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Vol. 38, No. 9

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Nov. 10, 2018

On The Front Foot

Ohio State Rush Offense Shines Despite Turnovers, Defensive Woes

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Run the ball effectively. Score touchdowns in the red zone.

Those were the two biggest focuses for the Ohio State offense during the two weeks between a 49-20 loss at Purdue and a home game against Nebraska on Nov. 3. The Buckeyes had run for just 76 yards on 25 attempts (3.0-yard average) against the Boilermakers, coming away with two field goals and no touchdowns from five trips to the red zone.

After an off week was used to address those issues on the offensive side, the 10th-ranked Buckeyes improved to 8-1 overall and 5-1 in the Big Ten thanks in part to 229 rushing yards on 40 attempts (5.7) and three touchdowns in four trips inside the opposing 20-yard line in a 36-31 victory.

"The run game in the red zone, I think we pounded the ball in there pretty good," head coach Urban Meyer said after the game.

The change didn't happen at the snap of a finger, though. The Buckeyes identified an issue, the offensive staff addressed it and drew up a plan to fix it, and the players executed the plan to near perfection on almost every rushing attempt.

Sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins led the charge with 163 rushing yards on 23 carries (7.1) with three touchdowns, two of which came in the red zone. Junior Mike Weber added 91 yards on just nine carries (10.1), and neither back had a rush go for a loss.

"We worked ad nauseam at that," Meyer said in regard to the running game. "The amount of time that we spent at that was over the top, and I felt the line of scrimmage change."

Senior right tackle Isaiah Prince admitted that criticism of Ohio State – specifically the run game – had bothered the Buckeyes. He said the line shifted its attitude in order to make sure the performance took a step forward, and that started with a renewed focus on the run game in practice.

That focus is down to offensive coordinator Ryan Day and the rest of the staff, but it started with Prince and his teammates. In fact, Prince said he had urged the coaches to focus on the running game leading up to the Nebraska contest.



GAINING GROUND – Ohio State sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins (2, above) racked up 163 yards and three touchdowns on 23 attempts against Nebraska. Junior running back Mike Weber (25, below) gained 91 yards on nine carries.

PHOTOS BY JOSH WINSLOW



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FAN FORUM

Buckeye Leaves

BSB's full-service website, BuckeyeSports.com, has 24/7 updates regarding all things Ohio State, including an active Forum where subscribers can chat with BSB staff members and other fans. The Forum also features a live thread during every Ohio State game where staffers and subscribers can share their thoughts, opinions and analysis. We'll also be handing out Buckeye Leaves after every game for standout performers, and we encourage subscribers to share their thoughts as well. Here's a sampling of what BSB staff members and subscribers had to say after Ohio State beat Nebraska, 36-31

Joe Dempsey: Brendon White deserves a Buckeye Leaf this week. Essentially seen as only a special teams contributor prior to the game against Nebraska, the sophomore safety showed that he should be on the field with the No. 1 defense. The Powell (Ohio) Olentangy Liberty product filled in for starter Jordan Fuller after he was ejected for targeting in the first half. White flew around the field and delivered some hard hits while playing sound coverage for the Buckeyes. The 6-2, 210-pound safety led the team with 13 tackles (eight solo), including a team-high two tackles for loss.

Junior linebacker Keandre Jones earned honorable mention for a blocked punt that resulted in a safety, which cut the Buckeyes' first-quarter deficit to 7-2 and gave them the ball with great field position.

James Grega: For me, this is one of the easiest Buckeye Leaves of the season.

After Jordan Fuller was ejected for targeting, I thought the back end of Ohio State's defense was doomed. Instead, Brendon White stepped in and played perhaps the best game of any Buckeye on the field Saturday.

White finished in a tie for the game-high 13 tackles in the victory and always seemed to be in position. He was aggressive in run defense and didn't appear to miss any assignments when he was in. To cap it all off, Ohio State ran a video during a timeout promoting the support of

his father and former Buckeye William White, who is struggling with ALS.

White is the most deserving of this week's Buckeye Leaf, and in my opinion, it wasn't close.

Tim Moody: Sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins is Ohio State's best player on offense. In fact, with Nick Bosa gone, Dobbins might be the best Buckeye overall. He proved why against the Cornhuskers.

After struggling behind an inconsistent offensive line over the past few games, Dobbins erupted against Nebraska, carrying the ball 23 times for 163 yards and three touchdowns. None of those 23 carries went for a loss as he averaged 7.1 yards per tote. Dobbins helped to close out the game, too, when he scored a 42-yard touchdown with less than five minutes remaining – and the Buckeyes went back to him to pick up crucial first downs as they ran out the clock.

Garrett Stepien: When junior safety Jordan Fuller exited the game in the second quarter on targeting against Kurt Rafdal, Ohio State's struggling secondary was looking at replacing its best player. Nebraska still got its yards and ripped off several big plays, but the Buckeyes buckled down in the second half – largely thanks to sophomore Brendon White.

Off the bench, the Powell (Ohio) Olentangy Liberty product stepped in and performed admirably. The 6-2, 210-pounder notched 13 tackles (two tackles for loss) to pace the defense.

He arguably had the play of the game in the fourth quarter, stuffing Devine Ozigbo at the 1 on third-and-goal as the Cornhuskers settled for Barret Pickering's 18-yard field goal to make it 30-24 with 7:46 left. Not only did White ensure his bright future on OSU's defense, but he made the case for more meaningful snaps with the first-team unit over the rest of the season.

Frank Moskowitz: I could go with J.K. Dobbins with his 163 yards and three touchdowns, including the game-clincher, but he should have been gaining 100 yards a game all season. However, it has to be Brendon White, who came from nowhere to record 13 tackles, two of which went for loss. More importantly,

he did it from a position group in desperate need of reinforcements.

Mark Rea: Brendon White and J.K. Dobbins are obvious choices. How about some love for Keandre Jones and his punt block? That kind of play makes you wonder what's holding the five-star prospect back at linebacker, especially when you see what passes for linebacker play at Ohio State these days.

BSB Subscribers

Brendon White. Best game by a DB all year. Played smart, attacking, and with fire. Should have been playing more this year. Shame on Greg Schiano and Alex Grinch. I could understand if we have not had holes at DB. Congrats to the legacy. Can't wait to see him in future games.

– Blufftonbuck

Brendon White. To come off the bench like that and get 13 tackles is insane. He needs to start next week without a doubt.

– Tiffin Buckeye

I would split it between Brendon White and J.K. Dobbins. I wanted to include the right side of the offensive line, but I am not sure their pass protection was great.

– AnthonyBuckeye

Brendon White was called and he stepped up, tackling Cornhuskers with ease. He's the man.

– PeyoteBuck

When Jordan Fuller got tossed, I sat there and told my wife that our defense is really screwed now. But Brendon White came in and did the job so he is my pick. Especially nice since his dad was featured on the video board a couple times to kick off a fundraising campaign for ALS.

– mrbigbux

I'll take Keandre Jones for that punt block and safety. Not sure Ohio State wins that game without that.

– AcrossTheField

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The New Coop

On Saturday morning (Oct. 20) I read the latest BSB print edition cover to cover and had two main takeaways: 1. The defense had to improve. 2. We had to fix our running game.

Neither happened against Purdue, obviously, so the question to Urban Meyer and his staff remains: why not?

I am losing faith in Meyer's ability to actually coach. He's quickly turning into John Cooper (great recruiter, poor sideline tactician).

Brian Copfer
Cincinnati

Hoping For Better

Shout-out to (BSB publisher) Frank Moskowitz in the Nov. 3 edition for remembering the 2002 Purdue game, which will be remembered, thanks to sportscaster Brent Musburger, as the "Holy Buckeye" game by the Buckeye faithful who saw it live.

I would have thought the 2018 squad would be better prepared than they were in West Lafayette, Ind., given the history of the game. I hope the rest of the season is better than that.

John Sheridan
San Antonio

Coaching Changes Needed

Luke Fickell had his detractors but he developed linebackers, including one three-star quarterback (Darron Lee) that he turned into a potential Pro Bowl performer. Billy Davis has eight four-star and two five-star linebackers and he has managed to turn them into clueless stiff! He needs to go, and today isn't soon enough.

I was very vocal about Ed Warinner being our offensive coordinator – he was in way over his head – and was glad that he was replaced. However, I do wish we had kept him on as our offensive line coach. He's turned Michigan's line into the second-best running attack in the conference while our O-line coach seems lost with ours.

Our running attack gets worse each passing week (through the Purdue game). He should be on a very short leash, as should cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson. He has been a huge disappointment after Kerry Coombs. I just don't see any improvement after eight weeks that I would expect to see.

On the flip side, Brian Hartline should be made the full-time receivers coach as he has definitely turned an underperforming group into one of this team's true strengths.

Urban Meyer needs to hold these guys making huge bucks accountable. We have far too much talent on this roster to lose to Purdue the way we did. It's time for some changes.

Peter M. Carusone
West Middlesex, Pa.

OSU Must Learn From History

How the mighty have fallen.

Just a few weeks ago this publication was extolling this Buckeye team as maybe the greatest ever and assured us when Coach Urban Meyer returned to the sideline he would not make any changes to the dynamics of that high-flying offense.

As we now know, neither of those things were correct. The current woes of this team can be traced to three individuals: two that were lost (Nick Bosa to injury and Kerry Coombs to the NFL) and one that returned (Meyer).

First, a few facts. The "three yards and a cloud of dust" media dig came into vogue to define Coach Woody Hayes' style of offense in 1955, ironically following an undefeated national championship season. From 1955 through 1967, Ohio State went 81-30-5 with three Big Ten titles and two national championships.

In a previous BSB issue, it was stated that Coach Hayes, already a three-time national champion, was hanging on by a thread when George Chaump moved him off of his Robust-T to a Power-I formation. From 1968-77, Ohio State went 98-20-3, won nine Big Ten titles and two more national titles that could/should have been six.

It is possible to win and win consistently with a one-dimensional offense. For Hayes, that was running the ball, but today's game is played in the air and downfield. Coach Meyer is also a three-time national champion but prefers to run an offensive style that is no longer relevant. So Meyer, now it is your time to listen to your coaches, make the necessary changes and turn over control of the offense, because those who do not learn from history are most certainly doomed to repeat it.

Dan Carusone
Girard, Ohio

If you would like to express an opinion concerning Ohio State University sports, please send your letter to BSB Letters, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, OH 43212, or email it to bsb@buckeyesports.com for use in BSB. Letters must be signed and include the writer's hometown and a daytime telephone number for verification. Publication priority will be given to those letters that are brief, and we reserve the right to edit letters for publication.

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The next issue (Nov. 17 cover date) will be mailed Nov. 13.

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Charter Member

OPINION

Ohio State Isn't A Championship Contender

Fans and pundits really ought to stop talking about Ohio State and its chances to make the College Football Playoff field of four. The way the Buckeyes have played since the beginning of October would lead me to believe the only way they'll get to the playoff is to buy a ticket.

If you were going to have a talent contest, Nebraska really had no business being on the same field with Ohio State this year, and yet the Cornhuskers drew first blood and held a 21-16 halftime lead – the first time in seven all-time meetings between the two teams that the Huskers had ever enjoyed a lead at the half.

Then when OSU threatened to finally take control of the proceedings, Nebraska twice scored in the fourth quarter to keep things close before finally succumbing to a 36-31 decision against the 10th-ranked Buckeyes.

Yes, Ohio State showed some life in its running attack, led by 163 yards and a career-best three touchdowns from J.K. Dobbins. Yes, the Buckeyes were much better in the red zone, tallying three touchdowns on four trips inside the 20. And, yes, the defense got a huge boost from backup safety Brendon White, who registered a career-high 13 tackles in relief of Jordan Fuller, who was ejected for targeting in the second quarter.

Just please spare me the argument that Nebraska is a much-improved team. The Cornhuskers have improved only because they couldn't have gotten any worse. They opened this season by losing their first six games, something that had never before happened in program history dating to 1890. After that historically bad start, they put together a modest two-game winning streak against Minnesota – a team that has now lost five of its last six games – and Bethune-Cookman, a .500 team from the Football Championship Subdivision, before traveling to Columbus to take on the Buckeyes.

The truth is that the game should not have been much of a game. In fact, it should have been a classic mismatch.

Ohio State entered the contest with the No. 3-ranked offense in the country while Nebraska was ranked 102nd in total defense. The Buckeyes had beaten the Cornhuskers by a 118-17 margin in their last two meetings, and Nebraska had never won in four previous trips to Ohio Stadium, losing those games by an average of nearly 30 points.

Add to those numbers the fact that OSU had an extra week to prepare and should have been an angry bunch with something to prove, using the game to make a statement that the embarrassing 49-20 loss at Purdue on Oct. 20 was a one-game aberration.

Instead, nearly every defensive weakness that was on display at West Lafayette – those “glaring shortcomings” Urban Meyer promised would get fixed during the week off – were exposed and exploited by Nebraska almost from the get-go.

On his team's second play from scrimmage, Cornhuskers running back Devine Ozigbo gashed the OSU defense for a 20-yard run straight up the gut. Fortunately for the Buckeyes, the play was wiped out by an illegal formation penalty, but on the very next snap, Nebraska quarterback Adrian Martinez took a read-option keeper through a gap in nearly the same spot for a 24-yard gain.

That first possession by the Huskers featured a little bit of everything with regard to the problems the Buckeyes experienced against Purdue, including (but not limited to) players getting out of position, more chasing than covering and a couple of pen-

alties – pass interference (declined because the receiver made the catch anyway) and an offside that resulted in a Nebraska first down. It all culminated when Ozigbo barreled into the end zone from the 1 to give the visitors an early 7-0 lead.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

What immediately followed was a comedy of errors.

Cornhuskers kicker Caleb Lightbourn botched an apparent surprise onside kick, giving the Buckeyes unbelievably good field position at the NU 31. And what did Ohio State do with that gift? The Buckeyes turned the ball over on downs when they couldn't convert a fourth-and-2 against a unit ranked 11th in the Big Ten in rush defense.

The special teams division temporarily gave the Buckeyes a reprieve when junior linebacker Keandre Jones blocked a punt through the end zone for a safety to make the score 7-2 at the 7:10 mark of the first quarter.

And then things seemed to settle into their natural progression.

Johnnie Dixon took advantage of a complete bust in the Nebraska secondary to gather in a 42-yard touchdown pass from Dwayne Haskins, and Dobbins capped a seven-play drive with a 10-yard scoring bolt to give Ohio State a 16-7 advantage late in the first quarter.

But just when the Buckeyes seemed poised to take control of the game, the defense stubbornly refused to cooperate. Martinez scored a pair of touchdowns in the final five minutes of the first half to give the Cornhuskers a 21-16 lead at the break.

Ohio State wrestled back control early in the second half as it appeared to commit more to its running game. Mike Weber and Dobbins were particularly effective, accounting for 114 yards and a touchdown during the third quarter alone. Weber broke off runs of 27 and 37 yards during the period, the longest runs from scrimmage by an OSU running back since the season opener against Oregon State.

A pop pass from Haskins to Parris Campbell accounted for a 9-yard touchdown to push Ohio State's lead to 30-21 with 1:43 remaining in the third quarter, an advantage that swelled to 36-24 with just 4:52 remaining in the game when Dobbins broke off a 42-yard touchdown run.

But the Ohio State defense couldn't resist making things interesting again, allowing Nebraska to march 75 yards in less than two minutes to cut the deficit to 36-31 with 2:57 to go.

That was the Cornhuskers' last gasp as the Buckeyes were able to run out the clock and secure the victory. But despite Meyer's assertion during his postgame press conference that “I thought our defense improved,” there were numerous times in crucial situations when Nebraska's lack of execution trumped anything the Ohio State defense did.

Early in the second quarter, the Huskers had a first-and-goal at the OSU 5 but came away empty when Martinez inexplicably dumped a lateral into the turf that was pounced on by the Buckeyes.

Then twice during the third quarter, Nebraska failed to keep drives going that might have altered the outcome of the game.

With his team protecting its 21-16 half-time lead, normally sure-handed receiver JD Spielman short-armed a third-down pass that would have put his team well inside Ohio State territory. On the Huskers' next possession, Ozigbo had a third-down pass bounce off his hands. On both occasions, the intended Nebraska receiver had beaten his defender and was looking at a huge chunk of yardage had he been able to gather in the pass.

Still Don't Like What I See

Give the Cornhuskers and first-year head coach Scott Frost credit. They took some chances, including that botched onside kick after their first touchdown that might have changed the entire complexion of the afternoon. Additionally, Nebraska played with a belly fire one might expect from prideful 17½-point underdogs, something Ohio State would do well to take note of.

I sometimes hear the excuse that the Buckeyes play with a target on their backs and therefore are always going to get their opponent's best effort. If that is the case, and everyone knows that is the case, why then don't opponents always get Ohio State's best effort?

When I watch the Buckeyes play these days, I see effort but I don't see a whole lot of emotion. I'm not privy to what is going on at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on a daily basis, so I don't know what kind of leadership is being practiced inside the locker room.

I can tell you, however, that I don't especially like what I see on the field.

I continue to see mental mistakes that should have been addressed in fall camp continue into early November. I see inopportune penalties continuing to be committed at the most inopportune times. I see defensive players habitually out of position or unable to get into position because they don't have the ability to fight through blocks.

I see a quarterback beginning to become increasingly frustrated when things don't go his way. I see offensive linemen continuing to get leveraged by smaller, quicker defenders because they will not (or cannot) bend their bodies to get their pads even to those of their opponent.

And now, ball security has suddenly become an issue. The Buckeyes totaled six fumbles vs. Nebraska, the most since they had an identical number during a 31-6 home win over Iowa in 2005. Thankfully, OSU lost only two of those fumbles against the Huskers, but coupled with an interception, they committed three turnovers for the second time this year – another glaring shortcoming that needs fixing as the team enters its final three games of the regular season.

As Meyer is fond of saying, the best thing about being 8-1 is that your team has a chance to go 9-1. And the reality of the situation is that Ohio State still controls its destiny as far as the Big Ten title is concerned. If the Buckeyes beat Michigan State, Maryland and Michigan to finish the regular season, they win their division and the right to play in the Big Ten Championship Game.

If Ohio State wins that game, it would then be up to the selection committee to decide whether or not a one-loss Big Ten champion deserves to play in the four-team national title tournament.

But there is a whole lot of football to be played before the committee has to weigh that decision, and I have a hard time thinking that the Ohio State team I've seen play since the beginning of October is going to run the table.

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Meyer Clarifies Future Plans Amid Health Concerns

During Ohio State's 49-26 win over Indiana on Oct. 6, head coach Urban Meyer briefly dropped to the Ohio Stadium turf as a headache flared up. The incident sparked questions about his health and the future of his career, which Meyer clarified during the week leading up to his team's 36-31 win over Nebraska on Nov. 3.

After questions about his health came up, Meyer reassured anyone with concern that he was OK during his Oct. 29 press conference.

"I appreciate it, and I'm fine," Meyer said. "I want Ohio State to be successful in the worst way. I'm working extremely hard to make sure that's happening. I love Ohio State, I love our players, so the issue, I don't want people to worry about me. I want to



SONNY BROCKWAY

MANAGING THE PROBLEM – Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer has suffered from severe headaches due to a cyst on his brain.

make sure we're getting some things right around here, and that is what the effort is. That is 100 percent of what my focus is on."

While Meyer's focus is on the team, his comments didn't fully shift the outside focus away from his health. The next day, Meyer met with a hand-picked group of reporters – Doug Lesmerises of Cleveland.com, Austin

Ward of Lettermen Row and Tim May and Bill Rabinowitz of The Columbus Dispatch – to further discuss his health.

Meyer was first diagnosed with an arachnoid cyst in his brain in 1998, and he underwent surgery to help with the issue in 2014. According to Lesmerises, Meyer said the pain triggered by the cyst had flared up over the past two years. The Cleveland.com report also included a statement from Meyer's personal physician, Dr. Andrew Thomas.

"The past four years, we've been working closely with Coach Meyer to monitor and manage the symptoms that have risen from his enlarged congenital arachnoid cyst," Andrews said. "This includes aggressive headaches, which have particularly flared up the past two years."

Despite the issue, even with the flare-ups of the past two years, Meyer has stressed that he has no plans to leave his post as Ohio State's head coach. When asked about his future, he said, "I plan on coaching." When asked directly if he would be the head coach in Columbus in 2019, Meyer kept it even more simple than that.

"Yes."

Bowen, Taylor Near Return

Ohio State junior offensive lineman Branden Bowen and fifth-year senior lineman Brady Taylor have each missed extended time this year. Bowen, who broke his leg against Maryland last season, has undergone three surgeries, partially because the injury did not heal properly.

Taylor suffered a knee injury during fall camp and, after playing through the pain early in the year, underwent surgery to correct the issue.

Conley Answers Readers' Questions

Former Ohio State player and coach and Buckeye Sports Bulletin columnist Bill Conley will be fielding questions from readers on BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website each Wednesday until the end of football season.

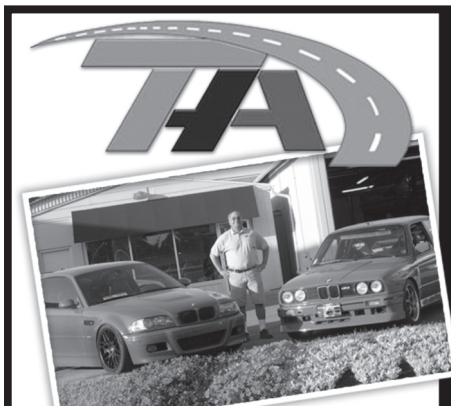
Conley offers his expertise on all things Buckeye past and present in his insightful and entertaining way. In his first session with BuckeyeSports.com readers on Oct. 31, Conley answered a diverse group of questions on such topics as the Purdue loss, Woody Hayes, Ohio State's running game and Maurice Claret and Terrelle Pryor.

Readers should watch The Forum at the BuckeyeSports.com site early each week for information on how to get their questions in the queue, and the coach will begin answering at 3 p.m. Columbus time each Wednesday.

If you are not already enjoying the benefits of BuckeyeSports.com, free with your BSB subscription, see page 5 of this issue for simple instructions on how to access the site. Or feel free to give us a call at (614) 486-2202 and we will be glad to help you.

Heading into Ohio State's off week, there was optimism that both Bowen and Taylor were nearing their returns, which could be a big boost for a line that has struggled at times.

On Oct. 29, Meyer said both players were progressing and said there was a chance they could play against Nebraska.



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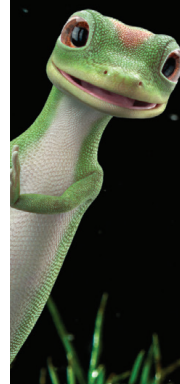
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Possible Postal Breakthrough

After weeks of effort, Buckeye Sports Bulletin believes it has made a breakthrough on delivery problems readers in the central Ohio area have been experiencing this football season.

With the assistance of JJ Hannon, an operations industrial engineer at the Columbus postal facility, BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz believes the problem has been isolated.

"JJ seems to have found the problem," Moskowitz said. "Now we need to see if our solution to it works. I appreciate JJ being responsive to our delivery issues."

Readers in such problem areas as nearby Powell reported receiving their BSB covering the Purdue game in a timely fashion, in fact before the Minnesota issue mailed a week earlier.

To avoid postal problems, any BSB subscriber wishing to upgrade their subscription to speedy first-class mail in an envelope for the remainder of football season may do so for just \$10. An upgrade through football recruiting season in February is just \$20.

Readers may also read the complete edition of each Buckeye Sports Bulletin on Mondays during football season and Tuesdays the rest of the year at our BuckeyeSports.com website. BuckeyeSports.com is free to all BSB subscribers.

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"They're both getting pretty close," Meyer said. "They should be practicing today against scouts. Not quite full speed, but getting closer."

Later in the week, Meyer said neither Bowen or Taylor was likely to see the field against the Cornhuskers, but he expected Bowen to be back for the Michigan State game Nov. 10. Whether or not he'll play a significant role has yet to be determined.

Both Bowen and Taylor were in full uniform for the Nebraska game.

Buckeyes, Spartans To Kick Off At Noon

No. 10 Ohio State is set to travel to East Lansing, Mich., on Nov. 10 for a matchup with Michigan State. Kickoff is scheduled for noon on FOX, the Big Ten announced Nov. 4.

In an era when noon kicks have become rare for the Buckeyes, Ohio State is set to play in the early time slot for the fourth time this season, and the Buckeyes will have at least one more noon kick on Nov. 24 at home against Michigan. The Nov. 17 contest at Maryland is expected to begin at either noon or 3:30 p.m.

The Buckeyes are undefeated in noon kicks the season. Last year, they played at noon three times, winning all three contests, including a 48-3 home victory over Michigan State on Nov. 11, 2017.

The last time Ohio State had five or more noon kickoffs was 2014 (6).

Victor, Werner, Munford Among Most Improved

For much of the 2018 season, the conversation around Ohio State football has revolved around one question: What's wrong with the Buckeyes?

On Oct. 29, Meyer was asked about what had gone right instead. More specifically, he was asked which player or players on the roster have shown the most improvement this season.

Meyer's first thought was of a junior wide receiver from Pompano Beach, Fla.: Binjimen Victor.

"He didn't have a great spring, and he's playing at a pretty high level," Meyer said of the Coconut Creek High School product. "He's still a little bit up-and-down, but when he goes, he's a really talented guy."

Victor made the first start of his career

against Nebraska, catching one pass for 10 yards. Through nine games, he has 15 receptions for 246 yards and three scores, including a key touchdown in the fourth quarter against Penn State.

Meyer also mentioned sophomores Thayer Munford and Pete Werner among the team's most improved players. Munford has started each of Ohio State's game's at left tackle while Werner is a starting outside linebacker who is third on the team with 35 total tackles (including 7½ tackles for loss and three sacks) this season.

OSU Ranked 10th In 1st CFP Standings

After losing to Purdue, 49-20, on Oct. 20, Ohio State was ranked 10th in the first College Football Playoff rankings of 2018, which were announced by the selection committee Oct. 30.

Alabama led off the rankings at No. 1, followed by Clemson, LSU and Notre Dame. Michigan was fifth while Georgia, Oklahoma, Washington State, and Kentucky all ranked ahead of the Buckeyes as well. After the rankings were announced, though, LSU lost to Alabama and Kentucky fell to Georgia, meaning the Buckeyes are likely to move up in the standings after their victory over Nebraska.

Also in the top 25 from the Big Ten was Penn State (No. 14) and Iowa (No. 16). Penn State lost to Michigan on Nov. 3 while Iowa fell to Purdue.

After the rankings were announced, committee chair Rob Mullens said Ohio State had some quality points on its résumé despite the loss to the Boilermakers.

"Again, we look at a whole body of work, and when you look at Ohio State, they've had an offense that's carried them, quality road win against a CFP-ranked Penn State," Mullens said. "When you look at Ohio State's résumé, when they played TCU, that was a healthy TCU team on a neutral site in Texas. So that does factor in."

"But obviously the loss at Purdue does weigh as part of that, and I think that's why you see Ohio State at No. 10."

At the time of their week-three contest, TCU was ranked 15th in the Associated Press top 25. Mullens said that ranking is irrelevant, but he stressed that the commit-

Continued On Page 6

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Continued From Page 5

tee recognized that TCU was at full strength against the Buckeyes before struggling in the ensuing weeks as the Horned Frogs dropped to 4-5 on the season.

"Well, we don't look at rankings unless they're CFP rankings, but the committee is fully aware that TCU was at full strength and how they were playing when Ohio State went to Texas and played them," Mullens said. "So that was a part of the discussion."

While Ohio State has struggled at times since a hot start, Michigan – the Buckeyes' primary challenger in the Big Ten this season – has excelled since a week-one loss to Notre Dame.

"Michigan has a very strong résumé," Mullens said. "Their only loss is to a No. 4 ranked team on the road in the first game of the year. Five wins against teams with a

winning record, strong road wins, Michigan State, at Northwestern. Great on defense. Michigan is a very good team."

Starting Kicker Sheds Black Stripe

Sophomore Blake Haubeil has served as Ohio State's kickoff specialist since the first game of his freshman year, and he has started at placekicker each of the past three games as well. Oddly enough, though, Haubeil wasn't an official member of the team until Oct. 30 – at least according to Ohio State's black stripe tradition.

Haubeil, a Buffalo, N.Y., native, shed his black helmet stripe the day before Halloween after kicking a 60-yard field goal in practice.

"I just want to thank everybody for coming out this week with an attitude," Haubeil said in a video posted to Ohio State's team Twitter account. "Pissed off, I'm seeing it. I want to thank my unit for getting me where they were today. Coaches, trainers. Let's go get this W, boys."

Haskins, Jones Up For National Awards

Ohio State sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins and junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones were named semifinalists for prestigious national awards by the Maxwell Football Club on Oct. 29.

Haskins – a Potomac, Md., native – is up for the Maxwell Award, which is given each year to the top player in the nation. Jones, a Cleveland native, is a semifinalist for the Bednarik Award, which is given annually to the nation's top defensive player.

Haskins, a first-year starter, has completed 242 of 347 passes for 3,053 yards with 32 touchdowns and six interceptions through

2018 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 1	OREGON STATE	W, 77-31	ABC	2-7, 38-21 loss to USC
Sept. 8	RUTGERS	W, 52-3	BTN	1-8, 31-17 loss at Wisconsin
Sept. 15	vs. TCU#*	W, 40-28	ABC	4-5, 14-13 win over Kansas State
Sept. 22	TULANE	W, 49-6	BTN	4-5, 41-15 win at South Florida
Sept. 29	at Penn State*	W, 27-26	ABC	6-3, 42-7 loss at Michigan
Oct. 6	INDIANA	W, 49-26	FOX	4-5, off week
Oct. 13	MINNESOTA	W, 30-14	FS1	4-5, 55-31 loss at Illinois
Oct. 20	at Purdue*	L, 49-20	ABC	5-4, 38-36 win over Iowa
Nov. 3	NEBRASKA	W, 36-31	FOX	2-7, 36-31 loss at Ohio State
Nov. 10	at Michigan State*	Noon	FOX	6-3, 24-3 win at Maryland
Nov. 17	at Maryland	TBA	TBA	5-4, 24-3 loss to Michigan State
Nov. 24	MICHIGAN*	Noon	FOX	8-1, 42-7 win over Penn State
Dec. 1	Big Ten Championship@	8 p.m.	FOX	

* – 2017-18 bowl team

– at Arlington, Texas (AT&T Stadium)

@ – at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

nine games, averaging 339.2 passing yards per game. He has set school single-game records for completions (49), attempts (73) and passing yards (470) – all against Purdue – in addition to tying the single-game record for touchdown passes (six) against Indiana. Haskins has thrown for at least two touchdowns in every game this season and has gone over the 400-yard mark three times.

Jones ranks first on the team with 10 tackles for loss and 6½ sacks among his 28 total tackles. He also has a forced fumble, two fumble recoveries, two quarterback hurries and an interception, which he returned 28 yards for a touchdown against TCU in week three.

Smith, Ex-Wife Agree To Protection Order

Former Ohio State wide receivers coach Zach Smith accepted a plea deal Oct. 23, granting his ex-wife, Courtney Smith, a three-year protection order, according to reports.

According to ESPN, Zach Smith pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor disorderly conduct charge in exchange for having a criminal trespassing charge dismissed in Delaware County court. He had to pay \$289 in fines and court fees as well.

Zach Smith was accused by his ex-wife of multiple instances of domestic violence, including an incident that was investigated by Powell, Ohio, police in 2015. When the accusations were made public over the summer, Zach Smith was fired by Meyer, who was placed on administrative leave in August amid a university investigation into the former assistant's behavior. Meyer was eventu-

ally suspended three games for his handling of Smith's employment at the university.

Smith has never received any domestic-violence charges. He is the grandson of former Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce, who died earlier this year and was a mentor to Meyer.

After the plea deal was made public, Smith posted a statement on Twitter.

"As I have stated from day one, I was falsely accused of very serious allegations that should not be taken lightly," the statement read in part. "As well as charged with breaking a law that I did not break. The media circus that ensued caused a great deal of harm to my family, my grandfather's legacy and ruined my professional career I worked extremely hard for since 2005.

"Domestic Violence is a horrific crime and as a father to two beautiful daughters of whom I adore, I have been destroyed over the public perception and media's spin on things that came out. Most severely inaccurate and damaging.

"I have made sure that we agreed to a Mutual Protection Order so that I am never in a situation to get falsely or wrongfully accused of anything ever again."

In his statement, Smith also noted that he missed his role as a mentor to Ohio State student-athletes.

"I miss my players terribly and that has been the hardest aspect to deal with," he wrote. "Watching them thrive and grow from afar has been rewarding to see but heartbreaking to not be a part of.

"I look forward to moving on and helping my kids move forward into the next chapter of our lives."

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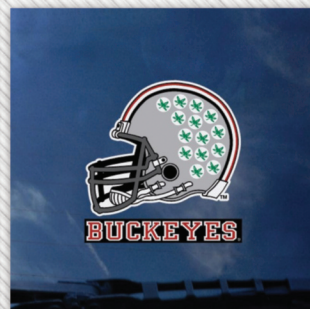
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Buckeyes Move Away From RPOs Vs. Nebraska

Continued From Page 1

"I'm not going to lie, I went to Ryan Day and I was just saying, 'Get behind me, keep running the ball, are we going to keep being physical?' And it worked out well," Prince said. "I said it all game, I said it all week, I said it last week. 'Get behind me and run the ball.'"

"That's all we did for two weeks. Just put everybody in the box, run the ball, extra defender or two in there until the backs run them over. That's just how we practice – got to get tougher."

Prince, it seemed, had the right idea. A reliance on the run game helped Ohio State overcome issues on offense – three turnovers – and avoid a loss on a day when the defense struggled at times to make stops.

For the five up front – Prince, right guard Demetrius Knox, center Michael Jordan, left guard Malcolm Pridgeon and right tackle Thayer Munford – it was a chance to get the chip off their shoulder, or at least make it a little smaller.

"It's exciting to finally silence the critics," Prince said. "People have been saying we've been struggling running the ball and that's just not the case, and I think we came out and proved that today."

