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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Dec. 1, 2018



JOSH WINSLOW

PULLING AWAY – Ohio State fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell (21) caught six passes for 192 yards and two touchdowns as the Buckeyes topped Michigan and head coach Jim Harbaugh (pointing behind Campbell), 62-39, for a seventh straight victory over the Wolverines.

Buckeyes Roll To Statement Victory In 'The Game'

By **TIM MOODY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Winning The Game is nothing new for Urban Meyer's Ohio State.

He was 6 for 6 against Michigan as the head coach in Columbus heading into 2018 with his eyes set on a perfect 7-0 start. This time, though, the Buckeyes weren't supposed to win – at least if you ask almost anyone outside the program.

Michigan was ranked fourth in the nation. The Wolverines were 10-1 overall and a perfect 8-0 in the Big Ten. They were favored in The Game in Columbus for the first time since 2004.

It was Ohio State that was coming off a 52-51 overtime win against unranked Maryland. It was the Buckeyes who had struggled on defense all year and who were preparing to face the No. 1 defense in the nation in various major categories.

But when the clock struck zero at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 24, it was Meyer's Buckeyes ahead once again. And it wasn't close. Ohio State responded to being the underdog by shellacking the Wolverines, 62-39. Meyer's perfect streak against Michigan stayed alive in resounding fashion.

At this point, the Ohio State players themselves can hardly remember The Game going any other way.

"I don't recall the last time they won against us, I was definitely a little boy and we did not want to be part of the team that gave them the first dub (win) in, what, 10 years?" said junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones.

Seven years, actually. But Jones was still a high school freshman at the time.

For Ohio State's seniors – playing on Senior Day – it was a fourth pair of

gold pants, five for some like Parris Campbell, who caught six passes for 192 yards and a two scores, including a 78-yard catch-and-run, in his final game at the Horseshoe.

For those seniors, it was the perfect cap to a regular season that was marred by off-field controversies out of their control. Meyer commended his team for fighting through that – it was him who was suspended three games to begin the year, not them – to come out with a win on the biggest stage yet.

"I'm extremely proud of our players, the way they've fought through it," Meyer said of the distractions. "Like someone was saying, nothing's ever good enough. And obviously, there was some adversity earlier in the year – not some, big-time adversity. And to come back against your rival and play like that, that's a focused team that loves each other and cares about each other."

For Michigan's seniors, it was a fourth loss when a win would have meant more than anything. Ahead of the season, Michigan set its sights on a "revenge tour" after losing to Michigan State, Penn State, Wisconsin and Ohio State last season. The last stop in that tour was Columbus after the Wolverines dispatched the other three teams with ease, but what became another career highlight for one set of seniors was a fourth (or fifth) lowlight for the others.

"That's the toughest part," Michigan senior safety Tyree Kinnel said. "I'm going to have to sleep on that the rest of my life, I wasn't able to win in this game. Other than that, I'm blessed to be here."

Slow Devastation

For Ohio State in The Game, it wasn't just a win. The Buckeyes turned a game many expected them to lose into one of the most resounding victories in the history of the rivalry.

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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's 62-39 shellacking of Michigan in The Game.

Joe Dempsey: Malik Harrison deserves a Buckeye Leaf for his performance in The Game.

Coming into the season with lofty potential, Harrison had high expectations. The 6-3, 245-pound linebacker showed why he has received so much hype in the Buckeyes' 62-39 victory against Michigan. The junior outside linebacker was everywhere on field, recording seven tackles (five solo), including two tackles for loss and one sack.

The Columbus Walnut Ridge product wasted no time making an impact against the Wolverines, turning two different second-and-2 tries into third-and-long attempts. On the second play of The Game, Harrison shot through the Michigan offensive line to sack Shea Patterson for a 7-yard loss, setting up third-and-9. Later in the quarter, Harrison brought down Karan Higdon for a 5-yard loss, setting up third-and-7.

James Grega: In the same way Ohio State fans remember the name Tim Biakabutuka, Michigan fans will now remember Chris Olave.

A freshman who entered the game with just five career receptions, Olave caught two touchdown passes in the first half against the Wolverines and also blocked a punt, contributing his fair share of 18 points in the win over Michigan.

Olave's performance was as unexpected as anything that happened on Saturday, and there was a lot that was unexpected in the four-hour game that unfolded at Ohio Stadium. Unlike the Biakabutuka performance, Olave figures to have a very bright future at Ohio State, whereas the U-M running back's performance was a one-time event.

Tim Moody: Ohio State freshman wide receiver Chris Olave had a grand total of five catches entering The Game. None of those was a touchdown.

Now he has two scores on the biggest stage plus a blocked punt that was returned for a touchdown by freshman cornerback Sevnyn Banks. That's quite a day for a guy playing in his first Michigan game, and for that he gets a Buckeye Leaf. Olave finished with just those two touchdown catches, but they went for 48 yards total and helped Ohio State turn the game on its head in the first half. He's a game changer, and Ohio State fans should get used to Olave's name going forward.

Garrett Stepien: Before The Game, Parris Campbell gripped the mic inside St. John Arena and sounded like a man on a mission when he made his pregame speech at Skull Session. Near the end, Campbell mentioned how Ohio State took notice of Karan Higdon's guarantee of Michigan's win.

"A player from their team said they guarantee a win against the Buckeyes," the fifth-year senior said. "And today, he got to pay, 'cause we don't lay down for nobody."

Campbell kept his word as he boosted the No. 10 Buckeyes' onslaught against the No. 4 Wolverines, taking matters into his own hands with the dagger in the fourth quarter. The 6-1, 208-pounder blew the doors off U-M's top-ranked defense on first-and-10 from OSU's 22. Campbell's 78-yard touchdown catch-and-run put Michigan out of reach and capped Ohio State's rout. His emphatic words prior to kickoff clearly resonated with the Buckeyes, who kept the same energy throughout the course of the contest. Campbell led all OSU receivers with six catches for 192 yards and two scores.

Frank Moskowitz: As always, you could choose Dwayne Haskins any week. He was great and remains so cool, calm and collected. Chris Olave would be a great choice with his two TDs and blocked punt. Don't forget about Parris Campbell with his six catches for 192 yards and two scores.

But I'm going with two maligned units as a whole. The linebackers played their best game by far, and the starters in that group combined for 27 tackles, two for loss, and a key pass breakup. And the offensive line did not allow a sack and helped the Buckeyes to 171 yards on the ground as well as 396 passing.

BSB Subscribers

Haskins. His willingness to run now has made our offense virtually unstoppable.

– **Tiffin Buckeye**

Of course, Dwayne Haskins for his superlative performance against our rivals. Chris Olave for his electrifying performance. The offensive line for keeping Haskins clean. Pete Werner for breaking up a caught touchdown in the end zone (else, the game momentum may have been different). Malik Harrison for a breakout performance. The fabulous wide receiver group, led by Parris Campbell, who made the Wolverines look so slow. A seventh Buckeye Leaf for Urban Meyer for winning his seventh consecutive game against the rivals. (He is making us believe that it is possible to do even better than Jim Tressel against our rivals.) A Buckeye Leaf for Mike Weber, who rushed for more yards than any rival player and helped the Buckeyes win.

– **AnthonyBuckeye**

A) Parris. Made the guys in the white shirts look mighty slow. B) Olave. First two TDs of the game and then the blocked punt that was scooped up for a TD. C) Haskins. Nothing needs to be said. D) Weber. Ninety-six yards and put one on his home-state school.

– **mrbigbux**

Sure, the names of Dwayne Haskins, Chris Olave, Parris Campbell and Malik Harrison deserve recognition. But my vote for who had the largest impact on The Game and deserve Buckeye Leaves were the offensive line and defensive line. Not one time did I ever see Haskins have to worry about scrambling away from pressure, mainly because there wasn't any.

And the harassment that the defensive line put on Shea Patterson was consistent all afternoon and constantly disrupted the Wolverines offense. The big guys in the trenches for the Buckeyes – on both sides of the ball – came to play, and it definitely showed in the final score.

– **JDub**

I'll take Jonathon Cooper this week! He was really disruptive. Probably his best game yet.

– **AcrossTheField**

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1983

In a battle of two top-10 teams, No. 10 Ohio State came up short Nov. 19 at No. 8 Michigan, losing 24-21.

The regular-season finale at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich., snapped a two-year win streak for the Buckeyes (8-3) against the Wolverines (9-2).

It was OSU's latest narrow loss in Big Ten play, the third of the campaign, after a 20-14 defeat at then-No. 7 Iowa on Sept. 24 and a 17-13 slipup at then-No. 19 Illinois on Oct. 15.

"It's been a tough three losses if you think about it," said Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce. "We've been just a few plays away from a victory, and we've lost three games. We're a very good 8-3 football team, but that's what we are."

30 Years Ago – 1988

At the annual football appreciation banquet on Nov. 21, Jeff Uhlenhake was named Ohio State's most valuable player.

The senior center claimed three major awards at the ceremony, which took place at Aladdin Temple Mosque in Columbus, as the Buckeyes' winner of the Jim Parker Award (outstanding offensive lineman of the year) and the Archie Griffin Award (outstanding offensive player of the year).

Uhlenhake became the first offensive lineman since Tom DeLeone in 1971 to win MVP honors, which did not surprise OSU players in the slightest.

"There was no question he was the most valuable player," said fellow senior Mike Sullivan. "He's a class guy, a polite guy and a great football player."

25 Years Ago – 1993

After his No. 5 team got blanked 28-0 against then-unranked Michigan on Nov. 20, head coach John Cooper made a bold proclamation at Ohio State's appreciation banquet two days later. Following the first loss of the season for the Buckeyes (9-1-1), a postseason-altering defeat at the hands of the Wolverines (7-4), Cooper guaranteed a win for OSU in its next time out.

"This season isn't over," Cooper, addressing the crowd of 1,600 supporters at the Aladdin Shrine Mosque in Columbus, said. "Bring 'em on, it doesn't matter who we play. I'm going to guarantee you a victory in the bowl game."

20 Years Ago – 1998

Following in the footsteps of the two prior senior classes, the 1998 seniors established a new record for wins in a four-year stretch with 42. Then-No. 7 Ohio State's 31-16 win over then-No. 11 Michigan on Nov. 21 at Ohio Stadium in Columbus improved the 1998 group's record to 42-7, edging the mark tied by the 1996 (41-8-1) and 1997 (41-10) classes.

"It feels great," said safety Damon Moore, who racked up 12 tackles in the Buckeyes' (10-1) victory against the Wolverines (8-3). "Hopefully the guys next year will beat it. We'll be very successful if seniors keep beating that record every year."

15 Years Ago – 2003

Ohio State announced it would ban advertisements for all alcoholic beverages on local radio stations in the greater Columbus area during Buckeyes broadcasts starting in 2004.

OSU had recently become the first university in the country to sign a pledge presented by the Washington, D.C., based Center for Science and Public Interest that wanted colleges to break their association with alcohol advertising.

Athletic director Andy Geiger told The Columbus Dispatch that agreeing to the pledge was an excellent idea.

"We can be accused of hypocrisy if we're sending one message at one level and doing something else at another," Geiger said.

The move marked the second time in the past several months that Ohio State had attacked alcohol. The university started to crack down on tailgating before football games in August, resulting in several alcohol-related arrests and citations.

10 Years Ago – 2008

Chris "Beanie" Wells was one of several Ohio State underclassmen considering declaring for the 2009 NFL draft, entering December with the decision looming.

The junior running back was coming off a 15-carry, 134-yard performance in then-No. 10 Ohio State's 42-7 rout of Michigan on Nov. 22 and trying to get healthy after leaving The Game early with a pulled right hamstring.

"It didn't go through my mind at all," Wells said when asked if he thought the Buckeyes' victory against the Wolverines might have been his last in Ohio Stadium. "I wasn't thinking about it."

Wells was considered by NFL analysts and scouts as likely the first tailback to be taken off the board if he were to forgo his senior season and enter the draft. Senior cornerback Malcolm Jenkins, who chose to come back for his final season in Columbus, said he knew the importance of Wells' upcoming decision.

"It will come down to what he wants in his heart," Jenkins said. "He could easily go to the NFL next year. He's played well enough to do it. Regardless of what he does, he's going to be successful. It will be a hard decision."

Five Years Ago – 2013

Throughout head coach Urban Meyer's career – from Bowling Green to Utah, Florida and Ohio State – he incredibly had yet to produce a 1,000-yard rusher in his offense.

The drought ended near the end of the 2013 season when senior running back Carlos Hyde, despite missing the first three games due to a suspension for his role in an alleged bar altercation over the summer, reached the milestone after the then-No. 3 Buckeyes' 42-14 rout of Indiana on Nov. 23.

Hyde, who logged two touchdowns and 117 yards on 18 carries for OSU (11-0) against the Hoosiers (4-7), reached 13 touchdowns and 1,064 yards on 138 totes with one regular-season game left to spare as Nov. 30 at Michigan (7-4) approached.

"During my suspension, I told myself it's still possible," Hyde said. "I just had to go even harder playing right now. I have basically in my mind said, 'I have to make up for time.' That's how I play."

One Year Ago – 2017

A freak pregame injury pulled J.T. Barrett from The Game in the third quarter, but behind sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins off the bench, then-No. 9 Ohio State (10-2) overcame the fifth-year senior quarterback's absence for a 31-20 triumph at Michigan (8-4) on Nov. 25.

With the win, Barrett became the first signal caller on either side of the rivalry to go 4-0 in The Game. After he injured his knee along Michigan Stadium's crowded sideline prior to kickoff, and before he reaggravated the tweak on a run early in the second half, Barrett was 3 of 8 passing for 30 yards and a touchdown in addition to 15 carries for 67 yards and another score.

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 1350 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 30
 P.O. Box 12453
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 bsb@buckeyesports.com

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PUBLISHER
 Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
 Becky Roberts

EDITOR
 Tim Moody

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
 Mark Rea

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
 Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
 Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
 Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
 Bill Armstrong Bob Roehm
 David Breithaupt Julie Roy
 Bill Conley Mark Schmetzer
 Joe Dempsey Steve Siegfried
 Rich Exner Garrett Stepien
 James Grega Jeff Svoboda
 Eric Loughry Mike Wachsman
 Craig Merz

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
 Jan Jager Dave Tebay
 Ron Friedman

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Charter Member

OPINION

Bucks Proved They Still Have Title Dreams

After a season's worth of uneven performances that brought into question whether Ohio State was the most flawed 10-1 team in college football history, the Buckeyes overcame adversity – most of their own doing – and turned an edge-of-the-seat rivalry game into a stomp-and-romp with a 62-39 statement victory Nov. 24 against fourth-ranked Michigan.

The outcome not only continued OSU's recent dominance over its archrivals – seven wins in a row and 14 victories in the last 15 meetings – it sent a signal throughout college football that the Buckeyes might not be ready to give up on their chances to play for a national championship.

That Ohio State showcased its ability to run roughshod over Michigan was achieved despite committing 12 penalties for 150 yards in the game, including five pass-interference penalties, four of which sustained U-M scoring drives. There were also two personal-foul calls against the Buckeyes as well as a pair of unsportsmanlike-conduct penalties, including one on head coach Urban Meyer for protesting a non-call on what he thought was a late hit on his quarterback.

It was the most overall penalties against OSU in a Big Ten game since the Buckeyes were flagged 13 times against Michigan in 1999, and the yardage was the most walked off against Ohio State in any game since at least 1959.

Compounding those unforced errors was a flubbed kickoff by return man Demario McCall right before halftime. As a result, the Wolverines were able to score their second touchdown in a span of just six seconds inside the final minute of the half to head into the visiting locker room facing only a 24-19 deficit.

Little did Michigan know that would be as close as it would get. Ohio State exploded in the second half, repeatedly showcasing its speed on offense and a heretofore unseen tenacity on defense as well as sprinkling in a crucial punt block at just the right time against the Wolverines, who entered the game with the virtually unbridled cockiness that accompanies a 10-game winning streak.

In addition to becoming the first Big Ten quarterback ever to crack the 4,000-yard mark in a single season, Dwayne Haskins became the first opposing quarterback ever to throw for six touchdowns in a game against Michigan. That is a noteworthy accomplishment in and of itself, but even more remarkable considering the Wolverines have been playing intercollegiate football since 1879.

Parris Campbell made his final game in the Horseshoe a memorable one, accounting for a career-high 192 receiving yards, including a 78-yard touchdown reception early in the fourth quarter. That was not only the longest pass play against the Michigan defense this year, it was the longest connection by Ohio State vs. the Wolverines since Joe Sparma and Bob Klein hooked up for an 80-yard score during the 1961 version of The Game.

True freshman Chris Olave, who entered the game with just five career catches for 70 yards, grabbed a pair of 24-yard touchdown passes and also came up with what many observers believe was the crucial play of the game. Olave blocked the punt that fellow freshman Sevin Banks turned into a 33-yard touchdown, a game-changing miscue that pushed Ohio State's lead to 34-19 at the 4:41 mark of the third quarter.

Three plays into the Wolverines' subsequent possession, safety Jordan Fuller's interception led to a 2-yard touchdown run by Michigan native Mike Weber – off an option pitch from Haskins, no less – and the Buckeyes really never looked back. Weber finished with

a game-high 96 yards, which pushed his career total to 2,529 and past 1955 Heisman Trophy winner Howard "Hopalong" Cassady into 18th place on OSU's all-time rushing list.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Meanwhile, the Ohio State defense, much-maligned (and deservedly so) in recent weeks, again made more than its share of mistakes, including the aforementioned pass-interference penalties. Michigan's late flurry at the end of the first half was set up by an interference call against junior cornerback Damon Arnette on a third-and-9 play with 1:07 remaining until the break. No penalty in that situation and the Wolverines are likely staring at a 24-6 halftime deficit.

Still, the unit seemed to play with more much fire and fury against Michigan, especially junior linebacker Malik Harrison, who finished the game with seven tackles, including two for loss.

In fact, it was Harrison who set the defensive tone on the game's second play. Michigan running back Karan Higdon, who had guaranteed earlier in the week that his team would beat the Buckeyes, ripped off an 8-yard run to begin the game. But on second-and-2, Harrison shot a gap and sacked Wolverines quarterback Shea Patterson for a 7-yard loss. Michigan wound up punting to Ohio State, which turned its first possession into a touchdown and an early lead it would never relinquish.

Harrison along with such defensive teammates as Robert Landers, Jonathon Cooper, Davon Hamilton and Dre'Mont Jones exacted a heavy toll on Patterson, who threw for 187 yards and three touchdowns. The senior transfer QB was sacked three times and dumped on several other occasions, and Patterson finally had to be helped off the field in the fourth quarter after Cooper had lowered the boom on him.

There were other stars for the Buckeyes, of course.

The offensive line helped protect Haskins – no sacks against a Michigan defense that had 31 of them coming into the game – and created enough holes for the running attack that led to 567 total yards against the Wolverines, who had been giving up an average of only 234.8 per game.

Perhaps best of all, the O-line had just one false-start penalty and wasn't flagged a single time for holding. (The Buckeyes did have one holding penalty, but that was against tight end Luke Farrell, and he's only an honorary member of the offensive line.)

