



BSB

Quickly

March 20, 2012

Wanting More

Ohio State Looks For Sweeter Result In Sweet 16

BSB Quickly

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Publisher..... Frank Moskowitz
Asst. Publisher..... Becky Roberts
Managing Editor..... Mark Rea

Staff Writers

Marcus Hartman
Jeff Svoboda
Ari Wasserman

Designer/Staff Writer

Matthew Hager

Photographers

Sonny Brockway
Kevin Dye
Josh Winslow

Editorial Office

Columbus Sports Publications
1350 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 30
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
(614) 486-2202 • (800) 760-2862

On The Cover:

Sophomore Jared Sullinger (0) and the Ohio State men's basketball team will face Cincinnati in the Sweet 16 on March 22. (Photo courtesy of Sonny Brockway)

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The next print edition of **Buckeye Sports Bulletin** (March 31 cover date) will be mailed **March 27**.

Buckeyes Hope Team Is Built For Long Run

By Ari Wasserman

Uniforms had yet to be taken off and the celebration was just starting. Then Ohio State was quickly reminded of how bitter the Sweet 16 has actually been.

Fresh off a 73-66 win March 17 over Gonzaga, the team's elation at advancing to the second weekend of the NCAA Tournament was met with a pressing question: How is this year's team going to avoid suffering the same fate of the last two?

In 2010, the second-seeded Buckeyes lost to sixth-seeded Tennessee in the Sweet 16. Last year, as the No. 1 overall seed, Ohio State fell in the same round to fourth-seeded Kentucky.

This year's team, a two seed, will face sixth-seeded Cincinnati at approximately 9:45 p.m. Eastern on March 22 in TD Garden, home of the NBA's Boston Celtics. Whether history will repeat itself will be decided in a matter of days.

"Our youth – that's why we think we'll have different results," junior transfer Evan Ravenel told BSB.

That goes against conventional wisdom given youth and inexperience are typically viewed as weaknesses come tournament time.

Last year's team was perhaps the best in college basketball because it wasn't plagued by youth. Senior leaders such as David Lighty and Jon Diebler were the foundation that supported an ultra-talented team that didn't have the limitations most opposing squads had to fight hard to overcome.

"This team is different from last year," OSU assistant coach Jeff Boals told BSB. "Last year's team was dominating. I don't think we're that dominating this year."

Conventional wisdom again goes out the window. Last year Ohio State lost only two regular-season games before entering the NCAA Tournament as the consensus favorite to win the whole thing. Dominating, most would think, would lend itself well to winning a national championship.

It didn't. Throw conventional wisdom out the window.

"We were dominating when we went into the Kentucky game, which was a close game, but we lost by two after not shooting well," Boals said. "This team has been in some close games. If you look at this season, they've been in close situations where they needed to grind out wins. This team has grown from those experiences."

Two months ago, Ohio State fit the perfect profile for an early-tournament burnout. It was losing games, its star players were admitting publicly to not playing together, and a Big Ten regular-season championship was in question.

It was a far cry from the expectations to start the year – an uncontested route to the regular-season conference crown being one of them – and Ohio State was largely in shambles.

Then the Buckeyes won two games in the final week of their regular season on their final possession. That included a Big Ten title-clinching victory at Michigan State when senior William Buford buried a shot from near the top of the arc in the final seconds to lift the Buckeyes to a gritty road win.

That shot meant everything to this team, and it goes so much further than the hardware sitting in a trophy case in Value City Arena. It was wins like that Ohio State went without last year.

"Last year was the best team in the country and should have won a national championship," Ravenel said. "This team has had to work a little harder for things because of our age and immaturity and our inexperience with things. I think having had to battle in different ways could make us more ready to keep advancing."

That's the reason Ohio State has made it this far. Take a look at the Gonzaga game, for example. The Buckeyes had to endure two early fouls from star player Jared Sullinger, and a talented Bulldogs team was hitting on all cylinders early.

Gonzaga built a seven-point first-half lead off hot shooting and was controlling the paint and offensive glass. The Buckeyes admitted to being off their game



SONNY BROCKWAY

MORE WEAPONS – Through its first two games of the NCAA Tournament, Thad Matta's Ohio State men's basketball team has shown it's more than just Jared Sullinger.

in their NCAA Tournament-opening win over Loyola (Md.) just two days earlier, and it looked like it was happening again, this time against a team far more talented and deeper than the Greyhounds.

But sophomore point guard Aaron Craft put his foot down. Not otherwise known for creating his own shot, Craft attacked the basket and took open jump

shots to help the Buckeyes weather the storm against Gonzaga. He finished with 10 first-half points to lead an otherwise lost looking Ohio State team to a two-point halftime lead.

"It's not just Jared on this team," sophomore Lenzelle Smith Jr. said. "If it wasn't Aaron, it would have been someone else. In the beginning of the season everybody

questioned what would happen if they stopped Jared or William Buford. What would happen to the Buckeyes? Would we lose games? It's starting to pay off and people are starting to see that they have to guard all of us."

The perceived game plan to beat Ohio State used to be simple – contain Sullinger in the paint and make others around him produce. Gonzaga was effective with that plan, but Craft's aggressiveness offensively negated the Bulldogs' efforts.

"It ain't just Sullinger, I can tell you that," Gonzaga head coach Mark Few said. "They've got some guys that can really make some shots."

That night it was Craft – who eventually recorded his first career double-double when he finished with 17 points and 10 assists. In Ohio State's win over Loyola two days earlier, it was sophomore Deshaun Thomas. He scored a career-high 31 points and grabbed 12 rebounds in the Buckeyes' 19-point victory over the overmatched No. 15 seed.

Who will it be against Cincinnati? Ohio State has options, and all of a sudden it looks just as dangerous as it did a year ago – perhaps even more so. Opposing coaches will still prepare for Sullinger, but who is next on the scouting report? Will it be Thomas? Craft? Oh, and then there's Buford.

Or maybe it will be the worst-case scenario for the opposition. Ohio State had four players in double figures against Gonzaga, and a balanced offensive attack makes the Buckeyes nearly impossible to beat.

"Teams are going to attack Jared, obviously," Smith said. "We have to keep our poise and play off of that. Sometimes teams get down when they lose their best player, but the thing about this team is how we respond and come together as a group. When stuff like that happens, our team keeps our composure.

"I think every game we play is more of a statement. Jared is a great player – maybe the best in the country – and some of that stuff sometimes overshadows the minor things we do. But at the end of the day we're all chipping in making sure we can win the game."

Now it is just a matter of continuing to win. Gonzaga's coach thinks that's possible.

"We went toe to toe with a really good team," Few said. "They're right at that level with some of those other good teams like Syracuse and Kentucky. It wouldn't

2011-12 Ohio State Men's Basketball Statistics
 Through March 17
 Record: 29-7 (13-5 Big Ten)

Player	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds		PF-FO	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									Off.-Def.	Total-Avg.						
Jared Sullinger	34-33	1021-30.0	211-398	.530	16-36	.444	154-202	.762	102-209	311-9.1	100-1	40	66	35	40	592-17.4
Deshaun Thomas	36-36	1122-31.2	225-423	.532	46-131	.351	76-103	.738	92-98	190-5.3	56-0	33	42	8	14	572-15.9
William Buford	36-36	1215-33.8	195-459	.425	57-161	.354	83-99	.838	28-145	173-4.8	61-0	100	76	9	29	530-14.7
Aaron Craft	36-36	1137-31.6	108-209	.517	20-57	.351	82-115	.713	21-97	118-3.3	88-1	169	76	7	88	318-8.8
Lenzelle Smith Jr.	36-36	888-24.7	75-163	.460	23-67	.343	46-78	.590	49-118	167-4.6	71-0	73	45	5	32	219-6.1
Evan Ravenel	36-3	376-10.4	46-85	.541	0-0	.000	38-55	.691	30-51	81-2.3	67-1	9	28	8	10	130-3.6
J.D. Weatherspoon	25-0	157-6.3	29-47	.617	0-2	.000	18-31	.581	16-11	27-1.1	8-0	4	8	4	6	76-3.0
Jordan Sibert	24-0	273-11.4	24-79	.304	13-50	.260	10-18	.556	5-28	33-1.4	21-0	18	14	1	11	71-3.0
Sam Thompson	36-0	393-10.9	33-68	.485	1-14	.071	12-22	.545	10-30	40-1.1	33-0	27	19	14	6	79-2.2
LaQuinton Ross	9-0	35-3.9	5-15	.333	2-8	.250	6-7	.857	0-4	4-0.4	5-0	1	3	0	0	18-2.0
Amir Williams	27-0	179-6.6	18-34	.529	0-0	.000	9-24	.375	26-32	58-2.1	22-0	1	6	21	4	45-1.7
Shannon Scott	34-0	366-10.8	19-67	.284	1-18	.056	2-8	.250	4-33	37-1.1	47-0	57	35	2	17	41-1.2
Trey McDonald	13-0	38-2.9	1-6	.167	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	3-3	6-0.5	3-0	1	4	0	0	2-0.2
TEAM									43*48	91-2.6			2			
Ohio State	36	7200	989-2053	.482	179-544	.329	536-762	.703	429-907	1336-37.1	582-3	533	424	114	257	2693-74.8
Opponents	36	7200	767-1897	.404	216-671	.322	383-552	.694	299-763	1062-29.5	667-12	366	532	97	176	2133-59.2

surprise me if they are cutting down the nets in New Orleans.”

Survive And Advance

Before the NCAA Tournament began, Ohio State head coach Thad Matta said he wanted his team to view each weekend of the Big Dance as a mini-four-team tournament. The Buckeyes, of course, survived the initial wave during a first weekend that featured plenty of upsets. Two No. 15 seeds knocked off two seeds, and upsets are often contagious. Ohio State could have been one of the victims, and it feels fortunate it wasn't.

“You feel alive in this moment,” Smith said. “You feel so alive because you're still playing. In this tournament, if you lose, you die. You pack up your bags and you have to go home. I love these guys and I want to keep playing with them as long as I can. I hope this never ends.”

The state of Ohio landed four programs in the Sweet 16 – the first time that has been accomplished by schools in any state in the history of the NCAA Tournament – and the Buckeyes' next opponent is one of them.

Cincinnati edged No. 3 seed Florida State by a 62-56 final March 19 to reach its first regional semifinal in 11 years. It has been more than five years since OSU and UC last met on the hardwood – Dec. 16, 2006, when the Buckeyes rolled to a 72-50 victory in the Wooden Tradition in Indianapolis.

That game marked the first meeting between the in-state rivals since the Bearcats beat Ohio State in back-to-back national championship games in 1961 and '62.

UC sophomore guard Sean Kilpatrick, who scored a team-high 18 points in the win over the Seminoles, said he doesn't think too much about the rivalry's history. He is more concerned with creating his own.

“I'm not that big on the history,” Kilpatrick said. “We're kind of young to think about that. It will be a great challenge. I mean, both teams have great talent, and it will be another game like (Florida State) or even tougher. We know how tough they are, but we're also a tough team as well. We haven't gotten this far from just being soft any night. We're a tough team.”

The 26-10 Bearcats are back in the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2001 when Bob Huggins – a former Ohio State assistant now head coach at West Virginia – was still leading the program. That year, Cincinnati lost to Stanford in the West Regional semifinal.

If the program hopes to advance farther than that this year, it will likely try to do what Gonzaga attempted to do – force Sullinger's hand and make others in Ohio State's lineup try to beat them.

Gonzaga was unsuccessful because the Buckeyes' support cast showed up.

But with 6-9, 260-pound senior big man Yancy Gates in the middle, Cincinnati will likely try to make Ohio State duplicate its impressive performance against the Bulldogs.

“I've been playing a lot of good bigs this season,” Gates said when asked about his pending matchup with Sullinger. “I just get ready to play against another great player, you know, with a lot of hype. I'll be prepared. I'll be ready for the challenge.”

If the Buckeyes advance, they would play the winner of the No. 1 Syracuse-No. 4 Wisconsin matchup.

The Orange, who have been forced to play without 7-foot sophomore center Fab Melo after he was ruled academically ineligible for the NCAA Tournament, run an effective zone defense. The Buckeyes blew a 10-point second-half lead to Gonzaga when it faced a scoring drought after the Bulldogs switched from man to zone defense.

Ohio State, however, will focus on getting over the hump that proved to be too high in each of the last two seasons.

“You feel fortunate to be advancing,” Boals said. “That's what the tournament is about – surviving and advancing, and right now we're living.”

NCAA East Region Schedule

TD Garden • Boston

March 22 – Semifinals

No. 1 Syracuse vs. No. 4 Wisconsin, 7:15 p.m.

No. 2 Ohio State vs. No. 6 Cincinnati, 9:45 p.m.

March 24 – Championship (Time TBA)

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INSIDER

OSU, UC To Renew Tournament Rivalry

The Ohio State men's basketball team gets a chance for revenge some five decades in the making when the second-seeded Buckeyes take on Cincinnati in the Sweet 16 on March 22 in Boston.

The Bearcats, the No. 6 seed in the East Regional, own a 2-0 all-time record against the Buckeyes in NCAA Tournament play, but the state of Ohio's two major conference teams have not played in such a setting in 50 years. Both of the previous meetings resulted in Cincinnati knocking off favored Ohio State teams to bring home the national championship.

The first came in 1961 when the Bearcats used a dynamic defensive game plan to battle the top-ranked Buckeyes to a 61-all tie in regulation before knocking off the defending champions in overtime by a final of 70-65.

Jerry Lucas, Ohio State's All-America center and the national player of the year, scored 27 points, but only guard Larry Siegfried joined him in double figures with 14. Meanwhile, four Bearcats scored in double figures, led by forward Bob Wiesenhahn's 17 points, and Cincinnati took home from Kansas City the national championship trophy under the guidance of first-year head coach Ed Jucker.

With the bulk of its team returning as seniors, Ohio State was ranked No. 1 throughout the following season but again met its match against the Bearcats in the championship game.

This time, the venue was Louisville and the result was a more decisive 71-59 Bearcats victory that Jucker hoped would prove to the nation his first team's triumph had not been a fluke.

Again, four Cincinnati players reached double figures in scoring, this time led by star center Paul Hogue's 22. Guards Thom Thacker and Tony Yates had 21 and 12, respectively, while forward Ron Bonham added 10.

Lucas managed only 11 points in the rematch as he tried to play through a knee injury suffered in the national semifinal victory over Wake Forest. Ohio State also got 15 points from center Gary Bradds and 11 from forward John Havlicek.

The teams have played once since then, a 72-50 blowout for fourth-ranked Ohio State over unranked Cincinnati played in Indianapolis as part of the Wooden Tradition on Dec. 16, 2006.

The programs were headed in different directions at that point with the Buckeyes bound for that season's Final Four and the Bearcats still reeling from the firing of head coach Bob Huggins.

In its first year under head coach Mick Cronin, Cincinnati skidded to a final record of 11-19 and won only two of 16 Big East games.

At the time, Cronin openly questioned why the teams played at that time after the series was dormant for so long.

"They caught us when we were down," he told reporters. "I got a contract after Coach Huggins got fired and it was obvious we were going to be in a depleted state. I left it in my AD's hands to make overtures, but I'm not going to beat a dead horse with it. Cincinnati basketball has had great tradition and it's been quite successful since 1962, so if they don't want to play us why would they elect to schedule the game at this point?"

After his team qualified for the regional semifinal matchup with Ohio State in this year's tournament by beating No. 3 seed Florida State 62-56 on March 18, Cronin had little specific to say about his upcoming opponent.

"I have great respect for their program," he said. "Other than that, they're the next team we play."

Ohio State leads the all-time series 5-4 with the teams first meeting in 1905. The Buckeyes took that contest by a 43-6 score.

Analyst Prefers To Avoid Conflict Of Interest

Clark Kellogg is nearing the end of his second decade as a college basketball analyst for CBS but faced a unique situation at the start of the 2012 NCAA Tournament.

Would he ask to provide color com-

mentary and analysis for Ohio University, where his son, Nick, is a sophomore starting guard?

"No, no, no, I did not," the former Buckeye told USA Today on March 18. "That was never on my radar. I didn't ask. I'd go where I was assigned. If I'd had his region, it would have been an added blessing – and a challenge."

The 13th-seeded Bobcats became one of the biggest stories of the first weekend of the tournament as they first knocked off No. 4 seed Michigan on March 17 and then downed No. 12 seed South Florida two days later to advance to the Sweet 16. It marks OU's first trip to the Sweet 16 since 1964.

While Ohio did its damage in Nashville, the elder Kellogg worked games in Greensboro, N.C., but he followed the exploits of his son and his teammates via an iPad, and his father's pride spilled into the broadcast he was doing with play-by-play partner Jim Nantz.

The pair was working the second half of a second-round game between Lehigh and Xavier when Nantz made reference to Ohio's 62-54 lead over the Bulls with 15 seconds remaining. That prompted Kellogg to say, "Run, clock, run. Hopefully we'll see a final posted up here pretty quickly, Jim. We've got a good one here."

After a brief pause, Kellogg added, "Boy, I'd like to see that one be over with the Bobcats on top."

The final seconds ticked off the clock in the OU win at just about the same time a whistle stopped play with more than 16 minutes left in the Xavier-Lehigh contest, giving Nantz an opportunity to declare Ohio the victor.

"Oh, wow," Kellogg said as the camera turned to him and he received a congratulatory handshake from his partner. "Oh, my goodness."

Nantz pointed out Kellogg's hands were wet with sweat and asked if he ever had such nerves while playing.

"No, it's a totally different deal when your kids are doing it," Kellogg replied. "Good job, young fella! Way to go Bobcats!"

Former Football Assistant Opts To Hang Up Whistle

Jim Heacock, an Ohio State football assistant from 1996-2011, is calling it a career after 40 years as a college football coach.

Heacock, 63, was one of five assistants from the 2011 OSU staff not retained by new head coach Urban Meyer, but he had



FILE PHOTO

RIDING OFF INTO THE SUNSET – Former Ohio State football assistant coach Jim Heacock has announced his retirement from coaching.

indicated after a 24-17 loss to Florida in the Gator Bowl on Jan. 2 that he intended to continue coaching. He apparently changed his mind after not finding a coaching opportunity he felt comfortable with that would not require moving his family.

“My family has been following me around the country while I did what I wanted to do and what I enjoyed doing,” Heacock told WBNS Radio in Columbus on March 14. “I feel like it’s time for me to give back a little bit.”

Jim Tressel retained Heacock when he took over for John Cooper in January 2001 and elevated him to defensive coordinator prior to the 2005 season.

The Silver Bullets promptly posted six consecutive top-six finishes in the country in points allowed, and Heacock gained a reputation as one of the nation’s best at his post. As defensive line coach, he mentored 10 first-team All-Big Ten players and four first-team All-Americans.

Heacock, an Alliance, Ohio, native, won the Frank Broyles Award as the nation’s top assistant coach following the 2007 season.

Before arriving in Columbus in 1996, Heacock served stints as an assistant at Washington, Bowling Green and Muskingum College, his alma mater. He also served eight seasons as head coach at Illinois State from 1988-95.

Former Buckeye Lineman Dead At 50

Former Ohio State defensive tackle

Chris Riehm passed away unexpectedly March 11 in his hometown of Medina, Ohio. He was 50 years old.

