

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN



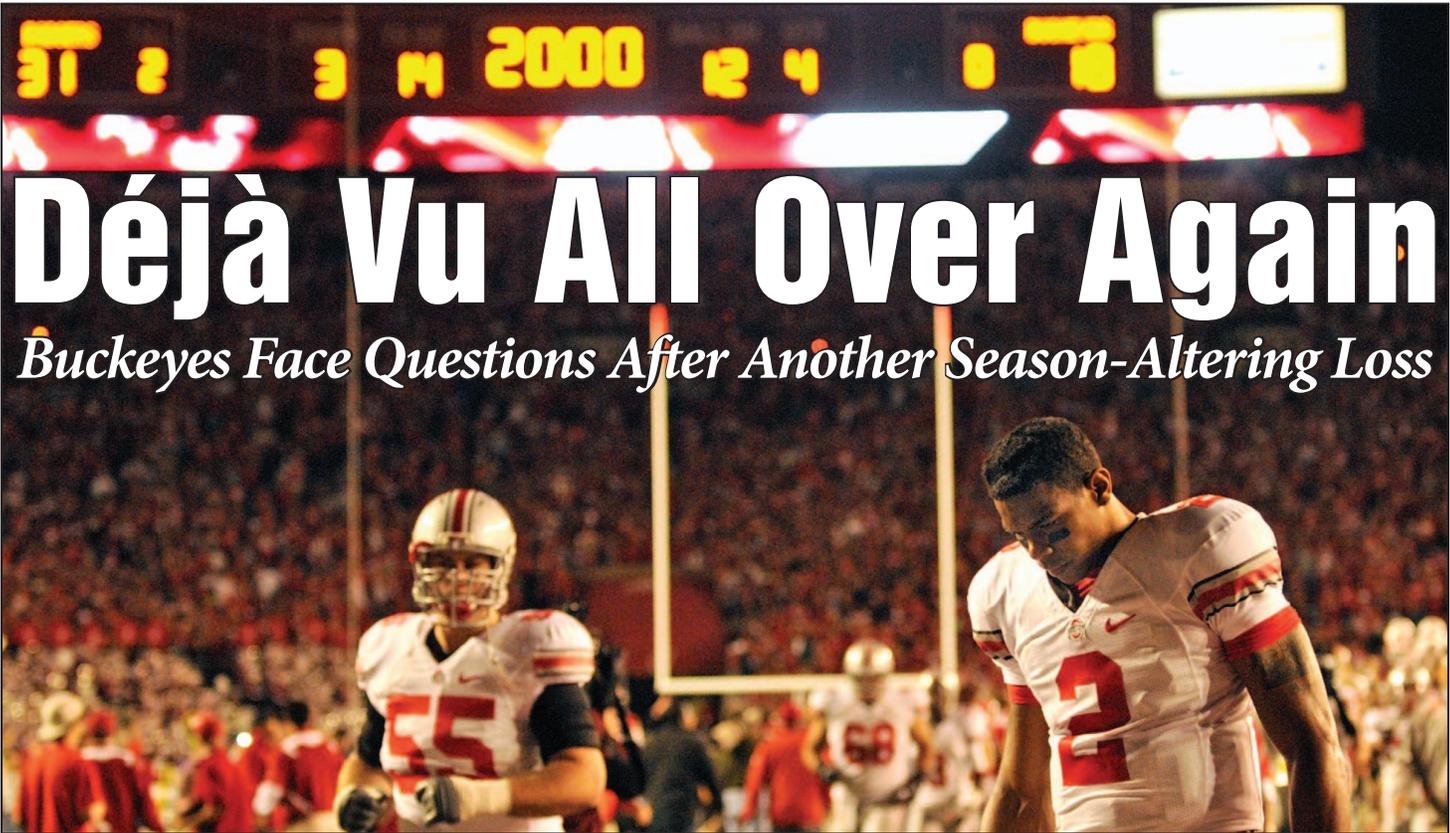
\$2.00

PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!

Vol. 30, No. 7

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

October 23, 2010



Déjà Vu All Over Again

Buckeyes Face Questions After Another Season-Altering Loss

SONNY BROCKWAY

SCOREBOARD SAYS IT ALL – Ohio State junior quarterback Terrelle Pryor (2) dejectedly walks to the Camp Randall Stadium locker room Oct. 16 after his No. 1-ranked Buckeyes lost a 31-18 decision to Wisconsin.

By ADAM JARDY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

If he had any doubts about what had just happened, Jim Tressel was given a verbal reminder during his postgame press conference.

The Ohio State head coach sat behind a raised table in the bowels of the Camp Randall Stadium concourse answering questions from the media with the same measured look on his face he wears after most games. This time, however, he was attempting to explain how his No. 1 Buckeyes had lasted exactly one week at the top of the rankings before taking a 31-18 loss Oct. 16 to No. 18 Wisconsin.

Tressel was in the middle of answering the second question of the postgame press conference when a nearby security guard's walkie-talkie inadvertently interrupted his thoughts.

"Attention, fans!" the voice rang out. "Please get off the goalposts and everyone else please move away from the goalposts."

Tressel tried to soldier on, but the public-address announcement that was also being broadcast on the security guard's walkie-talkie could not be silenced.

"Please get off the goalposts," the voice intoned again, forcing Tressel to cut off his remarks and wait for the guard to silence his device.

A few awkward seconds later, the coach resumed

his thoughts and the beat went on for the Buckeyes who were suddenly in charge of trying to make the best of an opportunity lost.

The defeat to the Badgers (6-1, 2-1 Big Ten) represented more than just the first loss of the season for the Buckeyes (6-1, 2-1). It represented the first major blow to a plan that was set in place nearly three years ago.

Fresh off a loss to LSU in the 2008 national championship game, Ohio State managed to retain nearly all of its junior talent that was contemplating heading to the NFL. James Laurinaitis, Malcolm Jenkins, Alex Boone, Brian Robiskie and Marcus Freeman each turned down the chance to turn pro for the opportunity at another shot at a collegiate championship.

Expectations were raised as the team welcomed in the nation's No. 4 recruiting class including the top overall prospect in the nation in quarterback Terrelle Pryor.

It took all of three games for those hopes to be shattered. After a season-opening win against Youngstown State and an unexpected squeaker against Ohio in week two, the Buckeyes headed west for a nationally televised showdown under the lights against USC.

In a game that could best be described as a nightmare, the Buckeyes were run off the field by a Trojans squad that looked quicker, tougher and simply better than their Big Ten opponent.

The game marked more than just a 35-3 loss. It provided the impetus for a changing of the guard within the program as the following week Tressel opted to bench senior co-captain and returning starter Todd Boeckman and hand the quarterback position over to Pryor. In doing so, the coach shifted the focus from winning a title that season to winning one in the future with Pryor and his classmates running the show.

It was not a seamless transition by several accounts with members of the team's senior class upset that their chances to win a national title were being put in the hands of a freshman – albeit a talented one. Junior wide receiver DeVier Posey, a freshman on that team, said he sensed the locker room conflict.

"I feel like that's for any freshman group coming in," Posey said. "You have to abide by the older guys' rules."

The 2008 season would get better from there and the Buckeyes captured a share of the conference title, but a close home loss to Penn State in week 10 firmly removed OSU from the national championship race.

Pryor was not the only one getting a baptism by fire, however. When he made his first career start against Troy the week after the loss to USC, so did classmate Michael Brewster at center. A number

Your Mailing Label Goes Here
Call (614) 486-2202
Today To Subscribe

Continued On Page 8

OPINION

Buckeyes Continue To Falter When Hunted

Remember last week's column with the cautionary wine-drinking vs. grape-stomping tale? Evidently someone over at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center has allowed their BSB subscription to expire.

Instead of taking care of business at Camp Randall Stadium, Ohio State wound up on the business end of a 31-18 decision Oct. 16 that was a borderline blowout by Wisconsin.

Forget the national championship. Bye-bye Heisman Trophy. The greatest dreams of the Buckeye Nation went up in smoke as its favorite football team fell victim once again to a lesser opponent who simply wanted it more.

It must be extremely difficult to always be hunted because every time – and I mean each and every time – the Buckeyes play with a target on their backs, they seem to trip themselves.

The only consensus national championships the team has won in the past half-century came in 1968 and 2002, teams that no one really expected to be title contenders at the beginning of the season.

Forty-two years ago, the Buckeyes were coming off a 1967 campaign that saw them post a 6-3 overall record and finish fourth in the Big Ten standings. Sure, Woody Hayes had a star-studded class of super sophomores coming in, but no one expected a national championship right out of the box. OSU played its first game that 1968 season ranked No. 11.

Back in 2002, Ohio State was supposed to be positioning itself for a title run the following year. They played Texas Tech in that season's opener as the nation's No. 13 ranked team.

If you would like to go back even further, the 1954 and 1957 national champions each began their respective seasons unranked.

A sharp contrast are the seasons during which the Buckeyes have begun the year ranked among the nation's top five teams. Over the past half-century, that includes 1962, 1964, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1980, 1987, 1998, 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2010.

That is 17 (and counting) seasons when OSU has started a campaign at No. 5 or higher in the national polls and come home an also-ran in the national championship race.

The glass-half-full crowd will say that you have to at least be in the race to win it, and there is some veracity to that. Ohio State has been one of college football's elite programs for much of the last six decades and is one of only a handful of schools that can boast such a winning résumé over such a protracted period of time.

On the other hand, all of the aforementioned seasons – and several others when the Buckeyes reached the top five in midyear – represent an awful lot of crushed hopes and dreams.

Things were supposed to be different in 2010, however. The Buckeyes had learned their lesson from losses last year to USC and Purdue, teams they should have beaten. After a mistake-filled trip to West Lafayette, the team circled its wagons and won six games in a row, finishing things off with a masterful Rose Bowl victory over five-point favorite Oregon.

Everything set up perfectly this year for Ohio State including a favorable schedule. The toughest games on the slate appeared to be a home game in week two with an improving Miami (Fla.) team and road tests at Wisconsin and Iowa.

When the Buckeyes demolished the Hurricanes in a game that was not nearly as close as the final score of 36-24 indicated, OSU seemingly had everything going its way. Sure, Wisconsin always played them tough, but the

Buckeyes had won four of their last five trips to Madison. They have had similar recent success in Iowa City, winning 14 of their 17 visits there.

Ohio State was going to storm through the last six games of its regular season the same way it stormed through the first six and once again head to the Arizona desert to play for the national championship – with a brief stop in New York City long enough for Terrelle Pryor to pick up the Heisman Trophy.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

At least that was the way it was supposed to be. Now, the Buckeyes and their fans are left not to ponder what might have been but what is. Purdue comes to town for homecoming, and while the Boilermakers do not seem to be on par with Wisconsin, they have made a habit of making things interesting against Ohio State teams in the recent past.

The Buckeyes have won four of the last six meetings, but OSU has scored 16 points or fewer in three of those four victories. Last year, the Buckeyes scored 18 and it wasn't enough against the upset-minded Boilermakers.

But, of course, everything was supposed to change after that game. Everything is always supposed to change after a loss. Too many times this season, I have heard one Buckeye or another say, "We made a lot of mistakes out there but we'll get those things fixed."

Yep. Every year, every new team says the same thing – this time things will be different.

And somehow, to nearly everyone's amazement, it usually turns out the same.

Can't Beat 'Em? Join 'Em

When former agent Josh Luchs recently told Sports Illustrated he had provided money and/or other illegal benefits to more than two dozen former college athletes, the sports world let out a collective yawn.

To paraphrase Capt. Renault in the movie classic "Casablanca," I'm shocked, shocked to find this kind of thing going on in college athletics. Shocked? Hardly. It's the dirty little secret that really is no secret at all.

These kinds of stories crop up every few years. The NCAA shakes its craggy finger at the guilty parties, and then the snakes and snitches like Luchs go merrily about their business.

I'm as critical as anyone with regard to the NCAA, but there is no way the governing body of college athletics can maintain a watchful eye over every member institution in every sport.

Therefore, I offer an unsolicited solution: Why not let the athletes sign with agents?

It would be akin to recruiting that everyone loves so much, only this way you can follow your favorite players as they navigate a maze of lawyers and former players who want a percentage of the youngsters' future earnings.

There can be contact and no-contact periods for potential agents as well as early and late signing days regulated by the NCAA to help ensure the legality of each transaction.

It is the only way I know to kill two ugly birds with the same stone. It would end the so-called \$100 handshakes that so often get athletes and their schools in trouble while providing legal stipends for destitute athletes to use during their college careers.

Along with this potential solution would be tough penalties for any booster or agent

wannabe who tries to entice an athlete to attend a certain school with money, cars, jobs, housing or any other benefits. Coaches who habitually abuse the system or turn a blind eye to illegalities occurring in their program should also be severely punished with suspensions or fines.

Will this solve the problem? Probably not but something has to be done. Besides, as the old saying goes, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

Some Final Thoughts

Pryor put way too much pressure on himself to beat Wisconsin. The alarm bells went off midweek when he said, "For sure, I'm not going to let us lose." There is little doubt that Pryor is the most gifted athlete on the team, but even the most gifted athlete on the team can't win a game all by himself. I thought Pryor was pressing and it showed in a subpar passing performance.

Some observers were critical of Jim Tressel's decision to punt the ball away with 6:29 left in the game and his team trailing by 10 points. He really had no choice. The Buckeyes had a fourth-and-10 at their own 29-yard line, and turning the ball over on downs at that point would have been suicidal. My guess is that 99 of 100 coaches would have punted in that situation and hoped for a fumble on the catch.

I found much more fault with Tressel's conservative play-calling at the end of the first half when Ohio State had first-and-goal at the Wisconsin 3. The Buckeyes had worked at perfecting their passing attack in nearly every game this season, yet Tressel called three straight unimaginative running plays. It seems that would have been a better time for the fake and throwback Pryor executed to tight end Reid Fragel for a two-point conversion later in the game.

Props once again to fullback Zach Boren, who pancaked Wisconsin linebacker Mike Taylor during Ohio State's second touchdown drive. I must admit I don't understand all the nuances of blocking, but Boren sure seemed to simplify things on that play. He met Taylor in the hole and put the 6-2, 223-pound sophomore on his back with a thud.

Kudos also to tailback Dan "Boom" Herron, who is running as well as he ever has during his OSU career. Since the Big Ten season began, Herron has averaged 84.6 yards per game and a tidy 4.7 yards per carry. His 13-yard touchdown run in the third quarter was a thing of beauty when he stiff-armed Wisconsin defensive tackle Ethan Hemer at the 10 and then bulled through hard-hitting safety Jay Valai at the goal line.

Junior linebacker Andrew Sweat stepped up in a big way when co-captain Ross Homan was sidelined with an ankle injury. Sweat not only snared a big interception and tallied a career-high eight tackles, he stopped Wisconsin tailback John Clay for no gain on a third-and-2 play in the third quarter. It forced the Badgers to punt and allowed Ohio State to claw its way back to within three points at 21-18.

The Big Ten has apparently told its officials to be on the lookout for anything that resembles a shot to the head on conference quarterbacks. OSU defensive end Nathan Williams was flagged for a questionable hit on Wisconsin QB Scott Tolzien, and there were a pair of roughing-the-passer penalties in the Minnesota-Purdue game that were dubious at best. How dubious? Bob and Brian Griese were providing color commentary for ESPN2 and both former quarterbacks criticized the calls.



Vol. 30, No. 7
October 23, 2010

www.BuckeyeSports.com

Buckeye Sports Bulletin (USPS 705-690, ISSN 0883-6833.) is published 28 times a year (weekly September through November and January through early March, biweekly mid-March through May and monthly June through August and December) by:

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

Periodical class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Subscription rates: \$74.95/year.

PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowicz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

MANAGING EDITOR
Mark Rea

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
Bill Armstrong Craig Merz
David Breithaupt Bob Roehm
Rich Exner Julie Roy
Matthew Hager Mark Schmetzer
Marcus Hartman Steve Siegfried
Adam Jardy Stacey Stathulis
Rich Leonardo Jeff Svoboda
Eric Loughry Mike Wachsman

DIRECTOR OF GROUP AND CO-OP SALES
Jack Woodworth

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Ron Friedman Jan Jager

2010-11 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 30)

No. 1	Sept. 11	No. 15	Jan. 22
No. 2	Sept. 18	No. 16	Jan. 29
No. 3	Sept. 25	No. 17	Feb. 5
No. 4	Oct. 2	No. 18	Feb. 12
No. 5	Oct. 9	No. 19	Feb. 19
No. 6	Oct. 16	No. 20	Feb. 26
No. 7	Oct. 23	No. 21	March 5
No. 8	Oct. 30	No. 22	March 19
No. 9	Nov. 13	No. 23	April 2
No. 10	Nov. 20	No. 24	April 16
No. 11	Nov. 27	No. 25	May
No. 12	Nov. 30	No. 26	June
No. 13	December	No. 27	July
No. 14	Jan. 15	No. 28	August

The next issue (Oct. 30 cover date) will be mailed on Oct. 26.

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

BSB e-mail address is: bsb@buckeyesports.com



Charter Member

COVER STORY

Buckeyes Left Looking For Answers After Loss

Continued From Page 1

of other members of that year's freshman class – dubbed the "Brew Crew" – were able to get their feet wet that season as well.

"We really have matured a lot during the past few years," Brewster said Sept. 7. "I think that's really the biggest thing. Luckily we did get those starts as freshmen. I don't think we'd be where we are now if it wasn't for that."

Following a loss to Texas in the Fiesta Bowl at the end of that '08 season, a prolific senior class that had played for two national titles was gone, and helping to fill the void were a number of sophomores. The Buckeyes began the season ranked sixth nationally based on the expectation that Pryor and his classmates would be ready to take a step forward in their development.