What Changed?

Overall, the Ohio State offense looked similar to what has been done in recent weeks. The Buckeyes didn't suddenly employ a fullback, they weren't lining up in the I-formation with quarterback Dwayne Haskins under center, and it certainly didn't look like the "three yards and a cloud of



TIM MOODY

STRAIGHT FORWARD – Ohio State senior right tackle Isaiah Prince said he was pleased the Buckeyes called more direct run plays against Nebraska.

dust" system of legendary coach Woody Hayes. But it was the 2018 Buckeyes at their best from a running standpoint.

For much of the season, Ohio State has ended up throwing the ball on called run plays. That comes about from running run-pass options and having a quarterback like Haskins who prefers to make plays with his arm. Against the Cornhuskers, though, the PO was taken out of the RPO.

"Just more downhill runs and more legit runs instead of RPOs and reads," Weber said after the game. "We came in this week trying to run the ball. We don't care how many are in the box. That was the motto this week."

Prince explained that straight run plays allow the offensive linemen to have a different mind-set. Instead of being ready to react to a sudden pass play – run blocking and

pass blocking are vastly different – the linemen knew they just needed to play "violent and physical," as Prince put it.

"To be honest, it's a great feeling," Prince said when asked about his approach to a play when he knows the running back is going to get the ball. "That's kind of my play style is run the ball, play physical. It definitely helps me out a lot personally as a tackle because we don't have to drop back and throw the ball a lot. That's a lot of stress on me. So I like running the ball."

Double Trouble

While Prince noted that the offensive line had grown frustrated with the criticism of the run game, Weber admitted the running backs had been on a low note as well. Although they weren't necessarily playing poorly – it takes more than a talented running back to make a successful running game – the results had certainly been below their expected standard.

Weber said he had been down on himself – he'll likely have some bad memories of his two fumbles (none lost) against Nebraska as well – but he said that was natural based on how things had gone for the run game. He noted that Dobbins had similar feelings and said it was important to get the backs back on track.

"Huge, because he was getting down on himself also," Weber said of Dobbins' big day. "Even if he was hitting holes, he had a bad play, he was getting down on himself, and I am happy to see him break a couple runs."

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COVER STORY

Outside of Dobbins and Weber, the Ohio State offense actually lost 25 yards on the ground (including kneel-downs at the end of the game). The two-pronged attack, though, was enough to make sure the Buckeyes came away with the win.

In fact, Dobbins went over the 2,000-yard rushing mark for his career, making him and Weber the first two 2,000 rushers ever to be on the team at the same time.

"To be honest, both of them were running so hard I couldn't tell the difference between the two and the two-five," Prince said, referencing Dobbins (No. 2) and Weber (No. 25).

That said, the milestone still didn't get Ohio State to where it wants to be in the ground game statistically. Prince said the goal going into the season was to have Dobbins and Weber each rush for more than 1,000 yards. Through nine games, Dobbins has 143 carries for 684 yards and seven scores. Weber has run the ball 105 times for 607 yards and three touchdowns.

"We've got big goals around here," Prince said.

Looking Forward

The run game was a bright spot for Ohio State – there's no other way to look at it.

But the Buckeyes were facing a Nebraska team that entered the game tied for 71st in the nation, allowing 166.0 rushing yards per game. Next up will be a Michigan State team that entered its Nov. 3 game against Maryland ranked 70 spots higher – first in the nation at 77.4 yards allowed per game. That number is now even better – 71.7 yards per game – after they allowed the Terrapins to gain just 26 yards on 29 attempts in a 24-3 Michigan State victory. And that game will be on the road in East Lansing, Mich., instead of the friendly confines of Ohio Stadium.

The Buckeyes have a block (or a blocking performance, more like) to build on, and it will be up to them to continue the momentum against Michigan State while also addressing the other issues – the turnovers and a leaky defense.

"We've just got to enhance it," Prince said. "There was a lot of plays where we didn't get any yards or we got tackled for a negative play, so we've got to correct those mistakes and keep the run game going."

"This definitely was a confidence builder going into next week. I think we needed some momentum going into the rest of the season."

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Defense Struggles Again In High-Scoring Win

It wasn't always through fault of their own, but Ohio State's defense looked far from fixed despite escaping with a 36-31 win over Nebraska on Nov. 3.

GAME NOTEBOOK

James Grega

The Buckeye offense coughed the ball up three times, putting Ohio State's defense in less than ideal situations. However, the Cornhuskers offense did enough to expose the OSU defense for 450 total yards and 31 points, the third time this season Greg Schiano's defense has surrendered 30 or more, coming two weeks after the Buckeyes allowed 49 points against Purdue in a 29-point loss.

After the game, head coach Urban Meyer said he was overall pleased with the win but acknowledged the Buckeyes still have room to improve on the defensive side.

"If we didn't have those three turnovers, obviously, you don't put your defense in a bad situation," he said. "I thought our defense improved. Obviously nowhere near we need to be, but they improved."

The Cornhuskers committed just one turnover, a backward pass that was dropped and then recovered by Ohio State as Nebraska was driving. Outside of that slipup, Nebraska played balanced football, rushing for 184 yards on 49 attempts while also completing 22 of 33 passes for 266 yards and a touchdown. Nebraska freshman quarterback Adrian Martinez accounted for 338 yards of offense and three touchdowns, as he added two scores on the ground.

His performance caught the eye of Ohio State sophomore safety Brendon White, who played extended reps against the Huskers for the first time in his career.

"The quarterback is a great, athletic quarterback," White said. "He has a bunch of awesome moves, and he has a bright future at Nebraska."

Ohio State surrendered 21 of its 31 points allowed in the first half, and White said it was mainly due to missed tackles.

"The first half, we missed a lot of tackles," he said. "That was the biggest thing



PHOTO CREDIT

GOING FOR THE STOP – Ohio State sophomore defensive end Chase Young (2) tallied a pair of tackles against Nebraska, but the Cornhuskers racked up 450 total yards.

going into halftime. The second half was not missing tackles and joining together as one. When we did that, the rest took care of itself."

Nebraska didn't score a touchdown in the second half until the final minutes, before Ohio State ultimately was able to run out the clock and secure the win.

The Buckeyes showed much more zone defense than they have in the past, routinely playing off the wide receivers, something Ohio State has not done much in recent years.

Usually a press-man coverage team, Ohio

State's new defensive strategy was because of injuries, according to Meyer, but also trying to prevent the big plays downfield.

"I think there's some adjustments we've made," Meyer said. "That was in two weeks, bye weeks. So there's a fine line, you can get bled to death and we don't want to do that obviously. But we did play a little more off coverage, a little more zone coverage too."

White Thrives After Fuller's Ejection

In the first half of Ohio State's win over Nebraska, Ohio State junior safety and cap-

tain Jordan Fuller was ejected for a targeting penalty on a Cornhusker tight end on a pass over the middle. That call, however, opened the door for one of the biggest performances of the day.

In Fuller's stead, the Buckeyes played White, and the son of former Buckeye William White did not disappoint.

In his first significant playing time in the scarlet and gray, White tallied 13 stops – eight of which were solo – and two tackles for loss. His performance also came on the day Ohio State debuted a tribute video on the big screen for his father, in an attempt to raise awareness for ALS, a disease from which William White suffers.

The younger White said he got emotional during and after the game, citing his performance and the tribute to his father.

"It is a dream come true," White said. "Hard work pays off. We always go through adversity as athletes, and the biggest thing is not to give up on yourself and have faith in God and keep going. I have great teammates here and a great safety room that keeps pushing me to be the best I can be. So when my opportunity comes, I can take advantage of it."

White's emergence was also due in part to an injury to fellow sophomore safety Isaiah Pryor, who missed the game with a shoulder injury, according to Meyer.

Meyer added that White had shown flashes of improvement in practice, and that is what led to his big day against the Huskers.

"He's been working very hard in practice to earn the trust of the coaches to get on the field," Meyer explained. "First thing, you have to earn the trust to get on the special teams. And to see that he started and I kept

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Game Analysis

What Worked Well

The run game. For the first time in nearly two months, Ohio State showed a pulse on the ground. Among the 481 total yards the Buckeyes compiled on offense, the running backs found the second level often and exploded for 254 rushing yards. Sophomore J.K. Dobbins paved the way with 23 carries for 163 yards (7.1 average) and three touchdowns, capped by his 42-yard score to extend OSU's lead to 36-24 with 4:52 left in the fourth quarter. Junior Mike Weber did damage as well, running angry en route to nine carries for 91 yards (10.1 average) and a long of 37.

In the red zone, Ohio State tweaked its personnel and scheme along the offensive line, and the moves paid off. At tight end, sophomore Luke Farrell and freshman Jeremy Ruckert threw key lead blocks in heavier sets near the goal line, and the addition of redshirt freshman offensive lineman Wyatt Davis as a sixth lineman in some situations packed a much-needed punch, particularly on Dobbins' 3-yard plunge on first-and-goal at the 5:39 mark of the third quarter to retake the lead at 23-21. With an off day of sorts in the passing game – compared to what the Buckeyes' are accustomed to when sophomore quarterback Dwyane Haskins drops back – OSU's offense needed to revive its running game, and the tailbacks answered the call behind a physical front.

What Didn't Work

Ball security. Turnovers traumatized Ohio State as Nebraska exchanged two of the Buckeyes' three miscues for touchdowns on the other end. The first two, fumbles near midfield from Haskins and junior receiver K.J. Hill, allowed the Cornhuskers to tack on 14 points in the final five minutes for a 21-16 halftime lead. In the third quarter, OSU's first drive showed promise until Haskins missed to the right on a post-corner route from freshman wide receiver Chris Olave. The pass, on 2nd-and-13 from Nebraska's 18, resulted in Lamar Jackson's interception and kept

OSU trailing. Weber and Hill also coughed up the ball on other occasions but recovered.

While Ohio State shored up its run game on offense, big plays – specifically through the air – continued to haunt the secondary. Among the Cornhuskers' 450 total yards, freshman quarterback Adrian Martinez carved the Buckeyes for 266 passing yards and found several targets – Stanley Morgan (46 yards), Austin Allen (41 yards) and Maurice Washington (20 yards) – for gains of 20 yards or more. Sophomore safety Brendon White (13 tackles, two tackles for loss) was a bright spot after junior Jordan Fuller's targeting ejection, but that was as far as OSU's positives went for the secondary.

Play Of The Game

Keandre Jones' blocked punt. Nebraska took its first drive 75 yards in 12 plays and 5:04 for a 7-0 lead, and Ohio State lacked an answer on its ensuing possession with a three-and-out. After the Buckeyes made a stand on defense to force the Cornhuskers into a punt near the goal line on fourth-and-10 from the 22, Jones came through. OSU rushed five players into Nebraska's three-man protection, which failed to account for Jones off the edge. As Isaac Armstrong stepped into the punt from the 10, Jones was already there. The block deflected the ball back into the end zone and out of the back right corner for a safety, putting Ohio State on the board and giving the Buckeyes the ball back at the 7:10 mark.

OSU made quick work of its next drive, moving the ball 68 yards in six plays and 1:52, culminating in Haskins' touchdown pass to fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon, who went untouched on a crossing route from right to left on first-and-10 from the Nebraska 42. The catch and run gave Ohio State its first lead of the game at 9-7 and a much-needed boost for the Buckeyes to combat the Cornhuskers' initial momentum.

– Garrett Stepien

hearing about it, earning the trust – he's getting better, he's getting better, he's getting better, and then obviously he proved it today."

Meyer said he expects Pryor to be healthy and ready to play Nov. 10 against Michigan State, but the coach did not comment on whether White might have earned extended playing time at safety.

White said after the game that he was not thinking about taking over a starting role during the game against Nebraska. Rather he was focusing on making sure he did the best in the position he was put in.

"My goal was to just do my job and not do too much," he said. "Not try to be the superhero. My job was a specific role. Trust my teammates that they have my back."

As for having the game he did on the same day Ohio State honored his father, he said it was just icing on the cake.

"My dad is one of my idols," he said. "Hopefully I made him proud today and we can only go up from here."

Injuries Mounting In OSU Secondary

In addition to the injury to Pryor and Fuller's ejection, Ohio State was without the services of sophomore cornerback Jeffrey Okudah against Nebraska, as the Texas native sat out the game with a groin injury.

Meyer said the injury occurred during the week of practice, and he cited Okudah's problem, among others, as part of the reason Ohio State has struggled in pass coverage this season, especially as the Buckeyes continue to play more zone coverage.

"By this time of year, you'd like to have consistency of personnel, consistency of scheme. And we had some scheme issues," he said. "And it's hard to change or adapt schemes on a Tuesday/Wednesday practice as you're getting ready for the next game."

Fuller, Pryor, junior cornerback Damon Arnette and Okudah have all missed time this season with injuries, and Ohio State's secondary has been suspect throughout the year in pass coverage. Fuller and Pryor have also both missed time because of targeting penalties.

With the injuries and ejections this season, Meyer acknowledged it has been hard

for the Buckeyes to get any kind of consistency in the back end of the defense.

"I see Jordan Fuller leave the game and you're thinking, 'My gosh, here we go again,'" the coach said. "You're down to two corners because Okudah couldn't go and you moved the other cornerback to safety, Shaun Wade. So, it's still that, putting that puzzle together. It's not solved yet."

Turnovers Set Buckeyes Back

Ohio State matched a season high in turnovers against Nebraska, giving the ball over to the Cornhuskers three times in the five-point win.

Junior receiver K.J. Hill coughed the ball up on a catch-and-run that would have set Ohio State up with a first down near midfield. Dwayne Haskins lost the football on a strip sack and later threw an interception in the end zone.

The three turnovers matched Ohio State's season high set in a win over Indiana and had Meyer upset with the Buckeyes' carelessness with the ball after the game.

"I'm very upset with the turnovers," he said. "That would have been a different game. The passing game wasn't as sharp today. We threw a pick and we had a sack where it was sack/fumbled. It was just a missed assign-

ment by a tight end. It shouldn't have happened. And then K.J., he is very tight with the ball usually and had a fumble. The other guys, Mike Weber had two times he laid it on the ground. We have to get those fixed. It never ends. You've just got to prioritize and emphasize and get it fixed."

As Meyer referenced in his comments, Weber put the ball on the ground twice, although both times Ohio State was able to recover. He also committed a false-start penalty in the second quarter.

The running game did improve, however, as J.K. Dobbins finished with a game-high 163 yards and three touchdowns on 23 carries, while Weber added 91 on nine rushes.



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Dobbins' 3 Touchdowns Lead OSU Past Nebraska

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State had two weeks to steam, scheme, reflect and reload after a stunning 49-20 loss to Purdue on Oct. 20.

The No. 10 Buckeyes' didn't tear apart an improving Nebraska team in their first game after an open week but did enough things right – namely finding the long-lost running game – to upend the pesky Cornhuskers 36-31 on a sun-drenched Nov. 3 afternoon at Ohio Stadium.

While the 52-degree temperature was nearly perfect for the noon start, the No. 10 Buckeyes (8-1, 5-1 Big Ten) were not. They had six fumbles, losing two, and third-year sophomore Dwayne Haskins threw an interception in the end zone.

"The biggest thing was to get that darned bad taste out of your mouth from a couple of weeks ago and go win the game," Ohio State coach Urban Meyer said afterward.

Sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins had 163 yards and three touchdowns on 23 carries for the Buckeyes, who trailed 21-16 at the half.

Junior back Mike Weber added 91 yards on nine runs. The Buckeyes had 229 rushing yards on a 5.7 average after getting 76 yards on 25 rushes (3.0) vs. Purdue.

Haskins was 18 for 32 for 252 yards, two touchdowns and that pick. Fifth-year senior Johnnie Dixon had a team-high five catches and 96 yards, including a 42-yard TD.

Nebraska (2-7, 1-5) had 450 total yards (266 pass, 184 run) with freshman Adrian Martinez, a one-time OSU recruit, accounting for 338. He was 22 for 33 passing for 266 yards and a TD and ran 72 yards on 20 carries with two TDs.

Devine Ozigbo had 20 carries for 86 yards and a TD. Stanley Morgan Jr. had seven catches for 87 yards, and JD Spielman, nephew of former standout OSU linebacker Chris Spielman, added 61 yards on six receptions with a TD.

Sophomore Brendon White saw his first extensive action when junior safety Jordan Fuller was ejected for targeting in the second



JOSH WINSLOW

TAKING FLIGHT – Ohio State sophomore J.K. Dobbins (2) scored three touchdowns, including a diving effort, against Nebraska.

quarter and had 13 tackles (eight solo), as did junior linebacker Malik Harrison (five solo).

How It Happened

Nebraska took the opening touchback and went on a 12-play, 75-yard, 5:04 drive to take the 7-0 lead.

Martinez was 3 for 3 for 25 yards and had six carries for another 46 before Ozigbo scored from the 1 on a second-and-goal with 9:56 left in the first quarter. Martinez had a 13-yard pass to Morgan and a 7-yard completion to Jack Stoll on a fourth-and-2 from the OSU 45 to keep the drive alive. An offside penalty gave the Cornhuskers another first down at the Buckeye 11.

On the ensuing kickoff, Caleb Lightbourn apparently attempted an onside kick, but he barely squibbed the ball ahead a yard. With an additional offside call, the Buckeye started at the Nebraska 31 but did nothing with the miscue.

Dobbins ran for 5 and 4 yards, but a run by fifth-year senior receiver Parris Campbell resulted in a 1-yard loss before Dobbins

gained only a yard on the next play and boos emanated from the crowd as the Buckeyes were stopped on downs at the 22.

The cheers returned when junior linebacker Keandre Jones went untouched to block a punt from the Nebraska 22. The ball went out of the end zone for a safety at the 7:10 mark of the first quarter to make it 7-2.

To compound matters, the Buckeyes took the free kick punt and drove 68 yards in six plays, consuming 1:52 to take a 9-7 lead on Dixon's 42-yard TD reception with 5:11 left.

The Buckeyes padded the lead after Nebraska's three-and-out with a possession that started lamentably at the OSU 43 with an offensive pass interference call on Binjimen Victor. But a pass interference on Nebraska two plays later got the Buckeyes out of trouble at their 48, and Haskins passed 13 yards to Campbell and had a 9-yard flip to sophomore tight end Luke Farrell to the 26.

Dobbins had a rush of 16 to the 10 and went over left guard for the final yardage on the ensuing play to make it 16-7 with 1:51 left in the first quarter.

Nebraska drove to the OSU 5 early in the second period before Martinez scrambled and made an ill-advised backward pass that junior defensive end Jonathon Cooper recovered for OSU at the 26. The Buckeyes could not cash in, however, failing to gain a first down and punting.

On the Huskers' next possession, Fuller was ejected for targeting. Because it occurred in the first half, he will be eligible to play from the start in OSU's next game at Michigan State. Despite the penalty, Nebraska was also forced to punt.

When OSU got the ball Haskins was

sacked and fumbled it away at the Nebraska 36. It was a costly turnover because Martinez took the Huskers 64 yards in 10 plays over 4:00 to pull them to within two at 16-14 on his 2-yard run with 4:52 to go before the half.

Martinez had completions to Morgan for 11, Spielman 14 and Mike Williams 15 along the way.

Another Ohio State miscue put the Cornhuskers in position to take the lead when junior receiver K.J. Hill fumbled at the OSU 47 after a 30-yard catch-and-run.

The Buckeyes were powerless to keep them off the board as Nebraska took a 21-16 lead with 15 seconds left in the half. The Huskers covered the 47 yards in eight plays (all runs), using 3:54.

Ozigbo had 27 of those yards on the ground and Martinez capped the drive with a 2-yard keeper.

OSU's first series in the second half went to the Nebraska 15, but Haskins was intercepted in the end zone by Lamar Jackson.

The Buckeyes regained the lead, 23-21, with 5:39 left in the third quarter thanks to Dobbins' 3-yard carry. Prior to that, Weber had rushes of 27 and 6 yards, the latter to the Nebraska 30, and 15 more were tacked on for a hands-to-the-face penalty. Farrell had a grab for 7 before Dobbins ran for 4 and then the score to finish the 80-yard, eight-play drive in 3:10.

A Drue Chrisman 59-yard punt to the Nebraska 4 helped the Buckeyes increase the lead. The defense stopped Morgan inches shy of moving the chains on his third-down reception, and the punt that followed put the Buckeyes in business at the Nebraska 47.

Weber had a run for 37 and another for 1 before Haskins' touch pass went for a 9-yard TD to Campbell to make it 30-21 with 1:43 left in the third quarter. The drive was three plays, 47 yards in 1:15.

Nebraska pulled to within one score, 30-24, on an 18-yard field goal by Barret Pickering with 7:46 to play as the Cornhuskers squandered a 46-yard catch by Morgan to the OSU 20. On third-and-goal from the 4, White stopped Ozigbo at the 1.

OSU went 82 yards in seven plays, chewing 2:48 off the clock as Dobbins ran for a 42-yard TD with 4:52 left. The big plays before the score were Johnnie Dixon's 12-yard catch and a 17-yard reception for Farrell. Haskins' run for a two points failed, leaving the score 36-24.

Nebraska needed just 1:55 to march 75 yards in seven plays to make it 36-31 with Spielman making the scoring grab of 17 yards with 2:57 left on the clock.

The Buckeyes got the ball back and Dobbins rushed twice for 11 yards to get the first down needed to run out the clock, and they ended the game at their 42.

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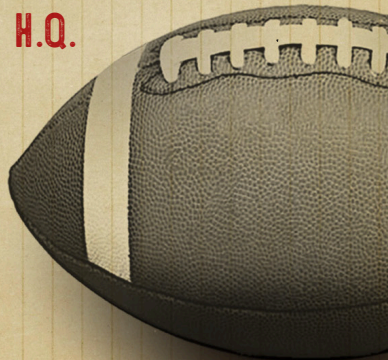
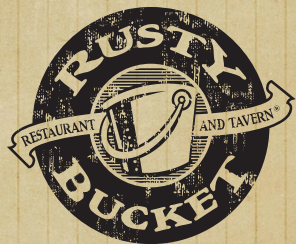
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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 36, Nebraska 31

Nov. 3, 2018 – Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4		F
NEBRASKA (2-7, 1-5 BIG TEN)	7	14	0	10	–	31
OHIO STATE (8-1, 5-1 BIG TEN)	16	0	14	6	–	36

First Quarter

- NEB – Ozigbo, 1 yard run (Pickering kick), 9:56; 12 plays, 75 yards, 5:04 TOP.
- OSU – K. Jones, safety, 7:10.
- OSU – Dixon, 42 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 5:11; 6 plays, 68 yards, 1:52 TOP.
- OSU – Dobbins, 10 yard run (Haubeil kick), 1:51; 7 plays, 57 yards, 2:29 TOP.

Second Quarter

- NEB – Martinez, 2 yard run (Pickering kick), 4:52; 10 plays, 64 yards, 4:00 TOP.
- NEB – Martinez, 2 yard run (Pickering kick), 0:15; 8 plays, 47 yards, 3:54 TOP.

Third Quarter

- OSU – Dobbins, 3 yard run (Haubeil kick), 5:39; 8 plays, 80 yards, 3:10 TOP.
- OSU – Campbell, 9 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 1:43; 3 plays, 47 yards, 1:15 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

- NEB – Pickering, 18 yard field goal, 7:46; 7 plays, 56 yards, 3:20 TOP.
- OSU – Dobbins, 42 yard run (Haskins rush failed), 4:52; 7 plays, 82 yards, 2:48 TOP.
- NEB – Spielman, 17 yard pass from Martinez (Pickering kick), 2:57; 7 plays, 75 yards, 1:55 TOP.

Att. – 104,245.

Weather – Low 50s, mostly sunny; wind 9-10 mph.

Team Statistics

	NEB	OSU
First Downs	27	23
Rushing	11	11
Passing	14	10
Penalty	2	2
Rushes-Yards	49-184	40-229
Passing Yards	266	252
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	22-33-0	18-32-1
Offensive Plays	82	72
Total Net Yards	450	481
Third Down Efficiency	4-14	3-9
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	0-1
Punts-Avg.	8-33.8	4-47.8
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	6-2
Penalties	5-44	6-46
Time of Possession	33:33	26:27

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – NEB: Ozigbo 20-86; Martinez 20-72; Washington 7-16; Spielman 1-6; Morgan 1-4. **OSU:** Dobbins 23-163; Weber 9-91; Campbell 2-(-4); TEAM 3-(-10); Haskins 3-(-11).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – NEB: Martinez 22-33-0-266-1. **OSU:** Haskins 18-32-1-252-2.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – NEB: Morgan 7-87; Spielman 6-61; Stoll 3-17; Williams 2-21; Allen 1-41; Washington 1-20; Ozigbo 1-13; Reimers 1-6. **OSU:** Dixon 5-96; Campbell 4-31; Farrell 3-33; Hill 2-39; Dobbins 1-22; McCall 1-12; Victor 1-10; Weber 1-9.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – NEB: Armstrong 7-38.6-54; TEAM 1-0.0-0. **OSU:** Chrisman 4-47.8-59.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – NEB: Spielman 1-(-2). **OSU:** K. Jones 1-22; Hill 1-2.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – NEB: Woodyard 1-13; Washington 1-12. **OSU:** Dixon 2-24; Hill 1-4.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – NEB: None. **OSU:** None.

FORCED FUMBLES – NEB: Domann; Williams; Gifford; Jackson. **OSU:** None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds) – NEB: Williams 1-0; Davis 1-0. **OSU:** TEAM 1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – NEB: Jackson 1-0. **OSU:** None.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – NEB: Williams 2.0-4; Domann 1.0-7. **OSU:** White 2.0-6; D. Jones 1.0-7; Harrison 1.0-2; Browning 1.0-1.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – NEB: Domann 1.0-7. **OSU:** D. Jones 1.0-7.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – NEB: Young 1-9-10; Reed 5-2-7; Domann 4-3-7; Barry 3-4-7; Williams 5-1-6; Williams 3-1-4; Gifford 3-0-3; Jackson 2-1-3; Bootle 1-2-3; Daniels 0-3-3; Weinmaster 2-0-2; Akinmoladun 1-1-2; Davis 1-0-1; Stovall 1-0-1; Davis 0-1-1; Newell 0-1-1; Neal 0-1-1; Davis 0-1-1; Tannor 0-1-1; Stille 0-1-1; Stoltenberg 0-1-1. **OSU:** White 8-5-13; Harrison 5-8-13; Borland 5-3-8; D. Jones 4-1-5; Arnette 2-3-5; Wade 4-0-4; Werner 3-1-4; Fuller 3-1-4; Cooper 2-1-3; Cornell 0-3-3; Garrett 1-1-2; Young 1-1-2; Sheffield 1-1-2; Browning 1-1-2; Togiai 0-2-2; Olave 1-0-1; Proctor 1-0-1; Landers 1-0-1; Riep 0-1-1; Gant 0-1-1; Smith 0-1-1; Hamilton 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – NEBRASKA: Offense, Morgan, Jaimes, Foster, Farmer, Wilson, Farniok, Stoll, Spielman, Martinez, Ozigbo, Washington, Pickering. Defense, Akinmoladun, Davis, Stille, Domann, Young, Barry, Gifford, Jackson, Williams, Neal, Bootle, Armstrong. Reserves, Reed, Davis, Tannor, Allen, Cox, Williams, Bell, Sullivan, Lightbourn, Williams, Stovall, Stoltenberg, Weinmaster, Rafdal, Reimers, Woodyard, Wildeman, Daniels, Davis, Newell. **OHIO STATE:** Offense, Munford, Pridgeon, Jordan, Knox, Prince, Farrell, Haskins, Dobbins, Campbell, Victor, McLaurin, Haubeil. Defense, Young, Landers, D. Jones, Cooper, Harrison, Werner, Borland, Sheffield, Arnette, Wade, Fuller, Chrisman. Reserves, Dixon, Proctor, Gant, T. Smith, Hill, White, Browning, Cornell, Riep, K. Jones, Olave, Weber, McCall, Pope, Hamilton, Togiai, Garrett, Davis, L. Smith, Mitchell, Wint, Berry.

Season Statistics

2018 Game-By-Game				
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd	
Sept. 1	(5) OREGON STATE	W, 77-31	102,169	
Sept. 8	(4) RUTGERS	W, 52-3	93,057	
Sept. 15	(4) vs. TCU* (15)	W, 40-28	64,362	
Sept. 22	(4) TULANE	W, 49-6	103,336	
Sept. 29	(4) at Penn State (9)	W, 27-26	110,889	
Oct. 6	(3) INDIANA	W, 49-26	104,193	
Oct. 13	(3) MINNESOTA	W, 30-14	100,042	
Oct. 20	(2) at Purdue	L, 49-20	60,716	
Nov. 3	(10) NEBRASKA	W, 36-31	104,245	
Nov. 10	at Michigan State	Noon	–	
Nov. 17	at Maryland	TBA	–	
Nov. 24	MICHIGAN	Noon	–	
Dec. 1	Big Ten Title Game**	8 p.m.	–	

OSU's CFP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name. AP ranking used through Purdue game.

* – At AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

** – At Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Team Statistics		
	OSU	Opp
First Downs	265	177
Rushing	93	63
Passing	149	91
Penalty	23	23
Average Per Game/Rush	178.1	153.4
Average Per Game/Pass	369.1	243.9
Total Offense	4,925	3,576
Total Plays	730	614
Average Per Game	547.2	397.3
Average Per Play	6.7	5.8
Penalties-Yards	72-653	49-514
Fumbles-Lost	11-4	15-8
Third Down Efficiency	62-129	41-127
Percentage	48%	32%
Fourth Down Efficiency	11-17	5-10
Percentage	65%	50%
Sacks-Yards	27-178	13-60
Time Of Possession Avg.	30:50	29:10

Score							
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	99	104	78	99	–	380	42.2
Opponents	41	75	47	51	–	214	23.8

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
J.K. Dobbins	143	684	4.8	7	42
Mike Weber	105	607	5.8	3	49
Tate Martell	18	121	6.7	2	47
Master Teague	17	106	6.2	1	33
Dwayne Haskins	38	45	1.2	1	17
Brian Snead	11	37	3.4	1	5
Demario McCall	4	26	6.5	0	15
C.J. Saunders	0	8	0.0	0	0
Parris Campbell	6	7	1.2	0	18
K.J. Hill	1	-3	-3.0	0	0
TEAM	12	-35	-2.9	0	0
OSU Totals	355	1,603	4.5	15	49
OPP Totals	324	1,381	4.3	15	93

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
D. Haskins	242	347	69.7	3,053	32-6	170.62
Tate Martell	23	28	82.1	269	1-0	174.63
OSU Totals	265	375	70.7	3,322	33-6	170.92
OPP Totals	161	290	55.5	2,195	12-6	128.61

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Parris Campbell	56	631	11.3	8	71
K.J. Hill	51	695	13.6	4	42
Johnnie Dixon	26	380	14.6	5	44
Austin Mack	26	331	12.7	1	48
Terry McLaurin	21	398	19.0	8	75
J.K. Dobbins	16	186	11.6	1	35
Binjimen Victor	15	246	16.4	3	47
Mike Weber	15	84	5.6	1	15
Luke Farrell	12	126	10.5	1	24
C.J. Saunders	10	73	7.3	0	19
Demario McCall	6	58	9.7	0	35
Rashod Berry	4	36	9.0	1	11
Jaylen Harris	2	22	11.0	0	15
Chris Olave	2	19	9.5	0	14
Garyn Prater	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jeremy Ruckert	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jaelyn Gill	1	11	11.0	0	11
OSU Totals	265	3,322	12.5	33	75
OPP Totals	161	2,195	13.6	12	93

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Terry McLaurin	8	–	–	–	–	48
S. Nuernberger	–	39-39	–	–	3-5	48
Parris Campbell	8	–	–	–	–	48
J.K. Dobbins	8	–	–	–	–	48
Johnnie Dixon	5	–	–	–	–	30
Blake Haubeil	–	9-9	–	–	5-6	24
K.J. Hill	4	–	–	–	–	24
Mike Weber	4	–	–	–	–	24
Binjimen Victor	3	–	–	–	–	18
Tate Martell	2	–	–	–	–	12
Rashod Berry	1	–	–	–	–	6
Nick Bosa	1	–	–	–	–	6
Luke Farrell	1	–	–	–	–	6
Davon Hamilton	1	–	–	–	–	6
Dwayne Haskins	1	–	0-1	0-2	–	6
Dre'Mont Jones	1	–	–	–	–	6
Austin Mack	1	–	–	–	–	6
Brian Snead	1	–	–	–	–	6
Master Teague	1	–	–	–	–	6
Keandre Jones (1 safety)						2
OSU Totals	51	48-48	0-1	0-2	8-11	380
OPP Totals	28	25-26	0-1	0-1	7-13	214

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
S. Nuernberger	2-2	1-2	0-1	0-0	3-5
Blake Haubeil	4-4	0-1	1-1	0-0	5-6
OSU Totals	6-6	1-3	1-2	0-0	8-11
OPP Totals	2-2	4-6	1-4	0-1	7-13

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Drue Chrisman	35	1,540	44.0	0	65
OSU Totals	35	1,540	44.0	0	65
OPP Totals	56	2,206	39.4	2	56

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Kendall Sheffield	2	0	0.0	0	0
Dre'Mont Jones	1	28	28.0	1	28
Malik Harrison	1	13	13.0	0	13
Isaiah Pryor	1	0	0.0	0	0
Shaun Wade	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	6	41	6.8	1	28
OPP Totals	6	174	29.0	1	46

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
C.J. Saunders	8	50	6.2	0	20
K.J. Hill	8	35	4.4	0	17
Demario McCall	3	32	10.7	0	26
Keandre Jones	1	22	22.0	0	0
OSU Totals	20	139	6.9	0	26
OPP Totals	9	34	3.8	0	12

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Johnnie Dixon	12	240	20.0	0	38
Demario McCall	2	52	26.0	0	31
C.J. Saunders	2	24	12.0	0	14
K.J. Hill	1	4	4.0	0	4
OSU Totals	17	320	18.8	0	38
OPP Totals	18	275	15.3	0	22

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Malik Harrison	32	16	48	4.0-14	1.5-10
Jordan Fuller	35	13	48	1.5-2	–
Pete Werner	25	10	35	7.5-20	3.0-10
Tuf Borland	16	18	34	4.0-11	2.0-10
Isaiah Pryor	18	11	29	1.0-1	–
Dre'Mont Jones	17	11	28	10.0-55	6.5-49
Damon Arnette	21	5	26	–	–
Jahsen Wint	20	5	25	0.5-1	–
Shaun Wade	19	3	22	–	–
Baron Browning	11	11	22	3.5-11	1.0-6
Chase Young	13	9	22	8.5-39	4.5-29
Jeffrey Okudah	17	3	20	–	–
Brendon White	10	8	18	2.0-6	–
Justin Hilliard	11	6	17	1.0-7	–
Kendall Sheffield	15	2	17	2.0-4	–
Jonathon Cooper	6	8	14	4.0-12	1.5-6
Nick Bosa	11	3	14	6.0-43	4.0-39
Robert Landers	6	6	12	2.0-8	–
Jashon Cornell	6	4	10	1.0-8	–
Davon Hamilton	4	5	9	2.5-3	–
Keandre Jones	5	3	8	1.0-1	1.0-1
Dante Booker	5	3	8	3.0-19	1.0-12
Tommy Togiai	5	3	8	1.0-2	–
OSU Totals	350	184	534	62-273	27-178
OPP Totals	425	274	699	40-119	13-60

Fumbles Forced: 8 – Tuf Borland 2, Nick Bosa, Dwayne Haskins, Dre'Mont Jones, Kendall Sheffield, Shaun Wade, Pete Werner.

