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*'I'm Getting Sick Of It' — Frey*

# Buckeyes Let Another One Slip Away

By Mark Rea

Greg Frey was simply being honest. The performance of Ohio State's offense during a 20-10 loss to Michigan State in East Lansing on Oct. 29 — the team's fourth loss in the last five games — nauseated him.

"I'm really frustrated," said the sophomore signal-caller after OSU's fourth loss in five 1988 Big Ten contests. "We've got a good offense. We just keep stopping ourselves over and over and over. I'm getting sick of it."

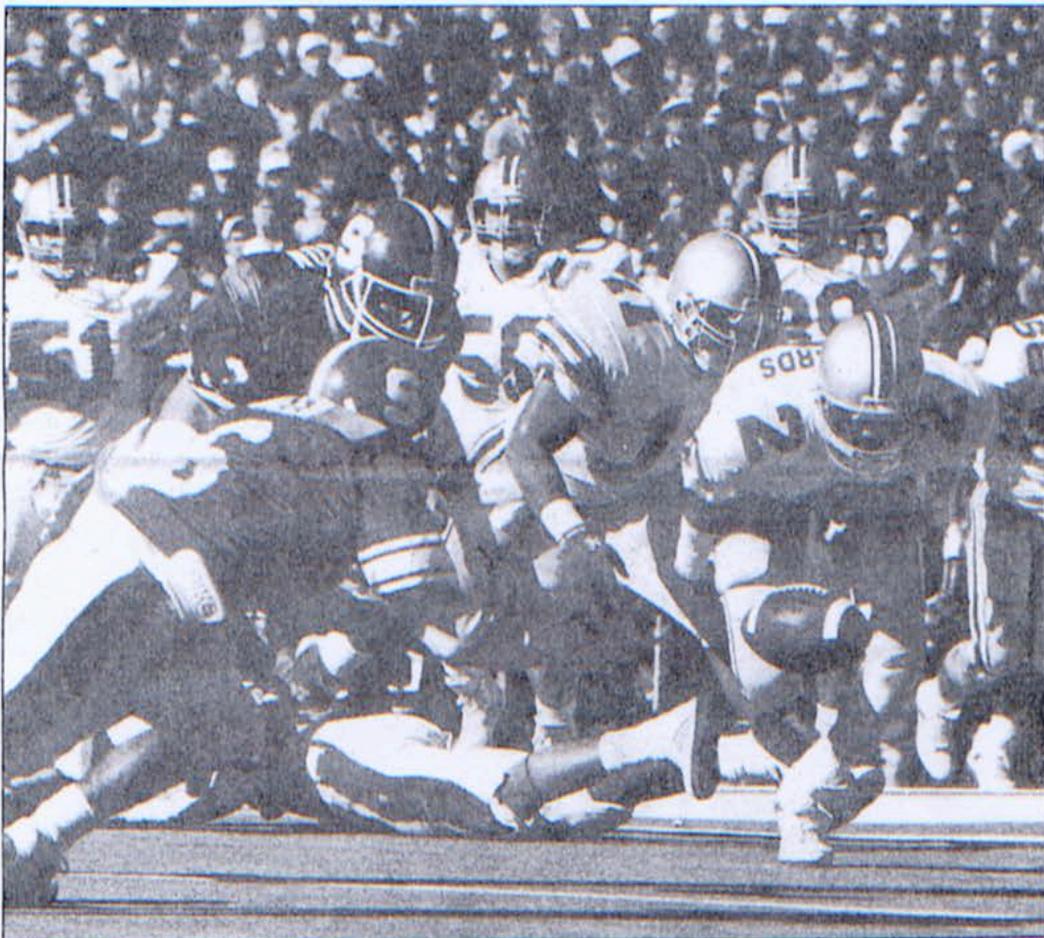
Frey played a creditable game against the Spartans, moving the Buckeyes' offense for 360 total yards against a team which came into the game ranked third in the Big Ten in total defense. The Cincinnati St. Xavier High School product completed 19 of 33 passes for 229 yards and one touchdown.

But a couple of glaring mistakes marred an otherwise excellent game for Frey. He was intercepted twice, the first on an aborted option play which stopped an OSU drive on the Michigan State eight, the second in the fourth quarter when the Buckeyes were trying to mount a last-minute comeback.

The first play came on a second-and-goal play from the MSU eight-yard line. After Frey passed incomplete to flanker Bobby Olive in the end zone on first down, he took the ball around right end on the next play. As he approached the line of scrimmage, he was met by Spartan linebacker Percy Snow and looked to pitch the ball to tailback Marc Hicks who was trailing the play.

Unfortunately, Hicks was too far away from Frey and the pitch floated just enough for Spartans' senior outside linebacker Kurt Larson to get his hand on it. Larson bobbled the ball three times before finally corraling it for the interception.

The play came during the Buckeyes' opening drive of the second half when



Michigan State's Derrick Reed (6) and Kurt Larson (3) scramble for a fumble with Ohio State's Bill Matlock (11) and Bernard Edwards (2). Unfortunately for the Buckeyes, loose footballs were a common sight during their 20-10 defeat at the hands of the Spartans.

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## Cooper Mentions Freshmen At Luncheon

# Will Frey Remain An Option For Bucks

By Mark Rea

Ohio State head coach John Cooper gave the first indication following the game against Michigan State that sophomore quarterback Greg Frey might have to fight to retain his starting job next season.

At his weekly press luncheon Oct. 31, Cooper was talking about the ill-fated option play against the Spartans in which

Frey pitched late to tailback Marc Hicks and had the ball intercepted, killing an OSU scoring rally.

Cooper said the play was a good call at the time. It simply wasn't executed properly.

"I love the option," he said. "With Herbstreit and Cochran, we'll be a good option team in the future."

Cooper was talking about freshman quarterbacks Kirk Herbstreit and Nick Cochran, both of whom are being redshirted this season. Herbstreit and Cochran, along with fellow freshman quarterback Jason Frank, are the subjects of a profile on page 9 of this issue of BSB.

When asked if he was contemplating a quarterback

change, Cooper replied, "I think you're missing the point. We run the option with Greg and we can win with Greg. All Greg has to start doing is have confidence in his running. We want him to pull it down and take off with it if the receivers are covered, instead of trying to force the ball in there."

"We saw a little bit of that against Michigan State. We're hoping to see a lot more."

OSU Drops 20-10 Verdict To Spartans**Mr. Hyde Resurfaces In Buckeye Loss***By Mark Rea*

Two days before Halloween in East Lansing, Mich., Ohio State's football team decided to come dressed in its familiar costume.

The Buckeyes came to the game clad in the traditional Scarlet and Gray, playing opportunistic defense and good combination offense against Michigan State in the first half of the Oct. 29 contest.

But, at halftime, OSU players decided to change into their ugly Mr. Hyde costumes, making four costly turnovers while losing a 20-10 decision to the Spartans. The loss dropped the Buckeyes to 1-4 in the Big Ten, 3-5 overall and almost definitely out of contention for a post-season bowl bid.

Head coach John Cooper talked about the ineffectiveness of the offense. Defensive coordinator Bill Young talked about his unit's inconsistency. Quarterback Greg Frey talked about mistakes he made.

But perhaps junior tailback Marc Hicks put it best.

"I don't know how, why or what, but we're jinxed," Hicks said.

That might be the best explanation yet in an inexplicable season for Ohio State. The Buckeyes have to look back on the game and wonder how, for the third time in five of their defeats, they could lose a game that just as easily could have been a victory.

OSU's offense piled up 360 total yards during the game against the Spartans, who came into the game with the Big Ten's third-ranked defense. Frey completed 19 of 33 passes for 229 yards and one touchdown. Seven of those completions went to sophomore tight end Jeff Ellis, who earned *Big Bear Buckeye of the Week* honors. Ellis' receptions were good for 73 yards, while sophomores Jeff Graham and Bobby Olive combined for six catches for 95 yards.

Another member of the team's outstanding sophomore class, tailback Carlos Snow, picked up a team-high 53 yards rushing against the tough MSU defense which gave Ohio State only two yards on the ground last year.

But, like so many other times this season, the Buckeyes couldn't stand prosperity. They self-destructed in the second half, committing the four turnovers, two of which came inside the Spartans' 10-yard line.

"I sound like a broken record week after week," Cooper said. "We're turning it over and making stupid mistakes and stupid penalties. We had a chance early today to do something but it was just one mistake after another."

Ohio State's defense played well early, but suffered late after being in the game so long. MSU had an advantage of nearly 10 minutes in time of possession.

The Spartans were led by a pair of 100-yard rushing efforts by tailbacks Hyland Hickson and Blake Ezor. Hickson picked up 179 yards on 37 carries, while Ezor tacked on 155 yards on 29 carries.

Young said it was probably the first time any team had two backs gain more than 150 yards against one of his squads. "I'll tell you what," Young said. "If it ever happened before, I tried to forget it."

Even though the defense surrendered more than 400 yards to an opposing offense for the fourth time this year, the Buckeyes had a chance to blow things open early, almost before a



Sophomore tight end Jeff Ellis (89) had another excellent game for Ohio State. He blocked well on the offensive line and also tallied seven receptions for 73 yards. Ellis was selected the *Big Bear Buckeye of the Week* for his performance against Michigan State.

Spartan Stadium crowd of 77,111 had a chance to warm itself on the 36-degree day.

The defense inspired the team early, stopping Michigan State on its first drive of the day and then taking the ball away on the Spartans' second possession. Senior outside linebacker Mike McCray, seeing his first action in three weeks, recovered a fumble from Ezor on the Spartans' 10-yard line. It was only the second defensive fumble recovery for the Buckeyes all season.

Two plays later, Frey put a perfectly placed pass into the hands of redshirt freshman flanker Bernard Edwards for a 14-yard touchdown. Junior place-kicker Pat O'Morrow converted the PAT and Ohio State enjoyed a 7-0 advantage with less than four minutes gone in the first quarter.

The Buckeyes' defense provided the team with another emotional lift on Michigan State's next play from

scrimmage. Spartan quarterback Bobby McAllister's pass over the middle was tipped and intercepted by senior inside linebacker John Sullivan. Sullivan returned the interception to MSU's seven-yard line to set up the Buckeyes' offense in scoring position again.

But the Bucks were whistled for defensive holding on the play, wiping out the interception and giving Michigan State possession again. The penalty loomed even larger when the Spartans marched downfield to the OSU three. But when Ezor tried to bull his way into the end zone, he fumbled again and junior cornerback Zack Dumas recovered for the Buckeyes in the end zone. Dumas was a defensive standout in the game with a team-leading 16 tackles, a fumble recovery and a blocked kick.

"At that point, we were feeling pretty good," Cooper said. "We were moving

the ball on offense and getting some breaks on defense."

The good feeling didn't last long, however. The Spartans stopped OSU on the next possession and then started another drive to the goal line. This time, Hickson relieved Ezor and carried most of the load, topping off the 64-yard, 10-play drive with a one-yard burst up the middle on the second quarter's first play. Place-kicker John Langeloh split the uprights for the conversion, tying the game at 7-7.

Ohio State's defense got the team another opportunity midway through the second quarter. The Spartans had driven to the three-yard line but stalled. Langeloh was sent in to attempt a 20-yard field goal, but Dumas got through the line and blocked the kick and it was recovered

Continued On Page 21

Mistakes, Penalties Are OSU's Undoing**'Same Old Story' For Bucks, Cooper**

By Mark Rea

John Cooper squinted into the lights of the television cameras. The first-year Ohio State football coach, who must think his eight-game tenure has lasted more like eight years, knew what was coming.

He was going to be pressed for an explanation of why Michigan State rolled up 372 yards on the ground and defeated the Buckeyes 20-10. He seemed almost apologetic for what he was saying, knowing the words he chose were words he had used several times before.

"It's the same old story," he said. "I sound like a broken record week after week."

He was correct, but he also had every right to say it. The Buckeyes' defense allowed over 400 total yards to an opposing offense for the fourth time in eight games. And the offense sputtered again when it got within scoring distance. The Buckeyes crossed into Michigan State territory seven times during the game — making it inside the 20-yard line on four occasions — and managed only one touchdown and one field goal.

Cooper knew the scenario. It was nearly identical to the ones which occurred against Illinois and Purdue. The Buckeyes lost a game they just as easily could have won. Still, the OSU head coach tried to explain the reasons why his defense couldn't hold off the opposition and why his offense couldn't punch the ball into the end zone.

"We're just not physical enough on defense," he started. "Then, when you get the ball on offense, you feel like you've got to do something and go score. Then we leave the ball on the ground. We're still turning it over and making stupid mistakes and stupid penalties."

"We had a chance early to do something. We convert a fumble into a touchdown and then we intercept a pass, run it back to the seven-yard line and have a defensive holding penalty on the play. It's just one mistake after another."

The mistakes numbered at least a half-dozen, four of which show up in the statistics. Sophomore quarterback Greg Frey had an excellent day throwing the ball, completing 19 of 33 passes for 229 yards and a touchdown. But he was intercepted twice when the Buckeyes were inside Michigan State's 10-yard line.

Another turnover came when sophomore tailback Carlos Snow, looking for the goal line on a third-quarter run, fumbled after picking up 17 yards. The fourth came when Frey and junior tailback Marc Hicks failed to connect on a handoff and fumbled the ball away.

Yet another mistake came in the second quarter when punter Jeff Bohlman mishandled a low snap from center Tom Moore and couldn't get his kick away. That play set up the Spartans' first field goal and gave them a 10-7 lead at the time.

On defense, the unit was whistled early for an unusual defensive holding penalty, wiping out an interception by senior linebacker John Sullivan which would have given the Bucks, up 7-0 at the time, the ball on MSU's seven-yard line.

Then there was the fact that the Spartans ran the ball with authority all day long. Sophomore tailback Hyland Hickson, hailing from the same Florida high school as former MSU great Lorenzo White, picked up 179 yards on 37 carries while his teammate, junior tailback Blake Ezor, carried 29 times for 155 yards.

OSU defensive coordinator Bill Young said he has been a football coach for 20 years and couldn't remember the last time an opposing team had a pair of runners gain over 150 yards each.

"I'll tell you what," Young said. "If it ever happened, I tried to forget it."

Young traced the Buckeyes' defensive problems to inconsistency.

"At times, we played outstanding. At times, we stunk the place up," he said. "We just didn't put it all together and we didn't play with the consistency that we needed to play with."

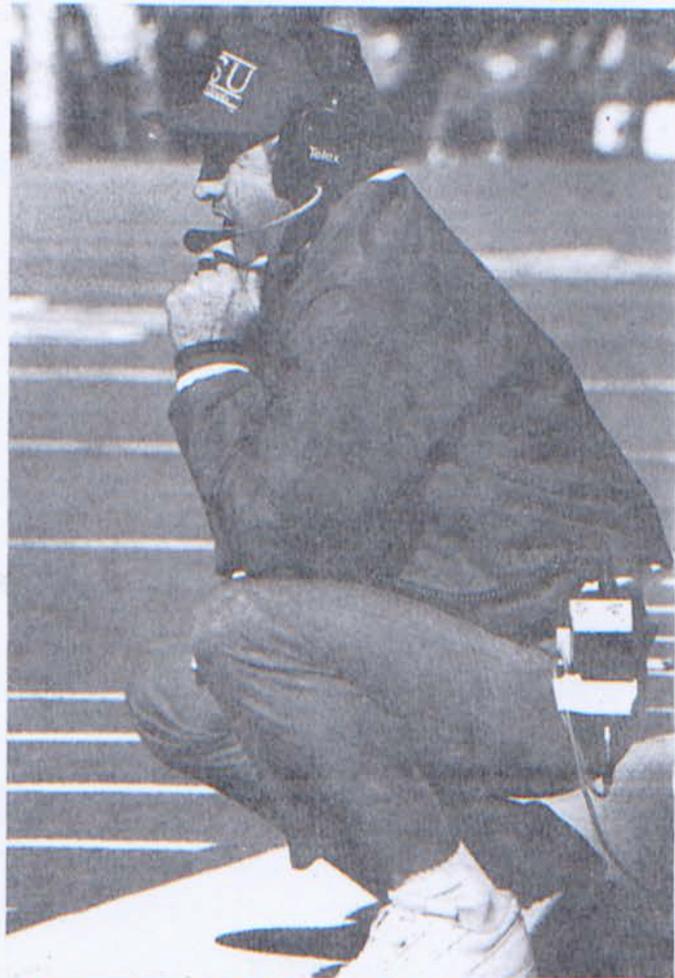
"For example, there at the end of the ball game, we needed to take the ball away from them and get the ball back to our offense, and we didn't do it. We let them take the ball and just drive it. They just ran the clock out on us and that was really frustrating."

Cooper agreed with his defensive coordinator, but expressed most of his concern about the Buckeyes' offense, potent between the 20-yard lines, but a struggling, sputtering bunch inside the scoring zone.

"We felt like we had to mix it up," Cooper said. "Obviously, nobody runs the ball against Michigan State's defense. I think we got something like two yards against them last year and no one has run on them this year."

"We felt we had to mix it up, throw a lot on running downs and try to keep their defense honest. We were able to get some yards like that, especially throwing the ball. But we didn't score enough points regardless of how many yards we got."

Cooper said his team's game plan against the Spartans included not only a mixture of running and passing plays but also a trick play or two and the anticipation of making something happen on special teams. Nearly all of that game plan ran true to form — with the exception of the Buckeyes' relative



OSU head coach John Cooper bundled up against the chilly temperatures in East Lansing. The Bucks' head coach got even chillier during the game as Michigan State handed his team a 20-10 setback.

inability to score touchdowns.

"When you play Michigan State, you've got to score three or four touchdowns," Cooper said. "We had a chance today and just didn't do it."

"We felt like we had to make something happen, we had to get a big play somewhere, a reverse pass, a long run, run a blocked kick back for a touchdown. We had some big plays but we couldn't score the points."

Despite suffering his fifth defeat in eight contests this season, Cooper tries to avoid making excuses. Still, he offered one alibi which had plenty of merit.

"We're not the same team that beat Syracuse," he said. "We don't have Mike McCray (pulled stomach muscle) at linebacker and Michigan State killed us on the sweep. We didn't have anybody who could play over the tight end and take the sweep away."

"We don't have our best inside linebacker (Andy Gurd, out for the season with shoulder surgery). We don't have our best defensive tackle (Mike Showalter, out for the season with an ankle injury). In the secondary, we were already without Dwight Smith (ankle) and then David Brown went out in the first quarter. Man, we're trying to hang on on defense. We're playing everybody

we've got and we're still getting killed."

The loss to the Spartans left the Buckeyes with a 3-5 record, one defeat away from clinching what would be the first losing record since 1966. Perhaps almost as important to Scarlet and Gray fans, their team appears to be out of the post-season bowl picture for the second year in a row.

Cooper admitted that a bowl bid is the farthest thing from his mind. He has to find a way to stop the Buckeyes' bleeding.

"There's no question this puts us out of the bowl picture," he said. "We're out of it unless we would win out for some reason and even then we'd only be 6-5."

"But I'm not thinking about a bowl right now. I'm thinking about regrouping for next week and what we can do to get this team on the right track."

Cooper has his work cut out for him. The Buckeyes' last three games come against Wisconsin, winless this season but winners over Ohio State three out of the last four years; Iowa, owners of a 4-2-2 record and 2-1-2 Big Ten mark; and archrival Michigan, the conference leader. Michigan's only losses this season were a one-point defeat to Miami (Fla.) and a two-point loss to Notre Dame.

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# Frey Accepts Blame For OSU Turnovers

Continued From Page 1

the score was tied at 10. The second interception shut the door on the Buckeyes with 4:28 left in the game and the Spartans holding a 20-10 lead.

Ohio State started at its own nine and marched 86 yards all the way to Michigan State's five in less than five minutes. But, on first down, Frey tried to throw the ball in the corner of the end zone to double-covered flanker Bernard Edwards and MSU cornerback Derrick Reed picked it off.

Frey admitted both plays were mistakes on his part.

