that's where he wants to go. That is the agreement everybody came to."

"He's made a commitment to Ohio State, assuming he qualifies. If he doesn't, he will probably go to a prep school."

When contacted by BSB, Carter seemed sold on Ohio State. "I just love them," he said. "I've been a Buckeye all my life."

15 Years Ago – 2005

After picking up two verbal commitments to the class of 2006 just days after February's national signing day, the Ohio State football program went without a verbal all the way through the month of May, leaving some reactionary fans to wonder whether the Buckeyes' recruiting efforts were lacking to that point.

Those fears were allayed on June 3 when just days after receiving his OSU scholarship offer, Springboro, Ohio, star tight end Jake Ballard issued his commitment to the Ohio State coaches.

The commitment capped a wild week for Ballard, who told BSB that he was up to 6-7, 260 pounds. Though he had offers from such high-profile schools as Louisville and Michigan State, Ballard thought he was going to have to hit the summer camp circuit to earn offers from some of the national-caliber programs.

Instead, he landed an offer from Wisconsin on May 30, Michigan a day later and Ohio State shortly after.

10 Years Ago – 2010

The commitment of defensive tackle Michael Bennett on May 16 gave Ohio State two tackles among four defensive linemen in the class of 2011, but Indiana three-star tackle Joel Hale was still confident that he would be in OSU's plans were he to choose the Buckeyes.

Once Elyria, Ohio, defensive tackle Chase Farris issued his commitment to Ohio State on March 13, however, Hale said he had a moment of realization and subsequent moment of concern.

"I think after Farris committed, I started getting worried and I had my coach call (running backs coach Dick) Tressel just to make sure and find out if I was going to be losing a spot or something like that," Hale told BSB in June. "Coach Tressel basically said that they're going to be there with me until the end. I was excited about that. I don't know what I want right now, and for them to say that they'll be there until the end for me is just reassuring."

Five Years Ago – 2015

Jonathon Cooper, who was listed as the No. 43 prospect in the country, saw his stock rise immensely when he shone at the Best of the Midwest combine held in Indianapolis in February.

He took another jump at the annual Nike Opening Columbus Regional, taking place at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on May 31.

Already a Buckeye commit, the athletic Cooper surprised some recruiting analysts with his combination of size and speed.

He was a force to be reckoned with in one-on-one drills, combining some impressive moves with sheer power to get past offensive tackles and tackle a dummy.

"I think I showed everybody that I'm an athletic pass rusher and a really good defensive end," Cooper said. "I want to be the best in the country."

"It means a lot to come here, especially because it's my future school. I came out here to prove something, and I think I did."

One Year Ago – 2019

Ohio State's 2021 recruiting class received a significant boost when Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep four-star quarterback Kyle McCord committed to the Buckeyes. His decision followed a pair of unofficial visits in the spring, which included a trip to Columbus for the annual spring game April 13.

"The biggest thing for me was just my relationship with the coaching staff," McCord told BSB. "I have a great relationship with (head coach Ryan) Day and (quarterbacks coach Mike) Yurcich. Seeing what the staff did with Dwayne (Haskins) last season was really impressive. Every time I'm on campus, it just feels like home. And on top of that, they recruited me the hardest out of every school."

The 6-3, 204-pound McCord – who was considered the eighth-best pro-style quarterback and No. 115 prospect overall in the class of 2021 – picked Ohio State over nearly two dozen offers from programs such as Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, North Carolina, Penn State, Pittsburgh, Rutgers, Syracuse, Texas A&M, Virginia Tech and West Virginia, among others.

he will be transferring from New Orleans Warren Easton to West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West to finish out his high school career.

The 6-0, 165-pound Brown, who is considered the 16th-best cornerback and No. 122 prospect overall in the class of 2022, was born in Ohio but moved to Louisiana when he was 4 years old. His older brother, Lonnell, was a standout defensive back at Cincinnati Colerain, where he played under Lakota West head coach Tom Bolden.

Brown landed an offer from the Buckeyes on April 17 and committed just five days later without ever visiting campus. Had he remained in New Orleans, he could have become the first player from the state of Louisiana to sign with Ohio State since Metairie Archbishop Rummel defensive tackle Nader Abdallah in 2004.

Brown, who recorded 25 pass breakups and two interceptions to help the Eagles to the state championship game last fall, will instead team up with Tshabola. The Firebirds are coming off their first playoff

appearance in five years, and Brown's addition undoubtedly increases their chances of making it for the second straight year.

Lakota West is scheduled to host defending state champion Cincinnati La Salle in the 2020 season opener, which means Brown and Tshabola will have an early-season test against a team that notably features Jaylen Johnson and Devonta Smith.

Kansas Linebacker Lists OSU Among Top Options

Olathe (Kan.) Blue Valley North four-star athlete Dasan McCullough trimmed his list of more than 40 scholarship offers to 10 on June 10, putting Ohio State alongside Clemson, Florida, Florida State, LSU, Michigan, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas and USC.

The 6-5, 215-pound McCullough is considered the eighth-best athlete and No. 73 prospect overall in the class of 2022, as he's being recruited by some schools as a linebacker and by others as a safety. The Buckeyes are focused on playing him at out-

side linebacker, where they view him as a bigger and faster version of Malik Harrison.

McCullough landed an offer from Ohio State on April 21, when he and his father, Kansas City Chiefs running backs coach Deland McCullough, took a virtual tour of the Buckeyes' campus and facilities with Day and Washington. He plans to make his first physical trip to Columbus in the fall.

Ohio State already holds one commitment at linebacker for the class of 2022 in Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter four-star C.J. Hicks and plans to add at least three players at the position to replace Dallas Gant, Teradja Mitchell and K'Vaughan Pope following the 2021 season. McCullough and Marysville, Ohio, four-star Gabe Powers are among the staff's top targets to fill that void.

Buckeyes Extend New Scholarship Offers

Ohio State handed out several new scholarship offers in recent week to prospects from the 2022 recruiting class.

That list includes Greenwood, Ind.,

four-star defensive tackle Caden Curry on May 18; Arlington (Texas) Martin four-star defensive end Ernest Cooper on May 19; Chicago St. Rita four-star wide receiver Kaleb Brown on May 20; Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star defensive tackle Dominick James on May 20; Snellville (Ga.) Brockwood four-star cornerback Marquis Groves-Killebrew and Baltimore St. Francis four-star defensive end Derrick Moore on May 27; Columbus (Ga.) Hardaway four-star defensive end Mykel Williams on May 28; Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep four-star defensive end Kenyatta Jackson on May 29; and Atlanta Westminster unranked tight end Holden Staes, Acworth (Ga.) Allatoona unranked tight end Bennett Christian, Pilot Mountain (N.C.) East Surry four-star tight end Benji Gosnell and Mauldin, S.C., four-star cornerback Jeadyn Lukus on June 2.

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Tight End Position Evolved Over Time At Ohio State

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

Since the days of essentially serving as a sixth offensive lineman, the tight end position has evolved dramatically over the years.

In Woody Hayes' offense, the tight end stuck his hand in the dirt and blocked for three yards and a cloud of dust. Today in Ryan Day's offense, the athletes at that position must be among the most athletic and versatile players on the field.

So how has the position developed to this point?

"Prior to the spread offenses, the fullback was used a lot in offenses in the 'I' formation and things like that," former Ohio State recruiting coordinator/tight ends coach Bill Conley (1984-87, 1992-2004) told BSB. "And then with the coming on of the spread formations, the use of a fullback became kind of secondary. You didn't go out and really recruit a fullback as much because you were running one-back sets a lot, so you didn't need a lead blocker in the sense of running power football.

"What has happened, the tight end has kind of overtaken that role, as well as being a major receiver. What you look for now, instead of just a tough guy that can be a lead blocker or a kick-out blocker on power plays, you look for a more versatile athlete – a guy that has good feet, good quickness, good agility, and can do the role of a blocker when you need a lead blocker because you can send them back there or you can put them in motion and take on the role of fullback."

The tight end has taken on an entirely different role since the days of Hayes, requiring a unique type of athlete today compared to that of the 1950s and '60s. One of Hayes' standout pupils from 1958-60, All-American Tom Matte, who famously transitioned from tailback to quarterback at Ohio State, marvels at how far the position has come.

"I've seen the size of the tight end has grown, and their speed has increased un-

believably," Matte told BSB. "The tight end wasn't more than just sort of an outlet guy, as far as dropping the ball off to him. But in today's pattern, now these guys can fly – I mean, they're so big and strong and quick."

After earning All-American accolades, Matte went on to become the seventh overall pick in the 1961 NFL draft by the Baltimore Colts, where he won an NFL championship and a Super Bowl as a two-time Pro Bowler. Matte played in one of football's most dominant offenses, alongside NFL Hall of Famers in quarterback Johnny Unitas and tight end John Mackey, who was well ahead of his time at the position.

"Probably the first one that really stood out in my mind was John Mackey when he came in from Syracuse," Matte said. "He was a guy that weighed 230-40 pounds and could run a 4.5 40-yard dash. He could fly and had good hands. The game has changed. I mean, when I was at Ohio State, our tight end was more like a tackle blocker, that's all.

"When Mackey walked into camp, he was a stud. He was just in great physical condition, and he could run a 4.5 40, and he had pretty good hands. Normally, they used to call them 'Borgs,' and he developed into a really great receiver. And that gave Unitas another option because we'd be coming out of the backfield with the backs doing close flares. The tight end would just come down to a circle pattern over the middle and hook up and just wait for John to throw the ball. And Mackey could catch it – that was a key factor."

Mackey went on to become a five-time Pro-Bowler, widely regarded as one of the best to ever play. Displaying his elite athleticism, Mackey averaged 15.8 yards per reception over 10 NFL seasons, ranking second among Hall of Fame tight ends behind Jackie Smith.

During his era, Mackey was an anomaly at the position, while most tight ends served as extra linemen as in Hayes' offense. Teams have strayed from the more predictable ground-and-pound attacks of years past, generally using more versatile athletes à la Mackey.

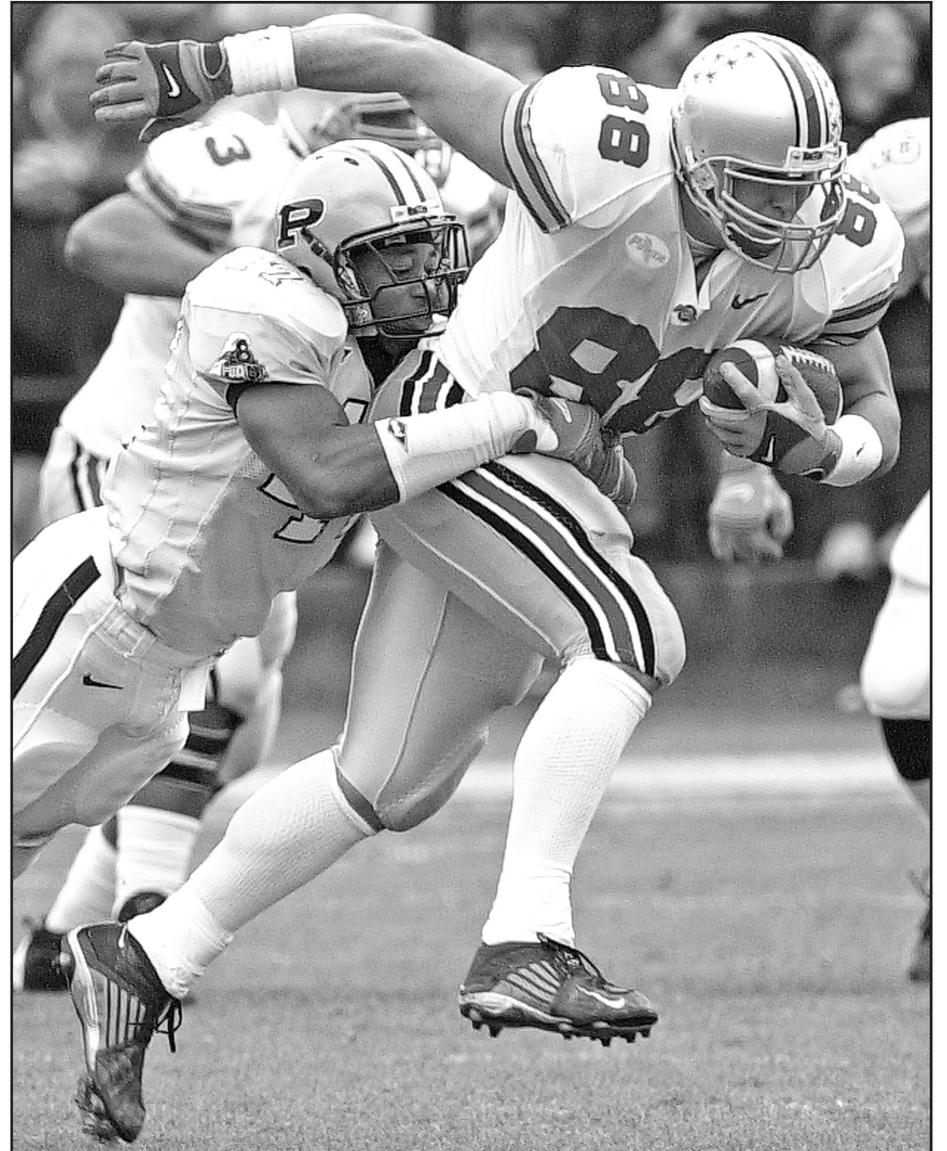
"The difference is in the old days you recruited a tight end to be primarily a blocker. He was kind of like a tall guard, more athletic than a tackle, but a guy that has some skills catching the football," said Conley. "Today, you recruit a more athletic, versatile guy."

One of the tight ends Conley recruited to Ohio State was Chillicothe, Ohio, native Ben Hartsock, who ended up playing 10 years in the NFL after coming to Columbus as an unheralded prospect in the 1999 class. Hartsock fit Conley's description of a solid blocker with good feet and quickness who can motion in as a fullback.

"When we played the national championship year (2002) and beat Miami, Ben Hartsock was that guy," Conley said. "We could play him on the line; we could play him off the line. And he was arguably one of the best blockers on the team. At the same time, you could use him in play-action passes, especially sneaking out to the flat or run an option route over the middle."

For the 2002 national champion Buckeyes, Hartsock totaled 17 catches for 137 yards and two touchdowns. His biggest impact came as a lead blocker for a rushing offense that averaged 191.3 yards per game.

"When I was getting recruited – man, that was such a long time ago – the tight



FILE PHOTO

FOCAL POINT – Ben Hartsock's 33 catches during the 2003 season are the most by an Ohio State tight end in the last 17 years.

end position that we see today, it existed in a much smaller realm," Hartsock told BSB. "But the tight end in my era was still much more of a block-first, catch-second responsibility."

As a fifth-year senior in 2003, Hartsock hauled in 33 receptions for 290 yards and two scores. He made a major statistical improvement despite playing one fewer game, but his numbers were not historically significant by any means. The lack of targets did not bother the 6-4, 265-pounder because he did not pursue a tight end-heavy offense as a recruit. He just wanted to be a Buckeye.

"I don't know if it's the culture of Ohio State or if it was the culture of college sports at the time – that position wasn't as glamorous as it is today," Hartsock said. "Even though, before me at Ohio State there was Ricky Dudley, who had just been drafted a couple years prior to when I got there, and he was prolific. And Ohio State was always going to be a run-heavy school. But they still had just graduated Joe Germaine and Bobby Hoying, and there are the great receivers of that era, Cris Carter and Terry Glenn and David Boston. So, I knew Ohio State was run-centric, but there was also plenty of opportunity.

"Honestly, though, I wasn't a big recruit. And so, I wasn't necessarily looking for a perfect fit for me. I wanted to go play for Ohio State, and it didn't matter if I was going to be the long snapper, I wanted to wear the scarlet and gray. So I wasn't disap-

pointed, I was grateful and excited to have any role that I could have with the team."

That selfless mentality helped Hartsock become an early third-round pick (No. 68 overall) by the Indianapolis Colts in 2004. While many young tight ends aspired to be anomalies like Mackey or Hall of Famer Tony Gonzalez, the Chillicothe Union-Scioto product was willing to do the dirty work and block some of the NFL's best defenders.

"I took a lot of pride in knowing my role and my responsibility," Hartsock said. "And I always advise younger athletes that want to get to college, to get to the pros, that the reason I played as long as I did is I did what nobody else wanted to do. Nobody coming out of college wants to be a blocking tight end. Well, for that reason, there's not as much competition. There are way more guys that are trying to catch 60-70 passes a year and have 10-15 touchdowns a year, but they're competing against far more guys. Whereas, when you're a person that can block Von Miller one-on-one, that can hold his own against J.J. Watt, that's a different asset that teams are always looking for."

Hartsock, who became an analyst on Fox Sports Radio and ESPN Radio after his playing days, had above-average pass-catching abilities, but his reputation as an outstanding blocker preceded him. He had no problem missing out on targets, though, and primarily served as a blocking specialist.

"You get pigeonholed a little bit at the pro level," Hartsock said. "Every year during training camp and during OTAs, I would get



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the opportunity to split out, play in the slot, even play outside some if the starting tight end like Greg Olsen was taking a break. And I would be running deep crossers and comebacks. I'll never forget (then-Panthers head coach) Ron Rivera coming up to me during practice and saying, 'What are you doing, man, running a comeback route? I said, 'Listen, Coach, it's not that I couldn't do it. You guys just never asked me to.' I accepted my role gladly, but I always wondered if maybe if I'd have been a little bit more of a diva, maybe I would have had more opportunities. But that wasn't my style."

Nowadays, there are fewer and fewer like Hartssock, with teams expecting tight ends to be able to block like linemen and catch passes like wideouts.

"In recruiting right now, they're looking for the big guy that can block and that can be able to catch the football," said Matte, who broadcast Ravens games on Baltimore radio from 1996-2005. "And that's a key factor, especially the colleges. In the pros, you can put a receiver in there in the slot or whatever you want to do – you get a lot more mobility. But the run game is so prevalent in the college ranks that you have to have a guy that can really sit down, set up a block, knock somebody down, or deflect off him and run a pass pattern so he becomes open real quick. Because those linebackers have got to get back to the depth that they have to have for coverage. So, the tight end is a key position, and you have to have good hands to play it today."

Basically, the modern-day tight end is expected to do it all. And the search for those dynamic, versatile athletes is tough for both college recruiters and NFL scouts. Hartssock

told BSB a humorous story that indicates just how difficult it can be, referring to his friend, Mike McCartney, who was the director of scouting for the Philadelphia Eagles.

"He's talking to the tight ends coach, and the coach says, 'OK, I need somebody that I can line up on the line of scrimmage and can block a defensive end one-on-one, do all these things in the run game to be able to not have to have a tackle need a double-team, but I also need him to be able to have athleticism, to stretch the middle of the field, to split the center of a Cover-2 zone and have enough wiggle.' And my buddy who is the scouting director said, 'That guy plays power forward in the NBA. Those guys don't exist.' And so you have to have some compromise very often now," Hartssock said.

Hartssock pointed to NFL All-Pro tight ends Rob Gronkowski and George Kittle as the rare specimens who can do it all. As he mentioned, those type of generational talents are few and far between.

The modern-day Buckeyes have a unique tight end talent in Jeremy Ruckert. The former wide receiver came to Columbus as the nation's No. 2 tight end and No. 37 overall prospect for 2018, weighing in at 220 pounds soaking wet.

Since then, the Lindenhurst, N.Y., product has transformed from a tall and skinny receiver to a powerful and versatile tight end, standing at 6-5, 253 pounds.

Prior to spring camp being shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ruckert discussed the evolution of the tight end position with BSB. He referenced all the extra work he must put in with wide receivers coach Brian Hartline and quality control coach Keenan Bailey in addition to his typ-

ical drills with offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson.

"Watching these NFL guys and how they're playing all different positions, full-back, wide receiver, and stuff like that – after winter workouts, we as a tight end group go in and study those guys and show that we could do that stuff at this level," Ruckert told BSB. "And we're just trying all new things right now in the spring. And playing receiver in high school, it kind of comes a little natural to me. And I've been working with coach Keenan Bailey and Hartline, on my route-running stuff and trying to excel in that as well. So I want to be able to get to the point where whatever the coach wants me to do, wherever I need to line up, I can do it and stay on the field."

When asked about the versatile type of athlete required to play tight end in today's offenses, Ruckert instead emphasized the importance of the mental side of the position. Given the drastic differences between roles an end may take on with each unique play call, an ultra-high attention to detail is essential.

"You have to be technically sound and have a skill set, but it's mostly about your mind-set," Ruckert said. "You have to know where you are in the play, how you fit in and what the mentality is, because obviously, when you're split out at receiver running a 'Go' ball, it's a different mind-set than playing fullback, running the power against the nose tackle or something. You have to just really understand how to play, what your mind-set is going into the play, and that you can do it with confidence and at a high level."

Hartssock agreed that the junior tight end's observation was right on the money.

The wide range of responsibilities for a tight end compares only to the signal caller himself.

"Outside of the quarterback, it's the position that has to know every move on the field," Hartssock said. "Only the quarterback has to understand and process more information, because tight ends are involved in run blocking and pass blocking – receivers don't worry about that, and offensive linemen don't worry about route schemes, route concepts, coverages and things like that. But tight ends absolutely have to be a part of that. There is a mental side of it. There's the mental part of just understanding it, but there's also the mental side of wanting to do it.

"Even when you want to do it, it's hard. If you don't want to do it, it's impossible."

The desire to put one's hand in the dirt and block for his teammates can separate the NFL busts from the Hall of Famers. And it takes a selfless perspective, because the tight end is not always heavily involved in the passing game.

For decades at Ohio State there has been a running joke that maybe this will be the year the tight end receives more passes thrown his way. Despite his athleticism and pass-catching abilities, Ruckert caught only 14 passes for 142 yards and four touchdowns as a sophomore. While he is hopeful for more targets, team success is his priority.

"Obviously, you want to catch the ball playing at this level," Ruckert said. "But whatever the team wants us to do, we're going to do, and we know that coming here we're going to get the recognition we deserve. Mainly, all we're trying to do is win."

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Hayes' First Staff Reads Like 'Who's Who' Of Coaching

By MARK REA
BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

Woody Hayes spent a record 28 seasons as head football coach at Ohio State, making it rather surprising that Hayes was not the university's first choice – or second and maybe not even its third choice – when he was hired in 1951.

In the wake of Wes Fesler's abrupt resignation following the 1950 season, Ohio State was looking for a fifth new head coach in just 10 seasons, more than earning its moniker of "The Graveyard of Coaches."

Several prominent candidates were mentioned for the opening, most notably longtime Missouri head coach Don Faurot. He accepted the job in Columbus on a Friday and went home to clean out his office. Less than 48 hours later, however, Faurot changed his mind and remained at Missouri.

With spring football only a few weeks away, Ohio State officials quickly reorganized and settled on a field of seven candidates – one professional coach, four coaches from the college ranks and two Ohio high school coaches.

The pro coach was Paul Brown, who had previously coached the Buckeyes from 1941-43 and produced the school's first national championship in 1942. Brown had already flirted with returning to Ohio State following World War II but instead took a job as head coach of the Cleveland Browns. The coach had led the Browns to championships in each of his first five seasons in Cleveland – four in the old All-America Football Conference and the 1950 crown in the National Football League.

Brown was the hands-down favorite of Ohio State fans and students to replace Fesler, and approximately 1,500 fans cheered his arrival in Columbus for a meeting with the university's search committee in late January, a meeting during which Brown reportedly told OSU athletic director Richard Larkins that he was "anxious to leave professional football."

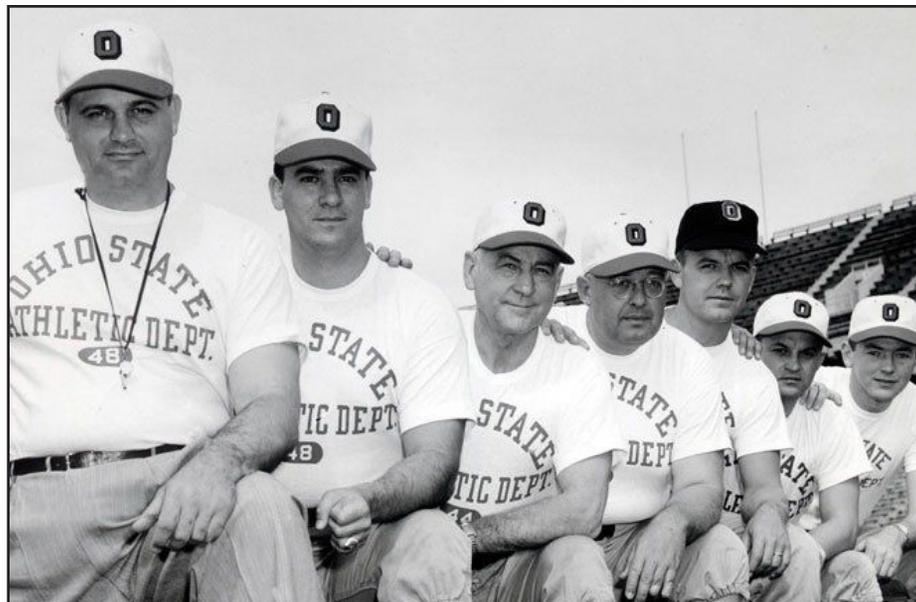
Larkins was not swayed, however. The AD later revealed that a number of influential Columbus businessmen did not want Brown to return. They felt he had reneged on a deal to return to Ohio State after the war and that he signed with Cleveland without notifying the university.