Sophomore kicker Blake Haubeil had a perfect 10-for-10 afternoon on placements (eight PATs and a pair of chip-shot field goals) and was flawless on kickoffs, while sophomore punter Drue Chrisman was called upon only three times but still responded with a 40.3-yard average.

Sophomore co-captain Tuf Borland, who has spent the better part of this season chasing opponents rather than meeting them head-on, turned in an excellent performance by sticking his nose into the teeth of the Michigan offense and finishing with a game-high 10 tackles.

All in all, for people like me who have been hyper-critical of the way the Buckeyes have played since late September, it was a satisfying win that earned Ohio State a seventh consecutive division title and the opportunity to play for another Big Ten championship.

Passing The Look Test

And now the question must be asked. Will one signature victory cancel out the ugly loss to Purdue and afford Ohio State a chance to play for the national championship?

The answer is a definite "maybe."

Alabama, Clemson and Notre Dame each appear locked into three of the four spots in the College Football Playoff with Georgia, Oklahoma and Ohio State the most likely competitors for the final spot.

Georgia has a date in the SEC Championship Game with top-ranked Alabama, and although anything could happen, the Crimson Tide have won every game this season by 22 points or more. Additionally, Alabama has beaten the Bulldogs each of the last three times the teams have played, including a 23-20 overtime victory in last year's national title game.

Undefeated Notre Dame is a virtual lock since there are no more games on its schedule, so if the Tide holds serve and Clemson takes care of business against a four-loss Pitt team in the ACC Championship Game, that leaves Oklahoma and Ohio State – teams with explosive offenses and sometimes frightfully-flawed defenses – vying for the final spot in the tournament.

While the Buckeyes take on Northwestern for the Big Ten championship, the Sooners will have to face a three-loss Texas team in the Big 12 title game. The Longhorns outlasted Oklahoma by a 48-45 final in early October, and that remains the only blemish on the Sooners' record this season.

Meanwhile, OSU and Northwestern have played one another only twice over the past 10 years, and the Wildcats have beaten the Buckeyes exactly one time over their last 31 meetings.

Ohio State and Oklahoma have put together surprisingly similar bodies of work this season. Each team has three victories against Power 5 opponents with winning records, including two against top-25 teams in the CFP rankings. They also have a common opponent in TCU, a factor the selection committee supposedly considers. The Buckeyes gave up 28 points to the Horned Frogs, who finished 6-6 this season, while the Sooners allowed 27 points during their mid-October win against TCU.

As porous as Ohio State has been on defense at times this season, Oklahoma has been even more so. The Sooners are the first team since at least 1937 to win three straight games despite allowing 40 or more points in each of those contests.

But, if you can believe it, OU is also more dynamic on offense than Ohio State.

Oklahoma leads the nation with an average of 583.8 yards per game, just slightly more than OSU's average of 547.6, which is second best in the country. But the Sooners average nearly 9.0 yards per play and have piled up 7,005 yards of total offense and 77 touchdowns. By comparison, the Buckeyes have 6,571 yards and 64 TDs.

The College Football Playoff was supposed to eliminate the so-called "look test" from the equation of how teams are selected to play for the national championship, but the past few years have obviously disproved that theory. Therefore, how Oklahoma and Ohio State look during their title-game appearances – whether they appear dominant or fortunate – will likely determine which team gets into the playoff and which team is left out.

Also, there is the be-careful-what-you-wish-for scenario. Whichever team gets that last playoff spot will likely face Alabama in the semifinal round. Of course, as pro wrestler Ric Flair has often said, "To be the man, you have to beat the man."



Starting Guard Knox Out Vs. Wildcats

Ohio State's 62-39 win over Michigan on Nov. 24 clinched a spot in the Big Ten title game for the Buckeyes, but it included a loss.

Buckeye head coach Urban Meyer announced during a teleconference Nov. 25 that starting right guard Demetrius Knox, a fifth-year senior who has been in the lineup for each game since a 2017 road trip to Nebraska, was out for the Big Ten Championship Game with a foot injury. Knox was carted off the field late in the fourth quarter at Ohio Stadium before the Buckeyes knelt down to close out their win over the Wolverines.

"He's out," Meyer said when asked about Knox. "He has a Lisfranc (ligament) issue with his foot and it's a tough injury, and he's done so much for this team in his career here. So it's a tough loss for us, and

we've got to regroup and put together that position."

Knox (6-4, 312), who already has his degree from Ohio State, was one of 12 seniors honored on the field before The Game.

Redshirt freshman Wyatt Davis (6-4, 315), whom Meyer has called Ohio State's sixth offensive lineman throughout the season, is expected to make his first career start against Northwestern. Davis has seen an increased role as a sixth lineman in certain packages in recent weeks.

"He's had a tremendous couple of months of practice for us," Meyer said of the Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco product. "So we're confident he'll be ready."

After Davis, the next man up would likely be junior Branden Bowen, who was the starting right guard last year until he broke his leg against Maryland, leading to Knox being inserted into the lineup. Bowen has yet to play this season after recovering from the injury later than initially expected. Meyer also named redshirt freshman center Josh Myers and junior tackle Joshua Alabi as two players who have provided depth along the offensive front.

"We've got a little bit of depth there," Meyer said.



Demetrius Knox

OSU Not Focused On Style Points

With a trip to the Big Ten title game comes one last chance for Ohio State to impress the College Football Playoff selection committee. The Buckeyes, if they win, would likely be compared with Oklahoma for the fourth spot in the playoffs, assuming Alabama and Clemson – who are favored – each win their respective conference championships.

Back in 2014, Ohio State used an impressive 59-0 win over Wisconsin in Indianapolis

Big Ten Championship Coverage Online Only

Buckeye Sports Bulletin's coverage of the Big Ten Championship Game will be on the website BuckeyeSports.com only. The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is the Bowl Preview issue, scheduled to be mailed on Dec. 12. The next issue after that will be the Bowl Wrap-up, tentatively scheduled to be mailed Jan. 15, 2019.

The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff will be providing plenty of coverage leading up to the game with Northwestern on Dec. 1 in Indianapolis, as well as gameday and in-game coverage on BuckeyeSports.com.

Readers will also want to follow the latest football recruiting news leading up the early signing period, which begins on Dec. 19, as well as coverage of both basketball teams, the hockey and wrestling teams and much, much more. Readers can also talk about the events of the day with members of the BSB staff and other Buckeye fans on BuckeyeSports.com's Forum.

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to leap into the playoffs, but Meyer said his team is focused on winning, not impressing the committee.

"Zero," Meyer said when asked how much thought he puts into the need for an impressive win. "We'll try to win the Big Ten championship."

Despite the big win over Michigan, Meyer admitted that his team needs to improve some to become a playoff contender.

"I don't think we are yet," he said when asked if his team was championship-caliber at this point in the season. "I think certain areas of our team are, I think certain are not."

Fitzgerald Not Taking Solace In Close Losses

Northwestern, led by head coach Pat

Fitzgerald who starred at linebacker for the Wildcats in the 1990s, has had a tendency to give Ohio State closer games than expected. Back in 2016, the Buckeyes edged Northwestern, 24-20, at home. Three years earlier, Ohio State needed a late defensive touchdown to win by 10, 40-30, in Evanston, Ill.

Despite those closer-than-expected contests, Fitzgerald said he puts no stock in being able to play a team tight if you don't come out on top.

"We lost, right?" he said Nov. 25. "It doesn't matter if it's close or not. We work our tails off to find a way to win, and the first thing we did, like every game, we came back and looked at things whether it was schematic issues or did we have the wrong personnel in or wrong checks? Did we execute the game plan? How do we play fundamentally?"

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2018 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 1	OREGON STATE	W, 77-31	ABC	2-10, 55-15 loss to Oregon
Sept. 8	RUTGERS	W, 52-3	BTN	1-11, 14-10 loss at Michigan State
Sept. 15	vs. TCU#*	W, 40-28	ABC	6-6, 31-24 win over Oklahoma State
Sept. 22	TULANE*	W, 49-6	BTN	6-6, 29-28 win over Navy
Sept. 29	at Penn State*	W, 27-26	ABC	9-3, 38-3 win over Maryland
Oct. 6	INDIANA	W, 49-26	FOX	5-7, 28-21 loss to Purdue
Oct. 13	MINNESOTA*	W, 30-14	FS1	6-6, 37-15 win at Wisconsin
Oct. 20	at Purdue*	L, 49-20	ABC	6-6, 28-21 win at Indiana
Nov. 3	NEBRASKA	W, 36-31	FOX	4-8, 31-28 loss at Iowa
Nov. 10	at Michigan State*	W, 26-6	FOX	7-5, 14-10 win over Rutgers
Nov. 17	at Maryland	W, 52-51 (OT)	ABC	5-7, 38-3 loss at Penn State
Nov. 24	MICHIGAN*	W, 62-39	FOX	10-2, 62-39 loss at Ohio State
Dec. 1	Big Ten Championship@	8 p.m.	FOX	

* – Bowl eligible in 2018-19

– at Arlington, Texas (AT&T Stadium)

@ – vs. Northwestern* at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

"You look at all those things, and you do that after every game. Obviously, we're a different squad this year and so are they. They're one of the best teams in the country for a reason. They're incredibly well-coached and incredibly talented."

While Ohio State just started preparing for Northwestern after beating Michigan,

the Wildcats have known for weeks that they'd be in Indianapolis for the Big Ten title bout. That allowed Fitzgerald to get a head start watching tape on Ohio State (and the Wolverines).

When asked what concerned him the most about the matchup with the Buckeyes, the coach kept things simple.

"Everything," he said with a laugh. "They're massive up front on the offensive line. Like I said, the skill positions on offense, everybody's a guy that can score by catching a hitch or a slant."

Fitzgerald went on to mention a long list of Ohio State players by name, including sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins, junior running back Mike Weber, sophomore tight end Luke Farrell, junior tight end Rashod Berry, sophomore defensive end Chase Young, junior defensive tackles Robert Landers and Dre'Mont Jones, junior defensive end Jonathon Cooper, sophomore linebackers Tuf Borland and Pete Werner and junior linebacker Malik Harrison.

"It's a younger group than maybe we saw a couple of years ago," Fitzgerald said. "They're really long, they're really athletic and they obviously are very, very talented."

Freshmen Making A Special Impact

Meyer has always stressed that the best way for a player to earn respect at Ohio State

is to make an impact on special teams. In 2018, that route is being taken by a handful of freshmen, and some of them shone against Michigan.

Against the Wolverines, freshman wide receiver Chris Olave caught two touchdowns, but Meyer had more praise for Olave's blocked punt in the third quarter, which was returned for a touchdown by cornerback Sevyn Banks, another true freshman.

Other freshmen such as safety Josh Proctor and linebacker Teradja Mitchell have been special-teams staples for the Buckeyes throughout the year.

"You see the special teams, I call them the heroes because they sometimes don't get the (credit)," Meyer said. "Chris Olave had two touchdown catches, but he did something more important than that, he blocked a punt. He's also a gunner for us."

Continued On Page 6

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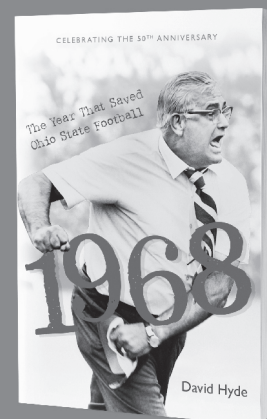


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INSIDER



INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

And then also a guy named Josh Proctor had two tackles on kickoffs against Maryland and was a force (against Michigan). And then a guy named Teradja Mitchell, which is just – he's going to have a tremendous career here."

Campbell Catches Sunday Touchdown

A day after Ohio State beat Michigan, fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell added a touchdown catch to his season stat sheet.

Campbell, a two-time team captain, took a handoff from sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins in the fourth quarter of The Game and raced 78 yards for a touchdown. Except it wasn't a handoff.

As photo evidence showed on the Sunday after Ohio State's win, Haskins had actually tossed the ball up, allowing Campbell to catch it and run. So, instead of a stellar five receptions for 114 yards and one touchdown, Campbell's final line for The Game read: six receptions, 192 receiving yards, two receiving touchdowns. With the jet sweep included, Haskins finished 20 of 31 for 396 yards and six touchdowns without throwing an interception. The sixth touchdown pass meant that Haskins had tied the program's single-game record for the second time this season.

After the game, Campbell insisted that it had been a passing play.

"That was a catch," he said. "He threw a pass. They need to fix that."

The mistake was officially corrected by Ohio State on Nov. 25.

Through 12 games, Campbell leads the team in receptions (72), receiving yards (903) and touchdowns (11). He needs just 97 yards to become the program's fifth-ever 1,000-yard receiver and first since Michael Jenkins caught 61 passes for 1,076 yards in 2002. The single-season record of 1,435 was set by David Boston on 85 receptions in 1998. Terry Glenn caught 64 passes for 1,411 yards in 1995 while Cris Carter reeled in 69 passes for 1,127 yards in 1986.

Campbell's big year marks just the 15th time an Ohio State receiver has reached 900 yards in a single season. With at least two games remaining, junior wideout K.J. Hill is on track to reach 900 yards (and possibly 1,000) as well. He has 66 catches for 823 yards and six scores so far.

Weber Dons New Number

Weber, a Detroit native and one-time Michigan commit, normally wears No. 25. Against the Wolverines, though, the first digit was gone as he donned No. 5, the same number he wore as a youth football player.

Weber is widely expected to leave for the NFL after the 2018 season, meaning the win over Michigan was likely his last game at Ohio Stadium. The Cass Tech product has played in 11 games this season, rushing 140 times for 807 yards and five touchdowns.

Michigan Band Staffer Dies

Maggie St. Clair, the director of operations for the Michigan marching band, died Nov. 24 before the Wolverines' contest against Ohio State, the university announced that morning.

"She suffered a medical emergency this a.m. just before departing for the Ohio State game," a tweet from Michigan's athletics account read. "Her husband Jerry, son Craig & family are in our hearts today."

St. Clair had been with Michigan's athletic band for 30 years and at the school for 42 years overall.

After her death, the university band released the following statement:

"It is impossible to encompass everything that Maggie meant to the Michigan Marching Band in a short statement. She has been the heart of this organization for decades. The high standards that she held herself and those around her to helped shape the MMB into what it is today. Maggie has touched the lives of thousands of individuals within the university community. Her commitment and unrelenting passion for the organization will be greatly missed. Her contributions will be a part of the fabric of the Michigan Marching Band forever. She was a leader and she was the best."

OSU Wrestling Signs Highly-Rated Class

On Nov. 20, Ohio State announced that the wrestling team had signed one of the top classes in the nation, including the No. 1 high school wrestling senior.

"This class is elite and one of the finest groups to commit together," head coach Tom Ryan said. "We are really excited for them to carry on the great wrestling tradition. They have big plans, and we have big plans for them."

The group included three of the top five recruits nationally, four wrestlers from Ohio and 11 combined state titles as freshmen, sophomores or juniors.

The haul was headlined by Grove Heights (Minn.) Simley heavyweight Greg Kervliet, who is rated by InterMat and TheOpenMat as the No. 1 overall senior.

"Greg has the talent, work ethic and character to experience sustained success at Ohio State," Ryan said. "He has won world gold, which speaks to his deep commitment. Our staff is excited about his love of the sport and leadership qualities."

Ohio State's class also includes two brothers from the Buckeye State in Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy's Jacob and Jordan Decatur. Jacob (125 pounds) is rated No. 52 overall by FloWrestling and No. 1 in the 113-pound class by InterMat. Jordan (133/141 pounds) is the No. 4 overall wrestler according to InterMat and No. 5 overall by FloWrestling.

In the 141-pound class, Ohio State signed Genoa, Ohio, product Dylan D'Emilio, the No. 21 (InterMat) or No. 23 (FloWrestling) high school senior overall.

The group was rounded out by Powell (Ohio) Olentangy Liberty's Carson Kharchla (165/174 pounds). He is the No. 4 (FloWrestling) or No. 5 (InterMat) overall recruit. All ranking services have him as the No. 1 wrestler at 170 pounds.



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Buckeye Seniors Finish Undefeated Against U-M

Continued From Page 1

Neither team had scored more than 42 points in The Game since Ohio State's 50-14 win in 1968. The Buckeyes had never scored more than 50, and Michigan reached 60 or

more just once – all the way back in 1902, an 86-0 victory for the Wolverines in the fourth-ever matchup between the two schools.

Ohio State – again, the underdog – posted 567 total yards, including 396 through the air. Nobody had gained 300 passing yards

against Michigan's No. 1 pass defense this season.

The Buckeye defense allowed 401 total yards, but it came up big when it mattered most, stopping Michigan on 8 of 14 third-down attempts and getting a pair of interceptions in the second half.

It was a dominant performance in many regards for Ohio State. From Michigan's perspective, it was slow devastation – at least that's how Kinnel put it.

"They slowly devastated us throughout the

game," he said. "Knowing all the yards they were putting up and how easily they were scoring, it was tough. It was very tough. They completely beat us everywhere. Run game, pass game, everyone is to blame."

It wasn't always rosy for Ohio State, though. The Buckeyes found themselves ahead, 21-6, with 3:18 left in the first half. The rout was on – at least momentarily.

Michigan's ensuing drive was extended when Ohio State junior cornerback Damon Arnette was flagged for pass interference on

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third-and-9 near midfield. Three plays later, Michigan signal caller Shea Patterson hit receiver Nico Collins for a 23-yard score.

Then disaster struck. Ohio State sophomore H-back Demario McCall fumbled the ensuing kickoff, and Michigan recovered at the 9. The Wolverines scored on a pass from Patterson to Chris Evans on first down and lined up to go for two and the tie. The Buckeyes forced an incomplete pass, though, to keep a two-point advantage. Then sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins guided a seven-play, 74-yard drive in the final 41 seconds of the half to get Ohio State in field-goal range, giving the Buckeyes a 24-19 lead at the break.

Despite letting most of a once-big advantage slip away, Jones said the Buckeyes stayed confident in the halftime locker room. They knew they had the upper hand. They felt they had the better team, and they were playing like it.

"Pretty composed and calm," Jones said when asked what the mood was in the locker room after 30 minutes. "We gave up some points that we kind of gave them. We felt like they didn't take over the game. We felt like we were very much in control, and we came out, we hit them right in the mouth off the top."

After the defense and special teams had slipped up toward the end of the first half, it was time for the offense to get some help. The Buckeyes had a nine-play, 56-yard drive early in the second half, but the offense stalled, settling for a chip-shot field goal, making it 27-19.

Then the defense got a stop, forcing fourth-and-8 at the Michigan 36. Freshman wide receiver Chris Olave blocked the ensuing punt, and fellow freshman Sevyn Banks returned it for the score.

After nearly allowing Michigan to tie the game late in the first half, the Buckeyes suddenly had a big lead once again at 34-19. From there, the Wolverines had some success on offense, but the Buckeyes dominated the game with their aerial attack while getting timely running – like Campbell's 78-yard scamper that made it 48-25 early in the fourth quarter.

"I don't know about 62 (points), but I knew we were going to come out and put on a show," Haskins said. "I'm proud of how we played today. It started up front with the O-line. And the playmakers made plays. That's what mattered."

A Statement Win

After The Game, Ohio State fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon was asked if he thought his team was one of the top four in the country.

"I think it is," he said.