"On the first one, I should have kept the ball or either pitched it sooner," he said. "It was just a dumb mistake on my part, especially on the five-yard line."

"It was just one of those things. I

shouldn't have pitched it. Once I was in the grasp, I should have eaten the ball because it was only second down. We would have had two more chances to put it in."

Frey also discounted criticism of offensive coordinator Jim Colletto that the option in that situation was poor play calling. "I think it was a good play," the quarterback said. "I just screwed it up."

It was that play that set the tone for the second half, he said. The fired-up Buckeyes stormed from the locker room and looked determined to take the lead. But the interception made for a quick change in the momentum of the game.

"We were tied at halftime and I was pretty happy because we knew we could throw the ball on them," Frey said. "We came out in the second half and drove it right down their throats

on the first drive. Then, you know what happened after that."

On the second interception in the end zone, Frey again shouldered the blame.

"It was a lot like the first one. I did something that I shouldn't have," he said. "I should have thrown it away. It was first down and I just tried to force it in there. They had a lot of defensive backs out there but I still thought I could get it in there."

"Looking back, of course, I guess I should have thrown it away. We should have had two more plays to go out and take it in."

Ohio State head coach John Cooper agreed that Frey should not have tried to force the ball in the end zone. But, he said, the play was a calculated risk he couldn't fault the quarterback for taking.

"I was thinking we had to score quickly or we might not have a chance

to get the ball back," Cooper said. "We took a chance and threw the ball in the end zone. We probably should have thrown the ball away or else the wide receiver should have kept the defensive back from making the play."

"But it was a good play on their part. We were trying to score and their defensive back made a nice play on the interception."

Frey was also involved in another of the Buckeyes' four turnovers in the second half. Late in the third quarter when OSU was backed up with second and 19 at its own 11, Frey and Hicks couldn't connect on a simple handoff and the Spartans recovered, setting up a field goal.

On the play, Hicks appeared to spread his arms wide as if he expected the handoff to be a fake. Frey later confirmed that Hicks might have indeed thought he was only a decoy on the play.

"I don't think Marc expected to get the ball in that play," the quarterback said. "To tell you the truth, I thought it was a good handoff. But it didn't end up that way."

The miscues overshadowed an otherwise excellent performance by Frey. He managed to avoid Michigan State's pressure most of the day, completing nearly 58 percent of his passes. His 229 passing yards gave him 1,582 for his young career and places him just 186 yards behind Bill Long for ninth place on the Ohio State all-time passing list.

And Frey ran the football more often and with more authority against Michigan State than he had in prior games. The quarterback had worked in practice on avoiding the rush and managed to duck inside and scramble for 40 yards minus sacks.

However, although Frey generated plenty of yardage, he couldn't get his team into the end zone after a first-quarter touchdown pass to Edwards. He said frustration is the word that best describes his mood but insisted that the offensive unit was extremely close to putting all the pieces together.

"It looks like we're really ready to bust open at any time. We just haven't done it yet," Frey said. "We're doing a lot of things right. We got two early turnovers today, we scored early and we had a lot of chances to put them out early, but once again, we didn't do the job."

"The offensive line did a heckuva job today. Michigan State's line does a lot of stunting and twisting which left a man open, so I had to do a lot of scrambling."

"But I think we moved the ball on them," he continued. "I thought we could move the ball and we showed we could. We just didn't put the ball in the end zone. The play calling was excellent. We just made too many mistakes again. You know, mistakes are only human and we're all human. But we just keep making them at the wrong time in the wrong place."

Although the loss to the Spartans was every bit as frustrating as ones to Illinois and Purdue in which the offensive unit sputtered down the stretch, Frey said the team can't afford to stay down.

"We've got Wisconsin coming up and although they haven't had a good season, they always play well against us."

"We can't afford to feel sorry for ourselves. We've got some tough games left. The season isn't over yet. There's always something we can salvage out of this."



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# The Numbers Game

## Spartans 20, Buckeyes 10

OHIO STATE	7	3	0	0	10
MICHIGAN STATE	7	3	10	0	20

OSU — Edwards, 14 pass from Frey (O'Morrow kick) 3:39  
 MSU — Hickson, 1 run (Langeloh kick) 14:55  
 MSU — Langeloh, 35 field goal 11:19  
 OSU — O'Morrow, 28 field goal 14:33  
 MSU — McAllister, 1 run (Langeloh kick) 11:31  
 MSU — Langeloh, 32 field goal 13:29  
 Att. — 77,111

	OSU	MSU
First Downs	18	22
Rushing	5	19
Passing	13	2
Penalty	0	1
Rushes-Yards	33-131	72-372
Passing Yards	229	53
Passes	34-19-2	6-3-0
Offensive Plays	67	78
Total Net Yards	360	425
Third Down Eff.	3-10	7-15
Punts	4-38.8	3-44.7
Fumbles-Lost	5-2	3-2
Penalties	6-66	6-54
Time Of Possession	25:48	34:12

### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING** (Att.-Net Yds.) — OSU: Snow 9-53; Hicks 7-28; Frey 10-25; Matlock 3-14; Bryant 1-10; S.Graham 2-7. MSU: Hickson 37-179; Ezor 29-155; McAllister 5-33; Montgomery 1-5.  
**PASSING** (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — OSU: Frey 33-19-2-229-1; J.Graham 1-0-0-0-0. MSU: McAllister 6-3-0-53-0.  
**RECEIVING** (Rec.-Yds.) — OSU: Ellis 7-73; J.Graham 3-48; Olive 3-47; Edwards 2-32; Hicks 2-20; Matlock 2-9. MSU: Bouyer 1-25; Rison 1-25; Montgomery 1-3.  
**PUNTING** (No.-Ave.-Lg.) — OSU: Bohlman 4-38.8-48. MSU: Butland 3-44.7-50.  
**PUNT RETURNS** (No.-Ave.-Lg.) — OSU: Olive 1-6-0-6; Dumas 1-24-0-24; Zizakovic 1-7-0-7. MSU: Miller 2-9-0-12.  
**KICKOFF RETURNS** (No.-Ave.-Lg.) — OSU: Hicks 2-12.5-17; Snow 1-29-0-29; Warner 1-20-0-20. MSU: Ezor 1-19-0-19; Haller 1-14-0-14.  
**DEFENSIVE FUMBLES RECOVERED BY** — OSU: Dumas, McCray. MSU: Reed.  
**INTERCEPTIONS** — OSU: None. MSU: Larson, Reed.  
**TACKLES FOR LOSS** — OSU: Pelini, Peel. MSU: Willertz (2), Jenkins, Eaton, C.Soenhnen.  
**TACKLES (Solo-Ass.-Tot.)** — OSU: Dumas 10-6-16; Pelini 4-10-14; J.Sullivan 6-5-11; Clark 5-3-8; Craig 5-2-7; M.Sullivan 5-2-7; Peel 3-3-6; Zizakovic 3-3-6; MacCready 4-1-5; Benio 0-3-0; Coleman 2-0-2; Kacherski 1-1-0; Team 2-0-2; Rogan 1-0-1; Rutledge 1-0-1; Huffman 1-0-1; Koch 1-0-1; Price 0-1-1; Thomas 0-1-1. MSU: Snow 6-4-10; Larson 5-2-7; Payton 4-2-6; Jenkins 2-4-6; Reed 2-4-6; Miller 3-2-5; Ridinger 2-3-5; Vanderbeek 2-3-5; Davis 3-1-4; Donelson 3-0-3; Willertz 3-0-3; C.Soenhnen 2-0-2; Ridgeway 1-1-2; Butland 1-0-1; Eaton 1-0-1; Edwards 1-0-1; Iaquinello 0-1-1; Montgomery 0-1-1; Wilson 0-1-1.

### Players In The Game

**OHIO STATE** — McCray, Kacherski, Rogan, Coleman, Thomas, M.Sullivan, MacCready, Prmel, Zizakovic, Craig, Benio, J.Sullivan, Dumas, Price, Clark, Rutledge, Brown, Pelini, Peel, Staysniak, Davidson, Uhlenhake, Zackeroff, Moxley, Ellis, Palmer, J.Graham, Olive, Edwards, Frey, Snow, Hicks, Bryant, Matlock, S.Graham, Bohlman, O'Morrow, Powell, C.Stablein, Closson, Tom Moore, Warner, Keenan, Kuri.  
**MICHIGAN STATE** — Rison, Smolinski, Mandarich, Kula, Martin, Tata, Robbins, Giewiec, Young, Marino, McAllister, Ezor, Hickson, Montgomery, Roy, Bouyer, B.Wilson, Vanderbeek, Johnson, Ridgeway, Davis, Ridinger, C.Soenhnen, Willertz, Jenkins, Snow, Larson, Reed, Miller, Payton, Donelson, F.Wilson, Hawkins, Iaquinello, Eaton, Pryor, Selzer, Haller, Kiple, Bullough, Bringstool, Edwards, Butland, Langeloh.



Sam Saporito of Big Bear (far right) recently presented Big Bear Buckeye of the Week plaques to (left to right) OSU players Bobby Olive, Greg Frey and Jeff Graham. Big Bear honors the outstanding OSU player of the game each week.

## Season Statistics

OPP	OSU	SCORE BY QUARTER					TOTAL					
		1	2	3	4							
FIRST DOWNS	161	133										
Rushing	92	46	Opponents	51	57	41	64	213				
Passing	61	81	Ohio State	20	54	23	41	140				
Penalty	8	4										
NET YARDS RUSHING	1637	1017	RUSHING	ATT	GAIN	LOST	NET	AVG	TD	LG		
Attempts	379	300	Snow	91	460	13	447	4.9	5	58		
Yards Gained	1806	1202	Bryant	45	204	3	201	4.5	2	11		
Yards Lost	169	185	Matlock	42	170	0	170	4.0	0	15		
Average Per Game	204.6	127.1	S.Graham	26	101	0	101	3.9	0	12		
Average Per Play	4.3	3.4	Hicks	17	64	1	63	3.7	0	13		
NET YARDS PASSING	1369	1518	Spencer	8	32	0	32	4.0	0	6		
Attempted	180	222	Olive	1	9	0	9	9.0	0	9		
Completed	103	116	J.Graham	1	1	0	1	1.0	0	1		
Had Intercepted	5	10	Wagoner	2	5	6	-1	-	0	5		
Percentage	.572	.523	Frey	49	93	114	-21	-	1	14		
Average Per Game	171.1	189.8	Rohlman	2	0	46	-46	-	0	-		
Average Per Play	7.6	6.8	"Others"	16	63	2	61	3.8	0	15		
TOTAL NET GAIN	3006	2535										
Total Plays	559	522	PASSING	ATT	COMP	INT	YDS	PCT	TD	LG	SA	EY
Average Per Game	375.8	316.9	Frey	218	114	10	1488	.523	4	50	15	97
Average Per Play	5.4	4.9	Hicks	1	1	0	22	1.000	0	22	0	0
POINTS	213	140	Wagoner	2	1	0	8	.500	0	8	1	6
Touchdowns	25	14	J.Graham	1	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0
Rush-Pass-Other	15-9-1	8-4-2										
EXF Kicking	24-24	12-12	RECEIVING	NO	YARDS	AVG	TD	LG				
EXF Rushing	0-0	0-0	Ellis	27	330	12.2	1	50				
EXF Passing	1-0	2-0	Olive	22	311	14.1	1	35				
DEXF Interception	0-0	0-0	J.Graham	19	291	15.3	1	29				
DEXF Kick Returns	0-0	0-0	Edwards	10	152	15.2	1	31				
Field Goals	17-13	19-14	Matlock	8	71	8.9	0	19				
Safeties	0	1	Hicks	6	102	17.0	0	44				
Average Per Game	26.6	17.5	S.Graham	6	66	11.0	0	18				
FUMBLE-HAD BLOCKED	35-1	35-1	Snow	6	50	8.3	0	26				
Yards	1267	1381	Spencer	5	36	7.2	0	10				
Touchback-Inside 20	1-6	4-10	Siegenthaler	3	71	23.7	0	36				
Average Per Punt	36.2	39.5	Frey	1	22	22.0	0	22				
Net Average	33.8	34.7	Koch	1	7	7.0	0	7				
PUNT RETURNS-FC	19-3	10-12	Falser	1	6	6.0	0	6				
Yards-TD	165-0	85-1	"Others"	1	3	3.0	0	3				
Average Per Return	8.7	8.5										
KICKOFF RETURNS-FC	28-1	41-0	SCORING	TD	B--P-O	EPA-K	RPO	RFD	AT-FG	PTE		
Yards-TD	595-0	993-1	O'Morrow	0	0-0-0	12-12	0-0	0-0	19-14	54		
Average Per Return	21.5	24.2	Snow	6	5-0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	36		
INTERCEPTIONS	*12	5	Bryant	2	2-0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	12		
Yards-TD	63-0	39-0	Ellis	1	0-1-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	6		
Average Per Return	5.3	7.8	Edwards	1	0-1-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	6		
PENALTIES-Yards	46-414	38-349	Frey	1	1-0-0	0-0	2-0	0-0	0-0	6		
Offense	30-267	20-189	J.Graham	1	0-0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	6		
Defense	7-64	11-95	McCray	1	0-0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	6		
Special Teams	9-83	7-65	Olive	1	0-1-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	6		
FUMBLES-Lost	13-3	19-10	"Team" (Safety)	1	0-0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	6		
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	52-116	52-117										
Percentage	.448	.444	PUNTING	NO	YARDS	AVG	NET/AVG	TS	120	RE	LG	
SACKS AGAINST	15-106	16-103	Bohman	34	1363	40.1	1198/35.2	4	10	170		
TIME OF POSSESSION	246:44	233:16	"Team"	1	18							
Average Per Game	30:50	29:10	* Includes Two Intercepted-Fumbles									
FIELD GOALS	(19-14)	(.737)	1988 OHIO STATE RESULTS (3-5, 1-4)									
O'Morrow (19-14, .737)	27+, 33+, 41+, 30+		M-OSU 26, Syracuse	9+	89,768							
26+, 35+, 41+, 49-, 49-, 45+, 56-, 30+			A-OSU 10, Pittsburgh	42-	56,500							
35+, 34+, 25+, 56-, 51-, 20+, 28+			M-OSU 36, Louisiana State	33+	90,584							
			M-OSU 12, Illinois	31-	90,274							
FC DISTANCE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+ TOTAL								
O'Morrow	6-6	5-5	5-3	3-0	19-14							
KICKOFF RETURNS	NO	FC	YDS	AVG	TD	LG						
Snow	13	0	415	31.9	1	100						
Hicks	12	0	233	19.4	0	35						
Olive	7	0	205	29.0	0	47						
S.Graham	3	0	59	19.7	0	23						
Warner	1	0	20	20.0	0	20						
Bryant	1	0	18	18.0	0	18						
Huffman	1	0	11	11.0	0	11						
Palmer	1	0	11	11.0	0	11						
Koch	1	0	0	0.0	0	0						
"Others"	1	0	23	23.0	0	23						
PUNT RETURNS	NO	FC	YDS	AVG	TD	LG						
Olive	7	1	34	4.9	0	19						
Clerk	1	0	19	19.0	0	19						
McCray	0	0	23	-	1	23						
Others	2	1	9	4.5	0	12						
PASS INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YARDS	AVG	TD	LG							
D.Smith	1	19	19.0	0	19							
Clerk	1	8	8.0	0	8							
McCray	1	7	7.0	0	7							
Peel	1	3	3.0	0	3							
D.Brown	1	2	2.0	0	2							
EXTRA POINT SUMMARY	OFFENSE	DEFENSE										
(Att.-Made)	RUN	PASS	INT	KRKT								
Frey	0-0	2-0	0-0	0-0								
PASSES BROKEN UP	(20)											
4-Clerk, 3-D.Brown, 2-Craig, Gurd, Peel, Rogan, 1-Benio, Dumas, McCray, Price, M.Sullivan												
FUMBLES CAUSED	(3)											
1-Dumas, MacCready, Pelini												
FUMBLES RECOVERED [DEFENSIVE]	(3)											
1-Dumas, McCray, Peel												
OSU FUMBLES - NUMBER/LOST	(18/10)											
Frey (7/2), Snow (3/3), Matlock (3/1), Olive (2/2), Bohlman (2/1), Hicks (1/0), "Others" (1/1)												
ATTENDANCE	GAMES	TOTAL	AVERAGE									
Home	4	361,596	90,399									
Away	4	229,965	57,491									
Season	8	591,561	73,949									
DEFENSIVE STATISTICS												
PLAYERS	SOL	AST	TOT	TAC-LOSS	QB-SACK							
Dumas	35	31	66	1.0	5							
J.Sullivan	30	37	63	2.0	3							
Peel	36	26	62	4.5	19	1.0	10					
M.Sullivan	22	23	45	3.0	16	0.5	4					
Craig	20	21	41	1.0	17	1.0	17					
D.Brown	22	14	36									

# Turnovers In Second Half Kill Buckeyes

Continued From Page 4

by junior linebacker Srecko Zizakovic.

But, like so many other times, the OSU offense could not take advantage of the opportunity. Forced to punt on fourth and 13, sophomore punter Jeff Bohlman mishandled a low center snap and was unable to get his punt away.

Unlike their rivals, the Spartans did manage to take advantage of the good field position, getting a 35-yard field goal from Langeloh to take the lead at 10-7.

That seemed to finally arouse the Buckeyes' offense. Taking possession at their own 38, Frey started the drive by passing 19 yards to Graham.

Two plays later, working from the shotgun in the hurry-up offense, Frey hit junior tailback Marc Hicks on a pass which gained 11 yards. Frey scrambled for 10 yards and another first down two plays later and then Hicks picked up another seven on a pitch around left end.

That gave the Buckeyes a second-and-three situation at the MSU 11. But the drive stalled when Frey underthrew to fullback Bill Matlock on second down and junior tight end Jim Palmer on third down.

Instead of taking the lead, the Buckeyes had to settle for a 28-yard field goal from O'Morrow — his 14th three-pointer of the year — and had to be satisfied with a 10-10 halftime tie.

According to Frey, the team was happy with the deadlock after two quarters of action.

"We were tied and I was pretty happy because we knew we could throw the ball on them," the sophomore signal-caller said. "We came out in the second half and drove it right down their throats on the first drive."

Snow got the Buckeyes in good field position with a 29-yard kickoff return to the MSU 40. Then, on third and two, Frey found Olive for 16 yards. On the next play, Snow got loose around the right end for 11 yards.

Later in the drive, Frey hooked up with Ellis on an eight-yard gain, giving the Bucks a first and goal on the Spartans' eight-yard line. Frey tried to hit Olive in the end zone on first down but the ball fell incomplete.

Then, Frey circled around to the right on an option. He was met by MSU linebacker Percy Snow and tried to dump the ball off to Hicks. But the tailback was too far off the play and Frey's pass floated just enough for Spartan linebacker Kurt Larson to make a circus catch for the interception.

Ohio State's defense was again called upon to stop the Spartans and they responded, forcing Michigan State to punt. Then the Buckeyes' offense took over and started moving the ball again. Frey gained nine yards on a scramble, Snow added four yards off left guard and then Frey took off again, this time picking up five yards.

Then, with second and five at the Michigan State 43, Snow pounded off tackle again and broke through the line. However, as he was breaking into the open field, Spartan safety John Miller stripped Snow of the ball and teammate Derrick Reed recovered.

"I saw one defender but that wasn't the one that hit me," Snow said of the fumble. "I was just thinking six points and he got me from the blind side. He just hit me as my arm was going back."

The turnover was too much for the Buckeyes' defense to overcome. After starting the drive with a 25-yard pass



Ohio State senior linebacker John Sullivan (57) tries to fight off would-be tackler Vince Tata (61) of Michigan State after Sullivan made a first-quarter interception. The turnover was nullified when OSU was called for defensive holding on the play.

play from McAllister to senior wide receiver Andre Rison, Michigan State kept the ball on the ground and gave it almost exclusively to Hickson.