Nevertheless, newspaper reports continued to trumpet Brown as the front-runner for the vacancy. Also receiving formal interviews were OSU freshman coach Harry Strobel, former OSU assistant and current Cincinnati head coach Sid Gillman, Warren Gaer of Drake and Hayes, who had just completed his second season at Miami (Ohio). Also in the mix were high school coaches Chuck Mather of Massillon and Jim McDonald of Springfield.

In early February, the field had reportedly been pared to three – Brown, Mather and Hayes with Strobel as a possible fallback candidate. Brown was the choice of the fans, Mather was backed by the Ohio High School Coaches Association, and Strobel had been the original choice of the athletic department. But Hayes had scored a stellar interview with the search committee, an interview that made the decision of choosing a new coach just that much more difficult.

An announcement was to be made around Feb. 14 – coincidentally Hayes' 38th birthday – but all seven members of the Ohio State board of trustees had to agree on the new coach and the university couldn't seem to get the entire panel together at the same time. In the meantime, the six-man search committee and 12-member athletic board had settled on Hayes.

The official decision was postponed for another



FILE PHOTO

COACHING TREE – Woody Hayes' first staff at Ohio State included (from left to right after Hayes) Bill Hess, Ernie Godfrey, Harry Strobel, Esco Sarkkinen, Doyt Perry and Bill Arnsparger.

er several days as speculation ran rampant. What if Hayes was rejected by the trustees? Would the athletic board then throw its support behind Strobel, or would some back-room maneuvering pave the way for Brown to return to Columbus after all?

The OSU board of trustees finally got together to end the speculation on Sunday, Feb. 18. Thanks to an impassioned speech from Sen. John W. Bricker, the board formally hired Hayes as the university's 19th head football coach. Hayes received a one-year, \$12,500 contract in accordance with university policy, but he received a five-year "gentleman's agreement" from university president Howard L. Bevis.

Before its Sunday meeting, the board reportedly remained split between Hayes and Brown. That was until Bricker made a 10-minute speech to his fellow trustees opposing Brown and boosting Hayes.

Despite the days and weeks of wrangling before being offered the job, Hayes didn't seem the least bit dismayed by the decision.

"I have wanted this job very much," he told reporters. "It's the greatest coaching opportunity in the country."

Hayes might have thought it was the greatest opportunity in the country, but he didn't have the luxury of time. The 1951 recruiting season was rapidly slipping away, and the Buckeyes had already lost the services of Dick Szymanski, a high school All-America lineman from Libbey High School in Toledo, who had switched his allegiance from Ohio State and decided to enroll at Notre Dame.

Szymanski became a four-year starting line-backer for the Fighting Irish before becoming an All-Pro center and three-time NFL champion with the Baltimore Colts.

In order to stem the tide of any more in-state defections, Hayes quickly assembled a staff of assistants that could best be described as Ohio-centric. He brought one assistant with him from Miami, retained four members of Fesler's staff, added two Ohio high school coaches, and began the coaching career of one of his former Miami players, making him a graduate assistant.

The staff ranged in age from 24 to nearly 60 and was made up of a cross-section of grizzled veterans and fresh-faced assistants eager to make a name for themselves in the coaching profession – several of whom did exactly that, including three who earned induction into the College Football Hall of Fame.

In 1951, however, many of those legendary

coaching careers were far in the future. In his book "You Win With People," published in 1973, Hayes remembered the growing pains associated with assembly of that first staff at Ohio State.

"I had started ... with only one coach who had ever coached with me," Hayes wrote, "I had retained four members of the previous coaching staff and I had added two high school coaches. Getting this staff into good working order was no small job."

It might have been "no small job," but the task must have been eased by the personnel with whom Hayes was working.

The coach who came to Ohio State with Hayes from Miami was 24-year-old former graduate assistant Bill Arnsparger. Strobel was retained from Fesler's staff along with longtime ends coach Esco Sarkkinen, running backs coach Gene Fekete and kicking coach Ernie Godfrey.

Meanwhile, Hayes raided the Ohio high school ranks of two of its finest young minds – Doyt Perry of Upper Arlington and Bill Hess, who had coached at Portsmouth and Grandview Heights.

Rounding out the staff was a graduate assistant who had played tackle for Hayes at Miami in 1949 and '50, and had decided to pursue a master's degree at Ohio State. His name was Bo Schembechler.

"If you sit down and look at that staff, you can really kind of map it out and understand how it was put together," OSU football historian Jack Park told BSB. "Both Arnsparger and Schembechler played for Woody at Miami, and Strobel went to Miami, too. Sarkkinen, Fekete and Godfrey all had longtime ties to Ohio State – each of them had played football, and Coach Sark and Gene were All-Americans.

"Perry and Hess were somewhat connected to Ohio State, too. Even though both were high school coaches, they were coaching at Upper Arlington and Grandview Heights. That's pretty much in Ohio State's back yard. I guess what I'm saying is that Woody didn't have to travel far to find them."

Familiar Faces

There were many familiar faces to Hayes on that first staff, but only one who had previously coached with him – and that was only as a graduate assistant.

Arnsparger grew up in Paris, Ky., where he was an all-state football player for head coach Blanton Collier, who went on to become head coach of the Cleveland Browns from 1963-70.

After serving with the U.S. Marine Corps in World War II, Arnsparger wound up at Miami, where he played tackle for Hayes.

After graduating in 1949, he joined Hayes' staff in Oxford as a graduate assistant for the 1950 season and then followed his head coach to Columbus the following year for his first full-time assignment in charge of OSU's offensive line.

Arnsparger spent three seasons with the Buckeyes and continued a career that included more than 20 years as an assistant and head coach in the NFL. Arnsparger participated in six Super Bowls as an assistant – four with the Miami Dolphins and one each with the Baltimore Colts and San Diego Chargers – and won two, both with the Dolphins. He was the architect of Miami's "No-Name Defense," a unit that helped the team win Super Bowls VII and VIII. He was also head coach of the New York Giants from 1974-76.

Known affectionately as "Two-Reel Bill" for his penchant for watching game film by the hour, Arnsparger also won an SEC championship in 1986 as head coach at LSU – the school's first conference title since 1970 – and spent seven years as director of athletics at the University of Florida. His coaching career culminated with three seasons from 1992-94 as defensive coordinator for the San Diego Chargers, with whom he participated in his sixth Super Bowl.

Just days after Super Bowl XXIX, in which the Chargers lost a 49-26 decision to the San Francisco 49ers, the 68-year-old Arnsparger announced his retirement, citing as a reason the prostate cancer surgery he had undergone the year before.

After years of declining health, Arnsparger died in 2015 at the age of 88.

Strobel was a native of Massillon, Ohio, and earned six varsity letters – three in football, two in baseball and one in basketball – at Miami University before his graduation in 1932.

He first made a name for himself in high school coaching, leading Bellevue to the Class AA state basketball championship in 1945 and then two years later piloting Barberton to the 1947 state football title. One of Strobel's star players on that Barberton football team was Schembechler.

In 1949, Strobel moved to the college ranks and joined Fesler's staff at Ohio State as freshman coach. At the same time, Strobel also served as an assistant for basketball coach Floyd Stahl.

When Hayes moved to Columbus and formed his new staff, he promoted Strobel from freshman coach to a varsity position overseeing interior offensive linemen.

"Harry had been considered seriously for the head coaching position in 1951, and it was a rather awkward situation for both of us," Hayes said. "(But) Harry became an extremely efficient guard and center coach. Most important, he understood me better than any coach on our staff.

"When I'd be uptight about something, he'd come up and put his hand on my arm and say, 'C'mon, Coach, now it really isn't that important, is it?' and we'd go on from there. He could quiet me down and understand my moods and tensions better than anyone else."

Strobel remained in charge of guards and centers for Hayes until poor health caused by diabetes forced his retirement from coaching following the 1967 season. After leaving the sideline, Strobel became assistant director of intramurals at Ohio State, and he remained in that position until his death of a heart attack on Nov. 28, 1971. He was 63.

Sarkkinen attended Harding High School in Fairport Harbor, Ohio, and became a star in basketball, track and football for the Skippers. He later found the same kind of success at Ohio

State, earning first-team All-America recognition as an end in 1939.

He returned to his alma mater seven years later to become one of college football's most acclaimed coaches of offensive and defensive ends. But as good as he was at tutoring young linemen, Sarkkinen was even better at scouting. His descriptive accounts of a rival's tendencies, specific to the tiniest detail, were invaluable to Hayes and the rest of his staff as they prepared game plans for upcoming opponents.

"Sark was acknowledged as the best football scout in the Big Ten certainly, and probably in the country," said Schembechler, who not only served with Sarkkinen on Hayes' staff at OSU in 1951, but again from 1958 to 1962. "I can't emphasize how much a good scout meant to our football program when I was an assistant coach. It was a critical resource."

Sarkkinen wound up spending 32 years as an assistant coach at Ohio State, including a 28-year partnership with Hayes that produced 13 Big Ten championships, five national titles and countless All-America players.

When Hayes was fired following the 1978 Gator Bowl, Sarkkinen quietly retired from coaching. He died Feb. 28, 1998, at the age of 79.

Fekete had been an All-America fullback on Ohio State's 1942 national championship team, but that came about only because of the intervention of a little-known assistant line coach.

After an all-state prep career in football and basketball in his native Findlay, Ohio, Fekete was ready to follow his older brother, John, to Ohio University where the older brother starred as a halfback and was named to the Little All-American first team.

"I was all set to go," Fekete once said, "except no one at Ohio University ever contacted me. I guess they just thought because of John, it was a foregone conclusion that I would be going there."

Instead, Fekete began taking a look at Ohio State and Michigan. Findlay was then home to the headquarters of Ohio Oil Co. (which later became Marathon Oil Corp.) and was filled with Michigan alumni, many of whom actively recruited Fekete. But Godfrey's warm approach – which Fekete described as "homey" – convinced him to attend Ohio State.

Early during his freshman year, however, Fekete thought he had made a mistake. Relegated to the fourth and fifth teams on a freshman squad that numbered more than 100, scrimmaging was the only way to get noticed, and being fourth- or fifth-string didn't allow for much playing time. So Fekete along with fellow freshman Dante Lavelli decided to transfer to Ohio University.

Only when assistant line coach Hugh McGranahan intervened, and Brown revised his methods regarding how players merited action during scrimmages, did the players stay.

The following season, Fekete was installed as the starting fullback, and he led the nation in scoring, earned first-team All-America honors, and finished eighth in the Heisman Trophy balloting while helping the Buckeyes to their first-ever national championship.

That 1942 title run was to be Fekete's only collegiate season. He enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II and didn't touch a football again until practicing for the annual College All-Star Game in 1944.

Fekete was 10 days late reporting to practice because of a mix-up on the part of the Army, and he was eager to make up for lost time. But after having had no football conditioning for nearly two years, his body wasn't ready. On the first day of practice, he took a handoff from Northwestern quarterback Otto Graham, started to cut upfield and tore the ligaments in his left knee.

Today, Fekete would have undergone surgery and resumed his career. In 1944, however, it was tantamount to a career-ending injury.

He tried to make a comeback with the Browns in 1946, but his knee just couldn't take it.

As a backup for fullback Marion Motley, Fekete saw action in only six games that season before deciding his playing days were over. But he couldn't give up the game for good.

Fekete began his coaching career in 1947 at Northern Illinois, and spent two seasons there before moving back to his alma mater in 1949 to join Fesler's staff. He remained at OSU with Hayes until 1958, when he began a career in education that included stints as a history teacher at West High School in Columbus, assistant principal at North High School and principal at Columbus Briggs.

Fekete retired in 1975 and remained a fixture in and around Ohio State football until his death in 2011 at the age of 88.

The senior member of the holdovers from Fesler's staff was actually a holdover from six previous OSU staffs. Godfrey was a native of Dover, Ohio, a tiny town about 20 miles north of Newcomerstown, the town in which Hayes grew up.

Like Fekete, Godfrey was a former Ohio State football player, playing a variety of positions for the Buckeyes – mostly center and end – for head coach John Richards in 1912 and John W. Wilce in 1913 and '14 before embarking upon a coaching career that spanned six decades.

Godfrey spent one year at Wooster (Ohio) High School and then moved to Wittenberg University, where at the age of 24 he led the Tigers to a 2-5-2 record in 1916. His coaching career was interrupted by World War I, during which he was a lieutenant in the U.S. Army, and then he returned to Wittenberg at war's end. Godfrey won titles in both football and basketball with the Tigers during the 1920s before joining the Ohio State football program as a line coach in 1929.

Godfrey was a defensive assistant – or, as Hayes called him, a "co-coach" – in 1951 before taking over the freshman team in 1954. Godfrey was also in charge of the Ohio State kickers (Pro Football Hall of Fame kicker Lou Groza had been one of his prize pupils), and Hayes always credited him with the 1958 Rose Bowl victory, a win secured when Don Sutherin kicked a 34-yard field goal in the fourth quarter to give the Buckeyes a 10-7 victory against Oregon.

"(Godfrey) developed more great kickers than any other coach in the history of football," Hayes said. "He retired from our staff at the age of 70 and five years later was offered a full-time coaching position on a professional team."

That team was the Cincinnati Bengals, whose owner and coach was Brown, who had Godfrey on his staff at Ohio State from 1941-43. Although he did not join the Bengals in a full-time capacity, Godfrey worked with such Bengals kickers as Horst Mühlmann and Chris Bahr well into his 80s.

In 1972, Godfrey was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in the "pioneer coach" category. He remained in and around Columbus until his June 1980 death of a heart attack at the age of 88.

Mining Prep Ranks

Partly due to Szymanski's defection, and partly due to his desire to maintain a good relationship with Ohio high school coaches, Hayes added two of the state's top young minds to his first Ohio State staff – Perry and Hess, each of whom would go on to become college coaching legends in their own right.

Perry was born in tiny Hartford, Ohio, just northeast of Columbus in Licking County. After graduating from high school, he attended Bowling Green where he was captain of the football, basketball and baseball teams. After graduation, he was hired as a teacher and assistant coach at Lorain Clearview High School, the first of several jobs as an assistant before he landed his first head coaching job in 1943 at Upper Arlington High School.

That job lasted only one season before Perry

enlisted for U.S. Navy service in World War II. After the war, however, he was back at Upper Arlington and had been head coach of the Golden Bears for five years before Hayes gave him his first chance at coaching in the college ranks.

Perry was put in charge of the OSU backfield – offense and defense – and he spent four seasons changing Hayes' offensive attack from an old-fashioned conventional T-formation to the more up-to-date Split-T. Perry helped quarterback John Borton set program passing records in 1952 that stood for more than 25 years, and along with Fekete, Perry helped groom halfback Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy from a freckle-faced freshman in 1952 to a Heisman Trophy winner.

Perry left the Buckeyes following the 1954 national championship season and returned to his alma mater as head coach. Bowling Green had enjoyed only one winning season in its previous six, but Perry immediately breathed new life into the program.

The Falcons finished 7-1-1 in 1955 and followed that with an 8-0-1 campaign in 1956 that earned the school its first-ever Mid-American Conference championship and first title of any kind since the 1929 team tied for first place in the Northwest Ohio League.

It was the first of five MAC championships during Perry's 10 years as head coach of the Falcons during which he compiled a 77-11-5 record that eventually earned him a spot in the College Football Hall of Fame. The stadium at Bowling Green, which opened in 1966, is also named in his honor.

Perry retired from coaching after the 1964 season but stayed at Bowling Green as its director of athletics through 1970. He later retired to Florida and spent three years as an adviser in the athletic administration department at Florida International University.

After a lengthy illness, Perry died in a Bowling Green nursing home on Feb. 10, 1992, at the age of 82.

Hess was a native of Athens, who attended his hometown Ohio University and lettered in wrestling as well as football. Upon his graduation in 1947, he embarked upon a coaching career and got his first chance to run his own program at Portsmouth in 1950. That was followed by a stint at Grandview Heights, located just a stone's throw from Ohio Stadium, before Hess joined the OSU staff in 1951.

Hess was 28 at the time, and his relative youth seemed to resonate with his players. Hayes put him in charge of interior offensive linemen and almost immediately saw positive results.

"I always felt he got just a little more out of his players than the rest of us did," Hayes said. "When I lost him as an assistant, I had to start over again. He was so good; I had turned too much over to him."

Hess left the Buckeyes following the 1957 season and returned to his alma mater to begin a successful 20-year run as head coach of the Bobcats. In 1960, OU posted a perfect 10-0 season and captured the small college national championship. That season also produced one of four Mid-American Conference championships under Hess.

In 1968, the same year Ohio State posted a 10-0 record and won the national championship, the Bobcats also went 10-0 during the regular season before a 49-42 loss to Richmond in the Tangerine Bowl. Still, Ohio University finished No. 20 in the final Associated Press writers' poll of the year, making it the first and only team in program history to finish ranked in the season's final AP poll.

Hess, who compiled a 108-91-4 record with the Bobcats, was diagnosed with cancer in 1976 and was forced to retire the following year. He eventually succumbed to the disease on June 10, 1978. He was only 55.

Although Perry and Hess became unques-

tionably successful in their profession, Hayes might have had an ulterior motive when he hired them.

Perry boasted an excellent running back prospect at Upper Arlington named Doug Goodsell, while at Grandview Heights, Hess had the services of Ralph Guglielmi, one of the state's top high school quarterbacks.

"I don't know if either man was hired because Woody was trying to recruit their best players," Park said, "but it probably didn't hurt."

Goodsell wound up signing with the Buckeyes and lettered in 1951 and '52 as both a running back and linebacker. Guglielmi, however, went to Notre Dame, where he became an All-American and finished fourth in the Heisman Trophy balloting in 1954. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2001.

A Future Archnemesis

The final member of Hayes' 1951 staff was getting his first taste of coaching and embarked upon a career that would last nearly 40 years.

Schembechler, of course, became Hayes' archnemesis when he took over as head coach at Michigan in 1969. In 1951, however, Schembechler was fresh off graduation from Miami – where he manned a tackle position first for Sid Gillman and then for Hayes – and seeking a master's degree at Ohio State.

That season, Schembechler served an apprenticeship as a graduate assistant. In those days, a graduate assistant helped with almost every position, but in reality was something of a gofer. One minute, Schembechler might be showing an offensive tackle the proper technique for taking on an opposing defensive end, and the next, he might be fetching coffee for the full-time assistants.

In any event, Schembechler said in later years that he learned as much about coaching during that 1951 season as he did in any other over his long career.

In 1952, Hayes promoted Schembechler to a full-time spot, but in 1953, he left Ohio State to fulfill a commitment to military duty in the U.S. Army. After that, he served one-year stints as an assistant at Presbyterian College and Bowling Green before serving two seasons as a defensive assistant for Ara Parseghian at Northwestern.

In 1958, Schembechler returned to Ohio State and remained on Hayes' staff through the 1962 season after which he was named head coach at Miami. Six years in Oxford produced a 40-17-3 record that included a pair of MAC championships, and in 1969, he became head coach at Michigan. Over the next 21 seasons, he posted a school-record 194 victories and captured 13 Big Ten titles or co-titles.

Schembechler, who was also athletic director at Michigan from 1988-90, retired from coaching following the 1989 season, citing a history of heart problems for leaving the game at the relatively young age of 60. He later served a tumultuous three years as president of the Detroit Tigers before embracing retirement on a full-time basis.

Schembechler continued to be a revered presence around the Michigan football program, maintaining an office in the football facility and providing local television and radio analysis on the Wolverines.

On the day before the Ohio State-Michigan game in 2006, as the former coach was preparing to tape a television preview show, Schembechler collapsed and was rushed to Providence Hospital in Southfield, Mich. He died about 2½ hours later due to chronic heart disease. He was 77.

Hayes, of course, enjoyed a 28-year run as head coach at Ohio State, posting a program-record 205 victories, 13 Big Ten titles or co-titles, and at least a portion of five national championships. Fired after the 1978 Gator Bowl for punching an opposing player, Hayes remained a legendary figure on the Ohio State campus until his death in 1987 of an apparent heart attack at the age of 74.

Davis Pushes Through String Of Difficult Losses

By WYATT CROSER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In college football, losses happen.

Losses happen to some teams more than others and can happen from a dominant effort or by a game of inches. They can come to a team that was expected to lose, and they can come to a team that never saw it coming. But, no matter what, a college football game will always have a winner, and it will always have a loser.

Ohio State went 13 games into its 2019 season without experiencing a loss. But that 14th game, in which the Buckeyes fell to Clemson, was the one that mattered the most, with the loss taking Ohio State out of the national championship picture.

It was a loss filled with highs, lows, controversy and what-ifs, but, as with all football games at the collegiate level, one team had to lose by the time the final whistle blew.

Those college football losses, as dramatic as they can be at times, can always be counted on. Losses in life aren't quite the same. There is no clock that hits zero, there is no rule saying a game has to be finished at a certain time in a certain way, but just like in college football, there will always be a time when it comes to an end.

Ohio State guard Wyatt Davis, who finished his first full season as a starter at Ohio State as an All-American, experienced losses both on the football field and in his life, with the latter coming from the death of his grandfather, Willie Davis, on April 15 at the age of 85.

The loss was one that did not come out of nowhere, but one that hurt Davis all the same.

"It was honestly very tough when he passed, but unfortunately my grandad was kind of struggling with health for the past couple of years now, so we knew eventually it was coming," Davis said. "It was hard when he passed, but it was even harder seeing him in the state that he was in just because that's not the granddad that I remember in the hospital bed."

Willie Davis had been hospitalized for a month with kidney failure before passing away, but decades prior, he was known for dominating the same sport his grandson did this past season. After playing at both offensive tackle and defensive end during his time at Grambling State, Davis was selected in the 15th round, pick No. 181 by the Cleveland Browns in the 1956 NFL draft, and after two years of military service, he made his debut for Cleveland in 1958.

He continued to play on both sides of the ball for the Browns before finding his permanent place on defense once he was



ANDREW LIND

IN THE FAMILY – Ohio State guard Wyatt Davis, a consensus All-American in 2019, is the grandson of Pro Football Hall of Famer Willie Davis, who passed away in April at the age of 85.

traded to the Green Bay Packers in 1960. There he thrived, making five Pro Bowls, garnering five first-team All-Pro selections and winning five NFL championships as well as a pair of Super Bowls in Super Bowl I and II.

Though sacks were not a stat during Davis' 12-year NFL career, John Turney of Pro Football Journal reported that he had more than 100 of them in his career, with the total possibly being as high as 120. According to Davis himself: "I would think I would have to be the team's all-time leader in sacks. I played 10 years and I averaged in the teens in sacks for those 10 years. I had 25 one season."

Fumble recoveries were a recorded stat, and Willie Davis had 21 of them while at Green Bay, which remains a team record. All of this led to his induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1981.

That alone would have left an impact

on Wyatt Davis, a former five-star prospect with large aspirations at the college level and beyond, but what Willie did after his impressive on-field career made the same sort of lasting impression.

Davis founded the alcohol distributor Willie Davis Distributing in 1970 and followed that up in 1976 with All-Pro Broadcasting, which currently owns a variety of radio stations. Quarterback Bart Starr, Davis' former teammate in Green Bay, said in the foreword of Davis' book, "Closing the Gap: Lombardi, the Packers Dynasty, and the Pursuit of Excellence": "Willie took his work seriously, both as a football player and later on in his many business ventures. That discipline has led him to unbelievable success."

This drive on and off the field motivated Wyatt, along with his brother, David, who played defensive tackle at Washington State and Cal, and showed them what they

would be able to do, both as a football player and beyond.

"What a lot of people don't know is my granddad was more successful and made more earnings outside of football than he was when he was playing," Davis said. "That type of work ethic is inspiring. He didn't let people put him in a box of just being an athlete, and he broke outside of that box and was extremely successful."

Last season, Davis said he would often get videos from Willie congratulating his grandson for his play during some of Ohio State's wins on the way to a Big Ten title and College Football Playoff berth. Davis said those moments always meant the world to him, considering how much he looked up to his grandfather in a variety of ways.

"He's like a second father to me and my brother. You know obviously with football he held me and my brother to very high

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standards because he knew what we were capable of," Davis said. "I knew he could never actually physically go to one of my games, but I knew that he was always watching.

"Even at the end of the season, he was still saying how proud of me he was. It was awesome, and it almost made me tear up hearing that, because he's my idol. He's what I want to be as a football player and as a businessman."