Riehm was a four-year letter winner at Ohio State from 1979-82 and started on the defensive line during his sophomore, junior and senior seasons. He appeared in 41 games during his OSU career, including 33 starts, and finished among the team leaders in tackles with 62, including eight for loss and three sacks, during his senior year.

He went on to a three-year career in the NFL with the Los Angeles Raiders from 1986-88. He also played in the USFL with the Oakland Invaders and Houston Gamblers.

Riehm is survived by his wife, the former Mary Garrison, and parents Carrolton C. Riehm and Sandra Thoburn.

Contributions in Riehm’s memory may be made to Highland High School, 4150 Ridge Road, Medina, Ohio 44256.

Buckeyes Pitch In At Columbus Foodbank

Before going their separate ways for spring break, about 60 members of the Ohio State football team spent a day helping those less fortunate.

Three different waves of players went to the Mid-Ohio Foodbank on March 14 to pack boxes of food for senior citizens in need within the mid-Ohio region and also for those in the Southeastern Ohio Foodbank region.

BSB 2012 Electronic Issue Schedule

Jan. 6	June 19
Jan. 13	July 17
Jan. 17	July 31
Jan. 20	Aug. 7
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March 20	Oct. 5
April 3	Oct. 12
April 17	Oct. 19
April 20	Oct. 26
May 1	Nov. 2
May 8	Nov. 16
May 15	Nov. 23
May 22	Dec. 4

A total of 975 boxes were packed by the Buckeyes with supplies that included canned fruits and vegetables, cereal, boxed milk, dry beans, pasta, rice, juices and various canned proteins (meat, chili and stew, etc.).

Senior defensive lineman John Simon called the activity a nice way to help out the community that helps build team bonding.

“It’s a fun thing so it’s good for us,” he said. “So many people look up to us, so to be able to give back for everything they give us is tremendous.”

Hockey Co-Captain Finds Professional Team

Sean Duddy, a co-captain for the Ohio State men’s hockey team this past season, signed a professional contract with the Gwinnett Gladiators of the ECHL on March 13.

Duddy, a native of Ann Arbor, Mich., logged 14 points (one goal, 13 assists) in 35 games with the Buckeyes last season. In four collegiate seasons, he earned 24 points (two goals, 22 assists) from his blue line position in 124 career games.

The Gladiators play at the Double-A level and are an affiliate of the Buffalo Sabres and Phoenix Coyotes of the NHL.

Ohio State Zips Zags, Moves On To Sweet 16

By Ari Wasserman

For much of Ohio State's third-round NCAA Tournament game vs. Gonzaga, Jared Sullinger's matchup with Bulldogs big man Robert Sacre seemed to be as relevant as the pregame conversations intended it to be.

During the final 3½ minutes of the contest, however, Sullinger proved that was just an overblown storyline.

Fighting through physical play in the paint that stopped him from dominating inside for most of the game, Sullinger scored six crucial points during the final 3:36 to boost the second-seeded Buckeyes to a 73-66 win March 17 over seven seed Gonzaga in front of 18,588 fans at Pittsburgh's Consol Energy Center.

Sullinger, who made a basket off the glass over the 7-foot Sacre to extend the Buckeyes' lead to five at 66-61 with 1:03 remaining, helped Ohio State close out a pesky Bulldogs squad to advance to the tournament's Sweet 16 for the third consecutive year.

The Buckeyes will face sixth-seeded Cincinnati in Boston at TD Garden on March 22. Tip-off is scheduled for 9:45 p.m. Eastern.

"Down the stretch, we wanted to get the ball in (Jared's) hands," Ohio State coach Thad Matta said. "He's a winner. We'll ride that down the stretch."

While Sullinger was either out of the game with early foul trouble – he logged only nine minutes in the first half – or being contained in the paint by Gonzaga's athletic big men, it was a balanced offensive attack that kept Ohio State in the game.

Sullinger and sophomore guard Deshaun Thomas led the Buckeyes with 18 points apiece, but perhaps the best offensive game of Aaron Craft's career kept the Buckeyes constantly afloat. The sophomore point guard had season highs with 17 points and 10 assists, accounting for his first career double-double.

"It always helps when you make your first couple of baskets," Craft said. "They did a good job of focusing on Jared and focusing on the other guys. That just kind of left me a little open. Fortunately enough, I knocked a couple down. That just gives you confidence for the rest of the game."



SONNY BROCKWAY

AWAY IT GOES – Sophomore Jared Sullinger (0) dealt with first-half foul trouble but finished the game with a game-high 18 points.

Freshman guard Gary Bell Jr. led the Bulldogs (26-7) with 18 points while junior forward Elias Harris added 16. Freshman point guard Kevin Pangos totaled 10 points, but he was blanketed by Craft throughout the game and made only 3 of 13 shots from the field. Pangos also had only one assist against two turnovers.

Sacre finished with eight points and six rebounds in 24 minutes on the floor.

Ohio State led 52-42 with 14:22 remaining in the game, but Gonzaga switched to a zone defense and that led to a final run. The Buckeyes, who managed only 11 points during the next 12 minutes, saw the score tied at 61 with 4:03 remaining in the contest when Harris buried a three-pointer from the right corner.

That trey came after Sullinger had a shot blocked by Sacre on the other end, but Ohio State's big man aggressively went right back to the basket on the next possession before scoring a baseline bucket to give the Buckeyes a two-point lead at 63-61 with 3:36 remaining in the game.

Ohio State 73, Gonzaga 66

March 17, 2012 • Consol Energy Center – Pittsburgh

Gonzaga (26-7)		37	29	–	66		
Ohio State (29-7)		39	34	–	73		
Gonzaga	Min	FG	FT	Reb.	A	PF	Pts
Edi	20	1-2	2-2	0-3	1	2	4
Harris	34	6-14	2-4	2-5	0	4	16
Sacre	24	3-6	2-3	1-5	1	4	8
Pangos	34	3-13	2-2	1-0	1	1	10
Bell Jr.	36	5-9	5-6	1-3	5	2	18
Carter	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Stockton	14	0-2	1-2	0-1	5	1	1
Spangler	2	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0
Moeninghoff	1	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Hart	15	0-0	0-0	1-1	0	3	0
Dower	18	4-9	0-0	5-1	1	2	9
Totals	200	22-56	14-19	13-21	14	19	66
Percentages: FG: 39.3%. FT: 73.7%. 3-point goals: 8-23							
(Edi 0-1, Harris 2-6, Pangos 2-8, Bell Jr. 3-5, Stockton 0-1, Moeninghoff 0-1, Dower 1-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 1 (Sacre). Turnovers: 9 (Dower 3, Sacre 2, Pangos 2, Harris, Bell Jr.). Steals: 3 (Pangos 2, Hart).							

Ohio State	Min	FG	FT	Reb.	A	PF	Pts
Sullinger	26	5-9	6-7	1-3	0	3	18
Thomas	39	7-15	1-2	5-2	1	3	18
Craft	40	7-9	2-2	1-2	10	2	17
Smith Jr.	28	2-6	2-2	0-5	1	2	7
Buford	40	4-13	3-4	0-5	1	3	13
Scott	11	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	2	0
Thompson	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Williams	4	0-0	0-1	0-0	0	1	0
Ravenel	11	0-0	0-0	0-2	0	1	0
Totals	200	25-53	14-18	9-22	13	17	73
Percentages: FG: 47.2%. FT: 77.8%. 3-point goals: 9-24							

(Sullinger 2-2, Thomas 3-7, Craft 1-3, Smith Jr. 1-4, Buford 2-7, Scott 0-1). Team rebounds: 5. Blocked shots: 4 (Thomas 2, Smith Jr., Williams). Turnovers: 11 (Thomas 2, Craft 2, Smith Jr. 2, Ravenel 2, Sullinger, Buford, Scott). Steals: 6 (Craft 3, Sullinger, Buford, Scott).

Officials: Corbett, McCall, Breeding. **A:** 18,588.

"I don't care," Sullinger said. "It doesn't bother me when someone blocks my shot. It was a big-time block, but I decided to make a move (on the next possession) and get off his body to eliminate his athletic ability."

The Buckeyes came up with a stop on the other end, and Thomas made 1 of 2 free throws to extend his team's lead to 64-61 with 2:41 remaining in the game.

Gonzaga again was unable to get points on the ensuing possession, and Sullinger grabbed the rebound off a missed Pangos layup attempt before being fouled. Sullinger, however, missed the front end of a one-and-one that could have extended Ohio State's lead to two possessions.

Pangos had a chance to tie the game again with a wide-open look from the corner, but he misfired, one of six misses the Gonzaga freshman had in eight long-range attempts for the game. OSU senior William Buford came down with the rebound and Sullinger made the shot over Sacre at the other end that helped put the game out of the Bulldogs' reach.

"It's always about the next play," said Sullinger when asked about the missed one-and-one opportunity. "You just have to keep playing hard and executing. If I would have focused on the past, it would have frustrated me. Maybe I wouldn't have made that shot."

Ohio State faced deficits as high as seven points at 27-20 at 7:58 and 30-23 with 6:38 to go in the first half, but the Buckeyes outscored the Bulldogs by a 16-7 margin for the remainder of the half to take a two-point 39-37 lead into the locker room.

Thomas, who had scored a career-high 31 points in Ohio State's NCAA Tournament-opening win over Loyola (Md.), scored 12 straight Buckeye points during a 4:52 span before Craft scored on a driving layup with five seconds remaining in the half to aid the Buckeyes' rally.

"It isn't my month – it is our month," Thomas said. "This was a complete team effort. We all came together to make the shots we needed to in order to stay in the game. It always hurts when Sullinger is out, but this team is more than just Jared."

Craft has made an effort to look for his own shot more often, and that resulted in 10 crucial points in the first half when the Buckeyes were scrambling for points. The point guard's efforts helped Ohio State prevent Gonzaga from creating a big lead heading into the break.

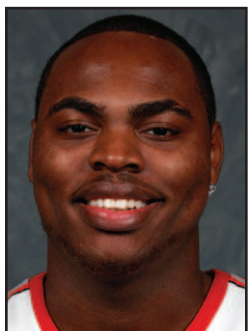
"If I get looks, I feel comfortable taking them," Craft said. "I don't mind looking for my own shot more. Whatever I have to do to keep my team in games is what I am going to do."

Game Notes

- The game marked the first-ever meeting between Ohio State and Gonzaga.

- Ohio State now has 29 wins this season, which tied for third most in program history. The Buckeyes had 35 victories in 2007, 34 in 2011 and 29 in 2010.

- Craft had three steals in the game, pushing his season total to 88 and breaking Mike Conley Jr.'s single-season record of 87, set during the 2007 run to the NCAA Tournament title game.



SONNY BROCKWAY

OFFENSIVE SPARK – Sophomore point guard Aaron Craft (4) scored 10 of his 17 points in the first half.

Thomas Paces OSU Past No. 15 Greyhounds

By Jeff Svoboda

The day before Ohio State and Loyola (Md.) opened NCAA Tournament play against one another, Jimmy Patsos said he knew Buckeye forward Deshaun Thomas was going to cause problems for his team.

Unfortunately for him, the Greyhounds head coach turned out to be quite the prognosticator.

Thomas set a new career scoring high with 31 points and tallied his third career double-double, pacing the Buckeyes to a 78-59 victory March 15 against the 15th-seeded Greyhounds in the NCAA Tournament's second round at the Consol Energy Center in Pittsburgh.

"I said I was worried about Deshaun Thomas," Patsos said. "Jimmy doesn't just bartend. He knows basketball, too."

Thomas proved prophetic the longtime assistant to Maryland head coach and one-time OSU mentor Gary Williams, turning in a dominating performance to lead the second-seeded Buckeyes. The sophomore's 31 points topped by one his previous best – set Dec. 17 against South Carolina – and he added 12 rebounds to fall one shy of a career high.

"I was just trying to get in the right spots at the right time, run a play, run with pace like Coach always tells us," Thomas said. "Then I was just knocking them down. I was just feeling it a bit."

Thomas was an equal opportunity scorer, leading Ohio State with 14 points in the first half and at one point in the second half posting 13 of the team's points in a row. He finished 13 of 22 from the field, falling just one shy of OSU's NCAA Tournament record for field goals in a game set by Jerry Lucas in 1960 and equaled a year later by the Buckeye legend.

"Deshaun played terrific today," senior William Buford said. "He was getting easy buckets. He was just playing his game. You know Deshaun. If he's making them, keep giving him the ball."

The Greyhounds (24-9) actually jumped out to a 5-1 lead in the early going behind a big dunk by junior forward Erik Etherly and a three by sophomore guard Dylon Cormier before Ohio State's athleticism allowed the Buckeyes to slowly pull away.

Big man Jared Sullinger was hard to handle early as he scored the Buckeyes'



SONNY BROCKWAY

BIG GAME – Sophomore Deshaun Thomas (1) scored a career-high 31 points and posted a double-double with 12 rebounds in a 78-59 win against Loyola (Md.).

first six points – including a trey from the left wing – before an old-fashioned three-point play by freshman Lenzelle Smith Jr. stretched OSU's advantage to 13-7 with 13:20 remaining in the opening half.

Ohio State's lead fluctuated between four and nine until the 7:49 mark of the half when Sullinger drove the lane and laid it in to make it 31-20.

The lead got as high as 15 two different times before the Buckeyes finished the first half up 42-31.

"We made our runs and then we relaxed," head coach Thad Matta said. "We'd make our runs again, then we would relax. Some of the turnovers we had were just uncharacteristic."

In addition to Thomas' 14 first-half points, Ohio State got 12 from Sullinger. Each had six rebounds as well. Smith added seven rebounds.

The Buckeyes also took advantage of 14 Loyola fouls – including four each by starting forward Shane Walker and

Ohio State 78, Loyola (Md.) 59

March 15, 2012 • Consol Energy Center – Pittsburgh

Loyola (Md.) (24-9)	31	28	-	59
Ohio State (28-7)	42	36	-	78

Loyola (Md.)	Min	FG	FT	Reb.	A	PF	Pts
Walker	28	3-8	1-2	0-4	1	4	8
Etherly	37	6-12	7-8	3-4	2	1	19
Cormier	28	5-12	2-2	1-2	0	1	14
R.J.Williams	22	1-1	0-0	0-0	4	5	2
Olson	33	1-11	4-6	0-5	1	3	7
Winbush	11	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0
Drummond	15	2-6	0-0	0-0	1	5	4
Latham	15	0-3	2-2	0-1	0	3	2
P.Williams	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Brooks	8	1-1	1-2	0-2	0	2	3
Wandrusch	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	200	19-54	17-22	5-19	9	24	59

Percentages: FG: 35.2%. FT: 77.3%. **3-point goals:** 4-14 (Walker 1-3, Cormier 2-4, Olson 1-6, Drummond 0-1).

Team rebounds: 1. **Blocked shots:** 8 (Etherly 4, Walker 2, Latham, Brooks). **Turnovers:** 12 (Walker 3, Cormier 3, Drummond 3, Etherly, Olson, Brooks). **Steals:** 6 (Walker 3, Olson, Drummond, Latham).

Ohio State	Min	FG	FT	Reb.	A	PF	Pts
Sullinger	32	4-14	3-4	4-7	2	2	12
Thomas	35	13-22	4-4	7-5	1	1	31
Craft	33	1-2	6-6	0-5	4	3	8
Smith Jr.	25	1-2	1-3	0-8	0	3	3
Buford	29	5-11	4-4	0-3	2	3	17
Scott	20	1-4	0-1	0-2	0	2	2
Thompson	13	0-1	2-2	2-1	2	1	2
Weatherspoon	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Ravenel	10	1-1	1-2	1-1	0	3	3
Totals	200	26-58	21-26	16-33	11	19	78

Percentages: FG: 44.8%. FT: 80.8%. **3-point goals:** 5-14 (Sullinger 1-1, Thomas 1-3, Craft 0-1, Smith Jr. 0-1, Buford 3-7, Scott 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 3. **Blocked shots:** 8 (Sullinger 5, Thomas 2, Ravenel). **Turnovers:** 18 (Craft 5, Smith Jr. 3, Buford 3, Thomas 2, Ravenel 2, Sullinger, Scott, Thompson). **Steals:** 6 (Craft 3, Sullinger, Buford, Scott).

Officials: Breeding, Epley, Porter. **A:** 19,413.

reserve guard Justin Drummond – to shoot 15 of 18 from the charity stripe.

The Greyhounds were led in the opening 20 minutes by Etherly's 10 points and five boards.

The second half was in many ways a microcosm of the first. The Ohio State lead swung between 12 and 19 for the first 14 minutes and change until Thomas' bucket with 5:35 left gave him his career-high point total and made the score 70-50.

Ohio State (28-7) was finally able to pull away behind a shooting percentage of 60.9 in the second half, but the Greyhounds did cut the OSU lead to 11 at 70-59 with 2:18 left, prompting Matta to insert his starters back into the game for a final 8-0 run.

Buford hit two three-pointers in the closing moments to finish with 17 points, while Sullinger had his 15th double-double of the year with 12 points – none in the second half – and 11 rebounds. The Buckeyes also held a 49-24 advantage on the glass.

Despite the fact Ohio State was in control on the scoreboard throughout, the team wasn't all that impressed by its performance. The Buckeyes lost 18 turn-



SONNY BROCKWAY

MORE POINTS – Senior William Buford (44) made 5 of 11 field-goal attempts and was one of three Buckeyes to finish in double figures in scoring with 17 points.

overs, shot 34.3 percent in the first half and assisted on only 11 of 26 buckets.

"Obviously this tournament is about advancing and that's what we did tonight," Matta said. "But I don't think we played at the level we need to. Our guys know that."

On the other side, Loyola – a team whose home gym holds 2,100 but who was playing in front of a facility-record 19,413 fans – was pleased with its showing. Etherly led the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference tournament champi-

ons with 19 points and seven rebounds while Cormier had 14 points.

"I thought we played really hard, which is what we do at Loyola University," Patsos said after his team made its first NCAA appearance since 1994. "I'm proud of my kids for playing. To play Ohio State, one of the best teams in the country, you're not going to win the game without having everything go right. We didn't have everything go right."

The game was the first meeting between the two schools on the hardwood.

Florida Takes Advantage Of Sloppy Ohio State

Florida's early 9-0 barrage during its March 18 NCAA tournament victory over the Ohio State women's basketball team relied heavily on three Buckeye turnovers, but members of each team could not agree on how to credit those key miscues after the Gators' 70-65 victory went into the books.

"Honestly, all week long, all we've heard was, 'Ohio State this, Ohio State that. Their guards average this, their post players do this, they run a transition,' and honestly we took that to heart," Florida senior guard Jordan Jones said after helping the ninth-seeded Gators advance to the second round of the NCAA tourney.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Marcus Hartman

With much of the talk before the game involving Ohio State head coach Jim Foster and his assertion that his team's No. 8 seed was lower than it deserved, Jones seemed to think the Gators were being overlooked.

"I know Ohio State talked a lot about being disrespected, but we felt a little disrespected because I don't think people realize how good our defense is," she said. "I knew that Ohio State hadn't faced anything like it, and I think it showed in the first four minutes and throughout the ballgame."

Foster and his junior guards Tayler Hill and Amber Stokes saw it differently, however.