Unfortunately for Dixon and the Buckeyes, it's not his opinion that counts. It's also not a conversation that was ready to be settled considering Ohio State has one more game – the Big Ten title bout in Indianapolis against Northwestern on Dec. 1 – before the College Football Playoff field is announced.

Dixon noted that he thought Ohio State made a statement. At this level, statement wins

always come back to the playoff conversation, but for this year's Ohio State team, the playoffs are only part of the equation.

Throughout the year, the Buckeyes have heard a lot of noise from the outside.

Meyer was suspended, and some thought he should have been fired. The Buckeyes lost to Purdue, and they were written off by many. Ohio State struggled against Nebraska and Maryland – it was just more

of the same, a talented team failing to live up to expectations.

Then there was the rampant speculation about Meyer's health, calling into question his status for next season. For now, though, all of that was pushed to the back for Ohio State, and that's where the statement came in.

"People are going to say what they're going to say," Dixon said, "but at the end of the day you still have to go on that field and play."



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Frosh Olave Becomes Breakout Star In Romp

Ohio State preached during the week that “legends are made” in The Game. That statement could not have been more true in the case of Chris Olave on Nov. 24 in his first ever game against Michigan.

GAME NOTEBOOK James Grega

Olave, who stepped in for Austin Mack in the receiver rotation after Mack was likely lost for the season to an injury in the loss to Purdue on Oct. 20, entered the game with just five receptions, but he made two against the Wolverines that Buckeye fans won't soon forget.

The California native caught a pair of 24-yard touchdown passes from sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins to help lead Ohio State to a 62-39 win over Michigan, extending its win streak against the Wolverines to seven.

Olave, a frequent special teams contributor throughout the year, also blocked a punt in the third quarter, which was returned 33 yards for a score by fellow freshman Sevn Banks.

The performance was special for Olave, who said it was the first time all season his parents were able to watch him play in person.

“I just do it for my teammates and the love for my brothers beside me,” he said. “And just everything we’ve been through throughout the season, it’s been crazy, so to come out here and contribute to the team is a blessing.”

While his touchdown receptions set the tone for the game, it was his punt block that opened the floodgates for what would be a second-half avalanche by the No. 10 team in the nation.

The punt block put Ohio State up two scores, 34-19, and was sandwiched between a Blake Haubeil field goal and a Mike Weber touchdown. The specific block the Buckeyes used to get to punter Will Hart was one that defensive coordinator Greg Schiano installed



JOSH WINSLOW

A LEGEND IS BORN – Freshman wide receiver Chris Olave (17) caught two touchdowns and blocked a punt that was returned for a score vs. U-M.

during the week and one that head coach Urban Meyer wasn't sure would work.

“To tell you the truth, I didn't think we could do it,” Meyer said. “Coach Schiano drew that up and (quality control coach) Parker (Fleming) that works with us and I saw it on Wednesday practice,” Meyer said. “And I grabbed Parker and I said, you can't – you only have 2.1 seconds to get there. And (Olave's) not that fast.”

“And Schiano kept saying, ‘We can do it, we can do it.’ So I called the block, which is – I shouldn't say – I called the block. See. I've got to change the signal now,” Meyer added with a chuckle. “We called the block and we have two blocks, and I thought we were going to go with the other one. And I

hear him go ahead, and I see the signal. And I got really pissed.”

Parris Campbell, a fifth-year senior, said he wasn't surprised by Olave's performance, but added he was like a proud older sibling watching Olave's breakout game.

“That is my little brother,” Campbell said. “There was a time where every freshman goes through (it). They are homesick, but his resilience showed. Obviously he had a breakout game today. His family was here today to watch him play. He is going to do a lot for this program, and I am excited to watch him in the future.”

Meyer concurred with his team captain wide receiver when it came to Olave.

“Buckeye Nation, get used to that one

now,” Meyer said. “That's the real deal. He comes from an incredible family, came all the way across the country to be a Buckeye. And you could see right out of the jump when he started practicing, he's got the ‘it.’”

OSU Overcomes Penalties, Special Teams Gaffe

For the majority of the season, Ohio State has had issues in a few areas, but two in particular have stood out: penalties and kick returns. Against Michigan, both could have derailed the Buckeyes.

Ohio State committed 12 penalties for 150 yards against Michigan yet defeated the Wolverines to secure its spot in a second straight Big Ten title game and keep its name in contention for a playoff bid.

The Buckeyes took a 21-6 lead with 3:18 to play in the first half against Michigan on a 31-yard touchdown pass from Haskins to Johnnie Dixon, and Ohio State looked in control. The Wolverines, led by quarterback Shea Patterson, marched down the field and scored to bring the game to within one score on a pass to Nico Collins to cap a drive that was aided by a pass-interference call on Ohio State junior cornerback Damon Arnette.

The ensuing kickoff was muffed by Demario McCall and recovered by Michigan on the Ohio State 9-yard line. It took the Wolverines just one play to score, as Patterson found running back Chris Evans on a wheel route, pulling Michigan to within two at 21-19 after a failed two-point conversion.

Dixon, who had a kickoff mistake of his own against Maryland on Nov. 17, said he believes the NCAA's new fair catch rule on kickoffs has confused players from multiple teams across the country, and he attributes that for part of Ohio State's issues in that area.

“I just think the whole fair catch rule is just throwing people off a little bit,” he said. “Maybe you don't approach the ball how you would if you didn't know about the fair catch rule. So that rule is a little weird, so it throws you off a little bit.”

Ohio State was able to weather the storm



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by marching 74 yards in 41 seconds to add a Blake Haubeil field goal as time expired in the first half, taking the edge off Michigan's momentum.

Offensive Line Shines, Doesn't Allow A Sack

Much had been made during the week about Michigan's defense, which is led by defensive lineman Chase Winovich. The Wolverines entered the game third in the Big Ten in sacks, and when Winovich – who was questionable to play due to an injury – suited up, it appeared Ohio State's offensive line might be in for a tough challenge.

Instead, the Buckeyes kept Haskins upright for the majority of the game and didn't allow the Wolverines to sack their quarterback once on 31 pass attempts.

"I have to take them out to dinner," Haskins said of his line. "So that's good. But as far as picking up protections, there was no pressures. I really had all day in the pocket. I can't complain. The line did a great job. I'm praying for (Demetrius Knox), hoping that he's OK. To have a performance like that, try to do it again next week."

Knox left the game late in the fourth quarter on a cart after going down with an injury and did not return. Meyer announced Nov. 25 that the lineman is out for the Big Ten title game with a foot injury. Knox was replaced by redshirt freshman Wyatt Davis late in the win.

Senior right tackle Isaiah Prince, who has consistently come under fire in his career for struggling to pass protect, said it was gratifying for him personally to play well in his final game at Ohio Stadium.

"I thought we played really good today," Prince said. "Obviously there is always room for improvement. We just went out, played as hard as we can and played for each other."

Injuries Mount For Michigan

A handful of Michigan starters on defense were forced to leave the game in the loss to Ohio State, including leading tackler Devin Bush.

While chasing Campbell from behind, Bush fell to the ground on Ohio State's sideline where he stayed for a few moments. He was assisted to the Michigan locker room by a pair of trainers, and head coach Jim Harbaugh said Bush's injury was to the hip.

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

The whole offense. In what was arguably Ohio State's best performance all season, the Buckeyes racked up 567 total yards on 396 passing and 171 rushing. Led by sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins, who showed for the second straight week his desire to run, the Buckeyes put Michigan's top-ranked defense on its heels.

Haskins rushed seven times for 34 yards, but he did his damage on 20-of-31 passing (65.0 percent) for 396 yards and six touchdowns to zero interceptions. Haskins spread the ball out between nine receivers, with four different targets scoring. Running backs Mike Weber (13 carries for 96 yards and a touchdown) and J.K. Dobbins (12 carries for 46 yards) combined for 142 yards on 25 totes while fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell caught six passes for 192 yards and two scores.

The Wolverines had no answer for OSU, with credit due to offensive coordinators Ryan Day and Kevin Wilson outcoaching U-M defensive coordinator Don Brown, who is widely regarded as one of the best in the business.

What Didn't Work

The pass defense. Michigan amassed 401 total yards with 240 passing behind a quiet performance, in hindsight, by Shea Patterson. The junior quarterback, who transferred from Ole Miss in the offseason, carved Ohio State for three touchdowns and 187 yards on 20-of-34 (58.8-percent) passing. Backups Joe Milton (2 for 3, 45 yards) and Brandon Peters (1 for 1, 8 yards) rounded out the Wolverines' passing numbers. The Buckeyes

contained the run game with only 161 yards on 40 carries (4.0 average), but Patterson picked on junior cornerback Kendall Sheffield for touchdown strikes of 23 and 12 yards to Nico Collins while U-M was still in striking distance.

Play Of The Game

The blocked punt. After an abysmal end to the first half with Michigan scoring 13 points with less than a minute to go, Ohio State's 24-19 edge at halftime continued to be too close for comfort into the second half. After another red-zone drive stalled for the Buckeyes, sophomore placekicker Blake Haubeil's second field goal – a 19-yarder – gave OSU a 27-19 lead at the 8:25 mark of the third quarter.

On the Wolverines' ensuing possession, Ohio State's defense rose to the occasion and forced a fourth-and-8 for U-M from its own 36-yard line. With Will Hart set to kick away to junior receiver K.J. Hill, OSU lined up eight players across the line of scrimmage and pressured seven. Freshman wide receiver Chris Olave, who hauled in two touchdown passes for 48 yards, was among those seven rushers as he slid inside and burst up the middle for the block near the 25-yard line. The deflection flew toward the sideline, and freshman cornerback Sevn Banks caught the loose ball in stride on his way to a touchdown return.

With the score, Ohio State led 34-19 over Michigan with 4:41 left in the third quarter. Olave's block and Banks' return gave the Buckeyes the spark they needed en route to their 38-point second half, which ultimately catapulted OSU to its 62-39 rout.

– Garrett Stepien

"I don't think it's going to be anything long-term, but it wasn't good for today," he said.

In addition, cornerback David Long suffered a hip injury and tight end Zach Gentry left the game with a concussion after dropping multiple passes in the contest. Quarterback Shea Patterson, who completed 20 of 34 passes for 187 yards and three touchdowns to one interception, was also knocked out of the game late with a right knee contusion, according to a report from MLive.com.

Patterson was briefly spelled by Brandon Peters on what would be a touchdown drive for Michigan as Ben Mason plunged in from the 1-yard line to make the score 48-32 with 9:35 to play in the game. Third-string quarterback Joe Milton finished out the game for the Wolverines and threw an interception on his first pass attempt, which was returned

near the goal line by Ohio State safety Brendon White. Milton later added the final score of the game, a 4-yard touchdown scamper with just 3:16 remaining.

Haskins Breaks More Passing Records

A week prior to The Game, Haskins broke the Ohio State single-season passing records for both yards and touchdowns. Against the Wolverines, Haskins added to his laundry list of accolades.

Haskins' 20-of-31 clip for 396 yards and six touchdowns put him at 4,081 passing yards for the year, a new Big Ten single-season record. He passed former Purdue quarterback Curtis Painter on the list. Painter threw for 3,985 yards in 2006 for the Boilermakers.

The Potomac, Md., product passed another former Boilermaker for the single-season

conference record for most touchdown passes, besting Drew Brees. The current New Orleans Saint threw 39 touchdown passes in 1999. Haskins is now up to 42 with at least two more games to play.

"I want to be one of the best to ever do it when I get done playing here at this university," Haskins said. "And this is a dream come true for me. I have no words to say about, like, all we've done this year. It's been a dream of mine to play here at the university for a while."

"And to break all these records and to go win these games the way we've won these games is a blessing. And (we're) going to put on a show next week."

In addition to the program season records for yards and touchdowns, Haskins holds the Ohio State single-season marks for completions (314), attempts (455), completion percentage (69.0) and total yards (4,208).



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Buckeyes Blast Wolverines In Historic Victory

By **CRAIG MERZ**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State was a rare underdog at home, but by the time fans stormed the Ohio Stadium field at 4:08 p.m. on Nov. 24, the Buckeyes were once again the top dog in their rivalry with Michigan.

Dwayne Haskins threw six touchdowns, and true freshman Chris Olave caught two of them and had a critical punt block in the third quarter to lead No. 10 Ohio State to a 62-39 victory over No. 4 Michigan for a seventh straight win in the series.

The Buckeyes (11-1, 8-1 Big Ten) will play West Division winner Northwestern in the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 1 in Indianapolis.

Never had OSU scored more points against its bitter rival in the 115-year history of the series.

It was the most points Michigan has ever allowed in regulation, breaking the 58 scored by Cornell in 1891. The only time U-M (10-2, 8-1) had allowed more points was a 67-65 victory in triple overtime vs. Illinois in 2010.

Olave's block was returned by freshman Sevyn Banks for a 33-yard touchdown to make it 34-19 in the third quarter. Later, after a Michigan TD made it 41-25, fifth-year senior Parris Campbell immediately took a jet sweep for a 78-yard score for a 48-25 margin before 106,588 on a cloudy, 48-degree day that began with rain and saw wisps of sunshine by game's end.

Ohio State torched the nation's top-ranked defense for 567 total yards (396 passing, 171 rushing).

"Our goal as an offense is always to score as much as we can," Campbell said. "Obviously, we knew they were the No. 1 defense. But watching film all week, we saw advantages."

OSU has won 14 of the last 15 and 16 of 18 in the series, and the Wolverines have lost eight straight in Columbus since 2000.

Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh is 0-4 vs. OSU while Urban Meyer is 7-0 vs. the Wolverines.

Haskins was 20 of 31 for 396 yards. He has 42 touchdowns passes to break Drew Brees'



JOSH WINSLOW

KEY PLAYER – Michigan native Mike Weber rushed for 96 yards and a touchdown for Ohio State against the Wolverines.

(Purdue) single-season mark of 39. Haskins also owns the season pass yardage record in the conference. He sits at 4,081 to break the record of Curtis Painter (Purdue), who had 3,985 in 2006.

Campbell had six catches for 192 yards and two touchdowns. Junior K.J. Hill had four catches for 51 yards and a score, and Olave caught two passes for 48 yards and the pair of scores. Junior Mike Weber, a Michigan native and one-time Michigan commit, rushed for 96 yards and a TD on 13 carries.

Michigan quarterback Shea Patterson was 20 of 34 for 187 yards, three TDs and an interception. Nico Collins had four catches for 91 yards and two TDs for Michigan, which had 401 total yards (240 passing, 161 rushing). Running back Karan Higdon, who seemed to guarantee a victory for U-M, had 72 yards on 15 carries.

The game was full of penalties and momentum shifts.

OSU was penalized 12 times for 150 yards; Michigan was flagged seven times for 72 yards.

Ohio State threatened to blow the game open on the third Haskins TD, 31 yards to Johnnie Dixon, for a 21-6 lead with 3:18 left in the first half.

But Michigan stunned the Buckeyes with two TDs in six seconds with under a minute to go and trailed 21-19 at the break after sophomore Blake Haubeil's 19-yard field goal on the last play of the half made it 24-19.

Then the second-half onslaught began.

How It Happened

OSU took a 7-0 lead on its first possession at 11:29 of the first quarter.

The Buckeyes forced a three-and-out to start the game, and Hill returned the 55-yard punt by Will Hart 23 yards to the OSU 43. Haskins ran for nine and Dobbins two for the first down.

Haskins hit Campbell for 16 yards across the middle to the Michigan 30. After a false start on fifth-year senior right guard Demetrius Knox moved the ball back to the 35, sophomore Demario McCall had an 11-yard grab followed by an incomplete pass to Hill. Haskins then found Olave on a crossing route, and he scored from 24 yards for his first career TD on a drive that took six plays and went 57 yards in 1:57.

Michigan made it 7-3 with 6:22 left in the first on a 39-yard field goal by Jake Moody on a 10-play, 44-yard march.

The Wolverines then made it 7-6 at 14:51 of the second quarter on another long drive that was aided by pass interference on junior cornerback Damon Arnette that moved the ball to the OSU 38. After 12 plays, 52 yards and 5:41 off the clock, however, the drive stalled at the Buckeye 13, setting up the field goal.

On third-and-6 from the 13, sophomore linebacker Pete Werner made a TD-saving breakup on a pass to Zach Gentry, and Moody made the 31-yard field goal.

Haskins and Olave did a repeat performance with a second 24-yard TD with 9:08 left in the first half to put Ohio State ahead 14-6. The nine-play, 80-yard drive that took 2:59 got a jump when sophomore tight end Luke Farrell gained 5 yards on third down to keep possession at the OSU 34. Big plays also included a 12-yard catch by Terry McLaurin and a 27-yard catch-and-run by Hill to the Michigan 28.

Haskins threw his third touchdown pass of the first half for a 21-6 lead with 3:18 to go when the Wolverines blew coverage and senior Johnnie Dixon was open by 15 yards to score from 31 yards out.

At the start of the drive, the Buckeyes faced dire straits when Meyer was called for an unsportsmanlike conduct when he protested a non-call on a high hit to a sliding Haskins.

On the next play, facing third-and-17 from their own 14, the Buckeyes got a break when Michigan was called for pass interference, setting up a first down at the 29. On second down, Haskins tossed a screen to Campbell and he juked his way for 33 yards to the Michigan 42. Three plays later, the Buckeyes scored to finish the eight-play, 79-yard drive using 3:54.

The game was all Ohio State's before the stunning turnaround.

Michigan also drove 79 yards in eight plays in 2:29. Once again an Arnette pass interference on third-and-9 from the U-M 47 moved the chains to the OSU 38. Patterson scrambled 15 yards to the 23 before the deep ball to Nico Collins made it 21-13 with 47 seconds left.

On the kickoff, McCall signaled for the fair catch near the goal line but fumbled, and Nate Schoenle recovered for the Wolverines

at the 9. On the next play, Chris Evans had a 9-yard TD grab with 41 seconds left. The two-point try failed when junior defensive end Jonathon Cooper tackled Patterson in the backfield.

OSU got the ball back at the 25. The Wolverines committed three penalties for 30 yards (holding, pass interference and illegal substitution). Haskins found McCall for 33 yards to the U-M 3 with 15 seconds left.

Weber had a 1-yard catch, and backup QB Tate Martell entered and gained a yard to the 1. Haskins returned and threw incomplete to Victor at the pylon, prompting a 19-yard field goal by Haubeil as time expired for the 24-19 lead.

Ohio State's second series of the third quarter started at its 42 after a three-and-out and a punt. Dobbins had four carries for 22 yards before Campbell caught a Haskins throw at the 32 and ran to the 5 for a 31-yard gain.

Martell came in again and got the same result as the end of the second quarter. He rushed for zero, Dobbins got three then nothing, and Haubeil kicked a 19-yard field goal with 8:25 left in the third.

The Wolverines committed a kickoff miscue of their own when Ambry Thomas stepped out of bounds at the U-M 8. The defense held, and it resulted in the Buckeyes taking a 34-19 lead with 4:41 to go in the third. After Michigan was stopped at its 36, Olave burst through the middle and blocked the punt. Banks picked it out of midair at the 33 and ran it in.

Michigan turned it over again on its next series when Patterson was intercepted by junior safety Jordan Fuller, giving Ohio State the ball at the Wolverine 22. Hill's reception pushed the ball to the 2, and Weber took a pitch by Haskins and made it 41-19 with 3:10 left in the third.