At the end of the season came the other loss that has shaped Davis' offseason, the football loss to Clemson that kept the Buckeyes from taking on their former quarterback, Heisman Trophy winner Joe Burrow and the rest of LSU in the national title game.

It was the first collegiate loss that Davis had faced as a starter, and it is the game from his dominant 2019 campaign that he won't soon forget. These feelings led to an empowering speech during mat drills from the junior guard, one that resonated with everyone who heard it.

"I think everyone will attest to the fact that the one guy that stood out to me was Wyatt Davis," said strength and conditioning coach Mickey Marotti. "He gave probably the most inspiring talk to a team in a winter program that I've ever heard in my life. I mean, I had tears. I know a lot of other guys were teared up, and it meant so much."

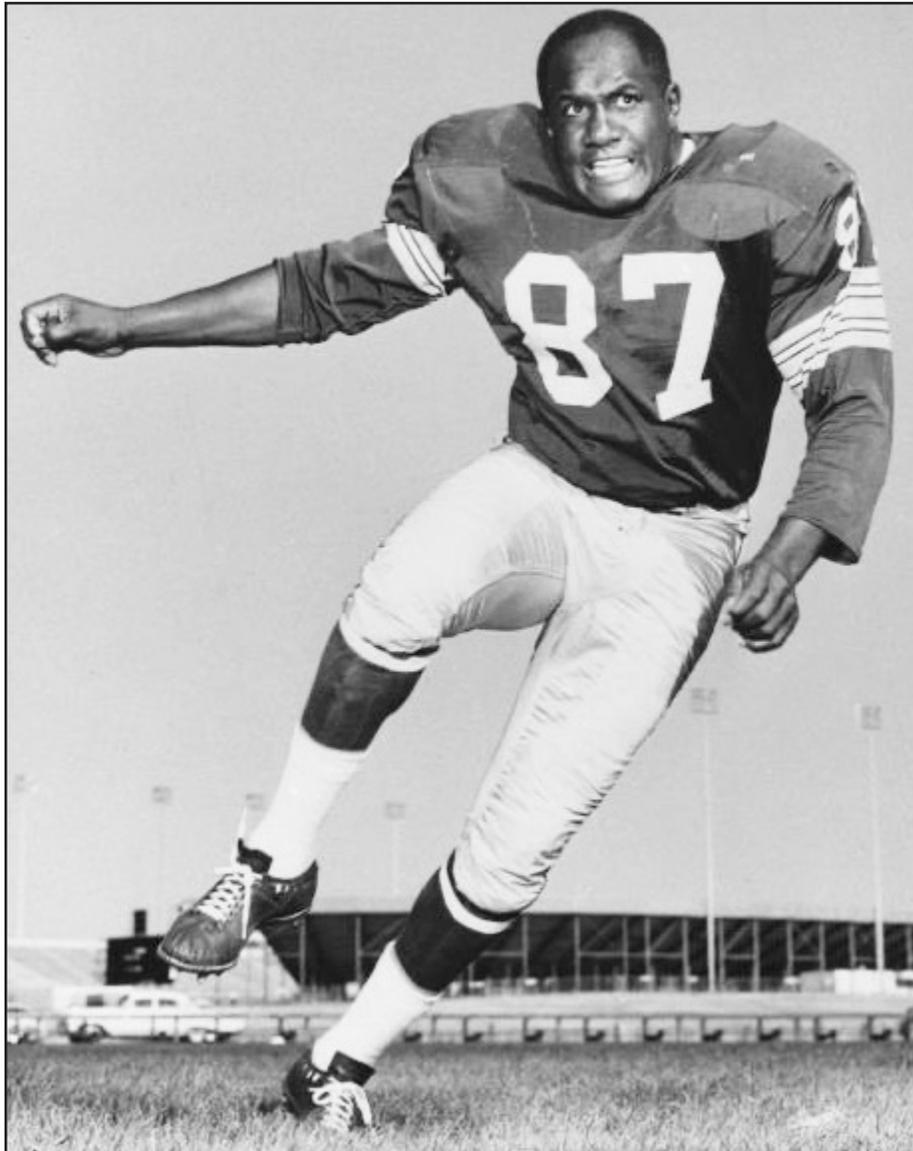
Davis said the speech came off the back of a drill that Marotti called the "parabelum," and it was inspired both by the recent loss to the Tigers and by finding his voice as a leader after often staying behind the scenes in his first three seasons with the program.

"Where that fire came from is I just feel like a buildup of emotions based off how we finished this last season," Davis said. "I kind of just got tired of sitting in the back of things. I mean last year for me, in my head I felt like I really wasn't in a place where I could be as vocal as I should have been based off my time being a starter and really what I had done for the program at that point. So kind of after this season and playing the way I did and ending on a high note, I felt like I had that respect from my fellow teammates to be able to step in front of them and kind of just open my heart out."

The speech was about the importance of the winter workouts that were taking place and how talent alone will not be enough to bring Ohio State a national championship. Davis also talked about the Clemson loss, and how he wants to be a leader and someone who can be counted on to help when called upon, both on the field and off.

"Essentially what I was saying during that speech was just, there's a lot of guys in the world that say they want things and they want all this stuff for them to happen. There's not many of them that are willing to put in the work for it," Davis said. "Coming off of that loss this past season, I don't ever want to experience that again. I was saying that the look in the seniors' eyes and they were crying – it's something I will never forget for the rest of my life. And for some of those guys, it was their last time ever even playing a football game, and that's how we went out."

"I was just telling them, right now, where we're at, this is the critical part of our season. And depending on how we do in these mat drills will truly let us know where we're at. And I was saying that I'm willing to open my heart out for you guys, I'll do anything for you guys because I'm bought in. I'm bought in to Coach Mick, to all other strength coaches and my coach



COURTESY OF WYATT DAVIS

LASTING LEGACY – Willie Davis was a five-time All-Pro who won seven NFL titles with the Green Bay Packers.

and everyone in the facility and with the program."

The overall message that Davis was trying to get across to his team, even with months and months to go before the next season was set to begin: Be accountable.

"Like a lot of people say they want to be the best wide receiver for instance," Davis said on May 14 when players were working out from home. "Well are you taking the extra steps or taking the extra reps to put yourself in that position? Right now, we're in a place where you're on your own. You have no one holding your hand. I mean the coaches are still texting you, but at the end of the day, no one's really going to know what you're doing besides you. So I feel like hopefully, that what I had said hopefully it still resonates and people are just using this as a reason to be accountable."

Davis' quarantine workout, as he laid out when he spoke to the media, goes as follows: wake up at 6 a.m., work out at the gym at 6:40 for "an hour and change," go back home for team meetings, then go to a field near his house around 2 p.m. for field work and position drills, which includes mimicking the length of an offensive drive.

"You can lift all the weights you want, but if you can't last a 10-plus-play drive, it's essentially pointless being that strong," Davis said. "I feel like it's a combination of finding that place where you're at a very good strength place, as well as being conditioned."

The Ohio State guard said he does this routine every single day, always waking up at 6 and always making sure he can be held accountable by his teammates.

This accountability could be seen

throughout Davis' game in his sophomore season. According to Pro Football Focus, Davis had 459 pass-blocking snaps in 2019 and did not allow a single sack in any of those snaps. The same website named Davis the best returning guard in college football, and Walter Camp named him a preseason first-team All-American.

Offensive line coach Greg Studrawa certainly noticed the talent that Davis possesses, but he was also impressed with the intensity and tenacity that the Ohio State guard seems to play with in every one of his snaps.

"The best thing about Wyatt, the thing that he did the best and why everybody's talking about him is because he's physical," Studrawa said. "He tries to destroy people. He doesn't try to just position block or just get the job done. He wants to try to destroy you physically, every single play that he's in there."

That desire to destroy his opponent comes from a source: Willie Davis. Wyatt Davis said his grandfather put that sort of energy into both his game and into his overall persona in whatever he was striving to accomplish.

"I feel like the reason why I have that fire is because what he instilled between both me and my brother is don't be complacent with where you're at, don't be OK with just getting the job done," Davis said. "It relates to the real world. You're just barely doing what you need to do to get by, then that's how you're going to be, that's how successful you're going to be. You're just going to be barely doing enough to get by."

"My grandad has always told me to go 100 percent, go above and beyond and do

what you need to do to be noticed. And that competitive nature is what drives me to be so competitive, and as far as the physical nastiness, that's the game of football.

"Playing football, you've got to be tough, you've got to be physical and you've got to be nasty. And that's what my grandad has told me about playing the game, and that's what I just tried to do."

The Ohio State football team, as a whole, was coming off a massive loss in a game that felt like it was very much for the taking. The Buckeyes held a 16-0 lead thanks to some lackluster red-zone trips, then lost a major defensive presence in Shaun Wade to a controversial targeting call, then had a fumble return touchdown reversed into an incompleteness, and then lost on an interception that was simply due to a miscommunication.

There were plenty of moments that will be thought about by that 2019 team for a while to come, and it is a loss that will lead to motivation in 2020 for the returning members. That loss led to Davis' speech during winter workouts, but it is not the loss that hit home the hardest for the star member on Ohio State's offensive line this offseason.

Wyatt Davis lost his grandfather, the man who, according to Davis' Instagram, was the reason he wanted to play football in the first place.

"My grandad was essentially my hero growing up," Davis said. "I mean his story of basically how he came from nothing, and it just seemed like he was like the underdog his whole entire life, especially getting drafted that late."

"Growing up, he was always around, especially with me and my brother, he treated us so good and that's why it was just so hard when he passed."

In an Instagram post about his late grandfather, Davis wrote: "I hope that I am making you proud. You are a true inspiration and I am fortunate to have had you in my life."

From Wyatt playing with the fire put there by his grandfather, to stepping up as a leader for Ohio State this offseason in workouts, to becoming one of the best offensive linemen in college football, there's plenty of reason for Willie Davis to be proud of his grandson.



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Fleming Brings High Expectations To Receiver Room

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In Ryan Day's first full attempt at putting together a recruiting class as a head coach, Ohio State finished with the fifth-best class in the country in 2020 according to 247Sports.

There were more than a few highlights, including three five-star commits, but at the top of the class was Julian Fleming, a five-star wide receiver from Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia who ranked as the top wideout in the class and the No. 3 prospect overall.

"I think he's physical. He's big. He's strong. He's mature," Day said on Feb. 5, which was National Signing Day. "I think so far his work ethic has really shown that it matters to him. He really cares. And his attention to detail is strong already, as a young player, but we'll see.

"We haven't got to the field yet but play-making ability, God gave him some great talents. And then how does he create the discipline and skill that he needs to play at this level. That will be between he and (wide receivers coach Brian Hartline). I think he's got the right tool set and the right mentality."

Fleming is coming to Ohio State as the top member of what ended up being a loaded wide receiver class for Day and Hartline. That 2020 wide receiver haul – which also includes Rockwall, Texas, five-star Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic four-star Gee Scott and Pattonville (Mo.) Maryland Heights four-star Mookie Cooper – features four receivers among the top 100 overall prospects and is one that Fleming believes can be historic.

"I'm sure everybody in the group has their own thoughts and expectations that they want to live up to, but as a group, I would say we do want to go out as one of the best wide receiver classes," Fleming said in February. "There's going to be a lot of work and a lot of commitment that's going to have to be put in to get to that point because Ohio

State has put out a ton of great wide receivers. It's Zone Six, so we're going to have to work our way up."

The past two seasons, Ohio State has been able to rely on a deep pool of veteran wideouts to be the main targets of both quarterbacks Dwayne Haskins and Justin Fields. In Haskins' lone season as starter, 167 of his completions for 2,433 yards and 31 touchdowns went to the fifth-year senior trio of Parris Campbell, Johnnie Dixon and Terry McLaurin, while in Fields' first season starting, 119 completions for 1,570 yards and 19 scores went to three seniors in K.J. Hill, Austin Mack and Binjimen Victor.

But headed into 2020, the main returning receivers are a junior and a sophomore in Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson, leaving a lot of room for the incoming freshman talent to make an immediate impact.

Still, Fleming is not coming into his Ohio State career with any expectations, instead getting ready for the process and the development in order to earn his place on the depth chart.

"You have to earn your whole way up," Fleming said. "Nothing's given to you. I mean you come to college and you think you're the cream of the crop, the best one. You come to one of the top colleges in the country, you're going to get put in your place real quick.

"So high school, yeah, sure I was at the top. I came here I'm at the bottom. And it's just going to be gradually improving and working my way up to hopefully get back to the top."

Even with Fleming's mentality of having to work toward playing time, he is also aware that the road to making a first-year impact under Day and Hartline has been paved by Wilson. In 2019, his freshman season, Wilson caught 30 passes for 432 yards and five touchdowns, all numbers that were fourth best on the team.

Wilson also made a larger impact as the season progressed, including a 118-yard performance against Michigan, as well as a highlight-reel catch against Clemson in the College Football Playoff Semifinal. He



ANDREW LIND

HIGH HOPES – Ohio State freshman wide receiver Julian Fleming was considered the highest-ranked commit in the Buckeyes' 2020 recruiting class at No. 3 overall, according to the 247Sports composite rankings.

was a five-star prospect who had a world of expectations behind him, and Fleming sees Wilson's first season as a goal for which to strive in 2020.

"Garrett had a great year last year and he's going to have another great year this year, I'm sure of it," Fleming said. "Seeing him play and compete at such a high level definitely did give me a little boost. I liked it, I liked it a lot and just seeing how quick he got in as a freshman.

"Ohio State – they're deep, they're deep at wide receiver and they continue to get guys in the rotation, so I like that a lot."

Wilson came into Ohio State with just one other receiver in his recruiting class: four-star Jameson Williams. But Fleming welcomes the idea of coming in with three other top-100 prospects at wideout, saying it shows how much this unit is striving to succeed, even with one of the most stacked wide receiver rooms that could be found anywhere in college football.

"The willingness to compete," Fleming said of the 2020 receiver group. "We all felt like we were the top guys and competed like we were top guys, so at this point it's just who's going to come in and work their tail off to continue to improve and be another top guy at a college program."

All of Fleming's competitiveness and desire to come into Ohio State and immediately earn his place is matched by his talent, talent that made him the top-ranked receiver in his recruiting class. He impressed many on his way to his spot in the rankings, including Hartline, who likes a lot of Fleming's game, including a skill set that is more diverse than one would find in a traditional wide receiver prospect.

"He's 6-2 and runs really well, really fast," Hartline explained. "He ran track as well. He

has really great ball skills and is very physical in the run game. You know what's great about Julian is (that) he runs in a kind of a Wing-T offense, a heavy run offense, so the expectation on targets should be pretty low.

"When he gets here, hopefully he's not like, 'Hey, man, I need the ball.' You didn't get it a whole lot in high school. But with that said, he'd get like three targets and it would be two touchdowns and whatever else. So that's good. I expect a great blocker. He sends me all of his blocking film before he sends me any kind of catch, so he loves it."

There are plenty of unknowns about the upcoming football season, and the ongoing pandemic has already cost Ohio State's early enrollees, Fleming included, crucial time to develop and make an impact on the coaches.

But Fleming will continue to bring high expectations from the fan base into the 2020 campaign thanks to his five-star rating and spot atop an exceptionally strong Ohio State recruiting class. If you ask Fleming, though, none of those rankings and expectations matter now that he is a part of the Buckeyes.

"In high school, you know expectations were high. And obviously my expectations for myself were higher than everybody else's, so it was just continuing to be the best version of myself," Fleming said. "Coming in here now, I'm not rated anything. I'm not any stars. I'm a freshman. I know how to stay looking to earn a position, so it's a completely different thing from high school because you know those rankings go out the door very quick.

"It's gone, all the stars are gone, all the rankings are gone, everything like that, so it's starting from scratch. It's kind of build your way up and you've got to earn everything."

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OSU Switches To Mobile-Only Football Ticketing

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

On May 28, Ohio State announced it would be going with mobile-only ticketing for the upcoming 2020 football season and for all football seasons moving forward. This is a move that the university has been making strides toward for years, including moving to mobile-only tickets for all student tickets the previous year.

"We are excited to implement digital-only ticketing at our venues and believe it will help us achieve the goal of providing a safe gameday experience for everyone," Ohio State deputy athletic director Diana Sabau said in a statement. "Digital ticketing will allow for contactless entry for fans while also providing flexibility to easily manage their tickets. It will also allow us to better respond to the dynamics surrounding COVID-19 and our increased safety precautions."

Buckeye Sports Bulletin reached out to the Ohio State ticket office, and an athletic department spokesman said that the overall purpose in moving to this all-mobile ticketing for the football season comes down to three main points.

First, this move provides "a convenient method for fans to manage their tickets, transfer to friends, donate to charity, etc." Going to mobile tickets will also "protect fans from fraud by reducing the potential counterfeit or invalid hard tickets being circulated."

Beyond just assisting the fans going to the games, the spokesman said that this will help the university through significant cost savings, as this will eliminate the costs that come from producing and shipping hard tickets.

These changes may help Ohio State on the whole, but how will it affect the secondary markets? According to Jamie Kaufman, president of Columbus-based ticket agency Dream Seats, the change won't have a particularly dramatic impact on what his business was already doing, even if, as he asserts, Ohio State is changing its format for more reasons than the university is saying.

"Whether they've said it out loud or not, that's clearly where they want it to be for the future," Kaufman told BSB. "I think they'd like to stop printing the paper and force people to mobile for not just for savings of the hard cost of the printing, but I think for a lot of other reasons. I would say it has a lot less to do with security than marketing for sure. They want to know who's sitting where, they want to be able to contact them, they want your information you know, everything they can, I think that is what the reasoning is."

"In terms of how it affects us, I mean so much of what we sold, I'd even call it the majority of what we sold last year was in a mobile-ticket format for Ohio State athletics."

But the lack of change is not necessarily the universal expectation in the secondary ticket market. Ryan Forgacs, president/owner of Main Event, told BSB that he expects the move to mobile-only tickets to make a change to how his company does business.

"It will make what we do a little bit harder because the older people that I deal with might not want to mess around with emailing me tickets vs. just being

able to come in and physically hand me the ticket," Forgacs said. "As far as buying tickets, it's going to make it a little bit harder, and then as far as selling them, it makes it harder because I might be selling tickets to Coca-Cola because they want to buy a couple tickets to give to a grocery store."

"The tickets that I sell may change hands two or three times, so it just makes it harder with the emails. Mobile ticketing is easy if you understand how it works, but it's like anything new – people are resistant and not looking forward to change."

A university spokesman said that just 26 percent of non-students adopted the mobile-ticket option last season, which shows the potential major shift in how a lot of football fans will be purchasing their way to the game.

So, why make this change now? According to the university, "Mobile ticketing was already on our roadmap, but the pandemic moved up the timeline by presenting additional drivers." Those drivers from COVID-19 include allowing for a more contactless environment, postponing the seating process with the unknown of how many people will be allowed in the stands, the ability to issue new seating assignments more efficiently, and "requiring online transfer assists with potential contact tracing if needed."

Kaufman said that moving away from print tickets will help Ohio State save money and will also allow the university to quickly adapt to whatever scenario is given to them during the unknowns of a pandemic.

"I think they might not even have the flexibility to do hard stock entirely this year where they have in all years past, where you have months to produce 100,000 printed tickets. You're not going to have that this year. The time won't be there," Kaufman said. "They've definitely been going more to that direction anyway, that's been their plan, but I think they'll say that, 'Well, this is easier now for everybody,' even though for some people, it's not."

Forgacs offered the same sentiment, saying that he thinks that this decision was being made for a while now and that the coronavirus allowed the university to have an excuse to bring it into play in 2020.

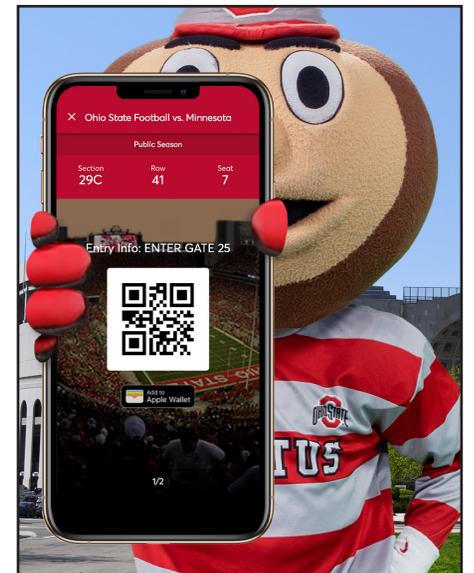
"I think the university is using the coronavirus as a scapegoat to do something that they were going to do in the next five years anyway," Forgacs said. "But rather than get pushback from the elderly people that don't want to go to mobile tickets, now Ohio State is just using the coronavirus as an excuse. 'Well now's our time, we can force mobile ticketing on these people because of coronavirus.' If you think about it, whether I'm holding a ticket in my hand or I'm holding my phone in my hand, there's still going to be something in my hand and the guy letting me through the gate is scanning it. So, what makes a difference if it's a physical hard ticket or it's my phone? He's still not touching the ticket, he's not touching my phone, he's just got a scanner in his hand and he's aiming it at that bar code."

"The mobile ticketing, I think, allows Ohio State to be more of a watchdog of what's going on with their tickets," Forgacs continued. "Let's say they send their tickets to a season-ticket holder. He has his physical tickets, he can do whatever he wants with those tickets. He can sell them to me, he can sell them online, he can give them to somebody, he can donate them. With the mobile ticket, whatever he does with his ticket, Ohio State can see it, Ohio State can monitor it."

As Ohio State continues forward with forcing fans to use their smart phones to get into Ohio Stadium, there is the lingering question of how fans without a smart phone will be able to use a mobile ticket or if there will be potential exemptions.

According to the university, it "will have an option available for fans who do not have a smart phone. More details will be released at a later time."

For now, though, it may serve as another difficult obstacle for the secondary ticket market, which has already faced



COURTESY OF OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

NEW FORMAT – Due to an increase in fraudulent activity with print-at-home tickets, Ohio State has moved to a mobile-only ticketing system for football games.

a whirlwind year as sports, concerts and public gatherings of any sort were put on hold.

"Business-wise, it's terrible," Forgacs said. "I mean we're not getting any calls, we're not selling anything. Traditionally, that guy who comes from Chicago, who graduated from Ohio State and he's making his plans, it's April and he's looking at the schedule, and he's making his plans and he's booking his room at the Blackwell. And he's buying his tickets for the two games that he's going to come from Chicago over to Columbus and relive his college days. Those calls are not coming in – that's not happening. Will they still come, or will they just take this year off? It's hard to say."

"I feel like we're heading in the right directions and we're going to have football, and you definitely have that air of confidence, but people aren't calling to buy any tickets yet."

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Best Men's Basketball Teams In OSU History: Part II

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

Beyond the 1960, '61, '62 and 2007 Ohio State men's basketball teams, Buckeye Sports Bulletin's evaluation of the best squads in program history continues with several more historic groups.

Ohio State basketball experts Lee Caryer and Tony White, who was a captain of the 1988-89 Buckeyes and works as the basketball analyst for 610 WTVN radio in Columbus, helped BSB break down some of the best squads in school history.

When discussing the best teams ever, we emphasized an importance on consistency, tournament success, future NBA players and the competition they faced.

1938-39: 16-7, 10-2 Big Ten NCAA Runner-Up

As runner-up in the 1939 NCAA Tournament, the 1938-39 Buckeyes deserve mention among the best teams in school history. After defeating Wake Forest, 64-52, and Villanova, 53-36, Ohio State fell in the national final to Oregon, 46-33.

1967-68: 21-8, 10-4 Big Ten NCAA Final Four

The 1967-68 team was the most surprising team in Ohio State history, overcoming bottom-of-the-barrel expectations to make a Final Four appearance.

"The '68 team deserves mention, because they were the most overachieving team by a large margin of the great teams in Ohio State history," Caryer said. "They went into the '68 season expected to be in the 8-10 range out of 10 teams. Then they lost one of their two best players - Jeff Miller, who few people have heard about, but he was a star as a sophomore. And Fred Taylor had approached him before his junior year and explained that he was going to be the hub of the offense."

After Miller went down, Taylor had to revamp his offense, which ended up leaning heavily on All-Big Ten big man Bill Hosket. At 6-7, Hosket led the Buckeyes with 20.1 points and 11.4 rebounds per game.

Ohio State defeated Kentucky, 82-81, on its home floor in the Elite Eight, but it ran into an excellent North Carolina team in the Final Four, falling 80-66.

In the consolation game, the Buckeyes

bounced back to beat an Elvin Hayes-led Houston squad, 89-85.

1979-80: 21-8, 12-6 Big Ten NCAA Sweet 16

The success of the 1979-80 squad does not compare to some of the other great teams in Ohio State history, but it was an incredibly talented team that featured a trio of Buckeye greats.

"It was Herb Williams' junior year, it was Clark Kellogg's freshman year, and it was Kelvin Ransey's senior year. They had a good season, but they did not win the Big Ten," Caryer said. "And they lost to a UCLA team which had several NBA players on it. No disrespect to UCLA, but Ohio State was better."