The sophomore pounded away at OSU's defense seven straight times, setting up MSU's score. Then, with the Bucks looking for Hickson, McAllister faked a handoff and danced untouched into the left corner of the end zone. Langeloh added the PAT to give the Spartans a 17-10 lead.

OSU's offense put pressure on its defense just three plays later when Frey and Hicks flubbed a handoff which was recovered at the Ohio 11 by Michigan State defensive end Chris Willertz.

Five plays later, Langeloh was back in the game, hitting a 32-yard field goal to push Michigan State's lead to 20 points at 20-10.

Faced with having to score twice to get back in the game, the Buckeyes had 13 minutes to mount a comeback. They started to move the ball immediately with plays like an 18-yard pass from Frey to Edwards, a 10-yard run from junior tailback Jaymes Bryant and a 10-yard reception by Ellis. However, on Ellis' catch, freshman fullback Scotty Graham delivered a late block on the

play and was slapped with a 15-yard personal foul. So instead of having a first down on the MSU 34, the Bucks were faced with third and 15 at the Spartans' 49.

Cooper didn't argue the personal foul call.

"It was a good call," the coach shrugged. "It was a late hit."

That was enough to stop the Buckeyes' drive as Frey's third down pass to Matlock fell incomplete.

OSU had one more chance to come back. Starting at the OSU nine-yard line, Frey engineered a drive which

covered 86 yards and 12 plays in less than five minutes. But the Bucks shot themselves in the foot once more when Frey's first-down pass from the nine was intercepted in the end zone by Reed.

The Spartans simply ran out the clock after that to preserve their 20-10 victory.

Ohio State returns home on Nov. 5 to host Wisconsin in Ohio Stadium. The Badgers, winless this season and 9-6 losers to Purdue on Oct. 29, have defeated the Buckeyes three times in the last four years.

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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

# Offense Returns Just In Time

## Buckeyes Dispatch Spartans 33-23 To Keep Pace In Big Ten

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Ohio State has welcomed back its offense just in time for a two-game parlay it hopes will propel it into an outright Big Ten championship.

After getting well against conference lowlights Indiana and Penn State, the Buckeyes took on one of the league's upper-echelon teams and dispatched Michigan State 33-23 on a chilly afternoon Nov. 8 in Ohio Stadium.

The victory pushed OSU's conference record to 5-1 and kept the team tied for first place in the Big Ten with Purdue and Michigan, the next two and final opponents on the Buckeyes' 2003 schedule.

While the Wolverines were idle, the Boilermakers were chalking up a 27-14 win over Iowa. Meanwhile, the Spartans tumbled from a virtual first-place tie all the way to fifth, one-half game behind Minnesota.

"Just keep winning," said OSU defensive end Will Smith. "That's all we're focused on right now. Just keep winning."

The Buckeyes also hold out hope of getting back into the national championship race.

"We don't have any control over the BCS or anything like that," said offensive tackle Shane Olivea. "But we control our own destiny as far as winning out and winning the Big Ten, and that's all you can ask (with two games remaining)."

After sputtering and stalling through much of the first portion of the season, the Ohio State offense has finally awakened with 1,299 total yards in the last three weeks. Against the Spartans, OSU was good for 395, mixing in a balance of

182 on the ground and 213 through the air.

Starting quarterback Craig Krenzel, the subject of speculation on how much he would play after suffering a rib injury and slight concussion a week before against Penn State, led the Buckeyes' offensive attack by accounting for 246 total yards and throwing three touchdown passes.

For the game, he completed 12 of 23 passes for 213 yards and also tacked on another 33 yards on 14 rushes. His performance earned him *Big Bear Buckeye of the Week* honors.

It came after a mini quarterback controversy was stirred up by head coach Jim Tressel, who intimated that backup Scott McMullen would get meaningful playing time in the wake of his second-half performance against the Nittany Lions that won the game for the Buckeyes.

McMullen did play, but not until the end of the fourth quarter when the outcome was no longer in much doubt.

Krenzel said his performance against Michigan State wasn't motivated by possibly being replaced.

"I was more motivated offensively because we haven't done as well as we should have all year long," he said. "We know coming down the stretch here that we're going to need to put some points on the board."

Krenzel picked out seven different receivers for his 12 completions, three of whom had 50 yards' worth of receptions apiece. Tight end Ben Hartscock led the Buckeyes with three catches for 54 yards and a touchdown, while flanker Santonio Holmes grabbed a pair of receptions for 51 yards and a score.

Senior split end Michael Jenkins also



JEFF BRIDGMAN

**KRENZEL COMES THROUGH** — OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel (with ball) responded to challenges for his starting job by tossing three touchdown passes against Michigan State.

had two catches for 50 yards, while tight end Ryan Hamby caught a pair of balls for 31 yards and had one of Krenzel's TD passes.

The OSU offense also was helped by another 100-yard-plus game from junior tailback Lydell Ross, who is running with more authority each week. It is no coincidence that the Buckeyes' offense has looked more alive the last three weeks as Ross has topped the 100-yard mark in each of those games.

After a slow start that included only 11 yards on six first-half carries, Ross exploded in the second half and finished with 125 yards on 24 carries.

While the offense was clicking for

much of the day, the Ohio State defense wound up chasing another opponent that all but gave up trying to run the ball in favor of a spread offense and all-out passing attack.

Michigan State tried to rush only 17 times all day and had just 5 net yards to show for their efforts. OSU's No. 1-ranked rush defense had allowed only 450 yards this season, an average of just 45.0 yards per game.

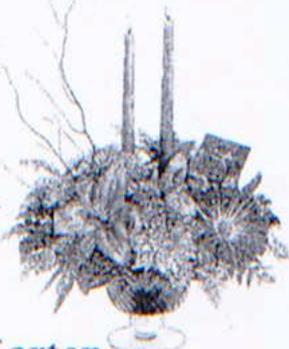
That left Spartans QB Jeff Smoker in the shotgun formation much of the day, and he responded by completing 35 of 55 passes for 351 yards and a pair of touchdowns. But Smoker threw a pair of interceptions, the first a costly red-zone pick

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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

that OSU safety Tyler Everett returned 66 yards early in the second quarter. That INT helped turn the momentum of the game in OSU's favor since the Buckeyes trailed 7-3 at the time and cashed that turnover into a touchdown of their own.

Twelve different Michigan State players grabbed at least one reception in the game, including slot receiver Agim Shabaj, who had nine catches for 78 yards and a touchdown.

Ohio State was led on defense by senior Robert Reynolds, who was sometimes the only linebacker in sets that featured up to six defensive backs. Reynolds made 10 tackles, including one for loss.

The Buckeyes chased Smoker all day and pressured him relentlessly but got to the MSU quarterback only twice. Senior linemen Darrion Scott and Tim Anderson had the sacks among their combined nine tackles.

#### Not-So-Good Start

The teams began the game feeling one another out like heavyweight fighters in the first couple of rounds, but Michigan State landed the first blow with a drive that covered 95 yards but took only seven plays and just over 3 1/2 minutes.

Smoker completed 5 of 6 passes during the drive, including a 15-yarder to wideout Aaron Alexander on the first play. In fact, the only pass Smoker didn't complete on the drive didn't count because of Ohio State pass interference.

The Spartans moved quickly away from their own 5-yard line and covered a big chunk of real estate when Smoker found split end Ziehl Kavanaght on the sidelines, a play the MSU receiver turned into a 47-yard gain to the OSU 24.

Two plays later, Smoker was at it again, this time finding Shabaj for a 22-yard touchdown and a 7-0 lead with 6:21 left in the first quarter.

The Buckeyes answered with their first sustained drive of the game, but it bogged down at the MSU 27 and Ohio State was forced to settle for a 44-yard field goal from Mike Nugent.

Smoker went back to work on the next possession and moved the Spartans from their own 21 to inside the OSU 20, completing 3 of 4 passes for 32 yards along the way. The Michigan State QB also caught a pass himself as Alexander gathered in a backward pass then found Smoker for a 22-yard reception.

But Smoker got greedy on a second-and-9 play at the Ohio State 18 and allowed Everett to make a play on a poorly thrown ball. By the time Michigan State could corral the OSU safety, Everett had returned the pick 66 yards to the MSU 28.

Five plays later, Krenzel found Hartsock along the sideline and the OSU tight end rumbled into the end zone to complete the 17-yard play and give the Buckeyes their first lead of the game at 10-7. They would never trail again.

#### Taking Firm Control

Everett's interception and the Buckeyes' score seemed to demoralize the Spartans. Their next possession went nowhere and, after a 12-yard punt return from Jenkins, OSU set up shop at its own 40.

It took only three plays to get back in the end zone. A 21-yard pass to Jenkins was the first play and then a 37-yarder to Holmes accounted for the touchdown and a 17-7 lead with 6:28 remaining in the first half.

The Spartans got a 48-yard field goal to narrow the gap to 17-10 at halftime,

but the Buckeyes stretched their lead to two touchdowns by taking the second half's opening possession for a score.

Krenzel softened up the Spartans' defense by completing a 29-yard pass to Jenkins on the first play and then finding Roy Hall for 18 yards on the next play.

After that, it was practically all Ross as the OSU tailback carried on the next five plays in succession, piling up 31 yards. On second-and-goal, Krenzel faked to Ross and pitched a 2-yard toss to Hamby, who scored to make it 24-10 for the Buckeyes.

But no sooner had OSU settled into a comfort zone than Michigan State answered immediately. Junior return man DeAndra Cobb took Nugent's kickoff and sprinted 93 yards to the opposite end zone, quickly cutting his team's deficit in half with 11:30 still remaining in the third quarter.

The Buckeyes responded to that lightning strike with exactly what the doctor ordered — an 11-play drive that covered 72 yards and chewed up more than five minutes on the clock.

OSU failed to score a touchdown, but Nugent's 24-yard field goal made it a two-possession game again at 27-17.

Meanwhile, the Spartans' offense began to sputter for the first time all day. In their next three possessions, they managed to gain only 32 total yards. One of the possessions ended in another interception thrown by Smoker, this one picked off by freshman safety Donte Whitner.

While MSU was spinning its wheels, the Buckeyes were at least getting some points as Nugent added fourth-quarter field goals of 42 and 18 yards, stretching the Ohio State lead to 33-17 with 5:18 left in the game.

Smoker tried to rally his team one last time, hooking up with Alexander for a 19-yard touchdown with 3:21 remaining. But his two-point conversion pass failed,

as did the ensuing onside kick try.

The Spartans got one last possession at their own 9-yard line with 1:32 left, but Smoker threw incomplete three times and Anderson sealed the victory for the Buckeyes with a fourth-down sack.

#### Game Notes

Tressel notched his 30th victory as head coach of the Buckeyes, achieving that mark in just his 36th game and making him the fastest to 30 wins in school history.

The previous mark had been held by Earle Bruce (1979-87), who took 37 games to capture 30 wins.

Only four other coaches have ever won as many as 30 games on the Ohio State sideline. They are John W. Wilce (78, 1913-28), Francis A. Schmidt (39, 1934-40), Woody Hayes (205, 1951-78) and John Cooper (111, 1988-2000).

It took Wilce just 38 games to win his 30th and Schmidt took 41 games, two more than Hayes. Cooper didn't win his 30th game until his 50th contest on the OSU sideline.

The game was the first Big Ten meeting between Tressel and Michigan State head coach John L. Smith, but the

two coaches had faced one another before.

The two were on opposite sidelines in a 1993 Division I-AA semifinal playoff game when Tressel's Youngstown State team defeated Smith's Idaho team, 35-16. YSU went on to win the Division I-AA national title that year, the Penguins' second of four championships under Tressel.

Cobb's kickoff return for a touchdown was the first given up by Ohio State in 19 seasons.

The last opponent to take a kickoff back all the way was Larry Jackson, who returned one 93 yards for Michigan State in 1984.

The Buckeyes won that game in East Lansing, 23-20.

OSU still doesn't have a kickoff return of its own for a touchdown since Michael Wiley ran one back 100 yards against Bowling Green in 1997.

Attendance at the game was announced at 105,194, the second-largest crowd ever to watch a game at Ohio Stadium.

The only crowd larger to see a game in the Horseshoe was the 105,539 on hand for the 2002 Michigan game.

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

# Extra Motivation Or Not, Krenzel Delivers

Whether directly or indirectly, Craig Krenzel had seen his manhood and abilities challenged.

After suffering through a forgettable day against Penn State — a day that included a slight concussion — Krenzel was informed midweek that backup Scott McMullen, who played hero against the Nittany Lions, was basically guaranteed playing time against Michigan State.

Like any competitor, Krenzel took the challenge and ran with it.

He put together one of his best days of the season, leading the Buckeyes to 33 points and finishing 12 of 23 for 213 yards and three TDs.

"I wasn't motivated by being replaced," Krenzel said. "Coach saying that Scott needed some playing time

## INSIDE THE OFFENSE with Mike Wachsman

didn't bother me at all. I can only control the things that I can control. That includes what I can do to put the team in the best position to score points and win football games."

Krenzel responded to calls for his job, both from factions of the media and the OSU-loving public, by playing a controlled, cool-headed game.

In addition to his passing, he scrambled for 33 yards and picked up three key first downs with his feet.

He also did a better job of checking down through his progressions and hitting secondary receivers.

"We stayed poised, and Craig stayed calm and thought about what he had to do," tight end Ryan Hamby said. "He stayed within the game plan and did a great job."

Krenzel helped the Buckeyes amass their highest offensive output in Ohio Stadium this year — 395 yards.

He got rolling with three touchdown passes on three consecutive series, spanning the second and third quarters.

Not bad for a guy who days earlier was on the verge of being run out of town by the what-have-you-done-for-

me-lately residents of the Buckeye nation.

"He's under a tremendous amount of pressure," said tight end Ben Hartssock, who led OSU with three catches for 54 yards and a score. "But he welcomes that, and he's dealt with it extremely well. A lot of people would have buckled under this kind of pressure where you go out and maybe don't have the kind of game you're hoping for, but then he was able to bounce back and have a huge day."

OSU's tenacity through the air and Krenzel's resourcefulness didn't come as much of a surprise to Michigan State.

"OSU is a championship team for a



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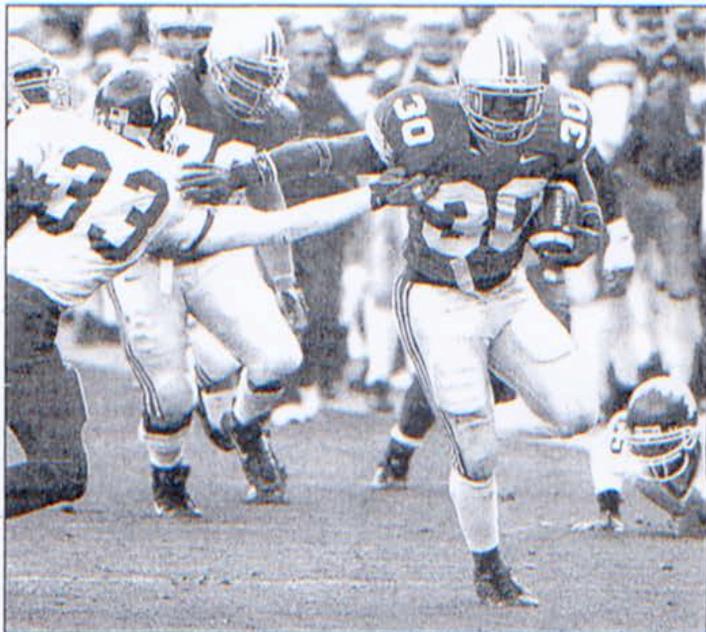
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JEFF BREHM

**ROSS ROLLS ALONG** — It took a little time to get going, but OSU tailback Lydell Ross (30) picked up his third straight 100-yard rushing game against Michigan State, finishing with 125 yards.

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**OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE**

reason," MSU cornerback and kick returner DeAndra Cobb said. "We had a hard time executing. Our mind was somewhere else. Ohio State played outstanding and took all the momentum."

**These Guys Are Tight**

Two of Krenzels three touchdowns went to tight ends, a group that had been targeted a lot this year but one that had been held out of the end zone for the most part.

Hartscock grabbed a touchdown on an underneath crossing route, while Hamby ran free along the back of the end zone and latched on to a Krenzels rocket in the third quarter.

"They've done an outstanding job, both of them," Krenzels said. "Ben especially, coming into his senior year, wanted to get a lot better and he took the time this summer to learn the protections and trying to understand the scheme of things and what we're trying to do. It's definitely paid off for him in terms of knowing where to be and when to be there."

Hartscock chuckled when asked about the security blanket he and Hamby provided the offense.

"We both said it's a good day for tight ends, so something must be going on," Hartscock said. "That doesn't usually happen."

The senior tight end said he wasn't the intended target on his scoring grab but was in the right place at the right time and took advantage of a Michigan State defensive lapse.

"I was trying to pull the corner down off one of the (twin receivers), but the corner dropped with him anyway. I got the ball in the open field," Hartscock said. "That's the first time I've ever had to run with the ball."

Hamby grabbed his third touchdown of the year thanks to the attention defenders were paying to Hartscock.

"I hope they keep worrying about him," Hamby chuckled. "I'll take that play every time. Ben and I were open a couple of times each and Craig found us."

**Holmes Sweet Holmes**

Since the loss of Drew Carter to a

knee injury, redshirt freshman flanker Santonio Holmes has stepped up big time, grabbing 13 passes for 282 yards in the last three games.

He scored a touchdown against Michigan State to put the Buckeyes up 17-7, outjumping a Spartans defender for the ball and breaking a tackle before hitting the end zone.

"Santonio made a great play on that," Krenzels said. "We were running a lot of skinny posts and were favoring (Mike Jenkins) side a little bit. That's what made us go to Santonio's side. I tried to put it in a place where only he could get it. Santonio is a kid that can make big plays, and he dealt with pass interference, made a great catch and did a great job getting the ball into the end zone."

Holmes said the plan was simple — go get the ball and make something happen.

"It was 65 Will," said Holmes, who finished with a pair of grabs for 51 yards. "I got on top of the DB and broke in on the post route. The ball was thrown short for me to jump up and catch it, and that's exactly what I did. I got it to the end zone."

Hartscock marveled at the progress Holmes has made in a short time.

"He's really picked it up," the senior said. "He's a mature kid, a kid who really wants to do well but was behind a lot of guys. He made plays in camp and really just needed a chance. That chance has come and he's run with it. Santonio is a great weapon for us to have."

**Answering The Questions**

After scintillating and not-so-scintillating offensive performances against Indiana and Penn State, respectively, the Buckeyes were really going to be tested by Michigan State.

The Spartans came into the game leading the Big Ten in sacks and were among the league's top four teams against the run. MSU got three more sacks to bring its season total to 38 but gave up precious yards on the ground.

The Buckeyes were able to put up one of their most balanced afternoons of the season, rushing for 182 yards and

throwing for 213.

They did it by getting physical.

OSU had three scoring drives of 10 plays or more and had a crucial one to start the third quarter.

Clinging to a 17-10 halftime lead, the Buckeyes opened the third quarter at their own 20.

Krenzels tossed two completions before Lydell Ross, who finished with 125 yards and posted his third straight 100-yard rushing day, went to work. He gained 31 yards on four carries before being stopped for no gain at the MSU 2.

That's when Krenzels found Hamby for the score to put OSU up 24-10, the fourth time this year Ohio State has opened the second half with a score.

"I think we were well-rounded and moved the ball up and down," Hartscock said. "We were able to run some play-action pass and push the ball down the field other times. There were a couple instances where we had opportunities to put more points on the board and it was a dropped pass here or an over-throw there."

Ross gained 114 of his yards after intermission and credited a team effort for his production.

"We're doing our job a lot better," the junior tailback said. "Our confidence is a lot better and we're getting on people and staying on them."

"We changed it up a little bit, ran some things a bit differently. We got together at the half and wanted to have a big game running the ball."

The grunts up front were a different unit in the second 30 minutes, too, opening holes for Ross and allowing

Krenzels plenty of time to pick out his receivers.