Michigan made it 41-25 with 14:11 left in the game, going 75 yards in 3:59 and eight plays in a drive that ended with Patterson's 12-yard TD to Collins. Patterson had passes of 20 and 13 yards, and the Buckeyes were flagged with another pass interference call, this one on junior cornerback Kendall Sheffield. The two-point try failed.

On the first play from scrimmage on the following possession, Campbell took a push pass from Haskins at the OSU 22 and burst around the right end for a 48-25 lead with 13:35 left.

Michigan responded with an 86-yard drive that consumed 11 plays and 4:13 to pull to within 48-32. Higdon had a 24-yard run, and Fuller gave U-M 15 more yards on a pass interference infraction.

Patterson got hurt, and backup Brandon Peters on his first play hit Evans for 8 yards to the 1. Ben Mason ran for the score from there.

Back came the Buckeyes with Haskins running for 11 and Weber another 29. A face-mask call against U-M on the play moved the ball to the Wolverine 13. Three plays later Haskins connected with Hill on a 1-yard TD for a 55-32 led with 6:59 left. The drive was six plays, 75 yards and 2:36 off the clock.

Campbell had a 16-yard TD catch from Haskins with 5:26 to go after U-M backup Joe Milton was intercepted by Brendon White and returned to the U-M 4. After an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on Fuller moved the ball back to the 19, OSU went the distance in three plays in 1:16 to make it 62-32.

Milton rushed for a score with 3:16 left at the end of a 75-yard drive that used six plays and 2:10. That brought the game to its final 62-39 count.

OSU marched 41 more yards to the U-M 7 before ending the game at the Michigan 10 after two victory formation kneels.

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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 62, Michigan 39

Nov. 24, 2018 – Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4		F
MICHIGAN (10-2, 8-1 BIG TEN)	3	16	0	20	–	39
OHIO STATE (11-1, 8-1 BIG TEN)	7	17	17	21	–	62

First Quarter

OSU – Olave, 24 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 11:29; 6 plays, 57 yards, 1:57 TOP.
MICH – Moody, 39 yard field goal, 6:22; 10 plays, 44 yards, 5:00 TOP.

Second Quarter

MICH – Moody, 31 yard field goal, 14:51; 12 plays, 52 yards, 5:41 TOP.
OSU – Olave, 24 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 9:08; 9 plays, 80 yards, 2:59 TOP.
OSU – Dixon, 31 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 3:18; 8 plays, 79 yards, 3:54 TOP.
MICH – Collins, 23 yard pass from Patterson (Moody kick), 0:47; 8 plays, 79 yards, 2:29 TOP.
MICH – Evans, 9 yard pass from Patterson (Patterson pass failed), 0:41; 1 play, 9 yards, 0:04 TOP.
OSU – Haubeil, 19 yard field goal, 0:00; 7 plays, 74 yards, 0:41 TOP.

Third Quarter

OSU – Haubeil, 19 yard field goal, 8:25; 9 plays, 56 yards, 3:45 TOP.
OSU – Banks, 33 yard blocked punt return (Haubeil kick), 4:41.
OSU – Weber, 2 yard run (Haubeil kick), 3:10; 2 plays, 22 yards, 0:35 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

MICH – Collins, 12 yard pass from Patterson (Patterson pass failed), 14:11; 8 plays, 75 yards, 3:59 TOP.
OSU – Campbell, 78 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 13:55; 1 play, 78 yards, 0:11 TOP.
MICH – Mason, 1 yard run (Moody kick), 9:35; 11 plays, 86 yards, 4:13 TOP.
OSU – Hill, 1 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 6:59; 6 plays, 75 yards, 2:36 TOP.
OSU – Campbell, 16 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 5:26; 3 plays, 19 yards, 1:16 TOP.
MICH – Milton, 4 yard run (Moody kick), 3:16; 6 plays, 75 yards, 2:10 TOP.

Att. – 106,588.

Weather – 48 degrees, cloudy; wind 11 mph.

Team Statistics

	MICH	OSU
First Downs	28	28
Rushing	10	9
Passing	12	15
Penalty	6	4
Rushes-Yards	40-161	36-171
Passing Yards	240	396
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	23-38-2	20-31-0
Offensive Plays	78	67
Total Net Yards	401	567
Third Down Efficiency	6-14	5-11
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-0
Punts-Avg.	5-35.8	3-40.3
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties	7-72	12-150
Time of Possession	35:24	24:36

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – MICH: Higdon 15-72; Evans 8-33; Wilson 7-32; Patterson 6-13; Mason 3-7; Milton 1-4. **OSU:** Weber 13-96; Dobbins 12-46; Haskins 7-34; Martell 2-1; TEAM 2-(-6).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – MICH: Patterson 20-34-1-187-3; Milton 2-3-1-45-0; Peters 1-1-0-8-0. **OSU:** Haskins 20-31-0-396-6.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – MICH: Peoples-Jones 7-64; Collins 4-91; Evans 3-25; Bell 2-19; McKeon 2-13; Eubanks 2-8; Black 1-15; Martin 1-4; Higdon 1-1. **OSU:** Campbell 6-192; Hill 4-51; Olave 2-48; McCall 2-44; Farrell 2-16; Dixon 1-31; McLaurin 1-12; Dobbins 1-1; Weber 1-1.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – MICH: Hart 4-44.8-55; TEAM 1-0.0-0. **OSU:** Chrisman 3-40.3-46.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – MICH: None. **OSU:** Hill 2-29; Banks 1-33; Olave 0-3.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – MICH: Thomas 6-87. **OSU:** McCall 2-22.

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

FORCED FUMBLES – MICH: None. **OSU:** None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds) – MICH: Schoenle 1-0. **OSU:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – MICH: None. **OSU:** White 1-49; Fuller 1-4.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – MICH: Gary 1.0-4; Kinnel 1.0-1; Ross 1.0-1; Winovich 1.0-1. **OSU:** Harrison 2.0-12; Landers 1.0-6; Cooper 1.0-3; Young 1.0-2.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – MICH: None. **OSU:** Harrison 1.0-7; Landers 1.0-6; Cooper 1.0-3.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – MICH: Kinnel 4-4-8; Ross 4-3-7; Bush 3-3-6; Metellus 4-1-5; Gary 3-2-5; Furbush 4-0-4; Gil 2-2-4; Winovich 1-3-4; Paye 3-0-3; Kemp 1-2-3; Hudson 1-2-3; Watson 1-2-3; McKeon 1-0-1; Hart 1-0-1; Glasgow 1-0-1; Mason 1-0-1; Hill 1-0-1; Milton 1-0-1; Hutchinson 0-1-1; Woods 0-1-1. **OSU:** Borland 4-6-10; Fuller 5-3-8; Harrison 5-2-7; Werner 2-4-6; White 1-4-5; Arnette 3-1-4; Sheffield 2-2-4; Hamilton 1-3-4; Landers 1-3-4; Cooper 3-0-3; Hilliard 2-0-2; D. Jones 2-0-2; Young 2-0-2; Wade 2-0-2; Okudah 1-1-2; Booker 1-1-2; Haubeil 1-0-1; Pryor 1-0-1; Wint 1-0-1; T. Smith 0-1-1; Cornell 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – MICHIGAN: Offense, Runyan, Bredeson, Ruiz, Onwenu, Stueber, Eubanks, Gentry, Collins, Peoples-Jones, Patterson, Higdon, Moody. Defense, Winovich, Kemp, Dwumfour, Gary, Hudson, Bush, Gil, Long, Metellus, Kinnel, Hill, Hart. Reserves, Ross, Thomas, Paye, Hawkins, Nordin, Milton, Wangler, Uche, Black, Bell, Evans, Wilson, Kelly-Powell, Peters, White, Woods, Hewlett, Watson, Glasgow, Cochran, Cheeseman, Anthony, Mason, McCurry, Bush, Robinson, Furbush, Spanellis, Martin, Schoenle, McKeon, Perry, Mone, Marshall, Hutchinson. **OHIO STATE:** Offense, Munford, Pridgeon, Jordan, Knox, Prince, Farrell, Haskins, Dobbins, Campbell, McLaurin, Dixon, Haubeil. Defense, Young, Landers, D. Jones, Cooper, Harrison, Borland, Werner, Sheffield, White, Fuller, Arnette, Chrisman. Reserves, Gant, Okudah, Martell, T. Smith, Hill, Proctor, Davis, Browning, Vincent, Mitchell, Cornell, Victor, Riep, Banks, Berry, Pryor, Harris, K. Jones, Olave, Wint, Wade, Weber, McCall, Hilliard, McCullough, Booker, Hamilton, Friday, Alabi, Cupp, Woidke, Myers, Togiai, Saunders, Hausmann, L. Smith, Gardiner, Ruckert, Garrett.

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	(10) at Mich. St. (18)	W, 26-6	74,633		
Nov. 17	(10) at Maryland	W, 52-51 (OT)	38,177		
Nov. 24	(10) MICHIGAN (4)	W, 62-39	106,588		
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.

** – Vs. Northwestern at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Team Statistics		
	OSU	Opp
First Downs	350	236
Rushing	123	88
Passing	192	117
Penalty	35	31
Average Per Game/Rush	181.4	164.9
Average Per Game/Pass	362.5	237.6
Total Offense	6,571	4,830
Total Plays	975	820
Average Per Game	547.6	402.5
Average Per Play	6.7	5.9
Penalties-Yards	98-912	72-720
Fumbles-Lost	16-8	23-11
Third Down Efficiency	81-173	53-169
Percentage	47%	31%
Fourth Down Efficiency	13-20	8-15
Percentage	65%	53%
Sacks-Yards	34-226	16-75
Time Of Possession Avg.	30:57	29:03

Score								
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.	
Ohio State	109	142	104	158	7	520	43.3	
Opponents	61	101	57	85	6	310	25.8	

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
J.K. Dobbins	206	961	4.7	8	42
Mike Weber	140	807	5.8	5	49
Tate Martell	22	128	5.8	2	47
Dwayne Haskins	63	127	2.0	4	17
Master Teague	17	106	6.2	1	33
Demario McCall	6	38	6.3	0	15
Brian Snead	11	37	3.4	1	5
Parris Campbell	9	24	2.7	0	18
C.J. Saunders	0	8	0.0	0	0
K.J. Hill	1	-3	-3.0	0	0
TEAM	17	-56	-3.3	0	0
OSU Totals	492	2,177	4.4	21	49
OPP Totals	430	1,979	4.6	22	97

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
D. Haskins	314	455	69.0	4,081	42-7	171.74
Tate Martell	23	28	82.1	269	1-0	174.63
OSU Totals	337	483	69.8	4,350	43-7	171.90
OPP Totals	209	390	53.6	2,851	16-9	123.92

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Parris Campbell	72	903	12.5	11	78
K.J. Hill	66	823	12.5	6	42
Johnnie Dixon	33	513	15.5	6	44
Terry McLaurin	31	591	19.1	9	75
Austin Mack	26	331	12.7	1	48
J.K. Dobbins	19	198	10.4	1	35
Luke Farrell	19	196	10.3	1	24
Binjimen Victor	17	287	16.9	4	47
Mike Weber	17	83	4.9	1	15
C.J. Saunders	10	73	7.3	0	19
Demario McCall	8	102	12.8	0	35
Chris Olave	7	118	16.9	2	25
Rashod Berry	7	73	10.4	1	15
Jaylen Harris	2	22	11.0	0	15
Garyn Prater	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jeremy Ruckert	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jaelen Gill	1	11	11.0	0	11
OSU Totals	337	4,350	12.9	43	78
OPP Totals	209	2,851	13.6	16	93

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Parris Campbell	11	–	–	–	–	66
J.K. Dobbins	9	–	–	–	–	54
Blake Haubeil	–	27-27	–	–	9-11	54
Terry McLaurin	9	–	–	–	–	54
S. Nuernberger	–	39-39	–	–	3-5	48
Johnnie Dixon	6	–	–	–	–	36
K.J. Hill	6	–	–	–	–	36
Mike Weber	6	–	–	–	–	36
Dwayne Haskins	4	–	0-1	0-2	–	24
Binjimen Victor	4	–	–	–	–	24
Dre'Mont Jones	2	–	–	–	–	12
Tate Martell	2	–	–	–	–	12
Chris Olave	2	–	–	–	–	12
Sevyn Banks	1	–	–	–	–	6
Rashod Berry	1	–	–	–	–	6
Nick Bosa	1	–	–	–	–	6
Luke Farrell	1	–	–	–	–	6
Davon Hamilton	1	–	–	–	–	6
Austin Mack	1	–	–	–	–	6
Brian Snead	1	–	–	–	–	6
Master Teague	1	–	–	–	–	6
Keandre Jones (1 safety)						2
TEAM (1 safety)						2
OSU Totals	69	66-66	0-1	0-2	12-16	520
OPP Totals	40	34-35	0-1	0-4	12-20	310

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
S. Nuernberger	2-2	1-2	0-1	0-0	3-5
Blake Haubeil	6-6	2-3	1-2	0-0	9-11
OSU Totals	8-8	3-5	1-3	0-0	12-16
OPP Totals	2-2	8-10	2-6	0-2	12-20

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Drue Chrisman	49	2,073	42.3	0	65
OSU Totals	49	2,073	42.3	0	65
OPP Totals	73	2,862	39.2	3	56

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Shaun Wade	2	12	6.0	0	12
Kendall Sheffield	2	0	0.0	0	0
Brendon White	1	49	49.0	0	49
Dre'Mont Jones	1	28	28.0	1	28
Malik Harrison	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jordan Fuller	1	4	4.0	0	4
Isaiah Pryor	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	9	106	11.8	1	49
OPP Totals	7	211	30.1	2	46

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
K.J. Hill	12	67	5.6	0	23
C.J. Saunders	8	50	6.2	0	20
Demario McCall	3	32	10.7	0	26
Sevyn Banks	1	33	33.0	1	33
Keandre Jones	1	22	22.0	0	0
Chris Olave	0	3	0.0	0	3
OSU Totals	25	207	8.3	1	33
OPP Totals	9	34	3.8	0	12

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Johnnie Dixon	13	240	18.5	0	38
Demario McCall	8	152	19.0	0	42
C.J. Saunders	2	24	12.0	0	14
K.J. Hill	1	4	4.0	0	4
OSU Totals	24	420	17.5	0	42
OPP Totals	31	472	15.2	0	31

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 62, Michigan 39

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on the crowd in Ohio Stadium: "We asked them at the Skull Session, 'When I need you the most, would you give us your very best?' And our fans and student body who we love just gave us their very best."

OSU sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins on the postgame celebration: "All the fans just flooded the field, and it shows how much love that this football team gets from this university. And just really a great win. And we played great and looking forward to next week."

Haskins on his motivation for The Game: "I mean, we didn't need the underdog score point. We didn't need the 'revenge tour.' We didn't need the guaranteed win. We know what this game means to our school, to our teammates and to our coaches."



Dwayne Haskins

OSU senior right tackle Isaiah Prince on the importance of keeping the Buckeyes' streak against U-M going on Senior Day: "To be honest, that was the only thing I cared about. I prayed before the game. I said, 'I don't care what happens as long as we win.' For it to happen on my Senior Day made me the happiest person."

Meyer on whether he expected an offensive performance of that caliber from the Buckeyes: "Just great players and a really good offensive staff, and that's how you do what you did. Did we see that? No, no. The guys just went out and played."

Haskins on facing Michigan's top-ranked defense: "I was licking my chops. I see the one-high covers and that's a quarterback's dream. The biggest responsibility for me all week was to be able to pick up blitzes and protection, because we saw a lot of different fronts and exotic looks. I spent hours in the film room just trying to figure out how we can pick the blitzes up. And once we picked it up, receivers make plays, and I'm going to put it there. And it was just a great overall team effort today."

OSU junior Malik Harrison when asked how important it was for the linebackers to have a big game: "It was real important, especially playing The Team Up North. Everybody – me, Tuf (Borland), (Dante Booker), Pete (Werner), we just came with our 'A' game."

OSU junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones on the defense: "We work really hard at practice from Sunday to Friday just going over, understanding our game plan, going over signals that we need to know and then to come out and see how we handled this team is just a crazy feeling. It kind of feels like all your hard work has been accomplished."

Harrison on having his best game in his hometown: "It makes it even more special. My family in the stands, we were always Buckeye fans growing up. So it was just being able to play my best game against The Team Up North – it was great."

Meyer on where this game ranks among his seven wins against Michigan: "I'm not going to short-change any of those other efforts that we've had. But the team we beat today was very good. It was a very, very good team with excellent players all over the field. And so where does that rank? I don't know. But I know the team we beat, that's a heck of a team we beat."

Meyer on the next steps for his team: "They celebrate the right way with their families, do the right things. And then they come back tomorrow and they accept their next mission assignment directive. And that's a big one. That's in Indianapolis."

OSU fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon on what's next for the Buckeyes: "For us, we always think we can do better, we always think we can do better. So I still don't think we're at the best level we can but, but it's better. We're moving in the right direction."

Prince, when asked if he felt OSU made a statement for the College Football Playoff committee: "Yeah, I think we made a statement. That was a pretty good defense we played against today. There is always room for improvement. We played hard for one another."

OSU fifth-year senior receiver Parris Campbell on whether the Buckeyes' goals are still in reach: "Definitely. Everything is still in front of us. We'll celebrate this win, get back to work next week and get better to beat Northwestern."

Dixon on his Senior Day emotions: "I knew it was going to be emotional. I thought Senior Tackle was going to be the day for me, but it wasn't. I knew coming in and knowing this was my last time playing in front of the fans, it kind of hit me."

"It hit me starting in our pregame video we watched today. I kind of shed a tear in there because it was just so emotional."

Dixon on freshman wide receiver Chris Olave: "I told you guys right after camp, I told y'all. I don't know if you all took me seriously or not, but the kid is the truth. He can play ball. I haven't seen a freshman come in like that, ever."

Olave, when asked if the performance was more than a dream: "Definitely. I kind of dreamed for this my whole life, and actually being put in the spotlight is unreal. So I thank my teammates and coaches and every-



Chris Olave

body."

Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh on OSU: "Well, they played great, their third quarter especially. They ran a lot of speed plays that got out on the perimeter and got loose. We also set them up in good field position with a couple turnovers, and of course the blocked punt, which contributed to the score as well."

Harbaugh on how he expects his team to respond: "We'll come back motivated and make darn sure it doesn't happen again."

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Columnists Give Their Takes On ‘The Game’

By JOE DEMPSEY
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Entering the 2018 edition of The Game, Ohio State was coming off an emotional overtime victory at Maryland and was widely perceived as the underdog against Michigan and its top-ranked defense. The Buckeyes had a different narrative in mind, continuing their dominance over their rivals with a convincing 62-39 beatdown.

The Scarlet and Gray have now won the last seven matchups with the Maize and Blue and 16 of the last 18 altogether. Ohio State improved to 7-0 against its archnemesis with Urban Meyer as its leader. Meanwhile, Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh slid to 0-4 against the Buckeyes and has received heat for his shortcomings after having received praise most of the season.

Michigan came to Columbus as the No. 4 team in the country, needing a win against Ohio State and a follow-up victory in the Big Ten Championship Game to secure a spot in the College Football Playoff for the first time. Ohio State came into The Game poised to show it remains atop the Big Ten and among the nation's best.