Fumbles Recovered: 8 – Nick Bosa 2, Dre'Mont Jones 2, Jordan Fuller, Davon Hamilton, Jeffrey Okudah, TEAM.

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 36, Nebraska 31

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on the performance of his team's running backs: "I thought the backs worked on pad level. And even when there was a free (defensive) player, which is going to be when you run more of a pro-style offense like we are, you're going to have a free player at times. And they have to run over those guys and drop their pads, and I thought they did a good job with that."

OSU senior right tackle Isaiah Prince on the improved rushing attack: "It was just the attitude. We've been throwing the ball a lot this season, and we kind of got away from the attitude it takes to run the ball. I think running the ball – that was the main focus."

Prince on running fewer run-pass options: "It makes a big difference. You can fly off the ball, come off the ball hard and not have to worry about – I mean, when you do an RPO and the quarterback pulls the ball, you lose sense of where the defense is supposed to be. Me being a veteran, I'm the one setting the run plays. I know exactly how the defense is going to react in certain situations. So when you add RPOs, it kind of makes it hard."

OSU sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins on the importance of getting the running game going: "It means everything for us to be able to be dynamic on both ends of the offensive spectrum. I'm glad we ran the ball today. We definitely want to run the ball. Today that was the goal for this game this Saturday, and I think we did a pretty good job with that."

Ohio State junior running back Mike Weber on the run game's recent struggles: "It's frustrating. When you expect certain things and they don't happen,

you can't just get down on yourself. You have to keep coming each week, have faith, and hopefully it will work out for you."

Prince on what sophomore guard Wyatt Davis has done to earn his way onto the field as a sixth offensive lineman in certain situations: "Wyatt has just proved that he's been a great practice player. He's showed that he's been capable of doing it in the game. I mean, if you can do that against our No. 1 defense, you can do it in the game. So he's proved that, and he's been kind of like a great sixth man."

OSU sophomore safety Brendon White, who earned his first significant playing time as a Buckeye after Jordan Fuller was ejected for targeting, on his mind-set going into the game: "Early, you never know what is going to happen. Someone could get ejected like what happened today. You just have to go into every week and be prepared so when your moment comes, you'll be ready to go. We always talk about next man up. I went out there when my name was called and I did it."

Meyer on OSU's effort: "I thought our team gave great effort, I thought the energy was there. So I was pleased."

Meyer on where his team stands nine games into the season with a trip to Michigan State looming: "I think we're close. We better be when you see what's coming up next week, but I liked the effort today."

Haskins when asked if the team is focused and/or angry at this stage of the season: "I agree with that in that we're focused, motivated, angry – we just feel

like we're being disrespected right now and we're going to keep trying to fight and show the country that we're one of the top teams. And we're going to keep getting better."

Haskins on getting ready for MSU: "Michigan State always plays us hard. It's a tough, strong defense. They're probably looking forward to giving us a run for our money next week as we did pretty good last year against them. So right now we're just going to start planning for them, getting ready for all their pressures and looks that they give. And I'm looking forward to going to that stadium. It's probably going to be cold outside as it always is, but we're looking forward to going to get that win."

OSU sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins on his mind-set going forward: "Well, it's pretty much the same. We got to carry on to next week. So try to enjoy this a little bit, but got to get ready for Michigan State."

Nebraska head coach Scott Frost on the game: "We had every chance in the world to win that game. I thought the defense did a great job in the first half. The offense did great on the first drive and came back in the second quarter and did well. We just needed to get a stop and go get a score in the third quarter, and for whatever reason, we just didn't play well in the third quarter."

Frost on his defense forcing three turnovers: "It was huge. We finally got the ball bouncing our way a little bit and even had a chance at a couple more that we didn't get. We put one on the ground in the red zone that prevented another score that would have been the difference. A couple of balls that we should have caught might have changed things."

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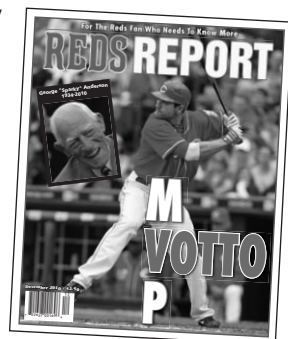
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OSU WRs Excelling Under Hartline's Direction

By JOE DEMPSEY
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

If you had told Brian Hartline he would be coaching wide receivers at his alma mater, he probably would have laughed and found the idea to be silly. At least that's what he says.

Hartline noted before Ohio State's game against Purdue that he never really thought he'd be in his position. However, the Buckeyes are glad to have him, and the wide receivers have never enjoyed such widespread production as they have with Hartline in charge.

Hartline returned to Ohio State as a graduate assistant in 2017 and was named interim wide receivers coach after the firing of Zach Smith in July. Head coach Urban Meyer has been very pleased with what he's seen from Hartline so far.

"He's very good technically, obviously, because that's how he's made his living for quite a while in the NFL," Meyer said. "Where he's improved is the tactical part, which is what goes on in (the meeting) room there. So he's made much improvement."

As Meyer alluded, Hartline had an eight-year career as an NFL wide receiver after winning four consecutive Big Ten championships at Ohio State. The former Buckeye wideout made a name for himself with back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons as a member of the Miami Dolphins from 2012-2013.

Ohio State fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell has made a plethora of big plays for the Buckeyes' receiver unit. He has 631 yards and eight touchdowns on 56 receptions through nine games. As a fellow football/track standout from the Akron-Canton area, Campbell is well aware of the

athletic prowess of Hartline, who was a high school All-American in the hurdles at Glen Oak High School.

"It's been great working with him," Campbell said this summer. "He's a great guy, he's played at the next level and also dominated at the next level, so it's been great. I don't know what's going to happen moving forward, but I put all the trust in Coach Meyer and our coaching staff to make the right choice for the players, which they always do."

With the murkiness of the investigation surrounding Meyer and Smith, there was plenty of uncertainty that came with Hartline being named the interim wide receivers coach. And a position that once seemed far-fetched to Hartline became much closer to reality.

"A little surreal," Hartline said when asked how he felt when he heard he was taking over. "But to me, I'm looking forward to earning past that. So to me, it was an opportunity I wanted to capitalize on. It was not the end role."

Hartline added that he feels like every day is an opportunity to prove his worth to the team, expressing his desire to remove the interim tag and become the full-time receivers coach. Meyer said Hartline's willingness to work toward improvement and his humility demonstrate the potential to be an excellent coach.

"Instant credibility, knowledge, played the game," Meyer said. "I love him. He's doing a great job."

The credibility that comes with being a former Buckeye wideout and playing in the NFL certainly helped earn Hartline respect in the receivers room.

Another Ohio State receiver who has

cherished the opportunity to learn from Hartline is fifth-year senior Terry McLaurin, who, like Campbell, has caught eight touchdowns this season.

"One of the big reasons I was coming back was I wanted to really work with him," McLaurin said prior to the season on Aug. 28. "Since January I've been working on my footwork, running out of my routes – just the little things that he brings to the table that can make me the best receiver I can – because he's been in my shoes before. So if you can lean on a guy like that, obviously, you can get better."

"He just brings a lot of that energy that you want from that wide receiver coach. He's very hands-on, and he doesn't expect anything but the best from us."

McLaurin has taken those hands-on instructions to the field, totaling 398 yards and the eight touchdowns on just 21 catches. The success of the Scarlet and Gray wideouts has not been limited to Campbell and McLaurin, however. K.J. Hill has 51 catches for 695 yards and four TDs, Austin Mack has 26 catches for 331 yards and one TD, Johnnie Dixon has 26 catches for 380 yards and five TDs, and Binjimen Victor has 15 catches for 146 yards and three TDs.

Hartline's altruistic and humble mentality has made a lasting impact on his players.

"When he came in he didn't really come

on an arrogant side like, 'This is my show now.' Really all he said was, 'My job is to make sure that you guys are the best that you guys are from the older guys to the younger guys,' " McLaurin recalled. "He wants to make sure that we're the best players that we can be. And he said if he can do that for us, that's all he really cares about it. He's not in it for the money. He's not in it for the titles and things like that. He's just trying to make us the best people and players we can be."

Hartline has earned the respect of Meyer and the Buckeye receivers despite inheriting a messy situation. He was able to do that because of an unwavering love for the game, a willingness to work and an insatiable desire to improve – the same traits that made him so successful as a player.

Some might point to Hartline as the primary reason for the improvements of the Ohio State receivers, others might argue it's all because of sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins, but the interim receivers coach has seen the growth from within his room.

"In the end I'm only as good as the people in the room," Hartline said. "And as much as I want to come in and try to help and enhance and make things tweaked or this or that, it's only upon the acceptance of these older men."

"And so, for their ability to just continue to pick my brain and want to grow and the thirstiness of wanting to get better and enhance and really study the game, that's why we've had some improvements."



Brian Hartline

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McLaurin's Versatility A Boost For Receiving Corps

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Receiver Terry McLaurin might not win the team MVP for Ohio State as in Most Valuable Player, but he will soon end his career with the recognition as another type of MVP.

The fifth-year senior from Indianapolis is one of the most versatile players for the Buckeyes with his ability to play the X and Z receiver positions, block like a beast, handle special-team duties when called upon, provide leadership as a two-time captain and mentor the younger players.

His latest contribution is filling in at the split end (X) from his normal flanker (Z) spot after junior Austin Mack sustained a left foot injury during the 49-20 loss at Purdue on Oct. 20.

"I've always prided myself on knowing the entire offense," McLaurin said. "Even toward the tail end of Purdue, when Austin couldn't play, I was playing X. So, I'm comfortable at that position as well, and I know I'm going to get a lot of reps at that, but if they need me to come over at Z, then I'll be able to do that."

In the Buckeyes' first game following the upset loss, McLaurin did not record a catch against Nebraska in Ohio Stadium on Nov. 3. For the season his 21 receptions have gone for 398 yards and eight touchdowns.

McLaurin prior to playing the Cornhuskers said that Mack's injury created a ripple effect among the receivers because



TIM MOODY

SCORING THREAT – Ohio State fifth-year senior wide receiver Terry McLaurin has caught eight touchdowns through nine games.

they had a two-man rotation at the X, Z and slot (H) positions.

"Now, somebody has to move or somebody has to take more reps, but when you come in at wide receiver you should know all the positions," he said. "I feel that's a benefit

the way we teach our offense at the wide receiver position."

Fifth-year senior Parris Campbell agreed with McLaurin that all the receivers are willing to help. Campbell is usually an H, but he's been asked to line up wide at times as well.

"It's not really an adjustment," he said. "I played a little bit of an outside receiver when I first got here, so I know the entire playbook. So it's kind of an easy switch, honestly – whatever the team needs."

McLaurin didn't mind his shift to X because it gives him more time with junior Binjimen Victor, who had been behind Mack on the depth chart.

"I like coming over to X, because me and Ben have a really good relationship, and I'm really tough on him in the way that I try to be that extra coach," McLaurin said. "But he's taken the initiative to try to just be that guy (as a starter)."

"He's 6-4, he has to play like that. He can't just do it in practice. He made a great play today (in practice), but I'm always telling him, 'The ball's not always going to be perfect. Our job is to make the quarterback right. If you're 6-4 you've got to play like it.'"

That's part of the mentoring side to McLaurin that makes him such an asset.

He was asked about the possibility of sophomore Jaylen Harris getting more reps in Mack's absence, and he sounded like a proud parent sending a child off to college.

"I'm always on Jaylen to be ready," McLaurin said. "I've been here for a while, so I've had a lot of little brothers in the big brother program, and he's one of them. But he's really been coming on."

"His biggest thing is just trying to stay consistent. He struggles with some fatigue sometimes, where he'll have a great play and then he'll be tired, but he's really come on just this week in practice. The bye week, that's a big week for development of younger players, and he took a big step last week."

McLaurin (6-1, 205) is comfortable in relaying his thoughts to the media because he graduated in December with a degree in communications. So it was surprising when he said a year ago that there was one area he needed to improve as a captain.

"I've always been a leader by example," he said. "I want to be a more vocal leader. I feel like I've really grown into that role not only on the team but in my room as well."

McLaurin has the attributes to be a coach someday if he wants to follow that path.

He even sounded like one when discussing the chances of true freshman Chris Olave moving into the rotation with Mack out. McLaurin noted that head coach Urban Meyer, who was suspended from working with the team until Sept. 3, missed an opportunity to evaluate Olave.

"I feel like he's been ready, to be honest, since he's stepped on campus and performed the way he did in camp," McLaurin said. "Coach Meyer didn't really get to see that (since he was away from the team during camp), so that was different. Coach Meyer kind of had to get acclimated to whether he was a tough guy and could he make plays on a consistent basis when he got back."

The younger players should not only listen to McLaurin, they should watch how unselfish he is. Most receivers don't delight in blocking, but he has relished in his ability to make a difference.

He took out two Tulane players in a highlight play earlier this season but saved his best downfield block for the 27-26 win at Penn State when he scattered three PSU defenders to

allow K.J. Hill to score the winning touchdown.

McLaurin did not make a catch against the Nittany Lions yet was named the team's offensive player of the game.

"With what the culture is, with the expectation level of the play here, he is the epitome right now," Meyer said.



Terry McLaurin

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Spartans Dealing With QB Carousel In 2018

By JAMES GREGA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State has dealt with its own quarterback competitions over the years, but that has not been an issue this season with the way Dwayne Haskins has played.

However, in East Lansing, Mich., Michigan State is having some trouble deciding on a signal caller.

Following a disastrous showing against Michigan (5 for 25 passing), Mark Dantonio benched starter Brian Lewerke, who was also limited with an injury, in favor of freshman Rocky Lombardi for a matchup against Purdue.

Against the Boilermakers, Lombardi completed 26 of 46 passes for 318 yards and two touchdowns to zero interceptions in a 23-13 win. That performance, however, wasn't good enough apparently for him to hold onto the

starting job as a week later, Lewerke was reinserted into the starting lineup.

"First of all, as I've said all week long, that Brian Lewerke is our quarterback," Dantonio said after a 24-3 win over Maryland. "He's built a foundation here, and he's played pretty well throughout the season. He's got an injured arm. I felt like he practiced and he deserved that opportunity (to start). And so, I have faith in our starting quarterback."

Against the Terrapins, Lewerke, playing with a slightly injured shoulder, completed 11 of 20 passes for just 87 yards and an interception. Lombardi didn't play much better against Maryland, attempting just two passes, neither of which were complete with one getting picked off.

Lewerke said he wasn't pleased with his performance against the Terps but was happy that Dantonio allowed him to contribute in the victory.

Get To Know ... Michigan State

About Michigan State

- **2018 Record:** 6-3 (4-2 Big Ten).
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Multiple; Defensive Formation – Multiple 4-3; Starters Returning – Offense 10, Defense 9, Specialists 2.
- **Head Coach:** Mark Dantonio, 14th season, 124-65 (11th at MSU, 106-48).
- **Series History:** 47th meeting, Ohio State leads, 31-15.
- **School Facts:** Location – East Lansing, Mich.; Enrollment – 50,019; Nickname – Spartans; Colors – Green & White; Conference – Big Ten (East Division); Stadium – Spartan Stadium (Surface, Grass; Capacity, 75,005).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Connor Heyward	70	358	5.1	5	80
La'Darius Jefferson	65	223	3.4	2	27
LJ Scott	55	180	3.3	0	14

Passing	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Brian Lewerke	151-270	55.9	1,740	8-8
Rocky Lombardi	27-50	54.0	327	2-1

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Felton Davis	31	474	15.3	4	37
Darrell Stewart	24	250	10.4	1	27

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 23.4
Rushing Yards Per Game – 125.6
Passing Yards Per Game – 234.8
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 360.3

2018 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)
Aug. 31	UTAH STATE	W, 38-31
Sept. 8	at Arizona State	L, 16-13
Sept. 22	at Indiana	W, 35-21
Sept. 29	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	W, 31-20
Oct. 6	NORTHWESTERN	L, 29-19
Oct. 13	at Penn State	W, 21-17
Oct. 20	MICHIGAN	L, 21-7
Oct. 27	PURDUE	W, 23-13
Nov. 3	at Maryland	W, 24-3
Nov. 10	OHIO STATE	Noon
Nov. 17	at Nebraska	TBA
Nov. 24	RUTGERS	TBA

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Joe Bachie	34	34	68	6.5-17	1.0-2
Andrew Dowell	29	32	61	6.0-22	3.0-10
Khari Willis	30	26	56	–	–
Justin Layne	37	18	55	1.0-1	–
Kenny Willekes	26	24	50	13.0-65	7.0-50

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
David Dowell	2	30	15.0	0	30
Khari Willis	2	30	15.0	0	20
Matt Morrissey	2	2	1.0	0	2

6 others tied with 1 interception each

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 19.0
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 71.7
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 253.4
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 325.1

"I did a little more this week trying to work back into it," Lewerke said. "Coach D said 'Hey, if you feel like you're ready to go, then you can go.' Obviously, I don't think I was 100 percent, but I felt good enough to be able to contribute."

For the time being, Dantonio maintains that he is sticking with Lewerke, despite his lack of production in recent weeks.

"Brian Lewerke is our quarterback, and we'll work it from there," Dantonio said. "Just like any Major League Baseball team, if your starter gets into problems and you have an ace reliever, you use him, and that's the way we'll look at things right now. If things aren't going quite well and we want to change it up or want to allow a guy to sit and watch for a minute and then get back involved – but, he's done too much around here not to be considered the starting quarterback."

Last season against the Buckeyes, Lewerke completed 18 of 36 passes for 131 yards, zero touchdowns and two interceptions in a 48-3 loss. He also lost a fumble and was sacked three times.

Running Back By Committee

Entering Michigan State's game against Maryland, three different Spartan running backs had toted the ball 50 or more times. One of them was former Buckeye recruiting target LJ Scott.

Scott, however, has dealt with injuries throughout his career and has been limited all year, and he did not play against Maryland. In his stead, sophomore Connor Heyward posted his best game of the year, rushing 15 times for 157 yards and two touchdowns, pushing his total to 358 on the year, putting him atop the Spartan rush standings in 2018. Scott, who has played in just four games this season, has carried just 55 times for 180 yards in his senior campaign.

The third back in the stable, La'Darius Jefferson, has carried 65 times for 223 yards. He carried just 11 times for 30 yards against Maryland.

Players To Watch

Before being injured, wide receiver Felton Davis was perhaps the most talented receiver in the Big Ten. However, in a 21-7 loss to Michigan on Oct. 20, Davis suffered an Achilles injury, ending his 2018 season.

Without Davis in the lineup, Michigan State has struggled to throw the ball, but while their offense has sputtered, the Spartan defense has thrived.

After struggling early on in the season, the Spartans have played stellar defense. In their last three games, Michigan State has surrendered just 37 points, 21 of which came in the loss to Michigan.

Leading the way for the Michigan State defense has been linebacker Joe Bachie, who leads the team in tackles with 68, ranking him in the top 15 in the Big Ten. A season ago, Bachie finished the season with an even 100 tackles. He managed just four however, in a loss to Ohio State in 2017.

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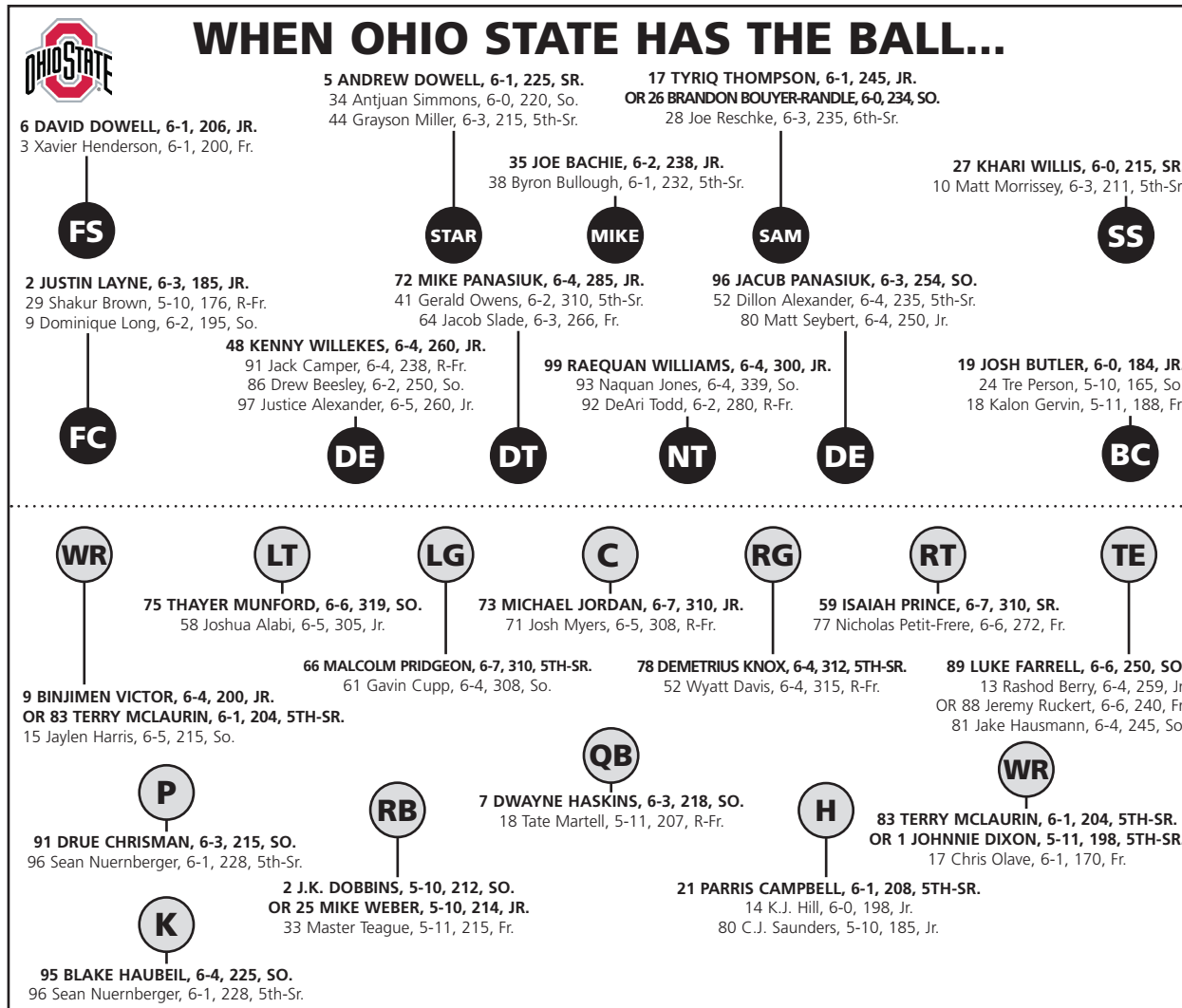


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How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. MICHIGAN STATE RUSH DEFENSE

Ohio State has a running game. Miracles do exist. What was once thought lost has been found, at least against Nebraska, and the elimination of the RPO (run pass option) for more straight ahead rushes resulted in 229 yards (5.7 yards per carry) for the Buckeyes in the 36-31 victory. Compare that to the 76 yards on 25 sluggish totes (3.0) in the 49-20 West Lafayette whiff against Purdue the game before the open weekend. J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber ran with authority and hit the second level with speed. Dobbins had 163 yards, including a 42-yard touchdown, and Weber had a 37-yard gain among his 91 yards. Now, for the bad news. Michigan State is an absolute beast against the run, allowing only 71.7 yards per game to lead the nation. Against Maryland in the last outing the Spartans gave up 26 rushing yards. Maryland was averaging 246 entering the game. **EDGE: MICHIGAN STATE**

MICHIGAN STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

In a mirror image of the Buckeyes, the Spartans also rediscovered the run, pounding their way to 269 yards vs. the Terrapins for their best output on the season by 100 yards. Their season average is 125.6, and MSU has been hampered by the continued absence of LJ Scott, who has missed four complete games and a partial one with an ankle injury. He did not play vs. Maryland. The Buckeyes gave up 184 rushing yards to Nebraska, but dual-threat freshman quarterback Adrian Martinez was a big culprit with 72 net yards. Still, OSU yielded only 3.8 yards per rush and avoided the long runs except for a 24-yarder by Martinez. Michigan State's Connor Heyward had TD runs of 80- and 18-yards last week. Uh-oh. **EDGE: EVEN**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. MICHIGAN STATE PASS DEFENSE

If a first-timer had watched the Buckeyes' rather pedestrian aerial performance vs. the Cornhuskers, that person wouldn't understand all the accolades directed toward Dwayne Haskins. But that's a credit to what Haskins has done in the past because his 252 yards on 18-of-32 passing included only a 42-yard scoring strike to Johnnie Dixon and a 9-yarder to Parris Campbell. For fans accustomed to his 300-plus-yard games, the passing attack looked out of sorts against the Cornhuskers. That's the price of emphasizing the run. The good news: Even though Maryland got only 74 passing yards, MSU is allowing 253.44 to rank 98th out of 130 teams, although they've surrendered only 11 TDs. The Spartans had five sacks in the Maryland game. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

MICHIGAN STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Brian Lewerke is a serviceable thrower, but coach Mark Dantonio wants him to not lose games rather than try to win them with his arm. Lewerke, who's playing with a bum shoulder, completed 11 of 20 for 87 yards vs. Maryland but was pulled for Rocky Lombardi after throwing a fourth-quarter interception. MSU is averaging 234.8 yards through the air with just 11 TDs, which is usually a good two-game stretch for Haskins. The Buckeyes continue to be banged up in the secondary, but coach Urban Meyer is hopeful of having everyone ready for the showdown in East Lansing. Martinez passed for 266 yards against the Buckeyes, who conceded plays of 46 and 41 yards. **EDGE: EVEN**

SPECIAL TEAMS

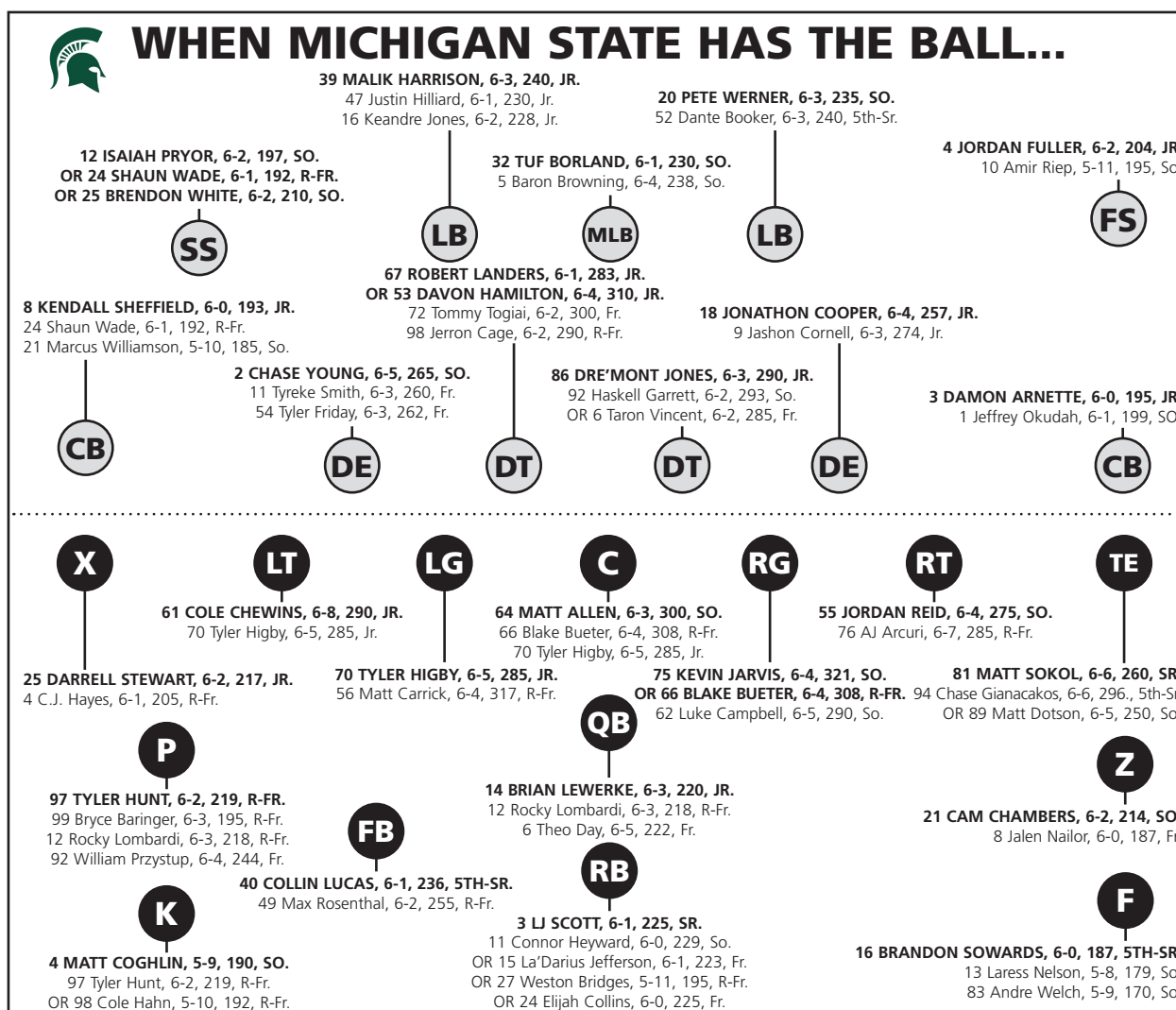
OSU punter Drue Chrisman is special. His 59-yarder to the Nebraska 4 helped turn the field and the game around. MSU walk-on punter Bryce Baringer had a rough go kicking into the wind vs. Maryland with boots of 16 and 8 yards. To be fair, he is the third-stringer after the other two got hurt. Heyward had a 49-yard kick return in the same game. MSU's Matt Coghlin has made 12 of 13 field goals with a long of 49. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

INTANGIBLES

Michigan State badly needs a redemption win after losing to Michigan. The Spartans also want revenge for a 48-3 smackdown in Columbus last season, and the Spartans have given the Buckeyes trouble over the years. With an opportunity for an upset, they will be ready. Ohio State wanted to put the Purdue debacle in the past while playing with more edge and succeeded, although not with the overpowering performance Meyer teams have done in the past when they won by an average of 30 points after a loss. That the outcome was in doubt for so long tells you something is amiss because Nebraska is good but not that good. **EDGE: MICHIGAN STATE**

PREDICTION

It's the Michigan State (run) defense vs. the Ohio State (pass, maybe run) offense. The Buckeyes are beatable, and Michigan State knows it. The Buckeyes had three turnovers the last game and still aren't always sure what to do in the red zone. They've made progress since Purdue, but Michigan State is also improving after several yips. **OHIO STATE 27, MICHIGAN STATE 24**



Boeckman Waited Years To Become OSU Starter

By JAMES GREGA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Growing up in an Ohio town of fewer than 3,000 people, Todd Boeckman didn't have many opportunities to play little league football.

However, once Boeckman did put on pads in the seventh grade, it wouldn't be long before he and his family realized what he was capable of with a football in his hand.

Boeckman played quarterback and defensive end in middle school, but after a conversation with his father, who was also the head coach at St. Henry High School, he knew football was going to be a big part of his life.

"My dad was our high school coach, and he sat me down after one of our eighth-grade games and he basically told me that I had a shot to be the starting quarterback the following year. I said, 'Oh yeah! Freshman or JV maybe?' And he said, 'No. varsity,'" Boeckman told BSB. "That was an eye-opener and made me work that much harder to be successful on the field."

As a high school freshman, the skinny 6-4 signal caller led St. Henry all the way to the Division 5 state title game, where the Redskins fell 35-20 to Amanda-Clearcreek High School.

It was shortly after that season that Boeckman first started getting recruiting letters. His first letter came from John Cooper at Ohio State.

"Being 14 or 15 years old and getting a letter from John Cooper, he was kind of like

a god. I will never forget getting that in the mail, my first letter coming from the biggest school you could think of in the country," he said. "As a boy, you dream of getting something like that. At that moment, I was 6-foot-4, 190 pounds and I knew I had a shot."

The idea that a quarterback from such a small town could make it at the top school in the country would normally be viewed as a long shot. However, it had already been done right in front of Boeckman's eyes just a handful of years earlier.

"Bobby Hoying was from my hometown. My dad coached him, and I grew up watching him. That was someone I idolized at St. Henry and then at Ohio State," Boeckman said. "Coming from a small town, there are not as many athletes coming through there. When you have a guy like that, Mr. Football in Ohio, everyone looked up to him. I always wanted to be like him. I remember writing him letters in third grade when he was in college. He was just such a great player and a great athlete."