Ohio State coughed up the ball only 10 times in the last 38 minutes after the trio of early mistakes to finish with 13 turnovers for the game, one fewer than the Buckeyes averaged during their first 31 games. Along the way, they picked up nonconference wins over athletic Southern teams from Florida State and LSU, leading to a dismissal of the idea Florida brought something new to the table.

"We played against SEC teams before," said Hill, who committed the first turnover of the game after dribbling into a trap near the sideline. "It was our offense – ourselves – turning the ball over, making poor decisions, taking quick shots. We've seen all types of defense before."

After noting that his team's 47.5 percent shooting on field goals was very similar



SONNY BROCKWAY

NOT QUITE ENOUGH – Junior Tayler Hill (4) scored a game-high 23 points with four assists and only two turnovers, but Ohio State fell to Florida on March 18 in the NCAA tournament.

to its 46.2 mark from the regular season, Foster agreed with his players.

"We shot ourselves in the foot a lot," the OSU coach said.

Hill had a game-high 23 points and handed out four assists with two turnovers while Stokes notched a dozen points with two assists and three turnovers. Their contributions were offset by the struggles of the third member of the starting backcourt, Big Ten Player of the Year Samantha Prahalis. The senior point guard committed the second turnover of the game and shot an early air ball from three-point range. She finished with only nine points, 11 below her season average of 20.1. Prahalis committed only a

pair of turnovers against three assists, but missed nine of her 13 shot attempts, including all three from behind the arc.

"They just got up on me, but I've seen that before," Prahalis said through tears in the locker room. "Today just wasn't my day."

Florida head coach Amanda Butler praised her team's effort on defense but seemed to agree some luck was involved as her team dodged Ohio State's biggest bullet.

"We played them a couple of different ways, and you know (Prahalis) also just missed a few shots," Butler said. "Sometimes we didn't play great defense

2011-12 Ohio State Women's Basketball Statistics

End Of Season

Record: 25-6 (11-5 Big Ten)

Player	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds			PF-FO	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									Off.-Def.	Total-Avg.	Total						
Taylor Hill	32-32	1175-36.7	215-453	.475	82-196	.418	141-183	.770	34-99	133-4.2	47-0	75	74	16	81	653-20.4	
Samantha Prahalis	31-31	1169-37.7	216-495	.436	62-179	.346	119-142	.838	28-100	128-4.1	58-2	194	107	6	67	613-19.8	
Amber Stokes	32-32	839-26.2	100-216	.463	3-15	.200	37-63	.587	57-59	116-3.6	76-0	60	38	10	39	240-7.5	
Ashley Adams	32-32	913-28.5	100-190	.526	0-0	.000	26-43	.605	64-158	222-6.9	54-0	69	65	96	29	226-7.1	
Darryce Moore	32-2	491-15.3	67-115	.583	0-0	.000	35-51	.686	37-82	119-3.7	70-2	30	36	15	14	169-5.3	
Kalpana Beach	30-30	535-17.8	63-146	.432	0-0	.000	27-34	.794	37-103	140-4.7	40-0	15	28	21	7	153-5.1	
Raven Ferguson	32-1	433-13.5	50-116	.431	17-45	.378	15-23	.652	25-42	67-2.1	35-0	21	25	3	13	132-4.1	
Martina Ellerbe	30-0	316-10.5	21-51	.412	4-13	.308	6-9	.667	17-38	55-1.8	17-0	16	13	10	7	52-1.7	
Emilee Harmon	20-0	134-6.7	17-38	.447	0-0	.000	13-22	.591	17-18	35-1.8	16-0	3	11	2	1	47-2.4	
Maleeka Kynard	25-0	171-6.8	13-31	.419	5-19	.263	13-14	.929	7-13	20-0.8	24-0	9	16	0	9	44-1.8	
Aleksandra Dobranic	17-0	100-5.9	13-27	.481	0-0	.000	4-7	.571	9-15	24-1.4	10-0	3	14	1	2	30-1.8	
Amy Scullion	14-0	94-6.7	5-12	.417	0-2	.000	19-23	.826	5-8	13-0.9	7-0	3	6	2	4	29-2.1	
Shelbi Honeycutt	11-0	56-5.1	1-16	.063	0-13	.000	3-3	1.000	3-8	11-1.0	1-0	4	1	0	0	5-0.5	
TEAM									47-70	117-3.7				13			
Ohio State	32	6425	881-1906	.462	173-482	.359	458-617	.742	387-813	1200-37.5	455-4	502	447	182	273	2393-74.8	
Opponents	32	6425	745-1972	.378	156-463	.337	365-526	.694	495-733	1228-38.4	540--	380	531	70	179	2011-62.8	

and she just didn't hit. But in particular in the second half, her not scoring ... I think we just had some really, really good individual effort."

The Florida head coach had glowing words for the Buckeyes' point guard despite her struggles in her final college game.

"I have great respect for Sammy," Butler said. "I hugged her after the ballgame and told her she's the best guard in the country this year - congratulated her on her career. I think she's an amazing player."

Threes Come As Surprise

Foster was mostly critical of his own team in how it handled the Florida defense, but he sang a different tune when it came to the Gators' three-point shooting prowess in the game. Florida made 9 of 21 from beyond the arc, a 42.9-percent clip that far outpaced the 29.2 rate it shot during the regular season and SEC tournament.

"We have a tendency around here not to give the other team credit," Foster said. "They made some big shots. They really did."

Guard Lanita Bartley led the Gators with three treys and said her team was trying to take advantage of what the Ohio State defense was giving it.

"We just made sure when they weren't guarding us - because they really didn't pressure us - that we were going to shoot the ball," said Bartley, who finished with 15 points. "Coach Butler said just shoot it if you're wide open, so we made sure we did that and we knocked down shots."

Butler liked seeing the threes go down, but she was most proud of her team's efforts on defense.

"If I had to choose one, I would say our defense because our defense was what I felt like contributed to the quick start, and we felt really good going into the offensive end when we had done a good job on the defensive end," the Florida head coach said. "Our team takes great pride in that, and a big part of our personality is what happened on the defensive end."

Among Rare Company

Prahalis did not envision her college career coming to an end the way it did, but she set one more milestone before the final buzzer sounded.

The senior picked up the 900th assist of her career on a successful jump shot in the lane by freshman Kalpana Beach with 6:06 to go in the first half of the loss to Florida.

Prahalis finished her career with 2,010 points and 901 assists, making her only the second player in NCAA Division I history to pass the 2,000 and 900 marks in those categories, joining Courtney Vandersloot of Gonzaga (2008-11).

Signees Receive State Honors

Ohio State signees Ameryst Alston and Caite Craft both were among big winners when the annual Associated Press All-Ohio teams and awards were released.

Alston, a 5-9 senior guard from Canton McKinley, became the fourth player to be named the state's Ms. Basketball for a second time and made her second appearance on the All-Ohio Division I first team. She was also named Division I Player of the Year for a second year in a row.

She averaged 25.2 points, 5.0 rebounds, 3.1 assists and 2.1 steals per game while shooting 49.2 percent from the field and making 75 percent of her free throws.

Previous two-time Ms. Basketball winners are Vonda Ward of Garfield Heights Trinity (1990-91), Semeka Randall of Trinity (1996-97) and Michelle Munoz of Mason (2000-01). Ward and Randall played their college basketball at Tennessee while Munoz initially attended Tennessee before transferring to Ohio State for the final two years of her college career.

Craft, a 5-8 guard from Findlay Liberty-Benton who is the sister of Ohio State men's point guard Aaron Craft, shared Division III player of the year honors with Lauren Langenderfer of Metamora Evergreen, Kiyanna Black of Columbus Africentric and Natalie Billing of Anna.

Craft also made her second appearance on the Division III all-state first team after averaging 21.4 points per game.

Craft, Eagles Bow In Semifinal

Craft saw her high school career come to an end one game shy of a shot at a state championship.

The senior guard scored a team-high 15 points for Liberty-Benton, but they were not enough as the Eagles fell to top-ranked Anna in a Division III state semifinal March 15.

The undefeated Rockets extended their winning streak to 50 games by a convincing final score of 58-41, but their victory was not secure until a dominant fourth quarter.

Craft made a jumper to pull the Eagles within six at 45-39 with 6:06 remaining only to see the Rockets reel off the next 11 to pull away. Anna outscored Liberty-Benton by a 19-6 margin in the final stanza.

Two days later, the Rockets' bid for a second consecutive D-III state title was denied in a 70-66 overtime loss to Africentric.

Rally Not Enough In Season-Ending Defeat

By Marcus Hartman

Florida rode an early flourish March 18 to a 70-65 defeat of Ohio State in the first round of the NCAA women's basketball tournament.

Playing in front of a mostly friendly crowd of 4,195 at the Stroh Center in Bowling Green, Ohio, the eighth-seeded Buckeyes turned the ball over on their first three possessions and fell behind No. 9 seed Florida by a 9-0 count.

Ohio State finally got on the board with a foul-line jumper by freshman forward Kalpana Beach at the 17:48 mark but was forced to play from behind the rest of the way. The task proved too great as the Buckeyes lost to a lower-seeded team for the seventh time in 10 NCAA appearances during head coach Jim Foster's decade-long tenure in Columbus.

"We just had some very bad turnovers, unforced turnovers," Foster said. "A couple of passes thrown over a player's head. When we moved the ball, we got quality shots."

Ohio State (25-7) cut the deficit to three at the 12:38 mark after point guard Samantha Prahalis stole a rebound and made a base-line jumper to make it 17-14, but freshman guard Andrea Vilaró Aragonés answered with a three-pointer for Florida. Senior teammate Ndidu Madu followed her with a layup to stretch the Gators' advantage back to eight, a lead that peaked at 13 when sophomore guard Jaterra Bonds hit a three-pointer with 7:21 to go to make it 30-17.

But the Buckeyes battled back to within eight by halftime.

They went to the locker room down 39-31 and then cut the deficit to four on a layup by junior guard Tayler Hill and a jumper from sophomore center Ashley Adams to start the scoring in the second half.

Florida (20-12) answered with a layup by senior guard Jordan Jones and a three-pointer by senior guard Lanita Bartley to give the Gators a nine-point advantage again at 44-35 with 17:20 remaining. Shots such as Bartley's became a common theme as the afternoon wore on. Every time the Buckeyes made a run, the Gators had an answer and it often came from beyond the arc, where they were 9 for 21 (42.9 percent) for the game.

"They had a couple of kids step up and make big shots," Foster said.

Ohio State cut the deficit to four points on five occasions in the second half, but the Buckeyes got closer than that just once. That was thanks to a Hill layup that made it 65-63 Florida and prompted Gators head coach Amanda Butler to call a timeout with 54.3 seconds left.

The crowd came to its feet at that point, but its excitement was dampened when junior forward Jennifer George dribbled around Adams for a tough layup in the lane. That stretched the Florida lead back to four at 67-63 with 45 seconds remaining and marked a rare head-to-head victory for the Gators' top post presence.

George entered the game leading Florida in scoring and was the top point-getter for the Gators against Ohio State, but she had to work hard for her 16 tallies. She missed 11 of 17 shots from the floor and had her shot blocked by Adams five times.

Nevertheless, George's last basket stemmed the tide one last time for the victors. OSU reserve forward Emilee Harmon missed a shot from about 16 feet with the shot clock running down on the ensuing Ohio State possession, and Jones was fouled after coming up with the ball in a scrum.

Jones missed the front end of a one-



SONNY BROCKWAY

THE END – Ohio State women's basketball head coach Jim Foster bemoaned his team's 13 turnovers after the Buckeyes were bounced from the NCAA tournament March 18 by Florida.

Florida 70, Ohio State 65

March 18, 2012 • Stroh Center – Bowling Green, Ohio

Florida (20-12)	39	31	-	70
Ohio State (25-7)	31	34	-	65

Florida	Min	FG	FT	Reb.	A	PF	Pts
George	33	6-17	4-6	2-4	1	1	16
Stewart	22	1-4	0-0	0-4	2	4	2
Bartley	33	5-15	2-2	2-2	3	0	15
Bonds	28	3-6	3-4	0-2	2	1	11
Jones	34	3-10	0-1	4-4	3	0	7
Allen	17	2-11	0-0	1-1	2	2	4
Madu	20	4-7	0-0	2-4	1	1	9
Vilaro Aragonés	5	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	1	3
Shine	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Svete	5	1-3	0-0	1-1	0	2	3
Totals	200	26-74	9-13	20-26	14	12	70

Percentages: FG: 35.1%. FT: 69.2%. **3-point goals:** 9-21 (Bartley 3-7, Bonds 2-3, Jones 1-6, Allen 0-1, Madu 1-1, Vilaro Aragonés 1-1, Svete 1-2). **Team rebounds:** 11. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Stewart, Madu). **Turnovers:** 10 (Bartley 3, Jones 2, George, Stewart, Bonds, Vilaro Aragonés, TEAM). **Steals:** 3 (Bartley 2, Stewart).

Ohio State	Min	FG	FT	Reb.	A	PF	Pts
Beach	15	2-3	0-0	0-1	0	1	4
Adams	39	5-9	1-2	0-14	4	1	11
Stokes	30	6-12	0-0	0-1	2	3	12
Hill	40	9-15	2-2	1-2	4	3	23
Prahalis	40	4-13	1-2	0-3	3	1	9
Kynard	0+	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Moore	18	1-3	0-0	1-3	0	3	2
Ferguson	9	1-3	1-2	0-1	0	0	4
Harmon	9	0-1	0-2	2-0	0	0	0
Totals	200	28-59	5-10	6-29	13	12	65

Percentages: FG: 47.5%. FT: 50.0%. **3-point goals:** 4-11 (Stokes 0-1, Hill 3-6, Prahalis 0-3, Ferguson 1-1). **Team rebounds:** 6. **Blocked shots:** 11 (Adams 7, Stokes 2, Hill 2). **Turnovers:** 13 (Stokes 3, Moore 3, Adams 2, Hill 2, Prahalis 2, Beach). **Steals:** 7 (Hill 4, Adams, Stokes, Prahalis).

Officials: Kantner, Smith, Parrish. **A:** 4,195.

and-one situation with 16 seconds left, but sophomore forward Lily Svete came up with the offensive rebound and passed to Bonds, who was fouled by Hill and made the subsequent two free throws to seal the game with 12 seconds to go.

Hill wound up Ohio State's leading scorer with 23 points while Amber Stokes added 12 and Adams notched 11.

Prahalis managed only nine points on 4-for-13 shooting, a bitter way for the Big Ten Player of the Year and Ohio State's only senior to end her career.

"She's the kind of player who needs a rhythm," Foster said. "I don't think she ever got comfortable with it today."

A teary-eyed Prahalis agreed with that assessment after the game.

"In the beginning, I think we all had a little bit of jitters," she said. "I just had too much energy. I missed a couple long and I couldn't get into a real rhythm all game. That was basically it.

"I just played terrible. I just played terrible and let my teammates down. That's it."

Bartley and Bonds joined George in double figures with 15 and 11 points, respectively, for the Gators, who advanced to face undefeated No. 1 seed Baylor in the second round.



SONNY BROCKWAY

SAY GOODBYE – Senior Samantha Prahalis (21) was held to nine points on 4-of-13 shooting in her final game as a Buckeye.

Spring Football Soon To Bloom For Buckeyes

By Jeff Svoboda

For the first 3½ months of Urban Meyer's tenure, the mileposts passed were mostly taking care of business off the field.

The new Ohio State head coach first hired – and in some cases rehired – his assistant coaches, signed his first class of recruits and watched as his new strength and conditioning staff put the returning players through a grueling off-season program designed to rework their bodies.

Finally, on March 13, Meyer turned his attention to the actual gridiron, speaking to reporters for more than 25 minutes about what can be expected when spring practice begins March 28 and culminates in the annual spring game, set for April 21 at Ohio Stadium.

And from the sound of it, fans, media and other observers can expect a group of 15 practices that are as competitive and intense as the workouts that preceded them.

"Every Wednesday and Saturday in the spring (after the first week), there will be a winner and a loser when you leave the practice field," Meyer said. "It's a competition. Once again, it's creating environments and situations where I want to see who the fighters are and who the guys are who are going to compete.

"There will be rewards at the end of the day. You can get off the field with Gatorade if you win, and if not you drink out of a water hose and do some running. That includes the coaching staff."

The goal for Meyer will be to continue to instill the competitive nature he demands from his teams, and it's fair to say the players started to learn what was expected during offseason work.

"It is going to be an intense spring drills," defensive lineman John Simon said. "Everyone got bigger, faster and stronger in the offseason. The entire team is ready to go. We all want to prove ourselves in front of the new coaching staff. We're all excited to see what we can do in all phases – offense, defense and special teams."

Players will need to have that type of attitude because Meyer has made it clear that spring will go a long way in determining who will be on the field when the

Buckeyes open the season Sept. 1 in the Horseshoe against Miami (Ohio).

Though fall camp will obviously have an impact on what will happen come the opening kickoff, Meyer said the real work toward cementing spots on the two-deep will happen this spring as the Buckeyes attempt to bounce back from a 6-7 season in 2011, their first losing campaign since 1988.

"By the time we hit training camp, it's game mode," the coach said. "We're trying to go beat Miami. I mean, sure, some things happen in the depth chart, but two-deep will be set right after spring practice."

As for the strength and conditioning program implemented by new assistant athletic director Mickey Marotti and his staff – which includes former Buckeyes Jeff Uhlenhake and Anthony Schlegel as well as new hires Rick Court and Kenny Parker – Meyer was excited to give it high marks.

"We take great pride in our off-season program, and in our very strong opinion, championships are won in the offseason," he said. "I grade ourselves a plus. We had a very good offseason. The team looks a lot different to me, especially the offensive line. I was very disappointed in some body types that were here. A lot of those bodies have changed. It's very impressive."

However, Meyer said that he didn't get the sense that the reputedly intense off-season work was any major change from the way things were done under previous head coach Jim Tressel.

"I don't get that feeling at all," he said. "I've kept several coaches on the staff. Zero resistance. I've asked because I have a lot of respect for what was done in the past.

"Sure, there are some differences. I think the tempo of practice is going to be a culture shock just because it's one of those offenses that we're going to try to go run as many plays as we can at practice."

The offseason work is now over, with players having scattered across the country for spring break the week of March 19. Upon their return, they will be treated March 26 to a "Champions Club" dinner, at which players who have bought in fully to the program and embraced their responsibilities within it will be recog-

nized. That also includes attending class as well as taking care of their on-campus responsibilities.

"We separate the non-champions from champions, and it's all about accountability," Meyer said. "The champions will eat very well (and) get nice gear. The non-champions will not eat as well that day. Hopefully that will give them some incentive to do things right."

Changing Perceptions

Meyer was quick to credit such players as defensive lineman Johnathan Hankins and running back Bri'onte Dunn for already living up to the high standards.

"Hankins is a guy and Bri'onte Dunn got graduated up in one of the classifications – another way that we evaluate our guys and encourage our guys," the coach said. "They did a good job, those two young men."

Meyer was also quick to point to Dunn as one player who has gone about changing the coach's perception since he took over in late November. The Canton (Ohio) GlenOak back was a five-star prospect who wavered between OSU and Michigan during the recruiting process and seemed worried about early playing time, and Meyer admitted that didn't quite please him.

"I wasn't a Bri'onte fan, and then something interesting happened. I went and visited his family," Meyer said. "Incredible people. I mean, off the charts. One of the best home visits I've ever had. We left there thinking, 'You know what? We get him now. He's a product of a great family.' We're excited to have him."