"We had a couple of long drives," senior offensive tackle Shane Oliven said. "We did a lot of positive things, put some points on the board."

"We've stopped pressing and said, 'Let's go out and enjoy the last few weeks and let the game come to us.' I have one game left in the Horseshoe. My emotions sometimes work for me and sometimes against me. I love this game so much and sometimes you just have to show a little emotion."

Krenzels was sacked just once after halftime.

"We didn't run as much empty backfield," Hartscock explained. "They got us a couple times in a row on that. It just got down to a point of executing and the big guys up front took it upon themselves to execute better, and they did."

**Leftovers**

- OSU stayed perfect at home this year while the Spartans lost for the first time in four road contests.

- The 395 total yards was Ohio State's second-best showing of the year, behind only the 603 put up against Indiana Oct. 25.

- Mike Nugent's 44-yard field goal in the first quarter was the first time an opponent had scored in the opening stanza against the Spartans this season.

- Ross' 35-yard fourth-quarter run was OSU's longest of the season, eclipsing a pair of 33-yarders earlier this year — one by Ross and the other by Maurice Hall.

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

# Defense Adjusts To MSU Attack

As defensive backs coach at Michigan State in 2000, Mark Dantonio watched a freshman quarterback for the Spartans by the name of Jeff Smoker get the better of his unit on some occasions.

Now Ohio State's defensive coordinator, Dantonio watched Smoker sling the ball around again against his defense, only this time it counted.

Smoker had an MSU-record 55 attempts against the Buckeyes, completing 35 passes for 351 yards.

The bulk of that production came in the first half, when Smoker connected on 26 of 37 passes for 265 yards.

Under Dantonio's watch, the Buckeyes have essentially shut down any spread offense they have faced the past three years. Smoker and the Spartans were moving the ball early, though.

"It's a very well-designed attack," Dantonio said. "And if you have a guy who can pull the trigger and make things happen like he can, it's going to make everybody (on the offense) a good player on that field."

Slot back Agim Shabaj had nine receptions in the first half for 78 yards, including a 22-yard touchdown in the first quarter when he was as undetected in the OSU secondary as any receiver can be. Eric Knott, Jaren Hayes and Matt Trannon all had three grabs apiece in the first half.

"That was the first team probably in a while that's played very effectively against us in that type of offense,"



JEFF BREHM

WHERE THERE'S SMOKER THERE'S FIRE — Michigan State quarterback Jeff Smoker (9) had a successful day throwing the ball against OSU, putting up 351 yards, but went home with a loss.

## INSIDE THE DEFENSE with Eric Loughry

Dantonio said. "And we have to go back and rethink some things. We missed some tackles (in the first half), which is uncharacteristic."

Operating primarily out of an empty backfield, MSU conceded it couldn't run the ball. The Spartans had zero net yards rushing on 10 carries in the first half and finished with just 5 yards in the game.

"I don't think they thought they could run against us in a conventional type way," Dantonio said. "And that's why we had a lot of the success we had."

The Spartans hurt Ohio State with underneath routes and screens, and with OSU missing first tackles and allowing

yards after the catch, the Michigan State offense was running downhill.

"I think they ran seven screens in the first half," Dantonio said. "So they were screening us and doing different things. They made the game complex, that's for sure."

The OSU defense didn't panic, though. In fact, they weren't totally surprised by the success of Smoker's passing barrage.

"We knew coming out that probably early on they'd complete some balls and might have a little success until we got adjusted exactly to what they're doing."

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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

linebacker A.J. Hawk said. "They have a good offense. They have a good scheme. I think Smoker really knows how to run it."

It's easier for Smoker to operate, of course, when he has time in the pocket. OSU had limited pressure in the first half, allowing the quarterback to run through his many options.

"We felt we weren't really getting pressure on him at the beginning of the game, and we felt that individually we had to step our game up and help out the secondary," defensive end Will Smith said.

### Turning Point

One of the few times the Buckeyes were able to put pressure on Smoker in the first half led to a game-changing play.

Leading 7-3 early in the second quarter, MSU was threatening to add to its lead. Operating at the OSU 18, Smoker felt heat from a hard-rushing Smith and hurried a pass intended for Trannon. The ball was intercepted by Tyler Everett at the OSU 8 and returned 66 yards down the right sideline to the Spartan 28.

OSU capitalized on the turnover, taking a 10-7 lead with its first touchdown of the afternoon.

Instead of possibly trailing 14-3, the Buckeyes were able to take a lead they would never relinquish.

"That's a 14-point swing, so that's a huge play," Dantonio said. "I'd say the play of the game."

The Spartans never recovered from the deflating turnover.

"Whenever there's a 70-yard flop on a turnover like there was there, that's huge," OSU coach Jim Tressel said. "Emotionally, it takes a lot out of the person that has that problem and obviously that was huge in the game."

Everett worked in when OSU used its dime package with six defensive backs. He has played primarily on special teams the last two seasons but came up big when called on.

"That was a big momentum swing for us," Hawk said. "It got our offense going. It got everyone going, I think."

In a similar situation last season, the then-freshman had an interception late against Washington State to thwart any shot of a comeback by the Cougars.

"We went with him a little bit today because he's got a little bit more experience with that type of passing game," Dantonio said of Everett, who added a career-high five tackles. He had just six stops all season prior to the game.

### Stopping MSU On A Dime

The Buckeyes had some success employing the dime package in the first half but used it even more in the second half, limiting the Spartans to just 91 total yards after halftime.

"We decided to play a little bit more dime — having six defensive backs in the game — because they spread us out," Dantonio said. "I think that helped. We played a little bit of that early, had some success with it, but we extended the package in the second half a little bit so there were more options to call."

"I think our players did a great job adjusting to that situation, adjusting to the speed of the game a little bit. Sometimes you play an offense like this, I think it's a little bit like an option offense. You have to get used to it a little bit. It just took us awhile to get used to it, I guess."

The Buckeyes were able to get more pressure on Smoker in the second half, too. He was sacked twice and knocked down on countless other occasions.

Shabaj didn't catch another pass after his busy first half.

"I think we hit him a little bit more in the second half," Dantonio said of Smoker. "We sent pressure, but when you send pressure, you're giving up something else. And he got it off. He was very quick. We couldn't get there in some of those situations. We did a little better job the second half."

There were no major adjustments at the half, according to the OSU defensive coordinator. Besides more reliance on the dime package, there had to be more pressure.

"We switched up our calls a little bit, maybe tried to do little different things, tried to get to him," Hawk said. "Because sometimes when he sits back there and has a lot of time to throw, of course, (he) just picks teams apart."

"So we changed little things up here and there, but it was just about getting to him and affecting the quarterback."

With OSU in the lead, Dantonio simply wanted to keep the Spartans offense in front of his defense.

"When we got ahead, I didn't want to give up anything long," he said. "And we did pressure (Smoker) a couple of times. And when we did pressure him in the second half, we hit him."

### Offense Finally Helps Out

For most of the last two seasons, the burden of wins fell largely on the Buckeyes' defensive unit while the

offense plodded along, providing just enough points.

With the offense hitting its stride after halftime against the Spartans, the defense was provided a less strenuous day than usual.

"Our offense played very well. I thought, controlled the game, controlled the complete tempo of the game the second half," Dantonio said. "We weren't on the field as much, which I think allowed us to be the winning team today."

The down time was particularly helpful for the defense given the spread offense the Buckeyes were up against.

"Our offense was unbelievable," Hawk said. "They played so well and drove the ball the whole game. That gave our defense a rest. We get to come out there and just have fun, try and make plays."

In addition to getting more help from the offense, the OSU defense afforded its offense more chances with opportunistic play.

The Spartans entered their match-up with the Buckeyes leading the Big Ten in turnover margin with a plus-16, a mark that also was second in the nation.

Everett's second-quarter INT coupled with Donte Whitner's first career pick, which came in the fourth quarter, gave Smoker two interceptions to OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel's one, allowing the Buckeyes to come out on top in the turnover department.

"That's huge," Tressel said. "Turnovers are the key to everything."

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# The Numbers Game

## Ohio State 33, Michigan State 23

Nov. 8, 2003 — Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
MICHIGAN STATE	7	3	7	6	—
OHIO STATE	3	14	10	6	—

### First Quarter

**MSU** — Shabaj, 22 yard pass from Smoker (Rayner kick), 6:21; 7 plays, 95 yards, 3:36 TOP.  
**OSU** — Nugent, 44 yard field goal, 2:20; 10 plays, 52 yards, 3:57 TOP.

### Second Quarter

**OSU** — Hartsock, 17 yard pass from Krenzle (Nugent kick), 10:53; 5 plays, 28 yards, 2:44 TOP.  
**OSU** — Holmes, 37 yard pass from Krenzle (Nugent kick), 6:28; 3 plays, 60 yards, 0:54 TOP.  
**MSU** — Rayner, 48 yard field goal, 3:13; 8 plays, 51 yards, 3:08 TOP.

### Third Quarter

**OSU** — Hamby, 2 yard pass from Krenzle (Nugent kick), 11:42; 8 plays, 80 yards, 3:18 TOP.  
**OSU** — Cobb, 93 yard kickoff return (Rayner kick), 11:30.  
**OSU** — Nugent, 24 yard field goal, 6:14; 11 plays, 72 yards, 5:13 TOP.

### Fourth Quarter

**OSU** — Nugent, 42 yard field goal, 12:57; 10 plays, 55 yards, 3:25 TOP.  
**OSU** — Nugent, 18 yard field goal, 5:18; 8 plays, 50 yards, 4:34 TOP.  
**MSU** — Alexander, 19 yard pass from Smoker (pass failed), 3:21; 6 plays, 63 yards, 1:49 TOP.

Att. — 105,194

Weather — 37 degrees, partly cloudy; wind 13-21 MPH NE.

### Team Statistics

	MSU	OSU
First Downs	20	23
Rushing	4	11
Passing	15	9
Penalty	1	3
Rushes-Yards	17-5	49-182
Passing-Yards	373	213
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	56-36-2	24-12-1
Offensive Plays	73	73
Total Net Yards	378	395
Third Down Efficiency	7-16	4-12
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-3	0-0
Punts	4-37.5	4-39.5
Fumbles-Lost	5-0	0-0
Penalties	12-89	2-14
Time of Possession	26:04	33:56

### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.)** — MSU: Teague 5-14; Shabaj 1-5; Hayes 4(-5); Smoker 7(-9). OSU: Ross 24-125; Krenzle 14-33; Joe 6-28; Guilford 3(-1); Team 2(-3).

**PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD)** — MSU: Smoker 55-35-2-351-2; A.Alexander 1-1-0-22-0. OSU: Krenzle 23-12-1-213-3; McMullen 1-0-0-0-0.

**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.)** — MSU: Shabaj 9-78; A.Alexander 4-47; Knott 4-36; Teague 4-33; Trannon 4-19; Hayes 3-31; K.Brown 2-23; J.Scott 2-12; Kavanagh 1-47; Smoker 1-22; Randall 1-19; Cobb 1-6. OSU: Hartsock 3-54; Holmes 2-51; Jenkins 2-50; Hamby 2-31; R.Hall 1-18; Gamble 1-7; Joe 1-2.

**PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long)** — MSU: Fields 3-36.3-50; Rayner 1-41.0-41. OSU: Sander 4-39.5-47.

**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — MSU: Shabaj 1-6; Team 1-0. OSU: Jenkins 1-12.

**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — MSU: Cobb 5-167; Simon 1-18; Harmon 1-11. OSU: T.Smith 2-34; Jenkins 1-8.

**FUMBLE RECOVERIES** — MSU: None. OSU: None.

**INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.)** — MSU: Maples 1-11. OSU: Everett 1-66; Whitner 1-7.

**SACKS** — MSU: Dukes 1-7; Labinjo 1-5; Taplin 1-2. OSU: Scott 1-9; Anderson 1-4.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.)** — MSU: Labinjo 1-5-6; S.Mitchell 1-5-5; Dukes 1-7; Taplin 1-2. OSU: Scott 1-9; Reynolds 1-4; Anderson 1-4; W.Smith 1-3.

**TACKLES (Solo-Assst.-Tot.)** — MSU: S.Mitchell 7-7-14; Stanley 4-6-10; Taplin 5-3-8; Harmon 3-4-7; Ware 2-5-7; Dukes 3-3-6; Askew 2-4-6; Maples 2-3-5; Labinjo 2-2-4; Flagg 2-1-3; Barnett 2-1-3; Cooper 1-1-2; Rasmussen 1-1-2; Ryan 1-0-1; A.Alexander 1-0-1; Trannon 1-0-1; Stanton 1-0-1; Simon 0-1-1. OSU: Reynolds 8-2-10; Hawk 3-4-7; Fox 4-2-6; Gamble 4-2-6; Sallee 4-1-5; Whitner 3-2-5; Everett 3-2-5; Scott 2-3-5; Allen 2-2-4; Anderson 1-3-4; W.Smith 1-3-4; Pagac Jr. 1-2-3; Fraser 0-3-3; Carpenter 1-1-2; D'Andrea 1-1-2; Moore 1-0-1; Holmes 1-0-1; Arden 0-1-1.

**PLAYERS IN THE GAME** — MICHIGAN STATE: Offense, Trannon, Wheeler, Tate, Morris, Harker, Stewart, Knott, A.Alexander, Shabaj, Smoker, Teague, Rayner, Defense, Taplin, Askew, Rasmussen, Dukes, Stanley, Labinjo, S.Mitchell, Barnett, Harmon, Ware, Maples, Fields, Reserves, K.Brown, Stanton, Simon, Cobb, C.Alexander, McLaurin, Cooper, Doyle, Hayes, J.Scott, Flagg, Dortch, Goebel, Corey, Beltnick, Herron, Wedlow, Ryan, Petterson, Niebytski, Whitticker, Randall, Kavanagh, Walters, Mullinder, Vickerson. OHIO STATE: Defense, Fraser, Scott, Anderson, W.Smith, Hawk, Pagac Jr., Reynolds, Fox, Gamble, Sallee, Allen, Sander, Offense, Jenkins, Sims, Clarke, Mangold, Stepanovich, Olivea, Hartsock, Holmes, Gamble, Krenzle, Ross, Nugent, Reserves, Childress, Guilford, D'Andrea, Everett, Whitner, T.Smith, McMullen, Moore, Youboty, Mitchell, Harley, DeMaria, Joe, Matthews, Carpenter, Datish, Kudla, Bradley, Andrews, Olds, Norman, Bishop, Hamby, R.Hall, Arden, Hollins, White, Pitcock, Bond, Green, Patterson, Penton, Richardson.

## Season Statistics

Date	Opponent (AP Rank)	Result	Crowd
Aug. 30 (2)	WASHINGTON (17)	W, 28-9	105,078
Sept. 6 (2)	SAN DIEGO STATE	W, 16-13	104,433
Sept. 13 (3)	N.C. STATE (24)	W, 44-38 (3OT)	104,890
Sept. 20 (5)	BOWLING GREEN	W, 24-17	104,358
Sept. 27 (4)	NORTHWESTERN	W, 20-0	104,680
Oct. 11 (3)	at Wisconsin	L, 17-10	79,793
Oct. 18 (8)	IOWA (9)	W, 19-10	105,044
Oct. 25 (8)	at Indiana	W, 35-6	51,240
Nov. 1 (8)	at Penn State	W, 21-20	108,276
Nov. 8 (7)	MICHIGAN ST. (14)	W, 33-23	105,194
Nov. 15 (4)	PURDUE (11)	3:30 p.m.	
Nov. 22	at Michigan	12:10 p.m.	

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

### Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	168	174
Rushing	76	45
Passing	85	107
Penalty	7	22
Average Per Game/Rush	131.2	45.0
Average Per Game/Pass	193.5	222.8
Total Offense	3,247	2,678
Total Plays	656	691
Average Per Game	324.7	267.8
Average Per Play	4.9	3.9
Penalties-Yards	70-603	64-445
Fumbles-Lost	18-11	27-8
3rd Down Efficiency	47/139	58/161
Percentage	34%	36%
4th Down Efficiency	8/11	4/12
Percentage	73%	33%
Sacks-Yards	33-236	24-121
Time of Possession	30:42	29:18

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	85	48	48	49	20	250	25.0
Opponents	31	27	16	65	14	153	15.3

Attendance	Games	Total	Avg.
Home	7	733,677	104,811
Away	3	239,309	79,770
Total	10	972,986	97,299

### Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Lydell Ross	141	643	4.6	9	35
Maurice Hall	96	319	3.3	1	33
Craig Krenzle	78	176	2.3	3	23
Ira Guilford	28	64	2.3	0	15
Scott McMullen	16	39	2.4	0	16
Brandon Joe	10	34	3.4	0	12
Chris Gamble	3	19	6.3	0	15
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>1,312</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>

Receiving	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Michael Jenkins	35	483	13.8	5	46
Ben Hartsock	30	268	8.9	2	20
Drew Carter	25	410	16.4	1	49
Santonio Holmes	16	334	20.9	3	47
Ryan Hamby	14	145	10.4	3	31
Lydell Ross	8	68	8.5	0	16
Bam Childress	7	72	10.3	0	15
Roy Hall	5	59	11.8	0	18
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>1,935</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>2,228</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>79</b>

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPP	FG	SAF	PTS
Mike Nugent	—	29-29	—	—	—	—	68
Lydell Ross	9	—	—	—	—	—	54
M. Jenkins	6	—	—	—	—	—	36
R. Hamby	3	—	—	—	—	—	18
C. Krenzle	3	—	—	0-1	—	—	18

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD/INT	Rating
C. Krenzle	107	192	55.7	1,404	9-8	124.29
S. McMullen	43	65	66.2	507	5-2	150.90
J. Zwick	4	8	50.0	24	0-0	75.20
Team	0	1	0.0	0	0-0	0.00
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>1,935</b>	<b>14-10</b>	<b>128.85</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>59.9</b>	<b>2,228</b>	<b>12-13</b>	<b>112.17</b>

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Mike Nugent	4-5	4-5	4-4	1-1	13-15
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>4-5</b>	<b>4-5</b>	<b>4-4</b>	<b>1-1</b>	<b>13-15</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>1-1</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>6-7</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>10-14</b>

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
B.J. Sander	56	2,417	43.2	0	68
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>2,417</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2,826</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>81</b>

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Dustin Fox	3	6	2.0	0	6
Will Allen	2	107	53.5	1	100
A.J. Hawk	2	55	27.5	0	55
Donte Whitner	2	12	6.0	0	7
Tyler Everett	1	66	66.0	0	66
Chris Gamble	1	0	0.0	0	0
Brandon Mitchell	1	0	0.0	0	0
Robert Reynolds	1	19	19.0	0	19
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>78</b>

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Chris Gamble	20	92	4.6	0	12
Michael Jenkins	12	131	10.9	1	54
Santonio Holmes	7	30	4.3	0	10
Roy Hall	1	13	13.0	0	0
Donte Whitner	0	0	0.0	1	0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Chris Gamble	5	93	18.6	0	27
Troy Smith	6	83	13.8	0	21
Maurice Hall	3	60	20.0	0	27
Bam Childress	2	31	15.5	0	12
Roy Hall	1	32	32.0	0	32
Michael Jenkins	1	8	8.0	0	8
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>93</b>

Defensive Leaders	Solo	Ass.	Tot.	TFL	Yds.	Sacks
A.J. Hawk	41	43	84	11.0	46	4-0-34
Will Allen	29	30	59	3-0	—	—
Nate Sallee	32	26	58	1-0	—	—
Dustin Fox	39	16	55	2-0	—	—
Robert Reynolds	30	25	55	6.5	2-0	15
Will Smith	24	15	39	17.5	84	9.5-59
Tim Anderson	14	24	38	9.5	33	3.5-24
Chris Gamble	21	9	30	2-0	—	—
Fred Pagac Jr.	11	17	28	3.5	1-0	1-0
Bobby Carpenter	16	10	26	3.0	22	2.5-20
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>85-376</b>	<b>33-236</b>	
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>57-197</b>	<b>24-121</b>	

Fumbles Forced	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
2	—	—	—	—	—
Will Allen, Bobby Carpenter, Darion Scott, 1	—	—	—	—	—
Mike D'Andrea, Tyler Everett, Dustin Fox, Marcus Green, Will Smith, Donte Whitner, Team.	—	—	—	—	—

Fumbles Recovered	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
1	—	—	—	—	—
Will Allen, Tim Anderson, Jason Bond, Simon Fraser, Brandon Mitchell, Fred Pagac Jr., David Patterson, Robert Reynolds.	—	—	—		

**BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 33, Michigan State 23**

OSU head coach Jim Tressel's assessment of the game: "Our kids played extremely hard and played against a very good football team in Michigan State. I thought we saw improvement as the game went on, which was a key to the win."

Michigan State head coach John L. Smith's assessment of the game: "We got beat by a real good team today. They're big and physical. They're not the defending national champions for nothing. I give our guys credit, though. I'm proud of how hard they played."

MSU offensive guard Paul Harker on the team's 12 penalties in the game for 89 yards: "You have to give credit to Ohio State's fans for making sure we could not hear. But we were so upset with ourselves. We were stopping ourselves (with those) penalties. We could have done so much more than we actually did."

OSU linebacker Bobby Carpenter on pressuring Michigan State QB Jeff Smoker more in the second half: "It really feels great knowing that we were able to put pressure on him because he's a great quarterback. But they also run the ball very well, so our main focus coming into today's game was to shut down their running game so we could focus on their passing attack."

Smith on Michigan State's inability to run the ball: "You're playing against one of the best defenses in the country out there. They have some good guys — not everything you try is going to work. For us to be the team we want to be, we have to rush the ball. But we weren't going to beat these guys today running the ball."

Smoker on his second-quarter pass that was intercepted and returned 66 yards by OSU safety Tyler Everett: "I wish I could have that one back. I didn't step into the throw and I was about to get hit. I should have thrown it out of bounds and over the receiver's head."

MSU receiver Agim Shabaj on Everett's interception: "That play was huge. We were up 7-3 at that point. If we score, it's 14-3 or at least 10-3. We score there and it might be a totally different game."

Smith on whether the interception was a turning



JEFF BREHM

**STRETCHING IT OUT** — OSU sophomore wideout Santonio Holmes has become a big-play man for the Buckeyes since the team lost senior Drew Carter to a knee injury. Holmes caught two passes and scored one touchdown against Michigan State.

point in the game: "You're playing against one of the best defenses in the country. You think everything is going to work for you? There were chances in there for us. You can't ask for any more than that."

OSU tailback Lydell Ross on his slow start of just 11 first-half yards but strong finish of 125 yards for the game: "I was a little dinged up from a stinger I

had this week in practice, but as the game wore on, I felt stronger. It feels good to get over 100 yards today. Hopefully, I can continue to run over 100 during the next two games."

MSU defensive back Robert Flagg on Ross' performance: "Ohio State didn't do anything different in the second half. They just came at us and we weren't ready. Ross was outstanding. He ran like a true champion. We couldn't penetrate the gaps and we couldn't bring him down. That's a good team over there."

OSU tight end Ben Hartssock on Lydell Ross' increased production: "He's crested the hill. I think he's gotten a lot better. He's running with more confidence. He's hitting holes faster, and he's not dancing as much. I think the coaches were really starting to stress that if there's not a hole, go ahead and make one yourself. He's really taken it upon himself to make holes when there aren't any."

OSU flanker Santonio Holmes on the offensive production: "I think everyone on this team is very focused right now. The quarterbacks are making plays, our running game is doing great and the defense is playing well. This win gives us a lot of momentum heading into the last two games."

OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel on whether his 213-yard, three-touchdown passing performance was a redemption game for him: "I don't think so. I'm just happy that I was able to contribute and that we walked away from this game with a win. Wins are tough to come by in the Big Ten this time of year."

OSU offensive tackle Shane Olivea on Krenzel's up-and-down season: "After the first game, people wanted him for the Heisman. After the second game, people wanted to run him out of town. But Craig's a levelheaded guy."

Tressel with the last word on the quarterback situation: "Well, I think there's no question who our starting quarterback is."

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Vol. 32, No. 5

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Oct. 6, 2012

# Arm & Hammer

## Clutch Pass Gives OSU Victory In Physical Battle

By JEFF SVOBODA  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Sometimes, the gap between elation and despair can be as little as one point.

After No. 14 Ohio State and No. 20 Michigan State traded body blows for three hours and 12 minutes Sept. 29, the scoreboard had the Buckeyes holding a 17-16 victory.

Battered and bruised after a game that had enough hard hits and excellent defense to extend the stereotype about Big Ten football for another year or two, the Spartans trudged off their home turf slowly and dejectedly.

On the other side of the field, the Ohio State players followed the postgame prayer with an excited jaunt to the northeast corner of the stadium to sing "Carmen Ohio" with the fans and the marching band.

Behind them, head coach Urban Meyer practically skipped across the Spartan Stadium grass, pumping his fist after racing onto the field at the final gun to embrace quarterback Braxton Miller.

The Buckeyes had survived the battle and earned the spoils that come with it.

"It's going to make a lot of people less hurt tomorrow," OSU center Corey Linsley said with a smile and a chuckle. "Just the level of enthusiasm we all have right now, that locker room was crazy afterward. It's real satisfying."

And no one appeared to be more satisfied than Meyer. Retired coaches don't get the feeling he got on the perfect autumn afternoon in East Lansing – the chance to prowl a sideline against a ranked team in their building with 70 players at his back for three roller-coaster, gut-wrenching hours, and then the combination of relief, excitement and satisfaction that comes when victory is finally clinched.



SONNY BROCKWAY PHOTOS

**CAUSE AND EFFECT** – Ohio State sophomore Devin Smith (15, above) caught a 63-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter at Michigan State that gave Urban Meyer (right) his first Big Ten win, a 17-16 victory over the Spartans.

With that in mind, this type of win seemed to be exactly what Meyer was missing when he was skipping from college town to college town last season as a television analyst. To have gone through it and emerged with a 5-0 football team put Meyer on an obvious high as he walked into the postgame press conference with wife Shelley and son Nate.

"That was a great game," Meyer said. "This ranks as one of the great ones. I've been very lucky to be around great players and great teams. This ranks as one of the top wins. This was fantastic."

It wasn't just the fact that the Buckeyes had emerged with the win but the way they did it that left their head coach so fulfilled.

On this day, scores across the country ballooned. The leading example was West Virginia's 70-63 home win against Baylor in the Mountaineers' Big 12 debut, but the trend was clear across the country. Up the road from Columbus, Miami (Ohio) beat Akron, 56-49, while No. 5 Georgia beat Tennessee, 51-44, and 12th-ranked Texas edged Oklahoma State by a 41-36 margin.

In all, seven Football Bowl Subdivision schools posted at least 40 points and still lost.

Even in the Big Ten, every other winning team on the day posted at least 30 points, with Northwestern setting a school record for total yards during a 44-29 win vs. Indiana and Purdue racing to a 51-41 victory against nonleague foe Marshall.



Continued On Page 8

OPINION

# Miller Proved His Toughness At Michigan State

You can complain about Braxton Miller's mentality as a run-first quarterback. You can criticize his throwing mechanics. You can even find fault with some of his decision-making.

But you had better never, ever question the kid's guts.

Miller's intestinal fortitude was never more on display than when he led Ohio State to a pressure-packed 17-16 victory Sept. 29 over a hard-hitting Michigan State team that some would say pushed the boundaries of clean, hard tackle football.

Just like the guy who keeps coming off the mat to win a heavyweight bout, Miller sucked it up and finally delivered the knockout blow. There was a reason Urban Meyer immediately went to his quarterback after the clock finally reached 0:00, leaving Michigan State head coach Mark Dantonio to wait a few extra seconds for his postgame handshake. Meyer was the beneficiary of one of the grittiest, gutsiest performances delivered by an Ohio State football player in quite some time.

Miller ran the ball 23 times against the Spartans, threw it 23 more and absorbed an inordinate amount of punishment countless other times. And he just kept coming.

He was first subjected to Michigan State aggression during the opening drive of the game after making a couple of veteran defenders look silly.

On the first play of the contest, Miller faked a handoff to tailback Jordan Hall before dancing his way to a 20-yard gain. Two plays later, the OSU quarterback squirted away from senior nose tackle Anthony Rashad White, who wound up grabbing at nothing but air.

Two plays after that, Miller started to run to his right before reversing himself, leaving several Michigan State defenders in the dust before he was pelted out of bounds by strong safety Isaiah Lewis.

Lewis was hit with a 15-yard personal foul, but Miller stayed on the ground for several minutes after banging his head against a big equipment locker. Backup Kenny Guiton finished off the touchdown drive with three straight handoffs to Hall, but Miller was back in the huddle on the Buckeyes' next possession, showing no worse for the wear. He even completed a couple of quick flips to Corey "Philly" Brown - appearing to purposely work plays into Lewis' area - before picking up a first down on a sweep around left end that netted 7 yards.

Miller continued to poke and prod the Spartans, who tried a variety of ways to bring down the elusive sophomore including some that seemed to occur well after the whistle had blown.

And still the sophomore kept coming - almost to the point of embarrassing the MSU defense.

With the Buckeyes protecting a 17-13 lead, an illegal block on a punt return had pinned them back at their own 15 at the 14:46 mark of the fourth quarter. Michigan State dialed up a blitz, and pressure from defensive end William Gholston and linebacker Denicos Allen appeared to have Miller corralled around his own 7 for a critical sack.

Somehow, though, Miller escaped the clutches of both defenders and managed to flip a short pass to Brown, who then turned the broken play into a 24-yard gain.

Five plays later, when Miller escaped the pocket on a third-and-6 from the MSU 46, the quarterback was on his way to a first-down run and the Buckeyes appeared ready to salt away the victory. But as Miller tried to squeeze between safety RJ Williamson and linebacker Max Bullough, the QB stumbled

and his left knee crashed into the Spartan Stadium turf.

Miller stayed on the ground for several minutes as head trainer Doug Calland and team physician Dr. Chris Kaeding examined his knee. Finally, Miller got to a seated position before he was able to stand and walk a few feet to the sideline under his own power. As Calland and Kaeding continued to ask him questions about how he felt, Miller, whose face had by now tightened into a painful grimace, flexed his leg - gingerly at first before he finally put his full weight on it. After a few more minutes, the quarterback walked back to his place on the bench and donned a headset.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

When the Buckeyes got the ball back, Miller took his place under center.

After the game, when reporters asked about his knee, the sophomore QB replied simply, "It's no big deal," although his teammates knew differently.

"To see him play through that pain and to now know how much pain he was in, that's awesome," center Corey Linsley said. "That's a hell of a player right there."

A hell of a young man, too.

## Big Ten Having Its Problems

What we have learned so far from the first five weeks of the 2012 college football season is that a flawed Ohio State team represents the cream of the crop in the Big Ten.

The Buckeyes and Northwestern are the only remaining undefeated teams in a conference that boasted five teams ranked among the nation's top 18 in The Associated Press' preseason poll. Those rankings are but a distant memory now in a Big Ten that has more problems than a screen door in a hurricane.

No conference team resides in the top 10 of either major poll with the Buckeyes at No. 12 in the AP rankings. OSU is not eligible for the USA Today coaches' poll, meaning Nebraska is the highest-ranking Big Ten team there at No. 20.

After the first month of the season, eight teams rank 54th or lower nationally in terms of total offense, and six of those are 79th or below. That includes two-time defending conference champion Wisconsin, whose once-vaunted offensive attack now ranks dead last in the Big Ten and 109th nationally.

But the 3-2 Badgers, who were once as high as No. 12 in both preseason polls, aren't the only conference team with issues. Michigan State is so offensively challenged that the Spartans have scored exactly one touchdown in their two losses this season. And both of those losses - 20-3 to Notre Dame and 17-16 to OSU - have come in home games.

Nebraska is 4-1, but it needed to erase a 17-point third-quarter deficit at home against Wisconsin on Sept. 29 to claim a 30-27 victory. The Cornhuskers' famed Blackshirts defense is only a middle-of-the-pack unit this season, giving up averages of 20.6 points and 340.8 points per game.

NU is also a decidedly different team away from Lincoln. The team's only loss this season was a 36-30 defeat at UCLA, and the Huskers were 2-2 on the road last year in their first season as Big Ten members.

Minnesota is also 4-1, but Goldy got exposed in a 31-13 loss at Iowa. The Gophers

were behind 24-0 at halftime to a Hawkeyes team that had been ranked No. 105 in the nation in scoring. Even with its outburst against Minnesota, Iowa moved up only to a tie for 97th.

Michigan has seemingly taken the step back many predicted this season. In fact, the argument could be made that quarterback Denard Robinson has taken a couple of steps backward. Robinson is still U-M's primary playmaker, but he played extremely poorly against Alabama and Notre Dame, combining to complete only 24 of 50 pass attempts for 338 yards and one touchdown against six interceptions. He did contribute 117 rushing yards in those games but failed to score.

Simply put, if you find a way to stop Robinson, you beat Michigan.

Northwestern and Purdue are the current dark horse darlings. The Wildcats are 5-0, but they have yet to reach the meat of their schedule. They take on Nebraska, Iowa, Michigan and Michigan State in successive games beginning Oct. 20. Meanwhile, the Boilermakers haven't even begun conference play yet and already have a half-game lead over the other three eligible teams in the Leaders Division. But they jump into the frying pan Oct. 6 by hosting a rested Michigan team coming off an open week, a game that begins a three-week stretch that includes a home game vs. Wisconsin and a road match at Ohio State.

Illinois appears to be struggling mightily under first-year head coach Tim Beckman, while Indiana is ... well, Indiana.

Finally, no one knows how much is left in Penn State's emotional tank. The Nittany Lions are currently on a three-game winning streak, but their next three games are interesting ones - at home vs. Northwestern on Oct. 6, at Iowa on Oct. 20 and home against Ohio State on Oct. 27. Penn State usually handles the Wildcats pretty well, but it has lost three of its last four to the Hawkeyes and four of its last six to the Buckeyes.

What we have learned about the Big Ten so far? That it has a couple of good teams, a couple of bad ones and several that are very average, so don't be surprised if the conference sends a team with three losses (or more) to the Rose Bowl.

## Some Final Thoughts

- One week after Reid Fragel turned in a career-best performance against UAB, the senior right tackle might have done even better vs. Michigan State. Fragel started his afternoon with a first-quarter recovery of a Brown fumble at the OSU 34, had a key protection on Miller's 63-yard touchdown strike to Devin Smith, and then threw the crucial seal block that allowed Carlos Hyde to pick up the game-clinching first down with the game clock winding under two minutes.

- No one should have been that surprised when the Buckeyes were able to hold Bell to just 45 yards rushing. No Michigan State player has rushed for 100 or more yards against Ohio State since 1988. That year, Hyland Hickson rushed for 187 yards and Blake Ezor added 147 as Michigan State piled up 372 yards on the ground during a 20-10 victory over the Buckeyes in Spartan Stadium.

- Aware of the fact I'm scratching at an unhealed wound, who exactly was the genius at Ohio State who thought playing in a bowl game last year was a good idea? The general consensus always was that the NCAA was going to levy a one-year postseason ban on the Buckeyes, so it's at least worth asking why the university didn't self-impose its own ban for last season.



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Charter Member

COVER STORY

# Buckeyes Come Through When Needed

Continued From Page 1

But Meyer's game in East Lansing was nothing like that. Ohio State's win was a battle of wills, a pad-popping affair screaming that the two sets of players would be facing a sore Sunday no matter who emerged victorious.

"The Big Ten has taken some heat but that was a great game, a great atmosphere and a bunch of great players on the field who will play at the next level," Meyer said. "That was good for the conference and good for the Big Ten."

When asked if he had any interest in taking part in the shootouts across the country, Meyer had a quick answer.

"Oh, no, no, no," he said. "Our plan to win is play great defense. We have to score more points on offense, but that's a good defense. I'd like 70 every once in a while, but right now, we're happy to be 5-0 with a chance to be 6-0."

His team got there by playing a style of ball that might best suit it. While much – perhaps too much, in fact – has been made of Ohio State's adaptation to a spread offense, there is little doubt the principles of tough football are still preached in Columbus.

Offensively, the spread Ohio State runs also features a fair share of power plays and inside running, while Meyer is attempting to create the type of rugged, dominating defenses Florida used to emerge from the Southeastern Conference to capture national championships in 2006 and '08.

The way the coaching staff challenges the players on a day-to-day basis also is designed to instill toughness in a team. From the intense offseason training regimen to the famous one-on-one "circle drill" in practice to brutally honest player performance reviews both in person and to the media, no stone is unturned when it comes to challenging the resolve of the players.

Considering all that, perhaps it's not hard at all to figure why Meyer's smile went from nearly ear to ear when he left the Spartan Stadium turf. When going toe-to-toe with a Big Ten rival, the Buckeyes passed their first major test of the season.

"Oh, he knew it was a slugfest," Linsley



SONNY BROCKWAY

**TIME TO PARTY** – Members of the Ohio State marching band celebrate as sophomore wide receiver Devin Smith races by en route to his key third-quarter touchdown in the Buckeyes' 17-16 win at Michigan State.

said. "We knew it was a slugfest. We came out on top and it was just awesome. This is what I grew up doing, coming from Youngstown and getting coached the way I've been coached. This is what I know and love – just ground and pound. It was an awesome, satisfying feeling to win this game."

In fact, a year ago, the Buckeyes might not have left East Lansing with the win secured. Of Ohio State's seven losses last year, six came by seven points or fewer, a fact that didn't escape junior left tackle Jack Mewhort as he discussed the game.

"I've lost games like this," Mewhort said. "Last year, as Coach Meyer puts it, we got kicked a lot, and we were in battles that we lost. To just go out there and really just

put it all on the line and rip it open and play four hard quarters, it was sledgehammer football.

"It feels good to come out of here with a win. It makes it well worth our while."

**Making The Plays**

The last five minutes and change of the game continued to show that while this might not be the most talented or consistent Ohio State outfit of all time, the Buckeyes make the plays they need to make when the chips are down.

Michigan State took over the ball at their own 20-yard line with 5:39 to go and the Buckeyes holding only a one-point lead at 17-16. With kicker Dan Conroy already showing his leg – he nailed a 50-yarder with plenty of distance to spare in the third quarter – the

Spartans likely needed to move only a few yards into Ohio State territory to have the chance to kick a field goal that would give them the lead.

But as the Ohio State defense took the field, there was nothing but confidence for a unit that has stiffened when necessary at pretty much every opportunity in 2012.

"Oh yeah, definitely," senior cornerback Travis Howard said when asked if he was sure the Buckeyes would make the stop. "We do this in practice all the time, and our coaches believe in us and know what we're capable of doing. We just had to go out there and leave it all on the field."

That's exactly what happened. Michigan State quarterback Andrew Maxwell did connect with Tony Lippett on the first play of the drive to gain 11 yards,



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COVER STORY

but Maxwell tried again to hit Lippett on the next play and threw an incompleteness to set up second-and-10. Ohio State replied by stopping Le'Veon Bell, holding the MSU standout to his 45th and final rushing yard to leave the Spartans in a third-and-9 situation.

Ohio State chose to go with a blitz on the ensuing play, and linebacker Etienne Sabino got there, completing one of the finest games of his career by forcing Maxwell to throw incomplete under heavy pressure.

Faced with fourth-and-9 and with more than four minutes left on the clock, Michigan State chose to punt the ball, but the Spartans would never see it again.

Ohio State rumbled for three first downs to close out the game, gaining at least 6 yards on each of the three first downs and finishing things with a 5-yard gain by Carlos Hyde on third-and-4.

The fact the Buckeyes were able to grind out those yards with Michigan State's impressive front figuring they would run the ball on every play brought a smile to Linsley's face.

"It was awesome," the OSU center said. "It didn't feel like they quit at all. It didn't feel like their defensive line let up or their play-calling let up at all. It was just one man against another man, and our men won."

It was the latest example of Ohio State doing what it has to do to emerge victorious. Each of the last three games of the nonconference schedule against Central Florida, California and UAB had a point or two in the second half when it looked like things could get away from the Buckeyes, and each time Ohio State shut down the opposing hopes.

"All year, every game, that's what we do so far," Linsley said. "When we need to win it and we need it, we finish every drive. We might not score every drive, but when it comes time to win the game, we win. I think that's our M.O. right now, to be honest with you."

The result was a very pleased Meyer, who has talked numerous times this season about the importance of winning even without style points.

"He was very ecstatic," senior defensive end John Simon said. "It means a lot for us to see him that excited about a win. We went out there knowing we were going to do whatever it took to get that win."

**Creating Identity**

In college football, identity might be the hardest thing to create and sustain.

There are few programs in football that can hang their hat on the same thing from week to week, and those that are able to establish a style of play are often the ones who wind up being the most successful.

Ohio State certainly had that under Jim Tressel, as the Buckeyes became known for having excellent defenses that shut down the run and kept opposing teams from hitting big plays while doing enough on offense to win the closest, most important games. That identity led to seven Big Ten titles and eight BCS bowl berths in eight seasons, one of the most successful runs ever in a program that stresses excellence.

Over the past two years, though, that characteristic started to wane a bit. In a span of 14 games, five different opponents cracked the 200-yard mark on the ground, and going into the Michigan State game, Ohio State sat dead last in the Big Ten in total defense.

For a unit that has worn the name "Silver Bullets" with pride for well over a decade, it was time to make a stand.

"We challenged ourselves," Simon said. "We knew this was a big game for us, and we haven't played up to our potential the last couple of weeks. We wanted to come out here and make a statement, and I think as a collective group we did that and we played well together."

The job Ohio State did shutting down Bell was the most impressive part. The MSU running back, who lists his hometown as Columbus, had topped 600 yards in his first four games, but Ohio State never let him get untracked. His longest run was a mere 8 yards, and he actually finished with more yards receiving (58) than rushing (45 on 17 carries).

The Buckeyes also brought the wood in the passing game. Michigan State's young wide-outs dropped a number of passes, especially when the Ohio State secondary was near. The OSU safeties delivered numerous big hits that jarred the ball loose and some others for good measure after the MSU receivers had a case of alligator arms.

The physical style of play was something Ohio State was pleased with after the game.

"It's definitely a thing we can hang our hat on," Howard said. "We know we have the defensive players and the defensive line to do that kind of stuff. I'm just happy that they came out and showcased their talent today."

"Our coaches always believed in us and told us we're capable of doing anything, but this

was the game we had to go out and showcase our talent on national TV. We wanted to go out there and leave a statement and show them how the Silver Bullets defense goes."

That identity might last as long as one week. The Ohio State defense faces a challenge with Nebraska's potent offense due to invade Ohio Stadium on Oct. 6. On the other hand, another excellent defensive performance against the Cornhuskers might show the Bullets are back in town.

"We're not satisfied," cornerback Bradley Roby said. "We have to get better at some things, but we're going to get better and play Nebraska."

That was a week away, though, as the team enjoyed the victory in East Lansing. When asked if at least the win against the Spartans was satisfying, Roby answered in the affirmative.

"Definitely," he said. "It was our first big win for the season, and we have to build off that."

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# Ohio State Answers Challenge At MSU

By MARK REA  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Ohio State managed to blunt Michigan State's vaunted running game and somehow overcame three turnovers, six penalties and a host of mental errors to score a hard-fought 17-16 victory Sept. 29 before 76,705 fans at Spartan Stadium in East Lansing.

The Buckeyes moved to 5-0 for the season but more importantly gave head coach Urban Meyer a win in his Big Ten debut.

"We found out something about our team today," Meyer told reporters after the game. "To go on the road, in a hostile environment against a quality, quality football team and find a way to win and answer every drive with another drive ... when it was time to go make a play, they did."

"This was a war, and this was two sledgehammers going at each other. I thought that was a great game."

OSU limited Michigan State to only 34 yards on the ground after the Spartans entered the game averaging 176.2 per game. MSU junior tailback Le'Veon Bell, who was the nation's third-leading rusher with an average of 152.5 yards per game, finished with only 45 yards on 17 carries. The Spartans had 17 first downs in the game, but not a single one of them was manufactured by the running game.

The Buckeyes were led once again by sophomore quarterback Braxton Miller, who was knocked out of the game a couple of times but kept coming back like a scarlet and gray Energizer bunny. Miller rushed 23 times for 136 yards, and completed 16 of 23 pass attempts for 179 yards and a touchdown.

But while Miller was notching his sixth career 100-yard rushing game and going over the 300 mark in total yardage for the third time in five games this season, the sophomore QB turned the ball over three times – twice on fumbles and once with an interception – as the Buckeyes struggled to maintain control of the game.

In addition to the turnovers, Ohio State also committed six penalties for 65 yards

and had trouble once again defensively with tackling and missed assignments. But the Buckeyes were able to total 383 yards of offense and make just enough plays on defense to preserve the win.

In addition to Miller, OSU got superlative offensive performances from a pair of juniors – wide receiver Corey "Philly" Brown and tailback Carlos Hyde.

Brown caught a career-high 12 balls for 84 yards while Hyde took over for an injured Jordan Hall and ground out 49 yards on 11 tough carries. Hyde converted two crucial first downs on the Buckeyes' final possession, including a slicing 5-yard run up the middle on third-and-4 with the game clock winding under two minutes that clinched the game for the Buckeyes.

Sophomore receiver Devin Smith added two catches for 79 yards, including a 63-yard touchdown catch with 3:05 remaining in the third quarter that accounted for the game-winning points.

Defensively, the bend-but-don't-break Buckeyes allowed 303 total yards to the Spartans, but Michigan State penetrated the OSU red zone only once in the game and then had to settle for a field goal.

Ohio State got excellent individual performances from the likes of cornerback Bradley Roby and linebacker Etienne Sabino to close out Michigan State when the Buckeyes needed it most.

Roby, the sophomore playmaker who missed the UAB game with a shoulder injury, totaled nine tackles and also blocked a punt. Meanwhile, the fifth-year senior Sabino turned in a career performance with eight tackles and a sack. He also was credited with a pair of quarterback pressures, including an important one on third down during Michigan State's final possession.

Michigan State was led offensively by junior quarterback Andrew Maxwell, who completed 22 of 42 passes for 269 yards and a touchdown. Those numbers were just shy of single-game career highs for the first-year starter.

Bell did far more damage as a receiver than as a runner, gathering in a career-best eight catches for 58 yards. Sophomore receiver Keith Mumphery added five catches for 79 yards and a touchdown. The yardage was a single-game best, and the TD reception was a highlight-reel, catch-and-run during which Mumphery broke at least six tackles.

"Give credit to Ohio State," Maxwell said. "They did a good job stifling our run game a little bit. They just played physical. I thought they had a good pass rush all day. That's a good defensive line. They're going to cause a lot of people some problems."

## Back-And-Forth Battle

The No. 14 Buckeyes wasted no time getting on the board early and even appeared they might be on their way to an easy victory. OSU took the game's opening possession and marched 75 yards in eight plays to take a quick lead.

Miller set the tone on the first play from scrimmage, faking a handoff to Hall before taking off toward the left sideline for a 20-yard run. Three plays later, Brown gathered in his first reception of the game, an 8-yarder that converted a third-and-5.

Miller followed with a 13-yard run that was followed by a 15-yard personal foul penalty against Michigan State that briefly knocked Miller out of the game. That gave



SONNY BROCKWAY

**MOMENTUM CHANGE** – Sophomore Bradley Roby (1) made one of several big plays for the Ohio State football team at Michigan State when he blocked a Mike Sadler (3) punt in the second quarter.

the Buckeyes a first-and-10 at the MSU 14 and, with Kenny Guiton at the controls, Hall did the rest. He carried three straight times – for 11 and 2 yards before diving over the goal line from the 1 for the game's first touchdown.

Junior kicker Drew Basil booted the extra point to give Ohio State a 7-0 lead at the 12:09 mark of the first quarter.

But as quickly as the Buckeyes seized the early momentum, No. 20 Michigan State took it away by responding with a score on its opening possession. Maxwell moved his team 50 yards in nine plays that included back-to-back throws to Bell that gained a total of 18 yards and pushed the Spartans to the OSU 15.

But Bell was stopped for a 2-yard loss by Ohio State senior lineman John Simon on second down, and a third-and-7 pass from Maxwell intended for Mumphery fell incomplete, so the Spartans were forced to settle for a 34-yard field goal from senior kicker Dan Conroy.

That made it 7-3 with 8:23 remaining in the first period, and the crowd sensed it was in for an offensive battle. It couldn't have been more wrong.

After the opening scoring salvos from both teams, neither team dented the scoreboard again in the first half although each had excellent scoring opportunities.

Early in the second quarter, Ohio State moved methodically from its own 20 to a first down at the MSU 25. It was an all-Miller drive with the quarterback rushing four times for 19 yards and completing three straight pass attempts for 36 more yards.

But Miller got a little too greedy. On first-and-10 from the 25, he tried to get a quick flip to Hyde but the ball was intercepted by Spartans sophomore safety

Kurtis Drummond at the 17-yard line to end the threat.

The Buckeyes had another chance go by the boards later in the second period. Two plays after Roby blocked a Michigan State punt to give OSU possession at the Spartans' 35-yard line, Miller fumbled on an aborted option read and MSU senior linebacker Chris Norman recovered at his own 37 with 1:42 left in the half.

Norman's recovery seemed to stir what had been a largely dormant Michigan State offense, and the Spartans quickly moved back into Ohio State territory thanks to Maxwell completions to junior tight end Dion Sims for 19 yards and Mumphery for 18 yards.

But the drive stalled at the OSU 24 when Maxwell fired incomplete on three straight plays, the last one while being pressured by Sabino. That caused the Spartans to call upon the normally reliable Conroy, but the senior pushed his 42-yard field-goal attempt wide to the right with 33 seconds remaining until the break.

Michigan State pulled within a single point for the first time at 7-6 when Conroy topped off the first drive of the second half by thumping a 50-yard field goal through the uprights at the 11:04 mark of the third quarter.

But the Spartans could have had more. After Maxwell found junior receiver Bennie Fowler behind an umbrella of OSU defenders for a 35-yard gain on third-and-10, the signal caller connected with Sims for 24 more yards to the Ohio State 9. But Michigan State was flagged for an illegal receiver downfield on the play, pushing the Spartans back to the 38-yard line. The subsequent three plays netted only 5 more yards and MSU was forced to settle for Conroy's field goal.

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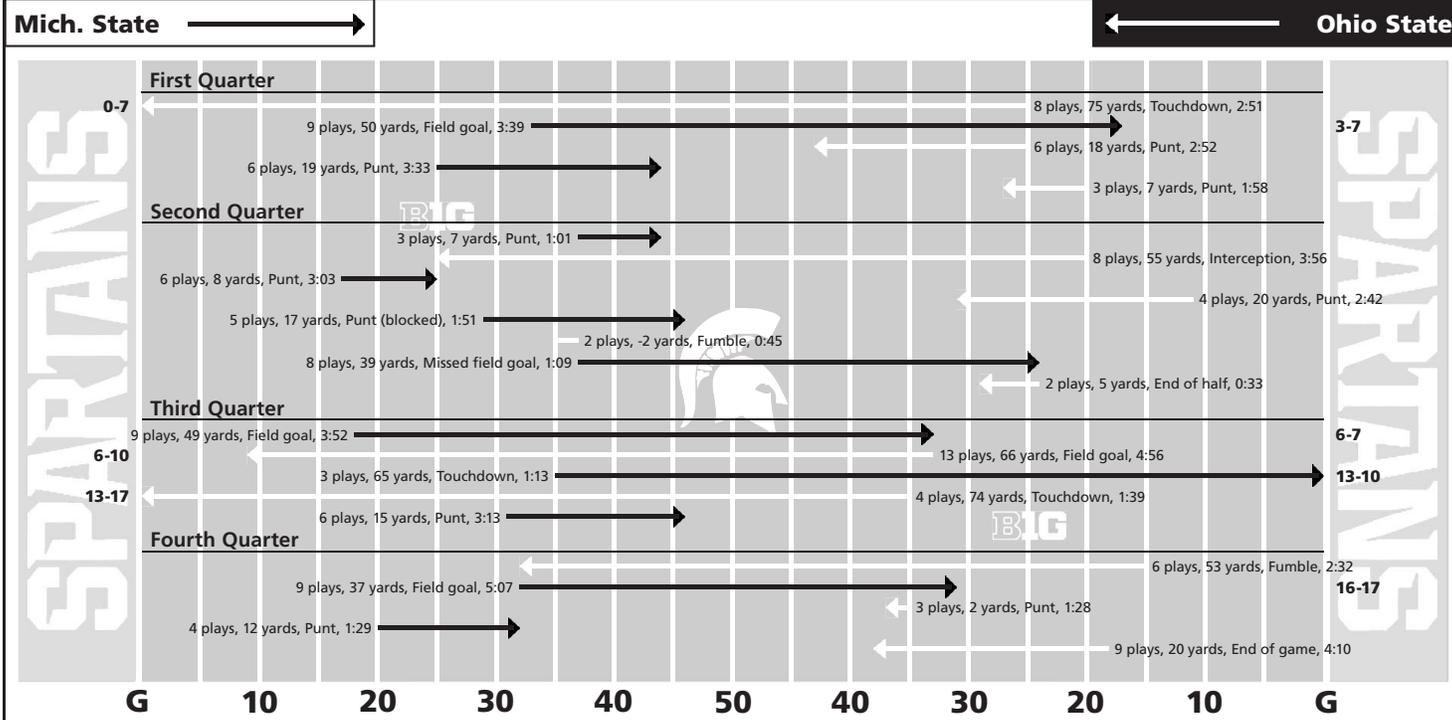
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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

# Drive Chart



Ohio State had to settle for three points of its own following its next possession. Miller led a 13-play drive 66 yards to the doorstep of the Michigan State goal line, but after reaching the 12-yard line, the QB misfired twice and got only 3 yards out of a bubble screen to Brown. On fourth down, Basil came on for a 26-yard field goal to make it 10-6 with 6:08 left in the third quarter.

The Spartans came right back to seemingly take control of the game with a 65-yard drive that took exactly 73 seconds. Sophomore Nick Hill returned a Basil kick-off to the 35 after which Bell took a direct snap and picked up 4 yards. Maxwell followed with a 17-yard completion to Sims that got an extra 15 yards tacked onto the end when Roby was flagged for a facemask penalty.

Then on the next play, Mumphrey gathered in a pass from Maxwell and muscled his way through six would-be tacklers on his way to a 29-yard touchdown romp. It was Mumphrey's first career touchdown catch, and once Conroy tacked on the PAT, Michigan State had a 13-10 lead with 4:49 to go in the third quarter.

It didn't take long for the Buckeyes to answer, however. Miller moved the team 74 yards in only four plays, the big one coming when Smith got loose down the sideline behind MSU senior cornerback Johnny Adams for a 63-yard touchdown bomb. Basil came on to add the extra point, and Ohio State had retaken the lead at 17-13 with 3:05 to go in the third period.

The Buckeyes threatened to add to that lead early in the fourth quarter when they moved out from their own 15 to cross midfield. But on a third-and-6 at the MSU 46, Miller crashed to the ground after a 12-yard gain and lost control of the football. Drummond made the recovery for the Spartans at his own 32 with 12:14 left in the game.

Michigan State quickly went the other way and benefited from an Ohio State

defensive holding call on an aborted fourth-and-1 play. That pushed the Spartans to the OSU 34, and they made it as far as the 28-yard line before Maxwell was corralled for a third-down sack by senior defensive end Nathan Williams.

The 3-yard loss forced the Spartans to call upon Conroy again, and this time the MSU kicker converted a 48-yard field goal to make it 17-16 with 7:07 to play.

The Spartans had one more chance to pull out the victory. After forcing a three-and-out series by the Buckeyes after Conroy's field goal, Maxwell completed an 11-yard pass to sophomore Tony Lippert to give MSU a first down on its own 31.

But the quarterback threw incomplete on the next play, Bell managed only a 1-yard run on second down and then Sabino hit Maxwell as he threw a third-down pass, a throw that fell harmlessly incomplete. Michigan State was forced to punt the ball away with 4:10 remaining, and the Spartans never got the ball back.

The Buckeyes converted a trio of first downs on their final possession, including a 6-yard run by Hyde on a second-and-3 and a 14-yard scamper by Miller on the following play.

Michigan State called its final two timeouts following the next two plays, but then Hyde iced the game by following a block from senior right tackle Reid Fragel and slicing through a would-be tackler for a 5-yard gain on third-and-4.

That gave OSU a first down with 1:29 remaining, and three kneel-downs later, the Buckeyes had the victory.

### Game Notes

- Ohio State moved its advantage over Michigan State to 28-13 in the overall series. That includes eight out of the last nine and 13 of the last 16 meetings. The Buckeyes also upped their record to 14-5 all-time in Spartan Stadium, including four wins in a row. Ohio State hasn't lost in East Lansing since a 23-7 decision in 1999.

## The Bottom Line

**The game was over when ...** Carlos Hyde followed a block from right tackle Reid Fragel and powered through Michigan State defensive end Marcus Rush for a 5-yard gain late in the fourth quarter. Hyde's run converted a third-and-4 play and gave the Buckeyes a first down inside the two-minute mark, clinching the victory.

**Game ball goes to ...** Braxton Miller. Yes, he committed three turnovers, but he took Michigan State's best shots on several occasions and just kept coming. The sophomore QB ran the ball 23 times and threw the ball 23 times, accounting for 315 yards of total offense and practically willing the Buckeyes to the win.

**Stat of the game ...** 0. The Spartans totaled 17 first downs in the game, but nary a one came via the running game. Before being stoned by the Ohio State defense, the MSU running game had accounted for 36.4 percent of the team's first downs (31 of 85).

- Mark Rea

- Meyer is now 1-0 against the Spartans, evening the record since 1951 of first-year Ohio State head coaches against Michigan State. Earle Bruce (1979) and Jim Tressel (2001) each beat the Spartans in their initial meetings, while Woody Hayes (1951), John Cooper (1988) and Luke Fickell (2011) all lost.
- Dantonio dropped to 1-5 lifetime against the Buckeyes. His team's victory last year broke a streak that included losses in 2004 and 2006 while at Cincinnati in addition to defeats in 2007 and 2008 with the Spartans. Dantonio, of course, was defensive coordinator on Tressel's OSU staff from 2001-03 and won the Frank Broyles Award in 2002 as college football's top assistant coach.
- Dantonio is now 47-24 in his five-plus seasons with the Spartans, including a 31-8 mark at home. Michigan State's 20-3 loss to Notre Dame on Sept. 15 snapped a 15-game home winning streak, the fifth longest in school history, and now the Spartans have lost two games at home for the first time since 2009.
- Meyer has his team off to a 5-0 start for the fifth time in 11 seasons as a head coach. The others were Bowling Green (2002), Utah (2004) and Florida (2006 and '09).
- With his 5-0 record, Meyer now has the third-best start to a career by an Ohio State head coach. Carroll Widdoes won his first 12 games in 1944 and '45, while Earle Bruce won his first 11 in a row in 1979.
- Some more Meyer stats: The coach improved to 39-4 all-time in September, 22-10 against ranked teams, 95-5 when his team is leading at halftime and a perfect 17-0 when his team blocks a punt.
- The game was the Big Ten opener for Ohio State, which is entering its 100th season as a conference member. The Buckeyes are now 72-24-4 in league openers, and that includes wins in 11 of their last 13.

Continued On Page 12

## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

## Miller Continues Attack On OSU Record Book

Continued From Page 11

• Michigan State kicked off its 60th season of Big Ten competition, and it now has a 32-24-4 record in league openers.