Williams led the Buckeyes with 17.6 points and 9.1 rebounds per game, while Ransey ranked second in scoring (16.2) and first in assists with 5.9 helpers per contest.

Kellogg added 11.6 points, 8.0 rebounds and 2.5 assists per game as a freshman, and junior guard Carter Scott averaged 10.4 points.

While Williams and Ransey were the leading scorers for the 1979-80 Buckeyes, White emphasized the importance of Kellogg's versatility on the offensive end.

"That team had the luxury of a star player in Clark Kellogg, who played like a guard," White said. "He was a big guy, almost 6-9, but had ball-handling skills like a guard, could shoot from the perimeter like a guard. Even without a three-point line, he was able to stretch the floor because of his size. And that made him a very difficult matchup."

"And that was just a really good shooting team. So they were able to really play off Clark and his size and playmaking ability and matchup problems that he created and make a lot of jump shots when Clark was able to draw attention, and Kelvin Ransey was one of the best at banging jump shots home."

Ohio State's talented trio represents one of the best in program history, with Williams playing 18 seasons in the NBA after earning third-team All-American recognition.

Ransey averaged 15.2 points and 6.9 assists as an NBA rookie, finishing one vote behind Darrell Griffith for rookie of the year in 1981 following a consensus second-team All-American season in Columbus.

Kellogg had one of the best rookie campaigns in NBA history in 1982-83,

averaging 20.1 points and 10.6 rebounds, but his career was cut short by chronic knee problems.

"That was a great team that wasn't a great team," Caryer said. "That was a team that had the potential to be a great team that didn't achieve any landmark that you could point to and say, 'This was a great team,' but it was an extremely talented team."

1991-92: 26-6, 15-3 Big Ten. NCAA Elite Eight

The 1991-92 Buckeyes posted a 26-6 record with a 15-3 mark in the Big Ten under head coach Randy Ayers. Despite winning the Big Ten outright, they made it only to the Elite Eight before falling to Michigan's "Fab Five" in overtime, 75-71.

"The Jimmy Jackson team with Lawrence Funderburke, Chris Jent and Mark Baker - those guys were really good. They won the Big Ten championship, but they went to the NCAA Tournament and didn't have much success there," said White.

White credited Jackson's competitive edge for guiding the team to a Big Ten title and an Elite Eight appearance. As a junior, Jackson won Big Ten Player of the Year and earned consensus first-team All-American recognition, both for the second straight season.

"Obviously, everyone knows about Jimmy Jackson, who was the star of that team, the guy who really was an engine for generating a lot of offense and a lot of focus for that team," White said. "Because Jimmy was so good on the court, you don't realize how much of a competitor he was. As good as he was physically, he might have been even better mentally, as a player, because he just brought it all the time. He competed and he challenged his teammates to be better."

Jackson led the team in scoring and rebounding, averaging 22.4 points and 6.8 rebounds per game, as well as 4.0 assists. Jent averaged 12.6 points and 5.3 boards as a senior, while Baker recorded 11.8 points to go with a team-high 5.2 assists per contest. Funderburke provided 12.2 points and 6.5 rebounds per game in his first season after sitting out a year following his transfer from Indiana. Senior guard Jamaal Brown added 9.9 points, shooting 51.2 percent from the field and 42.3 percent from three-point range.

"You had Jimmy to start with, and he had just a terrific group of guys around him," White said. "When you talk about having somebody like Chris Jent out there who's another tremendous competitor - a lefty with the versatility he had to shoot and pass and score in different ways."

"Jamaal Brown, who was a starter from the day he walked into my senior year team as a freshman, is just a guy who knew how to play the game, didn't make a whole lot of mistakes, made jump shots, was a physical presence and a great defender. And Mark Baker, who was just as quick and smart and good with the ball as you're going to find out there in a point guard. That was a team that had a really great core of guys, and a superstar. And when you have a great core and a superstar, you have a lot of potential."

The well-structured Ohio State team did not quite actualize all its potential, falling to rival Michigan in the Elite Eight

after an excellent season, but the group still measures up with the best in school history.

Jackson enjoyed the most professional basketball success on the squad, spending 14 seasons in the NBA. The former two-time Ohio Mr. Basketball winner from Toledo Macomber averaged a career-high 25.7 points per game in his third NBA season with the Dallas Mavericks in 1994-95.

Before becoming a respected NBA assistant coach, Jent spent some time in the league amid a long professional career, primarily spent overseas. He played three games for the Houston Rockets in 1993-94 and three more for the New York Knicks in 1996-97.

Jent won an NBA title with the Rockets in 1994, playing in 11 games during the title run, giving him more career playoff games than regular-season games.

Funderburke was selected in the second round of the 1994 NBA draft and joined the Sacramento Kings after spending three years playing overseas. The former Indiana transfer from Columbus Werhle averaged 9.5 points and 4.5 rebounds as a rookie and had an important role as Chris Webber's backup from 1998-2003, culminating in back-to-back Pacific Division titles.

"I remember Lawrence Funderburke when he was a senior in high school and I was a senior at Ohio State," White said. "Lawrence used to play pickup games with us, both at Ohio State and also he came out to my old high school, and we played pickup games out there. Lawrence was another guy who was a special talent as a young kid. Big and athletic and left-handed, and smart. One of the things that people don't ascribe to Lawrence that was perhaps his best attribute as a player was that he was very, very smart as a player."

"As a young player, you could use experience to beat him once. And you couldn't go back to that again. You had to beat him again a different way, because he learned."

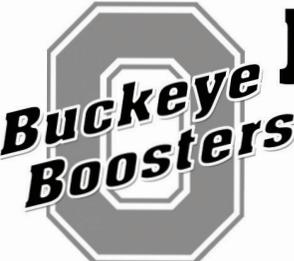
"And when he came, he really gave that Ohio State team a boost because they needed a big, athletic guy because Perry Carter left, and with Perry gone, that left a hole right there."

The Buckeyes spent the entire season ranked in the top 10 in the AP poll and finishing the season at No. 3. A more challenging nonconference schedule may have prepared the Buckeyes better for the challenging nature of March Madness, however.

"I always felt that one of the mistakes that they made was they played a very, very, very weak nonconference schedule, and even a good Big Ten won't prepare you to be successful at the NCAA Tournament," Caryer said. "One of the things about Coach Taylor is they always played the best teams in the country. But the Jackson teams brought a lot of energy to St. John Arena. They had a lot of talent, and they were awfully good."

1998-99: 27-9, 12-4 Big Ten NCAA Final Four (Vacated)

The 1998-99 Buckeyes deserve credit for making it to the Final Four, but they also will always have an asterisk attached to their accomplishments because of recruiting violations committed by Jim O'Brien and his staff.



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The stars of the 1999 Final Four team were sophomore Michael Redd, who later became an NBA All-Star, and junior Scoonie Penn, who had transferred from Boston College and sat out the prior season.

"Redd carried the team his first year because there wasn't anybody any good on the team besides him," Caryer said. "And at the same time, fans were hearing, 'Hey, they got this guy that's playing for the reserves in practice, and they beat the first string all the time, this Scoonie Penn is really a revelation.' That's the first time I heard about him at Ohio State, hearing stories about what he was doing in practice.

"And so, they had two main guys that blended together very well. I mean, it wasn't like Scoonie wanted to be the star or Michael wanted to be the star – they both wanted to be great – but they wanted the team to be great, and they worked together well to do that. And to have a really good team, you need to have star talent, but you need to have a bunch of grinders as far as their mentalities. And when you've got that, then you've got something special."

Redd led the team with 19.5 points per game, while Penn led the team with 4.3 assists per contest and added 16.9 points, which was by far the second most on the squad.

"Of all the teams we've talked about so far, that might be the gutsiest team, I mean, just gutsy," White said. "If you stacked them up talent-wise, I'm not sure that team is more talented than the teams we just talked about. Certainly, Michael Redd was a great player, and certainly Scoonie Penn was a great player. But when you start looking at the guys behind those guys, there's not a lot of Ohio State legends in there – they're good players but not great players.

"But that team was gutsy. They just got it done, and they came together. Sometimes you catch lightning in a bottle. They came together at exactly the right time. That team jelled right before your eyes against Detroit in the second round of the NCAA Tournament to get to the Sweet 16. They just came together; they figured out what they needed to do, how they needed to do it. Everybody knew their roles, and they executed it with perfection."

Third in line was Jason Singleton, who averaged 8.9 points and 4.6 boards per contest on 63.5-percent shooting, but he was more known for his lockdown defense.

Ken Johnson provided rim protection with 2.8 blocks per game to go with 6.4 points and a team-high 5.7 rebounds per game.

The '99 Buckeyes knocked off No. 1 Auburn, 72-64, in the Sweet 16, and then took down No. 3 St. John's, 77-74 in the Elite Eight. Then they fell to eventual champion UConn, which was led by Richard "Rip" Hamilton, 64-58, in the Final Four.

"The key player to that team who's often left out was a guy named Jason Singleton who was primarily a glue guy, a defensive forward," Caryer said. "They got a real break in the NCAA Tournament in the regionals, when they played two teams whose star player was a forward, and Singleton could play against their star player and be even more valuable because of the need for stopping a star player. And both times they did it, and so they won both games and went on to the Final

Four. For St John's, it was Ron Artest, and for Auburn, it was Chris Porter. And Singleton is probably one of the top defensive players in Ohio State history – he just shut them down. And that was the reason they were able to advance."

White also credited Singleton, along with his fellow role players, for helping build a strong supporting cast for Redd and Penn.

George Reese averaged 5.5 points and 4.3 boards per game, while Jon Sanderson provided 5.4 points and 3.4 rebounds per contest.

Boban Savovic, who is forever associated with the violations regarding his recruitment, added 3.5 points per game, while Neshawn Coleman and Brian Brown averaged 4.6 and 4.1 points per night, respectively.

"Guys like Jason Singleton, who was an undersized guy who came in there and just did his job and did it well against a lot of odds, because he was undersized all over the place," White said. "And George Reese, another undersized guy who had 15 rebounds against Detroit (in 17 minutes), that's pretty good. And I know all the recruiting stuff, but Boban Savovic was making threes – that team just came together at that moment in time.

"They didn't have the talent the other teams that we've talked about had, but what they had was they had timing and they had guts. And all that came together to form a team that has to be talked about as one of the best in Ohio State basketball history."

2010-11: 34-3, 16-2 Big Ten NCAA Sweet 16

The 2010-11 Buckeyes began the season 24-0 and appeared to be destined for greatness, but a loaded bracket led to their demise in the NCAA Tournament.

Ohio State led the nation in offensive rating (120.0) under Thad Matta that season, despite featuring only one future NBA player in true freshman Jared Sullinger.

"They were just brilliant all season long," Caryer said. "Now we're talking about Jared Sullinger, Aaron Craft and DeShaun Thomas as freshmen. And we're talking about Will Buford as a junior, and David Lighty and Jon Diebler as seniors, along with Dallas Lauderdale as a senior. That was a beautifully constructed team once Craft turned out to be a tremendous point guard. He was not expected to be tremendous. He was thought to be holding a spot until Shannon Scott got there, but he was far, far better than people realized."

Dominating the Big Ten with a 16-2 record and a Big Ten tournament ring, the Scarlet and Gray spent most of the season as the No. 1 team in the country.

"They went into the NCAA Tournament as the No. 1-ranked team for the seedings, but they got just a dreadful bracket," Caryer said. "I don't know how they could have been in the same bracket with North Carolina, Kentucky and Syracuse in their regional. They played Kentucky in the Sweet 16. And Kentucky had one of those early Calipari teams, which was all freshmen, and people didn't realize the kind of talent that Calipari was bringing in."

Calipari's Wildcats boasted seven NBA players, including freshman standouts Terrence Jones, Enes Kanter, Brandon Knight and Doron Lamb, while the Buckeyes had only one. Despite Sullinger representing the only NBA player on the roster, Ohio State excelled by playing

team basketball.

"They were good players and they played together so very well," Caryer said. "It was like, four fingers and a thumb on your hand that when you put it together in the form of a fist, it's really powerful. Well those guys were five different people working together, and that was a beautiful thing to watch. They were very successful and almost beat Kentucky. I mean, Buford had like a 2-for-16 night and missed the last shot, a lot of things went wrong that don't normally go wrong. But Kentucky was talented, it was far better than the 16th-best team in the country by the end of the season. So Ohio State lost that game, but it's a mistake to forget that team."

As an alum of the program, White experienced some heartache over the 2010-11 team. The disappointment did not come because of a lack of ability, though, but rather because of just how good that squad had played all year.

"There's a few teams that break your heart – they're high on the list of the break-your-heart factor," White said. "They had everything they needed on that team to win the national championship – every player, every position – they had what it took. For that team to not win the national championship, man, that was rough. It was rough. Because we talk about timing – timing wasn't right for that team. They did not play at the NCAA Tournament at the level that they could have, but they had the talent overall to do it."

2011-12: 31-8, 13-5 Big Ten NCAA Final Four

After losing Diebler, Lauderdale and Lighty, Ohio State still had a successful season in the 2011-12 campaign. Matta's team beat eight ranked opponents, including six teams who were ranked within the top 10. Also, seven of the squad's eight losses came to ranked opponents.

Sophomores Craft, Sullinger and Thomas took on bigger roles, with Buford providing leadership as the sole senior. Sullinger led the team with 17.5 points and 9.2 rebounds per game, while Thomas ranked second with both 15.9 points and 5.4 boards per contest.

Craft led the team with 4.6 assists and 2.5 steals per outing, and Buford finished third in scoring and rebounding with averages of 14.5 points and 5.0 rebounds.

Despite losing to Michigan State in the Big Ten tournament final, the Buckeyes regained their momentum in the NCAA Tournament, defeating Loyola (Md.), Gonzaga, Cincinnati and No. 2 Syracuse before falling 64-62 to No. 6 Kansas in the Final Four.

Caryer came away from that season less impressed than he was with the previous team, which had a better regular

season but caught a tough break in the tourney.

"They were very lucky to get to the Final Four, whereas the '11 team was very unfortunate in not getting to the Final Four," Caryer said. "But if you put an emphasis on late-season heroics, then the Final Four is better than the Sweet 16."

White also remembers the 2011-12 Buckeyes catching him by surprise, admiring how they responded to the loss of key pieces in Diebler, Lauderdale and Lighty.

"That's a team that's high on the guts factor too," White said. "That's a team that people went, 'What? What are they are doing here? Didn't they lose all these guys?' They went to Boston that year and won the regional at Boston, and I remember being at that regional. They were just a gutsy team that figured out how to play basketball, and it came out of nowhere."

"At least with the Redd and the Scoonie Penn teams, you had two very consistent, high performers on that team that you went out there and said, 'OK, we can ride these guys and go a long way.' And that (2011-12) Ohio State team really didn't have that level of consistency. They had not really played at that level of consistency all year to be saying, 'OK, they're going to the Final Four.' That kind of came out of nowhere, but it came out of nowhere because they were a gutsy group, and they kind of dug into themselves and figured out how they were going to win that year and get to the Final Four."

Once making it to the Final Four, the Scarlet and Gray met a talented Kansas team in New Orleans.

The Buckeyes carried their tourney momentum into the first half, leading by as many as 13 and holding a 34-25 lead at halftime. With only 20 minutes separating Ohio State and a national championship appearance, the wheels fell off and eventual national runner-up Kansas prevailed.

"They should have been in the national championship game," White said. "That Final Four game, they had that thing won and they should have been in the national championship game. It was kind of like the guts clock ran out. Because they played so well, and they were that close, and all the sand ran out of the hourglass. And it was over because you can only have so long."

"And it wasn't a team everybody would look at and say, 'Boy, I can't believe they didn't win the national championship,' but when you look at how they were playing and where they were in that semifinal game, you go, 'Boy, I can't believe they didn't win the national championship.' They were right there, I mean, they had the opportunity to win that game. And the way they were playing, if they kept it up for another 40 minutes, they were going to win the championship."

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Lacrosse Stadium Plans Paused, Others Continued

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

The COVID-19 pandemic that shuttered Ohio State and the ensuing “stay-at-home” order by Gov. Mike DeWine that led to the closing of nearly all businesses in March had an impact on some construction projects on campus.

Most notably for sports fans, it was announced April 17 through a Capital Projects Update release that the \$20 million lacrosse stadium north of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center and east of the new Covelli Center is in a holding pattern.

However, work continued through the pandemic on the \$22 million Ty Tucker Tennis Center, an indoor facility that broke ground in August of 2019 and is expected to be completed this fall. Exterior walls and interior tennis courts are currently being built, said Dan Hedman, OSU director of marketing and communications, Office of Administration and Planning, in a June 9 email to Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

“The new 75,000 square foot facility will feature six indoor courts and theater-style seating for spectators behind every court as well as locker rooms and training facilities for both the men’s and women’s teams,” he said.

The facility, named for longtime tennis coach Ty Tucker and adjacent to the outdoor courts, fell under the umbrella of “essential infrastructure” in DeWine’s March 23 edict that was lifted May 19.

There were numerous other projects at Ohio State that continued toward completion during the shutdown including the Celeste Lab, Dodd Garage, Optometry Clinic and Health Sciences faculty office, OSU East (hospital) expansion/renovation, the School of Music and the WOSU facility.

Locally, work continued nonstop on the \$300 million soccer stadium of the Columbus Crew in the downtown area, and nationally many high-profile athletic venues were among construction sites that remained open including an arena in Seattle and NFL stadiums in Los Angeles and Las Vegas, although construction on the new home for the New York Islanders on Long Island was halted for two months beginning on March 27.

The 2,500-seat lacrosse stadium, on land that was once used for graduate student housing, was not as far advanced as the tennis center when the pandemic hit.

“It will complete design before pausing to evaluate a future timeline and scope as well as fundraising,” the April 17th projects update said. There has been no change in status, Hedman told BSB on June 11.

Women’s lacrosse shares Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium with soccer and track and field. The men play in the Woody Hayes facility or Ohio Stadium.

Among 10 other projects that were slowed or modified were the Department of Theatre in the Arts District, the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Center, the library book depository and Taylor Tower renovations. While work continues on the Coffey Road Park renovations on the recreation fields reconfiguration, Lincoln Fields renovations were stopped until state restrictions were lifted.

“Most of those identified were at a milestone that made it a logical time to slow or modify – e.g. construction hadn’t started or hadn’t yet been approved,” Hedman said.

Ohio State is amid a building boom, or at least it was pre-pandemic, and athletics played a central role.

The Framework 2.0 concept published in January 2017 furthered plans set seven years earlier for an Athletics District from Lane Avenue north to Ackerman Road with Rt. 315 and Olentangy River Road as the west and east boundaries, respectively. The Jerome Schottenstein Center, more commonly known as Value City Arena, is the anchor and houses the men’s and women’s basketball team’s and men’s hockey.

The district was already home to numerous sports such as basketball, baseball, field hockey, men’s hockey, lacrosse, softball, soccer, tennis, and track and field as well as football’s indoor facility.

Several facilities opened in the past two years, including the Schumaker Student-Athlete Development Complex in 2018. Next to the “Woody,” the center provides training, nutrition and wellness, and rehabilitation under one roof for the student-athletes.

The \$50 million Covelli Center and Jennings

Family Wrestling Practice Facility debuted in May 2019. The 3,700-seat Covelli is used for fencing, men’s and women’s gymnastics, men’s and women’s volleyball, and wrestling. The venues were fully funded by donors.

Eventually, women’s hockey in the OSU Ice Rink and indoor track and field at French Field House, each adjacent to St. John Arena on Lane Avenue, will move into the district.

“The vision for the Athletics District is to bring all student-athletes together in one central location while freeing up the St. John parcel for academic and recreational use on the core of campus,” Hedman said. “As we’ve previously stated, there are no immediate plans for St. John Arena to come down. Any changes will happen only when proposed enabling projects have been completed to relocate athletics facilities from the site and when proposals are developed to support the university’s academic and research mission.”

The 2017 Framework 2.0 projected a hockey arena north of Covelli along Fred Taylor Drive, but those plans changed as of December 2019, with a proposed women’s rink in the range of 2,500-3,000 capacity (about half of the capacity the previous proposal) to be, as Hedman termed, “co-located with the Schottenstein Center.”

The men would use the new rink as a secondary practice site if VCA is not available. There is no time frame for construction. The OSU Ice Rink was constructed in 1961 and its infrastructure and that of French Field House are connected to St. John Arena. The latter two were built in 1956.

“Having (the women) in St. John Arena on that part of campus is a disadvantage to them,” deputy athletics director Diana Sabau said in December. “Taking the women and bringing them to the district for women’s ice hockey will help build that program not only from a competitive standard of excellence but a recruiting standard of excellence and have a consistent trajectory of being in the NCAA tournament.”

The women have locker room and training space in St. John Arena, and Sabau said upgrades are needed.

“We are looking at a locker room improvement project and maybe some additions to that ice rink in the short term to make it a

better experience for our student-athletes now because once this new project gets approved it will take some time to fundraise it and then to build it.”

She said in December that the hope was to have firmer details on a new arena in the spring of 2020. There has been no update because of the pandemic as the athletics department looks at moving forward with more fiscal restraint because of lost revenue.

The locker room for men’s hockey at Value City Arena will also be renovated at some point, and lighting inside the arena is expected to be upgraded along with possibly replacing the seats. A \$34 million renovation of VCA, which opened in 1998, was completed in 2018 with expanded food courts, relocated ticket offices, new athletic offices and other improvements.

Meanwhile, the plan for men’s hockey games is to partition the upper level of Value City Arena to create a hard cap of about 7,500 seats instead of 17,500.

“We have determined that the Schottenstein Center is the best place for the men’s team that will afford us the best crowd, the best fan experience, the best frenetic home energy for the team,” senior associate athletics director Shaun Richard said in December. “We have all the amenities we need for men’s hockey at the Schott, and we’re excited about that.”

The downsizing plan may have to be put on hold because of the pandemic. If crowd size is limited because fans must have social distancing, the irony is all the seating sections may have to be used to allow a good-sized crowd.

“The lucky thing is we do have a big building and that may end up being in our favor where some buildings may have 2,000 seats and you take one-fifth of that and all of a sudden you don’t have a whole lot of people there,” men’s hockey coach Steve Rohlik said June 12. “I have not heard where that’s going to go. Every day you hear something new so that’s why no one is going to jump and say this is what we’re going to do because we don’t actually know.”

Hedman said no decision has been made for this season:

“Athletics shared that the project to downsize VCA for hockey is still active and they are still waiting on overall direction for events to be determined,” he said.

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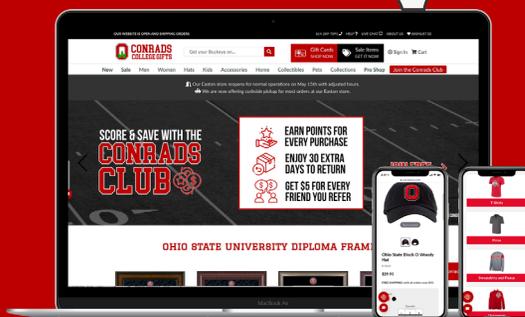
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OSU Basketball Junkies Get Something To Cheer

It doesn't replace watching the Ohio State men's basketball team in the canceled NCAA Tournament, but hoops fans will be able to take solace in rooting for some Buckeyes in July, albeit from the comfort of their homes.

The Basketball Tournament announced June 1 that a truncated 24-team field will play for the televised \$1 million winner-take-all prize at Nationwide Arena in downtown Columbus from July 4-14.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

Carmen's Crew, consisting largely of former Ohio State players, will have the opportunity to defend its title in its home city. Big X, another team full of OSU alumni, will also be in the tourney, but a new team, Great Lakes Elite, that features ex-Buckeye guard Kam Williams and forward Marc Loving, with former walk-on Jake Lorbach serving as assistant coach and general manager, did not make the final cut. Brackets will be announced June 16.

Fans will not be permitted to attend, but all games will be on the ESPN networks for the first live basketball played in the United States since the Big East tournament was halted on March 12 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Hosting TBT in Columbus is another step forward in our state's efforts to responsibly restart Ohio," Governor Mike DeWine said in the TBT release. "We're looking forward to having live sports back in a safe way we all can enjoy."

TBT received more than 120 applications for what normally would be a 64-team field playing for a \$2 million winner-take-all pot, but obviously the pandemic forced drastic changes.

Past tournaments held early rounds at regional sites around the country, including Capital University in the Columbus suburb of Bexley.

On May 27, TBT founder and CEO Jon Mugar announced a 64-team tourney that would have Ohio State's Covelli Center hosting regional games July 23-26 with the final at UD Arena in Dayton.

All that changed to provide the safest environment under the circumstances, and Mugar said that Columbus was chosen as the single site over cities such as Dayton and Wichita, Kan., because of the way the city's health and safety plans could be implemented.

"We can't thank the State of Ohio, Columbus Sports Commission, The Ohio State University and Nationwide Arena enough for their support, not to mention our long-standing partners ESPN, Puma and Zelle," Mugar said in a release. "Everyone is unified in wanting to see basketball on TV again, and our players can't wait to compete. Being the first basketball event to play in the U.S. since March is a monumental task that is only possible with great partners."