However, some further growing pains were expected as those players settled into more prominent roles within the offense. Last year's early loss to USC again put the Buckeyes behind the eight ball, but the group gained confidence and picked up four straight wins against unranked teams.

Then Purdue happened. OSU waltzed into an afternoon road contest against the unranked 1-5 Boilermakers and commit-

ted five turnovers during a stunning 26-18 loss.

"It comes back and gets me," Pryor said earlier this season about that loss. "I think we were just young. We had some young receivers, young offensive linemen (and a) young quarterback."

"I'll never forget Purdue. I'll never forget that. We didn't warm up. We basically just went out there and tried to play and those guys jumped on us. We remember that all the time. That's what pushes us. That's what motivates us."

An important lesson had been learned – each game must be taken with the same degree of importance if the team was to be able to reach its goals. Newly humbled, the players vowed not to make that mistake again and were able to win six straight games to close the season including a Rose Bowl win against a supposedly better Oregon team.

With the starting lineup almost entirely intact on offense and some impressive reserves ready for prime time on defense, the Buckeyes began this season as legitimate contenders for the national championship. Having been through the battles of the previous two years, the team's junior class spoke often of having a quiet confidence and that they were ready to stand in the spotlight.



SONNY BROCKWAY
NOT HIS NIGHT – Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel watched his top-ranked Buckeyes lose a key Big Ten road game at Wisconsin.

TICKETS Galore



OHIO STATE FOOTBALL TICKETS
All Games Available Including Away Games
ORDER NOW!!!

Also call us for... **BROWNS, BENGALS, STEELERS COLTS** and any other NFL Team! And **CONCERTS!**

Tickets Galore Inc. is THE source for the hard to find Ohio State Tickets! We are a family owned and operated company that has been serving Buckeye Fans since 1991. Call us for courteous and professional service, every time.

Go to our web site for Seating Charts, Schedules, and to Purchase Tickets:
USAsSeats.com

Member Better Business Bureau of Central Ohio

Proudly Serving Buckeye Fans Since 1991

(614) 889-2989

800-829-8457



58 S. High Street, Dublin Ohio



Agriesti's Barber Shop

1500 W. Third Ave., Suite 121
487-9215



WALK-INS WELCOME!!

HOURS

Monday: part-time • Tuesday-Friday: 11-7
Saturday: 10-4 • Closed Sunday

Eat It and Beat It!
at

Nancy's
HOME COOKING

3133 N. High St. • 265-9012

You must try our: Meat Loaf • Pot Roast • and our Famous Chicken & Noodles

TAILGATE PACKAGES AVAILABLE

MORNING OR AFTERNOON



COVER STORY

This was the year for it all to come together.

"I feel like confidence comes from the work that you put in," Posey said earlier this year. "We always talk about anytime before a game you should be able to look in the mirror and sleep easy because you know that whole week that you put in enough work that you can wake up Saturday and know things are going to be OK."

But on this particular Saturday, things definitely were not OK. When he came out for postgame interviews, Brewster looked as if he was blinking back tears while he was hunched over on a chair. A muted Pryor was unable to make eye contact with reporters for more than a second or two at a time, instead staring at his hands in his lap. Seated in the back of the same room, senior wide receiver Dane Sanzenbacher regarded the scene with a thousand-mile stare.

"There's not much to say," Brewster said. "Sometimes you feel like you left it all on the field and just didn't come out with the 'W.' We left every ounce of everything we had out there. The O-line stuck together and fought our butts off but it's a team effort. We tried to make a comeback and they answered."

In the lineman's eyes, the loss does not dictate how people should view the 2010 Buckeyes.

"This is definitely a special group," Brewster said. "There's still a lot to play for. Crazy things happen."

A New Hope

Now the Buckeyes must come to grips with the fact that their primary goals for the season are out of their control.

With the loss, Ohio State will need help if it hopes to secure a record-tying sixth straight Big Ten title. Michigan State improved to 3-0 a few hours before the Buckeyes took the field in Madison, and the two teams do not face each other this season.

Getting back into the national title race would be a much tougher task. After being ranked No. 1 for all of one week, the Buckeyes fell 10 spots to No. 11 in the Associated Press writers' poll and nine spots to No. 10 in the USA Today coaches' rankings.

As Brewster pointed out, however, crazy things can happen. The 2007 Buckeyes suf-

fered their first loss of the season in week 11 but wound up making their way into the title game thanks to a number of upset victories in the final weeks of the season.

Tressel said the focus will be on what happens next and not what happens five weeks from now.

"My thoughts are all of what we have to do tomorrow," he said. "I don't think too much about what goes on at the end of things. We worry about things day to day. If our guys are sitting there worrying about what will or won't be three months from now, then they're not thinking about the right things."

"We didn't talk anything about what remains and what's still out there. That's way further down the road than we typically talk about. We just talk about the fact that great lessons are learned when you're tested. The mark of a person is what they do after their disappointment. What we do tomorrow is going to be what's important."

One thing is for certain. The Buckeyes will no longer have to worry about the stress of being the nation's top-ranked team. As the rankings were announced Oct. 10, a number of OSU's players including starting safety Jermale Hines and starting cornerback Chimdi Chekwa took to their Twitter pages to express their dismay at being bumped up from No. 2 to No. 1.

Tressel said he did not think that his team was overly stressed by the national ranking.

"I'm sure that's an individual thing," he said. "It didn't change how we went about preparing for things. That's just part of what goes on each week. If you're distracted at all by that, perhaps it affects your ability to execute your job, but I did not sense that (affecting the team)."

In an effort to make sure the team was focused on the right things, Pryor delivered an impromptu speech the same day the rankings were announced.

"I didn't address them about being No. 1," he said prior to the Wisconsin game. "That's the least of my worries. Whether we're ranked 20 or 1, it really doesn't matter. We still have the same mind-set going into each game. I jumped up and wanted to speak to them about making better choices and being in the film room a lot more and taking a better step toward our goal - taking the next step."

Tressel was not present for the speech but said it was in a different vein than previous times the quarterback has addressed the team.

"Terrelle has always been a passionate guy," the coach said. "I think whenever he's gotten outspoken in the past it's been, 'Hey, I won't make that mistake again. I won't throw any more interceptions or I won't have a fumble.' It's always been, 'Hey, you guys, I'm learning some lessons.'"

Sanzenbacher said he appreciated the message Pryor delivered to the team.

"It's something we've had that goes without saying, but when you can get one of your leaders to go up there and talk in front of the other team, we'll always take that," the senior receiver said. "He wanted to reassure everybody that his focus was going to be there and make sure everybody was together. That was his message - to make sure everybody's mind was right."

The question is if Pryor saw something lacking in the team's focus that he felt needed addressing. Asked if he felt such a message needed delivered, he said he simply wanted to readdress the issue.

But senior linebacker and co-captain

Brian Rolle said the loss had nothing to do with mental focus or outside pressure.

"Everybody took this game as seriously as they could," he said. "It just came down to executing and that's something we didn't do. Nobody thought, 'Oh, we're big, bad No. 1 now.' Moving from No. 2 to No. 1 for us wasn't any different. People are still going to be gunning for Ohio State. Today we didn't execute like the No. 1 team."

Their first chance to put the loss in the rearview mirror ironically comes against Purdue. If there is a consolation to be had in the loss to the Badgers, the players said they liked the fact that they did not fold up shop and quit after falling behind early.

Trailing 21-3 at the half, OSU scored 15 straight points to pull to within a field goal before giving up a clinching touchdown drive to the Badgers.

"We stuck together tonight," Brewster said. "Like Tressel said, it doesn't matter what people say or what they write because we've got five games left and there's a lot to play for. There's a lot of football to be played."

"All we can do is go out next week and get after it, get prepared and come back out and try to get another win."

Ohio State Fans!



**Weekly September through November
Weekly January through mid-March
Biweekly mid-March through mid-May
Monthly December, June through August**

Some Ohio State sports fans need more information on the Buckeyes than they can find in their local newspaper. Buckeye Sports Bulletin is for those fans. By subscribing to Buckeye Sports Bulletin, they receive 28 issues a year featuring:



- In-depth coverage of all Ohio State sports
- The latest comments from coaches and players
- The latest in recruiting information
- Personality profiles
- Features on former Buckeye greats
- Rosters, schedules, statistics, photos
- Check us out on the Web at www.BuckeyeSports.com

- 1 Year, \$74.95
- 1 Year, First Class Mail, \$129.95
- 2 Years, \$139.95
- 2 Years, First Class Mail, \$229.95

I want to know more about Ohio State sports. I am enclosing \$_____

Money Order Check MasterCard Visa Discover Amer. Express
Credit Card # and Exp. Date _____

Credit Card Orders Accepted 24 Hours A Day
Call (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____
PHONE: _____

**Mail To: Buckeye Sports Bulletin
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
www.BuckeyeSports.com**

Travel is more than just A to B.

Travel should bring you closer to your favorite team.

No matter where your team is traveling, you're sure to find a Hilton Hotel. Stay in the newest upscale hotel in Columbus, the Hilton Columbus/Polaris, ideally located off Interstate 71 with complimentary self-parking and 252 luxurious guest rooms.

Book your travel today at www.columbuspolaris.hilton.com.

8700 Lyra Dr., Columbus, OH 43240 • 614-885-1600

Travel should take you places®

©2009 Hilton Hotels Corporation.

OHIO STATE VS. WISCONSIN

Mauled In Madison: Buckeyes Wilt At UW

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Wisconsin landed an early haymaker to the chin of top-ranked Ohio State and the reeling Buckeyes never fully recovered as they dropped a 31-18 decision to the upstart Badgers on Oct. 16 in front of 81,194 frenzied fans at Camp Randall Stadium.

Senior return man David Gilreath took the game's opening kickoff 97 yards for a touchdown and Wisconsin tallied a pair of rushing touchdowns from junior tailback John Clay to take a 21-0 lead at the 13:15 mark of the second quarter.

It was a hole from which the Buckeyes could never escape.

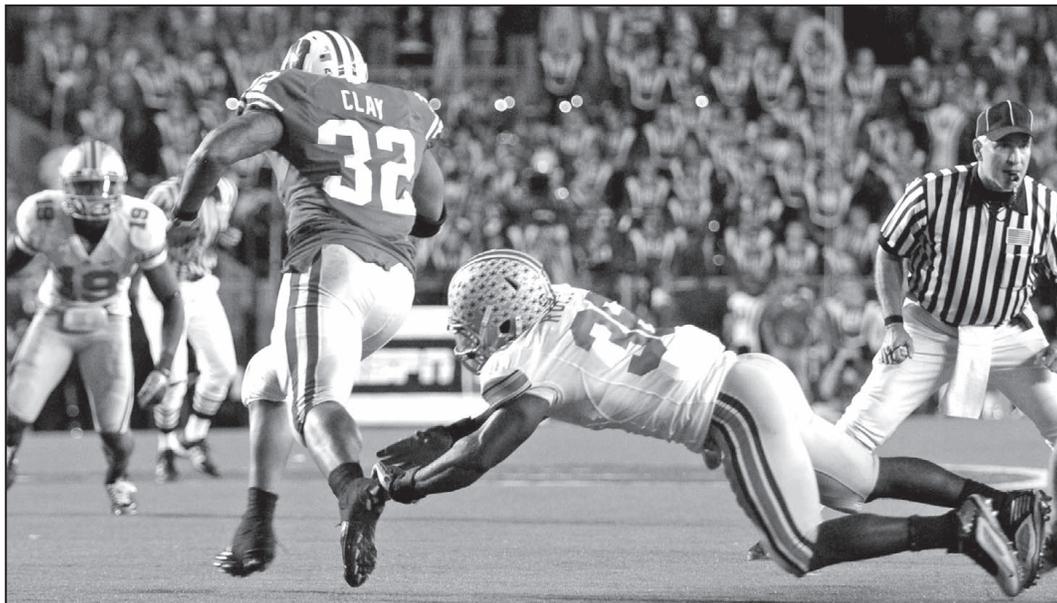
Clay's second touchdown capped a 19-play, 89-yard drive against an Ohio State defense that was battered and bullied all night by the Badgers' offensive line. The Buckeyes entered the game as the nation's fourth-toughest defense to run on, allowing an average of only 78.7 yards over their first six games. Wisconsin eclipsed that total by the 3:15 mark of the first quarter and finished with 184 yards on the ground.

Ohio State managed to make a game of it in the second half, roaring back to pull within three points thanks to a pair of touchdown runs from junior tailback Dan "Boom" Herron.

But after the Buckeyes closed the gap to 21-18 with 11:38 remaining in the game, the Wisconsin offense shifted gears and closed things out with a couple of ball-control possessions that left OSU with no time left for a comeback.

"Wisconsin did the things they needed to do to win the game," OSU head coach Jim Tressell told reporters after the game. "It started with special teams and they ran the ball well. I'm proud of our kids who fought hard and fought back when maybe a lesser bunch would have folded their tent. We got it back to 21-18, but to Wisconsin's credit they ... came up with the win."

The Badgers hadn't had much success over the years against top-ranked teams, entering the game with a 3-16 record all-time against No. 1-ranked opponents, but



SONNY BROCKWAY

STEP BEHIND – Ohio State senior linebacker Brian Rolle (36) could not corral Wisconsin tailback John Clay (32) during part of the Badger junior's big game that included rushing for 104 yards on 21 carries.

all of their victories over top-ranked teams have come at Camp Randall Stadium. The last time Wisconsin had beaten a No. 1 team came in the 1981 season opener when the Badgers handed Michigan a 21-14 upset loss in Madison.

For Ohio State, it was the first time its defense had allowed a Big Ten opponent to crack the 30-point mark since a 42-39 win over Michigan in the 2006 regular-season finale.

Additionally, the Buckeyes allowed a 100-yard rusher for the first time in 29 games when Clay finished with 104 yards on 21 carries. USC tailback Joe McKnight had been the most recent opponent to crack the century mark when he totaled 105 yards during his team's 35-3 victory on Sept. 13, 2008.

The loss wasted excellent performances by several OSU players, including Herron and senior receiver Dane Sanzenbacher. Herron rushed 19 times for 91 yards and the two scores while Sanzenbacher had six catches – many of them crucial, acrobatic grabs – for 94 yards.

OSU junior quarterback Terrelle Pryor had an excellent third quarter when he completed all seven of his pass attempts for 86 yards as the Buckeyes were in rally mode. But Pryor seemed out of sync most of the rest of the evening and finished 14 for 28 passing for 156 yards, no touchdowns and one interception. He added 56 rushing yards on 18 carries.

His Wisconsin counterpart, Scott Tolzien, was an efficient 13 for 16 for 152 yards, no touchdowns and an interception.

The Badgers wound up with 336 total yards while the Buckeyes had 311.

OSU was led on defense by senior safety Jermale Hines, who had 10 tackles, and junior linebacker Andrew Sweat, who played one of his best games in scarlet and gray. He registered a career-high eight tackles and also grabbed his second career interception.

Sophomore safety Orhian Johnson also established a career high with eight tackles while senior linebacker Brian Rolle also had eight.

Unfortunately, the Buckeyes couldn't muster any kind of pressure up front to harass Tolzien or stop the Badgers' running attack. OSU totaled only two tackles for loss and no sacks.

Wisconsin registered three sacks, two of them by junior defensive end J.J. Watt.

Down Big Early

Gilreath electrified the home crowd on the game's opening kickoff, taking it at his own 3 and exploding up the middle. The 5-11, 169-pound senior got a couple of key blocks at about the 20-yard line and then raced virtually untouched to the end zone.

Wisconsin kicker Philip Welch came on to add the extra point and the Badgers were off and running with a 7-0 lead a mere 12 seconds into the ballgame.

Ohio State started out well with its first possession when Pryor connected with junior wideout DeVier Posey on a 14-yard pass. But on the next play, Pryor pitched high and behind Herron on an option, and although the OSU tailback was able to get to the loose football and swipe it out of bounds, the play went for a 12-yard loss.

That was indicative of the sputtering OSU offense in the early going as the Buckeyes accounted for only 35 yards in the opening period.

Meanwhile, the Badgers' running game was gashing the Ohio State defense by blowing open huge holes up front. Clay was

9/18	OHIO	Noon
9/25	E. MICHIGAN	3:30 pm
10/2	at Illinois	TBA
10/9	INDIANA	TBA
10/16	at Wisconsin	7:15 pm
10/23	PURDUE	Noon
10/30	at Minnesota	8:00 pm
11/13	PENN STATE	TBA
11/20	at Iowa	TBA
11/27	MICHIGAN	TBA

**We Stock
All OSU Tickets
for
Home and Away Games**

Get \$15 off your next order over \$100.
Just enter **OSUWINS** when ordering.
Offer expires October 30, 2010.