The following is a collection of opinions from columnists in Ohio, Michigan and beyond regarding what transpired in the latest showdown in the ‘Shoe between longtime rivals and its consequential impact.

• **Dave Briggs, Toledo Blade:** “If Harbaugh famously held his hands inches apart to show the difference between victory and defeat two years ago – recall his take on The Spot – you would have needed a canyon, an ocean, and a lake to be named later to illustrate the talent and coaching divide between the teams Saturday.

“This was a name-the-score offense and a big-play defense – OK, a good-enough defense – reintroducing the Buckeyes into the playoff race and Michigan’s top-rated D proving the biggest fraud since Bernie Madoff. (Frankly, I’m not sure coordinator Don “Dr. Blitz” Brown is a real doctor.)”

• **Pat Caputo, Oakland (Mich.) Press:** “Buckeyes QB Dwayne Haskins chewed up and spit out Michigan’s defense to the tune of nearly 600 yards in collective OSU offense. The Wolverines were fortunate it was this close. And please, can this state stop getting ahead of itself when it comes to the Wolverines? Can we please allow Michigan to win something before crowning the Wolverines anything other than an enigma, which can’t get over the top despite resources suggesting they should be among college football’s elite? Because Michigan clearly is not. Ohio State showed exactly why Saturday.”

• **Paul Finebaum, ESPN:** “We’re four years in now and if you couldn’t beat this Ohio State team with Urban Meyer, ... you’re not going to beat them. If you’re a Michigan fan, just accept the fact that we’re going to lose to Ohio State every year as long as Urban Meyer is there. As bad as Urban Meyer has been this year, this has been the worst season we’ve seen in Urban Meyer since his last season at Florida in 2010, all of the pressure. And he can still put a game plan together to make Jim Harbaugh look like an idiot yesterday, then he might as well throw in the towel.”

• **Isaiah Hole, Wolverines Wire:** “Problems still persist with the program, assuredly, but unless they’re so deeply-rooted in

some kind of mental inferiority complex vs. the Buckeyes, they are solvable. It’s more likely that this Michigan team saw the tale of the tape heading into Saturday and felt too confident for its own good, whereas Ohio State – who has very, very rarely been the underdog since Meyer arrived in Columbus – took exception, and finally let its talent shine through. Michigan is still accumulating talent, but so too, unfortunately, are the Buckeyes. The disparity is lessening, and in years before this one, the Wolverines still managed to play OSU tight. As the memories get erased by the upperclassmen who don’t know anything different than losing to its arch rival, those newer, highly-touted recruits will arrive and take on the challenge with a bravado of their own.”

• **Doug Lesmerises, Cleveland.com:** “This was the best Michigan team Harbaugh could offer, on a 10-game winning streak, with a capable quarterback in Shea Patterson, a wise defensive coordinator in Don Brown, an improved offensive line and the No. 1 ranked defense in the nation. Michigan at its best? An Ohio State team that spent the season frustrating itself and its fans handled that best for 60 minutes. The Buckeyes have accrued more talent than Michigan for more than a decade, winning by force and as expected. Ohio State had won six straight because it was favored in six straight.

“This was different. This was peak Michigan and Ohio State maybe on the ropes, the Buckeyes in as much disarray as a 10-win team could be in.

“To win this will lead to a single question for the Wolverines – what else can they do?”

• **Rob Oller, Columbus Dispatch:** “Let’s talk playoff possibilities. I’m not one to think a 180-degree reversal is in order based on one impressive win. Translated: If you were 100 percent certain the Buckeyes were not deserving of a playoff spot before beating Michigan, it’s disingenuous to now claim with 100 percent certainty that OSU now is in. I see the Buckeyes jumping from the 10th spot to sixth, passing No. 4 Michigan, No. 7 LSU, No. 8 Washington State and No. 9 Central Florida. But passing No. 6 Oklahoma is going to be difficult, if the Sooners get their revenge on Texas (their only loss) in

the Big 12 championship game. I asked Ohio State H-back Parris Campbell if the Buckeyes deserve one of the four spots. ‘We just beat the No. 4 team, so definitely.’ I think Ohio State still needs help.”

• **Jeff Seidel, Detroit Free Press:** “As Harbaugh said, this is the game Michigan will think about for the next 365 days.

“And they will remember one thing: Ohio State’s domination. And the blame starts with Harbaugh. To me, that makes it a failure of a season. This is beyond blowing an opportunity. The Wolverines might have taken two steps forward this season, but they just did a face plant backward. Give Meyer credit. Clearly, he has a health issue. At one point, he was huddled over the sideline. But he owns Harbaugh.

“This felt bigger than a blown opportunity. This was an entire game, exploding in your face.

In the wake of this game, there is a massive question: If not this year, then when? If not with this team and this quarterback and this massive opportunity, then when? Michigan might have only one hope to get this turned around: Urban Meyer stepping down. Because after four years, we know one thing: Harbaugh hasn’t found a way to beat him.”

• **Pete Thamel, Yahoo Sports:** “For all the bluster and consternation, all the viral comments and bizarre indulgences, Jim Harbaugh’s tenure at Michigan remains college football’s annual \$7 million tease. There’s a distinct pattern that’s unfurled over his four years – optimism, followed by empirical evidence that derives hope and then persistent failure when the games matter the most. There’s all thunder and no delivery for Jim Harbaugh at Michigan, all chirping and no championships.”

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Championship Goals Are Alive For Ohio State

By JAMES GREGA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

One of the many focuses for Ohio State since Urban Meyer arrived on campus has been getting his team ready to compete for championships in November.

In every one of his seasons outside of 2012 (bowl ban), Ohio State has had a chance to do just that, and with a 62-39 win over Michigan on Nov. 24, the Buckeyes not only put themselves in the Big Ten title game for the fourth time in six years, they also re-entered the College Football Playoff discussion.

"We played well, so we've got to do it again vs. Northwestern next week and let the committee make a decision from there," quarterback Dwayne Haskins said after defeating the Wolverines. "But we're going to keep putting good stuff out there on film and keep getting better. And I feel like we can still get better. We haven't played our best game yet. So there's a ways to go for us."

Before Ohio State can officially throw its hat in the ring for the playoff, it has to defeat Big Ten West champion Northwestern, which enters the game with an 8-4 record. The Wildcats lost all three of their nonconference games in 2018, falling to Duke 21-7 and No. 3 Notre Dame 31-21 in addition to an upset at the hands of Akron at home, 39-34, in September.

The last time Ohio State and Northwestern played, the Buckeyes came away with a



JOSH WINSLOW

ON TRACK – Sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins has led Ohio State to an 11-1 record and a berth in the Big Ten title game.

24-20 win at Ohio Stadium in 2016. The two teams also matched up in 2013, with the Buckeyes surviving a 40-30 contest in

Evanston, Ill., against a 16th-ranked Wildcat team in prime time.

This matchup between Ohio State and Northwestern will be one of the most hyped in the history of the Wildcat program, with a Rose Bowl bid on the line for Pat Fitzgerald's team and the CFP still within reach for the Buckeyes. The Wildcats have never before appeared in the Big Ten title game, and they last won a conference title in 2000.

Meyer said he has plenty of respect for the Wildcats and added that his team will have to play its best game in order to capture another Big Ten title.

"I think they're awesome," Meyer said. "I'm a big fan of – Pat's one of my very closest friends. I have just great respect for him."

Fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell echoed his head coach's comments, adding that Northwestern's toughness is what makes the Wildcats difficult opponents.

"I think they are a bunch of tough guys," Campbell said. "I have watched them this season, and they are a team that is not going to quit and that is not going to give up. We definitely have our work cut out for us because they pride themselves on toughness."

Meyer's Ohio State teams are 2-1 in the Big Ten title game, defeating Wisconsin in 2014 and 2017 and falling to Michigan State in 2013. As the head coach at Florida, Meyer was also 2-1 in conference championship games, defeating Arkansas, 38-28, in 2006 and Alabama, 31-20, in 2008 before falling to the Crimson Tide a year later, 32-13.

Much like at Ohio State, all of those games came after wins over a rival, in that case Florida State. Meyer said he isn't concerned about an emotional letdown after defeating Michigan once again because his players are well aware of what is still in front of them.

"We've been there a couple times," Meyer

said. "That's our goal in the weight room. When you walk in you see a sign that says 'Get to Indy.' And they did. That's my job and our staff's and our leaders' job."

Should Ohio State defeat Northwestern, the Buckeyes would likely be jostling with Oklahoma for the final spot in the CFP. The Sooners will get a chance to avenge their only loss of the season in the Big 12 championship game against Tom Herman's Texas Longhorns. The two teams met in the annual Red River Rivalry, with Herman's squad coming away with a 48-45 victory in Dallas at the original Cotton Bowl stadium. The conference title game will be played at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, where the Buckeyes beat TCU earlier this year.

If Oklahoma was to lose, Ohio State's chances of getting into the playoff would figure to increase exponentially. The Big 12 title game is set to be played at noon, which would give Ohio State advance notice of what it needs to do in order to get into the CFP.

If both teams win, it will simply come down to the playoff committee. The four finalists will be announced Dec. 2, the day after the Big Ten title game. If Ohio State beats Northwestern and misses the playoffs, the Buckeyes will be headed to Pasadena, Calif., for the Rose Bowl against the Pac-12 champion – either Washington or Utah.

As for where the Buckeyes stand after The Game, they feel they are already one of the four best teams in the nation after rolling over the previous No. 4 team in Michigan.

"I think it is. That's my opinion," said fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon when asked whether he believes the Buckeyes are a top-four program. "Just because of things we've been through. We fight – maybe sometimes we don't play the best offense and then our best defense. But we fight, we find ways."

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WR Trio Has Come Full Circle In Columbus

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The receiving corps that once was derided as a "clown show" by Urban Meyer in the early months of his tenure in 2012 is now an indispensable part of the program.

Of course, none of the current Buckeye players were around six years ago, although it might seem that way for fifth-year seniors Parris Campbell, Johnnie Dixon and Terry McLaurin.

All were true freshmen on the 2014 College Football Playoff championship team and on Nov. 24 played their final game in Ohio Stadium vs. Michigan as accomplished players and leaders.

The trio are among seven captains with Campbell and McLaurin in their second seasons in that role.

"I remember when they came here in 2014 and Coach Mick (sports performance coach Mickey Marotti) talked about how much of a key role they're going to have in our future at Ohio State," said fifth-year senior right guard Demetrius Knox.

"When the three of them became captains this year, it reverted back to what Coach Mick said; they're important parts of our team. They know how to command a room, not just because of their voice but because what they show us every day, whether it's practice, in a game, the weight room, everything.

"Being a captain, all eyes are on you, and they do everything to perfection."

They excel when they get the ball as well. Campbell, McLaurin and fourth-year junior K.J. Hill all have at least 1,000 career receiving yards, the first time in school history there have been more than two on the roster at the same time to accomplish that feat.

Dixon needs 10 more yards to join the group.

"When we first got here, receivers weren't really thought of in that light (as leaders)," McLaurin said in August. "Now we're considered one of the strongest units on the team. To see how far this group has come, we just want to keep it going. It's really encouraging that it starts in that (receivers) room."

Their leadership was needed more than ever because of the adversity the team faced with the firing of receivers coach Zach Smith in July for alleged domestic violence. He was replaced on an interim basis by Brian Hartline.

Then head coach Urban Meyer was suspended for the preseason camp and for the first three games because of his handling of Smith's employment at the university.

"It was a challenge for sure, but having strong leaders in the program like myself, such as Terry, such as Johnnie, it kind of made it easy because it wasn't on one guy's shoulders," Campbell said. "Guys were able to lean on each other when leadership is necessary.

"Obviously, we've had a lot of hurdles. We've had ups and downs that hit us left and right. I feel like we've been in a title fight this whole season. We've stayed strong. We've taken it punch-by-punch. We've just handled it."

McLaurin said the loss of Meyer in preparation for the season was more difficult than outsiders could imagine.

"The toughest challenge was probably



Parris Campbell



Johnnie Dixon



Terry McLaurin

at the beginning of the season losing Coach Meyer," he said. "We have Coach (Ryan Day, offensive coordinator) who did a great job, but not having Coach Meyer during camp is tough because he really sets the pace and tempo of how things are supposed to be, how the season is going to go, how we're supposed to practice and things like that."

The Buckeyes seemed to weather the storm, but everything fell apart in a stunning 49-20 loss at Purdue on Oct. 20.

"That's been tough as a leader," McLaurin said. "It's my second year being captain and this is probably the toughest year with the ups and downs, the outside noise. But trying to control what we can control inside this building and making sure that I'm helping and making all the plays that I can has really been my main focus."

The three receivers had different reasons for returning. Dixon, from West Palm Beach (Fla.) Dwyer, wanted a chance to make up for lost time due to injuries throughout his career. Campbell, from the same Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary school that produced LeBron James, wanted to answer critics who said he wasn't ready for the NFL after last season.

McLaurin, out of Indianapolis Cathedral, felt like he had more to give to the program.

"Everything that I could accomplished this year, I've accomplished so far," he said. "That's really, really, what you look for coming back another year."

"I've been around some great leaders. I've witnessed (quarterback Dwayne Haskins) and how great he can be. I've been able to make myself a leader and a big part of our offense. ... I felt like I've left some sort of legacy."

Campbell also is happy with his choice to return.

"Definitely. Individually I've benefited from the season tremendously," he said. "Ultimately it was the best decision. I knew early on I had no regrets and I was happy with the decision."

He can't pinpoint one most satisfying moment of his final season.

"I try to take it week by week, game by game," Campbell said. "Each week had its moments. Each practice had its moments. Each game had its moments. I just appreciate the entire season thus far, and I'm looking forward to what's ahead."

He was asked if it was tougher dealing with the offseason problems or righting the ship after the loss to Purdue.

"I don't think you can compare the two just because early August, because that was something no one could have expected," Campbell said.

"As a football player, as a football team, you never want to look forward to having a loss, you never think you'll have a loss, but you know that's a chance. Every time you step on the field, you know you can lose a game."

"That was easier to recover from than the unexpected adversity we went through."

McLaurin has become the heart and soul of the team. His downfield blocking in the 27-26 win at Penn State on Sept. 29 earned him the team's offensive player of the game award even though he did not make a catch.

In the 26-6 victory at Michigan State on Nov. 10 he was brilliant as the "gunner" on punt coverage, running to down Drue Chrisman's punts within a sniff of the Spartans' goal line on multiple occasions.

Those are reasons Meyer has elevated McLaurin into legendary status, a player he will refer future players to as an example of what it takes to be a Buckeye. For example, former receiver/special teams standout Evan Spencer falls into that category.

"Coming to Ohio State I never set out to be in Coach Meyer's 'good graces,' to be thought of in that upper echelon of great players," McLaurin said. "But it's humbling because he's coached some of the greatest players to ever play college football."

"I've always wanted to be the guy who did the right thing, worked hard and brought somebody along with me as a leader, as a person, just that guy you could depend on, on and off the field that was going to make the program better."

"For him to think of me in that aspect is pretty cool."

Junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones said McLaurin has the respect of all his teammates.

"That's a testament to who he is," he said. "Terry's a very respectful, humble person. He doesn't play into the hype of what people say about them. He's really a team player."

For Campbell, Dixon and McLaurin, their time is winding down, so they will soak in all the moments that will make memories for a lifetime.

"Coming to Ohio State you learn quickly what the expectations are, the expectations for the rivalry," McLaurin said. "The expectations here is to win every game and you win the last game of the season. I learned that pretty quickly."

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Senior Class Leaves With Championship Memories

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

It's not hard to find the significance when Ohio State faces Michigan. For 12 Buckeye seniors, though, the 2018 edition of The Game meant a little more: It was their last time playing in the Horseshoe.

The group, which was honored ahead of the 62-39 victory over the Wolverines, includes three walk-ons and nine scholarship athletes, seven of whom were on the team when Ohio State beat Oregon in the College Football Playoff National Championship back in 2014. Over the past four seasons, this year's senior class has helped Ohio State to a 45-6 overall record and a 30-4 mark in Big Ten play. They won the Big Ten title in 2017 and registered bowl victories over Notre Dame (2015-16 Fiesta Bowl) and USC (2017-18 Cotton Bowl).

Four of the 12 are team captains this season, and two of them are in their second season serving in that role.

"It has been a crazy journey over the last four years that I have been here," said right tackle Isaiah Prince, one of this year's team captains. "I don't know how to describe it, a lot of ups and downs. I'm just blessed and thankful for the opportunities."

What follows is a look at each member of Ohio State's senior class, listed in alphabetical order by last name.

Dante Booker

Position: Linebacker

Jersey No.: 33 (2014-17); 52 (2018)

Height/Weight: 6-3/235

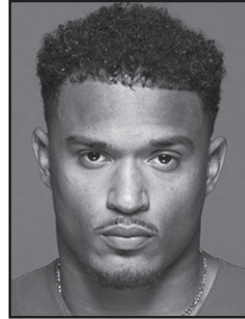
Hometown: Akron, Ohio

High School: St. Vincent-St. Mary

Career Notes: Booker arrived at Ohio State for the 2014 season as a highly-rated recruit, finding his way onto the field for 11 games as a true freshman. That included 21 plays against Alabama in the Sugar Bowl in the College Football Playoff. He is one of just three players still on the roster who appeared in a game for the 2014 Buckeyes.

Booker served as a reserve linebacker in 2015, totaling 22 tackles, before winning a starting job heading into the 2016 season. He suffered an injury in the opener against Bowling Green, though, and missed the rest of the year, taking a medical redshirt. Booker was a key player in the linebacker rotation again in 2017, tallying 31 tackles, two sacks and an interception in nine games, before encountering injury issues again in 2018 – he missed the entire spring after undergoing separate shoulder surgeries.

Booker, who was an OSU Scholar-Athlete in 2014 and an academic All-Big Ten honoree in 2015, graduated in May with a degree in sport industry.



Dante Booker

High School: St. Vincent-St. Mary

Career Notes: Campbell, a high school running back, redshirted in 2014 before finding his way into the rotation going into the 2015 season. His career started on a low note, though, after he dropped a sure-touch-down pass in the season opener that year. From there, Campbell blossomed into one of the most important players for the Buckeyes on and off the field.

He was a team captain in 2017 and again this season in addition to being a game-breaking receiver for Ohio State.

After catching a total of just 13 passes between 2015 and 2016, Campbell exploded onto the scene with 40 catches for 584 yards and three scores last year in addition to 10 rushes for 132 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Campbell was a third-team All-Big Ten honoree by the coaches as a return specialist in 2017. The following year he received third-team honors from the coaches as a receiver and second-team honors from the media as a returner.

Johnnie Dixon

Position: Wide Receiver

Jersey No.: 1

Height/Weight: 5-11/198

Hometown: West Palm Beach, Fla.

High School: Dwyer

Career Notes: Like Booker, Dixon actually played as a true freshman in 2014. He was able to appear in only two games, though, before serious knee issues limited him to just 14 appearances over his first three years in Columbus.