• The Buckeyes are now 5-1 in Big Ten openers vs. Michigan State, including 2-0 at Spartan Stadium. The only other opener in East Lansing was a 21-0 decision in 1975. Tailback Archie Griffin rushed for 108 yards in that game, fullback Pete Johnson scored two touchdowns and defensive halfback Craig Cassidy tied the school's single-game record by nabbing three interceptions. Cassidy is the son of 1955 Heisman Trophy winner Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy.

• Since joining the Big Ten in 1913, Ohio State head coaches are now 7-5-1 in their Big Ten debut games, including 3-2-1 on the road. John W. Wilce's team lost a 7-6 decision to Indiana in 1913, the Buckeyes' inaugural season as Western Conference members. Sam Willaman won his conference debut with a 7-6 win over Iowa in 1929, and Francis Schmidt's team gave him a 33-0 victory over Indiana in the 1934 season opener. Paul Brown took over in 1941 and his team eked out a 16-14 win over Purdue in the league opener, and three years later, the 1944 team gave Widdoes a 34-0 win over Iowa in his Big Ten debut. Three straight coaches then failed to win their first conference game – Paul Bixler, 20-7 at Wisconsin in 1946; Wes Fesler, 24-20 at Purdue in 1947; and Hayes, whose team fought Wisconsin to a 6-6 tie in Madison in 1951. Bruce broke that string with a 21-17

win at Minnesota in 1979 before Cooper lost his conference debut in 1988, a 31-12 defeat to Illinois. Tressel won his Big Ten debut at Indiana, a 27-14 victory in 2001, and Fickell lost last season to Michigan State.

• The game marked the first time this season Ohio State had faced a ranked opponent. Michigan was No. 18 in the USA Today coaches' poll and No. 20 in the Associated Press writers' poll.

• When Ohio State is the higher ranked team, it now has a 23-6 record against Michigan State. When the Spartans enter the game as the higher ranked team, they are 5-0. When neither team is ranked, OSU had a 5-2 edge.

• The Buckeyes were 2 for 2 in the red zone against the Spartans and have now scored on each of their last 15 trips inside the opponent's 20-yard line. That includes 13 touchdowns and only two field goals. Michigan State's previous four opponents had combined for only one touchdown and three field goals in just six trips to the red zone against the Spartans.

• With the trip to Spartan Stadium, Ohio State played its first game of the 2012 season on natural grass. The Buckeyes were 0-3 on grass fields last season – at Miami (Fla.), Purdue and the Gator Bowl – and they hadn't won on a natural surface since a 26-17 win over Oregon in the 2010 Rose Bowl. OSU is scheduled to play one more game this season on natural turf – the Oct. 27 contest at Penn State.

• The Ohio State defense knew going into the game it would do well to keep

Michigan State under 24 points. Since 1990, the Spartans are 125-33-1 when scoring 24 or more. When they are held to fewer than 24 points, their record is now 21-90-1.

• The Spartans have 28 Ohio players on their roster while Ohio State has only two players from Michigan – defensive lineman Johnathan Hankins (Dearborn Heights) and Fragel (Grosse Point Farms).

• Dantonio's coaching staff features plenty of assistants who have ties to Ohio State. Running backs coach and recruiting coordinator Brad Salem's older brother, Tim, was quarterbacks coach at OSU from 1997-2000. Linebackers and special teams coach Mike Tressel is the son of former Ohio State running backs coach Dick Tressel and nephew of former head coach Jim Tressel. Offensive line coach Mark Staten was a graduate assistant at OSU in 2002 and '03. Michigan State strength coach Ken Mannie was a graduate assistant on Bruce's OSU staff in 1984, MSU director of personnel/player development and relations Dino Folino began his coaching career as a GA for Hayes in 1974 and '75, and the Spartans' head trainer Jeff Monroe spent four years as a student trainer for the Buckeyes from 1969-72.

• Brown had a career-high 12 receptions for the Buckeyes, tying him for the fourth-best single-game total in program history. David Boston holds the school record with 14 catches at Penn State during a 31-27 OSU loss in 1997. Boston also had a 13-catch game at Indiana in 1996, matching the total Gary Williams had against

Florida State in 1981. Others with 12-catch performances are Bob Grimes (1952), Billy Anders (1966) and Brian Stablein (1992).

• Brown's 12-catch game was the first time an Ohio State receiver cracked double digits since Ted Ginn Jr. had 10 receptions during a 35-7 win over Bowling Green in 2006.

• Brown now has 32 catches this year, a pace that would put him at 77 for the season. That would be the second-best total in school history. Boston has held the single-season mark since 1997 with 85 receptions.

• Smith had only two catches against the Spartans, but they went for 79 yards. That gives the sophomore receiver 33 career receptions for 645 yards, an average of 19.5 yards per catch.

• Miller's 136 rushing yards vs. Michigan State pushed his career total to 1,292 and vaulted him from 49th to 45th place on Ohio State's all-time list. He passed Troy Smith (1,168, 2003-06), Derek Combs (1,231, 1997-2000), Champ Henson (1,235, 1972-74), Maurice Clarett (1,237, 2002) and Ricardo Volley (1,252, 1977-79).

• Miller needs only 12 more yards to become the fourth-leading rusher of all time among Ohio State quarterbacks. Terrelle Pryor (2008-10) holds the record with 2,164 yards, followed by Cornelius Greene (2,080, 1972-75), Rex Kern (1,714, 1968-70) and Art Schlichter (1,303, 1978-81). Note: The school no longer recognizes Pryor's record after erasing his totals from the 2010 vacated season.

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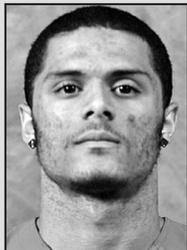
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# Buckeye Game Analysis

## Play Of The Game

Braxton Miller's 63-yard bomb to Devin Smith in the third quarter of Ohio State's 17-16 win at Michigan State went down as the game-winning touchdown pass, but it was interesting for a number of other reasons as well.

First, the matchup on the outside was straight from northeastern Ohio. Smith prepped at traditional power Massillon Washington while the player defending him, Michigan State senior cornerback Johnny Adams, graduated from Akron Buchtel, two schools about 30 miles apart as the crow flies.



Devin Smith

In addition, the route Ohio State called was "four verticals" – a somewhat famous play these days in the world of Internet strategy wonks, who have come to celebrate the play as one of the favorites of passing-game savant Mike Leach, now at Washington State.

The concept is simple – four wideouts run go routes down the field in an effort to stretch the opposing coverage. It's generally known as a zone-beater, but Ohio State showed the play is pretty effective against press man coverage as well.

Just minutes after Michigan State took a 13-10 lead with 4:49 left in the third quarter, OSU faced a first-and-10 its own 37. Ohio State's downfield passing game had been nonexistent to that point, but head coach Urban Meyer picked the right time to suggest a deep ball.

Not only did Michigan State decide not to blitz on the play, the Spartans ran their usual man coverage on the outside receivers. Adams was unable to get a jam on Smith at the line of scrimmage, though, as the Ohio State sophomore dipped outside of him and gained a step as he raced down the right sideline.

Leading wideout Corey "Philly" Brown was the inside receiver on that side and cut his route a few steps toward the middle of the field, drawing safety Isaiah Lewis, whose responsibility was to follow Brown in single coverage.

That left Smith and Adams alone on an island, and the step that Smith gained proved to be a crucial difference. The Ohio State offensive line picked up the four-man rush with ease – right tackle Reid Fragel held off tackle Anthony Rashad White on a stunt for the crucial block – giving Miller time to loft the ball up for his top big-play target.

Adams waved for the ball as it came down near the MSU 35, but it was just beyond his grasp and hit Smith in perfect stride. Adams quickly dove to try to bring down Smith, but the Ohio State wideout easily got free of the arm tackle and then waltzed into the end zone to give the Buckeyes a 17-13 lead they would not relinquish.

"What a great throw and catch," Meyer said.

## Hidden Play Of The Game

What could have been one of the scariest plays of the game for Ohio State instead turned out to be a relief in multiple ways.

When Miller escaped the pocket on a third-and-6 from the MSU 46 early in the fourth quarter, things looked pretty good for the Buckeyes. Not only was the Scarlet and Gray holding a 17-13 lead on the road, Miller had plenty of

room over the left side on the play and looked to be about to put the Buckeyes in field-goal range at the very least.

What happened next offered OSU fans the full gamut of emotions. Miller used a pump fake as he escaped the pocket to hold safety RJ Williamson and then cut inside of him to reach the first-down marker. But as Miller tried to sneak between Williamson and linebacker Max Bullough, he stumbled, and his next step caused his left knee to jam awkwardly.

Miller immediately dropped the football and fell to the ground clutching his knee, an event surpassed in importance only by the fact that the ball should have been live on the turf.

It was not, however. As MSU safety Kurtis Drummond picked it up and started up the right sideline, the officials blew the play dead with the ruling that Miller was down when the fumble occurred.

While replay overturned the call, two things went Ohio State's way. First, the officials couldn't give Drummond the yards back he would have gained on the return, as he appeared to have plenty of green space to run up the Ohio State sideline. Michigan State did get a field goal on the ensuing drive, but a touchdown would have given the Spartans the lead.

In the big picture, though, the most important development was the fact that Miller wasn't badly hurt on the play. After gingerly making his way off the field, the sophomore quarterback returned to the field on the next drive and helped OSU finish off the one-point win.

## What Worked Well

- **Keeping Le'Veon Bell in check:** The Michigan State running back entered third in the nation in yards per game but finished with only 45 net yards on the ground. The key was Ohio State's ability to keep him from rumbling downhill – his longest rush was 8 yards. The line either swallowed up Bell or forced him wide, while the back seven flew to the ball and wrapped up.

- **Quick change mentality:** Michigan State won the turnover battle 3-0 but turned that trio of gifts into a total of three points. The Spartans punted after the first turnover, missed a field goal after the second and got only a three-pointer after Miller's late fumble. In all, Ohio State's defense has allowed only that Dan Conroy field goal after the seven turnovers the offense has ceded this season, an impressive feat.

## What Didn't Work

- **Finishing MSU Off:** Ohio State lost three turnovers in Michigan State territory, and keeping the ball in any of those circumstances would have given the team an excellent chance to widen the final margin on the scoreboard. Miller was responsible for all three, losing a pair of fumbles and throwing a pick, all inside the MSU 40. As good as the sophomore signal caller is – and he's plenty good – he still makes youthful mistakes at times.

- **Tackling on MSU's touchdown:** At least five Buckeyes had a shot at Keith Mumphery when he turned a simple flare route into a 29-yard touchdown that gave MSU a short-lived third-quarter lead. The frustrating part of Ohio State's defense is that it can play so well for so long – witness the fundamentally sound play that helped shut

Bell down – yet still allow a potentially game-changing play like Mumphery's score.

## Reviewing The Matchups

**Ohio State rush offense vs. Michigan State rush defense:** Against a defense as stingy and physical as Michigan State, no one on the Ohio State side will argue about the 204 net yards on the ground. Miller didn't have some of the big seams he had in the nonconference slate to take it the distance but did use his athleticism to continually escape MSU tackles to keep the chains moving.

Jordan Hall and Carlos Hyde were also effective, and OSU's game-clinching drive on the ground was impressive. **EDGE: Ohio State**

**Michigan State rush offense vs. Ohio State rush defense:** Bell is the entire Michigan State rushing attack, and Ohio State's ability to frustrate him all day kept the Spartans from putting more points on the board. It was a great performance for an Ohio State team that had been gashed by numerous opponents over the past year and a half and perhaps signals that the Silver Bullets are back. **EDGE: Ohio State**

**Ohio State pass offense vs. Michigan State pass defense:** Miller's deep ball to Smith was the deciding play, but otherwise Ohio State's passing game wasn't a huge part of the game. Miller did finish 16 for 23 passing (69.6 percent) but a number of his completions were short screen passes to Brown. **EDGE: Even**

**Michigan State pass offense**

**vs. Ohio State pass defense:**

Going into the game, it wasn't clear if Andrew Maxwell could move the ball effectively against Ohio State, but the sophomore quarterback had a solid day. He finished with 269 yards through the air, and his 22-for-42 performance would have been better if not for a number of dropped passes. When Michigan State moved the ball on the day, it was largely through the air. **EDGE: Michigan State**

**Special teams:** This one was a mixed bag. Perhaps the biggest play on special teams was Bradley Roby's blocked punt in the second quarter, but a fumble by Miller two plays later negated any real edge OSU gained from it. Michigan State was solid about everywhere else. Conroy made some long field goals, Mike Sadler absolutely boomed his other punts and Nick Hill had a couple of solid returns. Drew Basil moved to 2 for 2 on the year in field goals for OSU. **EDGE: Even**

**Intangibles:** This game had a real edge to it, as the mutual respect between the programs when friends Jim Tressel and Mark Dantonio were in charge appears to have eroded a bit with Meyer's arrival at Ohio State. Michigan State in particular spent much of the game toeing the line between intensity and dirty play, even crossing it a few times. But that focus on extracurricular activities seemed to hurt the Spartans more than help. In the end, Ohio State yet again found a way to win, as this team seems to do. **EDGE: Ohio State**

– Jeff Svoboda



Kurtis Drummond



Andrew Maxwell

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

**BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 17, Michigan State 16**

**Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on his first Big Ten victory:** "I think we beat a good team. That was a really good team we played. Anytime you hold a quality running back to whatever it was, I think (45) yards, that's a great effort. A great team win."

**Michigan State head coach Mark Dantonio's opening statement:** "Good football game today. I thought our guys played extremely hard and I'm proud of them. When you lose a game, 17-16, you have a tendency to say 'what if' a lot and look at single plays and how they would have made a difference. But I was very proud of our football team. We have to stay balanced as a team and run the ball more effectively."

**Meyer when asked if he would have been happy if he had known before the game that the Buckeyes would hold MSU standout tailback Le'Veon Bell to 45 yards:** "If we knew? We didn't know. If I knew that, then why practice? We're good, we'll win the game. You know, not to pump his tires, but that's a good back. I'll venture to say that won't happen again to that guy. He's a good player."

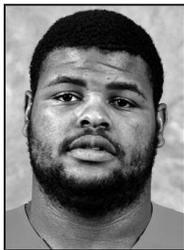
**OSU fifth-year senior defensive lineman Nathan Williams when he learned the defense held Bell to only 45 yards:** "It's amazing, isn't it? It's incredible. We played our butts off up front, and the DBs were covering great. We got lucky with a couple of dropped balls on their offense, but it's a great team win. Our offense did a heck of a job. Our defense played solid. It's a great day to be a Buckeye"

**OSU sophomore linebacker Ryan Shazier on silencing Bell:** "I think he probably got a little frustrated because he's used to averaging 150 yards a game and he got shut down today."

**MSU offensive coordinator Dan Roushar on OSU's success in slowing Bell:** "They dropped an eighth defender down into the box. When we motioned, they moved heavily to where our strength was. They made a commit-

ment to stop the run, and I think they did a good job."

**OSU junior defensive lineman Johnathan Hankins on the performance by the defense:** "The defense was really aggravated and really frustrated about the way we played the first four weeks. We were trying to show everybody in the world that we are a really good defense and we can stop the run and the pass. We showed them a little bit of that today, and we've just go to keep going strong."



Johnathan Hankins

**Meyer on whether he had thought the OSU defense was good enough to put up the performance it did against the Spartans:** "Absolutely I did. I thought our defense was good enough to play better in the first four games. That's how much confidence I have in our players and coaches. I think we have really, really good players. Do we have great players? I think a few of them. But I did have confidence in them."

**Dantonio on OSU quarterback Braxton Miller's performance:** "Braxton Miller is a very exciting player as we knew coming into the game, and he took a lot of bad plays and made them good ones. He got out of trouble quite often and is a very good player as we knew."



Mark Dantonio

**Meyer on Miller's 63-yard touchdown pass to sophomore Devin Smith in the third quarter:** "That was my deal. It was a blitz-a-thon. We had some deep throws we didn't hit earlier. When the ball is getting moved against them, they blitz. It was one of three blitzes they were bringing. We knew it. We just had to execute better. They have good corners, that No. 5 (Johnny Adams) is a good corner. I was kind of watching and said it was the right time."

**Smith on catching the game-winning TD:** "Words can't explain how good I feel right now, making plays for this football team and getting a win."

**Meyer on if his heart stopped when Miller left the game with a fourth-quarter knee injury:** "Yeah, close to stopping. I saw his knee jam right in front of me. I love Braxton. Braxton is my guy. I have a great relationship with him. He's family now. When something like that happens, I guess it's no different than John Simon. We're family now. You spend this much time together, you see what these kids do, they're family."

**OSU junior center Corey Linsley on whether he learned anything about Miller's toughness from the game:** "No. We already knew that. Come on. We already knew he was tough. It was awesome. He was in the locker room showing emotion after the game. He was hurting. I saw that look on his face. I went over to try to cheer him up, but he was hurting. Just to see him play through that pain and to know how much pain he was in after the game, it's awesome. He's a hell of a player right there."

**Linsley on OSU's time-killing drive late in the fourth quarter:** "I feel like that last four minutes was everybody ripping their heart out, everybody giving it to the team and doing what we talked about all week. Putting the team on our back as an offensive line, it felt great."

**Smith on the same subject:** "I just felt like we wanted it more than those guys. That's a great football team, Michigan State. The coaches coached them well, but I feel like we wanted it a little more. We went out there and showed it."

**OSU senior offensive tackle Reid Fragel on the win:** "It was a good test for us today. We just have to build on this game and move forward. Obviously there was a real sour taste in our mouths from last year, so it feels good (to win). We still have some things to work on, but it's great to get a win in a game like this with all the turnovers."

**Linsley on the importance of the win:** "We knew going into the game that this was going to be one of the best teams we'd face all year in the conference. We had to win it. If we win this, it starts to snowball in the right direction. If we don't win it, it starts to snowball in the wrong direction. So we knew the importance and the significance of this game, coming out on top. And we did it."



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# The Numbers Game

## Ohio State 17, Michigan State 16

Sept. 29, 2012 — Spartan Stadium; East Lansing, Mich.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	7	0	10	0	17
MICHIGAN STATE	3	0	10	3	16

### First Quarter

**OSU** — J.Hall, 1 yard run (Basil kick), 12:09; 8 plays, 75 yards, 2:51 TOP.

**MSU** — Conroy, 34 yard field goal, 8:23; 9 plays, 50 yards, 3:39 TOP.

### Third Quarter

**MSU** — Conroy, 50 yard field goal, 11:04; 9 plays, 49 yards, 3:52 TOP.

**OSU** — Basil, 26 yard field goal, 6:08; 13 plays, 66 yards, 4:56 TOP.

**MSU** — Mumphrey, 29 yard catch from Maxwell (Conroy kick), 4:49; 3 plays, 65 yards, 1:13 TOP

**OSU** — D.Smith, 63 pass from B.Miller (Basil kick), 3:05; 4 plays, 74 yards, 1:39 TOP.

### Fourth Quarter

**MSU** — Conroy, 48 yard field goal, 7:07; 9 plays, 37 yards, 5:07 TOP.

**Att.** — 76,705.

**Weather** — 69 degrees, partly cloudy; wind, NNW 7 mph.



### Team Statistics

	OSU	MSU
First Downs	21	17
Rushing	14	0
Passing	6	14
Penalty	1	3
Rushes-Yards	44-204	22-34
Passing Yards	179	269
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	16-23-1	22-42-0
Offensive Plays	67	64
Total Net Yards	383	303
Third Down Efficiency	6-13	4-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-0
Punts-Avg.	4-44.0	6-46.2
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	0-0
Penalties	6-65	4-35
Time of Possession	30:27	29:33

### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.)** — **OSU:** B.Miller 23-136; Hyde 11-49; J.Hall 6-26; P.Brown 1-6; TEAM 3-(-13). **MSU:** Bell 17-45; Caper 1-2; Hill 1-(-3); Maxwell 3-(-10).

**PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD)** — **OSU:** B.Miller 16-23-1-179-1. **MSU:** Maxwell 22-42-0-269-1.

**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.)** — **OSU:** P.Brown 12-84; D.Smith 2-79; J.Hall 1-10; Hyde 1-6. **MSU:** Bell 8-58; Mumphrey 5-79; Lippett 4-46; Fowler 2-46; D.Sims 2-36; Lang 1-4.

**PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long)** — **OSU:** Buchanan 4-44.0-47. **MSU:** Sadler 5-55.4-70; TEAM 1-0-0-0.

**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — **OSU:** D.Smith 1-16; Roby 1-11; J.Hall 1-6. **MSU:** Hill 1-10.

**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — **OSU:** D.Smith 1-21. **MSU:** Hill 4-102.

**FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds)** — **OSU:** None. **MSU:** Norman 1-0; Drummond 1-0.

**INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.)** — **OSU:** None. **MSU:** Drummond 1-0.

**SACKS (No.-Yds.)** — **OSU:** Sabino 1.0-7; N.Williams 1.0-3. **MSU:** Norman 1.0-6.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.)** — **OSU:** Sabino 1.0-7; N.Williams 1.0-3; Simon 1.0-2; Shazier 0.5-2; Bryant 0.5-1. **MSU:** Norman 2.0-9; Gholston 1.0-6; Drummond 1.0-2.

**TACKLES (Solo.-Ast.-Tot.)** — **OSU:** Roby 4-5-9; Sabino 4-4-8; Shazier 1-7-8; Bryant 0-7-7; Howard 3-2-5; N.Williams 1-4-5; Johnson 1-4-5; Simon 2-2-4; Goebel 0-4-4; Klein 1-2-3; Hankins 0-3-3; Basil 1-1-2; C.Brown 0-2-2; Reeves 1-0-1; Rice 1-0-1; Hyde 1-0-1; Griffin 1-0-1; C.Williams 0-1-1. **MSU:** M.Bullough 8-4-12; Lewis 5-5-10; Norman 5-4-9; D.Allen 2-4-6; Rush 2-3-5; J.Jones 3-1-4; Gholston 2-2-4; A.R.White 2-1-3; Drummond 2-1-3; Reynolds 2-1-3; Adams 1-2-3; Dennard 2-0-2; Williamson 1-0-1; Gardiner 1-0-1; L.Thomas 1-0-1; Kittredge 1-0-1; M.White 0-1-1; T.Jones 0-1-1.

**PLAYERS IN THE GAME** — **OHIO STATE:** Offense, D.Smith, Mewhort, Norwell, Linsley, M.Hall, Fragel, Z.Boren, Stoneburner, P.Brown, B.Miller, J.Hall, Basil. Defense, Simon, Hankins, Goebel, N.Williams, Shazier, Klein, Sabino, Roby, Bryant, Johnson, Howard, Buchanan. Reserves, C.Brown, C.Williams, Griffin, D.Grant, Guiton, Domicone, Spencer, T.Williams, Dunn, Reeves, Tanner, Rice, Bogard, Hyde, Marcus, Perkins, Homan, Hale, Makridis, Bennett, Decker, Kramer, Carter, Baldwin, Fields, Vannett, Heuerman. **MICHIGAN STATE:** Offense, France, J.Allen, Jackson, McDonald, Burkland, D.Sims, Mumphrey, Lang, Maxwell, Lippett, Bell, Conroy. Defense, Rush, Reynolds, A.R.White, Gholston, Norman, M.Bullough, D.Allen, Dennard, J.Jones, Lewis, Adams, Sadler. Reserves, Allen, L.Thomas, Fowler, Muma, Hill, A.Sims Jr., Caper, Williamson, Drummond, M.White, T.Jones, Elsworth, Drone, Davis, Harris, Gainer, Gardiner, Pepper, Kruse, Treadwell, Dennis, Ruhland, Klatt, Hoebing, Calhoun, Kittredge.

## Season Statistics

### 2012 Game-By-Game

Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Sept. 1	(18) MIAMI (OHIO)	W, 56-10	105,036
Sept. 8	(14) C. FLORIDA	W, 31-16	104,745
Sept. 15	(12) CALIFORNIA	W, 35-28	105,232
Sept. 22	(16) UAB	W, 29-15	105,019
Sept. 29	(14) at Mich. State (20)	W, 17-16	76,705
Oct. 6	NEBRASKA	8 p.m.	
Oct. 13	at Indiana	8 p.m.	
Oct. 20	PURDUE	TBA	
Oct. 27	at Penn State	6 p.m.	
Nov. 3	ILLINOIS	TBA	
Nov. 17	at Wisconsin	TBA	
Nov. 24	MICHIGAN	Noon	

Jake Stoneburner	3	—	—	—	18
Zach Boren	2	—	—	—	12
Carlos Hyde	2	—	—	—	12
Philly Brown	1	—	—	—	6
Bri'onte Dunn	1	—	—	—	6
Jordan Hall	1	—	—	—	6
Bradley Roby	1	—	—	—	6
Rod Smith	1	—	—	—	6
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20-21</b>	<b>2-2</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>2-2</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>8-14</b>

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Drew Basil	2-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-2
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>2-2</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>2-2</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-2</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>8-14</b>

\* 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	107	89
Rushing	64	22
Passing	40	56
Penalty	3	11
Average Per Game/Rush	224.2	100.8
Average Per Game/Pass	194.0	275.6
Total Offense	2,091	1,882
Total Plays	348	361
Average Per Game	418.2	376.4
Average Per Play	6.0	5.2
Penalties-Yards	37-325	29-252
Fumbles-Lost	8-4	4-2
3rd Down Efficiency	29-67	29-81
Percentage	43%	36%
4th Down Efficiency	2-3	1-8
Percentage	67%	12%
Sacks-Yards	12-106	8-52
Times Of Possession Avg.	29:13	30:47

### Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	27	59	38	44	—	168	33.6
Opponents	22	13	30	20	—	85	17.0

### Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Braxton Miller	90	577	6.4	7	65
Jordan Hall	40	218	5.4	1	15
Carlos Hyde	35	158	4.5	2	16
Bri'onte Dunn	12	60	5.0	1	13
Rod Smith	12	50	4.2	1	12
Philly Brown	5	48	9.6	0	19
Zach Boren	11	33	3.0	2	8
Kenny Guiton	5	14	2.8	0	11
Devin Smith	1	2	2.0	0	2
TEAM	7	-39	-5.6	0	0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>81</b>

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
Braxton Miller	76	121	62.8	933	8-3	144.44
Kenny Guiton	5	9	55.6	37	0-0	90.09
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>8-3</b>	<b>140.68</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>60.6</b>	<b>1,378</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>114.14</b>

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Philly Brown	32	317	9.9	1	38
Devin Smith	19	351	18.5	4	72
Jake Stoneburner	7	92	13.1	3	40
Evan Spencer	5	70	14.0	0	44
Zach Boren	4	35	8.8	0	14
Nick Vannett	4	19	4.8	0	7
Jordan Hall	3	31	10.3	0	14
Jeff Heuerman	3	28	9.3	0	10
Carlos Hyde	2	8	4.0	0	6
Verlon Reed	1	13	13.0	0	13
Michael Thomas	1	6	6.0	0	6
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>1,109</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>58</b>

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPP	FG	PTS
Braxton Miller	7	—	2-2	—	—	46
Drew Basil	—	20-21	—	—	2-2	26
Devin Smith	4	—	—	—	—	24

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Drew Basil	2-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-2
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>2-2</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>2-2</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-2</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>8-14</b>

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Ben Buchanan	27	1,126	41.7	1	55
TEAM	1	0	0.0	0	0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>39.9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>70</b>

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Travis Howard	3	26	8.7	0	17
Christian Bryant	1	38	38.0	0	38
Orhian Johnson	1	3	3.0	0	3
Etienne Sabino	1	2	2.0	0	2
Doran Grant	1	0	0.0	0	0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Philly Brown	3	12	4.0	0	10
Devin Smith	2	14	7.0	0	16
Bradley Roby	1	11	11.0	0	0
Jordan Hall	1	6	6.0	0	0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Devin Smith	5	101	20.2	0	26
Armani Reeves	2	45	22.5	0	26
Bri'onte Dunn	1	22	22.0	0	22
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Ryan Shazier	27	21	48	2.5-12	1.0-9
Etienne Sabino	19	17	36	2.0-17	2.0-17
Christian Bryant	14	18	32	0.5-1	—
Bradley Roby	18	10	28	2.0-13	1.0-11
Johnathan Hankins	10	18	28	2.0-12	1.0-10
Orhian Johnson	10	9	19	—	—
Garrett Goebel	6	12	18	2.0-8	1.0-3
Travis Howard	12	6	18	—	—
John Simon	7	10	17	2.5-9	1.0-7
C.J. Barnett	9	8	17	1.0-2	—
Nathan Williams	6	8	14	1.5-4	1.0-3
Doran Grant	10	2	12	1.0-8	1.0-8
Corey Brown	5	6	11	—	—
Storm Klein	3	4	7	—	—
Curtis Grant	2	5	7	—	—
Jamal Marcus	5	0	5	—	—
Adam Griffin	4	0	4	—	—

# Win Over Spartans Unofficial Start To Meyer Era

The Urban Meyer era at Ohio State may have technically started Sept. 1, 2012, when the Buckeyes waxed the Miami RedHawks. But for many, the Meyer era began in earnest four weeks later when his Buckeyes traveled to East Lansing and earned a hard-fought 17-16 victory over Michigan State.

Through all the ups and downs experienced by the Buckeyes during the four undefeated weeks of the nonconference schedule, I think everyone – fans, coaches, players and pundits alike – were looking toward the confrontation with the Spartans as the first measuring stick of how Ohio State was going to fare under Meyer, the wunderkind from Bowling Green, Utah and Florida who was returning to Ohio to coach his home-state Buckeyes.

And if you were among the few who failed to see the significance of this first true test for Meyer and his men, you need only to have looked at the raucous celebration among the OSU players, coaches and fans after the game. It was as if the Buckeyes had defeated the other school from that state up north – and then some.

What was interesting was that the Buckeyes scored the victory in almost Jim Tressel-like fashion, coming together as a team, digging down deep and doing what they had to do to record the win, especially at key times.

After months and months of talk and speculation and hope among Buckeye fans about the creative, wide-open offense Ohio State was going to run under Meyer and his new offensive coaching staff, there was nothing to compare to Sid Gillman, Bill Walsh or Walt Harris in this game.

It was pretty much Braxton Miller left, Braxton Miller right, Braxton Miller up the middle, a long pass to Devin Smith and a good-old fashioned late-game pounding by Carlos Hyde and the offensive line to generate enough yards, first downs and points to secure the one-point win. I suspect Jim Bollman could have drawn up that game plan.

And what about the defense – so maligned, and rightfully so, during the nonconference part of the schedule – shutting down Le'Veon Bell, the nation's third-leading ball carrier? The Columbus area product tallied only 45 yards on 17 carries, an average of just 2.6 yards per attempt. That was more than 100 yards below his game average for the first four games and half his 5.2-yard per carry average.

That forced the Spartans' offense to go away from its strength to try to beat Ohio State, and while MSU managed to rack up 269 yards through the air, it scored only one touchdown. That TD, a 29-yard third-quarter reception by Keith Humphrey that put Michigan State in a position to win the game, will still be a source for concern from OSU critics and coaches alike as the missed tackles that have plagued the Buckeyes all season were in abundance on the catch-and-run.

Other than that play, though, the bend-but-don't-break Buckeyes turned in their best performance of the season, holding the Spartans to four field-goal attempts on their other trips into OSU territory, three of which kicker Dan Conroy converted. On Michigan State's other six drives, all of which ended in punts, the Green and White averaged five plays and 11.8 yards before punting.

The Ohio State defense, which has been strong when it had to be all season, was especially tough when the game was on the line, even overcoming a serious gaffe in the fourth quarter.

With the Buckeye clinging to a 17-13 lead, Michigan State was forced to go for it on fourth-and-1 at the OSU 44. Ohio State forced an

## THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

incomplete Andrew Maxwell pass and should have taken over on downs, but the Buckeyes were called for defensive holding and the Spartans had new life on the OSU 34. The defense stiffened again, with Nathan Williams sacking Maxwell on third down, and MSU had to settle for a Conroy field goal to make it 17-16 with 7:07 remaining.

The Buckeyes were quickly forced to punt themselves, and Michigan State set up shop for what would prove to be the last time, taking over at the MSU 20. Maxwell immediately hit Tony Lippett with an 11-yard pass for a first down, but that would be the Spartans' last hurrah. The Buckeyes forced a third-and-9 and OSU linebacker Etienne Sabino came barreling in on Maxwell, forcing an incomplete pass and a punt with 4:10 to play.

Then behind Hyde and Miller, Ohio State ran out the clock.

Sabino added a key sack and had eight total tackles as the Ohio State linebackers had an impact on the game for the first time all season. Fellow linebacker Ryan Shazier also had eight tackles, and Storm Klein added three.

Speaking of Bollman, maybe some of his influence robbed off on Michigan State head coach Mark Dantonio in the eight years they coached together at Youngstown State and OSU. That's because I thought the Spartans stubbornly continued to run Bell, whose longest run was a gain of only 8 yards, when it was clear that his type of straight-ahead running is something the Buckeyes are – and always have been – geared to stop. Bell was much more effective as a receiver coming out of the backfield – the type of play the Buckeyes have struggled against – catching eight passes for 58 yards to lead the Spartans. He also could have been used as a decoy with play-action fakes into the line.

While the Buckeyes were bottling up Michigan State's top weapon, the Spartans, who entered the game sixth in the nation in total defense, did not have as much success stopping the Buckeyes' main weapon.

Miller called his own number 23 times, racking up 136 yards on the ground, more than two times the total of the highly-touted Bell. He also picked up another 179 yards through the air on 16 completions, giving him 315 yards of total offense on the day, 82.2 percent of Ohio State's total output of 383 and better than Michigan State's team total of 303.

The Buckeyes' brain trust, or perhaps Miller himself on some of his option decisions, appears to have embraced the fact that the quarterback is Ohio State's best offensive weapon and seems prepared to go to that well as often as necessary to emerge victorious. If that is the strategy, the 6-2, 220-pound Miller proved his toughness against the rugged MSU defense, getting knocked out of the game twice but returning quickly on both occasions.

Still, if the Buckeyes are in the Big Ten race for the long haul, you would think they will need to develop some of their other weapons.

Smith continues to show that "wow" factor that Meyer so dearly craves, scoring the decisive touchdown on a 63-yard bomb but gathering in only one other pass on the day. His 79 yards gave him 351 yards on 19 catches for the season, good for an 18.5-yard average, and it would be nice to try to get the ball in his hands more.

Corey "Philly" Brown had a solid, possession receiver-type day, catching 12 passes for 84 yards, giving him 32 receptions on the year and establishing himself as another viable option for Miller.

Jordan Hall and Hyde also each had catches out of the backfield, good for 10 and 6 yards, respectively. But Jake Stoneburner, he of the 12 career touchdown catches, was shut out for the second game in a row, and Miller did not complete a single pass to a tight end.

Hall, before he was knocked out of the game with a knee injury, and Hyde also had some success on the ground, though obviously not to the level of Miller. Hall carried six times for 26 yards with a long of 14, good for a 4.3-yard average, while Hyde bulled his way to 49 yards on 11 carries for a 4.5-yard mark with a long of nine. While those aren't game-breaking numbers, they are marks that add up to first downs, which in turn add up to victories. (By the way, if you rewatch the game, check out Hyde's blocking. It was outstanding.)

The options are there. The question seems to be whether Miller or Meyer and Co. have the confidence in those other options or would prefer to continue to ride Miller as far as he'll take them. It would seem, though, that using the others more would not only save wear and tear on the quarterback but increase his productivity by keeping defenses from keying on Miller.

Things don't get any easier as the Buckeyes prepare to host Nebraska on Oct. 6 in a prime-time showdown of traditional powers.

But as Meyer himself would say, the best thing about being 5-0 (and 1-0 in the Big Ten) is you have a chance to be 6-0 (and 2-0).

### Game Notes

- Nathan Williams was credited with five tackles and a sack against Michigan State, but his stat line doesn't reflect his presence during the game. His pressure was relentless and his continued improvement following a return from knee surgery has put opponents in the position of having to pick their poison when it comes to blocking.

The defensive line also features John Simon, who is already an established star and relentless performer, and big Johnathan Hankins, who is emerging as one of the top defensive line talents in the country. I know you hear a lot about defensive lines in the SEC, but how much better can a defensive line be than the one the Buckeyes have put together?

- The on-field meeting between Meyer and Dantonio following the OSU victory might have been the shortest on record between two coaches at the end of a game. It's clear that the days of the cozy relationship between Michigan State and Ohio State that existed when Jim Tressel, who was Dantonio's boss for eight years at Youngstown State and Ohio State, is over.

- As you saw players from both sides repeatedly being felled by injuries in East Lansing, along with a little extracurricular pushing and shoving, you knew that Big Ten football had started. It may not be SEC football, but it is *our* football.

### Looking Back

Those of you who are regular readers of this column know that I love our "From the

Pages of BSB" feature that runs in each issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin. It is always interesting to see things that I have forgotten or to look back at events with 10, 20 or even 30 years of perspective and see the frequent irony.

This issue, I was struck by something that shows how, for all its supposed innovations, football hasn't really changed.

Former Ohio State head coach John Cooper was lamenting 20 years ago that his team couldn't pound out a yard and a half against Wisconsin on a penalty-shortened two-point conversion attempt.

"In my opinion, with our big offensive line and the big backfield we had in there, if we can't make a yard and a half, we probably don't deserve to win the game, and it really boiled down to that," Cooper said.

Fast-forward to this season and current coach Meyer sounded the same after his Buckeyes couldn't pound the ball in from the 1 against Miami (Ohio).

"Ohio State should be able to knock it in from the 1," Meyer said after the 56-10 win over the RedHawks. "That's bad. That's absolutely nonnegotiable. Nonsense."

Enjoy "From the Pages of BSB" on page 2 of this issue.

In our ongoing celebration of the 10th anniversary of Ohio State's 2002 national football championship, this issue we look back as the Buckeyes, with Maurice Clarett returning to the lineup, bounced back from their near disaster against Cincinnati to roll to a 45-17 victory over visiting Indiana.

Clarett scored three touchdowns while racking up 104 yards just 11 days after undergoing knee surgery, to help vault Ohio State into the top five in both major polls.

We also learned that even a tough guy like Clarett could be a wuss, as he got squeamish at halftime when doctors were forced to give the running back stitches after he opened his surgical wound on a TD run late in the first half.

Don't forget that there will be additional coverage of the win over Indiana in our Oct. 5 electronic issue of BSB. Included will be my column from 10 years ago, as well as Mike Wachsman's column from the same issue where he boldly warns readers after just five weeks, "If you wait too long to secure those tickets to Tempe for the Fiesta Bowl, you'll be priced out of the market."

I'll let you read Mike's column to see where he was coming from.

### A Win Is A Win

I will guarantee you there are Buckeye fans out there, especially some of those who got completely caught up in the Meyer hiring frenzy, who are unhappy Ohio State defeated Michigan State by only one point. Now that Meyer is here, those fans reasoned that lopsided victories would automatically follow.

Out of curiosity, I checked Meyer's record against Alabama and LSU while he was at Florida to see if he was beating the SEC's best by multiple touchdowns. The average score in a game between the Gators and either Alabama or LSU during Meyer's tenure was 22-21 – in favor of the Crimson Tide and Tigers.

Meyer was 5-6 against the SEC's Big Two, in fact losing to both of the teams in his inaugural year of 2005.

It should be noted, however, that in his two national championship years, Florida dominated its rivals. In 2006, the Gators beat Alabama by a 28-13 final and LSU, 23-10. In the championship year of 2008, the Gators crushed LSU, 51-21, before downing the Tide in the SEC Championship Game, 31-20.