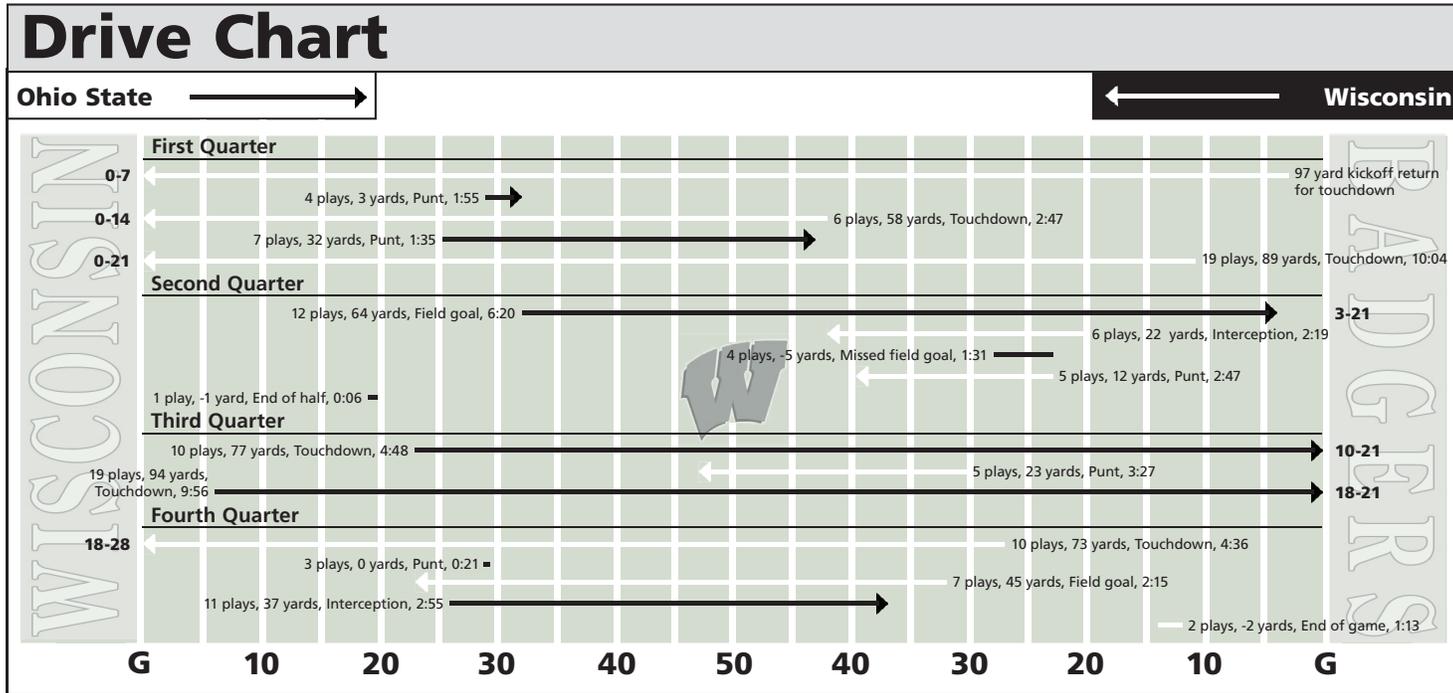
- We carry tickets for Buckeye Football, Browns, Bengals, All Big Ten teams
- Free local day of game pick-up for home Buckeyes games.
- Call us and talk to a live person M-F 10-8pm, Sat 10-7pm, Sun 11-4pm
- No Service Charges!

800-889-9100
GoldCoastTickets.com

Local pick-up available day of game

GoldCoast
TICKETS
You got a guy.™

OHIO STATE VS. WISCONSIN



the focal point of a six-play, 58-yard drive when he broke off runs of 4, 12, 5, 16 and 14 yards.

The 14-yarder capped the drive for a touchdown bolt on which Clay was barely touched, and Welch's PAT made it 14-0 at the 10:00 mark of the first quarter.

Ohio State seemed intent to play catch-up on its next possession as Pryor kicked things off with a nice 22-yard run. Three plays later, the quarterback powered his way just past the first-down marker on a third-and-6.

But Pryor misfired on his next two pass attempts, and tight end Jake Stoneburner's 10-yard reception on third down was ruled incomplete by replay officials, so the Buckeyes were forced to punt.

Wisconsin responded by embarking on its 89-yard drive that ate up an amazing 10:04 off the clock while completely deflating the OSU defense.

During the 19-play march, the Badgers converted a crucial fourth-and-1 at the Ohio State 31 when Tolzien sneaked ahead for the necessary yardage. Later, on a just-as-crucial third-and-6 at the 25, Gilreath got loose from OSU cornerback Devon Torrence for an 18-yard gain.

When Clay dived over from the 1-yard line three plays later and Welch kicked another extra point, the Badgers were sailing along with a 21-0 advantage with 13:15 still left until halftime.

The Buckeyes finally began to show some life on offense as they got their ground game untracked after a 17-yard

scramble from Pryor on a third-and-9 gave OSU the ball at midfield. Herron later broke off runs of 14 and 16 yards to give his team a first-and-goal at the Wisconsin 3.

But just as it seemed the Buckeyes had recharged their offense, the power went dead. They were stopped on three successive running plays – two by Pryor and one by Herron out of the Wildcat formation – and wound up settling for a 21-yard field goal from senior kicker Devin Barclay.

That made it 21-3 with 6:48 remaining in the half, and Ohio State got another scoring chance less than two minutes later when Sweat picked off a Tolzien pass at his own 44-yard line and returned it 18 yards. A subsequent personal foul penalty against the Badgers gave OSU excellent field position at the Wisconsin 23, but the Buckeyes couldn't cash in.

A 1-yard gain on a Sanzenbacher reverse and a second-down incompletion set up third-and-9, and that's when Watts blew past OSU right tackle J.B. Shugarts to sack Pryor for a 6-yard loss. Tressel had no choice but to call upon Barclay for what would have been a career-long field goal, but the senior's 45-yard attempt sailed just outside the left upright.

While the Buckeyes had trouble sustaining anything on offense in the first half, the third quarter featured a complete turnaround as Ohio State took the opening kickoff of the second half and marched 77 yards in 10 plays to cut into Wisconsin's lead.

Sanzenbacher grabbed an 11-yard catch

The Bottom Line

It was over when ... Wisconsin receiver Nick Toon beat OSU cornerback Chimdi Chekwa for a 20-yard reception on a third-and-3 early in the fourth quarter. The Buckeyes had just pulled to within three at 21-18 and needed a defensive stop to keep their momentum going. Toon's catch sustained an eventual touchdown drive that sealed Ohio State's fate.

Game ball goes to ... Andrew Sweat. The junior had an excellent game while many of his defensive counterparts did not. Sweat registered a career-high eight tackles and also nabbed his second career interception.

Stat of the game ... 0-3. In its last three games as the No. 1 team in the Associated Press writers' poll, Ohio State is 0-3. Before the loss to Wisconsin, the Buckeyes had dropped a 38-24 decision to No. 2 LSU in the 2007 national championship game as well as a 28-21 verdict earlier that season to unranked Illinois.

– Mark Rea

to convert a third-and-8 situation early in the drive and then four plays later made a leaping catch for a 24-yard gain to push the ball to the Wisconsin 26.

Two plays after that, Pryor picked up 13 on a quarterback draw before Herron lined up behind center once again in the Wildcat formation. He took the direct snap, stiff-armed UW defensive tackle Ethan Hemer about the 10 and then powered through strong safety Jay Valai at the goal line.

Herron's 13-yard touchdown was followed by Barclay's extra point, and the Buckeyes had climbed to within 11 points

of the Badgers at 21-10 at the 10:08 mark of the third quarter.

They got even closer thanks to their longest drive of the season, a 19-play march that covered 94 yards and ate away the final 6:34 of the third quarter and the first 3:22 of the fourth period.

The drive included a diving 12-yard catch by Posey, an acrobatic 9-yard reception by Sanzenbacher and a trio of third-down conversions. Herron finished things off with a 1-yard TD run, and then Pryor

Continued On Page 12

Paul's
FIFTH AVENUE
RESTAURANT & CATERING
1565 W. FIFTH AVE
AT NORTH STAR & W. FIFTH AVE
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43212
614.481.8848
www.paulsonline.com

SERVING THE GRANDVIEW AREA FOR OVER 35 YEARS
~
CASUAL DINING AND CARRY OUT
~
SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

REMODEL NOW

Columbus HOME SERVICES

- Kitchens • Baths
- Room Additions
- Entry & Patio Doors
- Finished Basements

Quality work & service
Customer satisfaction

licensed, bonded & insured
e-mail: homesserv@aol.com

"35 Years Experience"

JIM STRAUSBAUGH, OWNER **614.885.4663**

OHIO STATE VS. WISCONSIN

White's Fourth-Quarter TD Sealed Win For UW

Continued From Page 11

executed a perfect fake before lofting a pass to sophomore tight end Reid Fragel for the two-point conversion.

That made it 21-18 with 11:38 remaining in the game and momentum clearly seemed to be on Ohio State's side.

But the Badgers seized it back with a 10-play, 73-yard touchdown drive that broke the back of the Buckeyes. UW receiver Nick Toon beat Ohio State cornerback Chimdi Chekwa for a 20-yard gain on a crucial third-and-3 play early in the possession, and Wisconsin put it into overdrive after that.

Freshman tailback James White, who complemented Clay during the contest with 75 yards on 17 carries, ran through several arm-tackles during a 12-yard touchdown run with 6:57 to go, and once Welch added the extra point, the Buckeyes were down by 10 again at 28-18.

Needing to come up with some late-game heroics, OSU came up empty. The Buckeyes' ensuing possession featured three straight incompletions, and faced with fourth-and-10 at his own 29, Tressel had little choice but to send in the punting unit.

Wisconsin was able to move the ball back into Ohio State territory and wound up with a 41-yard field goal from Welch at the 4:14 mark to make it 31-18.

Pryor tried gamely to get one last score and got his team as far as the Wisconsin 33 with the clock ticking under three minutes. But he threw incomplete on first down and was sacked on the next play for a 4-yard loss, and then his attempt to Sanzenbacher was underthrown and intercepted by Wisconsin linebacker Blake Sorensen at the Badgers' 14.

Game Notes

- The game was the 76th meeting

between Ohio State and Wisconsin, and the Buckeyes still hold a decidedly lopsided 53-18-5 record in the overall series, including 24-11-2 in Madison. Since 1999, however, the series is dead even at 5-5.

• Tressel fell to 4-4 against the Badgers while Wisconsin head coach Bret Bielema won for the first time in four tries against the Buckeyes. The win was also Bielema's first in five tries against a top-10 opponent.

• Ohio State now has an all-time record of 66-12-1 playing as the nation's No. 1-ranked team.

• Wisconsin was playing a No. 1-ranked Ohio State team for the seventh time in history and now has a 2-5 record in those games. The other UW victory came in 1942 when the Badgers took a 17-7 win at Camp Randall Stadium in what has become known as "The Bad Water Game." Several members of the OSU squad became ill after drinking tainted water on the train to Madison, and the game wound up as the only blemish on the Buckeyes' 1942 record. They still went on to win the school's first-ever national championship that year.

• This year's loss snapped Ohio State's eight-game winning streak in Big Ten road games against teams ranked in the AP top 25. The Buckeyes had also won 19 of their last 20 conference road games.

• OSU is now 27-13 away from home in night games. Under Tressel, the Buckeyes fell to 16-11 after dark overall and 8-4 in Big Ten night games played on the road.

• Wisconsin has now won 41 of its last 45 at Camp Randall Stadium. That includes

14 of the last 15 with the only blemish a 20-10 loss to Iowa last season.

• The Badgers are lethal when they get an early lead. They are now 33-4 under Bielema when they score first.

• Former All-America receiver Lee Evans served as honorary captain for the Badgers. Evans caught a 79-yard touchdown pass to give Wisconsin a 17-10 victory over Ohio State in 2003, a night game at Camp Randall that snapped the Buckeyes' 19-game winning streak.

• In Tressel's 122 games with the Buckeyes, opposing teams have totaled 175 or more yards on the ground only 12 times. Wisconsin now has four of those 12 performances.

• Gilreath was already one of the most prolific kickoff return men in Big Ten history, holding the conference record with 116 career kickoff returns going into the contest against Ohio State. His 163 kickoff return yards against the Buckeyes made him the Big Ten's all-time leader in that category as well with 2,677. He passed Derrick Mason of Michigan State (2,575, 1993-96).

• Barclay is currently tied for the third-longest streak of consecutive games with at least one field goal. His 21-yarder in the second quarter gave Barclay at least one field goal in eight straight games. Georgia kicker Blair Walsh is first with 15 in a row while Dustin Hopkins of Florida State is second with nine. Danny Hrapmann of Southern Mississippi is tied with Barclay at eight.

JOIN US FOR DINNER AFTER THE GAME!

DINNER \$9.99



HOMETOWN BUFFET

3670 Soldono Boulevard
Columbus, OH 43228
(614) 279-6228

3874 Morse Road
Columbus, OH 43219
(614) 471-8777

3727 Park Mill Run Drive
Hilliard, OH 43026
(614) 527-9229

5805 Chantry Drive
Columbus, OH 43232
(614) 863-0505

Kids Eat FREE!

Up to 2 Kid's Buffets (age 11 & under) with the purchase of 1 Adult Buffet.

HOMETOWN BUFFET

© 2010 Buffets, Inc. Dine in only. Present coupon at purchase. Limit 4 Free Kid's meals per coupon with qualifying purchases. Not valid with other offers. Not redeemable for cash or credit. Reproduction and resale prohibited. Tax not included.

Expires 11/06/2010

TOPSOIL

VERY RICH PULVERIZED OR UNPULVERIZED "SOIL PLUS"



BLENDED SOIL WITH SAND and ORGANIC COMPOST
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
CRUSHED LIMESTONE, WASHED SAND & GRAVEL

ANY SIZE LOAD • IMMEDIATE DELIVERY ANYWHERE
Buy Where the Professionals Do • Delivered on Time - Every Time, It Doesn't Cost Any More!
Columbus' Largest

JONES FUEL COMPANY
350 Frank Road • 443-4611 • 1-800-TOPSOIL
www.jonestopsoil.com

ATTENTION BUCKEYE FANS

B.C.S CHAMPIONSHIP - JAN. 10 GLENDALE, AZ

Place a \$250 per person deposit and receive a 100% refund if Ohio State does not play in The 2011 B.C.S Championship Game.

All packages will include:

- * Ticket to the Game - You can choose from the endzone to the 40 yard line.
- * 3 Nights at the Chaparral Suites in Scottsdale.
- * Transportation to and from The Buckeye Bash
- * Tostitos tailgate party at the stadium
- * Transportation to and from the stadium
- * Daily breakfast and nightly happy hour

PACKAGES START AT \$1450 PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

You can see detailed information at www.diamondtravel.com or call 1-800-348-7748

Diamond Travel 22 years in business. Based in Phoenix

The Numbers Game

Wisconsin 31, Ohio State 18

Oct. 16, 2010 — Camp Randall Stadium; Madison, Wis.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F	
OHIO STATE	0	3	7	8	—	18
WISCONSIN	14	7	0	10	—	31

First Quarter

UW — Gilreath, 97 yard kickoff return (Welch kick), 14:48.
UW — Clay, 14 yard run (Welch kick), 10:00; 6 plays, 58 yards, 2:47 TOP.

Second Quarter

UW — Clay, 1 yard run (Welch kick), 13:15; 19 plays, 89 yards, 10:04 TOP.
OSU — Barclay, 21 yard field goal, 6:48; 12 plays, 64 yards, 6:20 TOP.

Third Quarter

OSU — Herron, 13 yard run (Barclay kick), 10:08; 10 plays, 77 yards, 4:48 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OSU — Herron, 1 yard run (Fragel pass from Pryor), 11:38; 19 plays, 94 yards, 9:56 TOP.

UW — White, 12 yard run (Welch kick), 6:57; 10 plays, 73 yards, 4:36 TOP.

UW — Welch, 41 yard field goal, 4:14; 7 plays, 45 yards, 2:15 TOP.

Att. — 81,194.

Weather — 70 degrees, clear; wind, W 8 mph.

Team Statistics

	OSU	UW
First Downs	22	21
Rushing	12	13
Passing	10	8
Penalty	0	0
Rushes-Yards	41-155	43-184
Passing Yards	156	152
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	28-14-1	16-13-1
Offensive Plays	69	59
Total Net Yards	311	336
Third Down Efficiency	6-13	4-8
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	1-1
Punts-Avg.	3-38.0	2-50.5
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties	2-14	3-35
Time of Possession	30:03	29:57

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — **OSU:** Herron 19-91; Pryor 18-56; J.Hall 2-8; Sanzenbacher 1-1; TEAM 1(-1). **UW:** Clay 21-104; White 17-75; Tolzien 3-7; TEAM 2(-2).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — **OSU:** Pryor 14-28-1-156-0. **UW:** Tolzien 13-16-1-152-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — **OSU:** Sanzenbacher 6-94; Posey 4-38; Herron 2-8; Saine 1-15; Z.Boren 1-1. **UW:** Toon 6-72; Anderson 2-13; White 2-9; Pedersen 1-33; Gilreath 1-18; Ewing 1-7.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — **OSU:** Buchanan 3-38.0-39. **UW:** Nortman 2-50.5-60.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — **OSU:** None. **UW:** Gilreath 1-13.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — **OSU:** Berry 4-102; J.Hall 2-45. **UW:** Gilreath 4-163.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds) — **OSU:** None. **UW:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — **OSU:** Sweat 1-18. **UW:** Sorensen 1-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) — **OSU:** Watt 2.0-17; Muldoon 1.0-4.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — **OSU:** Chekwa 1.0-1; Heyward 1.0-1. **UW:** Watt 3.0-20; St. Jean 1.5-1; Muldoon 1.0-4; Sorensen 0.5-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) — **OSU:** Hines 5-5-10; Sweat 5-3-8; O.Johnson 4-4-8; Rolle 2-6-8; Simon 2-4-6; Torrence 2-4-6; Chekwa 4-0-4; Heyward 2-2-4; R.Homan 1-3-4; Williams 1-3-4; Larimore 1-2-3; T.Jackson 1-1-2; Newsome 0-2-2; Saine 1-0-1; Wood 1-0-1; Gant 0-1-1; Bryant 0-1-1; Hankins 0-1-1. **UW:** Sorensen 5-5-10; St. Jean 4-3-7; Fenelus 5-1-6; Claxton 1-5-6; Watt 4-0-4; Hemer 1-3-4; Valai 3-0-3; Garner 3-0-3; Henry 3-0-3; Brinkley 2-1-3; Butrym 0-3-3; Kohout 2-0-2; Gilbert 2-0-2; Armstrong 1-1-2; Allen 0-2-2; Anderson 1-0-1; Briedis 1-0-1; Fenton 1-0-1; Muldoon 1-0-1; Hampton 0-1-1; Nzegwu 0-1-1; Pedersen 0-1-1; Dippel 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME — **OHIO STATE:** Offense, Pryor, Saine, Herron, Z.Boren, Sanzenbacher, Posey, Adams, J.Boren, Brewster, Browning, Shugarts, Barclay, Defense, Williams, Larimore, Simon, Heyward, R.Homan, Rolle, Sweat, Chekwa, Hines, O.Johnson, Torrence, Buchanan, Reserves, Bryant, Berry, Brown (DB), Washington, J.Hall, Gant, C.Brown (WR), Stoneburner, Oliver, Wood, Basil, Hyde, Clarke, Rice, Ebner, T.Jackson, Whiting, Sp.Smith, A.Homan, Hankins, Goebel, Miller, Newsome, Linsley, C.Smith, Fragel, Bellamy, McQuaide.