Dixon considered ending his football career after the 2016 season but instead returned to Columbus, got healthy and earned a big role in the rotation last year. He caught 18 passes for 422 yards and eight touchdowns in 2017 then found himself as one of seven team captains this year. Through 12 games, Dixon has caught 33 passes for 532 yards and six touchdowns.

Tate Duarte

Position: Tight End

Jersey No.: 48

Height/Weight: 6-5/248

Hometown: Poland, Ohio

High School: Poland

Career Notes: Duarte had the shortest tenure with the Buckeyes of any of the 2018 seniors after walking onto the team in the spring this year. He previously attended St. Francis and Ohio Dominican before transferring to Ohio State.

In high school, Duarte took part in the North/South All-Star Game and also played basketball and baseball in addition to running track.

Demetrius Knox

Position: Offensive Guard

Jersey No.: 78

Height/Weight: 6-4/312

Hometown: Fort Worth, Texas

High School: All Saints Episcopal

Career Notes: Although he was born in Ohio, Knox came to the Buckeyes from the Lone Star State in 2014, taking a redshirt that year. He played in 13 games the following year before being limited to just four due to injuries in 2016, including a brief appearance in the College Football Playoff loss to Clemson.

In 2017, Knox lost out on a starting spot at right guard to Branden Bowen, but after Bowen broke his leg against Maryland, he entered the starting lineup for the first time against Nebraska and never looked back. Knox has started every game for the Buckeyes since.

He graduated with a degree in sport industry in December 2017.

Bryan Kristan

Position: Punter

Jersey No.: 90

Height/Weight: 6-3/195

Hometown: Canfield, Ohio

High School: Canfield

Career Notes: Kristan walked on at Ohio State in the fall of 2016 and made one appearance against Army in 2017 on a kickoff – although it went out of bounds.

He was an OSU Scholar-Athlete in 2016 and 2017 in addition to being a Big Ten Conference

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Terry McLaurin

Position: Wide Receiver
Jersey No.: 83
Height/Weight: 6-1/205
Hometown: Indianapolis, Ind.
High School: Cathedral
Career Notes: While McLaurin was a four-star recruit, he went above and beyond in order to earn an offer from Ohio State out of high school. Then after arriving in Columbus, he continued to be one of the hardest-working Buckeyes.

Perhaps more than anything, McLaurin has made a name for himself on special teams, covering kicks and downing punts inside the 5-yard line on a regular basis. His efforts on the special units have almost overshadowed the fact that McLaurin has turned himself into one of the Buckeyes' best wide receivers as well. He caught just 11 passes for 114 yards and two scores in 2016 then reeled in 29 balls for 436 yards and six touchdowns last year. McLaurin really became a big piece of this offense this season as one of Ohio State's best deep threats. Through 12 games, he has 31 catches for 591 yards and nine touchdowns.

McLaurin's efforts earned him a nod as a team captain last year, and he, along with Campbell, is serving his second season in that role in 2018. He graduated with a degree in communications in December 2017.

Sean Nuernberger

Position: Kicker
Jersey No.: 96
Height/Weight: 6-1/228
Hometown: Buckner, Ky.
High School: Oldham County
Career Notes: Nuernberger can claim one thing that no other player on the roster can: He was a starter on a national championship squad. The kicker earned the starting spot as a true freshman in 2014, making 13 of 20 field goals and all 89 extra-point attempts. In fact, Nuernberger has never missed an extra point, connecting on all 216 of his career attempts. He's 36 of 50 on field goals overall.

After starting in 2014, Nuernberger didn't retake the job until late in 2015. Then he missed the 2016 season with an injury, earning a red-shirt, before connecting on 17 of 21 field goals last season. He served as Ohio State's starting kicker for six games this year before an injury paved the way for Blake Haubeil to take over.

Nuernberger was an OSU Scholar-Athlete in each of the past four years in addition to being an academic All-Big Ten honoree from 2015-17.

Blake Pfenning

Position: Offensive Line
Jersey No.: 60
Height/Weight: 6-5/292
Hometown: Wapakoneta, Ohio
High School: Wapakoneta
Career Notes: Pfenning joined the

Buckeyes as an invited walk-on in June 2015, making him a rare four-year walk-on in Columbus. He was an academic All-Big Ten honoree last year as a civil engineering major.

Malcolm Pridgeon

Position: Offensive Guard
Jersey No.: 66
Height/Weight: 6-7/310
Hometown: Central Islip, N.Y.
High School: Central Islip
Junior College: Nassau C.C.

Career Notes: Pridgeon joined the Buckeyes in 2016 as a five-star JUCO recruit. At the time, he was just the second JUCO recruit to sign for Urban Meyer in Columbus. He suffered a knee injury that fall, forcing him to redshirt. He played in all 14 games last year, mainly on special teams, with 41 offensive snaps against Illinois.

Pridgeon took over as the starting left guard this year and has served in that role for the first 12 games of the season.

Isaiah Prince

Position: Right Tackle
Jersey No.: 59
Height/Weight: 6-7/310
Hometown: Greenbelt, Md.
High School: Eleanor Roosevelt

Career Notes: Prince was one of four true freshmen to see the field for Ohio State in 2015, appearing in every game that year. He took over as the starting right tackle in 2016 and, despite struggling at times that season, became one of the Buckeyes' most important players in 2017 and 2018.

Prince led all Ohio State linemen with 945 snaps played in 2016 and 933 played in 2017. Through the Michigan game, he has started 39 consecutive contests for the Buckeyes.

He was named a team captain in 2018 and was a third-team All-Big Ten selection by both the coaches and the media last year.

Brady Taylor

Position: Offensive Line
Jersey No.: 79
Height/Weight: 6-5/295
Hometown: Columbus, Ohio
High School: Bishop Ready

Career Notes: As a local prospect, Taylor joined the Buckeyes for the 2014 season, taking a redshirt that year. He went on to back up Rimington Award winners in 2016 and 2017 (Pat Elflein and Billy Price, respectively) before battling for a starting spot this year.

In fact, Taylor was named the starter out of spring practice by Meyer but battled injury issues in the fall and throughout most of the season as Michael Jordan slid over from guard to start at center. Taylor has seen limited action in 2018 because of that injury after appearing in 13 of 14 games last year.

Taylor is an OSU Scholar-Athlete as a hospitality management major.



Isaiah Prince

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April 15, 2018 in Football, Garrett Stepien

VIDEOS: HEAR FROM DC GREG SCHIANO, DE CHASE YOUNG AFTER OHIO STATE SPRING GAME

Defensive coordinator Greg Schiano
<https://youtu.be/YVWQXjmAJT1> Sophomore defensive end Chase Young
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April 14, 2018 in Football, Ryan McGlade

MEYER: NO QB DECISION YET; MEETING WITH COACHES NEXT WEEK

Garrett Stepien / BSB Ohio State began spring practice on March 6 unsure of who the starting quarterback for the 2018 season is going to be, and the team was...
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Northwestern Set For 1st Big Ten Title Game

By JAMES GREGA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When experts were forecasting the 2018 Big Ten football season, not many saw Northwestern emerging from the conference's West division.

The usual suspect, Wisconsin, was widely expected to represent the West in Indianapolis on Dec. 1. However the Wildcats went undefeated against opponents within their own division, with their only conference loss coming by three to Michigan in Evanston.

Pat Fitzgerald's team has won seven of its last eight games, with the lone loss coming at home to No. 3 Notre Dame. Before that stretch, Northwestern dropped three straight to the likes of Duke, Akron and the Wolverines, all at home.

Perhaps those losses, combined with the fact that Northwestern's largest margin of victory was just 14 points vs. Wisconsin, are the reason that the Wildcats were underdogs in three of their final four games. That fact wasn't lost on Fitzgerald, who made a point to show his frustrations with the lack of confidence in his team after a 10-point win at Minnesota on Nov. 17.

"It was insulting," he said of the Gophers being favored. "We come up here as underdogs? Are you kidding me? That's a joke. To me, that was a joke. Quite frankly, it pissed me off. I started the week getting asked questions about our guys not being focused to play and that was insulting. It pissed us off and that's the way we approached (the game)."

The Wildcats followed up their win against Minnesota with an eight-point victory over Illinois, a game that was perhaps closer than it should have been. During his appearance on the Big Ten Championship Game teleconference on Nov. 25, Fitzgerald admitted to sitting out some of his players in an effort to remain healthy for the title clash since the West had been locked up for two weeks.

In particular, Fitzgerald is hoping to get cornerback Montre Hartage back. Hartage did not play in the win against Minnesota and played sparingly against the Fighting Illini. Getting the cornerback healthy for the game

against the Buckeyes would be critical for the Wildcats, as Ohio State boasts the No. 2 pass offense in the nation.

"I hope to get everybody back that we had out," Fitzgerald said. "But we'll see how the week unfolds. Every (Ohio State) skill guy can score just by catching a hitch, or every guy in the backfield just has to make one guy miss and he can take it to the house. (OSU sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins) is so efficient – almost throwing for 70 percent, 42 touchdowns, seven interceptions. That ratio is just absolutely incredible. So we're going to have our hands full. There's no doubt about that."

Fitzgerald also gave credit to Ohio State offensive coordinator Ryan Day for scheming up the Michigan defense for the better portion of The Game.

"I'm not going to lie, this is an incredibly talented football team, and Coach Day did a phenomenal job and the offensive formation variations, running different mesh concepts and taking advantage of Michigan's aggressive press man," Fitzgerald said. "Dwayne made some big-time throws. It looked like wheel routes, we call them crescent routes. They got the (running) backs matched up in favorable one-on-one matchups, and the line protected really, really well against that defensive front of Michigan. It was really impressive to watch."

Past Matchups

In five matchups against Ohio State since taking over as Northwestern head coach in 2006, Fitzgerald is winless against the Buckeyes. However, he has drawn closer in the more recent bouts.

Fitzgerald and Urban Meyer have faced off twice, with the Buckeyes winning both times. The first matchup resulted in a 40-30 Ohio State win at Ryan Field in a prime-time contest in 2013. The second saw the Buckeyes narrowly escape with a 24-20 victory in Columbus in 2016.

The Wildcats have come a long way since a 54-10 defeat at the hands of Ohio State in 2006, and Fitzgerald acknowledged that on the teleconference Nov. 25.

"It's a big deal for us to win the West," he said. "This is a step and a hurdle that we hadn't gotten over."

Get To Know ... Northwestern

About Northwestern

- **2018 Record:** 8-4 (8-1 Big Ten).
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 4-3; Starters Returning – Offense 7, Defense 7, Specialists 1.
- **Head Coach:** Pat Fitzgerald, 13th season, 95-69 (all at Northwestern).
- **Series History:** 77th meeting, Ohio State leads, 61-14-1.
- **School Facts:** Location – Evanston, Ill.; Enrollment – 8,367; Nickname – Wildcats; Color – Purple; Conference – Big Ten (West Division); Stadium – Ryan Field (Surface, Grass; Capacity, 47,330).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Isaiah Bowser	161	736	4.6	6	55
John Moten IV	40	127	3.2	2	29

Passing	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Clayton Thorson	251-416	60.3	2,675	14-12

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Flynn Nagel	64	746	11.7	2	61
Cameron Green	46	411	8.9	3	22
Bennett Skowronek	40	514	12.9	3	40
Riley Lees	19	198	10.4	2	29

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 23.7
Rushing Yards Per Game – 114.8
Passing Yards Per Game – 237.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 351.8

2018 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)
Aug. 30	at Purdue	W, 31-27
Sept. 8	DUKE	L, 21-7
Sept. 15	AKRON	L, 39-35
Sept. 29	MICHIGAN	L, 20-17
Oct. 6	at Michigan State	W, 29-19
Oct. 13	NEBRASKA	W, 34-31 (OT)
Oct. 20	at Rutgers	W, 18-15
Oct. 27	WISCONSIN	W, 31-17
Nov. 3	NOTRE DAME	L, 31-21
Nov. 10	at Iowa	W, 14-10
Nov. 17	at Minnesota	W, 24-19
Nov. 24	ILLINOIS	W, 24-16
Dec. 1	vs. Ohio State (B1G)	8 p.m.

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ass.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Blake Gallagher	61	51	112	6.5-18	–
Paddy Fisher	46	46	92	4.0-8	1.0-3
JR Pace	42	28	70	4.0-13	–
Jared McGee	34	15	49	3.0-13	–
Samdup Miller	22	25	47	4.5-11	0.5-2
Nate Hall	29	17	46	4.5-10	–

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
JR Pace	3	26	8.7	0	26
Nate Hall	3	0	0.0	0	0

3 others tied with 1 interception each

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 21.7
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 134.7
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 238.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 372.7

The next step for the Wildcats would be to get to the Rose Bowl, a place it has not been since Fitzgerald was a linebacker for Northwestern. In order to get there, they will have to beat a Buckeye team coming off its biggest win of the season.

Players To Watch

The easy pick is quarterback Clayton Thorson, and for good reason.

Thorson has thrown 58 touchdown passes to 42 career interceptions entering the Big Ten title game and is a four-year starter after redshirting in 2014. Against Ohio State in 2016, Thorson threw for 256 yards and a touchdown to one interception in the four-point loss. He also rushed six times for 44 yards and a score.

Thorson suffered an ACL injury in

Northwestern's bowl game at the end of the 2017 season, and there were questions about whether he would be able to return for the start of the 2018 season. Thorson did return but has been subbed out in certain situations for TJ Green, the son of longtime NFL quarterback and Indiana great Trent Green.

The younger Green has completed 20 of 35 pass attempts in seven games this season and has thrown one interception. He has yet to record a touchdown as a Wildcat.

Since losing running back Jeremy Larkin for the season, Northwestern has turned to Isaiah Bowser on the ground. In nine games, Bowser, a Sidney, Ohio, native, has rushed 161 times for 736 yards and six scores as a freshman. In all, the Wildcats have 18 Ohio natives on their roster.

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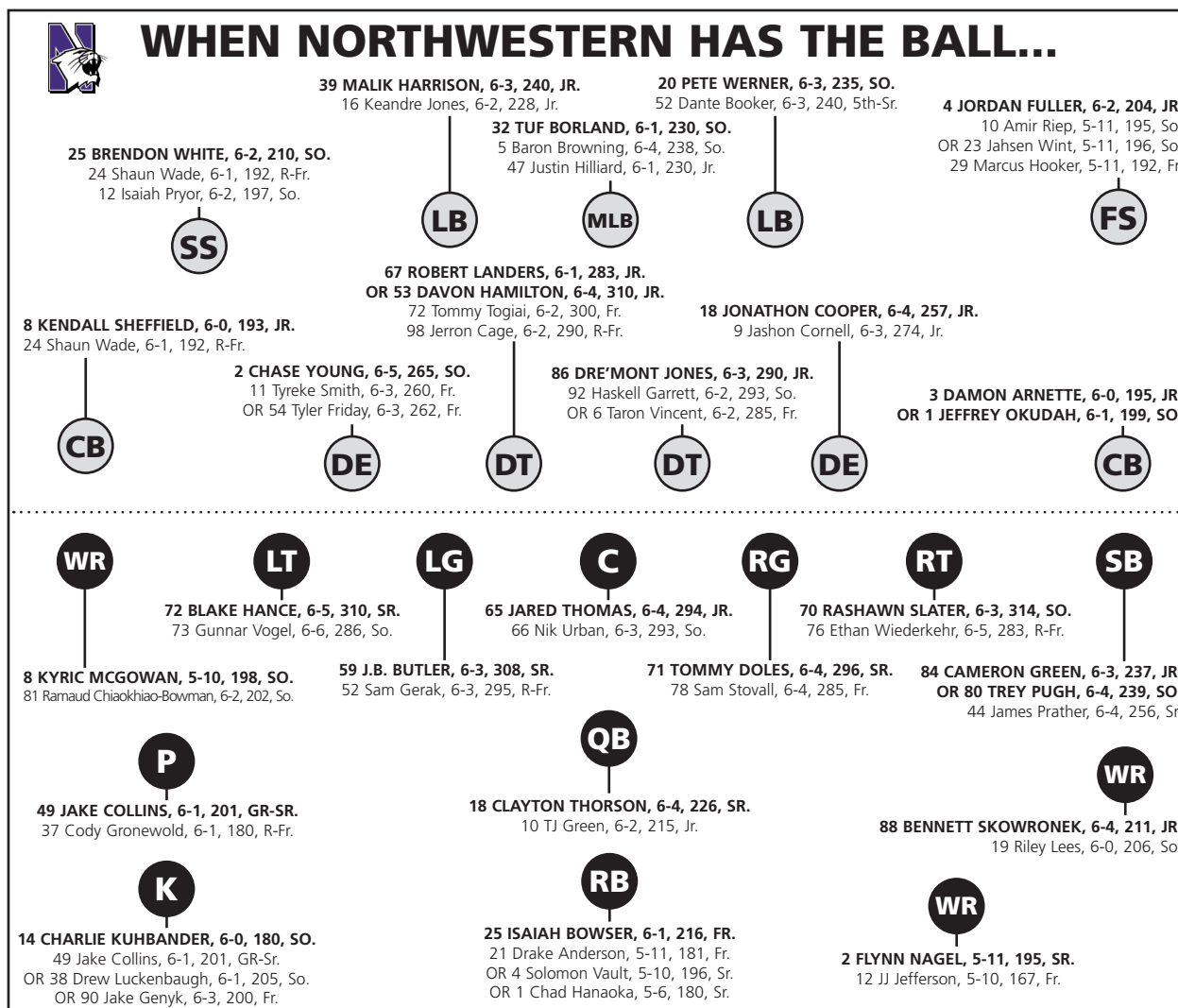
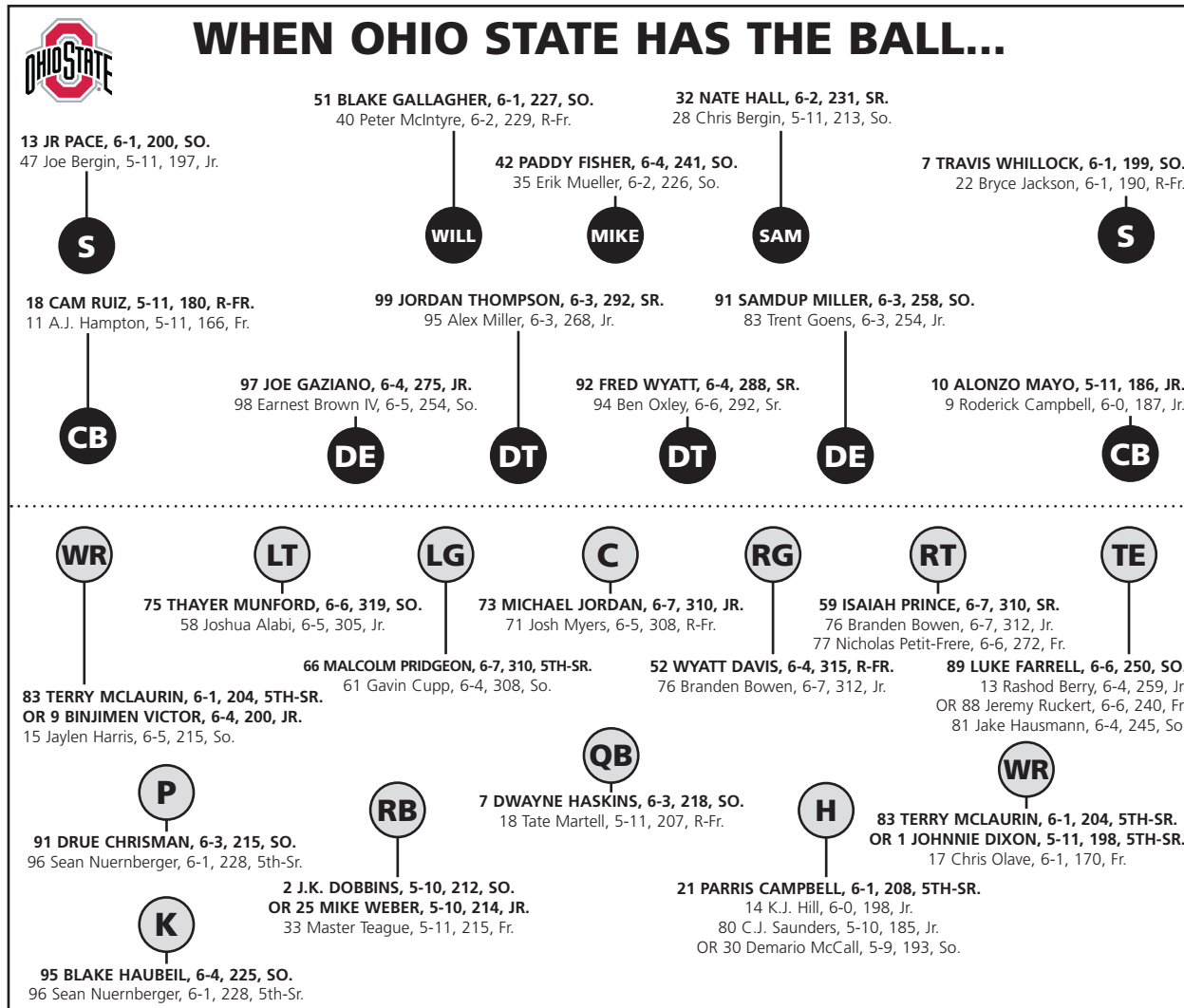