Hoying was Mr. Football in Ohio in 1990, leading St. Henry to the Division 5 state championship. He then proceeded to become a two-year starter at Ohio State under Cooper and become a third-round pick in the 1996 NFL draft by the Philadelphia Eagles.

After the 2000 season, Cooper was fired and Jim Tressel was hired to become the next head coach at Ohio State. Boeckman said it didn't take long for Tressel and his staff to offer him to play under the new regime.

"I went to the camp going into my junior year, and after that camp in June or July, I got offered," he said. "Once that happened, it was game over. I knew what I wanted to do."

Boeckman arrived on campus in 2003 but was redshirted as Craig Krenzel finished out his tenure as Ohio State's starter. In 2004, Boeckman was grayshirted, saving yet another year of eligibility. His grayshirt was almost burned that season, however, in the 2004 Alamo Bowl win over Oklahoma State. With starter Troy Smith suspended, Boeckman said he was told to get loose after Justin Zwick became hobbled with a hamstring injury. Had he played in the game, Boeckman would have lost an entire year of eligibility. Instead, Ohio State utilized wide receiver Ted Ginn as a wildcat quarterback and breezed to a 33-7 win over the Cowboys to cap the season.

Boeckman, who had taken snaps as the No. 2 quarterback during bowl prep, admitted he was nervous but would have been ready to go had Tressel decided to play him.

"I took quite a bit of snaps during bowl practice," he said. "When Justin went down, I started warming up, and I thought they were going to put me in for a second there. We were fortunate Justin wasn't hurt that bad and was able to come back in and play, but Teddy came in and ran the ball a little bit. I definitely was prepared for it."

After waiting two full seasons to see the field, Boeckman finally got his chance to play in 2005 in mop-up duty against Miami (Ohio) in the season opener. With Smith still suspended, Zwick started and led Ohio State to a 27-0 lead before Boeckman came in late in the third quarter. He completed 5 of 7 passes for 67 yards, including a 42-yard touchdown pass to Ginn, the only passes he threw that season.

After Smith returned, Boeckman returned to his role as third-string quarterback for the better part of the next two years. He attempted just three passes in 2006 as Smith went on to win the Heisman Trophy and led the Buckeyes to a Big Ten title and appearance in the 2007 BCS National Championship Game.

Boeckman said watching the evolution of

both Smith and Ohio State's offense during that time was a unique experience.

"It is truly crazy, going from high school where we were 50/50 (run/pass) and I-formation then coming to college where we did a lot of the 'I' but then started to venture into the spread," Boeckman said. "More and more people were doing it, and more and more people were having success with it. At the beginning I didn't understand it, but then you realize how fun it is and how many points people are putting on the board and what people were doing to where it is now. It has come a long way, and a lot of teams across the country were bought in on that."

Ohio State's offense seemed to evolve the most in 2006 during Smith's Heisman year. Seven different players caught 13 or more passes, with Smith completing 203 attempts, a number that at the time ranked third in program history behind only Joe Germaine in 1998 (230) and Hoying in 1995 (211). Boeckman, who was behind Smith on the quarterback depth chart from 2003-06, said Smith's development as a quarterback was special to watch.

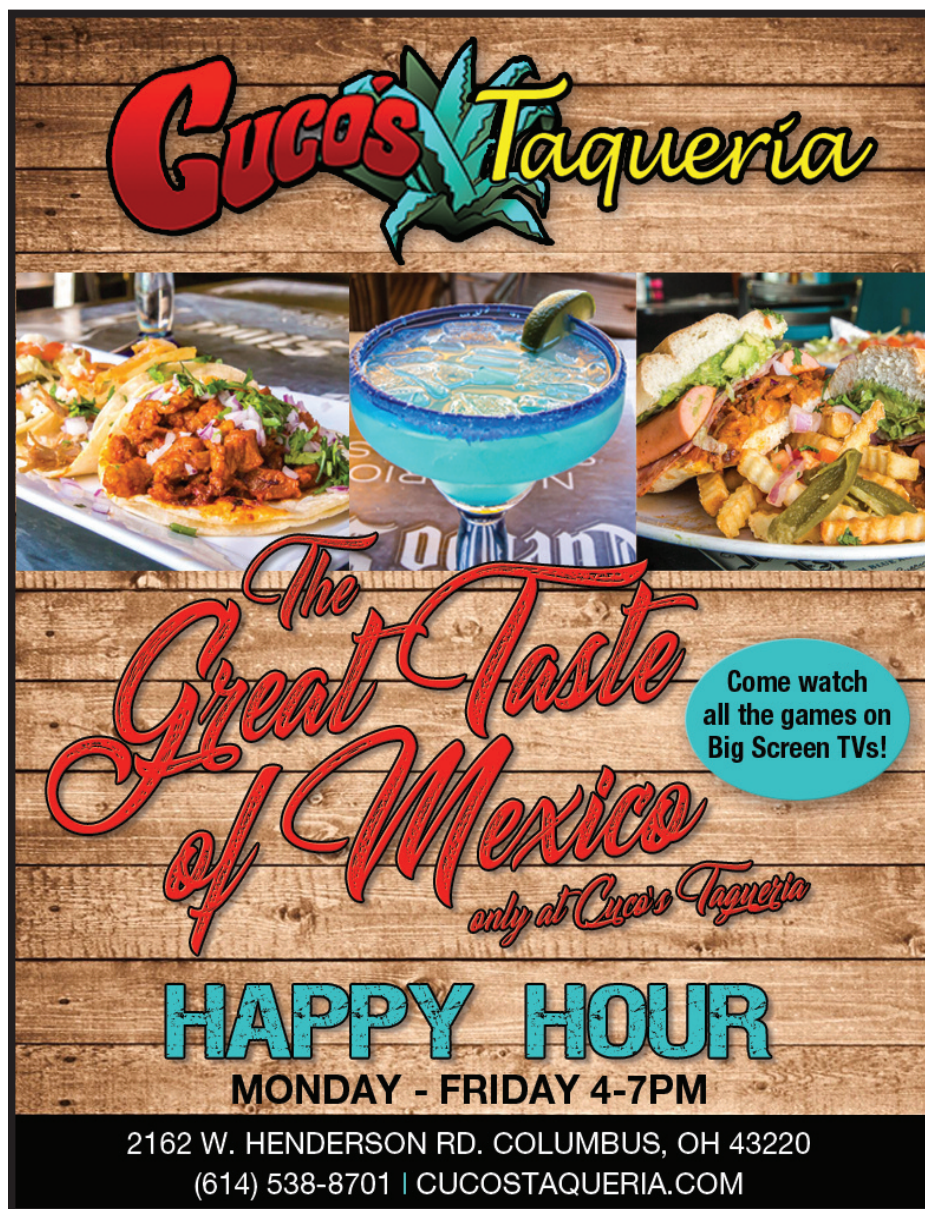
"To see what he did, what he went through and where he began and what he transformed into was unbelievable," Boeckman said. "It took him awhile to get to where he was, but to be able to watch him, he was one of the best I've seen."

Finally in 2007, Boeckman got his chance.

Boeckman beat out the likes of Rob Schoenhof and Antonio Henton to succeed Smith as the starter and led Ohio State to a 10-0 record before the Buckeyes were upset at home by Illinois, 28-21, on Senior Day.

His best game during that span came on the road against Penn State. Ohio State entered Happy Valley as the No. 1 team in the nation, and Boeckman put together his best performance as a Buckeye. He completed 19 of 26 passes for a career-high 253 yards and three touchdowns to one interception as Ohio State left University Park, Pa., with a 37-17 win over the Nittany Lions.

"I will never forget going into that stadium," Boeckman said. "You couldn't hear anybody talking and one of the best feelings in the world as a quarterback is when you go



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THE OHIO STATE QUARTERBACK



FILE PHOTO

UP AND DOWN – Todd Boeckman (17) took over as Ohio State's starting quarterback as a junior but lost the job to Terrelle Pryor in 2008.

in there and quiet them a little bit. You just feel it. Everything you throw, everybody is catching it. That was one of my best games as a quarterback."

Through that Penn State win, Boeckman had thrown 21 touchdown passes to just eight interceptions through nine games. He was playing so well that ESPN analysts began to mention him as a late contender for the Heisman Trophy, which would eventually go to Florida quarterback Tim Tebow.

Boeckman said he vaguely remembers the Heisman hype that surrounded him, something he looks back on now as a positive, even if the discussion was short.

"I remember it a little bit. Thinking back and realizing my name was in there for a brief period of time, that is pretty cool," he said.

The last three games of Boeckman's junior year didn't exactly go as planned. He threw three interceptions in the home loss against Illinois, and a rainy, sloppy Michigan Stadium limited him to just seven completions on 13 attempts for 50 yards, albeit in a 14-3 win over the Wolverines.

After a plethora of losses by other title contenders, Ohio State found itself in the 2008 BCS title game, only to lose 38-24 to LSU. Boeckman completed 15 of 26 passes for 208 yards and a pair of touchdowns but also threw two interceptions and was sacked five times.

The next season, Boeckman lasted just three games as Ohio State's starter before being swapped for freshman Terrelle Pryor. His last game as a Buckeye saw him split reps with Pryor at quarterback in a 24-21 Fiesta Bowl loss to Texas in which Boeckman threw for 110 yards and a touchdown pass to Pryor in the fourth quarter.

Boeckman briefly appeared on NFL rosters after going undrafted in 2009. He was signed by the Jacksonville Jaguars as a free agent but did not make the cut for the final roster. During practices though, Boeckman said he was blown away by the difference in the speed of the game from college to pro.

"I remember my first snap under center in practice at Jacksonville and just the speed of everybody. You know, it is the best players from every college team," he said. "Coming from high school to college is night and day different. Then going from college to the NFL it's even (faster)."

Boeckman, who now resides in Powell, Ohio, said football was initially tough for him to give up. However, he said that looking back on it, his body thanks him for hanging up his cleats when he did.

When he looks back on his career as a Buckeye, Boeckman reflects with positive thoughts, considering what he and his teams were able to accomplish. Boeckman was a part of four Big Ten championship teams and was a first-team All-Big Ten selection in 2007.

"It was truly a dream come true for me, first off to go there, and then the first time running out of that tunnel," Boeckman said. "I still get chills thinking about running out of that tunnel with 105,000 fans screaming at you. Becoming a starting quarterback and a captain, all of that happened in my time there, and looking back, it was one of the best experiences of my life and something I will always cherish and remember forever."

Buckeye Sports Bulletin will be running features on Ohio State quarterbacks throughout the 2018 football season.



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Harrison Visits; 3-Star RB Crowley Flips To OSU

Is Ohio State on the verge of seeing its recruiting efforts take a turn for the better? After a star-studded list of visitors were on hand Nov. 3 at Ohio Stadium in Columbus for the Buckeyes' blackout game, a 36-31 win over Nebraska, OSU appears primed for progress.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Garrett Stepien

Back from an Oct. 27 off week during which its coaching staff balanced travel to high schools all over the country with personnel and scheme adjustments ahead of the Big Ten battle against the Cornhuskers, Ohio State gained ground as several notable names made planned trips to central Ohio officially while other key recruits came to campus unofficially.

Ohio State emerged from the weekend with a new commitment, its first since St. Louis Cardinal Ritter College Prep 2019 four-star wide receiver Jameson Williams (6-1½, 169) pledged Sept. 28, after the Buckeyes set the wheels in motion with two official visitors at running back. Between the two targets it hosted at the position, OSU needed to fill its open spot for the current cycle, and the Buckeyes got the commitment from previous Miami (Fla.) commit Marcus Crowley (more on him below).

As a result, Ohio State slid up three spots from No. 15 to No. 12 in the nation and No. 2 in the Big Ten, according to the 247Sports composite team rankings, for 2019 with 15 commits – two five-stars, nine four-stars and four three-stars. As for 2020, the Buckeyes remain at No. 3 in the country and No. 1 in the conference with six commits – one five-star and five four-stars.

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JOSH WINSLOW

SHORT TRIP – Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange five-star defensive end Zach Harrison highlighted Ohio State's visitor list for the Nebraska game.

Ohio State Flips 2019 Miami Commit On OV

Ohio State moved quickly on Crowley, offering the Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy product on Oct. 11 and flipping the three-star running back over the weekend as he took to Twitter on Sunday to announce his decision.

"First I would like to start by thanking the University of Miami and their coaching staff for all the support and what they have done for me," part of Crowley's tweet read. "However after talking with my family and a lot of thought, I will be decommitting from the University of Miami. With this being said after taking my official visit to The Ohio State University my family and I feel that OSU is the best fit for me not only sports wise but also academically."

The 6-1, 200-pounder originally committed to the Hurricanes on Dec. 6, 2017 – long before the Buckeyes entered the equation. OSU needed to fill its void at running back for 2019 after Avon, Ind., four-star Sampson James (6-1, 211), who had been committed since March 18, flipped Oct. 7 to Indiana.

Crowley, who comes from the same high school as freshman cornerback Tyreke Johnson and redshirt freshman defensive back Shaun Wade, officially visited Ohio State over the weekend of Nov. 3 for the Nebraska game. Leading up to the trip, running backs coach Tony Alford stopped by Trinity Christian Academy on Oct. 22 – three days after 'Canes

offensive coordinator/running backs coach Thomas Brown checked in Oct. 19.

Crowley arrived Nov. 2 in Columbus with his parents. By the end of the game against the Cornhuskers on Nov. 3, he knew.

"We weren't even talking about football at first," Crowley told Steve Wiltfong of 247Sports. "(Alford) pulled up my grades, they had everything laid out and planned for me. Ohio State also has the Real Life Wednesday program. That's just a great thing. (Head coach Urban) Meyer talked about how he runs that and the network and the connections. Even if I don't go to the NFL, I'm not going to leave college without a great opportunity at a job."

The Buckeyes also hosted Katy, Texas, four-star running back Deondrick Glass (5-11, 200) for the Nebraska weekend. Crowley's commitment, however, likely caps OSU's recruiting at the position with Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic four-star athlete Steele Chambers (6-2, 215) committed since April 18.

Crowley is the 247Sports composite's No. 573 overall prospect, No. 35 running back and No. 77 players in Florida for 2019. Ten games into his senior season with the Conquerors, he had 151 carries for 1,550 yards (10.3 average) with a long of 95 and 20 touchdowns.

Harrison, Fleming Headline Several 5-Star Visitors

Crowley and Glass were just the tip of the iceberg for Ohio State's visitors, which included a handful of five-star recruits for 2019 and 2020. To start with the current cycle, the Buckeyes welcomed back Austin (Texas) Lake Travis five-star wide receiver commitment Garrett Wilson (6-0½, 181) and Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange five-star defensive end target Zach Harrison (6-5½, 243).

Wilson's unofficial visit marked his first trip back to Columbus as an OSU commit. He officially visited campus the weekend of April 13-15 for the spring game, followed with an official visit to Texas the next weekend, and ultimately picked Ohio State on April 29.

Wilson was back in time for an enormous day of recruiting for the Buckeyes' loaded crop of visitors, headlined by Harrison. After he reportedly checked out campus on an aca-

OSU Adds 4-Star WR For 2020

Four-star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba committed to Ohio State as BSB went to press Nov. 4, becoming the Buckeyes' second commit of the day.

Smith-Njigba (6-1, 188), a 2020 prospect out of Rockwall, Texas, pledged to the Buckeyes mere hours after head coach Urban Meyer's team picked up a commitment from 2019 Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy three-star running back Marcus Crowley. He picked the Buckeyes out of a long offer list that also included schools such as Arizona State, California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Notre Dame, TCU and Texas Tech, but he did not hold an offer from the in-state Texas Longhorns.

Smith-Njigba received his offer from Ohio State back on Sept. 17 and unofficially visited the Buckeyes on Nov. 3 for their 36-31 win over Nebraska. He is Ohio State's seventh commit in the 2020 class, which is first in the Big Ten and second nationally, according to the 247Sports composite team rankings.

He is rated in the 247Sports composite as the No. 288 overall player, No. 59 receiver and No. 36 player in the Lone Star State.

– Tim Moody

demic-only visit in October, the local product made his first football-related trip back to OSU for the Nebraska game.

The return of Harrison on an unofficial visit was significant for OSU after he went to Penn State (Sept. 29) and Michigan (Oct. 13) earlier in the season. Harrison has taken three of his five available official visits as he has weighed Ohio State with Michigan and Penn State among the finalists since the summer.

Harrison officially visited Penn State the weekend of April 20, followed by trips in the same capacity to Michigan (June 19-21) and Ohio State (June 22-24). At The Opening Regional Canton on May 5, he said he planned the commitment announcement to come Aug. 14 – his birthday – before delay-

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ASK AN ANALYST

With CBS Sports Network's Tom Lemming

Ohio State sits at 15 commitments in the 2019 recruiting class. The Buckeyes missed out on Frankfort (Ky.) Western Hills four-star all-purpose back Wandale Robinson (5-9½, 179), who chose Kentucky, a school where he is likely to have earlier playing time than he would in Columbus. How much does the element of playing time factor into OSU's struggles on the trail?

"A lot of the ballplayers are not as self-confident as they appear to be. They don't always want to go someplace that there's an established handful of guys ahead of them and they have to sit for two or three years. I think that lines up with most of the kids.

"The superstars, they don't care. You've got (sophomore running back) Najee Harris, the No. 1 player in the country (for the 2017 recruiting class), has still not started at Alabama after his second year. They're playing him but not starting, but he was confident enough to know he's going into a great program and eventually he'll be the starter. But some kids just don't want to wait."

Ohio State returned to action Nov. 3 against Nebraska for the Buckeyes' blackout game at Ohio Stadium. Despite the noon kickoff as opposed to a standard night start, how much more buzz do the theme's environment and jerseys generally play into the recruiting factor for a program like OSU?

"It gets the fans enthused. The fans get real excited, the players are excited – normally for the first part of the game, the first couple of minutes – but then that settles down into a game. It all comes down to how you start out the game on the field, but you get excited and pump everybody up. So it usually helps to have something like that, that's unique to the season. I think that it gets everyone going in the beginning, but then you get a drive that stalls in the very first time, then all of a sudden everyone sits on their hands.

"I think you always kind of need to show up on the field. After a blowout loss – you're a powerhouse team, you've got to go out and prove yourself the next week. Not only for the recruits, but for yourself. I think the recruits know that Ohio State's one of the top five premier programs in the country. So that Purdue loss (49-20 on Oct. 20) didn't mean anything to them. Sometimes, actually, it helps recruiting in a sense where some of them might think, 'Hey, these guys may be not quite as good as we thought and I can come in and play right away.' So I don't think it hurts, but I do think that in a big game, a rebound is key."

Ohio State appears to be in the midst of a battle for Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star safety Jordan Battle (6-1, 187), who has been committed to the Buckeyes since June 29 but has

taken several visits elsewhere. With an official visit to Alabama planned for the weekend of Nov. 10, plus the fact that his last trip to Columbus was June 22-24, how concerned should OSU be?

"I wouldn't count him as a hard commit. I call those guys soft commits. They're not really committed when they start visiting other schools, especially places like Alabama. I would count him as not committed, which means he's holding the spot still and could end up there but they're going to have to fight for him, especially if Alabama's coming after him hard.

"Ohio State should be very concerned because he's in the South and Alabama's in the South. Ohio State has had success with the Bosa brothers, among others, at St. Thomas Aquinas. But so has Alabama – they've got players out of there, too. A kid like that, you've got to battle for all the way up to Dec. 19 now until the early signing period – if he does sign in the first period. If you're Ohio State, you've got to stay on top of it and make sure you keep in the loop because if he goes to Alabama and they put a lot of pressure on him, there's a chance he could flip to them.

"I've seen him the last three years. I go to Aquinas every year. He's a big-time ballplayer. The program's got a lot of big-time prospects every year, but Battle's among the best in recent years. He's a four-star-plus guy."

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2019 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jordan Battle	S	6-1	187	★★★★	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas
Steele Chambers	ATH	6-2	215	★★★★	Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic
Marcus Crowley	RB	6-1	200	★★★	Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian
Cormontae Hamilton	TE	6-2	263	★★★	Memphis (Tenn.) Whitehaven
Ronnie Hickman	S	6-1	200	★★★★	Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic
Ryan Jacoby	OT	6-5	270	★★★★	Mentor, Ohio
Dwan Mathis	QB	6-4	197	★★★★	Oak Park, Mich.
Harry Miller	C	6-4	310	★★★★★	Buford, Ga.
Doug Nester	OG	6-5½	295	★★★★	Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley
Noah Potter	DE	6-5	250	★★★★	Mentor, Ohio
Bryson Shaw	S	6-2	175	★★★	Potomac (Md.) Bullis School
Cade Stover	OLB	6-5	235	★★★★	Lexington, Ohio
Jameson Williams	WR	6-1½	169	★★★★	St. Louis Cardinal Ritter
Garrett Wilson	WR	6-0½	181	★★★★★	Austin (Texas) Lake Travis
Craig Young	ATH	6-4	200	★★★	Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne

Players in the class of 2020 who has issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Lejond Cavazos	S	6-0	186	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy
Darvon Hubbard	RB	6-0	200	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Paris Johnson	OT	6-7	285	★★★★★	Cincinnati St. Xavier
Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	6-1	188	★★★★	Rockwall, Texas
Jake Wray	OT	6-5	290	★★★★	Marietta, Ga.
Luke Wypler	OL	6-3½	285	★★★★	Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional

ing the decision.

BSB caught up with Harrison on Aug. 24 after Olentangy Orange's 27-26 win over Worthington Kilbourne when he was working back from a minor knee injury, and he said he was still stuck in his decision process between the three finalists. Harrison, who keeps his recruitment tight-lipped and rarely does interviews, told reporters Oct. 31 at his All-American jersey presentation that he remained torn between the three.

"I do (feel pressure)," Harrison said when asked about staying home. "Everybody here is a Buckeye fan, so that's where they all want me to go. It weighs a little bit, but I've got to do what's best for me. So if it's Ohio State, then it's Ohio State. But if it's not, then it's not."

Whenever and wherever he decides to take his talents, that team will be getting arguably the best player in the country. Harrison is the 247Sports composite's No. 5

overall prospect, No. 3 weakside defensive end and No. 1 player in Ohio.

In addition to Harrison and Wilson in 2019, the Buckeyes boasted an abundance of talented visitors for 2020. The list started with five-star Julian Fleming (6-2, 205) – the 247Sports composite's No. 9 overall prospect, No. 1 wide receiver and No. 1 player in Pennsylvania for the next cycle – who made the trip from Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia with several high school teammates in the junior group of linebacker/safety Max Tillet (6-0, 190), wide receiver Preston Zachman (6-2, 205), linebacker/fullback Cal Haladay (6-1, 200) and running back Gage Garcia (5-10, 205).

Fleming returned for the first time since June 18 and plans to come back once more before OSU's campaign ends. He set his next unofficial visit for the Michigan game Nov. 24.

Another 2020 target, Denver Mullen four-star defensive tackle Aidan Keanaana (6-3, 292) made the cross-country trip to Columbus for the Nebraska game. He is the 247Sports composite's No. 310 overall prospect, No. 29 defensive tackle and No. 4 player in Colorado. The unofficial visit marked his first time back on campus since July 31.

Two offer candidates in attendance to see the Buckeyes take on the Cornhuskers included the Charlotte (N.C.) Myers Park duo of 2020 four-star wide receiver Muhsin Muhammad III and 2021 quarterback Drake Maye. The 6-0, 180-pound Muhammad is the son of former NFL star Muhsin Muhammad II and could be close to an offer from OSU as he boasts a list with the likes of Nebraska (Oct. 31), Indiana (Sept. 26) and seven other Power 5 programs. The 6-3, 180-pound Maye spent pregame with offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Ryan Day and already has offers from North Carolina (Oct. 2), West Virginia (May 30) and Tennessee (April 15). He announced an offer from OSU on Nov. 4.

Other notable names in attendance confirmed by BSB were Fort Wayne (Ind.) Carroll 2019 wide receiver prospect Camdyn Childers (6-0, 190); Cincinnati St. Xavier 2020 five-star offensive tackle commitment Paris Johnson (6-7, 285); Baltimore St. Frances five-star defensive end target Chris Braswell (6-3, 211); Port Huron (Mich.) Northern 2020 three-star defensive end target Braiden McGregor (6-5½, 248); Cleveland St. Ignatius 2020 three-star tight end prospect

Sam Daugstrup (6-5, 230); and Strongsville, Ohio, 2022 offensive tackle prospect Blake Miller (6-6, 300).

OSU Commits Suffer Season-Ending Injuries

As the high school slate nears its end for the majority of Ohio State's commitments in the classes of 2019 and 2020, future Buckeyes from both cycles shared season-shortening injuries before the playoffs.

As previously reported, a knee injury to Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral 2020 four-star quarterback Jack Miller sent the OSU pledge to the sideline. Since then it was learned that Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic 2019 four-star safety commitment Ronnie Hickman had also suffered a knee injury.

The 6-1, 200-pound Hickman suffered a torn ACL to his right knee in DePaul Catholic's 44-19 victory at Jersey City (N.J.) Catholic. He sat out Oct. 19 in the Spartans' 59-28 loss to Ramsey (N.J.) Don Bosco Prep before his head coach, John McKenna, confirmed Oct. 21 to NJ Advance Media that the two-way star would be out for the rest of the fall.

In addition, McKenna said Hickman would miss the Jan. 5 All-American Bowl at the Alamodome in San Antonio. Hickman, who plays wide receiver and defensive back for DePaul Catholic, caught 26 passes for 609 yards and nine touchdowns on top of 19

Continued On Page 24

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Crowley Fills A Big Backfield Need For OSU

Continued From Page 23

tackles (one for loss) and five pass breakups in the Spartans' first seven games.

As for the 6-4, 210-pound Miller, Ohio State's potential signal caller of the future sprained an MCL on Oct. 12 in Chaparral's 42-24 loss to Phoenix Mountain Pointe. Miller missed the Firebirds' next two games – Oct. 19's 23-7 defeat at Phoenix Pinnacle and Oct. 26's 51-21 loss to Peoria (Ariz.) Liberty – and he did not receive medical clearance from his orthopedic doctor in time for the team's 6A playoff game Nov. 2 against Phoenix Desert Vista.

Chaparral, which also has 2020 four-star running back commitment Darvon Hubbard (6-0, 200), dropped a 40-14 result in the first-round contest. Miller's junior campaign ended with 141 completions on 256 attempts (55.1 percent) for 2,431 yards and 27 touchdowns to six interceptions in eight games.

"This has been an unforgettable season with my teammates but due to my knee injury my doctor will not clear me to return to the field. I'm recovering great and I will be back better!" read part of a Miller tweet.

Hickman is the 247Sports composite's No. 124 overall prospect, No. 11 safety and No. 3 player in New Jersey for 2019. Miller is the No. 63 overall prospect, No. 4 pro-style quarterback and No. 4 player in Arizona for 2020.

2019 Texas ATH Target Commits Elsewhere

Ever since Ohio State offered Peyton Powell on May 15, the four-star athlete from Odessa (Texas) Permian appeared to heavily consider the Buckeyes before hiccups in his recruitment along the way shook things up. The process concluded for the 6-2, 182-pounder Oct. 23 when he committed to Texas.

"Really just the coaching staff, the players what they have going on there right now," Powell, who plans to play quarterback at the next level but is open to wide receiver as well, told Ben Peck of ABC-2 and KMID-TV in Odessa. "The culture is going to get better and everything's promising. (Head coach Tom) Herman was new last year, but I knew



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A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1988

Despite a season-ending injury due to a broken collarbone, Lorain (Ohio) Admiral King running back Raymont Harris (6-2, 205) had emerged on the recruiting radar of Ohio State and several other tradition-rich programs.

Recognized by high school recruiting experts nationally as one of the best available running backs, Harris had the attention of the home-state Buckeyes. He was considering them with Michigan, Purdue, Notre Dame, Penn State and Georgia Tech.

"I'd say it's pretty much up in the air at this point," Harris said. "I'll just go ahead and take my visits and then go from there."

25 Years Ago – 1993

Ohio State moved closer to a Big Ten championship with a 24-6 win over Penn State on Oct. 30, and the Buckeyes gained ground in league-wide recruiting battles as well after the result at Ohio Stadium.

Among the prospects on campus for OSU's game was a trio of Ohio running backs in Euclid's Pepe Pearson (5-11, 175), Youngstown Rayen's Herman Benson and Canton McKinley's Che Bryant (6-3, 190).

BSB caught up with Bryant after the visit to campus.

"The school that shows the most interest in me is the school I'm going to go to," Bryant said. "I'm looking at which team will be best for me because I think the education and social life at these schools are pretty much the same."

20 Years Ago – 1998

As Ohio State hit the homestretch of its season in November, the Buckeyes began to rack up official visitors for two of the late weekends in 1998. OSU had already hosted several recruits officially over the course of the season which was to end Nov. 21 with the regular-season finale against Michigan.

Ohio State was slated to host Florida lineman Alex Jackson, California lineman Shane Lehmann and Arizona lineman Nick Johnson on official visits for The Game while

Georgia wide receiver Luke Powell and Florida defensive end Clint Mitchell were expected to attend unofficially as well.

Indianapolis Decatur Central wide receiver Tyrece Butler (6-4, 195) was another unofficial visitor penciled in to attend the Buckeyes' matchup with the Wolverines. Down to five schools, he planned to take two of his remaining official visits left to Indiana on Dec. 4 and Tennessee on Jan. 15 with Michigan and Purdue also in the mix.

"Good chance I might commit," Butler told BSB of OSU.

15 Years Ago – 2003

Among the top targets left for Ohio State in the 2004 recruiting class was Loveland, Colo., center Jeff Byers. The 6-4, 280-pounder was set to announce his college choice on Nov. 1 with the Buckeyes heavily involved. He had taken all five available official visits – Iowa, Texas, Southern California, Notre Dame and OSU – with a trip to Columbus on Aug. 30 for the Scarlet and Gray's 28-9 win over Washington serving as the latest visit to Ohio Stadium.

"I think the coaching staff is fantastic," Byers told BSB of Ohio State. "I feel that they have a very strong bond between their offensive linemen."

Byers was the No. 1 center in the country. Colorado, Nebraska and UCLA were also in consideration.

10 Years Ago – 2008

Before the Nov. 1 off week, Ohio State battled Penn State but dropped a 13-6 final Oct. 25 at Ohio Stadium. Not all was lost in Columbus, though, as the Buckeyes hosted Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro five-star defensive tackle Corey Adams (6-3, 288) and impressed on an official visit. The No. 7 defensive tackle in the country, he left campus with a top three of Arizona, OSU and Southern California.

"Ohio State's been in the mix since the kid was a sophomore," Adams' high school coach, John Sanders, told BSB. "I wouldn't say they started coming around and contacting

him, but the kid knew that was a place that he would love to play. When kids are 14 or 15, they talk about going to be a Gator or going to be a Buckeye or going to be a Sooner. That was out of his mouth when he was a young kid."

Five Years Ago – 2013

When Ohio State routed Penn State, 63-14, on Oct. 26 at Ohio Stadium, a slew of recruits came away impressed with the prime-time experience in Columbus.

Hinesville (Ga.) Liberty County five-star linebacker Raekwon McMillan (6-2, 230) led the group. The Buckeyes hosted a pair of additional five-star targets from Texas in Coppell defensive end Solomon Thomas (6-3, 256) and Beaumont Ozen cornerback Tony Brown (6-1, 185).

Other prospects on hand from the 2014 recruiting class included Gallatin (Tenn.) Station Camp four-star wide receiver Josh Malone (6-2, 191) and East Mississippi Community College four-star offensive tackle Avery Gennesy (6-5, 315).

One Year Ago – 2017

Seven official visitors were among an abundance of recruits in attendance at Ohio Stadium for Ohio State's 39-38 comeback victory against Penn State on Oct. 28.

The list of confirmed prospects on campus included St. Louis Christian Brothers College four-star wide receiver target Kamryn Babb (6-1, 189); Orlando (Fla.) Jones four-star cornerback commitment Sevin Banks (6-1, 180); Fairfield, Ohio, five-star offensive tackle target Jackson Carman (6-6, 330); Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy four-star safety target Tyreke Johnson (6-1, 191); Franklin (Ga.) Heard County four-star quarterback commitment Emory Jones (6-2½, 195); Cleveland Heights four-star defensive end target Tyreke Smith (6-3, 260); and Seffner (Fla.) Armwood four-star running back commitment Brian Snead (5-11, 200).

At the time, OSU's 2018 recruiting class featured 18 commitments.

he was going to turn the program around like he does every other program that he goes to. So it wasn't surprising, but I like the way they're playing right now. Just the plan that they gave me, they had everything set up for me when I got there and I'm excited."

OSU hosted Powell, who was recruited as a defensive back, on an official visit the weekend of June 22-24 and remained heavily in the mix for his pledge throughout the next few months. He originally planned to announce a decision over the summer, setting a date for Aug. 13, but the university's investigation involving Meyer played into pushing the process back.

Powell attended Ohio State's 40-28 win over TCU on Sept. 15 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, as a guest of the Buckeyes before taking his final two official visits over the subsequent month. He spent weekends

on in-state trips to see the Horned Frogs (Sept. 28) and then the Longhorns (Oct. 13), ultimately wrapping up the process 10 days after attending UT's 23-17 victory against Baylor at DKR-Texas Memorial Stadium in Austin.

Powell chose Texas over OSU and TCU after things cooled in September with Oklahoma, which offered him July 30 and hosted him Sept. 1 for the Sooners' 63-14 rout of Florida Atlantic in Norman. He is the 247Sports composite's No. 351 overall prospect, No. 19 athlete and No. 42 player in Texas, which gives the Longhorns their 20th commitment in their No. 7-ranked class nationally for 2019.

Ohio State Offers 2020 Florida ATH

When Ohio State went out on the road

during the off week, Alford stopped in Cocoa, Fla., to offer 2020 four-star athlete Caziah Holmes. The 6-0, 175-pounder plays running back and cornerback for the Tigers.