Under TBT's protocol, players will undergo multiple tests for COVID-19 before coming to Columbus, and that will continue upon their arrival five days before

the tournament begins. Once the competition is under way, a single positive test by a team member would result in the removal of the entire team.

The players and staff will be quarantined at the Hyatt near Nationwide Arena, and practice courts will be set up at that hotel and the Columbus Convention Center so players won't have to leave the area, according to The Columbus Dispatch.

"I couldn't be happier to welcome TBT back to Columbus," Mayor Andrew J. Ginther said in the TBT release. "Our city is committed to following all public health recommendations in order to create a safe environment for participants. Although this year's event will certainly be different than years past, we look forward to showcasing Columbus and providing another excellent experience for TBT."

This is the seventh year of the TBT, which typically has teams made up of former college teammates. Last year for example, Carmen's Crew won the title game over the Marquette alumnus-heavy Golden Eagles, 66-60, in Chicago on Aug. 6.

This year's Carmen's Crew has guards Aaron Craft, William Buford, Jon Diebler, David Lighty and Lenzelle Smith and forwards Dallas Lauderdale and Evan Ravenel along with coach Jared Sullinger and general manager Evan Turner. Columbus native and former Otterbein University player Jeff Gibbs and Illinois alum Demetri McCamey round out the team.

Big X includes former OSU guards Andrew Dakich, C.J. Jackson and Keyshawn Woods, and forwards Andre Wesson and Kaleb Wesson.

The single-elimination tournament will hold Round of 24 games July 4-5. The Round of 12 will be July 6-9 followed by the quarterfinals July 10-11, the semifinals July 12 and the finals on July 14.

Once again, the end of games will be decided by the Elam Ending, which eliminates the clock after a certain point and forces a team to reach a target score to clinch a victory. The format is a longtime TBT staple but gained attention when it was used for the first time by the NBA in its 2020 All-Star Game.

Staying Put

As expected, guard C.J. Walker announced via Instagram on May 31 that he was withdrawing his name from the NBA draft and will return as a fifth-year senior.

"I love playing in front of Buckeye Nation and I can't wait to finish my degree and my playing career here at THE Ohio State University!"

Last season was his first for the Buckeyes following a transfer from Florida State. He started 29 of 31 games and averaged 8.7 points, 3.1 rebounds and 3.5 assists. He led the team with 1.3 steals per game.

Players can enter their names for the draft and hire an NBA-certified agent yet still maintain their college eligibility if they decide to withdraw before the deadline, which this year because the NBA is still in a shutdown mode due to the pandemic, is 10 days after the NBA Draft Combine or Aug. 3, whichever comes first.

No Secret Agent

The Wesson brothers signed with agent Jelani Floyd of Beyond Athlete Management in May. Floyd also represents former Ohio State player Jae'Sean Tate.

Andre has exhausted his eligibility and

OSU Men's Basketball Signees & Verbal Commits

Players in the class of 2021 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Kalen Etzler	PF	6-8	195	★★★	Convoy (Ohio) Crestview
Meechie Johnson	CG	5-11	160	★★★★	Willoughby (Ohio) Andrew Osborne

Players in the class of 2022 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Bowen Hardman	SG	6-3	160	★★★	Cincinnati Princeton

Kaleb, the Buckeyes' leading scorer and rebounder the past two seasons, will not return to the team after signing with an agent. He hopes to be the first player drafted following an appearance in TBT.

The NBA draft, originally scheduled for June 25, will be Oct. 15. Kaleb Wesson is projected to be a second-round pick. His brother is not expected to be drafted.

Recruiting Trail

Four-star guard Jalen Warley (6-4, 175) from West Chester (Pa.) Westtown School lists Ohio State among his top 10 choices. He is the No. 27 overall recruit, fourth among combo guards and first in the state for the class of 2021, according to 247Sports.

He was offered by OSU on May 29 during a virtual meeting with head coach Chris Holtmann and his staff.

Warley's other finalists include Florida

State, Louisville, LSU, Maryland, Memphis, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Oregon and Virginia.

Although he doesn't possess "elite athleticism," according to the 247Sports scouting report, he has a big upside: "Warley needs to continue to be more assertive so that his natural ability shines through, but all of the tools are there for him to make an impact (in) college, and potentially even in the NBA."

This is what Warley had to say about the Buckeyes to Stockrisers.com: "Ohio State has already one of the best classes in my year and I can flourish in the Big 10 under Coach Holtmann."

Ohio State has 2021 commitments from Convoy (Ohio) Crestview three-star forward Kalen Etzler and Willoughby (Ohio) Andrews Osborne Academy four-star guard Meechie Johnson to rank seventh nationally by 247Sports.

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Harris Ready To Go Following Redshirt Season

At the beginning of the 2019-20 season, Ohio State had more true freshmen on the roster than every other class year combined, bringing in seven first-year players in one of the strongest recruiting classes in the country.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

With that, the goal became clear: build for the future with young talent, with the emphasis being on developing chemistry and getting the most out of what the roster's potential had to offer.

Six of those freshmen got their opportunity to show what the hype was all about and helped to bring the Buckeyes a 21-12 record that exceeded the expectations of most, a runner-up finish in the Big Ten tournament that exceeded the expectations of everyone and a surefire spot in the NCAA tournament that ended up being canceled due to COVID-19.

Half of those six freshmen who played are now gone through transfers, while two of the ones who stayed – guards Madison Greene and Jacy Sheldon – locked up starting positions and the other – forward Rebeka Mikulasikova – carved out her role as an offensive threat off the bench who led the team in both field-goal percentage (50.3 percent) and three-point percentage (46.3 percent).

But there was one more member of that 2019 class who has not yet had her opportunity: Rikki Harris, a five-star guard who was ranked the sixth-best point guard and 24th-best player overall in her class. Harris was the second highest-rated member of Ohio State's class behind guard Kierstan Bell, who has since transferred to Florida Gulf Coast.

Harris missed the entire 2019-20 season recovering from a shoulder injury and will come into the upcoming campaign as a red-shirt freshman and as the top-rated Ohio State commit left from her class.

"She's a really bright kid; she took it in stride," Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff told Buckeye Sports Bulletin on May 28. "Our doctors and trainers did a great job explaining the situation, and I think she took it in stride because she knew deep down that they were advising her from a standpoint of what was best for her, and then my conversations were more of the 'Hey, let's look at this in the long term. We want you to get healthy first. That's going to allow you to be the best version of yourself,' and so she was good with it."

"I mean nobody wants to go through this, but I think she understood just given where she was, this was the best thing."

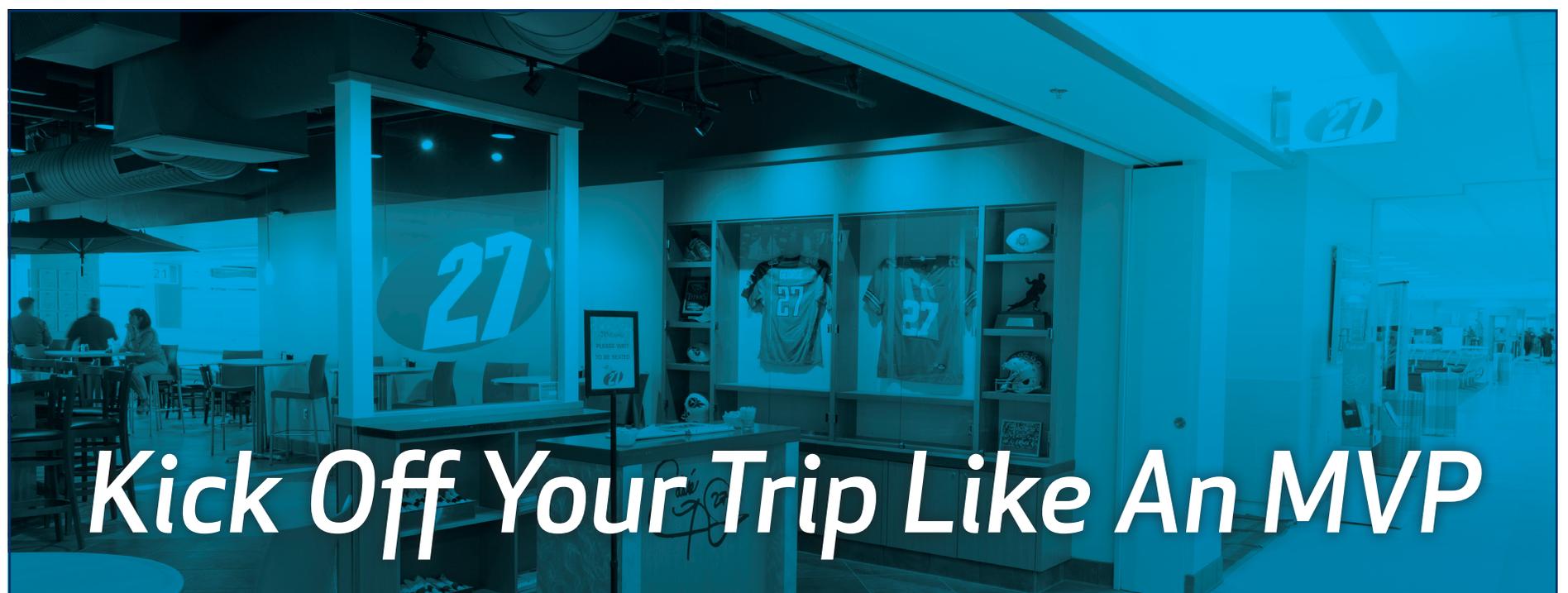
But it wasn't all easy for Harris in her first year with the program. The 5-10 guard from Indianapolis North Central came to the Buckeyes with a long list of injuries from high school, including a pair of ACL tears and a trapped nerve in her foot which required surgery, and she also had to rehab both of her knees during her first summer at Ohio State.

These battles to stay healthy cost Harris



SONNY BROCKWAY

PATIENTLY WAITING – Ohio State guard Rikki Harris, far right, redshirted during the 2019-20 season while recovering from a shoulder injury.



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a large portion of her high school career, but they were always injuries to her lower body, which allowed her to consistently do at least part of what she loves to do: shoot. With a new shoulder injury that required surgery, Harris had to battle through a lot off the court when the surgery, and ensuing recovery, cost her the season.

"When it happened and we chose to go with surgery, I knew I probably was going to sit out," Harris said. "I've had other injuries that put me out for a year, so I knew if I worked, I knew I can handle it. Normally, it's a leg, so I can shoot, but it was a shoulder this time so like I shouldn't even shoot, so this time was very different.

"I don't want to say depressing, but it was. Mentally I was down, like really bad, but my teammates pushed me through, as well as my trainer."

Harris wore a mechanical arm brace for much of the season in order to help her recover correctly from the injury. Taking it slow and making sure Harris would be fully healthy for upcoming seasons was a key emphasis for McGuff and Ohio State, as some of Harris' injuries were a result of an attempt to play before they were fully healed.

"It was more just in the beginning like, 'Hey, this is going to be the best thing, let's take a long-term approach,'" McGuff said. "She loves to be on the court, she's a real competitor, so it's tough at times. For any kid it would be tough, and it especially could be tough for her because of her competitive nature, but she's also bright, so she can understand it and process it in a way that it's tough, but she gets it."

Eventually, the brace was taken off, and Harris' mind-set and energy immediately improved.

"Once I started being able to shoot again, it was just like everything changed. I was just so happy again," Harris said. "Being able to just barely do anything with the ball has just made me a happier person, but I still didn't let that affect how I was with my teammates."

Throughout the process, Harris said her teammates were incredibly helpful with keeping her up and consistently keeping her part of the equation, even while she was unable to play or practice with the team.

That team-first attitude put forth toward Harris by the roster made a difference in her mind-set while also giving her extra determination to work harder toward recovery.

"Just being goofy, making jokes, just being themselves honestly," Harris said on how her teammates assisted her. "Making me not feel left out, even though I couldn't play. They made me still feel like I was part of the team, so I was thankful for that.

"I'm not doing everything yet, but I'm doing some things, so when they see me doing the little things, they say like 'Yeah, Rik!' They were just hyping me up so I would then have to be like, 'Oh yeah, now I have to go hard,' and then I would be like, 'Oh, I shouldn't have done it hard, now I'm tired.' But they just keep me going."

It wasn't just her teammates' energy that

had an impact on Harris. By the end of the season, even without playing in a single game, Harris was noticeably energized on the bench, constantly pumping up the team after a major basket or big defensive stop.

"She's a great teammate," said Braxtin Miller, who will be Ohio State's lone senior next season. "I think that she provides a lot of energy on the bench and just always making sure she's there for everybody. Whatever you need, she's right there to do it for you. So I think that she's a great teammate in that aspect and she brings a lot."

That sentiment was echoed by two more teammates, both of whom were in Harris' 2019 class.

"She's a huge part of the team," Sheldon said. "She has a huge effect when we come out of the game. Even during the game you can tell she gets excited about everything. She's always telling me keep shooting and she's always keeping everybody positive. She's had a huge impact even though she hasn't been able to be on the floor."

"She's definitely been a big energizer for the team," Greene said. "She's very uplifting. She pulls us aside and will be like, 'Hey, great shot,' or, 'Hey, she can't guard you, go to the basket.' We're really glad to have her on the team. She's really been helpful and helped us stay together."

With playing time not in the cards, Harris made it her goal to be the best teammate she could be and do it in a different way than anyone else on the roster. As her teammates' reactions showed, the results paid off.

"Just try and be the best teammate I can on the bench," Harris said of her outlook. "Be loud. If I see something, try to tell them and just hype them up when they're down. It's hard not playing, especially like right now (at the Big Ten tournament in Indianapolis) because I'm in my city, so it's like the more hype I can get for them, the more I feel like I'm on the court helping them."

Next season, Harris should have her chance to show she has more than the intangibles she brought this season with leadership and energy. With Bell, guards Janai Crooms and Kaelynn Satterfield, and forward Aixa Wone all gone from last year's team, there is room for Harris to step up and make an impact.

At the point guard position, Greene holds a strong grasp on the starting job, but Harris, as well as five-star point guard Kateri Poole from the 2020 class, has an opportunity to earn significant minutes in 2020-21.

Even though Harris was considered a five-star talent in high school and despite all that she proved on the court back in Indianapolis, McGuff was drawn to those off-court attributes that she brings to the table, the same ones that she brought in her first season at Ohio State without playing a single minute of game time.

"I think that she'll really impact us because she's tough, she's physical, she's a gritty player and she's a great teammate," McGuff said. "I mean she has a lot of talent, but she's also got a lot of great intangibles, and every team needs that. We need that. We need her toughness

and her grit, and I think that will really bring a lot to this team."

Bristow Transfers To Buckeyes

After losing four players to the transfer portal, Ohio State earned one back on May 29, with Providence guard/forward Hevynne Bristow announcing on Instagram that she would be transferring to the Buckeyes. She will have three years of eligibility remaining.

"I promise you; this story will be one to remember," Bristow wrote in the post. "Thank you Coach (Kevin) McGuff and the entire coaching staff."

In her freshman year with the Friars, Bristow played in 29 games and started in three, averaging 2.7 points and 2.2 rebounds per game while shooting 37.0 percent from the field.

Bristow is leaving a Providence team that went 13-19 overall and 3-15 in the Big East Conference while averaging just 59.8 points per contest.

With Bristow's transfer, Ohio State now has 11 members on its 2020-21 roster, with six active members of last year's team returning, along with Harris and a trio of freshmen in Poole, three-star guard Anyssa Jones and three-star forward Gabby Hutcherson.

Bristow, a Brooklyn, N.Y. native, played with Poole at the AAU level and will be reunited with her in Columbus.

The 6-1 guard/forward will not be eligible to play for the Buckeyes during the 2020-21 season.

Crooms Picks Spartans For Transfer Destination

Crooms, who spent her first two collegiate seasons with the Buckeyes, announced on Twitter on May 29 that she will be transferring to Michigan State.

She first announced she would be entering the transfer portal on April 23, saying in a statement that she "would like to take this opportunity to thank Ohio State University for allowing me to fulfill my dream of playing Division-I basketball.

"However, after much thought, prayer and consideration, I feel it is in my best interest to enter the transfer portal and explore other options."

The Spartans were a .500 team in the Big Ten last season, finishing with a 9-9 in-conference record and a 16-14 record overall. In Michigan State's one meeting with the Buckeyes, the Spartans defended their home court with a 68-65 win on Jan. 16.

In her sophomore season with Ohio State, Crooms averaged 6.8 points and 3.3 assists per game, with the assist total finishing second on the team. She shot 46.7 percent from the field and 20.8 percent from three.

These totals were coming off a freshman year when Crooms averaged 8.8 points and 2.2 assists per game while starting in 19 of the 29 games. She was highly effective from the field in her first year, hitting on 48.0 percent overall and 46.5 percent from deep, both of which led

the team.

After starting the first 10 games of the 2019-20 season, Crooms, along with freshman guards Bell and Satterfield, was suspended one game for a violation of team rules and then came off the bench for the remainder of the season.

Both Bell and Satterfield have also transferred out of Ohio State with the former, as mentioned, choosing to go to Florida Gulf Coast and the latter transferring to Xavier. The Buckeyes also lost forward Aixa Wone to Georgia Tech.

Crooms was a four-star prospect out of Barrington (R.I.) St. Andrew's in the 2018 class, and she will have to sit out the upcoming season barring a petition to become immediately eligible.

Buckeyes Return For Workouts June 15

A week after Ohio State's football team was able to begin voluntary workouts at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on June 8, both the men's and women's basketball teams were allowed back at the Schottenstein Center for their own voluntary workouts.

Voluntary workouts are done without coaches, and every player must be tested for COVID-19 and stay quarantined until the results are received.

Along with the players, coaches were allowed back to work on the same June 15 date for both basketball teams, as well as coaches for men's and women's soccer, field hockey, and women's volleyball. The players on those teams must wait until June 22 to begin voluntary workouts.

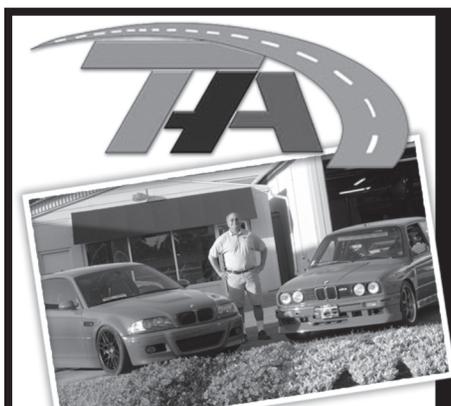
McGuff Says 'Too Early' To Think About No Fans

While the Ohio State football team considered playing games with limited fans in capacity, McGuff told BSB he has not yet come to a decision in his mind on what he thinks as far as playing basketball games at the Schottenstein Center with limited or no fans in the seats.

"I just think it's too early to really think – I mean you think it, I've thought about it and what it would be like, but I still just think there's a lot that can happen between now and when basketball would take place," McGuff said.

The coach said that there are benefits to seeing how fall sports such as football handle the COVID-19 pandemic and that it can all be used to implement a strong system for the winter sports.

"The good news for us is we have a lot of time to A, see what happens with the virus, with any therapies or vaccines that could or could not happen between now and then. But probably more importantly, just kind of see how some of the fall sports do in terms of how they operate, what it's like, if they have fans if they don't have fans, kind of how that goes," McGuff said. "We'll get the benefit of learning a lot from how those experiences go, and so hopefully by when basketball season rolls around, we'll be able to do it safely and efficiently."



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OHIO STATE

OLYMPIC NOTES

Sweeney Named New Rowing Head Coach

Ohio State made official the hiring of Kate Sweeney as the new rowing head coach on June 8. Sweeney had been serving as the interim head coach since March, when she took over for Andy Teitelbaum, who was fired after an investigation found that he had dismissed mental health concerns expressed to him by several of his athletes.

"We are excited to welcome Kate Sweeney as the new head coach of Ohio State rowing," said Janine Oman, Ohio

State deputy director of athletics. "Her familiarity with the program both as an assistant coach and as a former student-athlete makes her the right leader for the program. Kate has been part of championship teams here at Ohio State. She knows the program history well and is eager to continue to build on those successes."

Sweeney was a member of the rowing program from 2009-2012 and a two-time top-five finisher at the NCAA Rowing Championships, as well as a Big Ten Champion in 2011. After working as an assistant at Indiana in 2014 and 2015, Sweeney served as a volunteer assistant at California-Berkeley in 2016 as the Bears won a national title before returning to Columbus as an assistant in August of 2016.

"Ohio State has always held a special place in my heart," Sweeney said. "Both of my parents are alumni of Moritz College of Law, my grandfather was an Ohio State chemical engineering professor for many years and I'm a proud member of the class of 2012. I'm incredibly honored to be afforded the opportunity to lead this program that means so much to so many amazing women."

"As a program, we will strive to honor the legacy of the past 25 years by being engaged students, athletes and stewards of society. We remind ourselves often that we stand on the shoulders of giants, and with that sentiment in mind, we are eager to get started. Thank you, Janine

and Gene (Smith), for the opportunity."

Since her arrival for the 2016-2017 season, Ohio State has remained one of the best rowing programs in the country, finishing fifth at the NCAA championships in 2017, sixth in 2018 and fifth in 2019, while finishing first in the Big Ten in 2017 and 2018, snapping a six-year title drought, and second in 2019.

Dingler Selected In MLB Draft

Ohio State junior catcher Dillon Dingler had to wait a little longer than expected, but he was selected in the abbreviated MLB draft on June 11 by the Detroit Tigers with the No. 38 overall pick in the second round. According to a university press release, Dingler is the 107th Buckeye taken in the history of the MLB draft and the 12th taken within in the first two rounds.

He's also the highest Buckeye draft pick since Alex Wimmers was selected No. 21 by the Minnesota Twins in 2010.

"I'm really excited for the future and to have the opportunity to put on the Tigers jersey," Dingler said. "I was very fortunate to have a great baseball program in high school and then loved my time at Ohio State. The athletics program is second to none and has prepared me for this. I've been really fortunate to play for (head coach Greg) Beals and to be a Buckeye."

As a junior, Dingler really started to find his groove as a hitter through the shortened season and was named a Collegiate Baseball third-team All-American thanks to his improved offense and consistent defense. He put up a .340/.404/.760 slash-line in 13 starts while hitting five home runs and batting in 14 runs.

"Dingler is considered a high-upside pick," said Anthony Fenech of the Detroit Free Press. "Catching is always at a premium. Though Jake Rogers remains the Tigers' catcher of the future, the position is always in need of depth. The Tigers have spent significantly on catching in the early rounds of the draft and have yet to see any of those picks come to fruition, which is concerning. But adding another into the mix can't hurt from a depth perspective."

While Dingler did hear his name called, pitcher Seth Lonsway couldn't say the same. Despite pre-draft projections that placed him well within the top 50 prospects, Lonsway was not one of the 160 players selected in the shortened five-round draft and is expected to return to Ohio State for his fourth year in the program.

Buckeye Awards Roundup

Ohio State student-athletes continued to rack up awards through the end of May

and into June, including several significant conference awards and even a few national honors.

Starting within the university, football standout Chase Young and women's hockey star Jincy Dunne were named Ohio State's Male and Female Athletes of the Year on May 29 and were placed on the ballot for Big Ten Athlete of the Year (for more on that, see page 6).

Young is the 11th Buckeye football player to win the award, following quarterback Dwayne Haskins, who won it in 2019. Dunne is the first women's hockey player to earn the title.

Prior to Haskins, the football team was represented by quarterback Troy Smith in 2007, linebacker A.J. Hawk in 2006, kicker Mike Nugent in 2005, quarterback Craig Krenzel in 2003, running back Eddie George in 1996, linebacker Chris Spielman in 1988, wideout Mike Lanese in 1986, tight end John Frank in 1984 and quarterback Art Schlichter in 1982.

Dunne was also recognized a week prior on May 22, along with wrestler Kollin Moore, as Ohio State's Big Ten Medal of Honor recipients.

The award is given to one male and one female senior athlete at every school in the conference who has "attained the greatest proficiency in athletics and scholastic work."

Ohio State had nine total finalists for the award before selecting Dunne and Moore: Jacob Buchanan (rifle), Robbie Delagrang (pistol), Reese Devilbiss (volleyball), Domenik Koch (fencing), Olivia Aepli (gymnastics), Gabriella Cecchini (fencing) and Anjali Fernandes (rowing).

Five other Buckeyes were honored by the Big Ten in some capacity, starting with golfer Felix Kvarnstrom on May 18. Kvarnstrom was named to the All-Big Ten second team by a panel of the league's 14 coaches, thanks to his 72.94 scoring average and four top-20 finishes. He's the 53rd Buckeye to be named to one of the teams since its inception in 1968.

Elsewhere, wrestler Luke Pletcher and women's volleyball player Bia Franklin were recognized as Big Ten Outstanding Sportsmanship Award winners on May 27.