Similar transformations have occurred in a number of more established players on the team. Meyer talked up Dunn's fellow backs Roderick Smith and Carlos Hyde for maturing from January through mid-March, while converted tight end Reid Fragel was lauded for putting more emphasis on his work in the classroom.

Another player to receive plaudits without provocation from Meyer was quarterback Kenny Guiton, who also got the dreaded "not a big fan" label from Meyer upon the coach's arrival before going about changing his ways.

"He's taking his profession real seriously," Meyer said. "I kind of like guys that do that. When I say 'his profession,'



Urban Meyer



FILE PHOTO

BULKING UP – Tight end-turned-offensive tackle Reid Fragel (88) is nearing 300 pounds according to Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer.

I mean he's a professional student and professional football player. It's what he does."

Among personnel moves, Meyer said that Fragel is nearing 300 pounds while putting on weight in his quest to switch from tight end to offensive tackle, while sophomore Darryl Baldwin has moved from the defensive line to the offensive line, swapping his jersey number from No. 90 to 76 in the process.

The coach also confirmed Ohio State

will receive more help along the offensive line for spring ball when four-star offensive tackle recruit Taylor Decker arrives in time for drills. Decker will be joined as a March enrollee by defensive end Se'Von Pittman and linebacker Luke Roberts.

Dunn, quarterback Cardale Jones, wideout Michael Thomas, offensive lineman Jacoby Boren, linebacker Joshua Perry and defensive back Tyvis Powell enrolled in January and will also be on the field for spring drills.

While those players have been added to the roster, Meyer said he does not expect any more attrition from the team. The Buckeyes are at 82 scholarships – their maximum for the next three years due to NCAA sanctions – following the departures of Jaamal Berry, David Durham, Jeremy Cash, Dominic Clarke, DerJuan Gambrell, Taylor Graham and Jordan Whiting.

"I hope (the attrition is done), but you never know," Meyer said. "I think if a kid makes it through what they've been through, now they get to go play football."

Meyer said the position he's most excited about is the tight end group – pointing to the talents of Jake Stoneburner, Jeff Heurman and Nick Vannett – while he's also been pleased with the play of OSU's fullbacks. Their emergence could lead Meyer to use more of those types of players than the past regime.

The coach's ability to recognize such attributes from his players shows he's coming along when it comes to knowing the roster. Meyer said he wouldn't watch much – if any – film from the 2011 season, preferring to give his charges a clean slate. But he did say he's beginning to have an idea of what each of his players brings to the table.

"I have a pretty good feel," Meyer said. "The football specifics, (I have) no idea. I have not seen Braxton Miller throw a ball. I haven't seen guys catch a ball. I've seen them run, but I think that all will come. If they couldn't throw or couldn't catch, they certainly wouldn't be at Ohio State."

Offensively, Meyer said he expects to be able to install most of his spread offense principles by the time spring is over, and his search for a playmaker on offense in the mold of former Florida star Percy Harvin has a few contenders.

Meyer mentioned wideouts Devin Smith and Corey "Philly" Brown as two players who had potential to fill that role, while running back Jordan Hall – discussed as a potential hybrid back/receiver in the past – could also chip in but will have to improve upon his first three seasons.

All in all, the Ashtabula, Ohio, native said he likes the direction the team is going as it gets ready to begin spring football.

"I feel good," Meyer said. "I'll tell you more after the skill part. I would say that we are where I thought we would be. We have a bunch of good, tough kids – a lot of kids from the great state of Ohio that played high school football here."

Tebow-Like Quarterback Hearing From Ohio State

Comparing high school players to Tim Tebow is an overused analogy, and that's especially been the case at Ohio State since Urban Meyer was hired as coach. When it comes to Kansas City (Mo.) Staley quarterback Trent Hosick, however, he had been hearing those comparisons long before Meyer contacted him.

Hosick, a 6-2, 221-pound prospect, is ranked the No. 8 quarterback in the 2013 class according to Scout.com and sports similar physical attributes to the former Florida star. His grades, too, are exceptional.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Ari Wasserman

His teammates also call him "Tebow."

"I've grown up watching him, I've read his book," Hosick said of the 2007 Heisman Trophy winner who now plays for the NFL's Denver Broncos. "He's definitely someone I hold a great amount of respect for and look up to. It's special to be compared to a guy like him."

If the comparisons hold water, it's no mystery why Hosick's recruitment has exploded. The four-star prospect reports 14 offers, one most recently from Stanford, and Ohio State is starting to become interested as well.

Though the Buckeyes haven't come through with an offer yet, Hosick said the building relationship with new offensive coordinator Tom Herman is something he's excited about.

"Coach Herman said to me, 'Well, Trent, Coach Meyer likes you, and for obvious reasons you can assume,'" Hosick said. "When he said that, I'm not going to lie, I got pretty giddy inside."

"I know they think most kids with a lot of offers don't get too overly excited when they call, but I was trying to remain calm. It means a lot that Coach Meyer is interested in me at quarterback."

In his junior season, Hosick was the perfect dual threat. He completed 67 percent of his passes for 1,400 yards and 10 touchdowns. Perhaps the most

impressive part of his game was his ability to move the chains with his legs. He rushed 218 times for 2,096 yards and 31 touchdowns, guiding Staley to a Missouri Class 5 state championship.

Though Ohio State could make up ground in pursuit of Hosick if it offers him a scholarship, he has a lot of opportunities to consider. The programs that have offered him so far are the ones he's most focused on at the moment.

"I'm keeping all options open, but I'd say Iowa is standing out," Hosick said. "Iowa was the very first school to offer. It says a lot that they were willing to take a chance on me before everyone else was. They tell me I'm very important to their recruiting class. And there are a lot of coaches saying I'm very important to them, but Iowa's talked with me the most."

Hosick and his family have already made unofficial visits to Iowa, Missouri, Kansas State, Iowa State and Illinois, and he'd like to add Baylor and Arkansas to that list soon. Ohio State will visit Hosick sometime in April to watch him throw, and a scholarship offer could follow if the staff is impressed.

For now, Hosick is taking his time in his recruitment. Though he hasn't figured out a timeline for his final decision, the quarterback would find it most ideal if things didn't drag out much longer.

"I'd like it to be fairly soon," Hosick said of his pending decision. "Not only because I plan on graduating early, but because I feel like a quarterback should commit early to begin recruiting his teammates. That's an important part of the process."

"I'm not sure which direction I'll go, though. I've handed this decision over to the Lord. I know he has a plan for my life. I don't know what it is, but I'm fully open to where he wants me to go. And when he tells me, I'll make my decision."

Virginia RB Enjoys Visit To Wisconsin

Richmond (Va.) Hermitage running back Derrick Green has been on enough unofficial visits to know what to expect, but the four-star prospect was greeted

with a surprise during a layover in Chicago while on his way to Wisconsin.

"I actually ran into (former Wisconsin quarterback) Russell Wilson at the airport and got to speak to him for a while," Green said. "It was really cool and really unexpected. I went over to go speak to him and he actually knew who I was."

Wilson, also a native of Richmond, Va., was able to give Green some valuable input on what it would be like to leave the East Coast for Madison.

"He told me how great of place it was and how much it reminded him of home," Green said of Wilson, who led the Badgers to the Big Ten title and a Rose Bowl berth last season. "He said the atmosphere is great and definitely said that it's a school that there's a lot to like about."

Green is a 5-11, 220-pound running back who has garnered 24 scholarship offers, and the Badgers could be making a move toward the top of that list after the visit the weekend of March 17.

Wisconsin's coaching staff has plenty to boast about with what they've done with running backs, pointing most recently to Montee Ball, a Heisman Trophy finalist last year.

During his visit in Madison, Green met with academic advisers and got to speak with various current players, including Ball.

"Oh man, it was great," said Green of his brief conversation with Ball. "He's a great guy and I had fun. We talked a lot about the recruiting process. He talked about how much work he put in, how he gained weight to be more effective and how he studied film. I took a lot away from him."

Green, however, is most certainly making his rounds, visiting Clemson, North Carolina and North Carolina State during early March. Most recently, he took a March 18 visit to Michigan.

The Virginia running back prospect has been one of Ohio State's top targets, and he took an unofficial visit to Columbus the weekend of Oct. 29 to see the Buckeyes' dramatic last-second win over the Badgers in Ohio Stadium.

Growing up, Green watched Ohio



Trent Hosick

State football with his grandfather, an avid Buckeye fan. Green eventually started to root for Ohio State and wears No. 27 for his high school team in honor of Heisman Trophy winner Eddie George.

Green rushed for 1,500 yards and 20 touchdowns during his junior season, statistics he was able to compile despite rarely playing in second halves because Hermitage made a habit of blowing out its opponents.

Green plans to release a top five before his senior season starts, but the running back confirmed to BSB that Ohio State will get one of his five official visits. Though Green is continuing to gather more information, he said he plans on making a return visit to Wisconsin after his experience.

"Definitely, yes," he responded when asked if he plans on returning to Madison. "I want to continue building my relationship with the coaches."

Younger Heurman Sticking To List Of Four

Naples (Fla.) Barron Collier four-star tight end Mike Heurman recently cut his list to four schools – Ohio State, LSU, Miami (Fla.) and Notre Dame – and he doesn't anticipate adding any other programs.

"I just want to focus on the schools that have a legitimate shot to get me," Heurman said. "That's why I cut it to four. I'm very thankful for all my offers, but Notre Dame, LSU, Ohio State and Miami are the schools with the best chance."

One of the most promising youthful players on Ohio State's current roster is the prospect's older brother, Jeff, so the Buckeyes are hoping the younger Heurman (6-4, 220) will also wind up in Columbus.

It seems natural that having family ties would give Ohio State an advantage over the other three schools in the race, but Heurman said that isn't going to be the determining factor in his eventual decision.

"I would like Ohio State even if my brother didn't play there," he said. "I like Urban Meyer a lot, too, so that's good. It would be amazing to play with my brother, but part of me also wants to write my own story."

Notre Dame is the only school of the four that hasn't had Heurman on campus, but the Fighting Irish have

OSU Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2013 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Cameron Burrows	CB	6-2	195	★★★★	Trotwood (Ohio) Madison
Evan Lisle	OT	6-6	275	★★★★	Centerville, Ohio
Jalin Marshall	RB	6-1	190	★★★★★	Middletown, Ohio
Billy Price	DT	6-4	265	★★★★	Austintown (Ohio) Fitch
Eli Woodard	CB	6-0½	180	★★★★	Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern

a March 29 visit planned for the prep tight end. Heurman's relationship with Notre Dame receivers coach Tony Alford could be a big boost for the Irish.

"I talk to Coach Alford almost once a day," he said. "We have a great relationship and he likes to stay in touch constantly so I keep that going. I really like what Notre Dame has to offer from a football and academic standpoint. I'm going to visit March 29 and I'm excited to see what they're all about up there."

LSU is the program Heurman most recently visited, traveling to Baton Rouge on March 8-9, and he named the Tigers his favorite program after the trip.

"It was cool because it was really my first real unofficial visit," he said. "I liked it a lot and I like the coaches. I could see us having a good bond. LSU is a place I see myself going."

The final school Heurman is considering is Miami, and the proximity to his family in Florida could be a huge factor in his decision. Heurman has also built a strong relationship with Hurricanes head coach Al Golden but admitted the looming off-the-field issues could hurt Miami's chances.

"Of course, it's close to home and that will be big for me," he said. "Also, I think Coach Golden is a great guy. He's not just a great football coach, he's also a great person. I worry about the (pending NCAA) sanctions a little, but I try to focus on other things. I could help them and they could help me."

Four-Star DT To Visit OSU For Spring Game

Even after earning a verbal commitment from Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern cornerback Eli Woodard, Ohio State is far from finished recruiting the New Jersey area. The Buckeyes' next target from Woodard's neck of the woods is four-star defensive tackle Gregg Webb.

Webb, a 6-2½, 290-pound prospect from Erial (N.J.) Timber Creek Regional,

has picked up more than 30 scholarship offers from some of the nation's top programs, including Alabama, Florida State, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Michigan State, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Penn State, Tennessee and Washington.

"It's overwhelming sometimes but you really can't let it get to you," Webb said of the recruiting process. "It's all going to come down to how you feel you fit in somewhere. This is where (Timber Creek head coach Rob) Hinson comes in and gives me his best advice. I'm going to listen to everybody so I can start thinking for myself how I'm going to make this list, and how to manage it and narrow my choices down."

This spring will be a busy one for Webb, who is in the process of mapping out unofficial visits in an effort to become more familiar with programs recruiting him. First up for the defensive tackle will be a trip to Columbus on April 21 for the Buckeyes' annual spring game, and Woodard will accompany him.

"I know they have a new coaching staff," Webb said. "Mike Vrabel, a defensive great from Ohio State (is there). He's a great guy and knows a lot of things. And Coach Meyer is a legendary coach, and he surrounds himself with a good coaching staff all the time. I feel like I'll fit in there nice."

Webb also plans to take visits to Maryland, Virginia and Alabama, though none of those has been planned yet. He'll also keep hometown Rutgers in consideration, though the Scarlet Knights haven't been in the forefront of his recruitment to date.

As one of the most heavily sought-after defensive line prospects in the nation, Webb feels his versatility is one of the reasons he has already received this many offers.

"I feel like I can play from the 3 to the 5 to the 1 technique," he said. "I feel like I have the good qualities a nose (tackle) should have, and at the 3 technique and

5 technique, I can do the same things there, too. I would like to beat the center up all day. I'll take the double-team, but I would also like to play in that gap. It doesn't matter to me."

With a lot to figure out before coming to a final decision, Webb said he wouldn't make a decision until after taking official visits. However, he would like to have his list narrowed down some by the time this summer is over.

One advantage Webb believes he has heading into perhaps the busiest time of his life is the clarity of knowing exactly what he's looking for.

"I already know what I want – the same thing I have here," he said. "I want a great school, a great atmosphere, great coaches, great program and guys I can sit around and have fun with and be myself."

Georgia Defensive Tackle Believes He's Close To Offer

Suwanee (Ga.) Peachtree Ridge defensive tackle Tony Porter doesn't yet have a scholarship offer, but he's been hearing from some of the top programs in the country. Ohio State, Florida State and Georgia and Georgia Tech have all been in close contact with him and he expects offers to start rolling in.

Though Porter is unsure of who will be the first to offer, the 6-2, 270-pound prospect guessed the Buckeyes would be first.

"I have had good conversation with (Ohio State co-defensive coordinator) Everett Withers and they like me a lot," Porter said. "He talks to me about how they want me to visit and all that, so I know they are interested."

Porter attends the same high school that produced former Ohio State defensive lineman Cameron Heyward, who is currently with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Porter, who is still in the process of mapping out his visits, has seen only in-state Georgia thus far.

"I went to one of Georgia's junior days and it was pretty nice," he said. "I liked the facilities, the coaches, and it was a pretty good visit. I talked to them a little and I think they will keep recruiting me."

Though Porter's recruitment hasn't taken off as quickly as some other prospects, the defensive tackle has maintained a positive approach. Porter is just fine having not received a scholarship offer to this point because he thinks it is only a matter of time.

"I think I will get some offers this spring," he said.

Sophomore Akron LB Attracting Attention

The Nike Football Sparg Combine in Massillon, Ohio, on March 17 featured some of the top Ohio prep football talent, but one of the ones who stood out the most was Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary linebacker Dante Booker.

Booker, who is emerging as one of the top 2014 prospects, expects to improve on a productive sophomore year.

"I did pretty well last year as a sophomore, and I think I was able to get to the football and make plays," he said. "I want to step up and be a leader this season because we lost a lot of great seniors."

"I think I did all right (in the camp), but I don't think I'm in the best shape right now. Playing at St. Vincent is great because we get the best coaching and it's a great atmosphere."

Booker (6-3, 210) has two full high school seasons remaining, but he's already beginning to attract serious attention from top programs.

"I'm hearing from schools like Wisconsin, Ohio State and Michigan the most right now," he said. "I'm only a sophomore, so I don't really expect to hear too much at this time. I don't know too much about any program to be honest because I haven't really looked at this stuff much. I'd like to visit Wisconsin for a game."

Though Ohio State, Michigan and Wisconsin are all Big Ten powers, Booker said he'd also like to start hearing from schools in the SEC. Booker's father, Dante Sr., played for Auburn.

"I like LSU and Auburn the best," he said. "I plan on going to Ohio State's camp this summer and possibly Michigan also. I haven't set my schedule yet. I need to check into camps a little further."

In-State Running Back Hopes For Buckeye Offer

Aregeros Turner's recruiting process is starting to speed up, but perhaps the fastest prospect in the state of Ohio is hoping for more. The Copley, Ohio, running back has offers from Illinois, Tennessee and Washington, but he admits one from Ohio State would mean a lot.

"With Urban Meyer now at Ohio State, that really got my attention because I fit that type of offense," Turner said. "I will be going on a bus tour this summer to check out a lot of schools."

At 5-10 and 175 pounds, Turner does have some growing to do, but his 4.4 speed is his biggest asset. Perhaps his recruitment would be on a faster track had he not broken his leg during his junior season, but the three-star prospect is confident he'll return to make big plays on the field this season.

"I'm in rehab right now and I am about to be cleared to run track," he said. "My first meet is in May and things have gone really well with my recovery. I'm back jogging now and feel good."

Turner is hearing from California, Oregon and Wisconsin, and he expects an offer from Purdue in the coming week. He will remain patient, though, because he expects things to pick up quickly once he gets back on the field.

"I'm in no hurry to make a decision," he said. "I will probably take visits in the fall and then decide sometime before signing day. I know schools will want to see me run to make sure I am 100-percent healthy."

Recruiting Notes

- Ohio State has offered Missouri City (Texas) Marshall outside linebacker Deon Hollins. Rated the No. 16 outside linebacker in the 2013 class by Scout, Hollis (6-2, 222) has stacked up over 30 scholarship offers. Joining OSU with offers are such programs as Arizona, Nebraska, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma and Stanford.

- Warren (Ohio) Howland running back DeVeon Smith committed to Michigan on March 17. The four-star running back had an offer from Ohio State and five other schools. Scout rates the 5-11, 210-pound prospect as the No. 7 running back in the 2013 class. Smith said he felt comfortable in Ann Arbor and was encouraged by how he would translate in the Michigan offense when the Wolverines revert back to an I-formation after quarterback Denard Robinson graduates.

- Greensboro (N.C.) Northern Guilford running back T.J. Logan has an Ohio State offer but has said recently that South Carolina is currently leading for his services. Logan (5-11, 180) has rushed for over 3,500 yards and 52 touchdowns in the last two seasons and has already made a visit to OSU. He said he is keeping his options open and will narrow his list sometime at the beginning of his senior season.

New Urban Meyer Tees!



A.



B.



C.



D.



E.

Nuthouse Tee

F.



G.



H.



I.

- A. 44558 Red Long Sleeve Polo \$35.00
- B. 14445 Urban Era Tee w/ Schedule \$16.99
- C. 14449 Urbanation Tee \$16.99
- D. 13034 Ladies Charcoal/Red Raglan \$32.00
- E. 14556 Red Long Sleeve Basketball Tee \$26.00
- F. 18877 Nuthouse Tee XS-XL \$28.00 2X \$30.00
- G. 55003 Black Voyager Polar Fleece S-XL \$38.00 2X \$42.00
- H. 66892 Classic White Bar Cap \$12.99
- I. 66896 Black Woody Bar Cap \$12.99

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PROFILE

Fraser Wants To Show Exactly What He Can Do

By STEVE HELWAGEN
 Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

A year ago, Simon Fraser was the one everybody was going gaga over.