The Buckeyes' offer to Holmes marked his 12th after he saw North Carolina (May 17), Central Florida (May 7), Buffalo (May 4), Pittsburgh (May 3), Syracuse (April 25), Kentucky (April 3) and Rutgers (March 31) enter the mix throughout the spring evaluation period. Holmes previously picked up offers over the summer of 2017 from Florida, Louisville, Miami (Fla.) and Maryland.

He has attempted 95 rushes for 751 yards (7.9 per carry) with a long of 62 and 10 touchdowns so far in his junior campaign. Holmes is the 247Sports composite's No. 292 overall prospect, No. 20 athlete and No. 45 player in Florida for 2020.

Bucks Extend PWO Offers In St. Louis

Open-date travel took Ohio State to St. Louis Christian Brothers College, where the Buckeyes extended preferred walk-on offers to two prospects for 2019. OSU provided those opportunities to cornerback Larry Williams and tight end Niko Hea.

The 6-1, 190-pound Williams and the 6-5, 220-pound Hea have an abundance of offers from schools in the FCS. At the FBS level, Williams holds one offer from Ball State while Hea unofficially visited Illinois on March 10.

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Recruiting Updates

Those Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers who follow football recruiting closely should not only monitor the regular stories on our BuckeyeSports.com website daily but also check out the site's Forum, where recruiting tidbits are frequently found. Readers should also monitor the Official Game Thread on the Forum each Saturday game day. BSB staffers are on the sidelines before the game, especially home games, watching for recruits and any recruiting activity. The Game Thread goes on to offer insight from the staff and BSB readers throughout the game.

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the Buckeyes signed the four-star duo of wide receiver Kamryn Babb and cornerback Cameron Brown for 2018.

Top Target Robinson Stays Home

Ohio State's last shot at Wandale Robinson was not enough for the Buckeyes, who lost out on the four-star recruit to Kentucky as he decided Nov. 1 to stay home. The all-purpose back from Frankfort (Ky.) Western Hills chose UK over OSU and Nebraska, which was considered the favorite for his commitment earlier in the week. Robinson's final six also included Alabama, Michigan and Purdue.

"I was up in the air within the past couple of days," Robinson, fielding questions from reporters after the Nov. 1 announcement at Western Hills, said. "Really, I just sat with myself and really thought about everything and really where I wanted to be. Obviously, I decided Kentucky."

"This process has been going on for a really long time now, so it's really good to get it all over with and not really have to be talking to coaches every day."

The 5-9½, 179-pounder picked Kentucky after a packed schedule of visits over the previous five months. His weekends of official visits from June to October included trips to Purdue (June 8), Michigan (June 22), Nebraska (Sept. 1), Alabama (Sept. 22) and Ohio State (Oct. 6).

The Wildcats did not receive an official visit from Robinson, whose high school sits 30 miles west of the university's campus in Lexington, but proximity allowed him to check out UK on free time. He took his final official visit to see the Buckeyes record a 49-26 victory against Indiana, followed by an Oct. 26 visit from OSU interim wide receivers coach Brian Hartline at Robinson's regular-season finale for Western Hills' 25-18 win over Cynthiana (Ky.) Harrison County.

Ohio State, which recruited Robinson as a slot receiver and return man, was believed to be the favorite for his commitment after he first unofficially visited the Buckeyes on April 6 for spring camp before returning Sept. 8 for their 52-3 victory against Rutgers on another unofficial visit. Robinson is Kentucky's highest-rated commitment as the 247Sports composite's No. 322 overall

prospect, No. 4 all-purpose back and No. 7 in-state player.

OSU Offers Another Oak Park Product

Ohio State was already recruiting three players from Oak Park, Mich., and roped a fourth into the mix Oct. 31 when the Buckeyes offered 2020 three-star wide receiver Maliq Carr. OSU also has extended offers to the 2020 duo of five-star offensive guard Justin Rogers (6-2½, 311) and four-star athlete Enzo Jennings over the past year and a

half, while 2019 four-star quarterback Dwan Mathis has been committed since June 24.

The 6-6, 195-pound Carr caught 21 passes for 741 yards (35.3 yards per catch) and eight touchdowns in 11 games for the Knights. He holds offers from Purdue (Oct. 29), Pittsburgh (Oct. 20), Nebraska (Sept. 8), Kent State (June 8), Boston College (May 8), Iowa (May 8), Missouri (May 7), Iowa State (May 7) and Western Michigan (Jan. 30) since the start of 2018 after Kentucky (Dec. 6) and Syracuse (April 28) became his first offers in 2017.

How athletic is Carr? He has six offers for basketball – Missouri (Sept. 14), LIU-Brooklyn (April 28), Robert Morris (April 28), Oakland (April 27), Western Michigan (April 27) and Cleveland State (April 21) – with Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann's staff showing interest as well.

Carr plans to take his next unofficial visit to see the Buckeyes on Nov. 24 for the Michigan game. He is the 247Sports composite's No. 674 overall prospect, No. 119 wide receiver and No. 25 player in Michigan for 2020.

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UMD's Durkin Reinstated, Fired Amid Backlash

On Oct. 30, the University of Maryland elected to reinstate head coach D.J. Durkin after he had been placed on administrative leave in the aftermath of allegations of player mistreatment and the death of offensive lineman Jordan McNair, who died after suffering heatstroke during an offseason workout.

BIG TEN NOTES

James Grega

One day later, Durkin was fired amid backlash against the decision made by the board of regents.

Durkin was reinstated on Oct. 30 and coached practice on Halloween. He was expected to coach the Terrapins for their home game against Michigan State on Nov. 3. Instead, he was fired as he walked off the practice field at his first practice back by university president Wallace Loh.

Perhaps the most prominent name to speak out against Durkin was the governor of Maryland, Larry Hogan.

"I am deeply troubled by the lack of transparency from the Board of Regents and deeply concerned about how they could have possibly arrived at the decisions announced yesterday," Hogan said in a statement. "I share the concerns of many Marylanders and believe very strongly that more must be done to restore the public

trust. I am calling on both the University System of Maryland Board of Regents and President Wallace Loh to reconsider their decisions and to schedule a public hearing to address these issues in an open and transparent manner.

"While the university system is required by law to operate independent of political influence, and as such no governor has the ability to hire or fire any university personnel or members of the Board of Regents, I can and will demand that the university is held accountable for making the reforms they have pledged to put in place with the full transparency that the students, parents and faculty expect and deserve.

"The University System of Maryland has let down the University of Maryland community and the citizens of Maryland, and now is the time to fix it."

Among other people who called for Durkin's firing were U.S. Congressman Anthony G. Brown of Maryland and a number of Maryland players, including offensive lineman Ellis McKennie, who was very outspoken about the decision on Twitter.

In one instance, he wrote, "Every Saturday my teammates and I have to kneel before the memorial of our fallen teammate. Yet a group of people do not have the courage to hold anyone accountable for his death. If only they could have the courage that Jordan had. It's never the wrong time to do what's right."

According to reports, multiple players

walked out of a team meeting Durkin had when he was initially reinstated, and more walked out of his first practice back with the team.

After he was fired, multiple players took to Twitter to voice their approval of the reversal in decision.

Linebacker Tre Watson's Twitter statement, however, made the most noise on the Internet: "Pressure busts pipes, doesn't it?"

Wide receiver DJ Turner sent the following out on his Twitter account, following the firing: "It's funny how we have all this 'support' now, but I haven't seen the stadium full since I got to the University of Maryland!"

In another tweet, Turner wrote: "Please keep all the fake love, we're good! We stuck together when this mess started, and we will stay together now that it's over!"

In its first game since Durkin's firing, Maryland was defeated 24-3 by Michigan State in front of an announced home crowd of just 31,737 in a stadium with a capacity of 51,802.

Interim head coach Matt Canada, who will now finish out the season at Maryland, sent a letter to the families of the players on Maryland's roster prior to the loss to MSU.

"The last three days, much like the past several months, have been challenging for everyone involved," Canada wrote. "There has been a lot written and said about our program. Our young men have been forced to deal with intense distractions and speculation, none of which they asked for. We can't change that and we don't control it – what's being said, how it's being written, any of it.

"What we do control is what's in front of us as a team. We control how we prepare for Michigan State, we control how we represent this University and how we carry ourselves on and off the field. Our entire staff is extremely proud of how our young men have persevered and come together through significant adversity. Their resolve is incredible. Much of this is attributable to how you've raised, encouraged and supported them. For this we thank you!

BIG 2018 Standings

East Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Michigan	6	0	1.000	8	1	.889
Ohio State	5	1	.833	8	1	.889
Michigan State	4	2	.667	6	3	.667
Penn State	3	3	.500	6	3	.667
Maryland	3	3	.500	5	4	.556
Indiana	1	5	.167	4	5	.444
Rutgers	0	6	.000	1	8	.111

West Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Northwestern	5	1	.833	5	4	.556
Wisconsin	4	2	.667	6	3	.667
Purdue	4	2	.667	5	4	.556
Iowa	3	3	.500	6	3	.667
Illinois	2	4	.333	4	5	.444
Nebraska	1	5	.167	2	7	.222
Minnesota	1	5	.167	4	5	.444

Oct. 26 Score

Minnesota 38, Indiana 31

Oct. 27 Scores

Nebraska 45, Bethune-Cookman 9

Michigan State 23, Purdue 13

Northwestern 31, Wisconsin 17

Maryland 63, Illinois 33

Penn State 30, Iowa 24

Nov. 3 Scores

Purdue 38, Iowa 36

Michigan State 24, Maryland 3

Illinois 55, Minnesota 31

Ohio State 36, Nebraska 31

Notre Dame 31, Northwestern 21

Michigan 42, Penn State 7

Wisconsin 31, Rutgers 17

Nov. 10 Games

Illinois at Nebraska, Noon (BTN)

Maryland at Indiana, Noon (BTN)

Wisconsin at Penn State, Noon (ABC)

Ohio St. at Michigan St., Noon (FOX)

Michigan at Rutgers, 3:30 p.m. (BTN)

Northwestern at Iowa, 3:30 p.m. (FOX)

Purdue at Minnesota, 3:30 p.m. (ESPN2)

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From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1983

At halftime of Ohio State's 45-27 win over Wisconsin on Oct. 29 at Ohio Stadium, legendary Buckeye coach Woody Hayes became the fifth non-band member to dot the "i" during Script Ohio.

The others before Hayes were former OSU president Novice G. Fawcett and his wife in 1971, band music arranger Richard Heine in 1974, Bob Hope in 1978 and former band director Jack Evans and his wife in 1979.

Hayes dotted the "i" to showers of applause from the home crowd in the Horseshoe, which was described as its loudest and longest lasting roar in the past year.

"I think our team has a great feeling for Coach Hayes," said head coach Earle Bruce.

30 Years Ago – 1988

Ohio State fell to 3-5 overall after its 20-10 loss at Michigan State on Oct. 26, which served as a tipping point for the Buckeyes in their tumultuous 1988 season. Following OSU's fourth Big Ten loss in five contests, sophomore quarterback Greg Frey voiced his frustration.

"I'm really frustrated," said Frey, who completed 19 of 33 passes for 229 yards and one touchdown. "We've got a good offense. We just keep stopping ourselves over and over and over. I'm getting sick of it."

Ohio State's offense moved the ball for 360 total yards but was unable to get into the end zone more than once. The Buckeyes turned the ball over four times, two of which came from Frey's interceptions.

"It looks like we're really ready to bust it at any time," Frey said. "We just haven't done it yet."

25 Years Ago – 1993

Out for the season with a sleep disorder referred to by team physician Dr. John Lombardo as "burnout," junior nose guard Matt Bonhaus was granted an extra year of eligibility by the NCAA. Bonhaus received the news before Ohio State's 24-6 win over Penn State on Oct. 31 at Ohio Stadium.

"He's been working out at home, and we talk to him pretty frequently," defensive coordinator Bill Young told BSB. "Our main concern is for him to just get better."

He was not enrolled at the university at the time, instead spending his time home in recovery. Bonhaus redshirted as a freshman, but when the NCAA considered Bonhaus was not at school due to health reasons, he was able to receive another year of eligibility with the Buckeyes.

"We're monitoring him and he's doing well," team trainer Billy Hill said. "He's on medication, but we're trying

to slowly wean him off of that. All indications are he should be fine."

20 Years Ago – 1998

In the first year of the Bowl Championship Series, Ohio State sported the No. 2 spot in the initial ranking, heading into the Buckeyes' 38-7 victory against Indiana on Oct. 31, improving OSU to 8-0 overall and 5-0 in Big Ten play.

The official BCS standings, based on a mathematical formula with poll votes, strength of schedule, each team's record and computer rankings, came out first on Oct. 26 and featured Ohio State as the second-ranked team behind UCLA.

"I'm not going to tell you it didn't have anything to do with it," head coach John Cooper said of the initial rankings snub playing into OSU's 31-point rout of the Hoosiers. "I'd be lying to you if I said we didn't mention it to them."

15 Years Ago – 2003

As Ohio State entered its Big Ten matchup at Penn State on Nov. 1 after the Buckeyes' 35-6 rout of Indiana on Oct. 25, the offensive explosion came at a price with senior wide receiver Drew Carter's knee injury at the end of a 17-yard haul in the second quarter against the Hoosiers.

The 6-4, 200-pounder landed awkwardly on his right leg and initially thought the tweak was nothing more than a hyperextended knee. However, the day after the game an MRI revealed Carter's torn ACL.

"It's a tough loss because he's been a warrior for us," said head coach Jim Tressel. "He was a guy who was really starting to come on."

With the team at 7-1 overall and 4-1 in Big Ten play deep into its 2003 campaign, Carter's senior season and OSU career came to an unfortunate end. In his final game, in just about two quarters, he hauled in three passes for 75 yards.

Redshirt freshman Santonio Holmes and junior Bam Childress were expected to step up as a result at wide receiver, while the door also opened for wideout-turned-cornerback Chris Gamble to get more two-way time on offense.

10 Years Ago – 2008

Although Tyson Gentry was no longer on the field for Ohio State, the walk-on Buckeye was making an impact away from the game as he recovered from his partial paralysis injury and was nominated for the 2008 FedEx Orange Bowl Football Writers Association of America Courage Award. The requirements for the award included displaying courage on or off the field, including overcoming an injury or physical handicap, preventing a disaster or living through hardship.

The senior punter from Sandusky, Ohio, had suffered a broken C-4 vertebra during spring practice in April 2006 but remained a valued member of OSU's team through the subsequent seasons. The injury occurred when Gentry filled in as a scout-team wide receiver and hit the ground awkwardly on a pass play, but he had since regained movement in his head, shoulders and arms.

In a motorized wheelchair, Gentry remained around the program on a daily basis, attending team meetings and practices, while continuing a rigorous therapy regimen with progress. He was on track to receive his bachelor's degree in speech and hearing science in the spring of 2009 with an ultimate goal of getting a master's degree and becoming a speech therapist.

Five Years Ago – 2013

At halftime of Ohio State's 63-14 blowout win over Penn State on Oct. 26, legendary tackle Orlando Pace was honored for his induction into the College Football Hall of Fame as well as a \$250,000 donation to the football program.

One of the greatest blindside protectors the sport has ever seen, Pace was a two-time All-American for the Buckeyes from 1994-96. His donation went toward the Orlando Pace Recruit Room.

"Recruiting is such a big competition, and I wanted to do my part and give back," Pace said. "If a recruit goes in there – I was just in there last night, and it's a beautiful room. Recruiting is a competition, and once those recruits walk in that room they'll see Ohio State is the place to be."

One Year Ago – 2017

An instant classic unfolded Oct. 28 at Ohio Stadium when No. 6 Ohio State turned around a 15-point deficit in the fourth quarter and took down No. 2 Penn State for a 39-38 come-from-behind win before 109,302 in Columbus.

"Wow," head coach Urban Meyer said after the game. "What the heck just happened?"

The Buckeyes improved to 7-1 and 5-0 in Big Ten play after knocking off the Nittany Lions (7-1, 4-1), doing so behind fifth-year senior quarterback J.T. Barrett's career-best finish as he completed each of his last 13 attempts and threw three touchdown passes in the final frame.

"There's some times where I've got to come across aggressive and intense and get our guys motivated, and other times where you need poise and let everybody know that everything is going to be all right," said Barrett, who went 33 for 39 (84.6 percent) for 328 yards and four touchdowns through the air and added 17 attempts for 95 yards on the ground. "We've just got to stick together and it's going to work out."

other. We will continue to honor Jordan. We will play hard and as a team. We will make you proud."

Canada also left his personal contact information on the letter addressed to those parents and guardians.

Rutgers Player Arrested In Murder Plot

The nightmarish season for Rutgers took another strange turn on Oct. 30 when linebacker Izaia Bullock was arrested and charged for his connection to a double-murder plot.

The identities of Bullock's intended victims were not made public, and they were not harmed.

According to reports, Bullock was arrested after an investigation by the Rutgers University Police Department. The prosecutor's office said that the plot was initiated on Oct. 29 after Bullock went through a bad breakup and intended to harm unnamed members of the woman's family. His plans

were foiled when he told a teammate of his idea. That teammate reported the conversation to a coach, who then took the information to the authorities.

Following his arrest, Bullock was immediately dismissed from the team and has since reportedly admitted to planning the double-murder plot. Police said they found crushed Tylenol, a mask and gloves in his car following his arrest.

As of Nov. 3, he was being held in a Middlesex, N.J., jail following a court appearance on Nov. 1.

B1G Players Of The Week

A team that not many would have thought would be in this section of BSB, Illinois is getting its first player of the week nod of the 2018 season.

Fighting Illini junior running back Reggie Corbin rushed 13 times for a whopping 213 yards and a pair of scores in a 55-31 win over Minnesota on Nov. 3.

He ripped off touchdown runs of 77 and 72 yards against the Golden Gophers, while his backfield teammate AJ Bush carried 14 times for 127 and two touchdowns himself.

In all, the Illini accounted for 646 total yards of offense and tallied their second conference win and fourth overall.

Other notable performances around the

conference included another electric day from the reigning Big Ten Freshman of the Year, Jonathan Taylor, who rushed 27 times for 208 yards and three scores in a 31-17 win over Rutgers in Madison, Wis.

In Michigan State's 24-3 win over Maryland, sophomore running back Connor Heyward rushed 15 times for 157 yards and two touchdowns.

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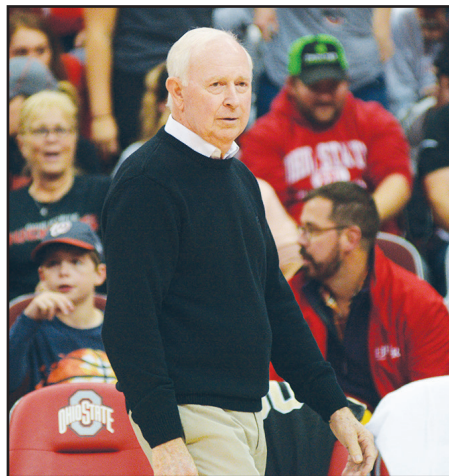
Return To OSU A 'Magical Moment' For Miller

Normally when Ohio State opens a season it comes against an in-state opponent in an exhibition. For years, the Buckeyes opened the season against Walsh during the Thad Matta era.

COURT REPORT James Grega

Last year, the first of the Chris Holtmann era, Ohio State opened against Wooster, the alma mater of assistant coach Ryan Pedon. To open the 2018-19 season, the Buckeyes brought back one of their own – but they went beyond the Ohio borders to do so.

Ohio State defeated UNC Pembroke on Nov. 1 in its exhibition game and in doing so brought former head coach Eldon Miller back to Columbus. Miller's son, Ben, is the head coach of the Braves, and Eldon has



KEVIN DYE

RETURN TO COLUMBUS – Former Ohio State head coach Eldon Miller faced the Buckeyes in an exhibition as a volunteer assistant with UNC Pembroke.

served as a volunteer assistant for the last decade.

An Ohio native, Miller coached the Buckeyes from 1976-86 and compiled a career record of 174-120, leading Ohio State to four NCAA Tournaments and an NIT championship in his final year in Columbus.

A pair of Miller's best players at Ohio State, Clark Kellogg and Ron Stokes, helped set up the reunion and joined Miller at mid-court for a photo along with a number of former players at halftime of the Buckeyes' 81-63 win over UNC Pembroke.

Prior to the game, Miller said he found out about the reunion over the summer, specifically on his birthday, June 19, from his son.

"I asked him, 'What's our exhibition game?' And he said, 'I think we got one. We are going to play the Buckeyes.' I said, 'What? Ohio State is not going to play you. They have too many in-state schools to take care of.' He said, 'No, they are going to play us. Stokes, Kellogg and some other guys got

it done,' " Miller said. "What a terrific deal. It is great for me personally and my family. My daughter flew up from the Cayman Islands. My only surviving aunt, she is 90, she will be here with my sister. It was exciting when he told me that."

The game, of course, was played at the Schottenstein Center, just down the road from the arena Miller coached in for 10 years. St. John Arena, which is set to host Ohio State's regular-season tilt against Cleveland State on Nov. 23, doesn't exactly hold a special place in Miller's heart, though.

He said that it was the players he coached who made his time at Ohio State special, not the venue they played in.

"That's a place. The reception before and after the game, that is real," he said. "That is love in the purest sense. That is very meaningful. When you have an opportunity to work with people and what they are doing and represent what they are trying to do, I feel very good about that."



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OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2019 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
DJ Carton	PG	6-1	189	★★★★★	Bettendorf, Iowa
Alonzo Gaffney	SF	6-9	190	★★★★	Wolfeboro (N.H.) Brewster Academy
EJ Liddell	PF	6-7	220	★★★★	Belleville (Ill.) West

When he reflects on his time at Ohio State, Miller said there is one particular day that stands out more than others, and it is a day that most Buckeye fans don't associate with basketball. That day was Dec. 29, 1978, the day of the 1978 Gator Bowl and Woody Hayes' final game as Ohio State's head football coach. Earlier that day, Miller's squad had pulled off perhaps the biggest upset of his coaching career, as the Buckeyes defeated No. 1 Duke, 90-84, in New York's Madison Square Garden.

"What is really sad to me is people outside the state didn't really know Coach Hayes. They remember Coach Hayes for that incident," Miller said of Hayes striking an opposing player at the Gator Bowl. "I remember Coach Hayes by following him

into the children's hospital, into the burn unit about once a week. That's how I remember Coach Hayes. Not by his football wins, but by what he stood for as a caring person. People remember him because he lost it for a second. That second doesn't define Coach Hayes."

After leaving Columbus in 1986, Miller was hired as the head coach at Northern Iowa, where he spent 12 seasons, leading the Panthers to their first ever NCAA Tournament appearance and win in 1990. After his departure from Northern Iowa in 1998, Miller remained out of coaching for 10 years before joining his son's staff at UNC Pembroke, where he has stayed since 2008.

At 79 years old, Miller said he is getting

more enjoyment out of coaching now than he ever did.

"I have been so blessed in my life, the opportunities I have had and I have now. I love Pembroke," he said. "It is a very diverse, small state university in North Carolina. Just a wonderful university trying to do good things in a very poor area both socially and economically."

As for his reunion at Ohio State, Miller called it "one of the great days" in his life.

"To be here with my family, to see a lot of the guys I was very close to – Ronnie Stokes, Troy Taylor and all the other players who on a Thursday night in November have come back to get together," he said. "That is the highlight. That is the most important part of this day. This is a magic moment. In coaching, you have magic moments, and today is certainly one of the most magical moments for my family."

Tough Stretch Opens Season

The first three games of Ohio State's regular season will perhaps be the toughest three-game stretch the Buckeyes play all season long.

Holtmann's squad is set to open the 2018-19 campaign Nov. 7 on the road against Cincinnati, a team that won 30 games last season and is reopening its brand-new renovated arena after a one-year hiatus.

From there, the Buckeyes are set to host Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne on Nov. 11. The Mastadons defeated Indiana last season by 20 points in Bloomington, Ind., and finished with a respectable 18-14 record. The third game in that stretch comes against a Creighton team that won 21 games a season ago before being ousted in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

The Bluejays are set to host the Buckeyes in Omaha, Neb., at the CHI Health Center, a place Holtmann's staff is familiar with. While at Butler, Holtmann dropped two of three contests at Creighton as a member of the Big East.

"I think some of it is in your control and some of it isn't," Holtmann said of the schedule. "In terms of Cincinnati, that was always going to be an early-season game."

Continued On Page 30



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Ohio's No. 2 Prospect Picks Michigan Over OSU

Continued From Page 29

The Gavitt Game (against Creighton) comes at us early, and it just so happens that it's at an incredibly hard place to play. We have a Fort Wayne team in there that has been a very good mid-major basketball team for a number of years.

"Am I concerned about this stretch? Sure," he added. "But I am anxious to see how we respond, too, and hopefully as coaches we can help our guys navigate our way through it."

Buckeyes Miss Out On Zeb Jackson

The No. 2 player in the state of Ohio for the 2020 class will be heading north.

Zeb Jackson, a point guard out of Maumee near Toledo, announced his commitment to Michigan on Oct. 23 with a Twitter video that featured him re-creating some of the biggest Michigan basketball moments in a small gymnasium.

In the video, Jackson said, "This has been a dream of mine ever since I was young. All of the hard work and late nights are finally paying off, and I couldn't be any more thankful. I want to thank my mom and dad for everything they have done because without them, I wouldn't be who I am today. I am excited to announce I will be attending the University of Michigan. Go Blue."

Jackson held an offer from Ohio State, and the Buckeyes were one of the final seven schools Jackson said he was considering before committing to the Wolverines. His commitment to Michigan likely means the Buckeyes will focus their attention on Dominiq Penn, the son of Buckeye great and current staffer Scoonie Penn. The younger Penn is rated the No. 3 prospect in the state out of Dublin Coffman High School and holds offers from Akron, Kent State, Duquesne, Saint Louis and Stony Brook as well as Ohio State.

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Bucks Have 'A Lot To Improve On'

The Ohio State men's basketball team defeated the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, a Division II school, 81-63 at the Schottenstein Center in an exhibition game on Nov. 1 10,147.

Head coach Chris Holtmann expressed some concerns in the postgame press conference with the regular season kicking off Nov. 7 against a talented Cincinnati team.

"We have a lot to improve on," Holtmann said. "We have some significant, significant areas that need improvement, significant areas."

Holtmann was asked if the significant areas were turnovers and three-point shooting after Ohio State turned the ball over 21 times and shot 5 of 25 from distance (20.0 percent).

"I'm not as worried about our shooting (as turnovers)," Holtmann explained. "Because I think some of that is just you're getting the feel and jitters and they had some changing defenses, which obviously we're going to see. And we weren't playing guys extended minutes. But certainly turnovers – way too careless with the ball today."

"I'm not playing guys extended minutes who can't take care of the ball – not doing it."

Holtmann was clearly unhappy with the turnovers against the Braves but said his team wants to do the right thing and will get better in that area.

Freshman guard Luther Muhammad started alongside senior point guard C.J. Jackson in the backcourt, while junior forward Andre Wesson and sophomore forwards Kyle Young and Kaleb Wesson started in the frontcourt. Holtmann said the starting lineup was currently the Buckeyes' best defensive lineup, but he acknowledged there was plenty of room for improvement.

"Andre gives us great versatility and he cares," Holtmann said. "Andre really cares about defense. Kyle Young is growing in that area, Kaleb is growing in that area. Luther is understanding our system but does a good job. And then C.J. competes on that end. He's got to get better, his details have to get better, but he competes on that end."

"We don't have the versatility we had with last year's group with (Jae'Sean Tate) and Keita (Bates-Diop) and that's significant. We're going to have to figure some things out as coaches because we don't have that versatility. But those guys care on that end."

Graduate transfer Keyshawn Woods came off the bench against Pembroke, but Holtmann clarified that the 6-3 guard would play starter-caliber minutes this season. He added that he likes to bring Woods off the bench to pair experienced

Ohio St. 81, UNC Pembroke 63

Nov. 1, 2018 Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio										
		1	2							F
UNC Pembroke		24	39	-						63
Ohio State		42	39	-						81
UNC Pembroke	Total FG FT Reb.									
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Pruitt	29	2-11	3-7	2-3	0	3	8			
Mounce	24	4-9	0-1	36-0	0	3	8			
Murray-Boyles	26	6-1	2-2	0-4	1	1	15			
Strother	26	4-9	0-0	0-1	1	2	11			
Kirk	28	1-7	2-2	2-9	4	2	5			
Kinsey	23	0-5	1-3	3-1	4	2	1			
Hamilton	12	0-6	3-4	0-1	2	2	3			
Bryant	15	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	1	3			
Levi	17	4-4	1-1	2-0	1	4	9			
Totals	200	22-67	12-20	16-19	13	24	63			

Percentages: FG: 32.8%. FT: 60.0%. **3-point goals:** 7-20 (Pruitt 1-2, Murray-Boyles 1-2, Strother 3-4, Kirk 1-4, Kinsey 0-1, Hamilton 0-5, Bryant 1-2). **Team rebounds:** 4. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Pruitt, Strother). **Turnovers:** 14 (Pruitt 3, TEAM 3, Murray-Boyles 2, Hamilton 2, Strother, Kirk, Kinsey, Bryant). **Steals:** 12 (Kinsey 5, Strother 2, Hamilton 2, Mounce, Kirk, Bryant).

Ohio State	Total FG FT Reb.									
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
A. Wesson	18	2-3	0-2	4-2	2	2	4			
Young	15	4-5	1-3	3-0	1	2	9			
K. Wesson	16	4-5	4-4	3-7	2	1	12			
Muhammad	17	3-5	2-3	0-1	3	0	9			
Jackson	18	3-10	1-2	1-5	2	2	8			
Potter	10	4-4	5-6	2-4	0	1	13			
Jallow	19	1-7	0-2	3-4	2	2	2			
Washington	21	2-8	0-0	0-0	1	1	5			
Ahrens	15	1-5	0-0	1-1	2	2	3			
Lane	8	1-3	0-0	0-2	0	1	3			
LeDee	15	2-2	5-6	2-5	0	1	9			
Woods	23	0-3	4-4	0-1	1	3	4			
Hummer	5	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	3	0			
Totals	200	27-61	22-32	21-35	16	21	81			

Percentages: FG: 44.3%. FT: 68.8%. **3-point goals:** 5-25 (A. Wesson 0-1, K. Wesson 0-1, Muhammad 1-2, Jackson 1-3, Jallow 0-2, Washington 1-5, Ahrens 1-5, Lane 1-3, Woods 0-2, Hummer 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 5. **Blocked shots:** 4 (Young, K. Wesson, Potter, LeDee). **Turnovers:** 21 (Jallow 5, A. Wesson 4, Washington 3, Jackson 2, Potter 2, Young, K. Wesson, Muhammad, Ahrens, Woods). **Steals:** 6 (K. Wesson 2, Muhammad, Jackson, Washington, Lane). **Officials:** Carstensen, Green, Schumer. **A:** 10,147.

guards with inexperienced guards on both the first and second units. Woods came to Columbus averaging 10.9 points and shooting 42.5 percent on three-pointers for his career with season highs of 12.5 points and 3.5 assists as a sophomore at Wake Forest.

Ohio State controlled the exhibition, leading 42-24 at the half and pushing the margin to as much as 30, 61-31, with 12:19 left in the game. Micah Potter led Buckeye scorers with 13 points in just 11 minutes of action.

The Buckeye freshmen played well despite some turnovers and missed three-pointers. Muhammad scored nine points and had three assists, while freshman forward Jaedon Ledee also scored nine points with seven rebounds. Freshman guard Duane Washington scored five points and freshman forward Justin Ahrens added three points, but both struggled from deep, each shooting 1 of 5 on three-pointers.

Kaleb Wesson will be the focal point of the offense, and he scored 12 points and grabbed 10 rebounds in only 16 minutes against UNC Pembroke.

– Joe Dempsey

Buckeyes Offer Maryland 4-Star

With the 2019 class complete, Ohio State has begun diving into the 2020 class and on Oct. 27 offered four-star small forward Che Evans out of Timonium (Md.) Dulaney High School.

Ranked the No. 142 player in the nation according to 247Sports composite rankings, Evans already holds offers from 19 other

schools including Big Ten programs Rutgers and Penn State.

Evans took an unofficial visit to Ohio State during the football off week and even took a picture with Greg Oden. Ten days before earning his offer, he listed Ohio State in his top 10 along with Texas Tech, Long Beach State, UCLA, TCU, Rutgers, Boston College, Florida, Boise State and Georgetown.

McGuff Set To Lead New-Look Bucks Into '18-19

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

After Ohio State missed on scholarship players in the 2017 recruiting class, head coach Kevin McGuff re-evaluated the plan for the women's basketball team in 2018 and beyond. Over the course of the 2017-18 season, the Buckeyes signed three freshman prospects as they looked to build up the program following their departed starting five.

With obvious roster spots left to fill, the head coach and his staff went an unconventional route, eventually catching five one-year players on the graduate-transfer market and entering the 2018-19 campaign with a nearly completely new squad.

"It was kind of just an overall strategy where I think, just based on what the landscape was with the high school kids, that this would give us the best chance to be great in the long run," McGuff said. "So, we're still in the middle of kind of making that happen. We did the first part – we got the grad transfers. Now the second part is to get the recruits, and we're certainly in that process. I like where we are. We've still got a couple of things I hope we can finish out. It will really put us in a great place."

On the trail, the move has paid off for McGuff. OSU's class of 2019 boasts four top-50 commitments in ESPN's HoopGurlz Recruiting Rankings – Canton (Ohio) McKinley guard Kierstan Bell (No. 6), Indianapolis North Central point guard Rikki Harris (No. 24), Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ the King wing Kaelyn Satterfield (No. 39) and Dublin (Ohio) Coffman guard Jacy Sheldon (No. 41) – with two pledges already aboard for its class of 2020 in Westerville South's Anyssa Jones and Gabby Hutcherson.

On the court, though, the gamble from 2017 puts Ohio State's 2018-19 season in jeopardy. The top six Buckeyes from the 2017-18 rotation are gone with Kelsey Mitchell, Stephanie Mavunga, Linnae Harper, Asia Doss and Alex Hart all graduated. Sierra Calhoun transferred to Rutgers. While one rotation player returns in fifth-year senior forward Makayla Waterman along with three reserves, Ohio State brings in three freshmen and the five graduate transfers as its Big Ten title defense begins.