"Members of varsity sports teams on every campus were chosen by his or her institution as a Sportsmanship Award honoree and two Outstanding Sportsmanship Award winners were then selected from each institution," an Ohio State statement explains. "All of the Sportsmanship Award winners have distinguished themselves through sportsmanship and ethical behavior. In addition, these honorees must be in good academic standing and must have demonstrated good citizenship outside of the sports-competition setting."

A day later, football walk-on Amari McMahon and rower Fernandes were

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awarded 2020 Big Ten postgraduate scholarships. The scholarships go to two athletes from each school set to pursue a graduate degree and are worth \$7,500. The winners are determined primarily on academic achievement.

McMahon graduated from Ohio State this spring with a degree in biology and plans to attend Ohio State's College of Dentistry in the fall. Fernandes graduated in March with her degree in English literature with a minor in biology and is a four-time Ohio State Scholar-Athlete.

And from the men's tennis team, John McNally, Kyle Seelig and Cannon Kingsley were all named to the All-Big Ten first team, while James Trotter landed on the second team.

Several Buckeyes picked up non-conference-affiliated awards as well. On May 26, Melissa McGhee, head dance coach at Ohio State, was named the National Dance Coaches Association College Coach of the Year for 2020. In January, McGhee led Ohio State to a national championship, claiming gold at the D1A Jazz National Championship in Orlando, Fla.

On May 27, five members of Ohio State's women's track and field squad were named U.S. Track & Field and Cross-Country Coaches Association All-Americans. Emma Nwofor was included for pentathlon and 60-meter hurdles; Adelaide Aquilla for shot put; Aziza Ayoub for 800-meter; Anavia Battle for 200-meter; and Devine Parker for 200-meter.

In men's tennis, McNally, Robert Cash and Kingsley were recognized on the national stage as well. McNally was named an All-American in both singles and doubles, one of just eight Buckeyes to be included on both, along with Bryan Koniecko (2008), Steven Moneke (2008), Justin Kronauge (2008), Chase Buchanan (2010 & 2012), Blaz Rola (2012), Peter Kobelt (2014) and Mikael Torpegaard (2018). Cash was named a doubles All-American.

Kingsley, meanwhile, was named a singles All-American, and on May 25, he was awarded with the ITA National Rookie of the Year award. He's the first Buckeye to win the award.

"My first year at Ohio State was everything I could have asked for," Kingsley said. "We didn't get an opportunity to achieve our team goals, but for me personally, I achieved some things that I will remember for the rest of my life. Receiving this award shows me that I'm right there with the top tennis players in the country, but also that I need to improve so much more in order to maintain that status. I can't wait to get back to work with the coaches and my teammates and make strides to become the best team in the country next season."

"Cannon was having a tremendous season when it ended due to the virus," said director of tennis Ty Tucker. "This big-time award will soften the blow of a lost season. Cannon certainly deserves this award because he played well from start to finish. He won in his very first tournament in September and also had a top-10 win in March just before the season ended. He had a number of wins over ranked opponents this year, and he's only going to get better."

Bete Raises Money For NAACP

Former Ohio State cross country runner and 2020 graduate Paul Bete ran

56.3 miles on June 7 to raise money for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People legal defense fund. Bete ran from Columbus to Wilberforce, Ohio, raising \$9,551 in the process, nearly twice his original goal of \$5,000.

Bete explained his motivations for the run and for the fundraising shortly after the event ended.

"For much of my life, I've avoided the topic of race," Bete wrote in a post on RallyUp.com, a fundraising website. "And like many people of my background it wasn't due to any explicit biases, but rather it was easy and convenient to not confront a system in which I was privileged and had an advantage to succeed. The murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police department, as well as the murders of countless other black people, have been a wake-up call. A call to no longer just condemn these actions in my mind or in talking with friends, but instead to go out in the world, protest, and take tangible action to stop the machine that allows these actions to happen."

"As a member of the Ohio State track and field program, my life has been shaped over my college years by strong black coaches/role models such as (director of track and field and cross-country) Karen Dennis and (cross country head coach) Khadevis Robinson. I had the privilege of competing with and getting to know dozens of black teammates whose constant strength in the face of adversity over the past weeks and years has changed my life and inspired me to do whatever I can to change the lives of others. In light of this, I will be using my ability to run that so many of these people have helped cultivate in me to raise money for the NAACP legal defense fund."

In an interview with the Dayton Daily News, Bete explained that the gathering of several Ohio State athletes and coaches in front of Ohio Stadium to kneel in protest on June 2 inspired his run.

"It was just powerful to be there along with all the other student-athletes and see everyone there for one goal," Bete said. "It was a pretty big turnout, which was surprising for the summer when a lot of people aren't on campus."

"I though the idea of running 56 miles would be outlandish enough to really raise awareness and make people want to donate, especially people who want to do something but don't really know a good way to do it."

Bete's run took about 10 hours in total, as he departed from Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium at 7 a.m. and arrived at the Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument in Wilberforce around 5 p.m.

Dennis made a statement on June 3, delivering a message of support to her team members.

"I'm writing to let you know I am with you as you peaceably protest," Dennis said. "I've marched also and attended rallies. I've cried about police brutality in my youth and now in the twilight of my life; I'm still crying. I'm also still fighting. It's important that you know our entire staff is with you in solidarity. We're here to listen to you talk, discuss, vent, express your feelings and opinions and ideas. And for those of you who are processing silently that is okay; I just hope you find some way to express yourself."

"In the words of the great novelist,

poet and activist James Baldwin, 'Not everything we face can be changed but everything we need to change must be faced.' Please be safe and take care of each other."

Women's Lacrosse Adds Two Transfers

Ohio State announced on May 21 that Mary Kate Bonanni and Kelsey Reed will be joining the women's lacrosse team in 2020 as graduate transfers. Bonanni comes to Ohio State from Cornell, while Reed was originally at James Madison. Both have one year of eligibility remaining.

"We are so excited to welcome Kelsey and Mary Kate to the Buckeye women's lacrosse family," said head coach Amy Bokker. "Our staff had a great time developing relationships and going through the process with these outstanding women leaders. I am really happy that in this unique situation, these outstanding student-athletes found a home at Ohio State and a place to continue their impressive careers."

The duo comes to Ohio State with quite a few accomplishments already under their belts. Bonanni, a defender, was a first team All-Ivy League selection in 2019, as well as second-team Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association All-Northeast Region. A two-time captain at Cornell, Bonanni led the team in caused turnovers (16) while also finishing second in ground balls (26). She started in 50 of 56 games over four years.

"Mary Kate reads the game so well and is an accomplished player on the

defensive end. I'm really looking forward to have her added voice to our defensive unit," said Bokker.

Reed, a midfielder, was named a second-team All-Colonial Athletic Association selection after totaling 27 points (19 goals, eight assists) in 2019 and was a part of James Madison's 2018 national title team. She was named a captain in 2020 and ranked fifth in the CAA in ground balls per game (2.33) prior to the end of the season in March. She played in 49 games during her time with James Madison.

"Kelsey will add experience, speed and overall athleticism to our midfield," said Bokker.

Leverett Brothers Sign With OSU

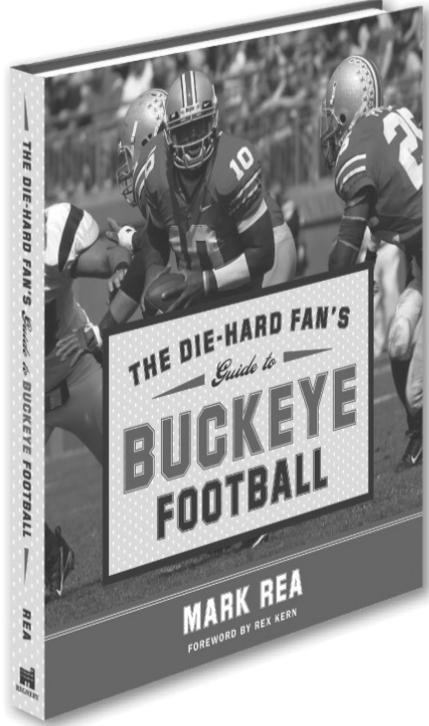
The Ohio State pistol program picked up two big signees on June 1, as Henry and Jackson Leverett made it official that they would be heading from Georgia to Columbus for college.

The two come to Ohio State as experienced shooters, with plenty of time spent on the international stage for Team USA. Both have competed in 12 international pistol matches for the team, across World Cups, Junior World Cups and World Championships from 2016-19, while setting four national USA Shooting records for junior men's rapid-fire and junior men's sport pistol in the process.

Ohio State's pistol team ranks as one of the best in the nation and was expected to compete for a title at the Intercollegiate Pistol Championships in March prior to their cancellation, after finishing second in 2019.

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OSU Has Earned National Respect Under Rohlik

The Ohio State men's hockey team was headed for an unprecedented NCAA tournament appearance when the season was canceled March 12 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three days shy of hosting Michigan in a semifinal of the Big Ten tournament, the Buckeyes were denied a chance at qualifying for the NAAs for a fourth straight season, which would have been a first for the program.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

The abrupt halt to the season left many unanswered questions such as did OSU already have that national berth locked up before playing the Wolverines, and if so, how would the Buckeyes have fared in the NCAA tournament?

Buckeye Sports Bulletin turned to Paula Weston, Big Ten columnist for USCHO.com, for her insider/outsider views not only on Ohio State but the state of college hockey as the plans for having a 2020-21 season remain in limbo.

Weston, a former BSB staff writer who covered the Buckeyes for many years, spoke via phone on June 10 from Flint, Mich., where she is a humanities professor at Motts Community College.

She said the numbers backed the belief by the Ohio State staff and players that the Buckeyes would have earned an at-large berth in the NAAs even with a loss to the Wolverines.

OSU was 10th in the USCHO PairWise Rankings that simulates the way the selection committee chooses the 16-team field.

"I don't think losing to Michigan would have bumped them out unless something extraordinary happened," she said. "I didn't see anything extraordinary happening."

"I didn't see them getting past Michigan, though. Michigan was hot, hot, hot at the end of the season (3-0-1), and Strauss Mann was the absolutely the best goaltender in Big Ten hockey at that point."

Fear not, Buckeye fans. Weston

believes the Buckeyes would have rebounded nicely, possibly qualifying for the Frozen Four for the second time in three seasons.

"They were solid. Their problem was consistency," she said. "They were a veteran team. Steve Rohlik is a really good coach and a good calming influence on that team. I know he and the coaching staff would have them prepared well. I definitely think they would have made some noise."

Speaking of Rohlik, the seventh-year coach and national Coach of the Year finalist in 2018 and '19 has kept the Buckeyes in the national spotlight.

"He's well respected," Weston said. "He's a stand-up guy. He treats people well, and that matters. The players seem to like him. He's a good coach. I've never heard one bad thing about or even implied about Steve Rohlik."

Picking Winners

Rohlik is 133-95-33 (71-60-21 Big Ten) with 20-plus wins in each of the past four seasons despite a recruiting system that is unlike those for the OSU football and basketball programs, which rely heavily on five- and four-star athletes and annually have some of the top recruited classes in the country.

Ohio State's top prospect is sophomore defenseman Layton Ahac, who was selected in the third round of the 2019 NHL draft by the Vegas Golden Knights. OSU's marquee player last season was senior forward Tanner Laczynski (2016 sixth round by Philadelphia), who signed an entry level contract with the Flyers in April.

Yet the Buckeyes (20-11-5) held their own against draft-laden opponents. No example was greater than game one of the best-of-three conference quarterfinals on March 6 at Value City Arena.

Seventh seed Wisconsin boasted a lineup with 12 draft picks, including three first-rounders. The Buckeyes had five draftees. OSU won 9-1 and defeated the Badgers 2-1 in overtime the next night to sweep the series.

"Look at Wisconsin," Weston said. "You have that many guys who are highly touted, they're going to leave. Ohio State and other programs might look at a guy and say, 'You know what? We're only

going to have them for a couple of years.' Some coaches would say, 'Yeah, I'll take that.'

"I don't know why Ohio State doesn't get the top picks. Maybe if they win a championship or consecutive or close together Frozen Four appearances would help, but I do think it works in their favor that guys that aren't drafted that high are going to be told to develop (by the NHL team that drafted them) so they're not going to be eager to leave and you have the core together."

"Clearly, very clearly, Ohio State is developing NHL talent. There's no question about that."

The guys that are coming out of Ohio State are ready for some sort of professional hockey career."

She added that Rohlik gets the most out of what he has.

"A program that's successful like Ohio State, when they don't have the marquee talents or highly recruited players, they're recruiting for what they know will work on their team. Those guys most likely are going to stick around. That's why I think they would have made some noise in the NCAA tournament this year."

"Every single time I talk to an opposing coach who is going to play Ohio State, he can rattle off the names of players like, 'This player is one of the best at what he does in the country' very specifically."

"This is a program that certainly is well respected nationally."

Knowing the hockey program from her time in Columbus, Weston knows one impediment to drawing top prospects is Value City Arena, the 17,500-seat facility men's hockey shares with men's and women's basketball.

With the hockey Buckeyes averaging 6,162 fans for the 2019-20 regular season, the building is simply too big. School officials announced plans in December to eventually build a rink for the women's team with a capacity no greater than 3,000 that will also be used by the men for practice.

Meanwhile, there's a plan to curtain the upper deck of VCA for the men's games starting this season to create a hard cap of about 7,500. That's dependent upon pandemic guidelines, of course.

"The Schottenstein Center is still a really great facility," Weston said. "It has all the things probably any hockey program would love to have. It has a great workout room, locker rooms."

"The problem is they are just tenants in that building and they can be moved. Scheduling, that's a big issue."

Ohio State has been forced at times to play conference tournament games at Nationwide Arena in downtown Columbus because of the boys and girls high school basketball state tournaments.

"It's never a good look when Ohio State hosts playoff games and they can't host them at their own rink," Weston said.

That will change beginning in March 2021 because the girls tourney has been moved to Dayton for at least three years and the boys will play on campus at St. John Arena with their 2022 site to be determined.

"People are always going to want Ohio State to have its own rink for both women and men's hockey," she said. "It's a shame

that they don't."

Weston, like many fans, would love to see a rink built with around 7,000 seats but doesn't think the school will revisit its current plan.

"You have to take the COVID into account," she said. "OSU has resources lots of other schools don't, but all schools are facing financial difficulties right now. If there were any thoughts of reopening that door (to an arena), that's probably gone."

On Thin Ice

College hockey is at a perilous junction in part because the pandemic caused the cancellation of the cash cow NCAA men's basketball tourney. With the possibility of no fans or limited capacity for football games this fall, universities have begun to slash athletic programs to counter the loss of revenue.

Obviously, hockey is an expensive sport, so it was surprising when Long Island University announced in April that it would field the 61st Division I hockey program beginning with the 2020-21 season.

The number of teams may fall in the next few years, though. Alabama Huntsville announced in mid-May that it was dropping the program, but fundraising will keep the Chargers alive for at least one more season.

However, after the 2020-21 season fellow Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) members Bemidji State, Bowling Green, Ferris State, Lake Superior State, Minnesota State, Michigan Tech and Northern Michigan are leaving to form a new CCHA.

That means the Chargers, Alaska and Alaska-Anchorage will be independents, and it will be hard for them, certainly the Alaskan programs, to survive.

"I know the reconfiguration of the current WCHA put an enormous strain on the budgets of all the teams," Weston said. "You look at the seven teams left from the WCHA that will make up the CCHA and they're all really geographically tight."

She also wonders if the long-rumored creation of a hockey program at Illinois to give the Big Ten eight teams may be in trouble under the current fiscal climate.

"Post-COVID a lot of colleges are fighting just to stay open," she said. "Higher education has been hit hard by this and will continue to be."

Looking Ahead

The Big Ten has not announced plans for the upcoming hockey season, and Ohio State has not released its schedule as officials wait to see what comes next with the coronavirus and its impact on live sports.

College hockey opens the regular season the first weekend in October so there is more time to prepare than some other sports.

"I think all schools are going to try and open up as much as they possibly can," Weston said. "Since football begins early and students will be on campus and some schools, not all, are starting before Labor Day, I'm wondering by October if we don't see another spike (in the virus)."

"That worries me about hockey season. If we have this same conversation in August it might go very, very different. In August, I might say, 'No way they play.'"



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Vondran Finds Home At Ohio State After Transfer

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

On Nov. 24, 2019, Josie Vondran and the Dayton Flyers women's volleyball team knocked off top-seeded VCU in the Atlantic 10 Conference tournament to take home the conference title in four sets. Vondran, a sophomore from Bishop Watterson High School in Columbus, led the team in assists with 27. It was the second time in as many years that the Flyers had hoisted the conference trophy.

Three months later, Vondran entered the transfer portal, and she did so with just one goal in mind: returning home.

"It was a huge decision that I had to make," Vondran told BSB. "There was nothing really bad about where I was before, and it was kind of a huge leap of faith for me because I was going into the portal knowing that I was only going to pursue one school."

Home, for Vondran, always meant Ohio State. The rising junior grew up in Columbus and spent much of her life around campus. Her parents both went to and competed at Ohio State, her dad, Chris, as a swimmer in 1990 and 1991, and her mom, Tracy (Endecavage), as a volleyball player from 1989-1992.

"Since I was 2 years old, Ohio State has always been my dream school to play at," Vondran said. "Both my parents were athletes at Ohio State, and my mom was a volleyball player. So when I was little I would go to the volleyball games at St. John (Arena) all the time, and I just grew up with the tradition and the OSU pride."

While Ohio State was always the dream for Vondran growing up, the timing with her recruitment and Ohio State's program trajectory didn't quite match up. She didn't fit with the staff that was in place in Columbus and ultimately decided to look elsewhere.

"When I was starting the recruiting process in high school, I just knew that Ohio State really wasn't the right school for me at the time," Vondran said. "It was just back and forth, 'Do I just want to go to OSU because it's my dream school?'"

"I ended up committing to Dayton my senior year of high school."

For two years, the decision appeared to be the right one. Vondran played in nine matches as a freshman in 2018, before bursting onto the scene as a setter in 2019, playing 66 sets over 24 games and leading the Flyers in assists (308) and assists per set (4.67). Everything seemed to be going exactly as planned.

"It was pretty amazing," Vondran said of the 2019 season. "Personally, it was my first year actually playing and being in the moment and I don't know, I feel like the hard work that I had put in over the summer and over the fall, and really fighting for a starting spot had kind of paid off in that moment. And back-to-back titles was pretty cool too."

"Honestly with my Dayton team I was really excited to develop more with them in the next couple of years."

Then, in January, the world turned upside down for Ohio State and for Vondran. The Buckeyes decided to move away from longtime head coach Geoff Carlston after a down season and looked to reconnect to the program's history with his replacement. On Jan. 17, Ohio State announced that it had hired Jen Flynn Oldenburg, a newcomer to

the college coaching world who had played for the Buckeyes from 1996-1999.

During that four-year span in Columbus, Oldenburg found her groove as one of the best players in the program, while establishing a friendship with an alum who always seemed to be in the crowd.

"Tracy (Vondran) was always in the stands at our home matches," Oldenburg told BSB. "She was an alum that stayed in town, and we got to know each other. She was such a big supporter of the program. I got to know her and her husband, Chris, as I was a freshman in college. Having a familiar face in the stands but also having an alum show that kind of support for the program stood out to me a ton. Then we just developed that relationship into a friendship over the course of the years."

"I've known them a long time, and Josie doesn't remember, but I knew her as a baby and as a little kid. To have the opportunity to coach her now is one that's pretty special."

More than 20 years later, that friendship changed Vondran's life, as she learned that a longtime family friend would be taking over the dream program that she had chosen to pass on two years prior.

"When I found out that Jen was hired in January, I was having so much trouble falling asleep and staying asleep," Vondran said. "My mom came to Dayton to take me out to lunch one day and she says, 'Jo, I think you're lying to yourself if you haven't been thinking about this.'"

"This was a waking up moment, like, 'OK, God put one of the best coaches for me in the world in my back yard, because Columbus is home.' I knew it was a huge risk knowing that I would go into the portal only looking at one school, but I think it was a huge risk that I really had to take," Vondran said.

For Vondran, the risk paid off. Ohio State got into contact and looked to set up a campus visit, though the sudden spread of pandemic shut that down, forcing the two parties to establish a relationship from afar, through Zoom calls and virtual visits.

"What was a little bit different with her process was the COVID-19 shutdown," Oldenburg said. "We had scheduled to have her on an official visit prior to everything closing down and things being delayed, and it just didn't happen. We had to do a FaceTime tour of campus, and our assistant coach Jill Wilson is actually the one that ran it because I was in Pittsburgh over spring break. I had not come back to Columbus yet."

"So, her process and the official face-to-face meetings, unfortunately, did not happen, but our phone calls and Zoom calls are how we finalized her recruitment to Ohio State. It was definitely an interesting way to go about it."

Even with the natural ties to Ohio State, Vondran's decision to return to Columbus and transfer to Ohio State was hers alone, which her parents made sure of.

"My parents, them being former athletes and being coaches, they are so good at giving me advice and guiding me through these things but never leading me one way or the other," Vondran said. "They said, 'You know, Jo, this is something that you need to trust your gut with, and we will love you no matter what you choose and we will support you, whatever you choose.' They were just like, 'Give these things up to God and let him guide you because we're just



DAYTON WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL/TWITTER

BACK HOME – Columbus native Josie Vondran transferred to Ohio State in May after two years at Dayton, where she helped the Flyers to back-to-back Atlantic 10 championships.

the ones that will support you and love you no matter what."

Still, those ties did play a role, thanks in large part to the familiarity between the Vondran family and Oldenburg.

"My mom being tied to Ohio State as well as my dad, knowing Jen and growing up knowing her made my decision to transfer a little bit easier because I already had familiarity with the coach. I don't know her very well. My mom obviously knows her more than I do. But my mom never, ever uses her connections or her ties to get me to where I want to go. She thinks it's really awesome that I'm going to Ohio State, but she doesn't really want any part of taking credit. My parents don't take credit for anything that I'm doing."

"I think what's cool about them is as much as they could be in her ear about that, I think they also were very respectful of what she wanted to do," Oldenburg said. "I think being a Buckeye is something that's important to her, but it wasn't her initial step."

"Still, it certainly makes it easier. Tracy

and Chris know what Ohio State means and know the resources we have, so I think that was just an easy transition."

With two years of eligibility remaining, and the ability to transition right into playing time in the upcoming season with no immediate eligibility limitations on women's volleyball, Vondran's Buckeye career can start as soon as players are allowed back on campus. With the chance to play for the team she grew up loving, under a coach with such deep ties to the program, the return home couldn't be any sweeter for Vondran.

"I'm looking forward to everything," Vondran said. "I'm looking forward to being coached by Jen and by Jill and by (assistant coach) Brian (Wright). I feel like my knowledge is just going to grow so much after being coached by them in the next couple of years."

"I've been an Ohio State fan my entire life, and to finally be on campus and be at Covelli and wear that Ohio State jersey, it gives me chills. I really can't wait to be there."

Olympic Sports In Crisis Amid Virus Outbreak

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

It took only a few weeks for the true impact of the coronavirus pandemic on college athletics to begin to materialize. After mass cancellations of all spring collegiate sports and several winter stalwarts – including men’s and women’s basketball and wrestling – many on the outside looking in at the NCAA figured that the brunt of the damage had been absorbed.

With the amount of television revenue lost on major events such as the men’s and women’s basketball tournaments, as well as several national title events for other sports, it’s easy to understand why that was the immediate assumption for many.

According to the NCAA, shortly after the cancellation of March Madness, the largest of the spring events, teams lost out on roughly \$375 million this year in NCAA payouts to conferences and teams of television, advertising and gate revenue.

“We’re going to take some hits there,” Big 12 commissioner Bob Bowlsby said of the usual spring NCAA payout to conferences on a conference call in March. The Big 12 alone lost out on nearly \$14 million this spring, bringing in roughly \$10 million from the NCAA rather than the usual \$24 million.

Without the windfall of the tourna-

ments, the NCAA cut that payout in total from \$600 million to \$225 million, a massive hit not just for the organization, but for teams across the country that depend on that money for scholarships and to fund programs that otherwise don’t turn a profit.

“As an association, we must acknowledge the uncertainties of our financial situation and continue to make thoughtful and prudent decisions on how we can assist conferences and campuses in supporting student-athletes now and into the future,” said Ohio State president Michael Drake, chairman of the NCAA board of governors.

The hit could have been even worse, were it not for the preparation of the NCAA in the case of a situation like the one that arose this spring.

“The Association has prepared for a financial catastrophic event like the one we face now,” Drake said. “While we certainly have challenges ahead, we would be in a far worse position had it not been for this long-standing, forward-focused planning.”

On a macro level, the loss in income is easier to quantify. The numbers are readily available, and while the decrease from 2019 to 2020 is large, it’s hard to put into context what \$375 million dollars actually looks like, relative to the programs that depend on that money. On the micro level, the real impact of the coronavirus

really starts to take its shape.