Fraser, a defensive end recruited to Ohio State out of nearby Upper Arlington High School, was everybody's All-American.

He was a Rivals100.com national top-100 prospect and among Ohio's five best prospects after leading UA to a perfect 15-0 record and the 2000 Division I state championship.

Yes, Fraser did get a chance as a true freshman to show a little bit of what he could do — with stress on the words "a little bit."

"I had a very exciting year," said Fraser, who saw action in 11 of OSU's 12 games in 2001. I learned a lot. I think I grew a lot from the player I was last year when I graduated from UA. I've had to step my game up.

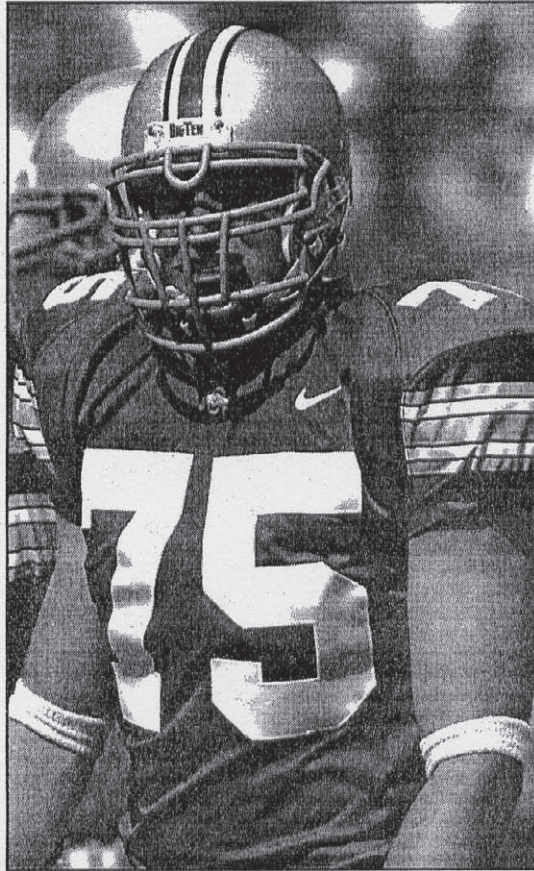
"I'm pleased with how the year went and I'm looking forward to the next couple of years."

Even at 6-5, 250 pounds, Fraser discovered it is a quantum leap to go from high school ball to the Big Ten.

"It was a challenge to go from high school football to the Division I level," he said. "You're going up against people who are 22 and 23 years old. They've been playing longer than you have and they're more physically mature. They have all those things on you.

"In high school, sometimes you go against kids who are half your size or are not as athletic. Sometimes it is a lot easier.

"But here, you're going up against kids who are on scholarship. They were recruited by the university and they are representing it. You're going up



JEFF BREHM

BEST IS YET TO COME — Upper Arlington, Ohio, native Simon Fraser saw action in 11 of 12 games for his hometown Ohio State Buckeyes in 2001.

against the best of the best."

As a senior at UA, Fraser tallied 130 tackles and 30 sacks. But as a freshman at OSU, he had to cool his heels a bit. He was content to work in behind veterans such as Darrion Scott, Will Smith, Kenny Peterson and Tim Cheatwood, who had all earned spots in the rotation at end.

"It's a challenge to go out there every day and compete," Fraser admitted. "Trying to earn a job out there is a challenge."

But the big redhead did not let the numbers situation get him down. He pushed his way into the rotation at end during fall camp and ended up tallying six tackles, three for losses and a sack.

"The biggest highlight of the year was probably my first tackle at Ohio Stadium (against Akron) and hearing my name up on the loud speaker," Fraser said. "It was kind of exciting."

"But the most exciting thing I was a part of this year was going up to The Big House and beating Michigan. I got in a lot and it was against Michigan, our big rival.

"To be able to contribute as much as I did, I felt good about it. It was a big victory that people would be talking about."

Fraser matched his season high for minutes with seven in OSU's 26-20 win over Michigan.

"Simon really came on as the year went on," said defensive line coach Jim Heacock. "If you look at the Michigan game, you see he really stepped forward. He knocked down a pass and had

a couple of big hurries for us."

Fraser said he has really taken to Heacock's coaching style.

"He tells you when you do something good, but he also works with you on what you need to improve on," Fraser said. "He's not one of those guys who gives up on you. If you're having a bad day, he will get on you and push you to become the best you can be.

"That's what I like about Coach Heacock. He keeps you motivated every day to be the best."

Heacock believes Fraser, with his strong work ethic, has a chance to become a mainstay for the OSU defense.

"Simon is a high motor guy," Heacock said. "He is like Tim Anderson because he always wants to get better. He practices every day all-out. He just has a great upside, great potential and a great attitude.

"He does everything right on and off the field and he has the potential to be a pretty good football player."

With Cheatwood out of the picture and Peterson likely shifting over to focus on defensive tackle, Fraser has a chance to earn more minutes as the top end reserve behind starters Scott and Smith.

But he knows he cannot afford to rest on his laurels.

"I'm looking forward to the off-season and a chance to get a little bit stronger and faster," Fraser said. "I want to come out in spring practice and look to improve. I just want to gain ground and earn a spot in the rotation."

Heacock is eager to see how much Fraser has improved since the end of bowl practice.

"Like everybody, Simon has some things he can work on," Heacock said. "He can improve on his pass rush techniques and things like that, but I know he will be looking forward to this spring."

With his strong profile in the classroom, Fraser seems to fit the new persona of the Ohio State football program.

"I'm very pleased with where this program is at and where it's heading," Fraser said. "You could kind of get a sense of that when we were at Michigan."

"People are buying into (head coach Jim) Tressel's beliefs and what he wants to do with this program. I think within the next couple of years, if people keep believing and working hard, there's going to be some good things coming out of Ohio State."

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PROFILE

Fans Tantalized By Smith's Late Performances

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

In his first season as a starter for the OSU defense, Will Smith saved his best for last.

The 6-4, 250-pound Smith was an unqualified star in OSU's last two games — the win over Michigan and the heart-breaking Outback Bowl loss to South Carolina.

"The big thing for Will was those last two games," said defensive line coach Jim Heacock. "He went through the year and was pretty solid. We were kind of waiting for him to break out."

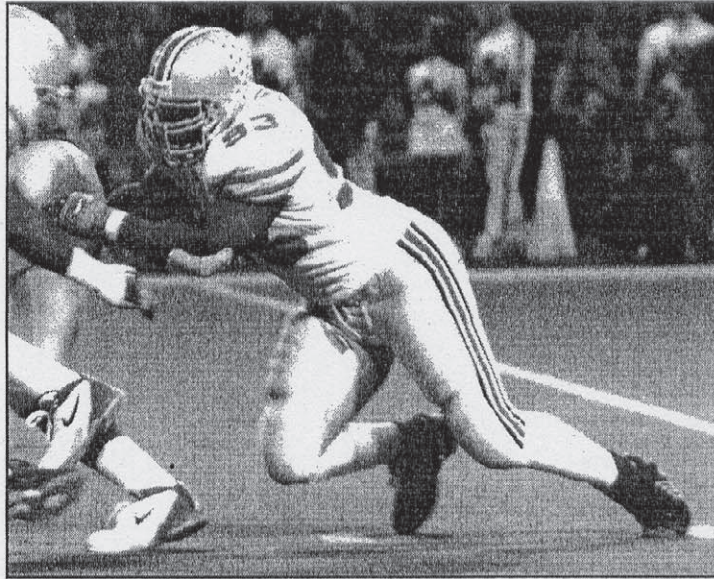
Against Michigan, Smith notched a pair of sacks on quarterback John Navarre. Plus he was on the spot to recover a fumble forced by fellow end Kenny Peterson.

Then, in the Outback Bowl, Smith tied linebacker Joe Cooper for team-high honors with nine tackles. That figure matched a career high for Smith, who was wrapping up his sophomore campaign.

"In the Michigan game, he had a real good game," Heacock said. "He had a couple of sacks and was very active. Then in the Outback Bowl, he led the team in tackles."

"I think in those last two games he became the kind of player we thought he should be."

Smith was one of the key members of OSU's 2000 recruiting class. A prep All-



SONNY BROCKWAY

LEAVE 'EM WANTING MORE — If the way he played in last season's final two games is any indication of what's to come from defensive lineman Will Smith, then OSU fans are in for a real treat in 2002.

American from Utica (N.Y.) Proctor High School, he signed with the Buckeyes over the likes of Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Virginia Tech and Boston College.

He impressed immediately as a freshman, backing up Brent Johnson at end. Smith logged a freshman-high 99 minutes and tallied three sacks.

This past year, he moved into the lineup at end, where he started 10 of OSU's 12 games. His two sacks in the Outback Bowl gave him a team-high four on the season. He finished second on the team in tackles for loss (nine) and seventh in overall tackles (47).

"I think I could have done better than I did this past year," Smith said. "I just take it that this is the start (for next year) and I just have to improve from this point."

According to Smith, changes in the OSU defense under new coordinator Mark Dantonio gave the ends different

responsibilities.

"I think the D-line tried to go out and attack and get sacks, but it was like we had to play a lot of different reads and play assignment defense," he said.

"Getting after the quarterback, we just wanted to get after him and make him make bad plays."

Smith made more than his share of plays. At UCLA, he notched a pair of tackles for loss as the Buckeyes bottled up tailback DeShaun Foster.

He also came up big against Northwestern, notching nine tackles with one sack. He also stripped stand-out tailback Damien Anderson, causing a fumble that teammate Mike Doss returned for a touchdown.

At Minnesota, he had seven tackles with two for losses.

"I think I did a lot of things in a lot of games," Smith said. "It's more the things I didn't do that I remember. There are a lot of things I wish I could have done."

Having a big hand in the win over Michigan was probably a key moment, Smith said.

"I think it was good for the program, for the players, for the seniors," he said. "They've been through a lot. It was good mentally."

Now moving into his junior season, Smith knows he will be asked to provide a good example for OSU's younger players and newcomers.

"I think everybody should be a leader on the team," said Smith, who would like to be an FBI agent one day. "If everyone shows leadership, we'll have better chemistry and everyone will like each other."

On paper, Smith could be part of one of the strongest units on the team. He will be joined by Darrion Scott at end and Tim Anderson at tackle. Like Smith, they each have one year of starting experience under their belts.

"I think we've got a lot of guys coming back," he said. "We're losing a couple of guys, but I think their backups will be able to step up and take their position and keep the defense strong."

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Big Ten Lives Up To Billing In NCAA Tourney

Given the 24-hour news cycle that is just as present in the sports world as it is in the realm of news and world affairs, it's often hard for anything to live up to the hype.

However, one thing that did so was the Big Ten men's basketball conference during the opening weekend of NCAA Tournament play. After being talked up by its coaches and some observers throughout the year as being the best league in the country, the Big Ten delivered March 15-18, sending four teams to the Sweet 16 to tie the Big East for the most in the nation.

BIG TEN NOTES

Jeff Svoboda

In all, Big Ten teams went 9-2 during the first weekend of the tournament with top-seeded Michigan State, second-seeded Ohio State, fourth-seeded Indiana and fourth-seeded Wisconsin holding serve and advancing.

The four teams reaching that level ties a league record set in 1989 and matched in 1999.

"I'm so proud of the league," Wisconsin head coach Bo Ryan said. "I just really think that the league has prepared us to play other people. Now what the results are going to be, that's to be seen. But I think in our conference with those coaches and the way they do things and how the league made everybody better as the league went on ... I thought we prepared each other."

Michigan State made its way to the Sweet 16 through Columbus, opening with an 89-67 victory against 16th-seeded LIU Brooklyn in West Region play. The Spartans moved on to face ninth-seeded Saint Louis, holding off a late Billikens charge to post a 65-61 victory.

Keith Appling, who hit a big three-pointer late to give MSU a seven-point lead it wouldn't relinquish, had a game-high 19 points, while forward Draymond Green assisted on that big trey on the way to finishing with 16 points, 13 rebounds and six helpers.

Afterward, Michigan State head coach Tom Izzo discussed his pride in both the Big Ten's postseason performance and

his squad's work in capturing the regular-season and tournament titles in the conference.

"That's what makes me proudest – winning the regular-season championship and then the tournament championship," Izzo told the Detroit Free Press. "And when you get as many as four teams in the Sweet 16, that says that the league was as good as we all talked about it being. That doesn't always happen, either."

"Not that I think that we should be totally judged on (making Sweet 16s) because it all comes down to the matchups. But I'm thrilled for every team that won. I really am. As you get a little older, you hope for your league to do well, and our league is sure doing well and making the Big Ten look good."

The Spartans will meet fourth-seeded Louisville in Phoenix in a regional semifinal March 23.

Two league teams have advanced in the East Region – Ohio State, which beat Loyola (Md.) and Gonzaga in Pittsburgh, and Wisconsin, which travels to Boston fresh off victories against Montana and Vanderbilt.

Ryan's Badgers had little trouble while downing 13th-seeded Montana, 73-49, in their opening game in Albuquerque, N.M., before holding on to best fourth-seeded Vanderbilt, 60-57. Jordan Taylor led UW with 14 points vs. the Commodores, and Ryan Evans grabbed a rebound of John Jenkins' potential game-winning three-pointer in the final seconds to help seal the Badgers' victory.

"Ryan did a great job of checking out down low and securing the rebound, but it was definitely heart-stopping for a second there," Taylor said.

Wisconsin held the Commodores to just 5-of-19 (26.3 percent) shooting from beyond the arc, and Jenkins – the team's leading scorer with 20.1 points per game entering the game – was just 3 for 13 from the floor including the crucial miss.

The Badgers will meet top-seeded Syracuse on March 22 for the right to play the winner of the Ohio State-Cincinnati contest.

Meanwhile, Indiana returned to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2002 thanks to victories against 13th-seeded New Mexico State and 12th-seeded Virginia Commonwealth in Portland, Ore.



SONNY BROCKWAY

STILL DANCING – Michigan State head coach Tom Izzo's Spartans were one of four Big Ten teams that advanced to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

The Hoosiers downed the Aggies by a 79-66 score to open play before a come-from-behind 63-61 win against VCU.

Indiana trailed the Rams, who were hoping to return to a second straight Final Four, by nine at one point in the second half and were still down by three with less than a minute to play when Victor Oladipo converted a three-point play to knot the game at 61. The next time down the floor, Oladipo's shot was blocked, but the ball went straight to Will Sheehy, who hit the game-winning jumper with 12.7 seconds left.

"I'm sure it was a great basketball game for people to watch from the stands," IU head coach Tom Crean said. "It was really a great game for me as well because I got to see this game – the last six or seven minutes – through our players' eyes. And they were so locked in and had such great resolve to never panic and to just truly believe that they were going to win."

Indiana advanced in South Region play to face top-seeded Kentucky on March 23 in Atlanta. The Hoosiers staged one of the most memorable upsets of the season against the Wildcats on Dec. 10 in Bloomington, using a Christian Watford three at the buzzer to down top-ranked and previously undefeated UK by a 73-72 score.

Two Big Ten teams were unable to advance past the first weekend, but it wasn't for lack of trying in the case of Purdue. The 10th-seeded Boilermakers upset No. 7 Saint Mary's in the opening round, 72-69, before losing a lead in the final minutes and falling to a 63-60 loss against second-seeded Kansas.

The loss against the Jayhawks in Omaha, Neb., was particularly brutal because the Boilermakers led throughout almost the entire game and opened a 60-57 lead late before allowing the last six points.

First, Tyshawn Taylor dunked the ball to get Kansas within one, and then Purdue guard Lewis Jackson lost the ball late in the Boilermakers' ensuing possession, allowing Elijah Johnson to break away uncontested and give Kansas a 61-60 lead with 23.3 seconds to play.

Senior Robbie Hummel missed a three on the other end for Purdue, leading to another breakaway slam by Taylor with the clock winding down. Ryne Smith got off a half-court heave for the Boilers as the buzzer sounded, but it hit the backboard and rim before spinning out.

Hummel had 19 points in the first 15 minutes and concluded his star-crossed career – which included All-America honors in 2010 and two reconstructive knee surgeries the past two campaigns – with 26 points and nine rebounds.

"I would just say I'm basically in shock from the game," Hummel said afterward. "It definitely hasn't hit me yet, but I don't even know. I can't believe it's over."

The lone Big Ten team to fail to win a game was fourth-seeded Michigan, which suffered a second-round upset loss in Nashville, Tenn., to 13th-seeded Ohio, 65-60. The Bobcats led for every minute of the second half, and guard D.J. Cooper paced OU with 21 points and five assists.

"Obviously a great win for our program, for the university and for the community in Athens," said Ohio head coach John Groce, a former Ohio State assistant under Thad Matta.

The win was iced by Ohio State transfer Walter Offutt, who hit two free throws with 6.8 seconds left to preserve the triumph.

"It's been an amazing journey," Offutt said. "Probably the best thing that ever happened in my life."

Carmody On Hot Seat

So far, two of the six Big Ten men's basketball coaches whose teams failed to make the NCAA Tournament have been

fired – Bruce Weber of Illinois and Doc Sadler of Nebraska.

Another coach could soon be on the chopping block as well. Rumors continue to swirl that Northwestern is considering ending the 12-year tenure of Bill Carmody, who has turned the perennially moribund Wildcats into a bubble team for the tournament in the past few seasons but has been unable to get it over the hump.

The Wildcats won 19 games this season but lost in their Big Ten tournament opener against Minnesota – seemingly with the school's first-ever Big Dance bid on the line – and then dropped out of the NIT in the second round with a blowout loss to Washington.

"Northwestern athletic director Jim Phillips, who witnessed the loss to Washington from behind NU's bench, has to make the first unpopular decision of his four-year tenure," Chicago Tribune writer Teddy Greenstein penned in a March 17 column. "Whichever direction he chooses, fans and alums will howl."

Greenstein wrote that Carmody has a contract that runs through at least one more season but that the buyout is not enough to give NU administrators pause.

A decision either way on Carmody's future is expected by the end of the week.

O'Brien Still In Play

Ever since Maryland quarterback Danny O'Brien announced his intention to transfer for his final two seasons of collegiate eligibility in February, the scuttlebutt has been that Wisconsin is one of the potential landing spots for the signal caller who will be able to play starting this fall.

However, another Big Ten school entered the fray March 14 when Penn State head coach Bill O'Brien said the QB from Kernersville, N.C., had contacted the school.

"Danny does have an interest," Bill O'Brien said. "I'd say we're one of many schools that he's looking at. If I can do anything to improve the football team within the rules, whether that's a recruiting idea or a scheme or transfer, then I'm definitely going to look into it."

Danny O'Brien threw for 22 touchdowns against eight interceptions while being named the 2010 ACC Rookie of the Year at Maryland, but he threw only seven scores in 2011 while battling injury and struggling to fit into new head coach Randy Edsall's offense.

Bill O'Brien said in the meantime vet-

eran QBs Matt McGloin and Rob Bolden will continue to battle in spring for the team's starting nod. They will be rejoined by Paul Jones, a one-time five-star prospect who was academically ineligible a season ago.

Coker Settles In

This past fall, Marcus Coker was perhaps the top driving force behind the Iowa offense.

Now, the running back is enrolled at Division I-AA school Stony Brook trying to get his career back on track.

Coker, who ran for 1,384 yards and 15 touchdowns in 2011 on the way to second-team All-Big Ten honors, left Iowa during the winter after being investigated for a sexual assault. The victim later chose not to press charges and the case was closed.

Speaking to Newsday in an interview that ran March 15, Coker declined to go into the specifics of what happened.

"I don't think it matters," Coker said during the interview, his first since the transfer. "It's in the past and I've moved on."

Coker said he cooperated fully with Iowa officials during the investigation but did admit a team suspension from the Insight Bowl played a part in his decision to transfer.

"It was just time for a change," he said. "It was time for a fresh start, being able to get closer to home."

Coker hails from Beltsville, Md., while Stony Brook is located about 300 miles away on Long Island.

Big Ten Note-worthy

- Penn State will likely not be in a hurry to name anything in Happy Valley after the late Joe Paterno, the legendary football coach who was let go in November for his role in the cover-up of the Jerry Sandusky sexual abuse scandal. However, it appears more Pennsylvanians agree than disagree that the school's Beaver Stadium should be renamed in Paterno's honor. A Quinnipiac poll of 1,300 registered voters released March 16 showed that 46 percent were in favor while 40 percent were opposed.

- One year after Michigan posted a stunning comeback victory against Notre Dame in the first night game ever in Michigan Stadium, the two traditional rivals will meet in another night game in 2012. This year's contest will be staged Sept. 22 in Notre Dame Stadium. Notre Dame hosted its first game under the lights in 22 years last season against USC.

Champion Stieber Leads OSU At NCAA Meet

By Jeff Svoboda

One year ago, Ohio State's Logan Stieber watched the NCAA wrestling championships instead of taking part in them.

That experience was the culmination of a trying year in which Stieber struggled on the mat before taking a medical red-shirt because of a hand injury. But that adversity allowed Stieber to assess what he needed to do better to compete at the college level after a dominating high school career that ended with 179 straight victories.

"I learned last year I did a terrible job," Stieber said March 17. "My weight, my health was bad. Everything was bad. And then at the end of the day I realized that they don't care. The opponents don't care, and the fans watching don't see you practice. They don't care. They just see what happens out on the mat.

"So really I got tougher. I got a lot better on my technique, and I was working on a lot of things. And it was a blessing because it helped me out a lot."

Stieber spoke those words in the post-match press conference room at the NCAA championships, and the Monroeville, Ohio, native was an honored guest after capturing the 133-pound national championship at the meet staged at the Scottrade Center in St. Louis.

Stieber's win – Ohio State's first national title since 141-pounder J Jagers in 2009 – in the final came by a 4-3 score against defending national champion Jordan Oliver of Oklahoma State.

"I've wrestled in so many events – a million events – but nothing compares to that," Stieber said. "Nothing compares. It's the best thing I've ever had in my life."

It's fair to say ebullient head coach Tom Ryan had similar thoughts after watching his charge put together the first national title for a freshman in school history and OSU's 15th overall.

"The birth of my four children, my wedding night – there is nothing besides those two things that compares with being alongside a person who reaches his ultimate goal of athletic success," Ryan said. "Incredible performance for a great human being. I couldn't be happier."

Stieber wasn't the only OSU wrestler to stand out as the Buckeyes posted a fifth-place finish March 15-17 to cap a bounce-

back campaign and finish with 68½ points. True freshmen Hunter Stieber and Cam Tessari – also natives of Monroeville – each earned All-America honors, a status also attained by sophomore Nick Heflin.

But there's no question Logan Stieber's effort was the highlight of Ohio State's tournament. One of the most prolific wrestlers in the nation when it comes to pins, he began the tournament with two straight falls to reach the quarterfinals.

There, Stieber earned revenge for his first loss of the year by taking down 10th-seeded Chris Dardanes of Minnesota by a 7-4 score after building a 6-0 lead. In the semifinals, Stieber moved to 3-0 on the season against Iowa's third-seeded Tony Ramos, the wrestler he beat in the Big Ten final, by taking a 4-2 decision.

That set up the championship bout against Oliver, who had previously beaten Stieber by a 7-3 score Feb. 12. Things looked like they might be the same this time around when the top-seeded Oliver posted a takedown within the opening 15 seconds to take a 2-0 lead.

However, Stieber quickly escaped to make the score 2-1 and began to do a solid job defending Oliver's low attacks throughout the first period on the way to posting what Ryan called a nearly perfect match. The Ohio State grappler also got his own shot in on Oliver's left leg during the frame, but the Oklahoma State junior was able to escape the move without being taken down.

Stieber tied the match at 2 early in the second with a quick escape after choosing the bottom starting position. Near the midway point of the period, he was able to snag Oliver's left leg then finally was able to take him down near the 20-second mark, sweeping out the right leg and spinning to the top position to take a 4-2 lead.

In the third, Oliver chose bottom and got out quickly, making the score 4-3 and setting up a tense finale. The Oklahoma State grappler thought he might have had a takedown after a late restart, but Stieber was able to keep hold of Oliver's upper body from his posterior to avoid giving up the two points.

"I was a little worried, but I knew I had him high and he wasn't that deep in me," Stieber said. "I just kept looking at the

clock and waiting. And then I got scared when the officials needed each other. You never know what's going to happen. But I thought it was right."

Stieber finished his campaign with a 33-2 record.

"We knew the day we signed Logan Stieber, the program would move forward in a mighty way," Ryan said. "It is a tremendous statement for the program that a young person can come in and excel so rapidly at this level. We are so happy."

The head coach also had to be pleased with the rest of his All-Americans, a list led by Tessari. After being upset in his opening match, the 149-pounder ripped off six straight wins to make the third-place match before taking fourth.

Tessari, who entered the tournament seeded 10th, won back-to-back matches on the second evening of the tournament to clinch All-America status. He first beat third-seeded Cole VonOhlen of Air Force, 5-4, thanks to the riding time advantage then notched a late takedown to best Scott Sakaguchi of Oregon State, 4-1.

"I'm going for third," he said afterward. "As soon as I lost in the first round, that was my goal. I am looking forward to finishing up tomorrow."

He did get into the third-place match with a 9-5 decision against Justin Accordino of Hofstra, but fourth-seeded Donald Vinson of Binghamton captured the consolation final by a 12-10 score as Tessari fought through a leg injury.

"Cam is a fighter," Ryan said. "We know what we have in Cam Tessari. The guy gives everything he has every time."

Hunter Stieber also had a tournament to remember. The fifth-seeded true freshman won his opening three matches to reach the national semifinals at 141 and secure All-America honors.

The biggest win came in the quarterfinals as he upset fourth-seeded Michael Mangrum of Oregon State by a 6-5 final. Stieber fought off a near pin by Mangrum late in the second period then notched the winning takedown in the final 20 seconds.

"I didn't think about this," he said of his preseason goals. "When I looked at the kids at 141 last year, I thought no way. It is



Logan Stieber

awesome. This is amazing. I can't believe this is happening this soon."

Stieber's luck ran out as he dropped a 5-2 decision to top-ranked Kellen Russell of Michigan, the eventual national champion, in the semifinals then lost to sixth-seeded Borislav Novachkov of Cal Poly and Mangrum to finish in sixth place.

"In the history of Ohio State wrestling, we have only had six freshmen place in all the years and this year we had three," Ryan said. "The future is bright."

Heflin, the No. 9 seed at 174, earned his first All-America finish by battling back from a quarterfinal loss to top-seeded and eventual repeat national champion Ed Ruth of Penn State to take fifth place.

Along the way, Heflin posted three wins against seeded wrestlers – including a 3-2 victory against No. 4 Logan Storley of Minnesota in the fifth-place final – and lost only to the Nos. 1 and 2 wrestlers in his bracket.

"This was so important," Heflin said of his All-America finish. "My weight class was so loaded and this is a great confidence builder. Besides Ruth, I was in every match and I trained just as hard."

Another Ohio State freshman, 197-pounder Andrew Campolattano, had an excellent finish. Though he didn't reach the podium, Campolattano posted upsets of Big Ten rivals Morgan McIntosh of Penn State and eighth-seeded Matt Powless of Indiana. He dropped an overtime decision to 10th-seeded Sonny Yohn of Minnesota to end just one win shy of All-America status.

Josh Demas was forced to wrestle in the lone opening-round match at his weight, and the 157-pounder used that victory against Mallie Shuster of Kent State to propel him into a solid showing against fifth-seeded Ganbayar Sanjaa of American University. Unfortunately for Demas, Sanjaa won a 6-4 final in overtime to send the OSU redshirt freshman to the wrestlebacks. He ended up finishing 2-2.

Sophomore heavyweight Pete Capone was 1-2 at the tournament, and true freshman 125-pounder Johnni Dijulius lost his only two matches.

Full OSU results from the tournament follow.

OSU Results (Seeds In Parentheses)

•**125:** **Johnni Dijulius** – lost 3-2 decision to (11) Matthew Snyder of Virginia; lost 10-4 decision to Erik Spjut of Virginia Tech.

•**133:** **(2) Logan Stieber** – pinned

Mason Beckman of Lehigh in 5:52; pinned Jordan Thome of Army in 1:19; won 7-4 decision against (10) Chris Dardanes of Minnesota; won 4-2 decision against (3) Tony Ramos of Iowa; won 4-3 decision against (1) Jordan Oliver of Oklahoma State to win national championship.

•**141:** **(5) Hunter Stieber** – won 4-2 decision against Richard Durso of Franklin and Marshall College; won 7-4 decision against (12) Tyler Small of Kent State; won 6-5 decision against (4) Michael Mangrum of Oregon State; lost 5-2 decision to (1) Kellen Russell of Michigan; lost 7-4 decision to (6) Borislav Novachkov of Cal Poly; pinned by Mangrum in 4:14 to place sixth.

•**149:** **(10) Cam Tessari** – lost 10-8 decision to Corey Jantzen of Harvard; won 6-1 decision against Shane Welsh of Lehigh; pinned Kevin Tao of American in 5:51; won 3-2 decision against Augustus Sako of Virginia; won 5-4 decision against (3) Cole VonOhlen of Air Force; won 4-1 decision against Scott Sakaguchi of Oregon State; won 9-5 decision against Justin Accordino of Hofstra; lost 12-10 decision to (4) Donald Vinson of Binghamton to place fourth.

•**157:** **Josh Demas** – won 2-1 decision against Mallie Shuster of Kent State; lost 6-4 overtime decision to (5) Ganbayar Sanjaa of American; won 4-1 overtime decision against Donnie Corby of Central Michigan; lost 11-1 decision to Roger Pena of Oregon State.

•**174:** **(9) Nick Heflin** – won 5-2 decision against Nick Purdue of Ohio; won 3-2 overtime decision against (8) Leroy Munster of Northwestern; lost 11-4 decision to (1) Ed Ruth of Penn State; won 3-1 overtime decision against Curran Jacobs of Michigan State; won 3-2 decision against (5) Ethen Lofthouse of Iowa; lost 8-7 decision to (2) Chris Perry of Oklahoma State; won 3-2 decision against (4) Logan Storley of Minnesota to earn fifth place.

•**197:** **Anthony Campolattano** – lost 5-3 decision to (11) Micah Burak of Penn; won 3-2 decision against Maxwell Huntley of Michigan; won 8-3 decision against Morgan McIntosh of Penn State; pinned (8) Matt Powless of Indiana in 4:37; lost 4-2 overtime decision to (10) Sonny Yohn of Minnesota.

•**HWT:** **Peter Capone** – won 6-5 decision against (12) Matthew Gibson of Iowa State; lost 4-1 decision to (5) Bobby Telford of Iowa; pinned by Nick Gwiazdowski of Binghamton in 3:49.

Individual Champions

125 pounds: (1) Matt McDonough, Iowa

133 pounds: (2) Logan Stieber, Ohio State

141 pounds: (1) Kellen Russell, Michigan

149 pounds: (1) Frank Molinaro, Penn State

157 pounds: (1) Kyle Dake, Cornell

165 pounds: (1) David Taylor, Penn State

174 pounds: (1) Ed Ruth, Penn State

184 pounds: (4) Steve Bosak, Cornell

197 pounds: (1) Cam Simaz, Cornell

HWT: (2) Tony Nelson, Minnesota

Team Scores

1. Penn State	143
2. Minnesota	117½
3. Iowa	107½
4. Cornell	102½
5. Ohio State	68½
6. Oklahoma State	66
7. Illinois	62
8. Lehigh	61
9. Northwestern	42½
10. Oregon State	40½

Baseball Opens Home Slate With Series Win

By Jeff Svoboda

Every home opener is special in the sport of baseball, but the one the Ohio State nine staged March 16 had a little more juice this year.

The Buckeyes christened the new Nick Swisher Field at Bill Davis Stadium that evening, playing on the new synthetic surface funded largely by the New York Yankees star in the presence of Nick's brother, Mark, who threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

Once the game got under way, Ohio State wasn't about to lose on the special day, either. It took 13 innings, but Josh Dezse's walkoff single allowed the Buckeyes to post a 4-3 win against Austin Peay.

"We were not going to lose the first game here at Nick Swisher Field at Bill Davis Stadium," head coach Greg Beals said.

Ohio State had opened a 3-0 lead by the fifth inning thanks to RBI singles by Brad Hallberg and Joey Ciamacco before Dezse's team-leading fifth homer of the year, but the Governors battled back and tied the score in the eighth.

The Buckeyes left the bases loaded in the ninth and the 11th, but Tim Wetzel walked to begin the 13th and eventually came home on Dezse's line drive to the gap in left center.

Starting pitcher Jaron Long gave up three runs – just two earned – in seven innings while John Kuchno came on to throw five shutout innings of relief, striking out six while allowing four hits and no walks.

"John pitched tremendously after a great start from Jaron, and the depth in our pitching staff was the difference in the ballgame," Beals said. "We had multiple opportunities offensively and weren't able to come through, but it was good to see Josh smoke that ball and win it for us."

Kuchno improved to 3-0, lowered his ERA to 1.42 and ran his shutout streak to 16½ innings.

"I just wanted to relax, throw strikes and live in the moment," he said. "My teammates were able to keep me loose and locked in, and it's just a great team win for us in our first game here."

Ohio State dropped the middle game of the three-game set a day later when Austin Peay posted five runs in the 10th inning to take a 7-2 victory. The game was OSU's third extra-inning affair in a row.

Hallberg had two hits and batted in a run for OSU while first baseman Brad Hutton hit his first homer of the year to account for the team's runs. However, the Governors put up five runs in the 10th on four hits and an error off Greg Greve (0-2) and Trace Dempsey to post the win.



David Corna

"We didn't play well enough to win," Beals said.

The Buckeyes captured the series finale, 7-3, on March 18 behind a strong start by Brett McKinney and a big day at the plate for senior David Corna.

McKinney went 7½ innings, limiting the Governors (9-8) to three unearned runs to improve to 3-2, while Corna went 3 for 4 with four RBI. In addition to an RBI double, the right fielder hit a three-run homer that just cleared the wall in left to give OSU (10-7) a 4-0 lead in the fourth inning.

"It was huge," Corna said of the homer, his third of the year. "It was a one-run game at the time and I've been struggling at the plate, so I needed that. I got it up in the jet stream and got a little lucky there."

Hallberg and Ciamacco each posted sacrifice flies in the game while freshman catcher Aaron Gretz had an RBI single.

"We did play pretty well," Beals said. "Brett threw a great ballgame, gave us a very good quality start. I thought besides a couple of plays, we played a pretty good game all around."

At the conclusion of the series, OSU's starting pitchers had posted a 1.52 ERA in the team's last seven outings.

Synchronized Swimmers Capture 28th National Title

It's fair to say the Ohio State synchronized swimming dynasty is back in full swing.

After going winless at the U.S. Collegiate National Championships from 2005-08, head coach Linda Lichter-Witter's team captured its fourth straight college title and 28th overall March 17 in

Gainesville, Fla. Ohio State finished with 93 points, five ahead of Incarnate Word's score of 88.

Buckeye sophomore Yuliya Maryanko was crowned the individual high-point winner and also was named to the all-collegiate team, where she was joined by sophomore Alex Beckett and junior Paige Ramsey. Joining them as Buckeye All-Americans were Java Nikbakht, Lauren Robinson and Khadija Zantotto, while Lichter-Witter was named coach of the year.

Maryanko won gold medals in solo and trio, capturing the individual event with a score of 89.133, and joining Ramsey and Beckett in the trio event as the Buckeyes posted a score of 87.4167.

Maryanko and Ramsey also took second in duet with a score of 87.933, just behind the duo of Saki Fujise and Inga Gillyer of Incarnate Word (88.533).

In the team routine, OSU's Scarlet team of Chelsea Aton, Beckett, Colleen Courtmanche, Lauren Nicholson, Nikbakht, Robinson, Kathryn Spada and Zantotto earned an 89.850, just .0167 points behind Incarnate Word.

In the technical events contested March 16, Maryanko earned the title in the A Technical, receiving a mark of 81.575.

Women's Swimming, Diving Finishes 20th At NAAs

Senior diver Bianca Alvarez led the charge of the 14th-ranked Ohio State women's swimming and diving team at the NCAA championships March 15-17, earning a pair of All-America honors to pace the Buckeyes' 20th-place finish.

Ohio State finished with 34 points at the meet, which was hosted by Auburn. California won the national title with 412½.

The Big Ten champion in both springboard events, Alvarez completed her OSU career with a solid NCAA meet, taking second in the three-meter competition with a score of 386.30 to earn her eighth career All-America bid. Earlier at the meet, she scored 340.50, third best in OSU history, to take ninth on the one-meter board.

Ohio State's relays had a good showing. The 200-yard medley relay of Kelsey Moran, Angela Severn, Shannon Draves and Megan Detro finished in 1:38.53,

good for 15th place and honorable-mention All-America notice.

In addition, the 200 freestyle relay squad of Michelle Williams, Detrol, Phoebe Cater and Moran placed 18th in a school-record time of 1:29.96.

Individually, Ohio State's best swim was posted by Emily Creran, who swam a 1:54.63 in the 200 backstroke preliminaries to make the consolation final. There, she touched the wall in 1:54.89 to place 13th.

Kelly Ann Baird was 19th in the 1,650 free, finishing in 16:19.88, while Big Ten 200 butterfly champion Draves took 20th in that event with a time of 1:57.01.

Women's Lacrosse Wins First Game Since Outbreak

Competing for the first time since six players were admitted to the OSU Wexner Medical Center to deal with an outbreak of the kidney ailment rhabdomyolysis, the No. 12 Ohio State women's lacrosse team won March 18 at Canisius by a 14-11 score.

Ohio State was led by senior Alayna Markwordt, who notched the fourth nine-point game of her career with three goals and six helpers. Gabby Capuzzi and Jackie Cifarelli had five goals apiece. Tori DeScenza had 10 saves, reaching double digits in the category for the second time this season.

Canisius led 8-5 midway through the first half before the Buckeyes scored seven straight goals to take control.

Ohio State played without Cara Facchina, Taylor Donahue and Tayler Kuzma, all of whom started each of the first six games, though their absences could not be confirmed to be related to the case of rhabdomyolysis that affected the team during the March 9 weekend. All players were released from the hospital after treatment.

No. 2 Oklahoma Too Much For Women's Gymnastics

For everything that has gone right for the No. 13 Ohio State women's gymnastics team this season, the one thing the Buckeyes have been lacking is a signature win.

Ohio State very nearly notched one March 17 in St. John Arena, but second-ranked Oklahoma held on for a 196.825-186.700 victory. Miranda Dir, Taylor

Jones, Nicole Krauter, Alyssa Marohn and Casey Williamson were recognized on Senior Day at the meet.

Marohn had one of the highlights of the day, scoring a career-high 9.875 on vault to lead OSU and finish second, while Jones tied junior Colleen Dean on bars with a 9.850 as the two placed third.

From there, sophomore Sarah Miller took over, capturing beam with a score of 9.950 and floor exercise with a 9.925. Dean also finished strong, posting a 9.90 on floor on the way to winning the all-around with a 39.350.

Ohio State had the better team score on vault and floor exercise.

After the meet, the Big Ten announced OSU will be the No. 3 seed behind top-seeded Nebraska and No. 2 Penn State at the league meet hosted March 24 by Iowa. Miller was chosen a first-team All-Big Ten honoree.

Men's Lax Falls Short Against Top-Ranked UVA

Looking to snap a three-game losing streak and hoping to post its second win of the season against a top-five team, the

Ohio State men's lacrosse team fell just short of a signature win March 17.

That day, Ohio State hosted No. 1 Virginia in Ohio Stadium but couldn't pull off the upset, losing an 11-9 decision.

"I'm proud of the way the men battled for 60 minutes," head coach Nick Myers said.

"They fought hard against a very good Virginia team. We continue to improve each week and will keep our heads high."

Logan Schuss, Jesse King and Turner Evans each scored twice for OSU.

The Buckeyes actually opened a 6-1 lead after one period of play, but the Cavaliers scored all five goals of the second quarter. OSU opened an 8-6 lead early in the third, but Virginia scored the next five tallies to pull away to the win.

Men's Volleyball Drops Conference Match

The No. 9 Ohio State volleyball team went on the road and dropped a 3-2 (21-25, 25-23, 23-25, 25-23, 15-12) match March 18 at Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association rival Ball State.

The match was Ohio State's first in 15 days because of final exams.

A trio of Buckeyes finished with double-double performances on the night in seniors Shawn Sangrey and Mik Berzins along with redshirt freshman Peter Heinen. Sangrey had a match-high 24 kills and added 10 digs, while Berzins finished with a career-high 16 kills and a team-best 17 digs. Heinen notched 57 assists and 13 digs in the match.

Sangrey ended play with 25½ points while Berzins had 18½, but the two combined to hit only .196. Ball State's Matt Leske, Greg Herceg and Kevin Owens combined for 50 kills and hit .362.

Softball Captures TSU Tiger Classic

The Ohio State softball team went 3-0 at the Tennessee State Tiger Classic in Nashville from March 16-18, claiming the event championship with wins over TSU, Belmont and St. Bonaventure.

Alicia Herron had two home runs and eight RBI to make the all-tournament team, where she was joined by Vanessa Spears (.455, six runs, one homer) and Taylor Watkins (.583, five runs).

The Buckeyes downed the home Tigers, 6-0, to open play. Spears had a home run and three RBI while pitcher Mikayla Endicott threw a complete-game shutout with eight strikeouts and Watkins was 3 for 3.

Herron had two home runs during a 15-3 win March 17 against Belmont to reach 43 for her career, second on the OSU all-time list behind Sam Marder (61, 2007-10). A scheduled game with Mercer later that night was canceled because of lightning.

Ohio State completed the tournament with an 8-2 win against the Bonnies. Herron and Danielle LeBeau each batted in two, and Melanie Nichols struck out eight.

Women's Tennis Team Loses At Tulane

Ohio State's 63rd-ranked women's tennis squad lost its third match in a row March 18, falling 5-2 at No. 52 Tulane.

The Buckeyes lost the doubles point but did get a win out of the pairing of Fidan Manashirova and Gabby Steele, who won 8-5 at the No. 3 spot.

In singles, OSU got wins from Kelsey Haviland at the third spot and Steele in the fifth spot. Both won in straight sets, and the victory was Steele's eighth in a row.



Alayna Markwordt

2012 FOOTBALL

Sept. 1 MIAMI (OHIO); **8** CENTRAL FLORIDA; **15** CALIFORNIA; **22** UAB; **29** at Michigan State.

Oct. 6 NEBRASKA; **13** at Indiana; **20** PURDUE; **27** at Penn State.

Nov. 3 ILLINOIS; **17** at Wisconsin; **24** MICHIGAN.

MEN'S BASKETBALL
(29-7, 13-5 Big Ten)

Nov. 6 WALSH (EXHIBITION), W 95-49; **11** WRIGHT STATE, W 73-42; **15** (7) FLORIDA, W 81-74; **18** JACKSON STATE, W 85-41; **21** NORTH FLORIDA, W 85-50; **23** VMI, W 107-74; **25** VALPARAISO, W 80-47; **29** (3) DUKE, 85-63.

Dec. 3 TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN, W 64-35; **10** at (13) Kansas, L 78-67; **14** SOUTH CAROLINA-UPSTATE, W 82-58; **17** at South Carolina, W 74-66; **20** LAMAR, W 70-50; **22** MIAMI (OHIO) (at Nationwide Arena), W 69-40; **28** NORTHWESTERN, W 87-54; **31** at (13) Indiana, L 74-70.

Jan. 3 NEBRASKA, W 71-40; **7** at Iowa, W 76-47; **10** at Illinois, L 79-74; **15** (7) INDIANA, W 80-63; **21** at Nebraska, W 79-45; **25** PENN STATE, W 78-54; **29** (20) MICHIGAN, W 64-49.

Feb. 4 at (19) Wisconsin, W 58-52; **7** PURDUE, W 87-84; **11** (11) MICHIGAN STATE, L 58-48; **14** at Minnesota, W 78-68; **18** at (17) Michigan, L 56-51; **21** ILLINOIS, W 83-67; **26** (16) WISCONSIN, L 63-60; **29** at Northwestern, W 75-73.

March 4 at (5) Michigan State, W 72-70; **9** Big Ten Tournament Quarterfinal at Indianapolis vs. (6) Purdue, W 88-71; **10** Big Ten Tournament Semifinal at Indianapolis vs. (2) Michigan, W 77-55; **11** Big Ten Tournament Championship Game at Indianapolis vs. (1) Michigan State, L 68-64; **15** NCAA Second Round at Pittsburgh vs. (15) Loyola (Md.), W 78-59; **17** NCAA Third Round at Pittsburgh vs. (7) Gonzaga, W 73-66; **22** NCAA Sweet 16 at Boston vs. (6) Cincinnati, 9:45 p.m.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
(25-7, 11-5 Big Ten)

Nov. 13 TENNESSEE STATE, W 78-51; **18** TEMPLE, W 70-66; **22** HOWARD, W 73-50; **25** STONY BROOK, W 84-37; **27** (20) LSU, W 77-68; **30** FLORIDA STATE, W 78-75 (OT).

Dec. 4 at (18) Oklahoma, W 69-63; **10** CANISIUS, W 84-41; **13** SOUTHERN, W 83-49; **17** at California, W 77-75; **19** CHARLOTTE, W 88-58; **20** SOUTHERN UTAH, W 88-50; **22** WASHINGTON STATE, W 79-57; **30** at Wisconsin, W 77-61.

Jan. 2 IOWA, W 84-71; **7** at Michigan, L 73-62; **12** NORTHWESTERN, W 82-72; **15** at Michigan State, W 64-56; **19** (20) NEBRASKA, W 82-68; **22** ILLINOIS, W 96-84; **26** at Indiana, W 73-55; **29** at Minnesota, L 76-65.

Feb. 6 WISCONSIN, W 72-58; **9** at Illinois, L 66-65; **12** (16) PURDUE, W 80-71; **16** INDIANA, W 75-54; **20** at (11) Penn State, L 84-66; **23** MINNESOTA, W 81-56; **26** at (23) Nebraska, L 71-57.

March 2 Big Ten Tournament Quarterfinal at Indianapolis vs. (7) Michigan, W 57-48; **3** Big Ten Tournament Semifinal at Indianapolis vs. (6) Nebraska, L 77-62; **18** NCAA First Round at Bowling Green, Ohio, vs. (9) Florida, L 70-65.

BASEBALL
(10-7)

Feb. 17 Big East/Big Ten Challenge at St. Petersburg, Fla., vs. South Florida, L 5-3; **18** Big East/Big Ten Challenge at Clearwater, Fla., vs. Seton Hall, W 14-7; **19** Big East/Big Ten Challenge at Clearwater, Fla., vs. Connecticut, W 9-5 (6 innings); **24** at (10) Georgia Tech, L 12-4; **25** at (10) Georgia Tech, W 7-3; **26** at (10) Georgia Tech, L 13-4.

March 2 Snowbird Classic at Port Charlotte, Fla., vs. Michigan, W 9-4; **3** Snowbird Classic at Port Charlotte, Fla., vs. Western Michigan (DH), L 15-8, W 5-2; **4** Snowbird Classic at Port Charlotte, Fla., vs. Villanova, W 4-3 (10 innings); **9** Chanticleer Classic at Myrtle Beach, S.C., vs. Marist, W 17-2; **10**

Chanticleer Classic at Myrtle Beach, S.C., vs. Coastal Carolina, L 4-1; vs. Toledo, W 13-1; **11** Chanticleer Classic at Myrtle Beach, S.C., vs. Coastal Carolina, L 3-2 (12 innings); **16** AUSTIN PEAY, W 4-3 (13 innings); **17** AUSTIN PEAY, L 7-2 (10 innings); **18** AUSTIN PEAY, W 7-3; **20** at Louisville; **21** at Dayton; **23** PURDUE, 5:05 p.m.; **24** PURDUE, 3:05 p.m.; **25** PURDUE, 1:05 p.m.; **27** EASTERN MICHIGAN, 6:35 p.m.; **30** at Michigan State; **31** at Michigan State.

April 1 at Michigan State; **4** at Miami (Ohio); **6** MINNESOTA, 6:35 p.m.; **7** MINNESOTA, 3:05 p.m.; **8** MINNESOTA, Noon; **10** OHIO, 6:35 p.m.; **11** AKRON, 6:35 p.m.; **13** NEBRASKA, 6:35 p.m.; **14** NEBRASKA, 3:05 p.m.; **15** NEBRASKA, 1:05 p.m.; **17** XAVIER, 6:35 p.m.; **18** CINCINNATI, 7 p.m.; **20** at Illinois; **21** at Illinois; **22** at Illinois; **25** BOWLING GREEN, 6:35 p.m.; **27** at Penn State; **28** at Penn State; **29** at Penn State.

May 1 YOUNGSTOWN STATE, 6:35 p.m.; **4** NORTHWESTERN, 7 p.m.; **5** NORTHWESTERN, 3:05 p.m.; **6** NORTHWESTERN, 1:05 p.m.; **8** at Oklahoma State; **9** at Oklahoma State; **11** SEATTLE, 6:35 p.m.; **12** SEATTLE, 3:05 p.m.; **13** SEATTLE, 1:05 p.m.; **15** TOLEDO, 12:05 p.m.; **17** at Indiana; **18** at Indiana; **19** at Indiana; **23-26** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT (AT HUNTINGTON PARK).

MEN'S GOLF
(2-1)

Feb. 10 Big Ten Match Play at Bradenton, Fla., vs. Wisconsin, W 4-2-0; vs. Indiana, W 3-2-1; **11** Big Ten Match Play at Bradenton, Fla., vs. Northwestern, L 5-1-0; **19-21** Puerto Rico Classic at Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, 11th/15.

March 23-25 FAU Spring Break Championships at Lake Worth, Fla.

April 2-3 Villanova Wildcat Invitational at Malvern, Pa.; **14-15** ROBERT KEPLER INTERCOLLEGIATE; **27-29** Big Ten Championships at French Lick, Ind.

May 17-19 NCAA Regional at TBD; **29-June 3** NCAA Championships at Pacific Palisades, Calif.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Feb. 13-15 Northrop Grumman Regional Challenge at Palos Verdes Estates, Calif., 6th/15; **20-21** Central District Invitational at Parrish, Fla., 6th/15.

March 5-6 Hurricane Invitational at Miami, Fla., 1st/16; **21** vs. Northwestern at Tucson, Ariz.; **23-24** Mountain View Invitational at Tucson, Ariz.

April 6-8 Bryan National Collegiate at Greensboro, N.C.; **21-22** LADY BUCKEYE INVITATIONAL; **27-29** Big Ten Championships at French Lick, Ind.

May 10-12 NCAA CENTRAL REGIONAL; **22-25** NCAA Championships at Nashville, Tenn.

MEN'S GYMNASTICS
(6-5, 0-3 Big Ten)

Jan. 14 Windy City Invitational at Chicago, 1st/16; **21** (3) OKLAHOMA, L 353.150-347.750.

Feb. 2-4 USA Gymnastics Winter Cup at Las Vegas, NTS; **18** at Ann Arbor, Mich., vs. SUNY Brockport, W 334.200-275.700; at (7) Michigan, L 345.700-334.200; **25** (2) PENN STATE, L 355.500-347.200.

March 2 at (3) Illinois, L 355.100-341.300; **9** (4) STANFORD, L 355.800-347.400; **24** at St. Paul, Minn., vs. Oklahoma and Minnesota.

April 6-7 Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa; **19-21** NCAA Championships at Norman, Okla.

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS
(11-3, 3-2 Big Ten)

Jan. 7 at Minnesota, W 195.375-195.075; **13** at (10) Michigan, L 195.500-195.175; **21** GEORGE WASHINGTON, W 195.900-188.900; **27** at Pittsburgh, W 195.625-193.500.

Feb. 4 at (19) Illinois, L 195.700-195.575; **10** (23) IOWA, W 196.125-194.425; **12** at Morgantown, W.Va., vs. Ball State, W 195.450-

191.775; vs. Auburn, W 195.450-193.650; vs. (24) West Virginia, W 195.450-195.175; **18** (20) DENVER, W 197.625-195.450; **25** (10) PENN STATE, W 196.025-195.000.

March 2 KENT STATE, W 196.925-195.775; **10** at North Carolina, W 195.750-194.475; **17** (2) OKLAHOMA, L 196.825-196.700; **24** Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa.

April 7 NCAA Regionals at TBA; **20** NCAA Championships at Gwinnett, Ga.

MEN'S LACROSSE
(3-4, 1-0 ECAC)

Feb. 9 DETROIT, W 11-6; **11** at Mercer, W 15-8; **19** Moe's Southwest Grill Classic at Jacksonville, Fla., vs. (5) Denver, W 10-9; **25** (8) UMASS, L 9-3.

March 3 (13) PENN STATE, L 5-2; **9** ROBERT MORRIS, L 9-7; **17** (1) VIRGINIA, L 11-9; **21** NOTRE DAME, 4 p.m.; **24** BELLARMINE, 7 p.m.; **31** at Loyola (Md.).

April 7 at Hobart; **14** at Michigan; **21** AIR FORCE, 11 a.m.; **28** at Fairfield.

May 4 ECAC Tournament Semifinal at Denver; **6** ECAC Tournament Championship at Denver.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE
(7-1)

Feb. 11 vs. San Diego State at Palo Alto, Calif., W 19-4; **12** at (6) Stanford, W 14-10; **17** ROBERT MORRIS, W 16-2; **19** LOUISVILLE, W 21-7; **25** BROWN, W 16-3.

March 4 (14) NOTRE DAME, L 16-7; **18** at Canisius, W 14-11; **19** at St. Bonaventure, W 15-8; **24** FLORIDA, 1 p.m.; **29** at Hofstra; **31** vs. Northwestern at Foxborough, Mass.

April 8 at Vanderbilt; **15** PENN STATE, Noon; **21** AMERICAN, 1 p.m.; **28** at Johns Hopkins.

May 3-5 ALC Tournament at Gainesville, Fla.

SOFTBALL
(14-8)

Feb. 10 Dot Richardson National Collegiate Softball Invitational at Clermont, Fla., vs. Central Florida, L 2-1; vs. Florida Atlantic, W 9-6; **11** Dot Richardson National Collegiate Softball Invitational at Clermont, Fla., vs. North Carolina, L 3-1; vs. North Florida, L 10-5; **12** Dot Richardson National Collegiate Softball Invitational at Clermont, Fla., vs. Florida A&M, W 7-1; **17** Louisville Slugger Desert Classic at Las Vegas vs. Texas Tech, L 7-4; vs. San Jose State, W 6-3; **18** Louisville Slugger Desert Classic at Las Vegas vs. UNLV, W 4-3; vs. Long Beach State, W 10-5; **19** Louisville Slugger Desert Classic at Las Vegas vs. Idaho State, W 6-2; **24** Cathedral City Classic at Cathedral City, Calif., vs. Fresno State, W 3-0; vs. Oregon State, L 4-3; **25** Cathedral City Classic at Cathedral City, Calif., vs. Cal State Fullerton, W 9-0 (5 innings); **26** Cathedral City Classic at Cathedral City, Calif., vs. Colorado State, W 9-8 (6 innings).

March 2 Citrus Classic at Orlando, Fla., vs. vs. Georgetown, W 5-0; Longwood, W 12-3 (5 innings); **3** Citrus Classic at Orlando, Fla., vs. Notre Dame, L 3-1 (8 innings); vs. Hofstra, L 1-0; **4** Citrus Classic at Orlando, Fla., vs. Pittsburgh, L 4-0; **16** TSU Tiger Tournament at Nashville, Tenn., vs. Tennessee State, W 6-0; **17** TSU Tiger Tournament at Nashville, Tenn., vs. Belmont, W 15-3 (6 innings); vs. Mercer, canceled; **18** TSU Tiger Tournament at Nashville, Tenn., vs. St. Bonaventure, W 8-2; **20** at Louisville (DH); **24** INDIANA (DH), 2 p.m., 4 p.m.; **25** INDIANA, 2 p.m.; **28** WRIGHT STATE (DH), 5 p.m., 7 p.m.; **31** at Michigan State (DH).

April 1 at Michigan State; **4** BUFFALO (DH), 3 p.m., 5 p.m.; **6** MICHIGAN, 5:30 p.m.; **7** MICHIGAN (DH), 2 p.m., 4 p.m.; **11** DAYTON, 6 p.m.; **14** at Purdue (DH); **15** at Purdue; **18** OHIO (DH), 5 p.m.; 7 p.m.; **21** NEBRASKA (DH), 5 p.m., 7 p.m.; **22** NEBRASKA, 2 p.m.; **28** at Northwestern (DH); **29** at Northwestern.

May 5 IOWA (DH), 6 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **6** IOWA, 2 p.m.; **11** at Penn State; **12** at Penn State (DH).

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MEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING (9-1, 3-1 Big Ten)

Oct. 28 KENYON, W 174-84.

Nov. 4 CLEVELAND STATE, W 211-90; DENISON, W 234-64; VIRGINIA TECH, W 177-124; **11** at Miami (Ohio), W 149-122; **18** vs. Purdue at Iowa City, Iowa, W 170-130; at Iowa, W 163-137.

Dec. 2-4 OHIO STATE INVITATIONAL, 1st/4.

Jan. 21 HARVARD, W 181-118; **27-28** PENN STATE, W 243-91; (4) MICHIGAN, L 194-140.

Feb. 11-12 OHIO STATE WINTER INVITATIONAL, NTS; **22-25** Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa, 2nd/10.

March 4 LAST DITCH QUALIFIER, NTS; **9-11** USA SWIMMING GRAND PRIX, NTS; **22-24** NCAA Championships at Seattle.

WOMEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING (10-0, 3-0 Big Ten)

Oct. 28 KENYON, W 176.5-83.5.

Nov. 4 CLEVELAND STATE, W 232-66; DENISON, W 234-64; VIRGINIA TECH, W 198-100; **12** OHIO, W 203-97; **18-20** Pitt Invitational at Pittsburgh, 1st/6.

Dec. 2-4 OHIO STATE INVITATIONAL, 1st/5.

Jan. 7 at Toledo, W 201-99; **20** at Michigan State, W 144-98; **21** (22) MICHIGAN, W 164.5-132.5; **27-28** Shamrock Invitational at South Bend, Ind., vs. Iowa, W 217-146; vs. Notre Dame, W 214-147.

Feb. 11-12 OHIO STATE WINTER INVITATIONAL, NTS; **15-18** Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa, 3rd/12; **26** LAST DITCH QUALIFIER, NTS.

March 9-11 USA SWIMMING GRAND PRIX, NTS; **15-17** NCAA Championships at Auburn, Ala., 20th/50.

MEN'S TENNIS (18-1, 1-0 Big Ten)

Jan. 18 BUTLER, W 7-0; XAVIER, W 7-0; **22** (16) MISSISSIPPI STATE, W 6-1; **28** ITA KICKOFF VS. (44) CORNELL, W 5-1; **29** ITA KICKOFF VS. (29) INDIANA, W 4-0; TOLEDO, W 4-0.

Feb. 3 (12) PEPPERDINE, W 4-1; **9** at (36) Louisville, L 6-1; **12** at (55) Michigan State, W 7-0; **17** ITA National Team Indoors at Charlottesville, Va., vs. (14) Texas, W 4-0; **18** ITA National Team Indoors at Charlottesville, Va., vs. (6) Kentucky, W 4-3; **19** ITA National Team Indoors at Charlottesville, Va., vs. (2) Virginia, W 4-1; **20** ITA National Team Indoors at Charlottesville, Va., vs. (1) USC, L 4-3; **25** (7) KENTUCKY, W 4-0; **26** (17) NORTH CAROLINA, W 6-1.

March 3 at (26) Notre Dame, W 5-2; **9** (17) TEXAS A&M, W 6-1; **11** PENN STATE, W 7-0; NORTHWEST OHIO, W 4-0; **19** at LSU; **21** at Georgia; **25** at Indiana; **30** NEBRASKA, 6 p.m.

April 1 IOWA, Noon; YOUNGSTOWN STATE, 5 p.m.; **6** at Wisconsin; **8** at Minnesota; **13** ILLINOIS, 6 p.m.; **15** NORTHWESTERN, Noon; **18** at Purdue; **22** MICHIGAN, Noon; **26-29** Big Ten Tournament at Evanston, Ill.

May 11-13 NCAA First & Second Rounds at TBA; **17-22** NCAA Team Championships at Athens, Ga.; **23-28** NCAA Singles/Doubles Championships at Athens, Ga.

WOMEN'S TENNIS (5-8, 0-1 Big Ten)

Jan. 15 at (42) South Florida, L 6-1; **21** WEST VIRGINIA, W 7-0; DAYTON, W 7-0; **28** ITA Kickoff Weekend at Tallahassee, Fla., vs. (18) Florida State, L 5-2; **29** ITA Kickoff Weekend at Tallahassee, Fla., vs. (29) Texas A&M, L 5-2.

Feb. 4 SYRACUSE, W 5-2; **7** at Penn State, L 4-3; **19** (10) TENNESSEE, L 4-3; **22** at Louisville, W 4-3; **24** (71) DEPAUL, W 5-2; **26** (31) ARKANSAS, L 4-3.

March 4 at Oregon, L 4-3; **18** at (52) Tulane, L 5-2; **20** at LSU; **23** PURDUE, 3 p.m.; **25** INDIANA, 11 a.m.; **30** at Nebraska.

April 1 at Iowa; **6** WISCONSIN, 3 p.m.; **8** MINNESOTA, 11 a.m.; **13** at Illinois; **15** at

Where To Watch The Buckeyes

Men's Basketball		
Date	Opponent, Time	TV/Website
March 22	Cincinnati, 9:45 p.m.	CBS
March 24	Syracuse/Wisconsin, TBA	TBA
Baseball		
Date	Opponent, Time	TV/Website
March 23	PURDUE, 5:05 p.m.	OhioStateBuckeyes.com
March 24	PURDUE, 3:05 p.m.	OhioStateBuckeyes.com
March 25	PURDUE, 1:05 p.m.	OhioStateBuckeyes.com
Women's Gymnastics		
Date	Opponent, Time	TV/Website
March 24	Big Ten Championships, 2 p.m.	BTN
Men's Lacrosse		
Date	Opponent, Time	TV/Website
March 24	BELLARMINE, 7 p.m.	OhioStateBuckeyes.com
Women's Lacrosse		
Date	Opponent, Time	TV/Website
March 24	FLORIDA, 1 p.m.	OhioStateBuckeyes.com
Softball		
Date	Opponent, Time	TV/Website
March 24	INDIANA (DH), 2 & 4 p.m.	OhioStateBuckeyes.com
March 25	INDIANA, 2 p.m.	OhioStateBuckeyes.com

Northwestern; **20** MICHIGAN STATE, 2 p.m.; **22** at Michigan; **26-29** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT.

May 11-13 NCAA Regionals at TBA; **17-22** NCAA Team Championships at Athens, Ga.; **23-28** NCAA Singles/Doubles Championships at Athens, Ga.

MEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

March 23 Big Ten/SEC Challenge at Starkville, Miss.; **28-31** Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays at Austin, Texas; **31** Jim Click Shootout at Tucson, Ariz.

April 13-14 JESSE OWENS TRACK CLASSIC; **19-21** Mt. SAC Relays at Walnut, Calif.; **20-21** All-Ohio Championships at Oxford, Ohio; **26-28** Drake Relays at Des Moines, Iowa; **29** Payton Jordan Invitational at Palo Alto, Calif.

May 5 Campbell/Wright Invitational at Akron, Ohio; **5** Oregon Twilight at Eugene, Ore.; **11-13** Big Ten Championships at Madison, Wis.; **24-26** NCAA East Prelims at Jacksonville, Fla.

June 6-9 NCAA Championships at Des Moines, Iowa; **14-16** USATF Junior Championships at Bloomington, Ind.

WOMEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

March 24 UCF Invitational at Orlando, Fla.; **31** Jim Click Shootout at Tucson, Ariz.

April 13-14 JESSE OWENS TRACK CLASSIC; **20-21** Tom Jones Memorial Classic at Gainesville, Fla.; **26-28** Penn Relays at Philadelphia.

May 11-13 Big Ten Championships at Madison, Wis.; **24-26** NCAA East Prelims at Jacksonville, Fla.

June 6-9 NCAA Championships at Des Moines, Iowa.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL (13-7, 3-2 MIVA)

Jan. 6 UC Santa Barbara Invitational at Santa Barbara, Calif., vs. (14) UC Santa Barbara, W 3-2 (19-25, 18-25, 25-19, 28-26, 15-9); vs. (3) UCLA, L 3-0 (25-16, 25-19, 25-16); **7** UC Santa Barbara Invitational at Santa Barbara, Calif., vs. (6) Long Beach State, L 3-2 (23-25, 22-25, 26-24, 25-23, 15-10); **13** LEES-MCRAE, W 3-0 (25-19, 25-21, 25-18); **14** (7) PENN STATE, L 3-0 (25-22, 25-23, 25-17); **17** SACRED HEART, W 3-0 (25-18, 25-19, 25-12); **19** GEORGE MASON, W 3-2 (21-25, 25-21, 25-22, 23-25, 15-11); **22** SAINT FRANCIS (PA.), W 3-1 (25-20, 22-25, 25-18, 29-27); **27** KEN AND DAVE DUNLAP

INVITATIONAL VS. (12) PACIFIC, W 3-1 (19-25, 25-20, 25-18, 25-21); **28** KEN AND DAVE DUNLAP INVITATIONAL VS. (4) STANFORD, L 3-2 (25-22, 23-25, 24-26, 25-22, 15-12).

Feb. 3 Penn State Invitational at State College, Pa., vs. Cal-Baptist, W 3-1 (23-25, 27-25, 25-20, 25-21); **4** Penn State Invitational at State College, Pa., vs. Mount Olive, W 3-0 (25-16, 25-17, 26-24); **10** at IPFW, W 3-1 (27-29, 25-11, 25-21, 25-20); **17** BALL STATE, W 3-0 (25-15, 25-22, 25-17); **19** CARTHAGE, W 3-1 (18-25, 25-21, 25-18, 25-16); **23** at (7) Lewis, L 3-1 (15-25, 25-21, 25-18, 25-18); **25** at (14) Loyola (Ill.), W 3-0 (25-18, 25-9, 25-19).

March 2 at St. Francis (Pa.), W 3-2 (23-25, 25-21, 21-25, 25-14, 15-11); **3** at (6) Penn State, L 3-2 (25-17, 25-19, 27-29, 22-25, 15-13); **18** at Ball State, L 3-2 (21-25, 25-23, 23-25, 25-23, 15-12); **23** at Quincy; **24** at Quincy; **30** LOYOLA (ILL.), 7 p.m.; **31** LEWIS, 7 p.m.

April 5 GRAND CANYON, 7 p.m.; **6** GRAND CANYON, 7 p.m.; **13** IPFW, 7 p.m.; **15** at George Mason; **21** MIVA Tournament Quarterfinal at TBA; **25** MIVA Tournament Semifinal at TBA; **28** MIVA Tournament Championship at TBA.

May 3 NCAA Semifinal at Los Angeles; **5** NCAA Championship at Los Angeles.

WRESTLING (13-4, 5-3 Big Ten)

Nov. 5 Eastern Michigan Open at Ypsilanti, Mich., NTS; **12** vs. North Carolina at Harrisburg, Pa., W 36-6; vs. Utah Valley State at Harrisburg, Pa., W 36-0; vs. Old Dominion at Harrisburg, Pa., W 30-3; **20** (15) VIRGINIA TECH, W 21-12.

Dec. 2-3 Cliff Keen Invitational at Las Vegas, 1st/34; **9** at (9) Pittsburgh, W 22-9; **11** at (20) Kent State, W 22-15; **18** INDIANA, W 31-9.

Jan. 6 at (14) Nebraska, L 18-16; **8** at (3) Minnesota, L 24-13; **12** PURDUE, W 27-10; **20** (2) IOWA, W 21-9; **29** at (2) Penn State, L 34-9.

Feb. 3 (12) MICHIGAN, W 24-13; **5** at Michigan State, W 24-13; **12** NWCA/Cliff Keen National Duals (Regionals) at Stillwater, Okla., vs. Boise State, W 26-9; vs. (8) Nebraska, W 21-18; vs. (1) Oklahoma State, L 25-6.

March 3-4 Big Ten Championships at West Lafayette, Ind., 5th/12; **15-17** NCAA Championships at St. Louis, Mo., 5th/70.

2012 NCAA Tournament



1

March 23
9:45 p.m.

4

SOUTH REGION
Atlanta

3

March 23
7:15 p.m.

10

1

March 22
7:47 p.m.

4

WEST REGION
Phoenix

3

March 22
10:17 p.m.

7

1

March 22
7:15 p.m.

4

EAST REGION
Boston

6

March 22
9:45 p.m.

2

1

March 23
7:47 p.m.

13

MIDWEST REGION
St. Louis

11

March 23
10:17 p.m.

2

March 25
TBA

March 24
TBA

April 2
TBA

March 31
TBA

March 31
TBA

March 24
TBA

March 25
TBA

National
Champions

Best To Just Enjoy Ohio State's NCAA Ride

I have a buddy who is fond of telling me to not live in the moment, yet during the first half of the March 17 third-round NCAA Tournament game between Ohio State and Gonzaga, when the Buckeyes were down by four, I received a text message reading, "OSU looks awful. Long day ahead."

I had a couple of other, less regular texters bombard me with messages, too – "What's wrong with OSU?" and "Looks like another early flameout in the tournament" – and all I could do was shake my head and smile.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

Basketball, much more so than football, can change on a dime, and with it emotions. One moment you could be cursing your team because they couldn't hit the ocean from a rowboat, and the next you might be exulting thanks to a pretty pick and roll that led to a three-point play. The ebb and flow of hoops – especially March Madness hoops – leads to wildly alternating emotions.

No more of an example of the ebb and flow of the game is needed than OSU sophomore Jared Sullinger. The burly All-America selection opened the game on fire, canning a pair of treys and thinking it was probably going to be an easy afternoon. But shortly thereafter he went to the bench with a pair of fouls and Gonzaga made a move.

When Sullinger returned after the break, he didn't look nearly as into things as usual – possibly because he didn't want to pick up an early third foul and allow Gonzaga to believe it still had a major shot to win the game. The OSU sophomore's habit of dribbling the ball too long before putting up a shot once again reared its ugly head, accounting for three straight misses. Sullinger was also finding it hard to rebound as he was surrounded by Gonzaga trees named Robert Sacre and Sam Dower. They did their best to bump, move and frustrate Sullinger, and it was working as the Buckeye star's body language indicated he was slowly fading from the game.



SONNY BROCKWAY

CONGRATS – Sophomore Jared Sullinger, seen here hugging teammate Deshaun Thomas (1), had a strong finish March 17 against Gonzaga.

What makes a player special is what he can do when it's absolutely needed, and in the last five minutes of the contest, Sullinger put on his Superman cape and hit a pair of baskets over Sacre, set up a couple of baskets by teammates with nice passes out of the post, and most importantly hit foul shots late to give the Buckeyes a little bit of breathing room. Just when it seemed like Sullinger had

forgotten what got him to that point, it came back to him.

Fans might have thought Sullinger wasn't playing well, but the coaching staff never believed that.

"Down the stretch, we wanted to get the ball in his hands," OSU head coach Thad Matta said. "We were running a couple of things out of the post that proved to be pretty good for us, like the last four minutes of the game. I know he missed the front end of a one-and-one, but he's pretty clutch down the stretch there and hit some big free throws for us as well.

"They were really trying to involve him late defensively. We had to have a little bit of a conversation about his defense from about the five- to the two-minute mark. ... He's a winner. We'll ride that down the stretch."

It's the view from here that Ohio State's postseason fortunes rest squarely on the shoulders of William Buford. If he's not hitting, the Buckeyes are probably going home. If he can't hit from the outside, defenses can pack it in on Sullinger and keep the Buckeyes from getting second shots.

For one afternoon, though, Buford's importance took a backseat to Sullinger. The sophomore showed resilience after letting early fouls and non-fouls get into his head and made the plays necessary for the Buckeyes to survive and advance. Without Sullinger, OSU would be home thinking about what could have been. Now it gets a chance to continue toward the title.

Ultimate Team Player

If Sullinger wasn't the MVP of the win over Gonzaga, Aaron Craft certainly was.

It's been my belief that the Buckeyes' improvement can be tied directly to Craft's uptick in offense. He's always been a capable scorer but wouldn't always involve himself in the offense. But with Buford flagging and Sullinger seeing double-teams, Craft knew he had to become a scoring option down the stretch. He's done that, and the OSU offense has new life.

Craft is known more for defense and assists, but the biggest contribution he made came before the ball ever went up against the Bulldogs.

Craft was instrumental in getting the team together to discuss some issues that have been simmering all season and keeping Ohio State from realizing

its full potential. Chemistry issues and maturity have dogged the Buckeyes all season, and they needed to be addressed or else there would be no more games this season.

"Nobody was yelling," freshman forward Lenzelle Smith Jr. said. "It was actually people communicating. We've had team meetings in the past, but nobody said anything. Everyone listens to whoever is speaking, and that person is usually the only one speaking. We all spoke and told each other how we felt and where we were coming from. People made sure people wanted to play with each other.

"I'm glad we had the meeting because if we wouldn't have had that meeting, we would've lost this game and that's a fact. I guarantee you those problems that we talked about would have hindered us."

Any leader sees the big picture, and Craft put it all out there for his teammates before the game and then left it all on the court afterward. His 17 points and 10 assists were nice, but it was the defensive pressure he put on the Gonzaga backcourt – most notably talented freshman Kevin Pangos – that led to the victory.

Sullinger gets the headlines – deservedly so – and Deshaun Thomas may get the buzz from NBA scouts. But Craft is the glue that holds the Buckeyes together, the very heart and soul of the squad. He'll do what he has to do to keep Ohio State playing because he loves competing and because he's a winner.

The Buckeyes should be thankful he's *their* winner.

Breath Of Fresh Air

The more I hear from Urban Meyer, the more I like the guy.

Jim Tressel had his strengths, but being transparent was not one of them. He always spoke of things in the context of "the group" or "the young people" to the point you wanted to rip your hair out.

Meyer has none of that and so far hasn't been afraid to call out individual players. He does it as motivation mainly, but also because he can – after all, he's the one controlling everything, and if you can't please him you aren't going to be rewarded.

"When you get away from your mommies and daddies, it's a tough world out there," Meyer said. "The people who prepare and work hard get the corner offices and trips to Cancun and bonuses.

"Everything we try to do around here

is incentive-based. If you want to live off campus, I have no problem with that, but you have to earn that right. If you want to change (your jersey) to No. 1, I don't care what (number) you wear, but don't come see me unless you're taking care of your business in all the other areas we evaluate."

Actual accountability was previously a foreign concept around Ohio State, but something that looks to be front and center with Meyer in charge.

Quick Hitters

- Those of you who read the March 17 print edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin no doubt checked out Rich Exner's column ("The Exner Point") when he highlighted former Buckeyes currently in the NBA.

I have to disagree with Rich on his evaluation of Evan Turner. He characterized Turner as not living up to expectations, but Philadelphia head coach Doug Collins – who has been around some talented players in his day – recently said of Turner, "He's been on fire lately and right now I think he believes he's our best player."

After recently being inserted into the starting lineup – at point guard no less, the position he played the year he won the Naismith Award at Ohio State – Turner reeled off five straight games of 20 or more points. He also had a couple of double-doubles, and reports say he's playing with more confidence.

The 76ers have surprised everyone this season, leading the Atlantic Division and sitting in fourth place in the Eastern Conference through March 18. How Turner fares down the homestretch will probably determine the Sixers' fate, but if early returns are any indicator they could be in line for a big finish.

- It was nice to see the Big Ten put four teams through to the Sweet 16 (even though Wisconsin knocked Vanderbilt, one of my Final Four picks, out of the tournament). That should show followers who maybe doubted the strength of the league that it truly was the nation's best conference.

Too many people looked at what teams did within the league when they should have been looking at games outside the Big Ten. Conference strength is measured by head-to-head showings against other power leagues, and not only did the Big Ten have the upper hand all year, it continues to show its stuff in the postseason.



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