"Kay Kay's been here five years now, and we obviously need a lot of leadership out of her," McGuff said of Waterman. "Even though the older kids, the fifth-year (players), some of them just by nature they are leaders. Even though they haven't been here, they have the experience in college basketball. They have experienced the trials and tribulations, so I would expect that they'll contribute in the leadership role."

After the Buckeyes closed out the pre-season with a closed scrimmage Oct. 21 against Louisville and an exhibition Oct. 28 at Value City Arena vs. Division-II Indiana University of Pennsylvania, OSU will face a brutal nonconference schedule to start as the calendar flips to November. Ohio State was slated to open Nov. 6 against South Florida, and after the Nov. 9 game vs. Detroit Mercy, it plays Nov. 11 at Connecticut. The Bulls blasted the Buckeyes in an 84-65 blowout Feb. 11 and went on to the NCAA tournament while the Huskies reached the Final Four, setting up two immediate tests for McGuff's team as it continues to come together.

"We just have to keep getting better,"

McGuff said. "I think it's kind of cliché for coaches to say that, and it's always important, but this year in particular there are so many new people. I just think getting better every day and making sure that we're on a path that allows us to do that is the most important thing."

Below is a position-by-position breakdown of the 2018-19 roster, listed in alphabetical order with the most recent stats for each player.

Forward

Savitha Jayaraman, 6-2, So. (0.5 points per game, 0.1 rebounds per game, 1 block) – Put on scholarship midway through her freshman year after she started the 2017-18 season as a walk-on, Jayaraman averaged 2.8 minutes in 19 games. While others are obviously higher on Ohio State's totem pole in the post, the Powell, Ohio, native from nearby Olentangy Liberty adds a developing sophomore who has now been around the program for the past 12 months.

Dorka Juhasz, 6-4, Fr. – OSU needs immediate production from all three of its freshmen, but Juhasz might have the biggest impact. The Pecs, Hungary, product comes to Columbus with overseas experience after competing on several Hungarian national teams from 2015-17. Most recently, she averaged 11.7 points and 9.4 rebounds in seven games at the 2017 FIBA U19 Women's Basketball World Cup. Her path to Ohio State includes an amateur stop on the PEAC-Pecs Professional Basketball Club, which belongs to the BTravel WABA League in Europe.

"Playing on the national team allowed me to play against a lot of competition," Juhasz said. "World championships, to play other nationalities – not just European teams – I kind of knew the players that were playing from other teams. I feel like the professional experience helped me a lot with playing against American players, WNBA players. So I kind of know what will be here this season."

With size and versatility to move inside

OSU Handles IUP In Exhibition Game

Ohio State's season starts officially with the Nov. 6 opener against South Florida, but the Buckeyes got their first taste of game action Oct. 28 in an exhibition matchup with Division-II Indiana University of Pennsylvania and came away with a 72-50 victory before 3,310 at Value City Arena in Columbus.

Graduate guard Carly Santoro and freshman forward Dorka Juhasz paced OSU with 14 points apiece, followed by 12 each from freshmen Janai Crooms and Aaliyah Patty. Fifth-year senior forward Makayla Waterman nearly notched a double-double effort with eight points and 10 rebounds.

"I thought we all played really well," Crooms said. "The first half was just that we weren't really used to playing on the big floor. But then as time went on, we started playing better and defense got better. The offense was just flowing, and we were just all involved."

Ohio State went with graduate point guard Carmen Grande, graduate guard Adreana Miller, Santoro, Juhasz and Waterman in its starting five. Grande went scoreless on an 0-for-6 clip from the floor but shelled out three assists and grabbed two rebounds, while Miller scored nine points on 2-of-6 shooting with a 1-of-5 on three-pointers and a 4-for-4 result on free throws.

Recaps of all Ohio State women's basketball games for the 2018-19 season will be posted on BuckeyeSports.com, BSB's full-service website. BuckeyeSports.com is free to all print subscribers, and signup information can be found on page 5.

– Garrett Stepien

Ohio State 72, Indiana (Pa.) 50

Oct. 28, 2018											
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio											
		1	2	3	4					F	
Indiana (Pa.)		13	13	11	13					50	
Ohio State		20	11	24	17					72	
Indiana (Pa.)	Total FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF				Pts.	
Robinson	29	0-3	0-0	0-6	2	4	0				
Griggs	22	1-6	1-4	0-4	3	3	3				
Appleby	34	7-15	8-9	0-4	2	3	23				
Wolosik	35	2-8	3-3	0-3	2	1	7				
Myers	33	4-7	0-0	2-5	0	1	11				
Lovelace	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0				
Alexander	10	1-2	0-0	1-1	0	1	3				
Cardona	3	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0				
Preston	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0				
Hunter	8	0-2	0-0	1-0	1	1	0				
D'Anna	14	1-3	1-2	1-2	0	4	3				
Fink	6	0-1	0-0	0-0	2	3	0				
Totals	200	16-48	13-18	12-28	22	50					
Percentages: FG: 33.3%. FT: 72.2%. 3-point goals: 5-18 (Griggs 0-3, Appleby 1-4, Wolosik 0-3, Myers 3-5, Lovelace 0-1, Alexander 1-2). Team rebounds: 9. Blocked shots: 3 (Robinson 2, Griggs). Turnovers: 23 (Wolosik 7, Appleby 4, Myers 4, Alexander 3, D'Anna 2, Robinson, Preston, TEAM). Steals: 5 (Robinson 2, Griggs, Appleby, Wolosik).											
Ohio State	Total FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF				Pts.	
Juhasz	27	5-11	4-7	4-5	0	0	14				
Waterman	30	4-9	0-0	3-7	3	2	8				
Grande	26	0-6	0-0	0-2	3	4	0				
Santoro	27	5-12	1-1	0-3	1	1	14				
Miller	26	2-6	4-4	1-1	1	2	9				
Crooms	24	5-8	2-3	0-1	0	2	12				
Jayaraman	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0				
Queenland	17	0-2	3-4	0-0	0	2	3				
Cronin	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0				
Patty	17	4-8	4-5	1-4	1	3	12				
Totals	200	25-63	18-24	14-23	9	16	72				
Percentages: FG: 39.7%. FT: 75.0%. 3-point goals: 4-20 (Juhasz 0-2, Waterman 0-3, Santoro 3-7, Miller 1-5, Queenland 0-1, Patty 0-2). Team rebounds: 5. Blocked shots: 4 (Waterman 2, Juhasz, Crooms). Turnovers: 9 (Grande 4, Waterman 2, Miller, Crooms, Queenland). Steals: 14 (Crooms 4, Waterman 3, Santoro 2, Juhasz, Grande, Miller, Cronin, Patty). Officials: Enterline, Herriman-Camarota, Maxey. A: 3,310.											

and out, Juhasz brings intrigue as an athlete who is a likely lock to be in the starting lineup at the five because the Buckeyes need her size and ability on the court. To expect so much might overwhelm the average freshman, but Juhasz embraces the challenge

as she meshes with the influx of graduate transfers and freshmen on the floor.

"As I talked to a lot of people, they were really scared, like, 'Oh, my God. Who will be

Continued On Page 32

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Guard Abshaw Out For Season After ACL Injury

Continued From Page 31

here in the season?" There's so many new players, but I don't think that's a negative thing. I think that can help us," Juhasz said. "Everybody's new. The grad transfers have just one more year to give everything on the court. We're freshmen, but we're really motivated to show what kind of players we are. Also, we have juniors who have two years.

"So, I feel like everybody's really motivated, and I feel like we built a really good team with really great team chemistry. But from the summer, I feel like although not every player was here we couldn't really work on it, but now we're spending more time outside the court and not just on the court. So, I'm pretty positive about it this year."

Aaliyah Patty, 6-3, Fr. – Like Juhasz, Patty will be expected to take immediate action as Ohio State retools down low.

As a senior at Lombard (Ill.) Montini Catholic in 2017-18, she averaged 15.9 points, 9.5 rebounds and 2.4 assists en route to a 34-win season and an appearance in the state title game.

In her freshman campaign with the Buckeyes, she projects to play off the bench at the five with room for growth dependent on where the development goes from there, but Patty embraces the opportunity to step up.

"I feel like I'll be in playing time early, which is an advantage for me to get in and experience it my first year so that my next few years to come I'm developing more and more," she said.

Makayla Waterman, 6-2, Gr. (3.5 ppg, 3.9 rpg) – Before she ultimately decided to return for her fifth year, Waterman nearly gave up basketball. Two torn ACLs between high school at Kettering (Ohio) Fairmont and as a freshman in 2014-15 at Ohio State, a hard fall and a strained neck as a junior in 2017-18 left Waterman to evaluate if 2018-19 was worth the further wear and tear. After her injuries, she spoke with McGuff and arrived at her decision.

"I had a couple talks with Coach McGuff, really, based on my health," she explained. "The older I get, the more my knee bothers me. But it was definitely based on how was I going to feel. Even now, if I don't feel like I can practice or I don't feel 100 percent, I'll stay out. I'm not going to force it, but finally, I decided – I'm like, 'I think I can do this.'"

She returns much-needed experience for the Buckeyes after they graduated their starting lineup. Waterman's average of 18.2 min-

OSU Adds Latest Top-50 Commit

The recruiting roll continued for head coach Kevin McGuff when Ohio State received its latest commitment in the 2019 class from Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ the King's Kaelynn Satterfield on Oct. 19.

The 6-0 Satterfield is the No. 39 overall prospect and No. 8 forward for the current cycle in ESPN's HoopGurlz Recruiting Rankings. She chose OSU over Georgia Tech, LSU, Michigan and Marquette.

Collegiate Girls Basketball Report's Dan Olson provided the following evaluation for Satterfield in April 2018: "Skilled, versatile perimeter prospect with deceptive quickness, superb hands, makes others better; exploits mismatches with physical 1 on 1 game; interior passer, court awareness; versatile on both ends of the floor; coveted player with pedigree in the class of 2019.

– Garrett Stepien

utes in 32 games off the bench give an experienced veteran to OSU's rotation, highlighted by her ability to create from the high post with 44 assists in 2017-18 to show for those efforts. Ready to lead the way, Waterman refuses to treat the upcoming campaign as a rebuild despite the offseason overhaul.

"I'm actually really excited just to kind of show myself to people that I've been watching for a while," Waterman said. "I'm ready. It's my last year. I'm ready to play hard, to win a lot of games. I kind of am like a little kid. I can't wait for the first game, just to see it all come together."

Guard

Ashanti Abshaw, 5-9, Gr. (19.2 ppg, 4.1 rpg) – After Ohio State added Abshaw as a graduate-transfer guard from Cleveland State in May, McGuff had high hopes for her impact on the Buckeyes' offense as she meshed with OSU's new-look squad throughout the preseason.

In October, however, Abshaw's season was taken away after a torn ACL. Ohio State announced the news Oct. 23 with a statement from McGuff.

"I'm extremely devastated for Ashanti,"

OSU Women's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2019 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect ESPN.com rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Kierstan Bell	G	6-1	★★★★★	Canton (Ohio) McKinley
Rikki Harris	PG	5-9	★★★★★	Indianapolis North Central
Kaelynn Satterfield	W	6-0	★★★★★	Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ The King
Jacy Sheldon	G	5-10	★★★★★	Dublin (Ohio) Coffman

Players in the class of 2020 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect ESPN.com rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Gabby Hutcherson	F	6-2	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South
Anyssa Jones	G	5-9	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South

McGuff said. "She is a great kid and worked really hard to get acclimated to our system and was going to make an impact. She will undergo surgery soon, and we will support her throughout this process to make sure she gets back to 100 percent."

On Oct. 25, McGuff delved further into Abshaw's situation, which leaves the door open for either a sixth year of eligibility or a jump to the professional ranks.

"That really stinks," McGuff said of Abshaw's injury. "I feel terrible for her. She was working very hard. I felt like she was going to be in position to really positively impact us in a big way, and that's just not going to be the case."

Abshaw graduated from Cleveland State in the spring with her degree in communications management, transferring to Columbus and working on a master's degree in workforce development. As a Cleveland Heights native, she decided to stay home with the Buckeyes over offers from Ole Miss and Purdue, among others.

"For one, first and foremost, family," Abshaw said, detailing the decision for OSU. "I really didn't want to go far. And then, second, I really liked their offense. And then it's just the program as a whole. It just seemed like a great program, and it was the best opportunity."

In three years with the Vikings, Abshaw became a three-time All-Horizon League honoree. She earned first-team selections for the past two seasons, capped with a 2017-18 campaign in which her 19.2 points per game paced CSU.

Jensen Caretti, 6-1, Jr. (2.4 ppg, 1.4 rpg) – Caretti is listed among Ohio State's guards but doubles as a forward due to the lack of bodies the Buckeyes possess in the post. With some size, Caretti has been experimenting at the four and the three throughout the preseason, moving between the paint and the wing as she transitions away from her natural position at guard and the two.

Among OSU's top returning three-point shooters, going 9 for 21 (42.9 percent) as a sophomore in 2017-18, her game has had to evolve. Despite standing 6-1 and possessing a slimmer build for a post player, Caretti hopes to use her athleticism as an advantage as she continues to develop.

"With the quickness of being a post – there's quickness, of course, but having versatility and being athletic makes my game about being able to take quicker moves in the post compared to some of slower posts," the Clarington (Ohio) River product said. "But I normally play top of the key for the four and I dive, and I'll play short corner and stuff. I haven't really posted up yet, or at least when I have I haven't gotten the ball on offense, so I guess we're going to have to work on that, but the quickness part is definitely going to be an advantage."

Ohio State will open the season without Caretti, however, after the Buckeyes

announced her suspension for an unspecified violation of team rules on Oct. 28. She did not play in OSU's exhibition game Oct. 28 against Indiana University of Pennsylvania as a result of the disciplinary action, which notably held her out from the campaign opener Nov. 6 against South Florida.

Karlle Cronin, 5-10, Sr. (0.1 ppg, 0.5 rpg) – Cronin made 20 game appearances as a junior in 2017-18, going from walk-on to scholarship midway through the season.

The Oakton, Va., native started her basketball career in 2015-16 at Southern Methodist before she transferred to Ohio State in 2016-17 and played for the women's lacrosse team. After playing seven games with two starts for that Buckeye squad, Cronin joined the women's basketball program with Jayaraman in the fall of 2017.

As a reserve guard, Cronin adds to OSU's depth at the position after its wave of graduate transfers added further experience in the backcourt.

Janai Crooms, 5-10, Fr. – With a pass-first mentality, Crooms comes to Ohio State as its likely point guard of the future. But for now, as she learns on the fly, Crooms takes each practice in stride and looks to get her game up to speed with the Buckeyes.

"I'm not the best – it's hard taking everything in, so I'm just adjusting to it and trying to get the hang of new things every day," Crooms said. "Other than that, it's fine."

As a senior in 2017-18 at Barrington (R.I.) St. Andrew's, Crooms did a bit of everything. She posted a double-double average with 12.3 points and 10.2 rebounds, shelling out 6.5 assists and finishing her career as a four-time New England All-Star.

"I think it will be some pressure because every team I've played for I've always started, so coming here to college I think will be a challenge," Crooms said. "I'm up for the challenge."

Carmen Grande, 5-8, Gr. (11.5 ppg, 3.8 rpg) – OSU's offense resets, beginning at point guard with expected starter Grande taking over McGuff's up-tempo attack. If her past few years at Ball State serve any indication, she brings a proven presence to Ohio State. Over the past three seasons, starting and playing all of the Cardinals' 96 games, Grande had the second-most assists in the country with 697, capped by finishing second nationally in 2017-18 with 9.2 per game (294 total).

"I think it's fun playing that way," she said. "I think it's fun passing the ball and just getting everybody involved. So I try to just attack gaps and then whatever is given to me by the game – whether it's me taking a shot or somebody open – I take that and I try to in practice focus on details and put it in right where it's supposed to be so that in games I can get my shooters to be comfortable shooting or the post can get it wherever they need it."

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OSU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SEASON PREVIEW

2018-19 OSU Women's Basketball Projected Starting Lineup

1 • Carmen Grande • G

Height: 5-8 • Class: GR-Sr.

Yr.	GP-GS	Min./G	PPG	RPG	A	TO	Bk.	Stl.
15-16	32-32	33.8	6.4	4.3	159	100	7	55
16-17	32-32	31.4	7.3	3.2	244	102	8	58
17-18	32-32	35.0	11.5	3.8	294	114	23	84



Transferred to OSU this year after starting for Ball State for three seasons.

All stats from Ball State.

15 • Adreana Miller • G

Height: 5-11 • Class: GR-Sr.

Yr.	GP-GS	Min./G	PPG	RPG	A	TO	Bk.	Stl.
15-16	30-11	26.5	9.4	2.7	19	56	2	18
16-17	30-26	24.3	10.1	2.2	18	46	6	9
17-18	29-28	33.5	13.6	3.4	36	83	4	17



Finished second on the team with 13.6 points per game in final season at La Salle.

All stats from La Salle.

10 • Carly Santoro • G

Height: 5-10 • Class: GR-Sr.

Yr.	GP-GS	Min./G	PPG	RPG	A	TO	Bk.	Stl.
15-16	28-0	12.7	4.3	1.8	11	30	1	22
16-17	31-31	29.7	12.0	7.4	31	83	4	26
17-18	30-30	31.7	12.8	8.7	48	82	4	45



Named Bowling Green's player of the year each of the past two seasons.

All stats from Bowling Green.

24 • Makayla Waterman • F

Height: 6-2 • Class: GR-Sr.

Yr.	GP-GS	Min./G	PPG	RPG	A	TO	Bk.	Stl.
15-16	32-1	14.3	3.1	3.8	25	35	23	15
16-17	35-0	13.5	3.3	3.0	37	35	19	17
17-18	32-0	18.2	3.5	3.9	44	40	16	25



OSU's most experienced returning player with 99 career games played for the Buckeyes.

14 • Dorka Juhász • F

Height: 6-4 • Class: Fr.

Yr.	GP-GS	Min./G	PPG	RPG	A	TO	Bk.	Stl.
17-18	32-0	18.2	3.5	3.9	44	40	16	25



True freshman. Averaged 11.7 points and 9.4 rebounds per game for Hungary at the U19 World Cup in 2017.

2018-19 Ohio State Women's Basketball Roster/Schedule

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous School
1	Carmen Grande	G	5-8	GR-Sr.	Madrid, Spain/Ball State
2	Ashanti Abshaw	G	5-9	GR-Sr.	Cleveland Heights, Ohio/Cleveland St.
3	Janai Crooms	G	5-10	Fr.	Cranston, R.I./St. Andrews
10	Carly Santoro	G	5-10	GR-Sr.	Bellevue, Ohio/Bowling Green
12	Savitha Jayaraman	F	6-2	So.	Powell, Ohio/Olentangy Liberty
14	Dorka Juhász	F	6-4	Fr.	Pecs, Hungary/PTE Babits
15	Adreana Miller	G	5-11	GR-Sr.	Somerset, N.J./LaSalle
23	Najah Queenland	G	5-10	GR-Sr.	Sacramento, Calif./Pacific
24	Makayla Waterman	F	6-2	GR-Sr.	Kettering, Ohio/Fairmont
25	Karlie Cronin	G	5-10	Sr.	Oakton, Va./SMU
32	Aaliyah Patty	F	6-3	Fr.	Lombard, Ill./Montini Catholic
33	Jensen Caretti	G	6-1	Jr.	Clarington, Ohio/River

Head Coach – Kevin McGuff (St. Joseph's (Ind.), 1992).

Associate Head Coach – Patrick Klein (Ohio State, 2005). **Assistant Coaches** – Carrie Banks (Detroit Mercy, 2000); Jennifer Sullivan (Memphis, 2005). **Director of Operations** – Beth Howe (Ohio State, 2005). **Special Assistant to the Head Coach** – Ericka Haney (Notre Dame, 2002). **Video Coordinator** – Sydney Durrah (Maryland, 2015). **Athletic Trainer** – Jennifer Novak (Kent State, 2005; Ohio State, 2007). **Strength and Conditioning Coach** – Brian Seitz (Ohio State, 2011). **Administrative Assistant** – Reid Gusdanski (Ohio State, 2014).

Schedule:

Oct. 28 IUP (Exhibition), W 72-50.

Nov. 6 USF, 7 p.m.; **9** DETROIT MERCY, 7 p.m.; **11** at UConn, Noon; **16** at Sacramento State, 11:30 p.m.; **18** at Stanford, 4 p.m.; **29** NORTH CAROLINA, 7 p.m.

Dec. 2 CINCINNATI, 2 p.m.; **5** at Washington, 11 p.m.; **16** FLORIDA at St. John Arena; **20** vs. Virginia Tech at West Palm Beach, Fla., 12:15 p.m.; **21** vs. Butler at West Palm Beach, Fla., 12:15 p.m.; **28** at Purdue, 4 p.m.; **31** NEBRASKA, 1 p.m.

Jan. 5 at Maryland, 4 p.m.; **10** INDIANA, 6 p.m.; **14** MICHIGAN STATE, 7 p.m.; **17** at Penn State, 7 p.m.; **20** at Michigan, 3 p.m.; **24** MARYLAND, 8 p.m.; **28** at Minnesota, 7:30 p.m.; **31** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.

Feb. 3 at Northwestern, 4:30 p.m.; **6** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **10** IOWA, 4 p.m.; **14** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **17** WISCONSIN, 2 p.m.; **21** at Michigan State, 6 p.m.; **28** at Wisconsin, 9 p.m.

March 3 RUTGERS, TBA; **6-10** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis.

talents to Columbus with hopes to go from the Mid-American Conference to the Big Ten and compete at the highest-possible level. After finishing her sophomore and junior campaigns as BGSU's player of the year, she takes 61 starts over the past two seasons into Ohio State's rotation.

"Everyone always wants the opportunity to play at the biggest stage," Santoro said. "Now that I'm granted the opportunity, I want to take it and run with it. So, I'm super excited that I'm here, and I'm looking forward to a great season."

Najah Queenland, 5-10, Gr. (4.8 ppg, 3.9 rpg) – After three years on the hardwood at Pacific from 2014-17, Queenland saved her fourth season of eligibility and took the 2017-18 campaign off, becoming the first graduate-transfer commitment for Ohio State when she announced in November 2017.

"I think at that time, it was only Aaliyah who was committed as well," Queenland said. "So I knew they were losing everyone. So I expected a lot of what happened. I think I expected us to probably fill the roster to 15, but I think what we have is really good. I think the more we have, the more we

would have had to adjust more. Now that we only have 11, it's kind of like each person individually knows to get corrected on the fly. I think we'll do well as long as we stay healthy."

The Sacramento, Calif., native figures to round out the Buckeyes' depth on the wing after playing 84 games with the Tigers in the West Coast Conference and peaking as a sophomore in 2015-16 with averages of 8.3 points and 5.4 rebounds. On her career, she has 40 three-pointers on 137 attempts (29.2 percent) and dished out 142 assists.

"I've been here five months now and I have really nothing negative to say about the coaches at all, which is a really great feeling because they're everything they presented themselves as," Queenland said. "The transition has been well. The coaches and drills they did were really well with breakdowns because when I do something wrong, instantly, I know I did something wrong and need to correct it. Our style of play, I think we're all really adjusting to it. With me, personally, it's just shooting the ball. If I'm open, just shoot it."

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The Madrid, Spain, native sees similarities between the Buckeyes' offense and the attack Ball State ran. Whether Grande takes the floor first or shares time running the point with Crooms, though, she hopes her unselfish mentality allows others in the offense to take off as well.

"I'm honestly not worried," Grande said. "I trust the coaches. I trust the work that we're putting in. I know that I'm the point guard who's most experienced, but I'm literally willing to help anybody. I want our freshman point guard to be great, so whatever's needed to be done, I'm sure everyone will step up to do it."

Adreana Miller, 5-11, Gr. (13.6 ppg, 3.4 rpg) – As Ohio State searches for an increased perimeter presence to balance its high-paced offense up and down the floor, Miller's addition makes her an option from long range after she drilled 164 three-point shots in three seasons at LaSalle, which competes in the Atlantic-10 Conference.

"That's definitely a big role, especially because I'm on the wings," Miller said. "Carmen Grande and Janai Crooms, they do a very good job of just looking up and giving us the pass that we need to score. So if we have great people like that, we have to do our jobs and run constantly and nonstop."

Miller's tenure with the Explorers ended

as a junior in 2017-18 with season averages of 13.6 points and 3.4 rebounds, totaling 36 assists and shooting 32.0 percent (62 for 194) from deep. On her career, Miller averaged 11.0 points over 89 games with 65 starts.

"Definitely one thing I bring to the table is my ability to shoot," Miller said. "Threes are my specialty, but I can also do a pull-up jumper. My teammates look for me, so I'm always on that open gap. Defense, therefore, has to read and be honest about if I want to drive or shoot. So it makes it harder for the defense."

Carly Santoro, 5-10, Gr. (12.8 ppg, 8.7 rpg) – After three seasons with Bowling Green, capped by team-high averages in points and rebounds, Santoro brings OSU versatility to the wings. She recorded a team-best 16 double-doubles with the Falcons and recorded seven 20-point performances, potentially giving the Buckeyes their starter at the three as they sort through possible lineups and rotations.

"I'm hoping to just bring my experience and anything I can to the floor," Santoro said. "I think this team, we're a whole new team, so experience is really going to be a great thing that's showing on the court. I hope that I can just go in there and do that."

From Bellevue, Ohio, Santoro took her

OSU Eyeing National Title Despite Departures

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When head coach Tom Ryan scans Ohio State's roster heading into his 13th year at the helm, he sees no reason the Buckeyes should not compete for another national championship. Despite several key losses causing a shuffle up and down the starting lineup, from 125-pounder Nathan Tomasello to heavyweight Kyle Snyder, Ryan remains steadfast in his belief that OSU can return to the top of college wrestling.

After back-to-back Big Ten titles in 2016-17 and 2017-18, Ohio State came up short at the end of each March with runner-up placements behind Penn State at the NCAA championships. The graduations of Tomasello, Snyder and 174-pounder Bo Jordan leave the Buckeyes with big shoes to fill in the place of three four-time All-Americans on the mat. At the same time, Ryan knows the standard he has built in Columbus.

"We always want to be the team that can win it," Ryan said. "You're ranked second in the preseason. We try not to get too caught up in the ranking. Let's just make it about the wrestling and getting better every day. But I think to leave here in any day thinking that, 'Hey, this isn't a team that can win,' no, that's not it."

Beyond the newcomers to the lineup, OSU does return quite a bit of experience on its roster. Junior 133-pounder Luke Pletcher, senior 141-pounder Joey McKenna, fifth-year senior 149-pounder Micah Jordan, senior 184-pounder Myles Martin and junior 197-pounder Kollin Moore return from what was a program-record eight All-Americans at the 2018 NCAA championships in Cleveland. Junior 157-pounder Ke-Shawn Hayes and senior 174-pounder Te'Shan Campbell also qualified for nationals before their respective bumps up a weight class, leaving for three weight classes to make the difference.

"We have five (returning) All-Americans," Ryan said. "We could put four or five guys in the finals, but we said this last year at this time. We said we could put four or five in the finals, but we put two (Martin and Snyder). Two wasn't enough. Two won't be enough this year."

"If those (five) punch through (to the finals), and a heavyweight matures and 125 matures and (redshirt freshman Kaleb) Romero at 165 matures, we have a shot, but there's a lot more unknowns with this team than last year. We really knew what we had last year, and that was just a matter of living up to our potential."

"We were up against a team that was really good as well. Penn State is a team that's good again, as are a couple of teams out there, so we've just got to really focus on getting better every day – one percent better a day. By the end of the year, this could be special."

Ohio State opened the season Nov. 2 with McKenna's individual bout at the NWCA All-Star Classic in Denver and continued Nov. 3 with the Buckeyes' dual against Navy at Owings Mills (Md.) McDonogh School.

With the campaign set to get into full swing, BSB breaks down OSU's upcoming slate with a look at the starting lineup by weight class from lightest to heaviest.

Weight-By-Weight Preview

125 pounds – After the departure of Tomasello due to graduation, 125 pounds provides Ryan with options between sophomore Brakan Mead and freshman Malik Heinselman. While the wrestle-off event ended with Heinselman's 4-3 decision over Mead, Ryan remains open to either of the two as Ohio State begins its season.

"Brakan lost but will be our '25-pounder,'" Ryan said of the second-year grappler from Powell (Ohio) Olentangy Liberty. "The match was close enough that we're not going to pull his redshirt yet. We'll continue to watch Malik. Brakan will be our starter for Navy. Then we'll kind of go from there."

Tomasello's knee injury to start the 2017-18 campaign opened the door for Mead throughout the first two months of the season, going 8-12 but getting experience. Heinselman, however, must be heavily considered as the starter after he won in wrestle-offs and brings his immediate-impact talent to the Buckeyes.

"They're both tough," Pletcher told BSB. "Brakan's tough, he's good on top, he's gamey, he's likes doing what he loves, and Malik's tough, too, getting better. I wrestle him all the time. It feels like he's getting stronger and better every time I wrestle him. He's going to be good. But Brakan's going to do what he can."

Heinselman comes to Columbus from Castle Rock (Colo.) Castle View, where he went 168-9 with three state championships to his name. According to Intermat and FloWrestling, Heinselman was nationally a top-50 overall prospect for 2018.

"Everything about Malik – he has every box checked that he'll be a great one here," Ryan said. "The question is, is he going to be great enough in the next 90 days, 120 days to make a decision to pull him? I don't know that right now."

"Brakan's a good wrestler. He's gotten bigger, stronger. He's been working hard. Brakan did a good job last year, won a couple of big matches. So right now, Brakan's the starter. Brakan knows that, despite losing the wrestle-off. He's the only one that lost and will still start. We'll watch him."

"We're going to watch Malik. Even if Malik won, we were going to send him to open tournaments. It's all common sense. We just don't have enough information on him yet. All we know is that he trains hard, we love him, and he attacks. He wants to score points. That's all we know right now."

133 pounds – Under the radar, Pletcher broke out as a sophomore in 2018 with an All-America campaign. He ended his season short of championships after losses to Michigan's Stevan Micic in Big Tens (7-4 decision in the final) and NAAs (8-4 decision in the semifinal), but Pletcher returns to Ohio State hungry for more.

"It's definitely driven me," Pletcher said. "I knew I was capable to win (Big Tens and NAAs) last year. To have it not go my way, it hurt, but it also just reassured me that I'm doing the right things. It just showed me that I'm there and I can do it. If I keep getting better each day, I plan on it working out in the end."

At the end of a 30-3 campaign, Pletcher placed fourth at NAAs after N.C. State's Tariq Wilson handed the third-seeded



Tom Ryan

2018-19 OSU Wrestling Roster/Schedule

Name	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous School
Te'Shan Campbell	174	Sr.	Pittsburgh, Pa./Pittsburgh
Elijah Cleary	157	So.	Winter Park, Fla./Lake Highland Prep
Alex Felix	141	Fr.	Gilroy, Calif./Gilroy
Ryan Ferro	165/174	R-Fr.	Warwick, N.Y./Warwick Valley
Brendan Fitzgerald	141	Jr.	Columbus, Ohio/Grandview Heights
Kevon Freeman	165	Fr.	Mentor, Ohio/Lake Catholic
Ke-Shawn Hayes	149	Jr.	Kansas City, Mo./Park Hill
Malik Heinselman	125	Fr.	Castle Rock, Colo./Castle View
Gavin Hoffman	184/197	Fr.	Montoursville, Pa./Montoursville
Jaimen Hood	141	R-Fr.	Mason, Ohio/Mason
Rocky Jordan	174	Fr.	St. Paris, Ohio/St. Paris Graham
Micah Jordan	149	r-Sr.	St. Paris, Ohio/St. Paris Graham
Quinn Kinner	141	Fr.	Mullica Hill, N.J./Kingsway Regional
Dylan Koontz	125	R-Fr.	Plover, Wis./Stevens Point Area Senior
Brady Koontz	125	R-Fr.	Plover, Wis./Stevens Point Area Senior
Hunter Lucas	125	So.	Cridersville, Ohio/Maryland
Micah Marshall	149	Fr.	Dayton, Ohio/Chaminade Julianne Catholic
Myles Martin	184	Sr.	Penns Grove, N.J./McDonogh School
Joey McKenna	141	Sr.	Towaco, N.J./Stanford
Brakan Mead	125	So.	Powell, Ohio/Olentangy Liberty
Kollin Moore	197	Jr.	Burbank, Ohio/Norwayne
Luke Pletcher	133	Jr.	Latrobe, Pa./Greater Latrobe
Clay Ragon	141	So.	Williamston, Mich./Dansville
Braeden Redlin	165	Fr.	Allen, Texas/Allen
Aaron Rehfeldt	149	So.	Brighton, Mich./Detroit Central Catholic
Kaleb Romero	165	R-Fr.	Mechanicsburg, Ohio/Mechanicsburg
Sammy Sasso	149	Fr.	Nazareth, Pa./Nazareth
Fritz Schierl	165	So.	Stevens Point, Wis./Stevens Point
Chase Singletary	HWT	R-Fr.	Naples, Fla./Blair Academy
Ethan Smith	174	R-Fr.	Latrobe, Pa./Sparrows Point
Kevin Snyder	197	So.	Woodbine, Md./Our Lady of Good Counsel
Zach Steiner	184	R-Fr.	Creston, Ohio/Norwayne
JD Stickley	141	Fr.	Urbana, Ohio/St. Paris Graham
Gary Traub	HWT	So.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Sycamore

Head Coach – Tom Ryan (Iowa, 1993).

Associate Head Coach – J Jagers (Ohio State, 2009). **Assistant Coach** – Tervel Dlagnev (Nebraska-Kearney, 2008). **Director of Recruiting & Operations** – Anthony Ralph (Kent State, 2000). **Volunteer Assistant Coach** – Bo Jordan (Ohio State, 2018). **Director of Wrestling Sports Science & Development** – Riley Ross (Nebraska-Kearney, 2003). **Assistant Director of Operations** – Ryan Mantel (Ohio State graduate student).