“There’s just going to be less money to go around,” an anonymous Power Five athletic director told Sports Illustrated’s Pat Forde. “How much less, and for how long, we don’t know. But we need to be ready to adjust to that.” Another director, Wyoming’s Tom Burman, estimated that his department would be down more than \$1 million. “It’s scary,” he said.

Only a few months removed from the initial impact of the virus, more than a dozen schools have resorted to drastic money-saving measures, starting on April 2 when Old Dominion announced that it would be the first Division I school to cut a sports program, as it discontinued the wrestling team, which it had sponsored since 1957.

“We are saddened to have to make this decision, but it’s one that was made with the long-term best interest of the athletics program in mind,” said Old Dominion athletic director Camden Wood Selig. “Our decision became even more clear during this coronavirus crisis, which we know will have significant impact on future athletics budgets. This decision will better allow the remaining sports to compete at a national level.”

In that program alone, 32 wrestlers are now without a team, and although they are able to transfer anywhere with immediate eligibility, they’ve been pushed out of their school. One wrestler, redshirt senior Sa’Derian Perry, has now been a part of two such cuts, as he was a member of Eastern Michigan’s wrestling program two years ago when it was cut for budgeting reasons.

“Imagine being a D1 athlete,” Perry posted on his Twitter account after the announcement. “The university cuts your program. Transfer, repeat and you’ll know how I feel.”

On April 14, Cincinnati cut its men’s soccer program, which had been operating since 1973, citing a loss of \$726,498

in 2019 along with the conditions of the pandemic. One player, goalkeeper Noah Lawrence, will play out the remainder of his career at Ohio State.

“This was a difficult decision, but one made with the long-term interests of UC Athletics at the forefront,” Cincinnati athletic director John Cunningham said in a statement. “During this time of profound challenges and widespread uncertainty, I have engaged in a comprehensive and thorough review of UC’s sport offerings and long-term budget implications of supporting the number of student-athletes currently at UC. Based on this review, and in consultation with President (Neville) Pinto and other University leaders, UC Athletics will no longer sponsor a men’s soccer program.

“Our men’s soccer student-athletes have been outstanding representatives of the University in the classroom and on the field,” Cunningham said. “They may not fully understand this decision, but I want them to know they were truly and conscientiously considered during my deliberations about the future of UC Athletics. We are making this decision now to enable our men’s soccer student-athletes to have an opportunity to play at another institution if they choose to do so.”

Dozens of programs have followed in the two months since, including Akron men’s cross-country, men’s golf and women’s tennis; University of Alabama in Huntsville hockey and tennis; Central Michigan track and field; East Carolina diving and tennis; FIU men’s indoor track and field; Wisconsin-Green Bay tennis; and Wright State softball and tennis are all among those eliminated. Each cut is accompanied by a similar statement from an athletic director expressing sorrow for the cuts.

“Every business, every industry is going through this right now,” Central Michigan AD Michael Alford said. “As you come up with problems and issues, you’ve got to find a solution.

“Right now, for our financial sustain-

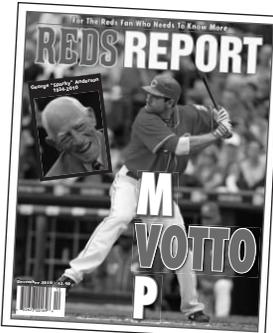


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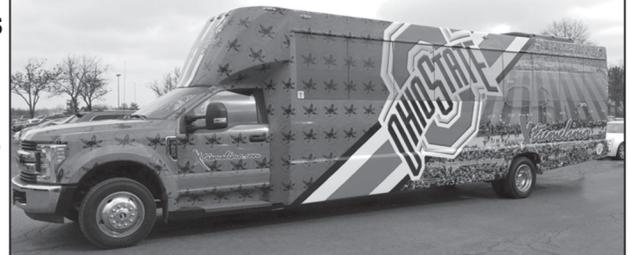


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ability, this is the decision, the solution I came to. As an AD, it's probably the hardest thing of your life."

In one case, Bowling Green cut baseball, only to see it return after \$1.5 million in donations came in to keep the program running less than a week after the announcement.

"In just days, our passionate baseball alumni and donors have committed \$1.5 million over the next three years," BGSU athletic department spokesperson Jason Knavel said. "During this time, the university, in partnership with a select group of baseball alumni, will pursue a long-term funding solution to sustain and support the program."

In other cases, however, the pandemic seems to be serving as less of a cause for the cuts and as more of an excuse.

"This is something they might have done, even without the pandemic," American Athletic Conference commissioner Mike Aresco told ESPN's "The Paul Finebaum Show" of Cincinnati's decision to cut soccer. "Their soccer program was a concern to them. They wanted to devote more resources to other sports. They felt they could do more if they didn't have soccer."

David Berri, a sports economist and professor at Southern Utah, echoed concerns about that exact situation to the Washington Post.

"If the program was viable before this took place, then it will be viable after this takes place," said Berri. "So that suggests to me that what's going on here is athletic directors are using this as an excuse. I just don't buy the argument that in response to a temporary crisis you need

to cut an entire program. If you were interested in cutting things, there are things in football and men's basketball that you could cut."

Ohio State carries 35 teams that, in 2016 according to a report from Cleveland.com, racked up \$166.8 million in expenses.

To this point, any budget cuts have not included the dropping of any programs, and in the case of a football season as usual, Ohio State may be able to escape this crisis without any program losses. Any issues with the upcoming season, however, and things start to look bleak for programs across the country.

"If there's no football season, or if football season is interrupted or shortened, there will be a massive fallout," TCU athletic director Jeremiah Donati said in an interview with ESPN. "There would have to be massive cutbacks. Could the department go on? Sure. It would probably look smaller. There would potentially be fewer sports and much less programming."

At Ohio State, coaches try to be candid with their athletes about the situation.

"Number one, we obviously don't know what we don't know, and we can only provide the best facts and the best information to our athletes and our team as to what we know," men's golf coach Jay Moseley told BSB.

"We haven't even reached the halfway point of the calendar year. So we've just tried to really hit on the importance of doing what's safe and doing whatever the athletes needed to do with their families to keep following health guidelines, while being respectful of what our experts are telling us in the medical field."

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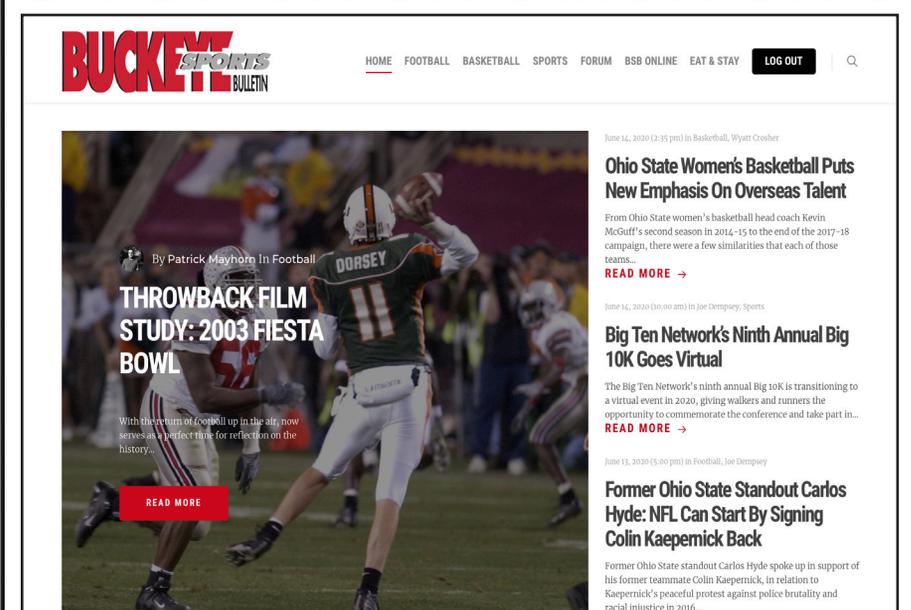
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Hawkeyes Part Ways With Strength Coach

Iowa cut ties with strength coach Chris Doyle on June 15, announcing a separation agreement that will pay him more than \$1.1 million after former Hawkeye football players accused him of mistreating black players.

The school announced the move before a news conference by athletic director Gary Barta, who released a statement wishing Doyle well. The university also said a Missouri law firm, Husch Blackwell, will conduct an independent review of allegations relating to racial disparities within the football program.

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

"I have worked diligently to make a positive impact on the lives of student-athletes, support them as they speak out, and look forward to continued growth," Doyle said in statement. "I am confident that my record and character will be confirmed in the course of the independent review. The university and I have reached an agreement and it is time to move on from Iowa football. My family and I are looking forward to the next chapter."

Doyle, who earned \$800,000 per year, was the highest-paid strength and conditioning coach in all of college football. He denied any "unethical behavior or bias" based on race.

Under the separation agreement, Doyle will be paid 15 months' salary and for unused vacation. There will be two payments of \$556,249.50, with the first coming on Aug. 1 and the second on Jan. 1. Doyle agreed not to take any legal action against the university, the board of regents or state of Iowa.

Several former Iowa football players spoke out about their negative experiences as black players on the team, with much of the criticism directed at the longtime strength and conditioning coach.

Former Iowa offensive lineman James Daniels, who plays for the Chicago Bears, posted his views on his experience on Twitter.

"There are too many racial disparities in the Iowa football program," Daniels wrote June 5. "Black players have been treated unfairly for far too long."

After seeing Daniels' tweet, several other black players who were Hawkeye alums spoke out against the prejudiced culture, including a few alleging incidents with Doyle, who has been at Iowa throughout head coach Kirk Ferentz's 21-year tenure.

Former Iowa defensive back Emmanuel Rugamba, who transferred to Miami (Ohio), referenced two alleged instances involving Doyle in which the strength coach mocked black athletes and, as a result, "made you walk around the football facility on eggshells ... and caused anxiety that could be unbearable at times with your dreams and career on the line."

Former Hawkeyes linebacker Terrance Pryor said black players had to deal with "many racist incidents" during his time in black and gold, including an incident with Doyle in which he alleges the strength

coach told him, "Maybe you should take up rowing or something you know? Oh wait, black people don't like boats in water, do they?"

Former Iowa defensive lineman Faith Ekakitie also shared his experience on Twitter, defending Ferentz and blaming Doyle.

"Coach Ferentz is one of the reasons I committed to Iowa as a high school senior," Ekakitie said. "He cares, and he gets it. However, for this program in particular, real change begins with Coach Doyle and his strength and conditioning staff."

Ferentz, who is the longest-tenured coach in the Football Bowl Subdivision, said in a prepared statement on June 5 that he was saddened to hear the comments from former players.

"While I wish they had reached out to us directly, I am thankful that these players decided to share their experiences now," Ferentz said. "As I said earlier this week, the best way to affect change is by listening. I have started reaching out to them on an individual basis to hear their stories firsthand. Making change that matters involves an open dialogue and possibly some tough conversations. I am glad to have the opportunity to do just that. As a staff and as leaders, we will listen and take to heart the messages we hear."

Doyle was placed on paid administrative leave June 6.

Offensive coordinator Brian Ferentz, who is the son of the head coach, and assistant defensive coordinator Seth Wallace were also alleged to have made inappropriate comments to players.

On June 7, Kirk Ferentz said the coaching style of some of his assistants "at times was demeaning and created unnecessary frustration and anxiety. One byproduct of that is that some of our black athletes felt they couldn't be themselves in our culture, and to that end we must be more inclusive and more aware."

Big Ten Announces Creation Of Anti-Hate, Racism Coalition

In the wake of the recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others, Big Ten commissioner Kevin Warren has established the Big Ten Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Coalition.

Warren made the announcement in an open letter on June 1, in which he invited student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, chancellors, university presidents and others to join him in a fight against racism.

An excerpt from Warren's letter:

"As a black man, I pray every day for the health and safety of my wife and children, especially during interactions with law enforcement. We continue to see inequality and deep divide regarding how members of the black community are treated compared to the rest of society, and too often, the results have been horrific and senseless. Such racism and inequality are pervasive, not just endemic in law enforcement.

"Meaningful change will only occur if, as a nation, we are united, resilient and determined to create difficult, uncomfortable dialogue and take significant tangible action. We all need to strive to make the world a better place. One person, one family, one city, one state, one conference,



IOWA FOOTBALL/TWITTER

CUT TIES – The Iowa football program reached a separation agreement with longtime strength and conditioning coach Chris Doyle on June 15 after he was accused by dozens of former players of racial mistreatment.

one country.

"George Floyd's death cannot be in vain.

"I have already received powerful notes of support and interest in joining this coalition and look forward to partnering with the existing diversity councils on our various campuses. It is critical that our student-athletes possess their rights to free speech, their rights to peaceful protest and we will work to empower them in creating meaningful change.

"We must listen to our young people. Our children and future generations deserve better. We are either part of the problem or part of the solution. The Big Ten Conference will be part of the solution as we actively and constructively combat racism and hate in our country."

Warren, who succeeded former Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany on Jan. 2, also announced that he and his wife, Greta, will personally donate \$100,000 from the Warren Family Foundation to the National Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights in Washington, D.C., which focuses on addressing issues regarding racism, hate and voter registration.

Ohio State has eight members in the coalition: fencing head coach Donald Anthony, track and field and cross country director Karen Dennis, sophomore defensive end Zach Harrison, women's volleyball head coach Jen Flynn Oldenburg, senior women's track and field member Alexus Pyles, cross country head coach Khadevis Robinson, athletic director Gene Smith and former men's basketball player Tony White.

Former Ohio State football wide receiver and defensive back Mekka Don is also a part of the coalition and will serve as a Big Ten alumni representative on the coalition.

Nebraska WR Spielman Enters Transfer Portal

Nebraska's top 2019 wide receiver, J.D. Spielman, entered the transfer portal.

Spielman's decision to enter the portal was reported as a "mutual separation" between Spielman and the school.

On March 2, Cornhusker head coach Scott Frost announced that Spielman had taken a personal leave of absence from the team. The former three-star prospect, who was the third-ranked recruit in Minnesota for 2016, returned home to deal with what the school referred to as a "personal health matter" and had not returned to the team.

"Everyone's focus right now is on J.D.'s well-being and providing him with the appropriate support," Frost said in a statement March 2. "We anticipate J.D. returning to the team in time for summer conditioning."

Entering his senior year, Spielman ranked fourth in Nebraska history with 2,546 yards receiving, trailing Stanley Morgan's program record by just 201 yards.

The speedy wideout also tallied 18 touchdowns as a Husker and thrived as a returner, totaling 1,051 return yards.

Spielman was a freshman All-American selection in 2017 before earning back-to-back third-team All-Big Ten honors.

Spielman is the son of son of Minnesota Vikings general manager Rick Spielman and the nephew of former Ohio State standout Chris Spielman.

Penn State QB Johnson Looking For New Home

Michael Johnson, a redshirt freshman quarterback for Penn State, entered the transfer portal.

The former four-star recruit was

expected to compete with classmate Ta'Quan Roberson for the third-string spot, behind junior Sean Clifford and sophomore Will Levis.

Johnson was a member of the Nittany Lions' 2019 recruiting class and did not take one snap during his redshirt season. The Eugene (Ore.) Sheldon product was anticipated to enter camp slightly behind Roberson for the third-team spot before practices were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Penn State strength coach Dwight Galt had expressed concern about the quarterback's ability to work out from home while social distancing in early April. Johnson spent his time with his parents in Mississippi.

"His parents came up from Mississippi and picked him up and took him back down there when (the hiatus) got prolonged for the rest of the semester," Galt said at the time. "So, he's down there right now. He's got some dumbbells down there, too, with his dad's equipment stuff. And we're currently trying to find somebody for him to throw to down there."

Johnson is likely out of the equation for Penn State, because while he can still return, it is more likely he will move on to a new program. As a prospect in 2019, Johnson was the No. 15 dual-threat quarterback and the second-ranked recruit in Oregon. Alabama, Florida State and N.C. State all had offered Johnson back then, and he visited all of the schools besides Alabama.

Iowa CB Johnson Crosses Conference To Purdue

D.J. Johnson, a former Iowa corner-

back, announced his transfer from one Big Ten West school to another in Purdue.

"New beginnings! Just want to give all praises to the most high for allowing me to be in this position," Johnson posted to Twitter. "I am officially committed to Purdue University. West Lafayette, I promise you are getting the best version of me."

The former three-star defensive back from Indianapolis North Central redshirted his first season at Iowa in 2018. Johnson showed flashes in limited opportunities as a redshirt freshman, recording 14 tackles (11 solo) and two pass breakups.

The majority of his production came against rival Iowa State when he posted eight tackles (six solo) and two pass breakups, earning a share of Big Ten Freshman of the Week honors.

"There is a lot of potential with this one, and he's a kid that a lot were excited about when Iowa beat out the likes of Notre Dame and LSU for his services," said Dylan Burn of 247Sports.

Hendershot Guilty Of Trespass, Other Charges Dropped

Indiana tight end Peyton Hendershot pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor criminal trespass charge at the Monroe (Ind.) County Court.

In connection with a plea deal, three other charges were dropped, including domestic battery, criminal conversion and criminal mischief related to an incident in Bloomington involving an ex-girlfriend.

Hendershot was sentenced to one-year probation for the trespass offense, which is a Class A misdemeanor. He is also required to receive a mental health eval-

uation and participate in a batterers treatment program.

Court records indicated that Hendershot was sentenced to 364 days in jail, with confinement beginning on June 9. The Lizton, Ind., native served two days of that sentence, and the remaining 360 days have been suspended.

Head coach Tom Allen suspended Hendershot from the team following the incident in February but later allowed him back.

"We brought him back in a modified way, back with our team," Allen said. "We continue to monitor the situation as he works through some things we don't have any control over."

A former three-star prospect, Hendershot earned third-team All-Big Ten recognition in 2019 after setting Indiana receiving records for tight ends with 52 catches and 622 yards. The 6-4 tight end added four touchdowns. He did not partake in the Hoosiers' four spring practices before football was shut down due to COVID-19, and it is unknown if Hendershot will be suspended for any games during the upcoming season.

Indiana Forward Smith Intends To Transfer

Justin Smith, a junior forward for the Indiana men's basketball team, entered the transfer portal.

The former four-star forward from Buffalo Grove, Ill., played in all 98 games for the Hoosiers during the past three seasons.

Smith was head coach Archie Miller's second-leading scorer and rebounder, averaging 10.4 points and 5.2 rebounds

per game in 2019-20.

An excellent student, Smith graduated from Indiana's Kelley School of Business in three years, so he could play immediately at another school as a grad transfer.

Smith had entered his name in the 2020 NBA draft last month but recently removed his name from the list. He has one year of college eligibility remaining.

"Justin Smith and I had a conversation recently where we discussed his future and the feedback from the NBA," Miller wrote in a tweet. "In that discussion, he made the decision to graduate and transfer for his final season of eligibility."

"I support his decision and wish Justin and his family all the best in this next chapter. I'm proud of his growth as a person, he's a great young man and has been a terrific role model off the court and in the classroom. He obtained his degree in three years from IU's Kelley School of Business, and we thank him for all his contributions to Indiana University and our program."

Smith, a 6-7 forward, tweeted "thank you" to the program, his teammates and Indiana fans following Miller's announcement.

"After much thought, prayer and discussion with the people I trust, I have decided to enter the transfer portal as a graduate transfer," Smith wrote. "I want to thank Indiana University, the IU men's basketball program and the awesome fans of Indiana for three amazing years in pinstripes."

"To my teammates, you are my brothers. I wish you nothing but the best on the bright path to complete our unfulfilled 2020 NCAA Tournament dreams."



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250 Buckeyes Earn Academic All-Big Ten Honors

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

The Big Ten Conference announced on June 10 a league-best 250 Ohio State student-athletes had earned academic all-conference honors for spring and at-large sports.

The Buckeyes finished the 2019-20 academic year with a total of 455 Academic All-Americans, including 112 in the fall and 93 in the winter, and came up just six shy of the school-record 461 honorees in 2018-19.

Ohio State was the only school with more than 200 selections from spring and at-large sports. Spring sports include baseball, golf, lacrosse, women's rowing, softball, tennis, and track and field, while at-large sports include fencing, pistol, rifle, men's volleyball, women's ice hockey and women's synchronized swimming.

In all, 2,055 student-athletes were recognized by the Big Ten for maintaining a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 or higher. Senior fencer Aleksandra Kolmykova was the lone Buckeye among the 47 student-athletes with a 4.0 cumulative grade-point average.

The complete list of Ohio State's spring and at-large academic All-Big Ten honors can be found below, listed alphabetically by sport.

Baseball – Garrett Burhenn, So., operations management; Matt Carpenter, Sr., finance/business economics; Nolan Clegg, So., air transportation; Zach Dezenzo, So., sport industry; Dillon Dingler, Jr., logistics management; Marcus Ernst, So., finance; Aaron Hughes, Jr., mechanical engineering; Mitch Milheim, So., mechanical engineering; Will Pfennig, So., finance; Scottie Seymour, Sr., finance; Griffan Smith, Jr., logistics management; Jake Vance, Sr., communication.

Men's Fencing – Leon Cao, Sr., electrical and computer engineering; Chris Collado, So., political science; Matthew Comes, Jr., mechanical engineering; John Culpepper, Sr., political science; Frank Ditullio, Sr., early childhood education; Ethan Edwards, Jr., political science; William Gaziano, Jr., finance; Matthew Hayes, Jr., psychology; Domenik Koch, Sr., business finance; Henry Lange, So., linguistics; Hudson Santana, So., management

and industry exploration; Liam Smith, Sr., industrial design; Roscoe Swartz, So., health sciences; Nathan Wriedt, So., materials science and engineering.

Women's Fencing – Gabriela Cecchini, Sr., economics/political science; Lauryn DeLuca, So., early childhood education; Natalia Falkowski, Sr., finance; Nicole Fisher, Jr., psychology; Ariel Gluck, So., materials science and engineering; Aleksandra Kolmykova, Sr., finance; Alexa Laskaris, Sr., health sciences; Sarah Merza, Sr., psychology; Stephanie Miller, So., journalism; Emma Montgomery, Sr., biochemistry; Camilla Rivano, Jr., hospitality management; Jessica Thow, So., psychology.

Men's Golf – JonErik Alford, Jr., sport industry; Grant Engle, So., finance; Laken Hinton, Jr., sport industry; Jack Mancinotti, Gr., business finance; Kevin Stone, Sr., finance; Justin Wick, Sr., marketing.

Women's Golf – Alanis Sakuma, Jr., aviation management; Yukie Sasaki, Jr., hospitality management; Sofia Seldemirova, Jr., marketing; Adeena Shears, Sr., human development and family science; Skylar Thompson, So., speech and hearing science.

Women's Ice Hockey – Madison Bizal, So., sport industry; Andrea Braendli, So., psychology/criminology and criminal justice; Lisa Bruno, Jr., sport industry; Jincy Dunne, Gr., sports coaching; Rebecca Freiburger, Sr., exercise science education; Sophie Jaques, So., civil engineering; Paetyn Levis, So., pre-health sciences; Emma Maltais, Jr., health sciences; Elise Riemenschneider, Sr., communication; Gabby Rosenthal, So., speech and hearing; Sara Saekkinen, So., sport industry; Eve Savander, So., sport industry; Liz Schepers, Jr., health sciences; Tatum Skaggs, Jr., special education; Olivia Soares, Sr., sport industry; Lynsey Wallace, Jr., animal sciences.

Men's Lacrosse – Anthony Ameo, So., marketing; Colby Barker, Jr., sport industry; Lukas Buckley, Gr., business finance; J.T. Bugliosi, Jr., finance; Alec Cerasoli, So., psychology; Matthew Clibanoff, So., sport industry; Michael Clibanoff, So., sport industry; Omari DeBerry, Jr., sport industry; Christian Feliziani, Sr., sport industry; Brandon Fisher, So., communication; Dayton Fisher, Jr., sport

industry; T.J. Hendricks, So., sport industry; Jeff Henrick, Sr., sport industry; Griffin Hughes, Jr., communication; Justin Inacio, Jr., biology; Josh Kirson, Sr., finance; Tre Leclair, Sr., sport industry; Zach Ludd, So., finance; Caleb Mahoney, Sr., civil engineering; Jed Manning, Jr., finance; Nick Musci, Sr., finance; Jack Myers, So., finance; Evan Riss, Jr., finance; Joey Salisbury, Sr., accounting; Colby Smith, Jr., biology; Ryan Terefenko, Sr., sport industry; Skylar Wahlund, So., accounting; George Walsh, So., exploration; Johnny Wiseman, So., consumer and family financial services.