WISCONSIN: Offense, Tolzien, Clay, Gilreath, Pedersen, Kendricks, Nagy, Carimi, Moffitt, Konz, Zeitler, Wagner, Welch. Defense, Nzegwu, Butrym, Kohout, Watt, Sorensen, St. Jean, Taylor, Brinkley, Valai, Henry, Fenelus, Nortman. Reserves, Toon, Jefferson, Abbrederis, Lukasko, Anderson, D.Smith, Gilbert, Southward, O'Neill, Fenton, Garner, White, S.Johnson, Hampton, Ewing, Armstrong, Claxton, Rouse, Groy, Wozniak, Dippel, Briedis, McGuire, Current, Wojta, Dehn, Burge, Oglesby, Korslin, Byrne, Hemer, Muldoon, Allen.

Season Statistics

2010 Game-By-Game

Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Sept. 2	(2) MARSHALL	W, 45-7	105,040
Sept. 11	(2) MIAMI (FLA.) (12)	W, 36-24	105,454
Sept. 18	(2) OHIO	W, 43-7	105,075
Sept. 25	(2) E. MICHIGAN	W, 73-20	105,017
Oct. 2	(2) at Illinois	W, 24-13	62,870
Oct. 9	(2) INDIANA	W, 38-10	105,291
Oct. 16	(1) at Wisconsin (18)	L, 31-18	81,194
Oct. 23	PURDUE	Noon	
Oct. 30	at Minnesota	8 p.m.	
Nov. 13	PENN STATE	TBA	
Nov. 20	at Iowa	TBA	
Nov. 27	MICHIGAN	TBA	

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

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	157	95
Rushing	73	37
Passing	76	52
Penalty	8	6
Average Per Game/Rush	208.4	93.7
Average Per Game/Pass	235.3	157.4
Total Offense	3,106	1,758
Total Plays	489	410
Average Per Game	443.7	251.1
Average Per Play	6.4	4.3
Penalties-Yards	28-262	40-344
Fumbles-Lost	5-2	12-6
3rd Down Efficiency	39-94	28-88
Percentage	41%	32%
4th Down Efficiency	6-6	3-7
Percentage	100%	43%
Sacks-Yards	8-55	16-97
Time of Possession Avg.	32:38	27:22

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	86	95	54	42	—	277	39.6
Opponents	35	34	9	34	—	112	16.0

Individual Statistics

	Rushing			
	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Dan Herron	96	446	4.6	9
Terrelle Pryor	75	410	5.5	3
Jaamal Berry	20	219	10.9	1
Brandon Saine	44	183	4.2	2
Carlos Hyde	15	84	5.6	0
Jordan Hall	16	83	5.2	0
Kenny Guiton	3	19	6.3	1
Joe Bauserman	5	10	2.0	0
Dane Sanzenbacher	2	9	4.5	0
Corey Brown (WR)	1	9	9.0	0
Bo DeLande	2	8	4.0	0
TEAM	8	-21	-2.6	0
OSU Totals	287	1,459	5.1	16
OPP Totals	217	656	3.0	6

	Passing				TD-INT	Effic.
	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.		
Terrelle Pryor	118	181	65.2	1,505	15-4	158.0
Joe Bauserman	12	18	66.7	122	1-1	130.8
Jordan Hall	1	1	100.0	20	1-0	598.0
Kenny Guiton	0	1	0.0	0	0-1	-200.0
TEAM	0	1	0.0	0	0-0	0.0
OSU Totals	131	202	64.9	1,647	17-6	155.2
OPP Totals	108	193	56.0	1,102	4-12	98.3

	Receiving				TD	Long
	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD		
Dane Sanzenbacher	33	505	15.3	7	65	
DeVier Posey	30	402	13.4	3	62	
Brandon Saine	14	174	12.4	4	60	
Dan Herron	10	123	12.3	0	47	
Jake Stoneburner	9	110	12.2	1	21	
Reid Fragel	6	60	10.0	0	15	
Jordan Hall	5	61	12.2	1	25	
Zach Boren	5	42	8.4	0	22	
Taurian Washington	4	48	12.0	0	19	
Corey Brown (WR)	4	43	10.8	0	15	

Grant Schwartz	4	26	6.5	0	11
Terrelle Pryor	2	19	9.5	1	20
Chris Fields	2	13	6.5	0	10
Spencer Smith	1	8	8.0	0	8
Adam Homan	1	7	7.0	0	7
Ricky Crawford	1	6	6.0	0	6
OSU Totals	131	1,647	12.6	17	65
OPP Totals	108	1,102	10.2	4	41

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPP	FG	PTS
Devin Barclay	0	33-33	—	—	12-14	69
Dan Herron	9	—	—	—	—	54
D. Sanzenbacher	7	—	—	—	—	42
Brandon Saine	6	—	—	—	—	36
Terrelle Pryor	4	—	—	—	—	24
DeVier Posey	3	—	—	—	—	18
Jaamal Berry	1	—	—	—	—	6
Kenny Guiton	1	—	—	—	—	6
Jordan Hall	1	—	—	—	—	6
Brian Rolle	1	—	—	—	—	6
Jake Stoneburner	1	—	—	—	—	6
Reid Fragel	0	—	—	1	—	2
Drew Basil	0	—	—	—	0-2	0
OSU Totals	34	33-33	—	1	12-16	277
OPP Totals	14	13-14	—	—	5-9	112

Cameron Heyward recorded a safety.

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Devin Barclay	5-5	5-6	2-3	0-0	12-14
Drew Basil	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-2	0-2
OSU Totals	5-5	5-6	2-3	0-2	12-16
OPP Totals	1-1	2-3	1-4	1-1	5-9

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Ben Buchanan	25	1,013	40.5	1	56
TEAM	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	26	1,013	39.0	1	56
OPP Totals	41	1,723	42.0	0	60

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Brian Rolle	2	30	15.0	1	30
Chimdi Chekwa	2	22	11.0	0	15
Cameron Heyward	1	80	80.0	0	80
Devon Torrence	1	25	25.0	0	25
Jermale Hines	1	23	23.0	0	23
Nathan Williams	1	22	22.0	0	22
Andrew Sweat	1	18	18.0	0	18
Ross Homan	1	7	7.0	0	7
Dominic Clarke	1	0	0.0	0	0
Tyler Moeller	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	12	227	18.9	1	80
OPP Totals	6	24	4.0	0	15

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Jordan Hall	17	119	7.0	0	22
Corey Brown (WR)	3	22	7.3	0	11
OSU Totals	20	141	7.1	0	22
OPP Totals	9	142	15.8	1	79

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Jaamal Berry	16	440	27.5	0	45
Jordan Hall	8	198	24.8	0	47
Brandon Saine	1	18	18.0	0	18
OSU Totals	25	656	26.2	0	47
OPP Totals	43	1,006	23.4	2	97

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Ross Homan	24	17	41	2.0-2	1.0-1
Brian Rolle	15	23	38	1.5-1	—
Jermale Hines	17	17	34	0.	

OHIO STATE VS. WISCONSIN

Buckeye Game Analysis

Play Of The Game

After a poor opening 30 minutes, Ohio State came back with 15 straight points to start the second half Oct. 16 at Wisconsin, giving the visitors momentum and cutting their deficit to 21-18.

In response, the Badgers staged a drive that took the Buckeyes out of the game. Taking over with 11:33 to play, Wisconsin moved 73 yards in 10 plays and 4:36 to ice a 31-18 victory.

The Buckeyes still would have been in the game if they had kept the Badgers to a field goal, but the last of those plays was a 13-yard touchdown run by James White that made it a two-score game.

Wisconsin lined up with three tight ends and a single running back in White. The freshman took a handoff from quarterback Scott Tolzien and took off for the left side of the line of scrimmage on an outside zone play.

First, UW left tackle Gabe Carimi set the edge, locking onto defensive end Nathan Williams and pushing him inside. White cut outside the massive left tackle and then quickly inside, making cornerback Devon Torrence miss the tackle at the line of scrimmage.

With no receiver on that side of the field, Torrence was unblocked and his missed tackle set up White's path into the end zone. The back then cut inside the safety on that side of the field, Orhian Johnson, who also had to deal with the blocking effort of tight end Jake Byrne.

Center Peter Konz also locked onto OSU linebacker Andrew Sweat, so from there it was a simple jaunt into the end zone for White, whose biggest contact on the play came when he jumped into the arms of wide receiver Jared Abbrederis to celebrate the game-clinching score with 6:57 to play.

What Worked Well

- **Making Dan "Boom" Herron the primary rusher:** With a young defensive line, Wisconsin came in susceptible to a physical running game and Herron lived up to his explosive nickname with one of the hardest rushing performances of his career. He also ran in from 13 yards out from the Wildcat formation and 1 yard out to get the Buckeyes back in the game. It was Herron's third two-TD performance of the season, and he has nine scores in seven games.

What Didn't Work

- **The kickoff coverage unit:** Yet again, the Buckeyes were crippled in this area, giving up a score on the opening kickoff that set the tone for Wisconsin's upset. What had been an airtight unit over the previous three games saw



SONNY BROCKWAY

GOOD EFFORT – Junior tailback Dan 'Boom' Herron (1) was one of the lone bright spots for Ohio State, rushing for 91 yards and scoring both Buckeye touchdowns.

all that good work brushed aside in the time it took David Gilreath to go 97 yards with the opening score. Again, all it took was one player out of his lane and the Buckeyes paid dearly.

- **Letting Wisconsin set the tempo:** Ohio State obviously struggled dealing with Wisconsin's big offensive line and power rushing game, and that allowed the Badgers to shorten the game. Ohio State didn't force a three-and-out all night, and UW's 89-yard touchdown drive that made it 21-0 took over 10 minutes. The Badgers' defense also forced Ohio State to take up more than 14 minutes combined on its two second-half scoring drives.

Reviewing The Matchups

Ohio State rush offense vs. Wisconsin rush defense: Ohio State had some success running the ball at the Badgers. Herron finished with a solid 91-yard performance on 19 carries, while Pryor had 94 positive yards – including a few big runs – on his 18 carries, though the quarterback lost 21 yards on three sacks. When the Buckeyes put together consecutive scoring drives to start the second

half, much of it came on the strength of the ground game. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Wisconsin rush offense vs. Ohio State rush defense: We said in the preview that this matchup would determine the game, and that proved prophetic. The Badgers' big offensive line controlled play for much of the night, moving aside the defensive line and getting to the linebackers, too. The story of the game might have been the 18 combined tackles for safeties Johnson and Jermale Hines. White and John Clay had a combined 38 rushes, only two of which went for negative yardage, for 179 yards and three touchdowns. Losing Ross Homan to injury early in the game didn't help the Buckeyes, either. **EDGE: Wisconsin**

Ohio State pass offense vs. Wisconsin pass defense: Pryor had looked like a much improved passer in the first half of the season, but he was clearly not on his game in Camp Randall Stadium. He completed only 14 of 28 passes, and many of those completions still required difficult catches by his wideouts, Dane Sanzenbacher in particular. DeVier Posey had only four catches for 38 yards, and the Buckeyes got no catches from the tight ends – save Reid Fragel's two-point reception – or any receiver not named Posey or Sanzenbacher. **EDGE: Wisconsin**

Wisconsin pass offense vs. Ohio State pass defense: Tolzien wasn't forced to make many difficult throws and managed the game nicely. He completed 13 of 16 passes, many of which were simple screen passes or curl routes. Nick Toon had a nice night against Chimdi Chekwa, catching six passes for 72 yards. Four of his grabs went for first downs and the other two were 9-yard catches on first-and-10. Tolzien did throw an interception, forcing a pass into traffic that Andrew Sweat nabbed. **EDGE: Even**

Special teams: The kickoff return touchdown truly set the stage for the game, inspiring the Badgers to a 21-0 lead in the first half. Ohio State didn't reply with any kick returns over 30 yards, setting up the offense with a long field all game. Add in a missed field goal by Devin Barclay in the first half, only his second miss all year, and the Badgers earned a big edge here by making the critical plays. **EDGE: Wisconsin**

Intangibles: The Buckeyes sounded confident all week and even danced to "Jump Around" before the fourth quarter, but the proof was in the pudding. With a raucous crowd behind it, Wisconsin punched the Buckeyes in the mouth by taking a three-score lead and then delivered the knockout blow with a game-clinching, fourth-quarter touchdown drive that required only a single third-down conversion. Many of the Buckeyes' big guns didn't play well – plain and simple. **EDGE: Wisconsin**

– Jeff Svoboda



says
"Go Team!"

Come in and tackle our famous "LoveBoat"

Voted
Central Ohio's
Best Sushi



Mention this ad
for 10% off
your check!

614-895-7575
www.sapporosushifactory.com

732 N. State St.
Westerville, OH

Located in the Northridge Crossing Shopping Center by Giant Eagle.

Whatever it takes.™





Heating & Cooling Systems

Call about the
\$1,500
tax credit!

SEARS

Heating & Cooling

Family Owned Since 1950

3981 Cleveland Ave.
Columbus, OH 43224

(614) 475-1800
License #22197

www.searsheatingcooling.com

OHIO STATE VS. WISCONSIN

Clay, White Ran All Over Ohio State's Defense

Squinting behind his thin-rimmed glasses, Dexter Larimore searched his mental filing cabinet for data that could not be found.

"I don't think I've ever experienced a team that they'd just jam it down our throat and we'd have no answer," the senior Ohio State defensive tackle said. "I don't think Ohio State's defense is that type of defense. I don't think the guys on our team are like that, but the bottom line was tonight that's exactly what (Wisconsin) did. They lined up and said, 'You can't stop the run' and obviously we didn't have an answer for it."

It was the duo of junior John Clay and freshman James White that did the damage for the home team. One year after being held to 59 yards on 20 carries during a 31-13 OSU win, Clay became the first back to rush for more than 100 yards against the Buckeyes since a 2008 road loss to USC in the third week of the season – a stretch of 29 games.

Clay finished with 104 yards and two touchdowns on 21 carries. The shiffter White put up 75 yards on 17 carries.

"They're great," OSU head coach Jim Tressel said of the duo. "They're a great tempo change – a big power guy and then the quickness with White. We were saying that the whole week as we prepared."

Clay wasted no time showcasing his talents. Wisconsin's first scoring drive – and its second score of the game after returning the opening kickoff for a touchdown – went for 58 yards. The junior was responsible for 51 yards on that drive, nearly surpassing his complete-game total from a year ago.

The Badgers boasted a talented offensive line that averaged 6-5½ and 320 pounds and had a combined 110 games started entering the game against Ohio State. Their rushing offense ranked 11th in the nation and second in the Big Ten at 240.8 yards per contest.

However, the Buckeyes have long prided themselves on stopping the run. But following the game they dropped from fourth to 12th in the nation with an average of 93.7 rushing yards allowed per contest.

"Hey, that's what you get into when you're in the Big Ten," a red-eyed senior

lineman Cameron Heyward said. "I didn't perform as well as I wanted to. I take this loss very personally. If there's a finger to be pointed, it should be at me. As a leader of this defense, I think it starts up front. I don't think we did a good job at all."

Heyward finished with four tackles including one of the team's two tackles for loss.

Wisconsin head coach Bret Bielema said he challenged his offensive linemen to break the aura that was the OSU rushing defense.

"I don't do that very often as a head coach," he said. "If I do something like that, it's usually that I have a really strong belief that it's going to come through. Everybody made a big deal about the 29 games that Ohio State had played without a 100-yard rusher. I threw that in our guys' faces all week. I threw it at our running backs but it all starts up front for us. For us to have success, we have to play well at the offensive line."

Larimore said he would have to look at the film to see why the Badgers were so effective at running the ball.

"They just kept running and running and running," he said. "We didn't seem to have an answer for it. The bottom line is you need to beat them up front. You need to get penetration so they can't cut back."

However, the senior defensive lineman said the mistakes did not come from a lack of effort on the part of his teammates.

"I don't think you can sit there and say that anybody wasn't giving effort or not giving it their all," Larimore said. "That's something that you want to see. It's just a matter of they were the better team tonight. They just got after us on the ground and in the air. You need to look within yourself and see what this season has in store for us."

half. But he limped off again after a handful of plays and sophomore Jonathan Newsome replaced him in the lineup.

Tressel said he had no update on Homan's status after the game and the linebacker was not made available for interviews. Rolle said he expects his fellow senior to be back soon.

"Honestly, I'm not sure at all (what happened)," he said. "I'm sure whatever it is, he'll be back."

Junior Andrew Sweat saw some of the most extensive playing time of his career and came up with his second career interception. He finished second on the team with eight tackles.

In the handful of plays he saw in the team's nickel defense, freshman DB Christian Bryant made one tackle. In the Buckeyes' nickel package, Rolle and Sweat served as the two linebackers.

Tressel said the game simply came down to execution – Wisconsin did and OSU did not, and he was surprised by that fact.

"It's one thing to talk about football and another thing to draw it on the board, but the real part is execution and they executed," Tressel said. "I never thought anyone would run on us. If I had to bet, it wasn't anything earth-shaking (that Wisconsin did). It was just excellent execution. I'm fairly certain this was a lot of their base package."

The third quarter was another story, however. Trailing 21-3 at the half, the Buckeyes held the ball for 11:29 of the third stanza and limited Wisconsin to four rushes for 8 yards. But once the visitors had pulled to within three at 21-18, Wisconsin picked up the first 36 yards of its subsequent drive through the air before gaining the final 23 yards on the ground to push the lead back to two scores.

In the win, the Badgers threw the ball 16 times and carried it 43 times. Wisconsin quarterback Scott Tolzien completed 13 of his throws for 152 yards, but he also tossed an interception. He was effective but not asked to do too much other than handing the ball off.

And the way Wisconsin was able to be successful in that area, why deviate from the script?

"We didn't do a great job at all," Heyward said. "Myself, I didn't do a great job at all. I think our whole defense has to get back to the drawing board and learn from this."

Playing A Man Down

The Buckeyes spent nearly the entire game in their base defense but were down a key player. Senior linebacker Ross Homan suffered what appeared to be an ankle injury in the second quarter that knocked him out of action for nearly the entirety of the rest of the game.

After missing a few plays, Homan trotted back out of the locker room carrying his helmet and was reinserted into the game as the Badgers took over for their final drive of the



SONNY BROCKWAY

HEADING THE OTHER WAY – Ohio State junior linebacker Andrew Sweat (42) saw the most extensive playing time of his collegiate career and recorded an interception of a Scott Tolzien (16) pass.

INSIDE THE GAME Adam Jardy

That much was certainly true. The Buckeyes entered the game ranked fourth in the nation in rushing defense, allowing an average of 78.7 yards per contest, and the Badgers piled up 184 yards on 43 carries to power their way to a 31-18 victory.

There was no secret to what Wisconsin was doing, and yet OSU was powerless to stop it.

"The run game, they just overwhelmed us with it," said Brian Rolle, a senior captain. "They just ran the ball, ran the ball, ran the ball. They didn't trick us or run reverses or try to do too much. They just ran the ball and that's something we've got to be able to stop."

SHOW YOUR SPIRIT IN STYLE!

with New Nike Styles for Adults & Women

ADULT HOCKEY JERSEY
\$125.00

ADULT FOOTBALL TEE
\$18.00

ADULT ORGANIC FOOTBALL TEE
\$24.00

ADULT HOCKEY MESH CAP
\$22.00

WOMEN'S VAULT HALF ZIP HOODY
\$55.00

WOMEN'S CAP
\$18.00

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL REPLICA TEE
\$32.00

THE BUCKEYE CORNER

Q

buckeyecorner.com 1-800-525-5630

POLARIS • EASTON • SAWMILL • LANE AVENUE

Logo used with permission of The Ohio State University. All items are subject to availability while supplies last. Prices and offers valid through 10-23-10.

OHIO STATE VS. WISCONSIN

BSB Quotebook: Wisconsin 31, Ohio State 18

Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel on his conservative late first-half play-calling that led to the Buckeyes settling for a 21-yard field goal: "Obviously we shouldn't have called them because they didn't work and obviously they didn't work because we didn't execute. Do I wish we would have scored seven there? Absolutely."

Tressel on punting the ball away trailing 28-18 with about 6:30 remaining: "It was fourth-and-10 and your percent chance of (converting) a fourth-and-10 is probably less than your percent chance of stopping them to see if we could score. Then we probably wouldn't have much time left and we'd have to onside kick, but it's probably easier to get an onside than a fourth-and-10. We felt like if it was fourth-and-3 or something else (we'd try)."

OSU center Michael Brewster on Wisconsin taking the opening kickoff for a touchdown: "It was a big momentum thing for them, especially at home. It gets them rocking. You've just got to keep fighting back. I thought we were making a comeback there in the second half and I thought we were going to have a shot at the end, but they answered us and closed the game up."

Wisconsin head coach Bret Bielema: "No one knew about this story – I kind of kept it under wraps. Kyle Wojta, our snapper for the last two years, tore his ACL in Tuesday's practice and snapped in the game today. Kid tore his ACL and was not going to be denied the opportunity to snap."

OSU senior linebacker Brian Rolle: "It's one of those games where we didn't come out and play like we needed to, especially on defense. We didn't put our offense in too good of situations. This week against Purdue is a game we're going to have to practice hard for. I'm going to get the guys together being a senior and being a captain and we'll come out Saturday firing."

OSU senior defensive tackle Dexter Larimore: "Obviously you're surprised when you don't play as well as you want to, but coming into this game we knew what was going to happen. We knew they were going to be physical. The bottom line is we didn't come in and play like we should have. We didn't come in and play like the No. 1 ranked team should play. That's something that we're going to have to handle."

Rolle on if he has ever been on a team that was beaten as badly on defense: "Not at all, except from playing video games. It was one of those things of, 'Did they really just do what they just did?' It's hard to even take in. We just got beat and it's not like we got beat on trick plays. They just beat us. That's it. They lined up toe to toe, ran right at us and beat us."

OSU senior defensive lineman Cameron Heyward on the team: "From the beginning of the season I knew it was a very special group. We're a tight bunch, but sometimes you need to be kicked in your butt a couple of times. We've still got a whole lot more games to go, though. There will be no letdown."

Heyward on if the game reminded him of the 2008 win at Wisconsin: "It's hard to even think about that '08 game. These are totally different teams. We were able to pick up the win back then, but we definitely got our butts kicked this week."

OSU junior wide receiver DeVier Posey on if he thought a loss was possible: "It's football. It's a game. Sometimes people have momentum and that's how it happens. I'm not going to toss and turn in my bed. I can take a loss. It's a hum-



SONNY BROCKWAY

NO BLAME – Ohio State quarterback Terrelle Pryor (2) called his team's defeat at Wisconsin 'a team loss.'

bling experience but you have to be a man. It's a game, and to us we play it. To the fans it might be a lot more, but you win some and you lose some. Wisconsin's a good team and they played great at home."

Wisconsin senior offensive lineman Gabe Carimi on the win: "I waited three years to beat (Ohio State). It was great as a senior."

OSU junior quarterback Terrelle Pryor on the quad injury suffered two weeks before: "I can't use the quad as an excuse at all. There was enough that I could run a little bit. I don't think that's an excuse. The quad's fine."

Wisconsin freshman running back James White on his fourth-quarter touchdown run: "They saw me trying to get to the outside a little bit before, so I figured if I set them up outside and just put my foot down, they wouldn't be able to tackle me. So once I made that one cut, they both tripped up a bit and I ran through the seam."

Pryor's thoughts on the defeat: "It was a team loss. The kickoff happened and then we had the fumble on the first drive we had. Things tore us apart. We're men and this doesn't define us as a team. It doesn't define me, I know that. There's going to be plenty more cheers and joy. Of course we didn't want to lose. We didn't want to lose for the fans and we didn't want to lose for ourselves. We thought we had the best team."

OSU senior wide receiver Dane Sanzenbacher on his leaping 9-yard grab to keep a third-quarter scoring drive alive: "At that point in the game, we're just trying to make any play that we can. We want to keep the chains

moving. If he throws the ball up in the air for me, I'm going to go get it and we'll worry about the rest afterward."

Bielema on his halftime speech: "I went in and told coaches and the players to approach the second half the same way as if the score was 0-0. But I did point out right before we left the locker room that we've been in four-quarter games this year – whether by choice or not. We've been in them and I didn't really think Ohio State had been. I really wanted our guys to believe in what we were talking about."

Pryor on another special teams breakdown: "Coach preaches to us all the time to take care of the ball and special teams. We talk all the time about special teams and we have to sit in an hour meeting when he just talks about it on Friday nights. He stresses it, but I'm not putting this on our special teams at all. As a team, we need to get better."

Tressel on his halftime message: "We really just talked about going out and making sure we played this thing one play at a time. We had to have some balance. We could sit here and say it's 21-3 and we have to throw every down and catch up on the first play. We had to methodically catch up and I was proud of the way the kids did that. All of the sudden you turned around and it was 21-18 and felt like we had a little bit of momentum – it's hard to have momentum in someone else's house – but we had a little bit of momentum and they delivered. I guess it's not unlike 2003 (when Wisconsin won a 17-10 decision). We fought and scratched and clawed our way back to 10-10, and then they hit a big play."

Winning National Championship Is Never Easy

I think sometimes we tend to forget just how difficult it is to win a national championship.

At a traditional power such as Ohio State, fans and observers go into nearly every season thinking the Buckeyes have a chance to go all the way – some seasons, such as this one, even more than others.

Those fans and observers circle certain games on the schedule as key contests, hoping the Buckeyes can win those games and not slip up in an uncircled game like Ohio State did against Purdue last season.

The first circled game for Ohio State this season was the 2002 championship game rematch with Miami (Fla.) and the Buckeyes passed that test with flying colors. The next anticipated test was the Oct. 16 game at Wisconsin, and things didn't go as well in Madison.

Intellectually, OSU fans knew the Badgers would present a test in Camp Randall Stadium. Emotionally, however, I think some assumed the Buckeyes would just roll to their seventh victory of the season.

Everyone knew Wisconsin was a good football team, and if we knew going in the Badgers would present a challenge in Madison, then we shouldn't be so surprised that they took the fight to the Buckeyes and prevailed in the end.

In the magical seasons, you win these games. Losses like the 31-18 defeat at the hands of the Badgers are the games that separate what will still probably prove to be a great season for the Buckeyes from a magical one.

To win every game in a season is very difficult. For all of its fans' expectations, Ohio State has done it only twice in the last 42 years, so losing to a good Big Ten team on the road shouldn't come as a complete shock.

Just as surely as Buckeye fans had circled Oct. 16 on their calendars as a key date in the quest for a national championship, they also knew in the back of their minds that if Ohio State didn't tighten up its kickoff return defense, it was going to come back to haunt them later in the season.

It seemed like the Buckeyes had improved their kick coverage considerably in recent weeks, yielding an average of only 18.9 yards per return in the previous three games. The longest return during that span was 29 yards by Darius Millines of Illinois during OSU's 24-13 victory in Champaign.

Now, I'm not saying David Gilreath's 97-yard return to open the Wisconsin game was the deciding factor in the contest, but it was certainly as big a factor as any. Obviously, seven fewer points for the Badgers would have made the game a lot tighter. More importantly, for an underdog to take the lead and ignite the revved-up nighttime crowd only seconds into the game was huge. Momentum is so important in big football games, and Wisconsin took it right off the bat.

We will never know if the outcome would have been different had the Badgers been forced to move the ball from scrimmage on their first drive. Defense is supposedly Ohio State's strength and the defenders seemed to be a little back on their heels after that quick score. The OSU defense ultimately tightened up considerably, but by then the damage had

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

been done and the Buckeyes were left to fight their way out of a 21-0 hole – never an easy task, especially on the road.

But battle their way out of the hole the Buckeyes did, closing to within three at 21-18 early in the fourth quarter and taking momentum back throughout the third quarter and into the final period.

It is my experience in watching sports for these many years, however, that when a team in any sport battles back from a large deficit, it expends so much physical and emotional energy in coming back that it is often hard to seal the deal. Sadly, Ohio State was unable to do so, allowing the Badgers to close the game with 10 unanswered points to secure the victory.

If I had to look at one other critical point in the game for the Buckeyes, it would be late in the first half when Ohio State twice drove deep into Wisconsin territory – once inside the 5-yard-line – and came away with only three points. A couple of touchdowns there and the Buckeyes could have gone into the locker room trailing 21-14 and it would have been an entirely different ballgame.

As far as my biggest disappointment in the game – other than the kickoff return – it would probably be the defense's inability to stop the Wisconsin running game in the first half. This was a case of strength against strength, and the Badgers got the best of it in the early going, grinding out huge chunks of yardage on their first drive from scrimmage. John Clay carried five times for 51 yards on that scoring march, a 58-yard drive that was set up when OSU's Ben Buchanan's 39-yard punt was returned 13 yards by Gilreath to the Wisconsin 42.

Ohio State tightened up against the run when the Badgers got the ball back the next time, but that allowed Wisconsin quarterback Scott Tolzien to mix in four pass completions on four attempts for 40 yards, helping the Badgers march 89 yards on 19 plays to up their lead to 21-0 early in the second period. Wisconsin ate up 10:04 on the drive, keeping Terrelle Pryor and his offense on the bench rather than out on the field trying to put points on the board.

While much was made of the running combination of Clay and freshman James White that combined for 179 yards on 38 carries, Tolzien was also pivotal in the win. The Buckeyes were unable to mount any consistent pressure on Tolzien, failing to register a sack as he completed 13 of 16 passes for 152 yards and was forced into just one miscue, an Andrew Sweat interception that the Buckeyes failed to convert into points.

Unlike in past games when Ohio State may not have registered a sack but put constant pressure on the opposing quarterback, this time – perhaps because of a commitment to stop the run – the Buckeyes seemed unable to get to the quarterback. On a pivotal play in the fourth quarter, Ohio State got first-down pressure on Tolzien, but he evaded the rush and completed a 33-yard pass to

tight end Jacob Pedersen to help start Wisconsin on its final scoring march to seal the victory.

Things weren't all bad for the Buckeyes, though.

First and foremost, they didn't fold when they got down 21-0 on the road. I thought it was a reflection of head coach Jim Tressel and the leaders on the team that they never panicked and didn't try to make up the entire deficit at once. Instead, the Buckeyes chipped away, making it a more than winnable game in the fourth quarter. The adjustments OSU made both on offense and defense could have been enough to pull out the victory.

And give credit where credit is due.

After taking its shots throughout much of the first half of the season, the offensive line helped the Buckeyes open up the running game, especially in the third and early fourth quarters when they mounted drives of 77 and 94 yards to close within three points.

The latter drive lasted 19 plays and ate up 9:56 with the line and also oft-maligned tailback Dan "Boom" Herron doing much of the heavy lifting.

Running in the shadow of the Wisconsin running backs, Herron finished the game with 91 yards on 19 carries for a 4.8-yard average and the Buckeyes totaled 155 yards on the ground, only 29 yards fewer than the Badgers.

This was the type of spotlight game where if Pryor had made his mark, he could have solidified his place in the Heisman Trophy chase. He had his moments against the Badgers, but in the end his performance was not nearly enough to secure the win or dominate the all-important highlight shows.

He got off to a very slow start throwing the ball, and even after he heated up he made dangerous cross-field passes that fortunately he was able to complete. Pryor also had mixed results rushing the football. He netted 56 yards on 18 carries for the game with a long of 22, but he lost a yard on both his attempts when the Buckeyes faced a first-and-goal from the 3 on the second-quarter drive that resulted in a 21-yard Devin Barclay field goal.

I have mentioned time and time again that receivers DeVier Posey and Taurian Washington need to reel in catchable passes that may not be on the money. Both were unable to corral Pryor passes on a fourth-quarter possession, leaving the Buckeyes facing a fourth-and-10 at their own 29 with less than seven minutes to play, forcing Tressel to call on the punt team. After a 39-yard effort from Buchanan and Tolzien's previously mentioned 33-yard pass completion, the Badgers were able to put the game out of reach with a field goal.

In championship seasons, players catch those passes.

While it is easy to point out where the Buckeyes failed, it would be absolutely unfair not to give Wisconsin its due. The Badgers outplayed the Buckeyes – plain and simple.

Hats off again to the Buckeyes for not folding, but on this night Wisconsin deserved to win.

Sanzenbacher Surprise

While Washington and Posey were struggling to reel in off-the-money passes from Pryor, Dane Sanzenbacher was making acrobatic and critical catches to help keep the Buckeyes in the game. The senior from Toledo finished the game with six receptions for 94 yards, both game highs.

I have to admit that Sanzenbacher continues to amaze me.

Throughout my 30 years at BSB, I have read hundreds of recruiting profiles from Dayton Roth's Keith Byars through the story on Chase Farris that appears on page 32 of this issue. With quotes from the proud prep coaches, these stories make virtually every recruit seem like the next Byars, Orlando Pace or Chris Spielman.

For some reason, the profile on Sanzenbacher that ran in our Sept. 9, 2006, issue stood out to me. Under the headline "All Sanzenbacher Does Is Make Plays For Central Catholic," the first paragraph of the story said it all.

"A wide receiver who stands 6-0, weighs 180 pounds and runs the 40-yard dash in 4.64 seconds might not sound particularly impressive."

It didn't sound very impressive to me and I figured Sanzenbacher would never amount to much for the Buckeyes. Obviously, I was wrong. Because as the headline said, all he "does is make plays."

Sanzenbacher currently leads the Buckeyes with 33 catches for 505 yards, a 15.3-yard average, and has scored seven touchdowns.

Chink In The Armor

While I figured Ohio State would beat Wisconsin – nothing quite like BSB managing editor Mark Rea's 41-17 prediction in our Friday electronic newsletter before the game, but a win nonetheless – I must admit to a bit of nervousness after several Buckeyes expressed concerns about the team's new No. 1 ranking.

That concern just seemed very out of character for this year's squad, which seemed to put aside hype and distractions and just concentrate on the week's task at hand. Where the Buckeyes were ranked was irrelevant to preparation for the Badgers, and I don't understand why the players cared. Ohio State is going to get the best shot from all opponents regardless of where it is ranked.

By the way, as it became apparent that the Buckeyes were going to fall to the Badgers, didn't you figure that the anti-Ohio State bias would cause the team to fall farther in the polls than was probably merited? Sure enough, OSU fell all the way to either 10th or 11th in the human polls, a pretty steep drop for a team that lost to a ranked team on the road. Alabama, by comparison, dropped from first to eighth the week before after losing to South Carolina.

With all due respect to such teams as Boise State, TCU or Utah, come play a Big Ten schedule – or any major-conference schedule – for a full season and then let's talk about it when you are undefeated.

I know these teams can't help the leagues they are in, but let's compare apples to apples when voting in the polls.



SONNY BROCKWAY

TIME TO PARTY – Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer (center) and his Buckeyes blasted Wisconsin on Dec. 6 to claim the Big Ten championship.

Redemption: Buckeyes Take Big Ten Title

By Jeff Svoboda

Exactly 52 weeks before Dec. 6, the Ohio State football team trudged off the field at Lucas Oil Stadium aware that its shot at a national championship was ruined.

The emotions ranged from disappointed to stunned as the Buckeyes silently made their way to the locker room to let the first loss after 24 consecutive wins sink in while Michigan State celebrated its Big Ten championship and Rose Bowl bid on the field.

The whole scene was summed up by a picture of Ohio State coach Urban Meyer dejectedly eating pizza in a golf cart after the game that went viral among college football fans.

Sitting at home while nursing a season-ending injury, then-freshman linebacker Darron Lee had tears in his eyes as he watched his crestfallen teammates walk off the field and swore that he would help make amends.

“What a difference a year can make, right?” he said in the locker room at

Lucas Oil after OSU’s 59-0 drubbing of No. 13 Wisconsin in this year’s Big Ten Championship Game. “I’ll never forget when I watched on TV last year, I cried. I cried a lot, and I vowed one day to get a championship for my leaders and for my brothers, so it’s crazy what a year can make.

“It feels good. Watching it from the TV and then coming out and winning it a year later, the feeling is indescribable.”

Lee’s smile was nearly a mile wide as the party around him was in full swing. The entire game – the second-biggest beating ever put on a top-15 team in college football history – was essentially a celebration for the team and its fans, who swarmed the home of the Indianapolis Colts looking to wash away the lingering feelings from the year before.

The team jubilantly cheered Devin Smith’s touchdown catch that started the shellacking just 1:59 into the game and was equally thrilled when Wisconsin’s last-gasp drive ended just short of the end zone against OSU’s second unit to keep the shutout intact.

After celebrating on the field and receiving the Big Ten championship trophy from commissioner Jim Delany, the Buckeyes retreated to the team locker room for a team dance party captured by reporters. Later, as reporters milled about, music blared as hugs and high fives were exchanged throughout the night.

“It’s just a great feeling,” senior linebacker Curtis Grant said. “Reality still hasn’t hit me yet. I think it’s all a dream. But I wouldn’t trade this team for the world.”

The thought that this year would be different entered the team’s mind from the second it returned to Lucas Oil Stadium. A year ago, Ohio State was the visiting team, meaning it stood on the east sideline of the stadium, used the opposing locker room and wore its road white uniforms.

When the Buckeyes arrived this year, they were the home team, which meant using the Colts locker room and donning the team’s iconic scarlet tops.

“We had that bad taste from last year,” Grant said. “Coming out of the opposite tunnel (in walk-through before the

game), the first thing I thought about was (Michigan State) coming out with their roses last year, and they were excited, man. It just hurt to be on the other end and to see it. Now we see what we can do.”

That Michigan State loss motivated the team throughout the year. Before the Indiana contest Nov. 22 that allowed OSU to clinch a share of the Big Ten East Division title and return to the conference championship game, the Buckeye players spoke unprompted about how important that goal had been to the team through winter workouts.

Once that mission was accomplished, the elders of the team spoke of how much they were looking forward to returning to Indianapolis to exorcise the demons of the past year. They did so in grand fashion against the Badgers.

“I think a lot had to do with how we finished the year last year,” senior tight end Jeff Heuerman said. “We didn’t forget that feeling, and they made sure of that in the offseason. We would watch before workouts, before mat drills, video of them celebrating out there and us losing and stuff like that.

“It was terrible at the time, honestly, but it truly motivated us the whole offseason. We learned from our mistakes and came out today and showed what we’ve been working for for the last year.”

Jones Keeps Up

Odds makers made Wisconsin the favorite before the game thanks largely to the fact Ohio State entered the game with a first-time starter at quarterback in sophomore Cardale Jones.

Redshirt freshman J.T. Barrett outpointed Jones in the battle for the No. 2 quarterback job in fall camp, became the starter when Braxton Miller went down with a season-ending injury and then took the college football world by storm, breaking school and Big Ten records on the way to earning Heisman Trophy consideration.

So when he went down late in the Michigan game with a broken bone in his right ankle, Jones – who had thrown 16 career passes in nearly three years in the program before the U-M contest – was suddenly the No. 1 guy.

If there was any weight on his shoulders considering the OSU season hung in the balance, he didn’t show it. Jones was superb from his first throw and finished with three touchdown passes while completing 12 of 17 throws for 257 yards

and no interceptions. More importantly, he was in command of the OSU offense throughout the game.

Teammates and coaches alike said they knew the 6-5, 250-pounder had the potential in him to shine, and most said they weren’t surprised by his standout performance.

Then there was Meyer.

“I don’t use the word surprised,” Meyer said. “I guess I’ll use it for the first time – I was a little bit surprised.”

Jones was asked if he played with an edge considering how his presence as the starter had led many to decree OSU the underdog in the game, but he said that was not the case.

“I wouldn’t say a chip on my shoulder,” he said. “I played with confidence because of the confidence my teammates had in me, the confidence my coaches had in me, my family, close friends, Buckeye Nation.

“It was very fun, going out there showing everybody what we can do when we all come together as one.”

During the week before the game, Meyer and his offensive staff went to great lengths to explain that a quarterback is the product of those around him while noting that the Ohio State offense had improved around Barrett throughout the first 12 games. That included a running back in Ezekiel Elliott who went from solid to a standout, an ever-improving group of receivers and an offensive line that jelled into a unit that brought back memories of 2013’s dominant squad.

“It’s the culture that Urban Meyer promotes, the culture of playing not for yourself but for your brothers and your teammates and playing for those guys in that room,” said offensive coordinator Tom Herman. “I think Cardale understood the responsibility he had not just to the team in general, but to that room.”

Jones was also lauded before the game for how he handled being the No. 2 quarterback this season, and his mature approach to preparation was consistent during the week leading up to the title game.

“To see the way he focused this week, he wasn’t at the house like he usually is,” roommate Tyvis Powell said. “He spent a lot of time at the Woody. He did a lot of throwing and a lot of film study. He stayed overtime at the Woody, so the work he put in this week, I knew he was leaving no doubt that he’d be ready to play.”

Whether his gaudy numbers were a

surprise or not, Jones got the job done when the spotlight was the brightest.

“He delivered just like I thought he would,” Herman said. “We worked all week to make sure that his confidence level was up and that he prepared like a pro, which he did. He did all those things. When he did all those things it fills you with confidence.

“He still made some first-time blunders. He certainly didn’t play a perfect game. The thing I was most proud of was when he did make some bonehead mistakes, he came right back and never got in the tank and continued to play extremely well.”

A Convincing Win

The jubilation in the Ohio State locker room was in part because of the lopsided nature of the game. Winning was the ultimate goal and making a statement was important, but to play one of the best games in school history from start to finish was like getting not one but two cherries on top of the sundae.

“If you would have told me earlier this week that we would shut them out 59-0, I wouldn’t have believed you,” senior Michael Bennett said. “I think it would have been a hard-fought battle, but we would have come out on top. But seeing the guys before the game and what was going on in the locker room and how just hyped up everyone was and how everyone bought in to what we were saying, maybe I thought they would get seven points. A shutout is a big deal against this offense.”

Bennett described the game as the first all season in which every unit on the field played to its potential, something teammates agreed with.

“To be here and see this right now, I don’t even know what to say,” guard Pat Elflein said. “It’s just really satisfying that we came together as a team. Everybody did their jobs, everybody played hard and we’re Big Ten champs. That’s always the ultimate goal is everybody to play their best game, and that’s what happened.”

The goal was to return to Indianapolis and erase the memories of the season before. That focus was clear in the locker room before the game, and by the end, the entire country was forced to take notice.

“We’ve been hyped up before a lot of games, but this game was different,” Bennett said. “The way guys looked at each other, the way guys cared about each other, just so much intensity, and people have taken ownership in what they do. It was incredible. I’m blessed to be a part of it.”

Buckeyes Blitz Badgers In Beat-Down

By Matthew Hager

The fifth-ranked Ohio State football team did its best to state its case for inclusion in the inaugural College Football Playoff with a 59-0 rout of No. 13 Wisconsin on Dec. 6 in Big Ten Championship Game.

After the Buckeyes (12-1) played their best overall game under Urban Meyer, the head coach was asked by a Fox reporter about his opinion on whether Ohio State was playoff worthy. As usual, Meyer did not hesitate in revealing his true feelings.

"I don't think there's any doubt that we're one of the top four teams in America," said Meyer, who was proved right roughly 12 hours later when OSU made the initial field of four.

Meyer had plenty to be happy about after the game, thanks in large part to sophomore Cardale Jones. The quarterback made his first career start in place of the injured J.T. Barrett and had nothing short of a stellar debut. The Cleveland Glenville product completed 12 of 17 passes for 257 yards and three touchdowns. He led the Buckeyes through, around and past a Wisconsin team that entered the night ranked second nationally in total defense.

The underdog Buckeyes thoroughly dominated the Badgers in every facet of the game. Ohio State outgained Wisconsin by a 558-258 margin and limited the nation's top tailback Melvin Gordon to 76 yards and no touchdowns, and even the special teams broke OSU's way. Sophomore punter Cameron Johnston had two punts downed inside the UW 5-yard line and recorded a career-long boot of 73 yards.

Senior wide receiver Devin Smith, long known as a deep-ball threat for the Buckeyes, had immediate chemistry with Jones. He caught just four passes, but three of them went for touchdowns of 39, 44 and 42 yards. Sophomore tailback Ezekiel Elliott outshone Gordon, rushing for career-high 220 yards and a pair of touchdowns, and the Buckeyes outrushed the run-heavy Badgers 301-71.

Not to be overlooked was the OSU defense.

The Buckeyes forced four turnovers, two coming during a dominant first half. Sophomore safety Vonn Bell and redshirt freshman linebacker Darron Lee led the unit with seven tackles apiece. Senior

defensive tackle Michael Bennett, who wore the No. 53 of late teammate Kosta Karageorge, recorded two sacks and four tackles for loss and forced a pair of fumbles.

Wisconsin (10-3) got little from its passing game. Quarterback Joel Stave completed 17 of 43 passes for 187 yards with no touchdowns and three interceptions. The Badgers were shut out for the first time since Aug. 24, 1997, vs. Syracuse.

The Buckeyes claimed their first conference title since 2010, and Jones was named the game's MVP.

Badgering The Badgers

It did not take Jones long to make an impact.

Wisconsin won the opening toss and deferred, and Jones quickly led the Buckeyes 77 yards to a touchdown in just six plays. He completed all three of his pass attempts, including a 39-yard touchdown pass to Smith. Jones took a shotgun snap, faked a QB run by taking a step to toward the line of scrimmage and dropped back to pass. He flung the ball deep into the end zone, and Smith muscled past Wisconsin cornerback Sojourn



SIX POINTS – Ohio State senior wide receiver Devin Smith (9) hauled in three touchdown passes to spark the Buckeyes.

SONNY BROCKWAY

Shelton for the ball in the end zone for a TD.

Freshman Sean Nuernberger came on to add the extra point, giving the Buckeyes a 7-0 lead just 1:59 into the game.

The Ohio State defense passed its first test against Gordon, holding him to 1 yard on a pair of carries on Wisconsin's first drive, which ended with a punt after a three-and-out.

Ohio State extended its lead later in the first quarter. This time it was Elliott taking a starring role. The Buckeyes started the drive at the OSU 7 and gained 12 yards on an Elliott run up the middle. The next play was much like the first, only Elliott went untouched up the middle 81 yards for a touchdown.

Elliott took the Jones handoff and immediately had plenty of room to run. OSU senior right tackle Darryl Baldwin had a key pulling block, and sophomore center Jacoby Boren had another crucial block to spring Elliott, who outraced the Wisconsin defense down the field.

Nuernberger's PAT made it 14-0 Ohio State with 4:06 remaining in the opening quarter.

A Stave interception by Bell turned into points early in the second quarter. Jones drove the Buckeyes from the OSU 41 to the UW 1 before a false start penalty and a dropped potential touchdown pass by Elliott forced Ohio State to settle for a 23-yard field goal by Nuernberger that upped the lead to 17-0 with 14:14 left before halftime.

Jones continued his stellar play with another deep touchdown pass that extended the lead to 24-0 with 11:09 remaining in the first half. It was another quick TD drive, lasting just three plays. At the UW 44, Jones dropped back and stood tall in the pocket, taking a hit as he threw deep for Smith again. And again, Smith came down with the ball in the end zone for another score. Nuernberger added the extra point to give the Buckeyes a commanding lead.

After throwing his second TD of the night, Jones had completed 7 of 9 passes for 165 yards – and one of those incompletions could have been caught for a third TD.

The onslaught continued with another Ohio State touchdown later in the second quarter. The Buckeyes marched 69 yards in six plays, facing little trouble against the Wisconsin defense. Elliott capped the drive with a 14-yard touchdown run that, following the Nuernberger PAT, made it 31-0 with 6:36 left before halftime.

Ohio State concluded a near perfect half



SONNY BROCKWAY

TKO – Ohio State sophomore defensive end Joey Bosa (97) celebrates his 4-yard fumble return for a touchdown, which gave the Buckeyes a 38-0 halftime lead.

with another key play in the final minute of the second quarter. Following another impressive punt by Johnston that was downed at the Wisconsin 5, the Badgers had the ball at the UW 12 in the final minute of the half before Bennett forced a Gordon fumble. The ball was scooped up at the UW 4 by sophomore defensive end Joey Bosa, who rumbled into the end zone with just 36 seconds left in the half.

Following the Nuernberger PAT, the Buckeyes boasted a 38-0 lead that they took into halftime.

The first-half stats told the story of Ohio State's dominance. The Buckeyes outgained the Badgers 364-91, and Jones completed 10 of 13 passes for 211 yards and two touchdowns. Elliott scored a pair of touchdowns and had 150 yards on 12 carries. Smith caught three passes, including two for a TD, for 95 yards.

Conversely, Gordon was limited to 43 yards on 14 carries, an average of 3.1 yards per carry. Stave completed just 5 of 14 passes for 58 yards and an interception.

Jones and Smith connected again for a third touchdown in the third quarter. The Buckeyes extended their lead to 45-0 with 9:24 on the clock on the 42-yard touchdown pass. On a play-action play, Jones again threw a ball up for Smith to beat a Wisconsin defender in a one-on-one situation. And again, Smith won the battle, bringing down the ball in the end zone for a third time.

Freshman Curtis Samuel capped the scoring with a pair of fourth-quarter touchdowns. The first came on a 12-yard run with 11:39 remaining. Nuernberger added the PAT to up the OSU lead to 52-0. With 2:25 remaining, Samuel added a 1-yard run that set the final score at 59-0.

Run Defense Stuffs Wisconsin Standout

Ohio State's run defense has had some issues over the past two seasons. It has also had Melvin Gordon's number.

Heading into the Big Ten Championship Game, most signs pointed to a big game for Gordon, the outstanding running back from Wisconsin. He had run for at least 100 yards in 10 straight games, including a then-NCAA record 408 yards Nov. 15 against Nebraska. The outburst against the Cornhuskers vaulted him into Heisman Trophy contention and even gave him an outside shot at reaching Barry Sanders' single-season NCAA rushing record with huge games against the Buckeyes and in a bowl.

GAME NOTEBOOK Marcus Hartman

Meanwhile, Ohio State went to Indianapolis with a run defense yielding 145.6 yards per game, good for only 40th nationally. In November, the Buckeyes allowed 180.8 yards per game on the ground, a figure built upon facing running games both strong (Michigan State, Minnesota and Indiana) and weak (Illinois and Michigan), and they did not do much to foster a belief they would be able to duplicate their 2013 showing against Gordon, when he was held to 74 yards on 15 carries in Columbus.

Head coach Urban Meyer noted prior to the game that his team had not overplayed against the run during the regular season, instead choosing to remain balanced after a disastrous 2013 against the pass. Very rarely in the first 12 games of the season did the Ohio State front seven receive help from an extra defender in the box, and that was a factor in the success opponents had. So, too, was a tendency for the Buckeyes to get blocked, miss gaps, miss tackles and wear down because of a lack of depth.

None of those was an issue against Wisconsin, however, as coordinator Luke Fickell, co-coordinator Chris Ash and the rest of the defensive staff drew up a game plan that called for a safety to play near the line of scrimmage as essentially a fourth linebacker, trusting the cornerbacks to lock up a pedestrian group of



SONNY BROCKWAY

NO GO – Ohio State's defense, led by players such as sophomore defensive end **Joey Bosa (97, center)**, limited Wisconsin tailback – and Heisman Trophy contender – **Melvin Gordon to 76 yards on 26 carries.**

receivers from Wisconsin without much help.

"That's where we've grown," Fickell said, referring to the cornerbacks. "Doran Grant and Eli Apple and Gareon Conley, those guys have done an unbelievable job. And really (safeties) Tyvis Powell and Vonn Bell, we put our safeties in some situations, too, but those are the things we need to do to be successful. Those guys take that upon themselves as a challenge. Everybody had their things they had to do tonight, and they did it."

Of course, the former Ohio State nose tackle was sure to emphasize the defensive line had to set the tone.

"It all starts up front with a game like this," he said. "To have the ability to be able to stop Melvin Gordon, you've got to be able to do a lot of things, and those guys did an incredible job. As a whole everybody did a great job, but to finish

the way they did, there was more energy on that sideline in the last 45 seconds than there was the whole second half."

He acknowledged that the Buckeyes' plan was more tailored for the Badgers than the typical opponent this season.

"It is a unique offense for us that we don't see every day or even in practice, but there's not one defense that makes everything," he said. "There's not one call that makes everything. It's 11 guys believing in what they're doing and playing as one. It starts at the line of scrimmage."

Loading the box helped, but the biggest factor was simpler. Tackles Michael Bennett and Adolphus Washington just refused to be blocked for a significant portion of the night.

"Mike and I made it clear before the game this was a game me and him could control," said Washington, who had four tackles, including one for loss. "If we

could do our job and make them bounce it out, then we'd win. Simple as that."

While Bennett (five tackles) and Washington were standouts inside, so too was end Joey Bosa (four tackles, one quarterback hurry) on the edge. That trio played very well, but it also enjoyed a smaller workload than usual as the coaching staff subbed more frequently than it has most of the season. Tackles Tommy Schutt and Donovan Munger and ends Steve Miller and Tyquan Lewis all had solid moments off the bench while Rashad Frazier represented himself well as a surprise starter at end to give the team more size up front.

"It's guys stepping up, and we know we've got to be able to do that," Fickell said. "Sometimes in situations we haven't been able to do it, but we expected it to be a 60-minute battle and we knew if it was going to be a slugfest at the end of the game we had to have some energy to be able to fight it out. We had a plan going into the thing, but we didn't need it as much at the end of the game. We were prepared for it."

Frazier not only set the edge against the run but had a sack before the night was over.

"Rashad is normally that spark off the bench, but with them being bigger guys we felt that we needed more size at defensive end and we knew he could get that job done," Washington said of the 6-4, 272-pounder. "Rashad is a very high-motor guy."

Gordon finished the night with 76 yards, two more than he had a year ago against the Buckeyes. He needed 26 carries in Indianapolis, though, as opposed to the 15 he had in Columbus.

"I don't think they brought anything surprising," Gordon said. "When it came down to it, we just weren't playing Wisconsin football. It was just one of those days, but we just have to regroup, get back together, get ready for this bowl game."

He entered the game averaging 188.3 yards per game, and his total of 2,260 yards were 368 shy of the mark Sanders set at Oklahoma State in 1988. He goes to bowl season still with an outside shot of catching Sanders, who ran for 2,628 yards in 11 regular-season games for the Cowboys. Statistics from bowls did not count toward final totals at that time.

"We knew Melvin Gordon made a statement last year that we were the toughest defense he ever played against, and we knew once we heard that we had to go after him," Washington said. "We had to

hit him and hit him hard."

Receivers Bust Out

The defense was not the only unit that redeemed itself on the Buckeyes' return trip to Indianapolis.

While Cardale Jones grabbed most of the headlines as he stepped in for the injured J.T. Barrett to throw for 257 yards and three touchdowns en route to being named the MVP of the game, he got a lot of help from his receiving corps.

First there was Devin Smith, who started the scoring by outleaping Wisconsin cornerback Sojourn Shelton in the end zone for a 39-yard touchdown on OSU's first drive. That was just the first of three touchdown catches for Smith, who totaled 137 yards through the air on four receptions.

"We had a couple of completions early, and we felt like we had a good matchup with Devin Smith on that cornerback and we decided to take our shot," offensive coordinator Tom Herman said of the first deep ball to Smith. "We were playing well, we were protecting well and we knew that he had gotten his feet wet with the early couple of completions. We felt had we not hit it, it wouldn't have done much to his psyche, so it was a calculated risk and it paid off."

Receivers Michael Thomas, Jalin Marshall and Corey Smith all turned in gains of 20 yards or more as well, marking a contrast from last season when the talented secondary of Michigan State got the better of the Buckeyes. A handful of 50-50 balls – not unlike Smith's catch against Shelton – went the way of the Spartans, resulting in plays that had a major effect on the outcome of a game Ohio State lost 34-24.

"That represents our growth as receivers," said Evan Spencer, a senior who caught one pass for 13 yards. "We know how to be pros now. We know how to watch film and know how to go about practice and get better in practice. We took that approach all offseason, all throughout camp and all through the season that we have to get better every day. At the end of the season now today with the performance we put on today is an example of everything we've done."

Unsurprisingly, the ultra-confident Devin Smith felt going into the game he would have chances to make big plays against a Badgers secondary that often plays aggressively. He felt the same way Nov. 8 when the Buckeyes got their

revenge against Michigan State, burning the Spartans repeatedly for big plays in a decisive 49-37 decision.

"We knew what we could do against Michigan State last year," said the speedy Smith. "We didn't execute very well, and then this year you saw we dominated Michigan State's DBs and we just carried that mentality the rest of the year and into this game. We just put all our emotions into this game with everything that's happened and just have faith in God and were able to get it done."

Seniors' Moment

Bennett, Spencer and Devin Smith are just two of the fourth-year seniors who made the trip to Indianapolis intent on avoiding making an unfortunate bit of history. They were in danger of becoming the first class since the group that finished its career in 1992 to go through four years without a Big Ten championship.

"That moment when the clock was ticking down was just so special to me and special to the senior class," Smith said. "We've been through so much, and we didn't want to leave this room or leave this stadium without one. And we got one."

Few classes have had the experiences – both good and bad – this one has. Some enrolled early in January 2011 while the rest signed letters of intent in February. All of them expected to play for head coach Jim Tressel, who had led the Buckeyes to at least a share of the previous seven Big Ten championships.

Instead, an NCAA scandal forced Tressel out in May and led to a turmoil-filled first year on campus for them as freshmen. They got a new coach with a national championship pedigree in Meyer by the end of that year, but the fallout from the NCAA scandal meant they were declared ineligible for postseason play as sophomores. Then came the disappointing loss to Michigan State last season.

It all added up to one last chance to leave a legacy that will last.

"We've been waiting for this for four years," Bennett said. "It means so much to me to be able to do this with these senior guys. And all these young guys that have contributed and take it seriously, you don't see that in every program where the young guys look up to the seniors and look up to them and respect them the way our young guys do. That just means a lot to me because it shows how close this team is and how much we care about each other."

Bennett made the most of his chance on the big stage, notching four tackles for loss and a pair of sacks. He also forced two fumbles, one of which Bosa scooped up and returned for a touchdown late in the second quarter.

Talented sophomores such as Bosa played a big role in the success of the season and in the title game, and they were happy to send the seniors out as winners.

"I was so nervous picking that ball up, that it would actually get in my hands, but it was a good feeling to contribute," Bosa said. "I'm just so happy my team got it done."

The often eloquent Spencer – a legacy recruit who grew up around the program as the son of Tim Spencer, an assistant coach who also happened to be one of the school's best running backs – had a difficult time describing his feelings.

"It's hard to put in words," Spencer said. "Going through what we went through earlier and battling and losing last year, it gave us the hunger. It gave us the hunger that we needed, and coming out here we knew that we were going to lay it on the line. This was my last time to get one. The fact that I am a Big Ten champ, it's hard to put into words, it really is."

Fickell, who is also the linebackers coach, was happy to see one of his guys go out on top. Curtis Grant has had to share the middle linebacker role with hotshot freshman Raekwon McMillan, but he left his mark in the Big Ten Championship Game with four tackles, including one for loss, and a pass breakup.

"That kid has been through so much," said Fickell of a player who lost his father to illness during last season. "He's been through more in his 22 years of life than I've been through in my 41 years of life, and to be honest with you he's the heart and soul. He's the passion for us. There are times when even Coach (Meyer) wants to see these young guys, but you can't play this game without passion and energy and he is the passion to a lot of the things we do."

Punter From Down Under

Cameron Johnston was pretty much an immediate hit upon joining the Ohio State football team last year, and at the Big Ten Championship Game the Australian punter added another chapter to a growing legacy by averaging 53.0 yards on four tries.

"It was nice to be back inside indoors

instead of being in some cold places like Columbus," he said. "The balls always travel a little farther when you're inside, so that was good."

He didn't waste much time making his mark as his first punt traveled roughly 60 yards in the air before hitting at the 21-yard line and rolling dead at the 2 for what went down in the books as a career-long 73-yard effort, and he followed that up with a 58-yarder that was downed at the 5.

"The first two I looked up and I was just like, 'That's going a fair way,' so it's just good to be able to do something to help out the team," he said. "You watch the offense and defense and they're killing it, so it's good to be able to contribute somehow."

"I just try to do my job and we've got Bryce Haynes snapping and he's always putting it there and running down and Devin Smith is stuffing it so he's pretty good with it."

Johnston's 58-yarder hit at the 1-yard line and bounced away from the goal line instead of into the end zone. Four plays later, Gordon fumbled and Bosa scooped and scored to make it 38-0 to effectively extinguish any hopes Wisconsin had of a comeback.

The Buckeyes' sophomore punter laughed a bit at the recollection of that bounce.

"I'm just trying to get it down there as far as I can," he said. "Usually they come back anyway so when that comes back I'm pretty happy."



SONNY BROCKWAY

BOOM – Ohio State sophomore punter Cameron Johnston averaged 53.0 yards over four punts during the Big Ten Championship Game, including a career-best 73 yard effort.

Ohio State 59, Wisconsin 0**Dec. 6, 2014 • Lucas Oil Stadium; Indianapolis**

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
WISCONSIN	0	0	0	0	- 0
OHIO STATE	14	24	7	14	- 59

First Quarter

OSU – D.Smith, 39 yard pass from C.Jones (Nuernberger kick), 13:01; 6 plays, 77 yards, 1:59 TOP.

OSU – Elliott, 81 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 4:06; 2 plays, 93 yards, 0:42 TOP.

Second Quarter

OSU – Nuernberger, 23 yard field goal, 14:14; 7 plays, 53 yards, 2:41 TOP.

OSU – D.Smith, 44 yard pass from C.Jones (Nuernberger kick), 11:09; 3 plays, 63 yards, 1:17 TOP.

OSU – Elliott, 14 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 6:36; 6 plays, 69 yards, 2:52 TOP.

OSU – Bosa, 4 yard fumble recovery (Nuernberger kick), 0:36.

Third Quarter

OSU – D.Smith, 42 yard pass from C.Jones (Nuernberger kick), 9:24; 5 plays, 77 yards, 2:47 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Samuel, 12 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 11:39; 2 plays, 72 yards, 0:34 TOP.

OSU – Samuel, 1 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 2:25; 7 plays, 61 yards, 4:02 TOP.

Att. – 60,229. **Weather** – Indoors.

Team Statistics

	UW	OSU
First Downs	18	24
Rushing	6	12
Passing	11	10
Penalty	1	2
Rushes-Yards	37-71	38-301
Passing Yards	187	257
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	17-43-3	12-18-0
Offensive Plays	80	56
Total Net Yards	258	558
Third Down Efficiency	5-18	2-8
Fourth Down Efficiency	3-5	0-0
Punts-Avg.	8-41.1	4-53.0
Fumbles-Lost	3-1	1-0
Penalties	3-23	5-44
Time of Possession	33:55	26:05

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **UW:** Gordon 26-76; Clement 5-14; Doe 1-6; Erickson 1-4; McEvoy 1-2; Stave 3-(-31). **OSU:** Elliott 20-220; Dunn 5-47; Samuel 4-23; C.Jones 8-9; Marshall 1-2.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **UW:** Stave 17-43-3-187-0. **OSU:** C.Jones 12-17-0-257-3; Marshall 0-1-0-0-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **UW:** Erickson 7-83; Doe 3-41; Fumagalli 2-24; Arneson 2-23; Clement 2-12; Traylor 1-4. **OSU:** D.Smith 4-137; Thomas 3-41; Marshall 2-36; C.Smith 2-30; Spencer 1-13.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **UW:** Meyer 8-41.1-57. **OSU:** Johnston 4-53.0-73.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **UW:** None. **OSU:** Marshall 2-1.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **UW:** Doe 6-114; Fumagalli 1-8. **OSU:** Samuel 1-23.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – **UW:** None. **OSU:** Nuernberger (29).

FORCED FUMBLES – **UW:** None. **OSU:** Bennett 2, Lee.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – **UW:** None. **OSU:** Bosa 1-4.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **UW:** None. **OSU:** D.Grant 2-60; Bell 1-7.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – **UW:** Landisch 1.0-9. **OSU:** Bennett 2.0-16; Frazier 1.0-8.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **UW:** Landisch 1.5-10; Schobert 1.0-5; Ma.Trotter 1.0-4; Herring 1.0-1; Obasih 0.5-0. **OSU:** Bennett 4.0-18; Apple 2.0-4; Frazier 1.0-8; Washington 1.0-4; C.Grant 1.0-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – **UW:** Ma.Trotter 7-3-10; Landisch 4-3-7; Caputo 1-5-6; Hillary 3-2-5; Jean 2-3-5; Shelton 2-1-3; Doe 1-2-3; Herring 2-0-2; Schobert 2-0-2; Figaro 2-0-2; Keefer 1-1-2; Jacobs 0-2-2; Zagzebski 1-0-1; Gaulden 1-0-1; Tindal 1-0-1; Gordon 1-0-1; Fredrick 1-0-1; V.Biegel 0-1-1; Jordan 0-1-1; Obasih 0-1-1; Musso 0-1-1. **OSU:** Lee 5-2-7; Bell 4-3-7; McMillan 4-2-6; Apple 4-1-5; Bennett 4-1-5; Perry 3-2-5; Bosa 4-0-4; C.Grant 2-2-4; Washington 2-2-4; E.Smith 3-0-3; D.Grant 1-2-3; Burrows 2-0-2; C.Williams 1-1-2; Powell 1-1-2; Fada 1-1-2; Dunn 1-1-2; S.Miller 1-0-1; Frazier 1-0-1; Tanner 1-0-1; Conley 1-0-1; Carter 1-0-1; Marshall 1-0-1; Samuel 0-1-1; Lewis 0-1-1; Booker 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **WISCONSIN:** Offense, Stave, Gordon, Erickson, Fredrick, Arneson, Marz, Lewallen, Voltz, Costigan, Havenstein, D.Watt. Defense, Gaulden, Zagzebski, Herring, Schobert, Ma.Trotter, Landisch, V.Biegel, Shelton, Caputo, Jean, Hillary, Meyer. Reserves, Jordan, Doe, McEvoy, James, Clement, Wheelwright, Love, Rushing, Baretz, Musso, Ogunbowale, Tindal, Straus, Hudson, Figaro, Jacobs, Obasih, Ferguson, Endicott, Hayes, Mi.Trotter, Traylor, Fumagalli, McGuire, Ruechel, R.Ball, Maly, Keefer, Sheehy, Goldberg. **OHIO STATE:** Offense, C.Jones, Elliott, Thomas, D.Smith, Spencer, Heurman, Decker, Price, Boren, Elflein, Baldwin, Nuernberger. Defense, Bosa, Washington, Bennett, Frazier, Lee, C.Grant, Perry, Apple, Powell, Bell, D.Grant, Johnston. Reserves, E.Smith, McMillan, Samuel, Webb, Holmes, Bell, Burrows, Marshall, Conley, Tanner, Dunn, Reeves, Booker, Worley, Fada, Clinton, Haynes, Munger, C.Williams, Lewis, Carter, Hill, Brown, Vannett, C.Smith, S.Miller, Schutt, Sprinkle.

BSB Quotebook: 59 | 0

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer's assessment of the game: "I've been asked a lot, 'Did I see this happening?' I saw a team that prepared very well and is playing at a very high level right now."

Wisconsin head coach Gary Andersen on the game: "We're going to bounce back, take care of business. I'll do a lot better job as a head football coach. I failed the kids tonight. So I'll come back, fight, and away we go."

Meyer on the days leading up to the game: "A lot of things happened this past week. There's a family grieving that was a big part of our family. Kosta (Karageorge), we had a prayer and a moment of silence for him in our locker room for him and his family. We'll never forget our teammate."

OSU linebacker Curtis Grant on the game: "I didn't know what was going to happen. Like the coaches say, it's hard to beat a man with a vision, and we had a big vision. I've been dreaming about this moment for like the last two weeks and didn't know what it was, but I'm obviously here. We were put here for a reason."

Fellow linebacker Darron Lee on the same subject: "I'm almost really at a loss for words. I don't really know what to do because I'm still trying to figure out what just happened."

Wideout Evan Spencer on if he saw the lopsided margin of victory coming: "I was actually talking to Devin (Smith) before the game and I told him that I had a dream that we were going to put a lot of numbers up. I was just like, come on, guys, we've got to start fast.' We came out swinging and we didn't stop until there were three zeros on the clock."

Meyer on if he thought the win would resonate with the College Football Playoff committee: "I hate getting asked that, to be honest with you. I like coaching a team. This is without question the most improved from start to finish team that I've ever been around. To see them operate in all facets of the game at a high, high level from our punter to the way we played defense then offense was incredible."

OSU senior offensive lineman Joel Hale on his emotional pregame speech to the team before warmups: "That's usually Curt's job. I had a lot bottled up today. I was just talking about the

seniors and how we haven't had the opportunity to do it and today was that time. I said a lot of things. I probably blacked out in the midst of it, but I was pretty pumped up."

Offensive coordinator Tom Herman on Smith, who caught three TDs: "Oh my gosh. Best deep-ball catcher in America that we've seen in a long, long time. The thing that I liked that he did today was he fought for the football. They weren't perfect throws by any stretch. They were good enough and Devin went up and fought for the football, and I'm really proud of the way that he responded when we called his number."

Smith on his thoughts after his TD catch on Ohio State's first drive: "After the first touchdown, I knew the game was over. I went to Coach Meyer and I told him it was over. Their demeanor wasn't, 'We can still win this.' I feel like they were kind of scared of us, and we just came out and kept our foot in the throttle the whole game."

Wisconsin linebacker Marcus Trotter on the play of his defense: "I felt like the defense today was in some parts playing a little timid. We're a bunch of guys who are blue-collar workers with a chip on our shoulder. Something about today, we didn't have that attitude."

Hale on OSU's return to Lucas Oil Stadium for a pregame walk-through: "Walking out on the field, you could feel it. There was a sense of eeriness, like a dull feeling in your heart like something was missing. We got to fill that today with my best friends and do what we do. We're living the life right now."

Wisconsin tailback Melvin Gordon on his fumble late in the first half that was returned for an OSU touchdown: "Honestly I was desperate to make a big play. I lost focus on the ball. That's how it came out. I was just trying so hard to make a play, get the team going."

Ohio State defensive end Rashad Frazier on starting the game and making a sack: "So many emotions go through your body. I'd like to think that my late friend Kosta, I think he had a big part in what I was able to accomplish tonight and what the D-line was able to accomplish tonight. Holding Melvin Gordon to so few yards, it was unreal. I really think Kosta had a lot to do with that."



Curtis Grant



Joel Hale

GAME ANALYSIS

Play Of The Game

When Ohio State took over the ball at its own 7 on its third drive up 7-0, there was not quite a full indication of what was to come.

After a clinical six-play, 77-yard drive to open the Big Ten Championship Game against Wisconsin, Ohio State lost 9 yards and went three-and-out on its next possession. Then Wisconsin got 34 yards on its next possession before burying OSU inside its own 10, and the Badgers looked primed to get some real momentum going with a stop.

Instead, two plays later OSU was up

14-0 and never looked back. After Ezekiel Elliott ran for 12 yards on first down, he broke through the line and ran 81 yards to pay dirt on a play in which he gained more yards than the ballyhooed Melvin Gordon would the entire game.

Ohio State came out in a formation that it used often throughout the game, lining up tight end Jeff Heurman on one side of the line on a wing and having him block back across the formation.

Elliott lined up behind quarterback Cardale Jones in the shotgun on a run play in which everything OSU did worked and everything Wisconsin did backfired.

The Buckeyes ran a read option in which the offensive line and Heurman did their jobs expertly.

Heurman came across the formation from left to right to block outside linebacker Joe Schobert, while the line created a huge hole for Elliott. The right side of the line folded down to the left, as guard Pat Elflein pushed slanting defensive tackle Konrad Zagzebski downhill to the left and tackle Darryl Baldwin following by riding linebacker Marcus Trotter along with him. The left side of OSU's line took out the tackle and end on that side, while Jacoby Boren got to the second level and hogtied linebacker Derek Landisch, spinning him around and nearly drawing a holding penalty.

The last piece of the puzzle was the option action by Jones, which drew both safeties Peniel Jean and Michael Caputo to their left. So once Elliott got through the line, there wasn't much there other than a lot of green, plastic grass. The play was essentially over when Caputo tripped over the umpire scrambling to get back in the play, and Elliott was past the deepest Badgers on the field by the 35.

Sixty-five yards after that, Ohio State was pulling away just as Elliott had done on his career-long rush.

Hidden Play Of The Game

When the score was still 7-0 and Wisconsin had reclaimed some momentum by earning a pair of first downs, a missed deep shot by quarterback Joel Stave failed to get the Badgers fully back into the game.

It was third-and-8 at the Wisconsin 36, and the Buckeyes blitzed on the play to try to get pressure on the Badgers junior. The blitz didn't get home, though, and that left the single coverage in the back end exposed. In particular, speedy wide-out Kenzel Doe got behind OSU safety Tyvis Powell and was streaking down the right sideline.

He had two steps on Powell, but Stave's throw floated just a bit too far, and Doe couldn't get a foot in bounds as he hauled it in along the sideline near the 30. A good throw likely would have resulted in a TD but instead the Badgers had to punt, and two plays after that, Elliott was in the end zone and the rout was on.



SONNY BROCKWAY

LONG GONE – An 81-yard touchdown run by Ohio State sophomore tailback Ezekiel Elliott (15) helped the Buckeyes set the tone early.

What Worked Well

- **Literally everything:** What more can be said after one of the worst beatings ever administered between two highly ranked teams in college football? Ohio State got contributions from just about every skill position player and every defender, and the Buckeyes won the special teams battle as well. It's hard to think of a player who didn't have a good game for the Scarlet and Gray. It was just that kind of night.

- **Playing to Jones' strengths:** Ohio State's offense didn't look tremendously different in switching from J.T. Barrett to Jones, but one thing the team did early and often was go deep. One of Jones' best strengths from the beginning of spring has been his ability to throw the deep ball with pinpoint accuracy, and his connection with Devin Smith is real. That opened up just about everything else for the Buckeye offense on a dominant day

- **Playing eight in the box:** Ohio State basically intimidated it was going to make changes to its defensive front against Wisconsin and did so, rotating a safety down near the line of scrimmage on run downs. That helped fill gaps and take away running lanes from Gordon, and a number of excellent individual efforts did the rest.

What Didn't Work

- **Some nitpicks:** Ohio State missed a field goal, neither trick play really worked – a Wildcat run to Elliott fared poorly and Jalin Marshall threw into double coverage on a throwback pass to Jones – and the

Buckeyes committed two more penalties than Wisconsin and lost the time of possession battle. Other than that ...

Inside The Numbers

6.8: Ohio State had an advantage of 6.8 yards per play on Wisconsin, averaging 10.0 every time it snapped the ball to the Badgers' 3.2.

13: The longest rush of the day for Gordon was just 13 yards, a major victory for OSU considering the Heisman hopeful entered leading the nation over the past two years in runs of 10-plus, 20-plus, 30-plus, 40-plus and 50-plus yards.

24: Ohio State ran 24 fewer plays than Wisconsin (80 to 56) yet racked up 300 more yards than the Badgers.

29: Smith moved up to second all-time in OSU annals with 29 career touchdown catches. He passed Cris Carter, who has 27, and sits five behind David Boston.

81: Elliott's 81-yard scoring run was OSU's second TD run of more than 80 yards this season. The Buckeyes had just eight runs of 80 yards or more in school history before this season.

Reviewing The Matchups

Ohio State rush offense vs. Wisconsin rush defense: Ohio State ended up more than quadrupling Wisconsin's rushing output, piling up 301 net yards on the ground. Elliott did most of the damage with a Big Ten title game-record 220 yards, while Bri'onte Dunn and Curtis Samuel combined for 70 yards and two touchdowns off the bench. The offensive line played a fan-

tastic game against the Badgers' 3-4 front. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Wisconsin rush offense vs. Ohio State rush defense: Of all the things that were surprising about this game, this might top the list. Gordon had set a Big Ten record for rushing yards in a season and had rushed for more than 1,000 yards in November alone, and OSU stopped him cold. Much credit must go to the defensive line, which got more penetration than at any previous point on the season. Ohio State's Silver Bullets defense used to ruin Heisman campaigns like that was its job, so it was a throwback performance against Gordon. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Ohio State pass offense vs. Wisconsin pass defense: Wisconsin entered the game second in the nation in passing yards allowed and eighth in passing efficiency defense. But the Badgers were exposed, essentially in one-on-one coverage, as Smith ran free in single coverage throughout the game. Jones also looked solid in other facets of the passing game, hitting some curls and drag routes while completing 12 of 17 passes and not being picked off. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Wisconsin pass offense vs. Ohio State pass defense: This was a TKO. Stave was harassed and hit all night and likely needed some Advil in the morning. When he did throw the ball, nothing was there, as he finished 17 for 43 for 187 yards, zero touchdowns, three interceptions and three sacks. Wisconsin lacks targets outside, so being forced to throw does not suit this team. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Special teams: Which Cameron Johnston punt was better? For pure spectacle, the 73-yarder he hit on OSU's second drive might have been more impressive, as he hit a frozen rope over the head of return man Doe that bounced and died at the 2. But his 58-yard punt, an absolute beauty that hung in the air and checked up inside the 5, was more impactful. It came late in the first half and led to a Gordon fumble returned for a touchdown by Joey Bosa that capped OSU's 38-point first-half outburst. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Intangibles: You always expect both teams to show up for a championship game, but that clearly didn't happen here. Ohio State was good for sure, but Wisconsin folded from the second it was punched in the mouth on the Buckeyes' first drive. Credit goes to Ohio State for its putting the pedal to the metal and never letting up. **EDGE: Ohio State**

– Jeff Svoboda



SONNY BROCKWAY

AERIAL ATTACK – Ohio State sophomore Cardale Jones (12) helped the passing game dominate the Wisconsin secondary.

Jones Shows Maturity, Talent In Debut

Yeah, we all saw that coming.

A third-string quarterback with only a week of preparation. The most feared, talented back in the conference as an opponent. The site of last year's championship meltdown. Everything conspired against Ohio State winning a Big Ten title and making a run at the College Football Playoff.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

So what happens? The Buckeyes don't flinch and make things look easy.

Full disclosure time – the result was a complete shock. It was the feeling that Ohio State, given its leaky run defense, would have trouble containing Gordon, and Wisconsin would build momentum and play from ahead and win the football game. The Buckeyes, as they have been known to do recently in big-time pressure situations, would feel the magnitude of the moment and have a late-game mistake that spelled the difference between victory and defeat.

Um, not exactly.

Ohio State's offense hummed as well as any in America the last six weeks of the season, and the thought was that it couldn't continue with a third quarterback under center. Two Heisman Trophy contenders – one a preseason favorite, the other an out-of-nowhere in-season résumé builder – are out, so the balance of the season is entrusted to Cardale Jones, a young man who hasn't always made the wisest decisions in his time at Ohio State – most notably his freshman year tweet about class being pointless and that no football players came to attend school.

That would have doomed just about anyone else to a life of football purgatory, but Jones has grown up, become much more of a team player and, as he showed against the Badgers, a leader and player of surprising skill.

While much of Buckeye Nation was uncertain how the hulking Jones would fare, his teammates were not.

"He's just Cardale – he's always just a happy, fun, silly guy," left tackle Taylor Decker said. "We knew we had to raise

our level of play around him, and it ended up he played an amazing game. I don't know how he managed all that, but he did."

Offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Tom Herman didn't change much offensively, for he knew that Jones would be up to the task of running the Buckeyes' high-octane offense.

"It's the culture that Urban Meyer promotes, the culture of playing not for yourself but for your brothers and your teammates and playing for those guys in that room," Herman said. "I think Cardale understood the responsibility he had not just to the team in general but to that room. He had two guys in that room who had done some amazing things for this university.

"He took that responsibility very, very seriously. He prepared as hard as I've seen a quarterback prepare throughout the week given the short time he had to prepare."

That preparation paid off as Jones threw for 257 yards and three scores, including two of the spectacular variety to deep threat Devin Smith.

The defense answered the call as well, putting aside talk that Gordon was going to stomp all over them and stake his own claim to the Heisman. It was reminiscent of the 1985 showdown with top-ranked Iowa, when newspaper wags expected the Hawkeyes and Chuck Long to throw for 1,000 yards against OSU's overmatched secondary. Instead, the Buckeyes confused and harassed Long and won the game 22-13.

This had that same look, with Gordon unable to find the huge swaths of real estate he's grown accustomed to seeing. His longest run was 13 yards, he finished the night with 76, and he posted an average of 2.9 per carry. Those are very human numbers for a guy who has looked like a superhero most Saturdays, and it came about because of team effort from the Buckeyes.

"This is the first time everybody did everything that was asked of them and did it as hard as they possibly could," defensive lineman Michael Bennett said. "This is a huge victory for us. A lot of respect for the offense we won against."

And a ton of respect for the Buckeyes, as well. They have grown and evolved as

much as any team in the country and have made the early September home loss to Virginia Tech seem like ancient history.

Credit for this goes to Urban Meyer, who may not have won his conference's coach of the year honor but who has done one of the best coaching jobs at OSU in recent memory and should vie for national coach of the year awards.

"This is a close group, they've gotten closer in the last week and they're just a great group to be around," Meyer said after the game. "I definitely feel like we're playing at a championship level."

Getting Their Chance

The victory over Wisconsin was impressive enough to vault the Buckeyes into the inaugural College Football Playoff, and what a doozy of a matchup – Alabama in the Sugar Bowl. Two of the proudest programs in college football history, two coaches with familiarity and maybe a little animosity – this one will be a ratings bonanza.

The fact that the Buckeyes passed TCU and staved off Baylor made for interesting debate, but it really wasn't all that surprising. OSU has a better strength of schedule than either, has more wins over top-60 teams than either, has beaten nine bowl-eligible teams and has won 11 games in a row. Neither of the other two can say that. The fact that OSU won the last of those 11 with a third-string quarterback is even more impressive and speaks to just how talented the Buckeyes are.

I think the committee got it right in the end. Whether it was right during the year is another matter, but the final rankings are the only ones that matter. Completed résumés, with championship games included, are most important, which is why Ohio State had an advantage.

As far as on the field against the Fighting Sabans, it could be a game full of offensive fireworks.

The Tide is led by quarterback Blake Sims, whose play has grown a ton during the season, and receiver Amari Cooper would be one of the five best in the NFL right now. He could prove to be a real matchup nightmare for the Buckeyes, but the defense has been good all year against the pass, and Sims has had bouts with inconsistency. T.J. Yeldon is a workhorse running the football, and five-star recruit Derrick Henry is around to spell him.



KEVIN DYE

MAKING HIS MARK – Ohio State freshman D'Angelo Russell (center) has impressed during his first handful of collegiate games.

Alabama has been good at keeping teams out of the end zone but has not faced an offense as potent as Ohio State's. Auburn has a similar offense and churned out 44 points and more than 600 yards in the Iron Bowl, so this isn't vintage Crimson Tide defense. In terms of yardage allowed nationally, Alabama is 11th and OSU 14th, so there isn't much difference. There will be a ton of talk and breakdowns on the game in the pages of BSB and on ESPN and other sports outlets, so the days until Jan. 1 should be fun.

The Rose Bowl is also a solid matchup with Oregon and Florida State, and I think OSU would fare well against either, should it win against Alabama.

Most pundits will say it shouldn't, but they also never thought Ohio State would be where it is now.

Sleep on the Buckeyes at your own peril.

It's Part Of The Game

Shortly after J.T. Barrett suffered his season-ending ankle injury against Michigan, a faction of OSU fans – I like to refer to them as the Know Nothings – blasted Meyer, saying his offense is dangerous and that he's the worst coach in America.

Um, have you not noticed that Meyer has a pair of national title trophies on his shelf and has routinely made the rest of the Big Ten a laughingstock, with no signs of ceasing?

This has been Meyer's offense as far

back as Bowling Green – yes, the quarterback does take some risk, but they face risk on every play. Quarterbacks have the ball in their hands on every play and are much more vulnerable on pass plays than they are running plays. I don't recall Tim Tebow, who ran this same kind of offense to perfection, getting hurt too often.

And I don't recall that same faction of OSU fans bellyaching when Barrett was scampering for a touchdown just before the half, giving the Buckeyes a spark.

For the record, Barrett was injured on his 15th carry, just moments into the fourth quarter. It's quite possible he could have carried the ball a few more times, but the fact of the matter is that there were five contests this season in which he had more than 15 carries. He had 20 against Penn State, 17 against Minnesota (for 189 yards) and 20 against Indiana. At no point did I hear anyone talking about the offense being a bad one – especially since the Buckeyes were rolling up 40 and 50 points routinely.

Detractors will point to Braxton Miller as evidence the system is high risk. I will say that Braxton Miller is injury prone, one of those players who even if he wasn't "put in harm's way" would find a way to get hurt. That's not a slam, just fact. Miller hasn't played a complete season dating back to high school, which is before Meyer ever got a chance to work with him.

The next time someone tells you that Meyer is clueless and a bad fit for Ohio

State, ask them who would be a better choice. When they fail to come up with a suitable answer, continue on your merry way, knowing that the football program is in more than capable hands.

D'Angelo Is The Man

Yes, Ohio State lost to Louisville. Yes, it looked horrible in the first half and pretty much eliminated any chance of winning one of its few marquee games. But the Buckeyes have D'Angelo Russell – man, can he play.

It was easy to tell Russell was a neophyte early in the game as Louisville – a group of *men* – put on a defensive clinic, frustrating the rookie and all of his teammates. OSU looked about as bad as a team can look in a half, and already the cries were starting that the Buckeyes weren't going to be very good.

Then came the second half, and Russell took over. His hoops IQ and offensive ability remind me a bit of a freshman Jim Jackson – minus the chiseled physique. Jackson was a leader, someone older players listened to and understood had the ability to win a game. Russell has that same on-court presence, though not in as demonstrative a fashion.

Russell has a silky smooth game, and two second-half plays showed just how talented he is. On one, the Buckeyes had a three-on-one break, with Russell in the middle. He could have passed to either one of his wing teammates, but instead he chose to go to the right side of the hoop and lay it up with his left hand. On the other, he had the ball at the top of the lane, dribbled twice, crossed a Cardinals defender over and hit a jumper in the lane. To say it had a "wow" factor would be selling it short.

In a nutshell, the kid has game.

The Buckeyes are young, as evidenced by three freshmen on the floor in the latter stages of the Louisville game – a game in which OSU pared a 19-point deficit down to three points. Russell will win his share of games for the team, but fans need to enjoy him while they can because he will be on to the greener pastures of the NBA at season's end.

Don't believe me? Then believe ESPN NBA draft guru Chad Ford, who updated his rankings just hours before the Louisville game and had Russell flirting with the top 10. If you're rated that highly, you should leave. Thad Matta would say the same and has had players in this position before.