Schedule: (1-0)

Nov. 3 vs. Navy at Owings Mills, Md., W 28-9; **11** Ohio Intercollegiate Open at Cleveland, TBA; **16** at California Baptist, 10 p.m.; **18** at Arizona State, 2 p.m.; **30-Dec. 1** Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational, TBA.

Dec. 9 WISCONSIN, 4 p.m.

Jan. 6 N.C. STATE, 6 p.m.; **11** at Indiana, 7 p.m.; **13** MICHIGAN STATE, 2 p.m.; **25** MICHIGAN, 7 p.m.

Feb. 1 at Illinois, 9 p.m.; **3** at Northwestern, 1 p.m.; **8** PENN STATE, 8:30 p.m.; **15** at Purdue, 7 p.m.; **17** NEBRASKA, 2 p.m.; **22** at Cornell, 6:30 p.m.

March 9-10 Big Ten Championships at Minneapolis; **21-23** NCAA Championships at Pittsburgh.

Buckeye a 17-8 major decision. Pletcher's three losses came to Micic and Wilson, who respectively finished second and third in the nation.

141 pounds – Following two seasons at Stanford, McKenna arrived in a big way as a key transfer for Ohio State. Known for his All-America run in 2016, capped by the second of consecutive Pac-12 championships in 2017, he went 21-2 with a Big Ten title to add to the collection.

The fourth-seeded McKenna surged into NAAs, dropping four nationally ranked foes before falling in a 1-0 decision to Wyoming's Bryce Meredith in the 141-pound semifinal. McKenna settled for third place after he dropped second-seeded Jayden Eierman. In his second season at OSU, the team captain will try to capitalize on his national breakout.

"The view of it is that I am (on top), but I'm still going to wrestle the same way," McKenna said. "My mind-set is kind of switched in my wrestling, so I'm focusing more on just going out there and performing

and scoring points rather than the results. In past years, I focused too much on that. Last year, I feel like that was one of the first where I just started looking forward to getting out there and putting my foot on the line and actually just wrestling and competing. So I think I'm looking at it from a different viewpoint now, where I can hopefully still assume the same level of wrestling out there on the mat without taking that pressure."

149 pounds – The top matchup at wrestle-offs resulted in Micah Jordan's 2-1 decision over Hayes, bringing Jordan back down to his original weight after he moved up to 157 pounds as a junior in 2018.

"I wrestle Ke-Shawn a lot, every day in the room and everything else, so I knew the match was going to be a tough match," Jordan said. "Ke-Shawn's a really good wrestler, and I'm just excited to move forward and wrestle some good competition. We wrestle each other all the time and wrestle-offs are tough, but now I'm just excited to wrestle some different opponents."

OHIO STATE WRESTLING SEASON PREVIEW

Jordan made the most of his bump up to 157 pounds, where he worked to the Big Ten final, was seeded seventh at NCAAs and finished sixth to become an All-American for the second straight season after doing so in 2017 at 149 pounds. Jordan went 25-9 at 157 pounds, but he wanted his final shot as a fifth-year senior to come at 149 pounds as the chase for an elusive national title continues.

"I just feel like '49 is where I feel most comfortable in that weight class," Jordan said. "I think I was a little small for '57, so I think naturally I'm best fit for '49. At '49, I feel like I can make a run at a national title."

Jordan discussed the drop back down with Ryan. The result from wrestle-offs solidified the plan.

"I would say that at 149, probably in my 25 years of coaching, this was probably the single biggest wrestle-off that we've ever had," Ryan said. "There was a lot at stake. Either one of them had the capability of winning it at 149. It was just tough."

"What's really cool and speaks to the culture and who Ke-Shawn Hayes is – Ke-Shawn was pretty bummed. He also found out that he had some stuff at home, some pains at home. But he texted Micah and he let him know how much he loved him and that he's looking forward to the season still and helping him."

157 pounds – As a result of Jordan's grasp on 149 pounds, Hayes embraces the challenge of his move up to 157 pounds. Hayes emerged as a third-year sophomore in 2018, falling just shy of becoming an All-American after he dropped a 2-1 tiebreaker as the fifth seed to North Carolina's fourth-seeded Troy Heilmann in the quarterfinals at 149 pounds.

Hayes, who punched his ticket to NCAAs after he finished third in the Big Ten, went 29-7 in his first full season back on the mat after he had surgery on his left knee in November 2016 to abruptly end the then-redshirt freshman's 5-1 start to the campaign. With a full year of competition under his belt, the journey takes him up a weight class, and he embraces the challenge.

"The only thing that really changed is just eating and lifting more," Hayes, a junior, told BSB. "Other than that, wrestling is wrestling. Size only matters to an extent when you're talking about moving up one weight class. So, I've just been focusing on improving and – same as before – just trying to be the best wrestler that I can."

165 pounds – With Campbell's climb to 174 pounds, Romero comes to 165 pounds ready for the spotlight. All the way back from torn ulnar collateral ligaments in his right and left arms between his senior season at Mechanicsburg, Ohio, and the summer of 2017 entering Ohio State, Romero learned from spending the majority of his redshirt-freshman campaign off the mat.

"My redshirt season was definitely a learning experience," Romero told BSB. "I was just really working on trying to improve the areas that needed to improve the most that I was weak in. So I feel like I've improved so much since I got here. We were really working hard on all of those positions that needed to improve. So I feel like the offseason went great. I'm just looking forward to competing."

Romero competed in three tournaments before taking his redshirt, and he went 11-1. Ryan saw glimpses of Romero's ability, and the freshman's overall growth from the redshirt season catapulted him into a starting spot with high hopes of becoming an All-American.

"He's a great athlete, he was one of the top recruits in the country," Ryan said of Romero, who went 202-3 in high school

and won four Ohio state championships to become InterMat's No. 12 overall prospect and No. 1 wrestler at 170 pounds in the nation for 2017. "He's someone that can compete at a super-high level and we need him to, so we expect a lot out of him as we should. He expects a lot out of himself. He's hard on himself. He's a disciplined guy."

"He's not in this (for fun). This isn't a game. This is his wrestling career. To this point, I saw some really good things. Last year, I saw some good wins. I haven't seen the Kaleb Romero that we need to see, but hopefully we see that guy."

174 pounds – Bo Jordan remains at Ohio State but no longer on the mat, as a volunteer coach. The four-time All-American trades in his singlet for a spot next to Ryan in the coaches' chairs as he and the Buckeyes look to Campbell, who moves up from 165 pounds, to keep things rolling.

"One thing that went into it was Bo graduated, so now there's an opening there and he's more of a natural '74-pounder," Ryan said of Campbell. "We just feel better with him there. I think we all hope that when we go through a season like he went through – it was a tough season for him – there's enough pain to cause change."

While he spent 2017 at 165 pounds for Pittsburgh, prior to his transfer, Campbell never quite felt as comfortable compared to 174 pounds. Back to more of his natural weight, he has set his sights on a deep run into the NCAAs, which take place where Campbell was born and raised.

"Last year, I was struggling a lot with cutting weight," said Campbell, who went 19-12 and dropped an 8-0 decision to Rider's Chad Walsh at 165 pounds in NCAAs. "Tom put it in my ear, like, 'Just get through this year. You'll go up. You'll never have to see 165 again.' Now we're not in that same situation. It's my last year, so going up and feeling healthy is definitely a great thing."

184 pounds – Penn State is bumping reigning national champion Bo Nickal up to 197 pounds, which makes the 2018 runner-up, Martin, the No. 1 grappler at 184 pounds by default. Martin, who went 31-3 with second-place finishes to Nickal in the Big Tens and NCAAs, is shooting to become a four-time All-American but also aims higher now for a legacy-cementing national title as a senior.

"It's driven me a lot," Martin said of his 2:30 pin fall to Nickal in the 184-pound final for 2018. "It's also let me put it in the perspective that, literally, the worst has happened. So now, it's just like, who cares what happens on the mat. Just wrestle the way you wrestle. I always tell myself to just keep it simple. But the past is behind us. It's time to move forward. Literally, the worst has happened. You got pinned in the national finals. So that's why it was tough, but I'm ready to go. Every time I wrestle, I'm putting everything I have on the mat. I'm not holding back anything."

197 pounds – In the offseason, Moore hit the reset button after a long talk with Ryan. Down the stretch of the 2018 season as a sophomore, the top-seeded Moore was never quite the same as he battled physical and mental fatigue, which halted his top-ranked momentum and resulted in a stunning sequence of losses to Kent State's Kyle Conel – a 1:30 pin fall in the quarterfinal and 5-3 decision in the third-place match.

"Kollin Moore learned a lot about mindset and just about mentality," Ryan said. "He told a story to the team in one of our leadership meetings: 'Last year, when I came out as the No. 1 ranking, people were texting me, telling me I'm going to win it, and some of that can get to you if you let it.' As a young guy, ranked No. 1 as a sophomore, he said, by the end of the year, he realized it had gotten to him a little bit."

Moore, who went 27-4 and held the top seed at 197 pounds, saw his campaign end on a sour note. He has since turned the page, learning not to look too far down the road.

"I think I realized, after, that I was focusing on protecting the No. 1 spot a little bit

because I'd never been in that situation before," Moore, a junior, told BSB. "It was pretty different. I was always the underdog. Now guys are coming at me as hard as they can. So it was a little different. I was dealing with some minor injuries with my elbow and stuff. So, a little bit of body, little bit of mind. But motivation wise, I've tried not to let it motivate me too much. Just forget about it and focus on just getting better at wrestling."

Heavyweight – No one will be able to replace what Snyder, arguably the greatest wrestler of all time, did for Ohio State. At the same time, nothing changes Ryan's expectation for the Buckeyes to produce an All-American.

The only catch, though, is the Buckeyes' starter remains unsettled after sophomore Gary Traub's 3-2 tiebreaker over redshirt freshman Chase Singletary in the wrestle-off. Not to discredit Traub's effort, but Ryan was displeased with the way Singletary's performance unfolded.

"Really, it wasn't about beating Gary," Ryan said. "That was irrelevant. It was just about the way they performed. It wasn't to the level that we need. They're capable of more. We've got some work to do."

Singletary, who went 21-3 in tournaments last season before taking a redshirt, came to Columbus with great expectations. His national rankings from InterMat and FloWrestling as a top-six overall prospect in 2017 and the No. 1 recruit at 220 pounds set the Naples, Fla., native up for prime position to replace Snyder.

However, with Traub's edge, the spot stays open into the season. Traub, originally from Cincinnati Sycamore, sported a 21-9 mark as a redshirt freshman last year.



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Preston Brings Experience As An Older Freshman

Quinn Preston is like many freshmen on the Ohio State campus as he learns to navigate new surroundings and adapt to a college lifestyle.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

He's different in that he's not your typical teenager away from home for the first time. For one, as a hockey player, he's already lived a bit of a nomadic life playing at the junior level in Topeka, Kan., and Dubuque, Iowa, before coming to Columbus.

Then there's his age. Preston turned 21 on Oct. 21 and is following the path that others such as OSU captain Mason Jobst have taken by using all his eligibility in juniors before going to school.

Jobst, a senior who will be 25 on Feb. 17, is the leading returning scorer in the nation and was an All-American as a sophomore.

"He's a great person to learn from," Preston said. "He did the same thing I did, aged out of juniors. The amount of success he's had here is awesome. It gives me something to look forward to and giving myself the expectations that the sky's the limit."

Preston, a forward from Trenton, Mich., is not the only older player joining the Buckeyes this season. Freshmen Matt Jennings and Gustaf Westlund are also 21, as is sophomore transfer Collin Peters.

"There's always a difference between an 18-year-old playing against a 21-, 22-, 23-year-old so we're not afraid to spring for the older kid," said Ohio State coach Steve Rohlik. "We feel that maturity and experience pays off."

"They've been through some life experiences away from the rink which I think helps. You hope the maturity level is higher than a younger kid."

Preston (5-11, 182) is glad he waited.

"I had a lot more experience coming in," he said. "I felt I was more ready and developed. Having played a few years in juniors I have more confidence, I would say, than probably a younger guy coming in. It really helped me to go back to Dubuque for a year and have a really good year there and being more physically ready."

At Dubuque in the United States Hockey League, he had 55 points (24 goals, 31 assists) as an alternate captain last season and 35 points (14-21) the season before.

Prior to that he played in the lower-level North American Hockey League for Topeka and in 2014 won a state championship at Trenton High School.

"I was a late bloomer so when I got into juniors and went with it, I worked as hard as I could," he said. "It was hard. I hadn't experienced anything like that, especially in a totally different place. It was a learning curve but I got adjusted pretty quick and figured how to play the junior game. It's a more controlled game which was really good for me."

Rohlik said the older players may also have chips on their shoulders because they weren't taken in the NHL draft or offered scholarships at an earlier age.

"Everybody's path is different," he said. "It doesn't mean you're going to fail if you don't go in as an 18-year-old. That's what kids are finally seeing. They can still have success no matter when they come in."

Preston grew up south of Detroit but knew he wanted to be a Buckeye after his visit.

"It's not far, especially being away the past few years, so my family can come see me," he said.

That Ohio State made the NCAA tournament the past two seasons did not go unnoticed.

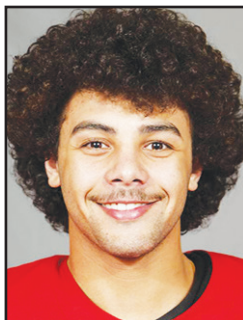
"They were more on the spectrum, that was a big thing," he said. "I knew the

program was on the rise, so I figured it was a good opportunity for me to play for a really good Division I team. That was my goal since the start of juniors."

He attended the Winnipeg Jets' development camp this summer, and he had a chance to practice with some of their top prospects.

"It was a great experience to see all those great players and see where I fit in with them," he said. "It was a huge honor, a huge thing for my confidence as well."

Preston has not registered his first point for the Buckeyes while playing in seven of the first eight games.



Quinn Preston

Not Fit To Be Tied

With the Nov. 2-3 start of the Big Ten season for the Buckeyes, the conference's new overtime rules are in effect.

The old format was five minutes of sudden-death 5-on-5 after regulation, followed by a five-round shootout. The new procedure inserts five minutes of sudden-death 3-on-3 after the 5-on-5. If the score is still tied, there will be a sudden-death shootout.

All conference games are worth three points. A team will receive three points for a regulation or 5-on-5 win. If it is still tied after that, each team gets a point and the winner of the 3-on-3 or shootout earns an additional point.

Buckeyes Bounce Back

After a horrendous showing against Bowling Green in the first game since BSB last went to press, the Buckeyes (4-3-1, 1-1-0) rebounded to go 1-1-1 vs. the Falcons and Notre Dame.

There wasn't much to say after then-No. 15 BG routed the No. 3 Buckeyes 8-2 on Oct. 26 before a crowd of 5,871 at Value City Arena.

The Falcons led 7-0 in the third period. After the Buckeyes scored twice, BG capped the evening with its second short-handed goal, this time while being down two players.

"We had a great crowd tonight," Jobst said. "The students were all involved. Letting those guys down was embarrassing to us."

The Falcons (5-1-1) returned home the next night looking for the sweep, but the rejuvenated Buckeyes rallied from down 2-1 late in the third period on a goal by senior Freddy Gerard for the 2-2 tie in front of 5,000 at Slater Ice Arena.

"We still couldn't piece our game together for a full 60 minutes, but we saw some signs of how good we can be," Gerard said.

OSU opened Big Ten play with a sterling 1-0 win at No. 5 Notre Dame on Nov. 2, but the Fighting Irish (4-3-1, 1-1-0) took the rematch 2-1 at Compton Family Arena on Nov. 3.

In the opener, No. 7 OSU kept the 4,595 in attendance quiet most of the game. Jobst scored at 8:59 of the first period, and senior Sean Romeo stopped 23 shots for his third career shutout.

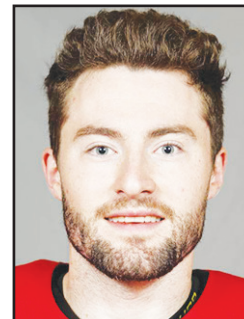
Notre Dame took the second game when Joe Wegwerth broke a 1-1 tie at 13:48 of the third period to the delight of the 4,165 fans. Jobst had scored in the first period, and sophomore Tommy Nappier made 36 saves.

"This is a disappointing loss," Rohlik said. "We had an opportunity to win two games on the road and fell short."

Up Next

The Buckeyes finish a stretch of five road games with the Nov. 9-10 nonconference series at Colgate in Hamilton, N.Y.

For a complete recap of Ohio State's series with Bowling Green and Notre Dame, go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



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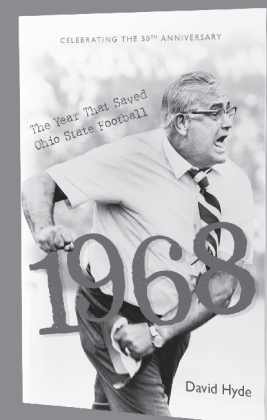
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Grimmer, Wetterich Leading Talented Buckeyes

By JOE DEMPSEY
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Although the Ohio State men's golf team took second place at the Big Ten championships last year and had steadily improved under head coach Jay Moseley, it had not won a tournament in more than four years. That changed when the Buckeyes won the Musketeer Classic by 18 strokes, concluding their fall season in dominating fashion Oct. 22-23 in Cincinnati.

The victory marked the first Buckeye team win for Moseley and each of the golfers, including seniors Will Grimmer and Daniel Wetterich, who finished first and second, respectively, in the individual standings.

"It was really special, especially for those two seniors who grew up in Cincinnati and who take a lot of pride in being from the Cincinnati area," Moseley said. "Will Grimmer has been a member of Maketewah (Country Club, where the tournament was held) since he started playing the game. And so it was a pretty cool event for those guys to be seniors going to play in their hometown in the closing fall event. And to have the performance they did was nothing short of outstanding for our team."

Grimmer took full advantage of golfing on his home turf, winning the Musketeer Classic by a 11 strokes. The Mariemont High School product earned Co-Big Ten Men's Golfer of the Week honors for his performance, which was both the second time he received the award and the second time he won an individual title. Grimmer won the Bearcat Invitational as a sophomore along with Big Ten Men's Golfer of the Week honors – giving him two career victories in his home city. With a track record of success at the Bearcat Invitational, Grimmer hoped to win another individual title there on Sept. 24, but the tournament was canceled due to rain. Ohio State added the Musketeer Classic to its schedule to cap the fall campaign.

"It was kind of like turning the glass half empty to glass half full," Grimmer said. "And it was really, really special to get to go down there and play my home course and be in front of family and friends and a lot of people that don't typically get to see me play and compete that got to come out and watch me. And then I really just put together a great three rounds of golf over those two days and was fortunate enough to win the tournament."

Grimmer finished his three rounds at Maketewah with a career-best 54-hole score of 202, shooting 68-67-67. Grimmer's stroke average improved to 69.56, which is atop the Big Ten and top-25 nationally (No. 23, according to GolfStat's rankings). Despite all of the individual success, Grimmer wanted the team to experience something they never had before – a victory.

"That was very special," Grimmer said. "It's great to win individually and that's always fun, but I've experienced that before in college; I've experienced that before out of college. But being a senior and playing for a team – this is the last season I'll ever get to compete on a golf team, and so it's something that I've wanted and we haven't gotten, and it was really a goal of mine this year that we have to win a tournament as a team."

Wetterich took second place at even par, shooting 74-69-70, including two eagles. Like Grimmer, Wetterich had experience



COURTESY OF OSU ATHLETICS

TWO-TIME CHAMP – Ohio State senior Will Grimmer has a pair of collegiate victories, with both coming in his hometown of Cincinnati.

at Maketewah that helped him succeed in the tourney. Wetterich, a product of La Salle High School, earned All-Big East honors and was the Big East Freshman of the Year at Xavier University before transferring to Ohio State after his first year.

Wetterich, who has golfed with Grimmer since they were 7 years old, said the two always push each other – even when they might not notice it – in part because they're always trying to beat each other.

"The competition between me and Will will better ourselves and each other, and then in turn other people will see that and then they'll start to join in," Wetterich said. "It will be ultimately better for the team. It will make our team stronger and more together."

Grimmer has seen Wetterich come a long way since they were kids in the Queen City, expressing pride in watching his teammate come into his own on and off the course.

"Daniel's really emerged and grown," Grimmer said. "Daniel's definitely a little more quiet than some of our guys on our team, but the biggest thing with Daniel is he's just a hard worker and a good player."

Despite being known as a quiet guy, Wetterich's development as a leader has not gone unnoticed by his coach.

"He's pretty quiet, pretty soft-spoken and humble," Moseley said of Wetterich. "That's his personality style so he's usually one of the last ones maybe to speak up, but he definitely has a strong voice and a powerful effect on his teammates from setting an example in a positive way."

Working hard and leading by example have been essential to the Buckeyes' success. When the best golfers on the team push each other to improve daily, the others follow suit and the program is uplifted as a whole. Moseley emphasizes the importance of having leaders who are dedicated and set an example of diligence for the team to follow.

Wetterich expressed the same sentiment when talking about the team and the impact Grimmer has on those around him.

"He knows a lot about golf," Wetterich

said of Grimmer. "He understands what is right for the team and he does it. He's always willing to help out, and he also leads by example, which is also really important."

Moseley is well aware of the team lead-

ers' drive to improve themselves and those around them, adding that fellow seniors Caleb Ramirez and Will Voetsch have stepped up as well.

"They've provided great leadership for our program," Moseley said. "And they work hard, and it's great to see them carry the banner high for our program."

Grimmer and Wetterich also excel in the classroom, both earning Academic All-Big Ten honors. Moseley said the desire to thrive both athletically and academically is ingrained in the culture of the program, which seeks student-athletes with high motors and a competitive drive.

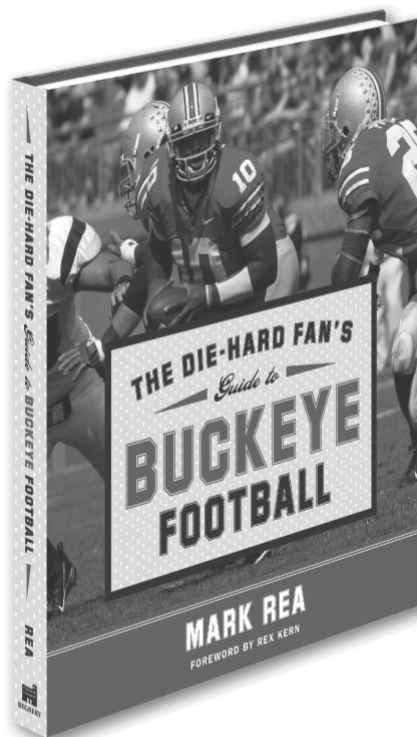
"It just gives you grit," Wetterich said of the benefits of hard work. "When things are getting tough on the golf course, you can understand that you know you put in the time and effort and the hard work into performing."

"So when you're on the course, if things are going south, you can just look back to that and then just take a step back and understand where you are, what you're doing and understand all the hard work you've put into it. And I feel like that really allows you to adjust to certain situations and ultimately change the outcome in a positive way."

In order to better introduce BSB readers to Ohio State's Olympic sports teams and athletes, we have shifted to more feature-oriented coverage of the various squads. Buckeye Sports Bulletin will provide a roundup of all the games, matches and meets involving OSU's teams each Monday on our BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all print subscribers.

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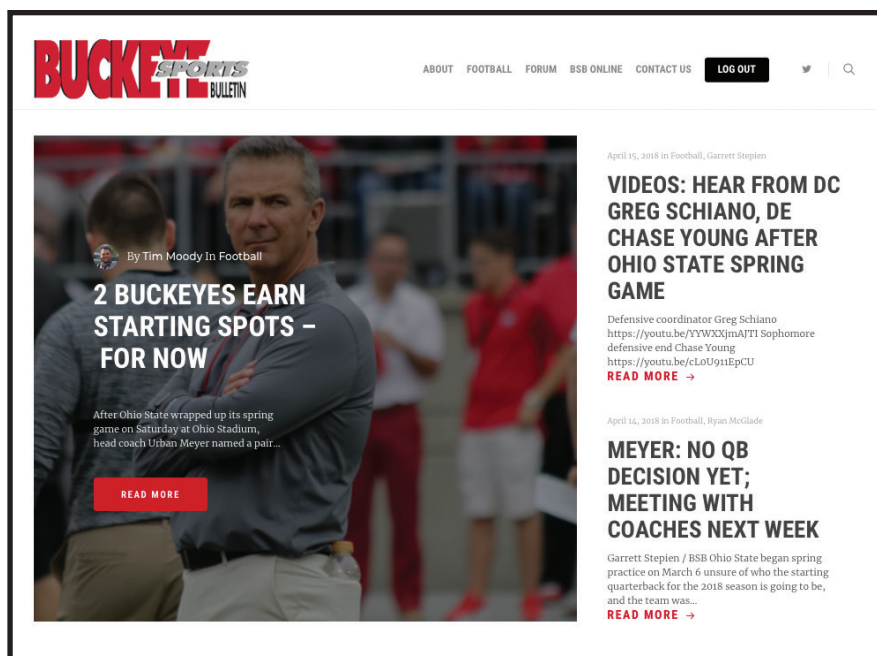
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BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (8-1, 5-1 BIG TEN)

Sept. 1 OREGON STATE, W 77-31; **8** RUTGERS, W 52-3; **15** vs. (15) TCU at Arlington, Texas, W 40-28; **22** TULANE, W 49-6; **29** at (9) Penn State, W 27-26.
Oct. 6 INDIANA (Homecoming), W 49-26; **13** MINNESOTA, W 30-14; **20** at Purdue, L 49-20.
Nov. 3 NEBRASKA, W 36-31; **10** at Michigan State, Noon; **17** at Maryland, TBA; **24** MICHIGAN, Noon.
Dec. 1 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis, 8 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Nov. 1 UNC PEMBROKE (exhibition), W 81-63; **7** at Cincinnati, 6 p.m.; **11** PURDUE FORT WAYNE, 4 p.m.; **15** at Creighton, 7 p.m.; **18** SOUTH CAROLINA STATE, 2 p.m.; **20** SAMFORD, 7 p.m.; **23** CLEVELAND STATE at St. John Arena, 8 p.m.; **28** SYRACUSE, 7 p.m.
Dec. 2 MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **5** vs. Illinois at Chicago, 7 p.m.; **15** BUCKNELL, Noon; **18** YOUNGSTOWN STATE, 7 p.m.; **22** vs. UCLA at Chicago, 3 p.m.; **29** HIGH POINT, TBA.
Jan. 5 MICHIGAN STATE, Noon; **9** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **12** at Iowa, 2:30 p.m.; **18** MARYLAND, 6:30 p.m.; **23** PURDUE, 7 p.m.; **26** at Nebraska, Noon; **29** at Michigan, 9 p.m.
Feb. 2 RUTGERS, Noon; **7** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **10** at Indiana, 1 p.m.; **14** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.; **17** at Michigan State, 1 p.m.; **20** NORTHWESTERN, 8:30 p.m.; **23** at Maryland, 2 p.m.; **26** IOWA, 7 p.m.
March 2 at Purdue, 2 p.m.; **6** at Northwestern, 9 p.m.; **10** WISCONSIN, 4:30 p.m.; **13-17** Big Ten Tournament at Chicago.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Oct. 28 IUP (exhibition), W 72-50.
Nov. 6 USE, 7 p.m.; **9** DETROIT MERCY, 7 p.m.; **11** at UConn, Noon; **16** at Sacramento State, 11:30 p.m.; **18** at Stanford, 4 p.m.; **29** NORTH CAROLINA, 7 p.m.
Dec. 2 CINCINNATI, 2 p.m.; **5** at Washington, 11 p.m.; **16** FLORIDA at St. John Arena; **20** vs. Virginia Tech at West Palm Beach, Fla., 12:15 p.m.; **21** vs. Butler at West Palm Beach, Fla., 12:15 p.m.; **28** at Purdue, 4 p.m.; **31** NEBRASKA, 1 p.m.
Jan. 5 at Maryland, 4 p.m.; **10** INDIANA, 6 p.m.; **14** MICHIGAN STATE, 7 p.m.; **17** at Penn State, 7 p.m.; **20** at Michigan, 3 p.m.; **24** MARYLAND, 8 p.m.; **28** at Minnesota, 7:30 p.m.; **31** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.
Feb. 3 at Northwestern, 4:30 p.m.; **6** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **10** IOWA, 4 p.m.; **14** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **17** WISCONSIN, 2 p.m.; **21** at Michigan State, 6 p.m.; **28** at Wisconsin, 9 p.m.
March 3 RUTGERS, TBA; **6-10** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis.

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 1 Queen City Invitational at Highland Heights, Ky., Men: 6th/10; Women: 1st/10; **8** (Men) Golden Eagle Invitational at Cookeville, Tenn., 1st/4; **15** Commodore Classic at Nashville, Tenn., Men: 8th/14; Women: 1st/19; **29** Loyola Lakefront Invitational at Chicago, Men: 9th/26 (248); Women: 3rd/33 (85).
Oct. 13 Pre-Nationals at Madison, Wis., Men: 31st/34 (814); Women: 13th/35 (389); **28** Big Ten Championships at Lincoln, Neb., Men: 11th/12 (350); Women: 8th/14 (232).
Nov. 9 NCAA Regionals at Terre Haute, Ind.; **17** NCAA Championships at Madison, Wis.

FIELD HOCKEY (12-8, 5-4 BIG TEN)

Aug. 24 (9) DELAWARE, L 3-2; **26** at (8) Louisville, W 3-2 (OT).
Sept. 1 vs. (25) Maine at Boston, L 2-1 (OT); **3** at (19) Boston University, W 4-2; **7** BALL STATE, W 6-0; **9** LEHIGH, W 5-0; **14** (6) PENN STATE, L 3-2; **16** MIAMI (OHIO), L 2-1; **21** at (3) Maryland, L 1-0; **23** at (17) Rutgers, W 4-3; **28** INDIANA, W 1-0; **30** IOWA, L 2-1.
Oct. 5 at Northwestern, W 2-1; **7** OHIO, W 5-2; **12** JAMES MADISON, W 5-0; **14** at Kent State, W 4-0; **19** MICHIGAN STATE, W 6-1; **21** MICHIGAN, L 2-1; **28** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT QUARTERFINALS vs. (10) RUTGERS, W 1-0.
Nov. 2 Big Ten Tournament Semifinals at Evanston, Ill., vs. (2) Maryland, L 9-1.

MEN'S GOLF (FALL)

Sept. 15-16 Northern Intercollegiate at Sugar Grove, Ill., 4th/14 (881); **24-25** Bearcat Invitational at Cincinnati, Cancelled; Inverness Intercollegiate at Toledo, NTS; **30-Oct. 2** Nike Collegiate Invitational at Fort Worth, Texas, 10th/15.
Oct. 8-9 JACK NICKLAUS INVITATIONAL at Dublin, Ohio, vs. Clemson, T 2½-2½; vs. Florida State, L 3½-2½; **22-23** Musketeer Classic at Cincinnati, 1st/13 (851).

WOMEN'S GOLF (FALL)

Sept. 16 East & West Match Play at Ann Arbor, Mich., Stroke Play: 4th/8 (585); **17** East & West Match Play at Ann Arbor, Mich., vs. UC Davis, L 3-2; **18** East & West Match Play at Ann Arbor, Mich., vs. Oregon State, W 3-2.
Oct. 1-2 Windy City Collegiate at Chicago, 7th/14; **12-14** Tar Heel Invitational at Chapel Hill, N.C., 16th/18 (915); **28-29** Jim West Challenge at San Marcos, Texas, 12th/15 (891).

MEN'S SOCCER (1-15-2, 0-7-1 BIG TEN)

Aug. 24 WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. FURMAN, L 2-0;

26 WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. HOFSTRA, W 1-0; **31** Dayton Classic vs. Marshall, L 1-0.

Sept. 2 Dayton Classic vs. Milwaukee, L 1-0; **7** USF, L 1-0; **11** BOWLING GREEN, T 1-1 (2OT); **16** at Penn State, L 3-1; **21** NORTHWESTERN, T 0-0 (2OT); **25** at Michigan, L 3-1; **30** RUTGERS, L 3-2.

Oct. 5 CLEVELAND STATE, L 2-0; **8** at Syracuse, L 3-0; **12** MICHIGAN STATE, L 2-1; **16** KENTUCKY, L 3-0; **19** at Maryland, L 5-0; **24** INDIANA, L 1-0; **28** at Wisconsin, L 1-0 (2OT).

Nov. 3 Big Ten Tournament First Round at Bloomington, Ind., vs. Northwestern, L 3-1.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (9-5-4, 6-2-3 BIG TEN)

Aug. 16 at (3) Duke, L 2-0; **19** at (6) North Carolina, L 2-0; **24** at Florida, W 1-0; **26** DUQUESNE, Cancelled; **30** MOREHEAD STATE, W 8-0.

Sept. 2 at Notre Dame, W 1-0; **7** FLORIDA GULF COAST, L 1-0; **14** at Penn State, L 4-0; **20** at Illinois, W 2-0; **23** at Northwestern, W 1-0 (OT); **27** IOWA, W 2-0; **30** NEBRASKA, T 1-1 (2OT).

Oct. 5 at Michigan, L 1-0; **7** at Michigan State, W 1-0; **12** RUTGERS, T 0-0; **14** MARYLAND, T 1-1 (2OT); **18** at Purdue, W 2-1; **21** (19) WISCONSIN, W 2-1; **28** BIG TEN TOURNAMENT QUARTERFINAL vs. NEBRASKA, T 0-0 (PKS: L 3-2).

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (4-3-1, 1-1-0 BIG TEN)

Oct. 12-13 at Arizona State, W 3-2; W 3-0; **19-20** MASSACHUSETTS, L 6-3; W 3-1; **26** (15) BOWLING GREEN, L 8-2; **27** at Bowling Green, T 2-2 (OT).