Women's Lacrosse – Kimberly Apuzzo, Sr., speech and hearing; Sophia Baez, Jr., sports industry; Ali Beekhuizen, So., psychology; Catie Beg, So., fashion and retail studies; Hannah Brink, Jr., human resources; Sage Darling, Sr., speech and hearing; Regina Doty, Sr., civil engineering; Lindsay Epstein, Jr., strategic communications; Riley Ewing, Jr., logistics management; Mary George, So., psychology; Sarah George, Sr., communications/child youth studies; Liza Hernandez, Sr., human resources; Clare Johnston, So., speech and hearing; Carli Mager, Jr., biochemistry; Cai Martin, So., health sciences; Meghan Matey, Sr., strategic communications; Jaclen Moxley, Sr., exercise science; Jill Rizzo, Sr., marketing; Emily Skrzypczak, Sr., health science; Caroline Tatsuoka, So., math; Alexandra Vander Molen, Sr., accounting; Kiera Venza, So., speech and hearing.

Pistol – Robbie Delagrange, Sr., criminology and criminal justice; Samuel Gens, Jr., civil engineering; Cade Haiby, So., mechanical engineering; Shrenik Jain, So., data analytics; Irene Li, Sr., finance/mathematics; Bernard Melus, Jr., electrical and computer engineering; Emily Nothnagle, Jr., psychology.

Rifle – Jacob Buchanan, Sr., sport industry; Ariel Hall, So., human nutrition; Mica Harr, Jr., neuroscience; Annabelle Stanec, So., accounting; Annie Tomb, So., finance; Rhiann Travis, Sr., agricultural communication; Megan Wilcoxson, Jr., communication.

Women's Rowing – Meghan Bartel, So., human nutrition; Katelyn Bartos, So., mechanical engineering; Divya Batchu, Jr., public health; Michayla Binkley, Sr., psychology; Mariah Bruns, Jr., human nutrition; Kaitlyn Clouse, So., psychology; Megan Cymanski, Jr., communication; Rachel DeWitte, Jr., communication; Jenna Draycott, So., psychology; Anjali Fernandes, Sr., English; Madelaine Freundberg, Sr., animal sciences; Jennifer Hallsworth, So., philosophy/criminology and criminal justice; Lena Harper, Jr., industrial and systems engineering; Emily Hawk, So., exploration; Leonie Heuer, Jr., human development and family science; Allison Krish, So., industrial design; Kayla Kuntzman, Jr., animal sciences; Olivia Kwiecinski, Sr., environment, economy, development and sustainability; Grace Libben, Sr., public health; Kendell Massier, Sr., speech and hearing science; Megan McNutt, So., biomedical engineering; Julia Miklasevich, Jr., sociology; Michaela Nordhaus, Jr., psychology; Alexandra Nothdurft, Jr., international studies; Grace Pabst, So., human development and family science; Madeline Perrett, Sr., biology; Ida Petersen, Jr., biochemistry; Katherine Reymann, So., marketing; Josephine Robison, Sr., medical dietetics; Savannah Sellers, So., environmental science; Kelly Stainbrook, Jr., biochemistry; Sierra Tiede, Sr., international studies; Chih-Yun Tseng, So., international business; Jessy Vermeer, So., sport industry; Willow Wahlers, Jr., communication.

Softball – Niki Carver, Jr., special educa-

tion; Summer Constable, Jr., physical activity and coaching specialist; Andi Farrah, Sr., health sciences; Skylar Hayward, Jr., radiologic sciences and therapy; Megan McMenemy, Jr., health sciences; Claire Nicholson, Jr., human development and family science; Ashley Prange, So., health sciences; Jess Ross, So., language arts education; Spencer Sansom, Sr., physical activity and coaching specialist.

Synchronized Swimming – Kaitlyn Carboun, Sr., international studies; Phoebe Coffin, Sr., human development and family science; Nikki Dzurko, So., environment, economy, development and sustainability; Erin Fanning, So., composition; Laila Huric, Sr., biology; Rachel Jager, Jr., health sciences; Paula Luis, So., accounting; Breanna Malone, Sr., arts management; Cassie Neeley, So., psychology; Trinity Patton, So., arts and sciences undecided; Renee Stehlik, Jr., radiologic sciences and therapy; Sarah Walsh, Jr., environment, economy, development and sustainability; Haley Watson, So., psychology.

Men's Tennis – Andrew Lutschauing, So., finance; John McNally, Jr., marketing; Kyle Seelig, Sr., child and youth studies; Tim Seibert, Jr., finance; Jacob Wareti, Sr., health studies.

Women's Tennis – Kolie Allen, So., speech and hearing science; Isabelle Boulais, So., psychology; Emma DeCoste, Jr., marketing; Luna Dormet, Jr., political science; Shiori Fukuda, Sr., communication; Mary Beth Hurley, Jr., health sciences; Kathleen Jones, So., journalism; Danielle Wolf, Sr., communication.

Men's Track and Field – Steven Bauers, Sr., finance; Paul Bete, Sr., finance; Asa Burke, Sr., family and human sciences; Coty Cobb, Sr., strategic communications; Joseph Cooper, Jr., sports industry; Noah Corbett, Jr., actuarial science; Tyrese Fajardo, Jr., chemical engineering; Davion Fisher, Sr., sports industry; Eric Halford, So., finance; Ryan Harrington, Sr., science and technology; Peter Hayden, Jr., data analytics; Matthew Hurley, Sr., criminology; Terry Johnson, Sr., construction systems management; Luke Landis, Sr., finance; Nicholas Miller, So., finance; Robert Oswald, So., international security and intelligence; Nick Regas, So., business administration; Aaron Wood, Sr., civil engineering.

Women's Track and Field – Brittany Atkinson, So., accounting; Aziza Ayoub, So., biology; Gabby Dilick, So., nursing; Emma Hoellrich, So., chemistry; Megan Hoffman, So., human nutrition; Alexa Jankowsky, So., architecture; Sarah Kanney, So., business; Devon Leahy, So., biology; Abby Nichols, So., speech and hearing sciences; Sade Olaytoye, So., health sciences; Alexis Pyles, So., pharmaceutical sciences; Cierra Pyles, So., nursing; Kalee Soehlen, So., exercise science; Sarah Stanley, So., finance; Lainey Studebaker, So., exercise science; Grace Thomas, So., health promotion, nutrition and exercise science; Annie Ubbing, Jr., communications; Elizabeth Weber, So., nursing.

Men's Volleyball – Tyler Alter, Sr., consumer and family financial services; Reese Devilbiss, Sr., health sciences; Austin Gerwig, Jr., biology; Andrew Hillman, Sr., finance; Shawn Hughes, Sr., aero and astronautical engineering; Martin Lallemand, Jr., industrial and systems engineering; Luke Lentin, So., finance; Luke Meidel, Jr., neuroscience; Parker Mikesch, So., sport industry; Robbie Murphy, Jr., marketing; Sean Ryan, So., business economics; Jack Stevens, So., civil engineering; Ethan Talley, So., finance; Jamie Wolmering, Sr., civil engineering.



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Is Ryan Day Good, Or Is He Simply Fortunate?

The offseason in Columbus is filled with many things – recruiting, speculation about the upcoming trashing of Michigan. And pressure.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

There are precious few college football programs under the microscope 24/7, 365, but Ohio State is one of them. To that end, coaching for the Buckeyes can sometimes feel overwhelming. You're expected to not just win but win big. And then win some more.

Ryan Day did just that in his first season as program master, yet there has been a lot of debate on social media about whether he should be considered among the best

coaches in the game. For what it's worth, the answer from this corner is yes. Not only does he seem to lead the Buckeyes with more calm than Urban Meyer, he also is better at adjusting on the fly. How many times in the throes of a close fourth quarter did we see Meyer bent at the waist, hands on knees, looking like he was going to pass out at any moment? The magnitude of the situation almost looked like it was too big for him, yet more often than not he came out of it smelling like a rose.

While the sample size is small, it appears that Day doesn't get flustered by things going wrong. Case in point – last year's Big Ten Championship Game. OSU fell behind 14-0 to Wisconsin – a team it had dealt with easily in the regular season – and trailed 21-7 in a first half when precious little went right. Meyer would have seemed agitated and uncertain, but Day was cool and collected – as if he knew things would work out in the second half. The Buckeyes scored the final 27 points to win another championship.

At the time, quarterback Justin Fields

talked about Ohio State not losing confidence, not going away from what got it there. "We just played our game," he said.

And their game is almost always good enough to win.

Getting back to Day and his place in the coaching pecking order – I recently placed him fifth, behind Nick Saban, Dabo Swinney, Lincoln Riley and Kirby Smart. It's not a stretch to believe he's actually third but deferring to the more experienced Riley and Smart seemed like a smart move. Believe it or not, there are quite a few people out there who think that because he wasn't a big name, Day isn't a great coach. The name Larry Coker was brought up as a comparison, and though they share a commonality of inheriting a stacked team from a national championship predecessor, that's where it ends.

In the year prior to Coker's 2001 hiring, Miami was fourth in per player average in recruiting. The Hurricanes were No. 2 in 2001, fifth in 2002 and 2003, ninth in 2004, third in 2005 and ninth in 2006, which was his final season in Coral Gables. After having a ton of talent drafted in 2002 and 2003, the development hit a lull. Miami had five first-round picks in 2002, four in 2003 and a whopping six in 2004. But after that it slowed down – one first-rounder in each of 2005 and 2006, three in 2007 then just one in 2008 and none in 2009.

Right now, Day – again with an admittedly small sample size – is killing it in recruiting. OSU was third in average per recruit in 2019 and fifth in 2020 and is currently atop the rankings for 2021, with one of the best average per recruit scores of all time (95.34, with four five star commits). Looking at OSU's roster, you can see NFL talent in nearly every spot, and that's a big reason I believe Day will be good for a long time.

Now, could he be another Coker? Sure. Maybe once all of Meyer's players are gone we find out that the replacements Day has brought into the program weren't as good as advertised. Or maybe development will be lacking. Or maybe there will be infighting among coaches, which will lead to poor chemistry and a bad culture. All of that could happen.

But it seems unlikely, simply because Day appears to be such an even-keel guy. He even laughs in press conferences, which is something you seldom saw Meyer do. It was always business, not a place to have fun. Day looks like he's having fun, and the players sense that, and play that way.

Only time will tell us if Day is more Meyer or Coker, but my guess is the former.

But no matter which it turns out to be, one thing is certain – Day will either prove he can handle the magnitude of the gig (Meyer) or that he's in over his head but the talent early in his tenure masked that (Coker).

Tommy Lasorda put it best when he said, "Pressure is a word that's misused. When you start thinking of pressure, it's because you've started to think of failure."

That doesn't appear to be on the horizon anytime soon for the Buckeyes.

Buckeyes Expected To Vie For Crown

I recently began collecting back issues of Street & Smith's college football magazines, including the 1980 edition which arrived today. Art Schlichter graces the cover, and Ohio State was the preseason choice as the nation's No. 1 team.

There is a piece inside about whether the time had come for a playoff to determine the national champion, and some of the quotes from coaches were quite interesting – and a tad prescient.

Joe Paterno was one of the few at the time who supported a playoff, stating that a lot of reluctance was due to the fear of diminishing the prestige of the bowl games, which at that time numbered just 15. Paterno said he would incorporate the bowls into the playoff proceedings, thereby keeping a high profile.

"I favor having four teams selected after the bowl games," he said. "There would be two semifinal games with the winners advancing to the championship, which could be played the day before the Super Bowl. Sort of a 'Super Saturday.'"

USC coach John Robinson was against that, saying, "You would still have to vote for the teams (to be included in the playoff). That's just as phony as voting for the national champion."

It's funny how little things have changed. Even today, with a playoff, there is bickering about whether it's the best method, as well as the process.

Incidentally, Street & Smith's 1980 preseason top 15 included current playoff regulars Alabama (No. 3) and Oklahoma (No. 5), and tabbed Purdue at No. 9.

Georgia, behind stellar freshman running back Herschel Walker, ended the season at No. 1, while the Buckeyes failed to live up to the lofty praise and came in at No. 15.

Going to the newsstand or corner store to find the newest college magazine was all the rage back in the day – it wouldn't be anything for a young Facts Man to come home with new copies of Game Plan, Street & Smith's, Athlon, Inside Sports, Sports Illustrated – heck, even Don Heinrich's annual was a must-have.

Once home, I would go through each magazine, comparing their picks and trying to get a gauge on which one was the most accurate. For some reason I felt Street & Smith's did the best job, but that could have been because it had the most information.

Most of the magazines have gone the way of the newspaper, leaving a big four of Athlon, Lindy's, Street & Smith and Phil Steele's Annual. I have three of the four, and Steele's will be on the way in mid-July.

A lot is expected of Ohio State in 2020 – Athlon and Street & Smith's place the Buckeyes at No. 2, behind Clemson, while Lindy's has them in the top spot and projects them as national champs.

Justin Fields, Wyatt Davis and Shaun Wade are fixtures on the All-America teams, while Chris Olave and Baron Browning are ones to watch.

While it is nice to finally be able to look forward, confident that there will be a college football season, the offseason isn't quite the same. There is ease in ordering the magazines online and not worrying about them being sold out at the store – but it's also less fun.

Maybe it's nostalgia, maybe it really wasn't better but merely seems so because I was young – but I miss being able to lean against the rack of magazines and check out the shiny new arrivals that promised college football. It meant that fall was coming, and soon enough pads would be popping, coaches would be yelling, and fans would be reveling or sulking.

And a young boy with nothing but time on his hands would be reading and memorizing.

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Meyer Should Have Handed The Ball To Hyde

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

As I have noted before in this column, threads on our BuckeyeSports.com website can meander in often interesting or unexpected directions. In the middle of a lengthy recent thread, someone posed the question, "Who was better, Carlos Hyde or Beanie Wells?"

Think about that one. There is no right or wrong answer as to who was the better running back. My initial thought was Wells. But our own Patrick Mayhorn went on to post each of their career stats and they were remarkably similar.

Wells rushed for 3,382 yards on 585 carries for a 5.8-yard average and 30 TDs, while Hyde ran 523 times for 3,198 yards, a 6.1-yard average and 37 TDs. Those totals leave the pair sixth and 10th all time in Ohio State rushing history. Patrick noted that Hyde's slight edge in average per carry might be attributed to the fact he played in Urban Meyer's system, while Wells played in Jim Tressel's.

I think one reason I may have initially thought of Wells as the better back was the fact that he had the sole rushing spotlight during his big years of 2007 and 2008. And his performance in the 2007 Michigan game will always stick out to me. That year the Buckeyes faced inclement weather in the Big House and Tressel went old school, giving the ball to Beanie 39 times. He responded with 222 yards and Ohio State's only two touchdowns in a 14-3 Buckeye victory.

Meanwhile, Hyde was forced to share the rushing spotlight with Braxton Miller. When Meyer arrived for the Hyde's junior season, Hyde responded with 970 yards on 185 carries with 16 touchdowns. That same season, Miller tallied 1,271 rushing yards of his own, with 13 scores. The next season, when Hyde became Meyer's first ever 1,000-yard running back with 1,521, a 7.3-yard average and 15 scores, Miller still got 1,068 yards and 12 touchdowns.

While Hyde excelled, it is hard not to think of Miller during those early Meyer years.

Wells, meanwhile, frequently lined up behind the more stationary Todd Boeckman at quarterback. In Beanie's monster 2007, when he rushed for 1,609 yards and a 5.9-yard average, Boeckman was the starter at QB, netting just 63 yards rushing. Wells was the man and the only man.

When I think of Hyde, it's a play on which he didn't carry the ball that I will always remember. Those of you who know me know what's coming. It was a play in the 2013 Big Ten Championship Game. The Buckeyes had battled back from a 17-0 deficit and trailed Michigan State 27-24 with just under six minutes to play in the game.

I'll let BSB Managing Editor Emeritus Mark Rea explain what happened from there.

"The Buckeyes trailed by only three points when Meyer called timeout with 5:46 remaining to strategize over a fourth-and-2 at the MSU 39," Mark wrote in the Dec. 21, 2013, issue of BSB. "The Spartans had just stopped Miller after a 1-yard gain on third down, while Hyde had already gained 118 yards on only 18 carries against the nation's No. 1 rush defense. With one of college football's best offensive line units and a 235-pound wrecking ball practically begging for the chance to sustain the drive, Meyer and offensive coordinator Tom Herman instead called for a quarterback sweep to the short side of the field. Michigan State defended it well, tight end Jeff Heuerman missed a key block on Spartan linebacker Denicos Allen, and Miller was stopped well short of moving the sticks."

After the game, Meyer justified the call by saying, "I wanted to put the ball in the hands of our best player, Braxton."

I maintained at the time that the Buckeyes had two "best" players, the other being Hyde.

"Sometimes football isn't about deception but about strength against strength and may the best 11 win," I wrote in favoring Hyde on that play. "Just ask Woody and Bo."

Leave it to me to continue to question a coach who was in the midst of a 24-game winning streak to start his stay at Ohio State.

"I do feel that if you were going to send Miller outside," I wrote, "why not go to the wide side of the field, where he would have more of a chance to do what he does best – make people miss. On the short side, you are running against an added defender – the sideline."

I had become so obsessed with that play that in just seven short years, I had forgotten what happened next in that game.

When the Spartans took the ball over after the failed fourth down, there was still 5:41 to play, plenty of time for Ohio State to make a defensive stand and come back and tie or win the game in regulation.

Instead, the Buckeyes gave up runs of 16 and 26 yards to Jeremy Langford, the latter for a touchdown in a 61-yard march to put the game out of reach at 34-24.

For all my worry through the years about that failed fourth-down play, it was the defense that let the Buckeyes down. Not only did they fail to stop MSU when it counted, they allowed Connor Cook, a three-star quarterback out of Ohio, to pass for 304 yards and three touchdowns in the Spartan victory.

"Adding insult to injury for virtually all Buckeye fans was the fact that the defensive coaches were being outmaneuvered by a Spartan staff featuring co-offensive coordinator Jim Bollman, one of the most reviled offensive figures in recent Ohio State history."

Cook's passing performance would add to Ohio State's 268.0 passing yards per game given up for the 2013 season, 112th worst in the nation.

"While I have found (Meyer) to be intensely loyal to his assistant coaches, I find it extremely hard to believe he won't make changes on that side of the ball once the season is completed," I said after the loss to the Spartans. "Someone has to be held accountable."

Sure enough, co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach Everett Withers was off to James Madison after the season, Chris Ash was hired, and the Buckeyes won the national championship the next season.

Coincidence?

Ohio State lost to Michigan State twice in the first four years that Meyer was in charge in Columbus. But there was a key win over the Spartans in the early going and Hyde did get the ball in a key situation in that game.

The Buckeyes were extremely inconsistent in Meyer's first games as Buckeye coach back in 2012, and the coach was clearly frustrated. The first real challenge of the season came in week No. 5 when the Buckeyes traveled to East Lansing.

They came away with a 17-16 victory that really set the tone for that undefeated season.

"After months and months of talk and speculation and hope among Buckeye fans about the creative, wide-open offense Ohio State was going to run under Meyer and his new offensive coaching staff, there was nothing to compare to Sid Gillman, Bill Walsh or Walt Harris in this game," I wrote in the Oct. 6, 2012, issue of BSB.

"It was pretty much Braxton Miller left, Braxton Miller right, Braxton Miller up the mid-

dle, a long pass to Devin Smith and a good-old fashioned late-game pounding by Carlos Hyde and the offensive line to generate enough yards, first downs and points to secure the one-point win. I suspect Jim Bollman could have drawn up that game plan."

Ohio State held a tenuous 17-16 lead when the Buckeyes took over at their own 18 with 4:10 to play in the game. Ohio State went to the ground, and the Spartans never saw the ball again. Hyde converted two first downs and Miller added another as Michigan State and its fans helplessly watched the clock tick down to zero.

Miller finished the game with 23 carries for 136 yards and a long run of 20. Hyde had 49 yards on 11 carries with a long of nine.

The game proved to be a good, old-fashioned Big Ten slugfest.

Center Corey Linsley summed up the victory for the team, himself and his coach.

"Oh, he knew it was a slugfest," Linsley said of Meyer. "We knew it was a slugfest. We came out on top and it was just awesome. This is what I grew up doing, coming from Youngstown and getting coached the way I've been coached. This is what I know and love – just ground and pound. It was an awesome, satisfying feeling to win this game."

After such a slow start to the season, Meyer understood the significance of the victory.

"That was a great game," he said. "This ranks as one of the great ones. I've been very lucky to be around great players and great teams. This ranks as one of the top wins. This was fantastic."

That's a mouthful for a week-five game from a coach who had already won two national championships.

Football Graduate List Thin

Longtime readers of this column know I like to evaluate the list of football graduates each semester (or quarter for most of our history). I used to joke that the list generally was made up of a reserve or two and several walk-ons.

Ohio State has made tremendous strides in this department in recent years, but the list of graduates from the recent virtual spring commencement made me think back to those nondescript graduate lists of old.

The biggest names on the list of 11 football graduates were Chris Chugunov, Jake Hausmann and Marcus Williamson, hardly a star-studded cast.

There can be any number of reasons that the list was suddenly so limited, not the least of which is that so many Buckeyes leave for the pros before they have finished school, though many of those players ultimately do earn their degrees. Sometimes the graduating cycle among players just doesn't match up with a particular commencement. But it certainly is worth watching to see if this was a one-time thing or a trend.

A complete list of Ohio State's graduating athletes was printed in the May issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin. If you missed it, the issue is archived at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all subscribers.

Congratulations to all the spring grads. It is no easy task to balance academics with athletics.

An Anniversary, A Passing

I have always considered June 1 the anni-

versary of the start of Buckeye Sports Bulletin. Thus, on June 1 we kicked off our 40th year of publishing.

I had been working for the old Buckeye Leaves in the early '80s, and they were getting ready to go out of business after a two- or three-year run and take my job with them. My father, who made a habit of encouraging his children to pursue their dreams, encouraged me to set out on my own rather than go down with the ship. With \$5,000 of my dad's and \$2,000 of my own (not nearly enough, even in 1981 dollars), Buckeye Sports Bulletin was born.

This is an extremely awkward way for me to share that my father, the incomparable Jack Moskowitz, passed away on June 3 in Washington, D.C. – in fact, in the house I grew up in.

I was struck by the timing of his death, in the midst of demonstrations in the wake of the death of George Floyd, demonstrations to remind us that black lives matter and to end police brutality against blacks and systematic racism, among other things. My father spent the bulk of his life fighting for the oppressed, the downtrodden and the most vulnerable.

We moved to Washington in 1962 so Jack could work on the Senate Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees. At that time he primarily worked on legislation to protect refugees from Castro's Cuba. Later, he moved to the Subcommittee on Aging. There he fought to protect what I consider one of our most vulnerable sectors – senior citizens.

Jack eventually moved across the Potomac to the Pentagon, where he became the top civil rights officer for the Department of Defense. There he won some small battles and some bigger ones.

While it seems almost trivial now, a typical indignity for black service members back then was the fact that juke boxes in base clubs featured only country and rock music. My father fought to have soul music added to the playlist. In a more visible battle, he worked to make sure that off-base landlords who didn't rent to black service members didn't rent to any service members.

Jack finished his full-time professional career working for the United Way of America, going back to Capitol Hill to lobby for laws favorable to charitable giving. He essentially lobbied for the benefit of all charities, not just the United Way, again helping those less fortunate.

Upon "retirement" he went back to school, earning a degree in comparative religion at George Washington University, already in his 70s.

While noted for his crankiness, Jack was always fair with his family and others. That thoughtful, even-handed quality helped him when he became a mediator in the D.C. court system, helping settle many civil cases without having to go to trial.

When he finally "really" retired, he maintained a keen interest in politics and current events. He was a voracious reader of newspapers, reading several a day. One of my last memories of my dad will be him reading the newspaper to my mother, whose eyesight has been failing. I found this extremely endearing.

Jack Moskowitz came from extremely modest means. Maybe that is why he was so concerned with those less fortunate. It saddens me that in his last days he was unaware of the ongoing protests. And if the protests do result in substantive change in this country, he will not have lived to see it.

But he had a wife of 72 years, four children and three grandchildren all of whom he loved dearly, which means he died a wealthy man.

FOR ATHLETES

**HEADS UP
CONCUSSION
IN YOUTH SPORTS**

**HOW CAN I TELL IF I HAVE
A CONCUSSION?**

You may have a concussion if you have any of these symptoms after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body:

- Get a headache
- Feel dizzy, sluggish or foggy
- Be bothered by light or noise
- Vomit or feel sick to your stomach
- Have trouble focusing or problems remembering
- Feel more emotional or problems remembering
- Feel more emotional or "down"
- Feel confused
- Have problems with sleep



**HOW CAN I
HELP MY TEAM?**

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Avoid hits to the head and follow the rules for safe and fair play to lower your chances of getting a concussion. Ask your coaches for more tips.

BE A TEAM PLAYER

You play an important role as part of a team. Encourage your teammates to report their symptoms and help them feel comfortable taking the time they need to get better.

Concussion symptoms usually show up right away, but you might not notice that something "isn't right" for hours or days. A concussion feels different to each person, so it is important to tell your parents and doctor how you are feeling.

The information provided in this document or through linkages to other sites is not a substitute for medical or professional care. Questions about diagnosis and treatment for concussion should be directed to a physician or other health care provider.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/concussion>



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention