



[BSB Reprints: Ohio State Drops 2014 Orange Bowl To Clemson](#)

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Unhappy Ending

Orange Bowl Defeat Completes Difficult Finish To Season

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For the second time in as many series, Braxton Miller lay on the Sun Life Stadium field, clutching his side while being attended to by Ohio State trainers.

Nearby on the Buckeyes sideline, wide receiver Corey "Philly" Brown expressed his dismay, running back Carlos Hyde removed his jersey and shoulder pads and wideout Chris Fields headed to the locker room.

This wasn't the storybook ending to the season that any of them imagined.

To be honest, Miami wasn't even where they wanted to be in the first place, with the national championship game being played three days later in Pasadena. But after a Big Ten Championship Game loss to Michigan State a month prior rerouted Ohio State to the shores of Biscayne Bay for the Orange Bowl, the Buckeyes had a shot at redemption and to end the season on a positive note but ultimately found neither in their 40-35 loss to Clemson on Jan. 3.

"The loss is devastating for me," senior left tackle Jack Mewhort said. "I'm going to wake up tomorrow and I'm not going to be these guys' teammate anymore. That's the hardest part for me right now."

It might have been the OSU offense that had the last chance to win the game - an ill-fated effort that ended when Miller was picked off by Clemson linebacker Stephone Anthony - but it was again the Buckeyes' defense that did the most damage to Ohio State in its second loss in as many games.

A month after surrendering 438 yards to what had been a struggling Spartans outfit - and 603 to Michigan a week before that - the Buckeyes again struggled when it came to making stops, as quarterback Tajh Boyd and the Tigers offense racked up 576 yards.

The effort was enough for Buckeye coach Urban Meyer to admit that what he had in his defense wasn't good enough this



SONNY BROCKWAY

THE END - Ohio State linebacker Ryan Shazier (2) walks off the field for the final time as a Buckeye after the team fell 40-35 in the Orange Bowl vs. Clemson.

season, at least not when it came to the team's preseason goal of a national championship.

"We're not a championship-caliber defense right now," Meyer said. "Although we think about the last two games, we were in position to go win that game."

Being in position to and actually doing so, however, are two different things.

The mood in the Buckeyes' locker room after the game was understandably somber, as seniors tried to piece together the legacies that they were leaving mere moments after their college careers had come to an end. Miller deflected inquiries into whether or not he'd be entering the NFL draft, while a few feet away freshman quarterback J.T. Barrett answered questions about the future of Ohio State.

Even as safeties coach and co-defensive coordinator Everett Withers hugged his players for one final time before leaving for the head coaching position at James Madison University, one thing in the Buckeyes' locker room stood out over everything.

A white board with some plays and instructions scribbled upon it seemingly had been punched out, leaving a gaping hole that was impossible not to notice.

Players attributed the damage done to some pregame excitement, but whether that was actually true was irrelevant. As players packed their bags and cleaned out their lockers - some for the final time of their college careers - the

defaced white board symbolically served as a reminder of the imperfection that was the 2013 Ohio State season.

Ranked second in the nation a mere month earlier, the Buckeyes were in line to play for their first BCS National Championship Game since the 2007 season but concluded their 2013 campaign with the first two losses of the Meyer era in Columbus.

Given the state that the program was in when Meyer took it over two years ago, there are certainly worse things that Ohio State could lay claim to than a 24-2 mark in two seasons, even if the last two games left a sour taste in the Buckeyes' mouths heading into the 2014.

"We had a team meeting two years ago, and if you'd have told me when I walked out of that team meeting that this group would buy in and we'd go on a nice run and have the highest-scoring offense in program history and 24 straight wins and all that, I'd have looked at you and said you're out of your mind," Meyer said.

"Sometimes you have to go through things. I'd rather not, but that's part of it. We played a good team in the Orange Bowl, and it was a high-scoring game with a lot of great plays. We didn't finish it."

Weird Week Leads To Loss

It might not have been an enjoyable one, but the Ohio

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Nearly six years ago, Ohio State matched up with Clemson in the 2014 Orange Bowl with Urban Meyer at the helm and Braxton Miller at quarterback.

Despite the Buckeyes holding leads of 29-20 and 35-34 in the second half, they lost 40-35 at the hands of the Tajh Boyd and Sammy Watkins-led Tigers.

With another showdown with Clemson less than two weeks away, we dived into the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives and looked back at that game.

This installment of BSB Reprints includes our coverage of that gut-wrenching upset loss to the Tigers following the 2013 season.

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