Nov. 2-3 at (5) Notre Dame, W 1-0; L 2-1; **9-10** at Colgate, 7 p.m.; 4 p.m.; **16-17** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; 5 p.m.; **23-24** PENN STATE, 5 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **30-Dec. 1** at Minnesota, 8 p.m.; 5 p.m.

Dec. 28-29 MERCYHURST, 7 p.m.; 8 p.m..

Jan. 4-5 at Michigan State, 7 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **11-12** MICHIGAN, 7 p.m.; 7 p.m.; **18-19** at Penn State, 7 p.m.; 7 p.m.

Feb. 1-2 NOTRE DAME, 7 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **8-9** at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **15-16** MINNESOTA, 6 p.m.; 6 p.m.; **22-23** at Michigan, 6:30 p.m.; 6 p.m.

March 1-2 MICHIGAN STATE, 6:30 p.m.; 5 p.m.; **8-10** Big Ten Tournament First Round; **16** Big Ten Tournament Semifinals; **23** Big Ten Tournament Finals; **29-31** NCAA Regionals.

April 11/13 NCAA Frozen Four at Buffalo, N.Y.

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (9-3-0, 5-1-0 WCHA)

Sept. 28-29 at Quinnipiac, W 3-2; W 3-2.

Oct. 5-6 COLGATE, W 4-3; L 5-2; **12-13** MINNESOTA STATE, W 4-0; W 2-1 (OT); **19-20** at Minnesota, L 3-0; W 3-2; **26-27** at St. Lawrence, L 3-2; W 6-1.

Nov. 2-3 ST. CLOUD STATE, W 3-2; W 3-2; **9-10** at Bemidji State, 4:07 p.m.; 4:07 p.m.; **16-17** MINNESOTA DULUTH, 6:07 p.m.; 1:07 p.m.

Dec. 1-2 at Minnesota State, 7:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.; **15-16** MERCYHURST, 3:07 p.m.; 1:07 p.m.

Jan. 5-6 MINNESOTA WHITECAPS, 3:07 p.m.; 12:07 p.m.; **11-12** WISCONSIN, 6:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.; **18-19** at Minnesota Duluth, 8:07 p.m.; 5:07 p.m.; **25-26** at Minnesota, 6:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.

Feb. 1-2 at St. Cloud State, 4:07 p.m.; 4:07 p.m.; **8-9** BEMIDJI STATE, 6:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.; **22-23** at Wisconsin, 8:07 p.m.; 4:07 p.m.

March 1-3 WCHA Quarterfinals; **9-10** WCHA Final Faceoff at Minneapolis; **16** NCAA Quarterfinals; **22/24** NCAA Frozen Four at Hamden, Conn.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (12-14, 3-11 BIG TEN)

Aug. 24 ALBANY, W 3-1; **25** OHIO, W 3-0; TEXAS A&M, W 3-0; **31** vs. Southern Miss at Oxford, Miss., W 3-2; at Ole Miss, L 3-2.

Sept. 1 vs. Samford at Oxford, Miss., W 3-0; **7** vs. Princeton at Towson, Md., W 3-0; **8** vs. Missouri at Towson, Md., W 3-1; at Towson, W 3-0; **14** vs. Evansville at Dayton, W 3-1; **15** vs. Tennessee at Dayton, L 3-1; at Dayton, L 3-2; **19** at (6) Wisconsin, L 3-0; **22** (4) PENN STATE, W 3-1; **26** INDIANA, L 3-1; **29** at Maryland, L 3-2.

Oct. 5 at Rutgers, W 3-2; **6** at (9) Penn State, L 3-0; **12** MICHIGAN, L 3-2; **14** MICHIGAN STATE, W 3-0; **19** at Indiana, L 3-0; **20** at Purdue, L 3-0; **24** NEBRASKA, L 3-1; **28** at Northwestern, L 3-0.

Nov. 2 ILLINOIS, L 3-1; **4** NORTHWESTERN, L 3-1; **7** at Michigan State, 7 p.m.; **10** MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **16** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; **17** MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **23** at Nebraska, 8 p.m.; **24** at Iowa, 8 p.m.

WRESTLING (1-0)

Nov. 3 vs. Navy at Owings Mills, Md., W 28-9; **11** Ohio Intercollegiate Open at Cleveland, TBA; **16** at California Baptist, 10 p.m.; **18** at Arizona State, 2 p.m.; **30-Dec. 1** Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational, TBA.

Dec. 9 WISCONSIN, 4 p.m.

Jan. 6 N.C. STATE, 6 p.m.; **11** at Indiana, 7 p.m.; **13** MICHIGAN STATE, 2 p.m.; **25** MICHIGAN, 7 p.m.

Feb. 1 at Illinois, 9 p.m.; **3** at Northwestern, 1 p.m.; **8** PENN STATE, 8:30 p.m.; **15** at Purdue, 7 p.m.; **17** NEBRASKA, 2 p.m.; **22** at Cornell, 6:30 p.m.

March 9-10 Big Ten Championships at Minneapolis; **21-23** NCAA Championships at Pittsburgh.



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OCT 20 - AT PURDUE
OCT 27 - BYE WEEK
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NOV 10 - AT MICHIGAN STATE
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NOV 24 - TTUN

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Running Game Sparks Buckeyes Vs. Nebraska

The Nebraska Cornhuskers have a proud football tradition that, like the Buckeyes, dates back to the late 1800s. Also like Ohio State, they have over 800 wins in their storied gridiron history.

COACH'S CORNER With Bill Conley

The Nebraska administration offered their head football job this year to former Cornhusker quarterback Scott Frost. Frost had brought success to the University of Central Florida, and Nebraska officials hoped that he could bring back some of that Cornhusker magic that had evaded the program for quite some time.

Despite all the anticipation from the Nebraska fan base, the season did not start off with the success many had hoped. It was apparent the program turnaround would not take place overnight. After six straight losses, the Cornhuskers got their first victory in the Frost era with a win over Minnesota followed by a 45-9 thrashing of Bethune-Cookman. They would come into Ohio Stadium on a two-game high with a powerful offense, seeking revenge on a team that had destroyed them in Lincoln, Neb., last season by a score of 56-14.

Nebraska linebacker and leading tackler Mo Barry had stated earlier in the week that his team needed a fast start to build

its confidence and, at the same time, put doubt in the Buckeyes' minds. It looked as if the Cornhusker plan was right on schedule as their offense took the opening drive 75 yards in 12 plays for a touchdown and a 7-0 lead. But after the Nebraska kicker muffed an onside kick attempt, the Buckeyes took over deep in Cornhusker territory.

The Nebraska defense held the Buckeyes, who failed to convert on fourth-and-2. The Buckeyes' first score was a Keandre Jones blocked punt that went out of the end zone for a two-point safety that made the score 7-2. The Buckeyes would own the rest of the first period by scoring two touchdowns and taking a 16-7 lead.

The Cornhuskers flipped the tables in the second quarter by forcing two Ohio State fumbles and converting both turnovers into touchdown drives to take the lead, 21-16, at halftime. The Buckeyes showed some signs of progress in the running game, but inconsistencies on defense and putting the ball on the ground too many times by the offense made the home crowd turn on their own as the Buckeyes left the field at the end of the second quarter. The Cornhuskers not only took the lead going into the locker room but had nearly 10 more minutes of possession time and had the ball 17 more plays than the Buckeyes. The Cornhuskers had the taste of a possible upset, but they would have to repeat their heroics the second half against a Buckeye team that had something to prove.

The Buckeye defense, which had been

so porous the first half, stiffened to the point of forcing the Cornhuskers to punt in their first five possessions of the second half.

The Ohio State running attack kept showing supremacy at the line of scrimmage in the second half, and the duo of J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber would rush for 163 and 91 yards, respectively for the game. The Buckeyes put 14 more points on the board in the third quarter and another six in the fourth. The proud Cornhuskers fought to the end, but their goal of a revenge victory was not to be accomplished this day. Ohio State ended the game with signs of improvement in many areas but still too many shortcomings to be satisfied.

Improved Running Game

The Buckeye offensive coaching staff used its two weeks of preparation to overhaul the running game, which had been pretty much nonexistent this season – a running game that was especially anemic in the red zone and in short-yardage situations.

Wisely, the coaches put the run-pass option on the shelf and replaced it with a two-tight end running attack which allowed the offensive line to fire off the ball with confidence. Using a variety of tight end sets, the offense ran a multitude of plays that emphasized power and gap schemes as well as isolation plays.

Buckeye tight ends were not just used for blocking but were able to release out of the backfield on play-action passes.

This new concept was just what the doctor ordered and was long overdue. It really let the entire offense play more aggressively and at a faster tempo. This offensive scheme allowed the running backs to average 5.7 yards per carry, a big improvement from the 3.0 yards per carry at Purdue.

Even though Dwayne Haskins wasn't as sharp as normal, the improved running

game should help him in the passing game. A strong running attack opens up the play-action passing game by forcing the defense to honor the run in run-or-pass situations. It helps the offense stay ahead of the chains and gives the unit more options in terms of play calling. A more balanced attack is just what is needed to help the Buckeyes reach their goal of playing for the Big Ten championship.

White Steps Up

It's often tough for a son of a football legend to live up to the legacy set by his father. Sometimes an athlete has to have patience awaiting his chance to make his own mark.

Sophomore Brendon White, son of Buckeye great defensive back William White, had his shot against Nebraska.

Brendon answered the call of duty by replacing safety Jordan Fuller, who was ejected after a targeting call in the first half. The younger White had caught the attention of the Buckeye defensive staff in practice and on special teams. It wasn't a matter of "if" but "when" he would he get his real chance.

Not only did Brendon play well in replacing Fuller, but he led his team in tackles along with linebacker Malik Harrison with 13 each. A "Cinderella Story" that's far from over, Brendon is just getting started in establishing his own legacy at Ohio State, and no one is prouder than his father, a father who is in the middle of a fight of his own in battling ALS. Brendon and William White are two great role models for all of us to follow. Hats off to both.

Known as one of the top recruiters in college football, Bill Conley is a national championship-winning coach and player at Ohio State who suited up for Woody Hayes and spent 17 years on the staffs of Earle Bruce, John Cooper and Jim Tressel.

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Goals Still On The Table, But OSU Must Improve

Style points aside, Ohio State is positioned to very likely land a spot in the College Football Playoff should the Buckeyes win out. The problem is, it's hard to imagine them winning out the way they have been playing lately.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

While Michigan seems to be getting better every week, Ohio State – at best – has been at a standstill or – at worst – playing poorer by the week.

But there are reasons why the games are played. Upsets happen. Momentum turns.

While OSU was winning a five-point game against Nebraska on Nov. 3, Oklahoma was in an equally tight game, and both Washington State and West Virginia needed scores in the final seconds to secure wins.

Trying to accurately predict how things will turn out with three to four weeks to go is precarious. Here are three things to keep in mind.

In the four-year history of the playoffs, every outright champion of the five major conferences with no more than one loss has been invited. Ohio State is one of the few teams left this year with no more than one loss.

Notre Dame throws a wrench into it this season. If Notre Dame finishes unbeaten, only three spots will be left for the five conferences.

The most likely path for Ohio State making the playoffs, should the Buckeyes win out, is for Alabama to win the SEC, which would leave all other SEC schools with at least two losses, and for the champions of both the Big 12 and Pac-12 to have two losses.

All that is very possible.

A Season Of Questions

The puzzling turn of the Buckeyes from No. 2 in the country in mid-October to uncertainty in early November raises just the latest questions in a season of questions.

Did we realize how much Nick Bosa meant?

I thought Ohio State had the depth to overcome the loss of Nick Boss on the defensive line without much notice. I was wrong, at least in the context of the entire defense.

The Buckeyes' dominating defensive line, with Bosa, was so overwhelming that it helped cover deficiencies at the linebacker and defensive back spots.

Turns out there really is depth on the line. It is still playing very well and is the strength of the defense. But there also has been a noticeable drop-off without Bosa. No longer does the D-line control games the way it did with Bosa.

Were the TCU and Penn State wins overrated?

Yes. I thought Ohio State had two high-quality wins in defeating the Horned Frogs in Dallas and Penn State on the road. The rankings at the time said both PSU and TCU were very good, and they each looked the part.

The rankings were wrong, and so was the look test at the time.

Penn State is good, not very good, as shown by its 6-3 record, which now includes losses to Ohio State, Michigan State and Michigan.

TCU might actually be bad. TCU is near

the bottom of the Big 12 standings with a 2-4 league mark, 4-5 overall. Its only wins are against lower-division Southern, plus SMU, Iowa State and Kansas State.

How bad is Ohio State's résumé?

The schedule is not this team's fault. But the Buckeyes have only one win against a team that currently has a winning record (Penn State, 6-3).

Rutgers is 1-8, Nebraska and Oregon State are each 2-7, and Indiana, Minnesota, Tulane and TCU are each 4-5.

All the upcoming opponents – Michigan State, Maryland and Michigan, plus a possible Big Ten title game opponent – currently have winning records.

Just how unusual is this year's run/pass mix for Urban Meyer?

Ohio State is averaging 4.5 yards per carry this year. That's lower than any Meyer team at Ohio State. Last year, the Buckeyes averaged 5.8 yards per carry.

In Meyer's previous six OSU seasons, the low was 5.2 yards per carry in 2012 and the high was 6.8 yards per carry in 2013.

With 1,603 yards rushing and 3,322 yards passing, OSU has accounted for just 32.6 percent of its yards on the ground.

The previous low for a Meyer team at OSU was 48 percent in 2016. The lowest in his coaching career was 39 percent in his first year at Florida, in 2005.

Will OSU have a 1,000-yard rusher?

There's a good chance Ohio State will still have a 1,000-yard rusher this season, maybe even two.

With 684 yards so far, J.K. Dobbins is on pace to reach 988 yards in a 13-game season (the regular season plus a bowl game) or 1,064 yards if the Buckeyes play in both the Big Ten Championship Game and a bowl.

Mike Weber has 607 yards. That puts him on pace for 877 yards in 13 games or 944 yards in 14 games.

Just how unusual are the passing numbers?

Dwayne Haskins is on pace to set the school record for passing yards in a single season in Week 10 vs. Michigan State – well before the end of the season.

With 3,053 yards through nine games, Haskins needs 278 yards to break Joe Germaine's 1998 record of 3,330 yards.

Haskins is averaging 339.2 passing yards per game. Germaine holds that record at 277.5 yards per game.

Haskins finished the Nebraska game tied with J.T. Barrett for the third-highest total in

a season. Barrett had 3,053 yards last year. Bobby Hoying in 1995 had 3,269 yards.

Anyone notice those empty seats in Ohio Stadium?

Ohio State reported attendance of 93,057 for the Rutgers game – staggering when sellouts well in excess of 100,000 had become commonplace.

Since then, the announced crowds have been 103,336 for Tulane, 104,193 for Indiana, 100,042 for Minnesota and 104,245 for Nebraska.

But it's hard to believe that many people were at the games.

In addition to the elimination of more B Deck sections for construction, large portions of some upper-deck sections in each end zone were empty for at least the last two home games, as well as a lot of seats throughout the stadium.

The Ohio Stadium record of 110,045 was set in 2016 against Michigan.

Ohio State averaged 107,495 a game last year, second in the country behind Michigan.

This year's average to-date of 101,174 ranks Ohio State fourth, behind Michigan, Penn State and Alabama.

This Week's Top 10

Here's my stab at a top 10 this week:

1. Alabama (9-0) – This is easy, clearly the nation's best team.

2. Clemson (9-0) – Suspect résumé to date and it won't get better, but the Tigers are on a roll.

3. Notre Dame (9-0) – Being undefeated this late in the season merits respect.

4. Michigan (8-1) – The nation's most improved team from September through early November.

5. Oklahoma (8-1) and West Virginia (7-1) – I'll pick between these two front-runners in the Big 12 when they play on the Friday after Thanksgiving.

7. Georgia (8-1) – Smooth sailing now for the Bulldogs until they get hammered by Alabama in the SEC title game.

8. Ohio State (8-1) – Good enough, record wise, to still be in playoff contention.

9. LSU (7-2) – Nation's best two-loss team, and a sentimental choice since ex-Buckeye Joe Burrow is the quarterback.

10. Washington State (8-1) – Pulled out a last-second win over Cal to stay in the hunt.

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OSU Should Have Solved Rushing Formula Sooner

Beating a mediocre Nebraska team by five points will never answer many questions for a struggling Ohio State squad, and a win like that shouldn't. The Buckeyes still had glaring holes despite the victory, and they'll still need to get those fixed if they want to achieve any of their overall goals for the season.

MOODY MUSINGS Tim Moody, Editor

That said, credit needs to be given where credit is due: Ohio State entered the off week looking for ways to fix the running game and the red-zone offense, and the Buckeyes thrived in those areas against the Cornhuskers.

Yes, I understand that Nebraska doesn't have a great defense. Yes, I know Ohio State has to face the No. 1 rushing defense in the nation in its next game. But I also know that Ohio State had previously struggled to run the ball against teams such as Indiana, Minnesota and Purdue. Those three squads aren't world-beaters, either.

Nebraska was the team on Ohio State's schedule this week, and the Buckeyes' success running the ball against the Cornhuskers still counts for something. In fact, it counts for a lot.

It matters because Ohio State didn't suddenly run the ball better at the wave of a wand. The Buckeyes were able to identify their issues in the run game, make the necessary changes and run effectively. They also relied more heavily on their best offensive player, sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins, who had 23 carries for 163 yards and three touchdowns.

The same can't be said in regard to Ohio State's other glaring problems. The defense was still shaky at best and it gave up big plays regularly. Nebraska had more than one pass go for 40 or more yards. You can't have that if you want to win, especially if you turn the ball over three times. And Ohio State still struggled with penalties, being flagged six times for 46 yards – and that was actually an improvement from most games this year.

So tip your hat to the offensive coaching staff – especially Ryan Day, Kevin Wilson, Greg Studrawa and Tony Alford. They figured out the right formula for Ohio State to run the ball. Can the Buckeyes do it against Michigan State, too? Sure. Will they? Just wait and see, and while you wait, watch some highlights of Dobbins against Nebraska. He really was excellent.

Now that I've finished singing the praises of the offensive coaching staff, I have to point out a problem in the form of a question:

Why did it take a 29-point loss to Purdue for the necessary changes to finally be made?

Ohio State's problems in the run game had been obvious for weeks. Maybe even months. The Buckeyes really had not looked outstanding running the ball since a week-three win over TCU, which had been Dobbins' only 100-yard performance before the Nebraska game.

Instead, the offense had been focused heavily on run-pass options – a good play and a play that Ohio State should continue to utilize at times. But it became clear early on that the Ohio State offensive line – this group of five players – wasn't suited for that scheme. And with a quarterback like Dwayne Haskins, the ball was being thrown often – too often, really. The line can't explode into a block if they're worried that the quarterback might throw. That's how you get penalties for illegal men downfield.

That's not an excuse. The line needed to be better at blocking for RPOs. But it wasn't, and the coaching staff should have been willing to recognize that and make the necessary adjustments sooner.

You should have seen senior right tackle Isaiah Prince's face when asked after the Nebraska game how many RPOs had been called.

"To be honest, I don't think there was any RPOs today, not that I remember," Prince said with a huge grin.

He went on to explain why it can be difficult for the linemen when they have to account for the quarterback potentially pulling the ball and throwing on an RPO call: "I mean it makes a big difference (when blocking a straight run play). You can fly off the ball, come off the ball hard and not have to worry about – I mean, when you do an RPO and the quarterback pulls the ball, you lose sense of where the defense is supposed to be. Me being a veteran, I'm the one setting the run plays. I know exactly how the defense is going to react in certain situations. So when you add RPOs, it kind of makes it hard."

The linemen aren't the only ones who were thrilled by the escape from the RPO offense. Both Dobbins and junior back Mike Weber, who had nine carries for 91 yards, said it was nice to get back on track with direct run calls.

"We got back to old Buckeye football," Dobbins said. "Just run at them and show them that we're strong."

Based on the performance against Nebraska and the mood of both the linemen and running backs, it's clear that this Ohio State team – this particular group of players in 2018 – is better off running the ball full steam ahead. Haskins will survive without the RPO – he's an excellent passer – and a better running game will open up downfield passing options for him even more.

Really, getting the run game going was the key for Ohio State. It opens things up downfield and in the red zone, where the Buckeyes scored three touchdowns in four tries against the Cornhuskers.

Why it took more than two months for the coaches to figure that out, we'll likely never know. But they got there in the end, and that's a good thing for the team's plans going forward.

The other issues? Well, let's just say there are plenty of questions to be answered in East Lansing, Mich.

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Issues Remain Despite Improved Rushing Attack

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

A poster on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum mentioned that he couldn't remember ever having so much anticipation for an Ohio State game against a 2-6 opponent such as Nebraska. His point was that he was anxious to see if the Buckeyes, stagnant for much of the season and coming off an embarrassing 49-20 loss to Purdue, had shown any improvement.

I have to say I agreed with him. I wanted to know if the Buckeyes had made any progress in the same areas that had plagued them all season – such things as the running game, red-zone difficulties, gaining short yardage, giving up big plays and the ever-unpopular too many penalties.

In the end, the Buckeyes showed progress in a couple of these key areas in their not so pretty 36-31 win over the Huskers, but at times the game looked like a battle between a pair of 2-6 teams. At other times, if you arrived fresh off a deserted island, you might have struggled to figure out which team had the losing record and which was the one trying to stake a claim to the playoffs.

The area of improvement that stood out most for Buckeye fans and observers was the run game, which fed into improvement in the red zone, where Ohio State scored three touchdowns in four visits, two of the scores via the run.

In the first half, it wasn't necessarily apparent that the Buckeyes would rack up 229 ground yards, their most since the whopping 375 they posted in the season opener against Oregon State (who could have imagined the decline down to 76 against Purdue after that outburst?).

They ran for 50 yards in the first quarter, including 36 by J.K. Dobbins – capped by a 10-yard touchdown run – on a drive that gave OSU a 16-7 lead late in the period. But in the second quarter the team was credited with just three net rushing yards as the Cornhuskers took control of the game and took a 21-16 lead into the locker room.

Most of the credit for righting the running ship will go to Dobbins, who ran for 163 yards on 23 carries, the first Buckeye to break the century mark since he had 121 against TCU in week three. I maintain it was Mike Weber who really got the Buckeyes untracked.

Much has been made of late about how the offensive line has been unable to move opposing defenses when Ohio State has tried to run. The truth of the matter is that neither Dobbins nor Weber, two pro-quality backs, had been able to do much on their own, either – something the great backs do.

Dobbins had gained 24 yards on three carries on the team's first drive of the second half, a march that ended when Dwayne Haskins tossed an ill-advised pass for an interception in the end zone. But it was Weber who seemed to really give the offense a spark when, after appearing to be trapped in the backfield on the next OSU possession, he reversed course and gained 27 yards to the Nebraska 36. Dobbins, in after Weber lost the handle following a 6-yard gain, capped the drive with a 3-yard TD run to put the Buckeyes back on top, 23-21.

Later in the third quarter, Weber set up a touchdown with a 37-yard run, and Dobbins seemingly blew the game open with a 42-yard scoring burst in the fourth quarter to make it a 36-24 Buckeye lead with 4:52 to play, these runs coming after neither of the backs had a run of more than 21 yards in the previous seven games and none longer than 12 in the two most recent games against Minnesota and the Boilermakers.

With the Buckeyes getting untracked with 112 yards on 13 carries in the third quarter

and struggling to stop the Nebraska offense for much of the afternoon, it was that much more puzzling that at the start of the fourth quarter, finally in possession of a 30-21 lead, the Buckeyes threw three straight incompletions on their opening drive of the stanza for a three-and-out that consumed all of 24 seconds. You would think they would have wanted to milk some clock.

Fortunately, Dobbins would ultimately bail the Buckeyes out with his long TD run, and Ohio State, with the help of the running game, would overcome what, by his standards, was a subpar performance by Haskins, which included not only lower numbers, but an interception and a lost fumble.

The Buckeyes needed the running game to offset Haskins' sluggish performance because the defense wasn't going to do it. The Buckeyes yielded 31 points and 450 yards. Were it not for some timely – for the Buckeyes – drops by Husker receivers, we might be chronicling a second straight defeat and a potentially lost season for Ohio State.

Leading 21-16, Nebraska had its first two drives of the second half stall when Husker receivers could not haul in catchable third-down passes from Adrian Martinez.

The Buckeyes allowed several long plays in the game, including a 46-yard reception by Stanley Morgan early in the fourth quarter to the OSU 20 (the defense made a key stand and held Nebraska to a field goal), but for the most part the Buckeyes kept plays in front of them. The Huskers' longest touchdown was their last, a 17-yarder to close the score to the final 36-31 margin.

But that final Nebraska drive was among the most troubling.

Dobbins had just put the Buckeyes up by 12, and the Huskers had but 4:52 to post two touchdowns. Ohio State allowed Nebraska to march 75 yards virtually unchecked on seven plays, using up only 1:55. The Cornhuskers did not face a third down on the march. That's hardly playing championship defense.

Whether you allow a team big plays or let them march up and down the field, it results in the same thing – yardage and scores. Nebraska opened the game with a 12-play, 75-yard, 5:04 scoring drive, and its other touchdown drives were 10 plays for 64 yards and eight for 47. Give Ohio State credit for doing better on the big ones, but the defense still has a *long* way to go.

After the game, head coach Urban Meyer seemed to indicate that changes made on defense in the off week may have led to Nebraska being able to nickel and dime the Buckeyes.

"So there's a fine line," he explained. "You can get bled to death, and we don't want to do that obviously. But we did play a little more off coverage, a little more zone coverage too."

The silver lining for the stop troops, if there was one, was the surprising play of Brendon White, who came on for the ejected Jordan Fuller and recorded 13 stops, several of them key. I'm sure most Buckeye fans figured when Fuller was lost from a depleted and underperforming safety group, Ohio State was in trouble.

"Early, you never know what is going to happen," White said of being prepared to play. "Someone could get ejected like what happened today. You just have to go into every week and

be prepared so when your moment comes, you'll be ready to go. We always talk about next man up. I went out there when my name was called and I did it."

The sad thing is that if Fuller hadn't been ejected, we might never have known what White was capable of doing. Presumably, the coaches had seen the potential in practice, but given the struggles of the defense in general and the safeties in particular, you have to wonder why we haven't seen more of White to this point.

The Buckeyes failed to convert another fourth-and-short in this game. The team squandered a gift on what appeared to be a botched surprise onside kick, taking over at the Nebraska 31 after the Huskers' initial scoring drive. Dobbins could not gain the necessary 2 yards, and Ohio State turned the ball over on downs. Although Ohio State should have been able to get the two, the drive was lost, in my mind, on third-and-1 the play before. Rather than give it to Dobbins and let him drive straight ahead, the staff got cute and gave it to Parris Campbell coming across, and he tried to go outside and was thrown for a 1-yard loss.

This is Ohio State. If you can't pound out 1 yard on two plays, you don't deserve to win anyway.

As for penalties, the Buckeyes were flagged for a still-too-high six for 46 yards, but at least none of them was of the game-changing variety.

The Buckeyes will be stepping up in class against Michigan State in their next game, especially on the road.

The Spartans are leading the country in rushing defense, so it will be interesting to see if Ohio State continues its upward trajectory with the running game, not to mention to see if yet another offense picks apart the Buckeye defense. The Spartans, who will have plenty of confidence after seeing plenty of film of lesser teams marching up and down the field against Ohio State, will be very itchy to pay back Ohio State for the 48-3 thumping at the hands of the Buckeyes last season. They will have seen plenty of that film as well.

But as a certain football coach might say, the best part of being 8-1 is having a chance to be 9-1.

Let Them Play

Speaking of Fuller being ejected, the targeting rule for which he was sent to the showers drives me crazy. I am all for player safety, but officials are legislating football out of football. It's a rough and tumble game, and all of the changes of late seem to favor the offense. Maybe some people like 63-52 games, with all that scoring action, but there is a place for good defense, too.

I think more attention needs to be paid toward intent on targeting calls. It seemed to me that there was not intent on Fuller's part to target Kurt Ravidal. Maybe march 15 yards off – and I think even that's a stretch – but don't throw a guy out for trying to play defense.

Interestingly, while doing some research on the targeting rule, I came across a good article on the rule on SB Nation. The picture they used to illustrate the infraction was one of Joey Bosa lowering the boom on Notre Dame's DeShone Kizer in the Fiesta Bowl following the 2015

season. It was a play that proved to be the last of Bosa's illustrious Ohio State career.

I said at the time and I will say it now: That was a play that up until a few years ago would have been considered a great play by Bosa.

I am going to ask the question on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum, "Which is more bothersome, the targeting rule or the new rule allowing fair catches on kickoffs?" I find the fair catch rule more annoying but the targeting rule more potentially game-changing.

Be sure to check in on the Forum with your opinion.

Who Is That?

I know some of the guys in the office were crazy about the black uniforms Ohio State wore against Nebraska. Count me as a contrarian on this particular fashion statement.

If you are scanning through games on television and you can't immediately identify that you are seeing Ohio State, then the Buckeyes are wearing the wrong uniforms. Ohio State is a traditional power and the Buckeyes have worn, essentially, the same uniforms for as long as I can remember. The minute you see those uniforms and helmets, you should know that you are seeing the Buckeyes. As I have stated many times before, gimmicks are for wannabes, not powers. Or at best for Nike to sell more jerseys.

Ohio State's colors are scarlet and gray. I am sure if I scoured the Ohio State media guide – sadly online now, not in book form – I would find no reference to black as a team color. I suspect that the fact that the team's colors do not include black made the attempt to have a "blackout" even more difficult because most Buckeye fans have scarlet and gray gear in their closets and drawers. Instead, you got a "black with scarlet speckles out," not that Buckeye fans are the best at this type of gimmick displays of loyalty.

Maybe the whole thing was a plot to get Buckeye fans to go out and buy new, black gear, with Ohio State picking up their royalties.

There is also the theory that recruits love these alternate uniforms. If a prep prospect chooses Ohio State based on occasional gimmick fashion statements, I am not sure that he is a player I want to build around.

I don't mean to bring up Ohio State's archrival, but would Michigan ever go into battle without their famed winged helmets?

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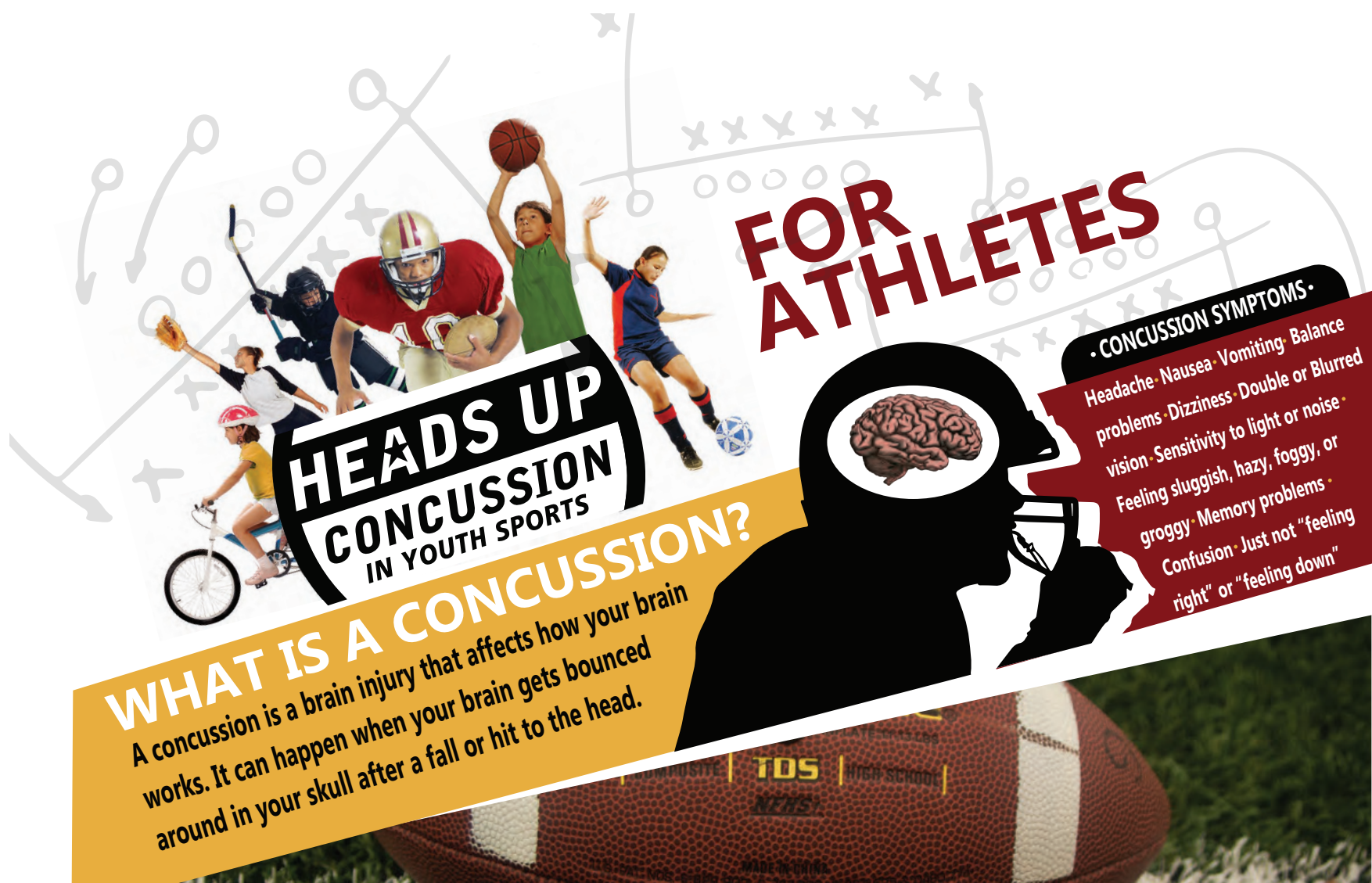
The critical part of the season is coming up and, obviously, there are still plenty of questions about the direction of Ohio State's season and its ultimate outcome. Now is not the time to have your Buckeye Sports Bulletin show up in the mail after the next game has been played.

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