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Projected Depth Charts



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. NORTHWESTERN RUSH DEFENSE

What does the Ohio State offensive line not allowing a sack against the vaunted Michigan defense have to do with the running game? It's called confidence. After being suspect for much of the season, the big guys in the trenches can feel good about themselves for a moment before turning their attention to a Northwestern rush defense that is fourth best in the Big Ten, yielding 134.7 yards a game. (Disclaimer: Statistics are basically meaningless considering Michigan entered The Game as best in the country in total defense and pass defense and was fourth in scoring defense, but U-M was torched by the Buckeyes for a gazillion yards and 62 points.) The Buckeyes ran for 171 yards with 4.8 yards per carry vs. the Wolverines with Mike Weber leading the way with 96 yards and a robust 7.4-yard average. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

NORTHWESTERN RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Wildcats have found their guy in freshman Isaiah Bowser, who clipped off a career-high 166 yards, 115 in the first half, on 18 carries against woeful Illinois in their final regular-season game. He ran for 55 yards on the Wildcats' first play and has rushed for more than 100 yards in four of the past six games. Whoa. Didn't Maryland have a pretty good freshman in Anthony McFarland? And, didn't he rip apart the OSU defense on Nov. 17 for 298 yards, including runs of 81, 75 and 52 yards? Ohio State seems to have fixed its problems by limiting U-M to 161 yards on a 4.0 average, but in this unpredictable season, there are no certainties. For those numbers geeks, Northwestern is last in the Big Ten with 114.8 yards a game and 3.0 per carry. **EDGE: EVEN**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. NORTHWESTERN PASS DEFENSE

Dwayne Haskins had six touchdown passes against a Michigan defense that had allowed only seven in the first 11 games. It was so convenient for him to dump a short ball across the middle or hit a slant downfield for big yards. Included in Haskins' 396 yards vs. U-M was a 78-yard jet sweep to Parris Campbell that initially was ruled a run. You can bet Northwestern will be ready. Haskins' 42 TD passes lead the nation by five over Heisman Trophy hopefuls Will Grier of West Virginia and Kyler Murray of Oklahoma. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

NORTHWESTERN PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

The Wildcats have the kind of quarterback who can lead a team to an upset of Ohio State. Clayton Thorson is a steady veteran who is an efficient passer and has also rushed for eight TDs this season. Thorson has started 51 consecutive games, the most starts for any QB in Big Ten history. He has run and passed for a score in the same game 15 times in his career with a 12-3 record when he does. The Buckeyes harassed U-M quarterback Shea Patterson the whole game and recorded three sacks and two hurries. Also, Jordan Fuller and Brendon White had interceptions. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

There was the bad and the great for the Buckeyes. OSU continues to have trouble handling kickoffs. First was a pooch kick that the Buckeyes failed to field at Maryland, then Demario McCall fumbled a return, giving U-M possession at the OSU 9 late in the first half. All was forgiven when Chris Olave blocked a punt and Sevyn Banks returned it for a TD in the third quarter. Northwestern's three kickers have made 8 of 14 field goals. Jake Collins has tried three, making his last two with a long of 29 yards. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

INTANGIBLES

Northwestern may have the edge when it comes to preparation. They long ago wrapped up the Big Ten West, and coach Pat Fitzgerald said after beating Illinois that he'd been watching video of OSU and Michigan, his two possible opponents in the Big Ten Championship Game. Compare that to Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer saying post-Michigan that he hadn't watched tape of the Wildcats. Now, his assistants likely have, but it was evident that the OSU staff had been scouting Michigan all season and had an excellent game plan on both sides of the ball. Finally, there's the "nobody gives us respect" factor that all teams seem to want to embrace. Score one for the Wildcats. **EDGE: NORTHWESTERN**

PREDICTION

It is too easy to overlook a Northwestern team that lost four games, including to Akron. Think about it, though. OSU has been humiliated by less talented, seemingly overmatched West Division opponents twice in the past two seasons. All the Buckeyes need to do is watch clips of Iowa and Purdue celebrating like they won national championships to understand what's at stake. The Buckeyes have two tasks, in this order: Win. Win impressively to sway the College Football Playoff selection committee. Keep the same focus and intensity as shown vs. Michigan, and both goals will be attained. **OHIO STATE 42, NORTHWESTERN 24**

Quiet Walk Capped Krenzel's Storied OSU Career

By MARK REA
BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

When former players are asked to recount a favorite memory from their playing days, most remember a big victory or a crucial pass, run or catch.

For Craig Krenzel, however, it was different.

Echoes from the cheers of more than 100,000 fans had long since died away when the former Ohio State quarterback walked onto the Ohio Stadium field for the last time as a Buckeye.

Just an hour before, Krenzel had helped his team to a thrilling 16-13 overtime victory against Purdue in the penultimate regular-season game of the 2003 season, and his attention had already shifted to the next opponent – archrival Michigan. But as he exited the warmth of the home locker room, he looked up into the cold November sky and noticed the lights were still on inside the venerable old Horseshoe.

Instead of heading for his car and any number of postgame parties, he motioned to a handful of fellow seniors and together they made one final walk down the concrete ramp toward the south end zone.

After plotting and executing so many narrow escapes in two years as Ohio State's starting quarterback, after notching two victories against his school's archenemy, after leading the Buckeyes to their first national championship in more than three decades, the quiet solitude of an empty stadium following his final home game served as a fitting postscript on Krenzel's storybook career.

"That is my favorite memory from my college career," he said. "After that final home game, I went back into the stadium. The lights were on and I just sat there for a while with a couple of my teammates, silently in admiration of the best stadium in the country."

"It was also nice to sit there that night knowing that even though I would never play another game in Ohio Stadium, we had never lost a game there while I was a starter. That was a pretty good feeling – one I'll treasure for the rest of my life."

That a proud son of Michigan found his calling at archrival Ohio State was remarkable enough without the stardom that came with being a championship quarterback.

Krenzel was born in the southeastern Michigan town of Utica, the youngest of three children whose parents each had a head for numbers. Krenzel's father, Al, was a U.S. Army veteran who served a 16-month tour of duty in Vietnam before embarking upon a career as an accountant, while his mother, Debbie, worked as a school bookkeeper.

"We always told the kids, 'Do anything you want, but put your heart and soul into it. Don't just show up,'" Al Krenzel said.

Evidently, his kids listened. Brian, the eldest, played safety for four years at Duke before becoming an orthopedic surgeon specializing in hip and knee replacements, while middle child Krysten became an elementary school teacher.

Meanwhile, Craig wanted nothing more than to follow his older brother into football and medicine, but was he just a skinny freshman at Henry Ford II High School with no real sense for the game of football much less the intricacies of playing the quarterback position.

Still, when Ford High coach Terry Copacia saw the youngster throwing a ball around during a gym session one afternoon, something clicked. Copacia saw something in Krenzel's throwing motion and immediately immersed his new pupil in quarterback fundamentals.

"Pretty much everything I understood about being a quarterback," Krenzel said, "it came from Coach Copacia."

By the end of his sophomore season, he was getting most of the varsity snaps, unusual for a team that was more accustomed to upperclassmen at the controls. But Krenzel seemingly never faced a challenge he couldn't overcome. That went for the classroom as well where he carried a 3.80 grade-point average, scored 30 on the ACT and aligned himself with advanced classes so that he could pursue a degree in medicine when he got to college.

After throwing for more than 3,000 yards and 30 touchdowns during his final two seasons at Ford, Krenzel became a hot commodity on the recruiting trail. He had grown up just about an hour from the University of Michigan campus, but that didn't automatically make him a fan of the Maize and Blue.

"My brother and I were actually Notre Dame fans in the late '80s when they had Tim Brown, Tony Rice and the Rocket (Raghib Ismail)," he said. "Then when I was in high school, I was a big Tennessee fan when Peyton Manning was there. I loved the way he played the game."

Further complicating Michigan head coach Lloyd Carr's pursuit of Krenzel was the fact he had signed Drew Henson, another in-state Michigan quarterback, the year before. Henson had attended Brighton High School, one of Ford's archrivals, so that immediately scratched the Wolverines off Krenzel's list of potential schools.

Michigan State expressed keen interest while spirited pitches came from such other programs as Boston College, Stanford and Duke. But an unusual offer from an unlikely source intrigued the young quarterback prospect.

"Coach Copacia put together a little high-

light tape and sent it around, and on the basis of that four-minute tape, Ohio State offered me a scholarship the January before my senior year," Krenzel said. "They had never even seen me play a down of football in my life, but they offered anyway. All they had to go on was that little highlight reel."

Four months after the initial offer, Krenzel found himself on the Ohio State campus for the first time where head coach John Cooper and recruiting coordinator Bill Conley reaffirmed their interest.

"It was a good school, a good medical school, a good football program and just the right distance from home," Krenzel said. "Mom and Dad could make all the games but couldn't show up on my doorstep unannounced. Plus, it just felt right."

That feeling didn't last.



Craig Krenzel

Bench-Warmer To MVP

Krenzel took a redshirt during his first year on campus and got only token snaps behind starter Steve Bellisari and backup Scott McMullen as a redshirt freshman in 2000. Cooper was fired after that season, but Krenzel's prospects for playing time didn't get any better when new head coach Jim Tressel took over.

Things got so frustrating in 2001 that Krenzel asked his new coach if he could miss a mid-October game to attend his sister's wedding. The ceremony had been scheduled two years in advance so that Krenzel could attend, but the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, forced the cancellation of the Buckeyes' scheduled game the following weekend against San Diego State. The contest was moved to Oct. 20, the day of the wedding.

Getting no first-team snaps in practice the Monday before the game, Krenzel wrestled with his options and then decided to ask for the time off.

"He went into it with so much class," Tressel remembered. "He was considerate of his teammates and the coaching staff, and when he asked me if he could go home, I said yes. Let's face it, the fall of 2001 after 9-11 was not a time for conventional thinking."

A little more than a month later, however, a twist of fate had Krenzel starting at quarterback for the Buckeyes during their traditional season finale against Michigan. Bellisari had been suspended for the final home game of the season following a drunken driving arrest, and McMullen was ineffective as the starter in an eventual 34-22 loss to Illinois.

Krenzel had come off the bench to throw for 163 yards and a touchdown against the Fighting Illini, a performance good enough that Tressel entrusted him with the starting assignment a week later against Michigan, and that trust was repaid with a 26-20 victory against the Wolverines, Ohio State's first win in Ann Arbor in 14 years.

"People always hope for an opportunity," Krenzel said, "but you have to be ready because – at least in my case – there might not have been another one. So, I was mentally ready."

Krenzel's performance against Michigan carried over into the 2002 season, and he was at the controls for one of the most magical seasons in recent Ohio State history. Seven of the team's 14 victories that year were won by a touchdown or less, including a dramatic, come-from-behind, 10-6 win at Purdue when Krenzel completed a fourth-down touchdown pass to wide receiver Michael Jenkins with only 1:37 remaining in the game.

"No one thought we would end up doing what we did on that play," said Krenzel, who explained that his heave to Jenkins was his fourth and final option in the do-or-die situation. "I'm pretty sure Coach Tressel was leading the bandwagon of four-letter words when that ball was flying through the air."

Tressel, who had called a similar pass that had just worked for a solid gain to sure-handed tight end Ben Hartsock, admitted to thinking his quarterback had lost his mind when he saw Krenzel step up in the pocket and make his desperation heave.

"I thought Ben would be open, but I was wrong," Tressel said. "I thought maybe the backs would get open for a check-down, but I was wrong. Then (wide receiver) Chris Gamble ran the wrong route. Craig was looking for him and Chris was over on the Purdue bench. So, Craig had one choice."

"And while he might think he knows what I was thinking, I'm sure he was thinking four-letter words right before that, saying, 'I can't believe they called this play.' But as you know, the No. 1 attribute of great quarterbacks is that they make great decisions, and no one made better decisions during my 38 years of coaching quarterbacks than Craig Krenzel."

An overtime win at Illinois and an emotional victory at home against Michigan closed the 2002 regular season, and then Krenzel led the heavy underdog Buckeyes to an improbable victory against the University of Miami, a 31-24 thrill ride over the defending national champions that took two overtimes to decide. The win was a total team effort, but it was Krenzel who earned offensive most valuable player honors, mainly for repeatedly throwing his 6-4, 225-pound body into harm's way against one of the toughest defensive units in college football and finishing with a career-high 81 rushing yards and two touchdowns.

The Buckeyes couldn't replicate their success the following season, but Krenzel still led them to an 11-2 record culminating in a thrilling 35-28 Fiesta Bowl victory against Kansas State. Krenzel threw for 189 yards and four touchdowns against the eighth-ranked Wildcats and was again named the outstanding offensive player of the game.

Krenzel never threw for 300 yards in any game during his college career, but when he finished at OSU, he was eighth on the all-time passing list with 4,493 yards. Plus, he has that 2002 national championship ring.

"That season was such a thrill," Krenzel said. "The ups and the downs, all the roller-coaster rides that season – and then the culmination of it through the exciting nature of that championship game ... just to be on that field, to hold that trophy, to go back to the hotel and celebrate with all my teammates, coaches and family. It was truly a night that I will never forget."

Brief NFL Career

Following his graduation from Ohio State, most observers naturally assumed Krenzel, who majored in molecular biology as an undergrad, would use his degree to follow his brother into medicine.

Despite some less-than glowing assessments from scouts regarding his pro prospects, however, Krenzel wanted to see if he had what it took to play in the NFL.

"I had a pretty good head on my shoulders, a pretty good mind for the game of football, and I think that's what you need to have for the quarterback situation," he said. "There were a lot of intangibles where I was

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strong. Obviously, I knew and other people knew that, physically, there were still some things that I needed to definitely improve upon."

Chicago Bears head coach Lovie Smith, who served one year as an assistant on Cooper's staff at OSU in 1995, selected Krenzel in the fifth round of the 2004 draft. He was the seventh of 17 quarterbacks taken in the same draft that featured Eli Manning, Phillip Rivers and Ben Roethlisberger being selected among the first 11 overall picks.

Krenzel entered training camp with only an outside shot at making the regular-season roster, but after Bears starter Rex Grossman was injured and backup Jonathan Quinn was ineffective, the former Ohio State quarterback was suddenly a starting quarterback in the NFL.

"I was ready. I was excited. I wanted to go out there and help the team," Krenzel said. "Obviously, you don't get to that level and you don't achieve certain levels of success without having that can-do attitude, the confidence and really embracing the challenges that are going to be put in front of you on the football field."

Krenzel's first taste of the pros came when he replaced Quinn in the second half of a game at Tampa Bay. With the Bears trailing 13-0, he completed his first three career pass attempts and later directed his team on a short touchdown drive to cut the deficit to 13-7.

But he threw an early fourth-quarter interception that set up a Buccaneers touchdown, and the Bears wound up with a 19-7 loss. Krenzel finished the game 9 for 19 in the passing department for 69 yards and the interception.

"I knew I did some good things, but I also knew I didn't play well enough for us to win down there," he said. "But at the same time, I understood what had transpired in that game. The fact that they gave me the ball in the second half meant there was a pretty good chance I'd get more reps as the season went on."

Smith went with Krenzel as his starter the following week against San Francisco, and the rookie QB responded with a 23-13 victory, touching off a three-game winning streak for the Bears. During that stretch, Krenzel displayed the same kind of form he always had – nothing flashy, just winning football.

"The first thing that pops into my head is just how good our defense was and how well they were playing," he said. "Even though I was young as a rookie, I was still smart enough to understand that what we were doing offensively wasn't good enough to win consistently in the NFL."

The streak ended with a 41-10 loss to the Colts during which Peyton Manning threw for 211 yards and four touchdowns in a game Krenzel called "the worst defeat that I'd ever experienced as an athlete."

Next up was a Thanksgiving Day matchup against a struggling Dallas Cowboys team that was just 3-7 for the season. Unfortunately, Krenzel suffered a high ankle sprain during the second quarter of the eventual 21-7 loss to the Cowboys. It was to be his final NFL game. He was released by the Bears the following June.

"I would say I was a little surprised," Krenzel said about being released. "Just from the standpoint of my feeling in terms of what I thought my plan was and what the Bears thought my plan was in the organization, why I was drafted – all that kind of stuff from a long-term standpoint."

"Obviously, things didn't go the way any of us really wanted to my rookie year, but I was still looking forward to that opportunity

to continue to grow, learn, contribute and be the best quarterback I could be. But I'm also smart enough to understand that the NFL is an interesting animal. You have to produce – like anything else in life."

Krenzel spent the 2005 season in Cincinnati as the third-string quarterback behind Carson Palmer and Jon Kitna, but when he injured his elbow and was facing ligament replacement surgery in the fall of 2006, he finally hung up his cleats. It wasn't an easy decision.

"I had to walk away from the game I had played for such a large portion of my life, and the game that had such a huge impact on me as a person," he said. "It taught me so much about life. For me to have to come to the realization that I couldn't play football anymore, it was difficult."

"But at the same time, I was very blessed. The way I was raised, I owe everything I have in life to my parents for the way they raised myself, my brother and my sister. Football was not something that defined me as a person. It was something I did. It was something that taught me a lot. It was something that helped shape who I am as a person. It was a

difficult thing to come to that realization, but it wasn't impossible."

Armed with his undergraduate degree as well as an impressive football résumé, Krenzel could have returned to Ohio State to enroll in medical school.

"Being out of school for three years, and after the fortune – or misfortune – of seeing what my older brother, Brian, went through and what he did to get where he is, I thought maybe there were a lot of other ways in this world to make a living."

"Plus, my wife and I had been married for a little over a year and we were expecting our first child. I just didn't feel like going back to school."

Krenzel has found success away from the gridiron much as he did when he was on it. He and his wife, Beth, now have four children, and he is a partner at his own insurance brokerage as well as co-founder of a custom home-building firm.

He is also active in multiple charities in and around Columbus, including fundraising efforts for the James Cancer Hospital at Ohio State as well as the 2nd & 7 Foundation, a

nonprofit organization founded in 1999 by former Ohio State players Ryan Miller, Luke Fickell and Mike Vrabel that tackles childhood illiteracy in central Ohio.

Still, as successful as he has been since his playing days, Krenzel realizes he will always be remembered as the quarterback who led the Buckeyes to all of those close victories in 2002, including a thrilling 14-9 victory against Michigan to clinch a trip to the national championship game.

"I always talk about that last home game during our senior year as my favorite memory, but a very, very close second was beating Michigan at home the year before," Krenzel said. "How many times in the '90s did Michigan spoil that dream for the Buckeyes? To get that monkey off our backs and to come away victorious that day – and to have the representatives from the Fiesta Bowl leading up to the national championship in our locker room afterward, well, that's just another day that I'll never forget."

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



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2019 Visitors On Flip Watch After ‘The Game’

Ohio Stadium was rocking Nov. 24 as Ohio State stomped Michigan before 106,588 in Columbus, where what was by far the biggest group of recruiting visitors all season gathered to watch the Buckeyes blast the Wolverines, 62-39.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Garrett Stepien

Among the wave of prospects at the Horseshoe, a handful of top targets in the 2019 recruiting class made the trip to OSU – officially and unofficially, expected and unexpected – leaving several on flip watch and others to keep tabs on heading into the Dec. 19-21 early signing period.

With room for those potential additions in the next month, Ohio State's current class continues to sit at No. 12 in the 247Sports composite team rankings, boasting 15 commitments – two five-stars, nine four-stars and four three-stars.

The Buckeyes' class of 2020 still holds seven pledges – one five-star and six four-stars – but slipped from No. 2 to No. 3 after Alabama (10 commits) leapfrogged OSU and Miami (Fla.) (10 commits) for the No. 1 spot.

Official Visitors Take In ‘The Game’

Ohio State's laundry list of visitors from all classes for its romp over Michigan would probably be easier to describe by reporting which recruits didn't attend The Game. Prospects in the 2019 class, however, were much easier to sift through.

The prospects on hand started with a stacked slate of official visitors including Toledo Whitmer three-star defensive tackle Caven Butler (6-2½, 285); Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ the King three-star defensive tackle Jared Harrison-Hunte (6-4, 286); Owings Mills (Md.) McDonogh School four-star defensive tackle D'Von Ellies (6-2½, 280); Apopka (Fla.) Wekiva three-star cor-

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1988

Ohio State returned almost all of its secondary for 1989, but the Buckeyes were still looking for defensive back reinforcements, leading their recruiting efforts to Toledo Macomber-Whitney's Myron Bell.

The 6-1, 198-pounder was among the best available athletes in Ohio in the eyes of national recruiting expert Tom Lemming and others.

"He is rated as one of the top defensive back prospects in the country," Lemming said. "He will come up and stuff the run like a pro. He also excels at one-on-one coverage. Myron breaks very well to the ball."

Bell, who recorded a bench press of 250 pounds and clocked a 40-yard dash of 4.60 seconds, had mutual interest in OSU. He was considering his home-state school with Michigan, Michigan State, UCLA and Tennessee.

25 Years Ago – 1993

As tailbacks Raymont Harris and Butler By'not'e departed from Ohio State, the Buckeyes were left with a trio of players – Eddie George, Travis McGuire and Keith Wilkerson – at the position.

OSU didn't have to look far for an option to add depth as its recruiting efforts led to Euclid, Ohio, running back Pepe Pearson (5-10½, 175), who sported a 285-pound bench press and 4.30-second 40-yard dash.

His attributes made for a national list of offers from Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Syracuse and Penn State before he closed in on a decision after the season.

"After the season, I'll finalize my visits," Pearson said. "I also plan on visiting Ohio State. It's a matter of scheduling it. I went to both the Washington and the Penn State games and had a pretty good time."

20 Years Ago – 1998

As the end of the season approached, Ohio State inched closer to another commitment in its recruitment of Shaker Heights, Ohio, offensive tackle Adrien Clarke. The 6-6, 315-pounder visited the Buckeyes for their win over Michigan and came away with OSU as his top choice.

"I guess I would say Ohio State is strongly my No. 1 school," he said. "It's funny, but the same thing has happened every time I've gone down there for a game. I would walk around and people would talk to me and my family and

say things like, 'Please let Adrien come here.' The atmosphere is wonderful. My mom saw that and she gave me her blessing. They won The Game and the crowd was into it, and after they beat Michigan, that really pushed it forward for me."

Clarke said he planned to hold off on his commitment announcement until January, after more visits.

15 Years Ago – 2003

Ohio State already possessed a quarterback committed to its 2004 recruiting class in Tallahassee (Fla.) Lincoln's Joe Bauserman (6-1, 233), but the Buckeyes were looking closely at taking another signal caller as they increased their interest in Daytona Beach (Fla.) Seabreeze's Xavier Lee (6-4, 212).

He was rated nationally as a five-star prospect and Rivals.com's top dual-threat quarterback, and OSU tentatively locked in Lee for an official visit at a date to be announced. Lee was coming off an official visit to Auburn the weekend of Nov. 21-22 for the Tigers' 28-23 win over Alabama in the Iron Bowl. He was considering Florida State, where he also officially visited, while Florida and Syracuse were slated to get his other two of five official visits.

"Auburn and FSU are my two leaders, but they're even right now and I want to take all five of my visits first," said Lee, who planned to make his commitment announcement on Jan. 25.

10 Years Ago – 2008

Looking to close out its 2009 recruiting class, Ohio State hosted two of three expected official visitors Nov. 22 during its game against Michigan.

Two commits from Florida, Palmetto running back Jaamal Berry (5-11, 193) and Fort Lauderdale St. Thomas Aquinas wide receiver Duron Carter (6-3, 185), the son of Buckeye great Cris Carter, made the trip to Columbus.

Chatham (Va.) Hargrave Military Academy quarterback Kevin Newsome (6-3, 217), however, was unable to make the trek due to inclement weather.

Among the three, Berry's visit brought clarity to OSU's staff, he said, although his official visits to Florida and Ole Miss were in the process of getting planned.

"(Head coach Jim) Tressel knew about this before I committed," Berry said, "and they have never pressured me to cancel those visits. There is absolutely nothing to worry about because I'm 100 percent committed to Ohio State."

Five Years Ago – 2013

Less than three months away from National Signing Day, Ohio State boasted 17 commitments in its 2014 recruiting class with room for more.

Scanning where the Buckeyes stood then, Scout.com recruiting analyst Bill Greene told BSB that the group was likely to look much different by the first Wednesday in February.

Among the possibilities, OSU appeared to lead for Hinesville (Ga.) Liberty County five-star linebacker Raekwon McMillan (6-2, 230).

"He's down to Ohio State, Clemson and Alabama," Greene said. "He's the No. 1 target by far. They've been chasing him for over a year, and he's made multiple visits to Ohio State on his own dime."

However, Ohio State was less likely to land two of its priority prospects at wide receiver, where the Florida four-star duo of West Palm Beach Cardinal Newman's Travis Rudolph (6-1, 175) and Palm Beach Gardens William T. Dwyer's Johnnie Dixon (5-11, 190) appeared out of reach.

"They need another receiver," Greene said. "They're chasing guys like Travis Rudolph and Johnnie Dixon. I don't think they're going to get either of those two."

One Year Ago – 2017

About a month out from college football's first early signing period, which ran from Dec. 20-22, Ohio State held 18 commitments in its 2018 recruiting class.

Among other positions, quarterback remained unclear for the Buckeyes, who had a long-standing commitment from Franklin (Ga.) Heard County four-star Emory Jones (6-2½, 195) but offers out to several others.

Those included Austin (Texas) Lake Travis three-star Colorado State commit Matthew Baldwin (6-2½, 195), Fresno (Calif.) Clovis West four-star Tennessee commit Adrian Martinez (6-2, 205) and Lawrenceville (Ga.) Central Gwinnett four-star Kentucky decommit Jarren Williams (6-2, 206).

"I don't think (Ohio State is) getting Jarren Williams, and I don't think they think they're getting Jarren Williams," Greene said. "He would be a stand-alone guy, for sure. Then you drop down to guys like Baldwin and Martinez. Are those your stand-alone guys? Or are they (Ohio State senior quarterback) Stephen Collier-types in which you would take two and hope one of them hits?"

nerback Renardo Green (5-11, 164); and Potomac (Md.) Bullis School three-star safe-

ty Bryson Shaw (6-2, 175). Out of the official visitors, Shaw was the Buckeyes' only com-

mitment, while the others were top targets with offers.

Joined by a group of pledges – Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley four-star offensive tackle Doug Nester (6-6½, 314); Mentor, Ohio, four-star defensive end Noah Potter (6-5½, 250); Mentor, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Ryan Jacoby (6-5, 270); Lexington, Ohio, four-star outside linebacker Cade Stover (6-5, 235); Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne three-star athlete Craig Young (6-4, 200); Oak Park, Mich., four-star quarterback Dwan Mathis (6-6, 205) – OSU's official visitors received plenty of attention from the coaching staff and the members of the 2019 class.

Among the targets was Green, who committed to Florida State on April 16, making his first trip back to campus since he received an offer from Ohio State on a June 8 unofficial visit.

"The atmosphere was crazy," Green told John Garcia Jr. of 247Sports. "The best part was when I was talking to the coaches and how if you go to Ohio State you've got to be a dog. You have to really work 24/7 because iron sharpens iron. Everybody is getting better."

"A lot of places aren't really built like that. They are always developing players with that mind-set or working all the time. Working

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ASK AN ANALYST

With CBS Sports Network's Tom Lemming

With uncertainty around the future of Southern California and head coach Clay Helton, Penn State head coach James Franklin has been floated as a front-runner for the job if the Trojans make a change. If Franklin leaves for USC, what would that mean for Ohio State in recruiting?

"James Franklin is one of the best recruiters in the country. I'd put him in the top five with (Ohio State head coach) Urban Meyer, (Clemson head coach) Dabo Swinney and (Alabama head coach) Nick Saban. I'd say that it would definitely hurt Penn State. Personally, I don't see him leaving just because he's from Pennsylvania and took the Penn State job, talking about what kind of dream-come-true type of job it is. You never know, but you never say never when it comes to coaches and money.

"He would fit in perfectly at USC, and it would open things in the Big Ten for teams like Ohio State with Penn State vulnerable. He can recruit no matter where he is. He can bring players to Alaska. There aren't many of them around, but he's one of them. Urban's another one. If Franklin went there, as opposed to staying at Penn State, I think USC would be up with Ohio State and Alabama as far as consistently bringing in great players of the upper-echelon tier.

"The state of Pennsylvania has dipped dramatically, when it comes to talent in the state, since I started covering recruiting 40 years ago. It was definitely one of the top five states in the country with big-time ballplayers. Now, it's no longer. You look at next year in the 2020 class, I can count less than 10 impact-type guys. Usually, there used to be 40 of them in the state

of Pennsylvania. So he's still winning that way at Penn State because he's in Jersey, Maryland and Virginia. If he were to leave and go to USC, they would dominate the PAC-12 conference and Ohio State could benefit from it with the way they've gotten into recruiting battles with Penn State over the years while Franklin's been there."

On the topic of the changes, Meyer's future has been uncertain despite his attempts to reaffirm that he will be back next year. What would the recruiting impact be for Ohio State if Meyer leaves, whether it comes after the regular season or the bowl game?

"It might impact the early signing period. Remember, when (former Ohio State head coach) Jim Tressel got pushed out, everyone thought it was going to be a disaster and then Urban ended up with one of the top classes in the country. But he had a couple months. It all comes down to who takes over. If it's not a good coach, then they will lose some guys because Urban's the man. He's the name. They've got to go after a great one, but who's out there, really? Who would they think of? (Iowa State head coach) Matt Campbell could be one because he's a fanatical recruiter, too. They were very involved in recruiting under Campbell. If Ohio State took Campbell, they wouldn't skip too much of the recruiting ability. On the surface, it only comes down to name recognition, familiarity with all the players nationally. If Ohio State offered every single guy, they'd be in on all of them, but they're so selective. Campbell, and some others, is great, but he's no Urban Meyer."

How important are December visits after the regular season is over, and what changes compared to gameday trips?

"You've got 48 hours. No games. Just recruiting. The questions are always – when the parents come along, there's a lot of academic questions. Sometimes for the games, the players are just there by themselves and you've got 48 hours with a tightened window because of the game day. It can be pretty tough. These (December) weekends, you've got 48 hours to get in your questions in a more relaxed environment.

"However, I think the big thing is it's so close to National Signing Day (Dec. 19). I would say those two weekends are becoming the biggest ones – they're everything, just about. You've got a lot less going on, and you get a lot more traction in recruiting. I think it's going to be real important because signing day's the 19th. Commitments being around the uncommitted kids is everything. Everyone's doing it, bringing in all their kids, and it can really galvanize around the uncommitted recruits and get the coaches in, saying to the commitments, 'You've got to talk to this target, this target, this target.' So it's important to get the personable guys that are committed working on the uncommitted players. It's a big part of recruiting. The recruiting landscape has changed because of two signing days. Now, with the important one being in December, a lot of schools are close to done. But it's important to get a lot of guys revved up for the 19th so they can spend the majority of January recruiting 2020 players. That's become very important."

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

like there's no tomorrow. I like that about Ohio State, it's real different."

Green is the 247Sports composite's No. 463 overall prospect, No. 46 cornerback and No. 60 player in Florida. Without any visits elsewhere all season, his recruitment comes down to the Buckeyes vs. the Seminoles.

"Florida State, it's always been a dream to go there," he said. "It's in Florida, it's like two or three hours from where I'm from. Florida State has been known for having DBs going to the (NFL) from Terrell Buckley, Deion Sanders ... Jalen Ramsey – on and on."

Another two-horse race out of the week-

end is in play for Ellies, who returned to Columbus for the first time since he took an unofficial visit June 16 at OSU's third one-day position camp of the summer. Ellies, who picked up an offer from Penn State on July 30 after camping with the Nittany Lions a day earlier, officially visited PSU the weekend of Nov. 10 and is down to two.

"It's between Ohio State and Penn State," Ellies told Brian Dohn of 247Sports. "I feel as though they embody everything I am looking for."

Continued On Page 26

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Duplain A Surprise Visitor For Win Over U-M

Continued From Page 25

Before Penn State entered the equation, Ellies told BSB in August he had cut his list down to four – Ohio State, Rutgers, Virginia Tech and West Virginia. Offers from the Nittany Lions, Florida (July 28) and Southern California (Nov. 8) caused him to reset his recruitment before he circled back to the Buckeyes and Penn State.

“Me and (head coach Urban) Meyer spoke about my choices and what opportunities I would have if I attended the Ohio State,” said Ellies, the 247Sports composite’s No. 249 overall prospect, No. 16 defensive tackle and No. 5 player in Maryland. “We talked about (defensive line coach Larry) Johnson and what he’s done in the past years to develop the players into men and into exceptional players seen on TV every Saturday.”

Butler, who has been committed to Kentucky since Aug. 3, officially visited Michigan State the weekend of Oct. 20 and received an offer from the Spartans on Nov. 5. He is considering OSU, where he returned for the first time since unofficially visiting

the weekend of Oct. 6 for the Indiana game, as well as the Wildcats and MSU. Butler is the 247Sports composite’s No. 834 overall prospect, No. 56 defensive tackle and No. 39 player in Ohio.

Harrison-Hunte has been on Ohio State’s recruiting radar since the spring evaluation period, which led to his offer on June 22 at Friday Night Lights. He returned for The Game, making his second of five official visits after heading to Arizona State the weekend of Nov. 9.

As for his next move, Harrison-Hunte heads to Penn State officially the weekend of Nov. 30, making his second trip to campus since unofficially going to Happy Valley on Sept. 29. Then he follows up with Tennessee the weekend of Dec. 14, giving the Volunteers the last shot before the early signing period. Harrison-Hunte is the 247Sports composite’s No. 548 overall prospect, No. 35 defensive tackle and No. 4 player in New York.

Shaw, as mentioned above, was the only official visitor already committed. He

watched his future team for the second time in as many weeks after attending the Buckeyes’ 52-51 overtime win at Maryland on Nov. 17. Attending nearby Bullis, Shaw made the short drive to College Park, Md., as a guest of OSU and then followed the subsequent weekend with his official visit. Shaw, who has been committed to Ohio State since he announced his flip from Wisconsin on April 28, is the 247Sports composite’s No. 551 overall prospect, No. 47 safety and No. 10 player in Maryland.



J.D. Duplain

In-State 2019 Targets Take In OSU's Win

As expected, two top targets from Ohio checked in Nov. 24 for the Michigan game with the four-star linebacker duo of Cleveland St. Ignatius’ Tommy Eichenberg (6-3, 225) and Clayton Northmont’s Jestin Jacobs (6-3, 210) both on campus.

However, a surprise visitor from within state borders who is committed elsewhere also showed up when J.D. Duplain appeared from the southeast tunnel to take in pregame

warmups. A three-star offensive guard from Strongsville, Ohio, Duplain has been committed to Michigan State since Aug. 1. The Buckeyes offered Duplain on Oct. 2, but he had appeared to be sticking with his pledge to the Spartans.

For the first time since OSU began recruiting him in the spring, when he made his March 23 unofficial visit, Duplain quietly returned to campus and signaled a chance for a flip. The 6-4, 295-pounder is the 247Sports composite’s No. 802 overall prospect, No. 47 offensive guard and No. 35 player in Ohio.

While Duplain’s status with MSU is worth watching, Eichenberg went back on the market prior to his Ohio State visit when he decommitted from Boston College on Nov. 19.

“I have decided to reopen my recruitment,” Eichenberg said in a tweet. “Thank you Boston College for everything.”

Between OSU, from which he received an offer Oct. 2, and Michigan, where he took an unofficial visit Nov. 3 after his offer from the Wolverines on Oct. 3, Eichenberg has the option to make return trips to both campuses with all five of his official visits on the table.

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He is the 247Sports composite's No. 358 overall prospect, No. 19 inside linebacker and No. 13 player in Ohio.

In a similar position with a late offer from Ohio State, Jacobs has been committed to Iowa since May 11. Since the Buckeyes offered Nov. 5, though, he has given his home-state school a look.

"I talked to Coach Meyer and (linebackers coach Billy) Davis," Jacobs told Steve Wiltfong of 247Sports. "The message was that I was a great player and should come to Ohio State. Coach Davis wants me to come back soon."

The Hawkeyes typically have a strict no-visit policy for pledges but made an exception for Jacobs, who is a cornerstone in head coach Kirk Ferentz's class.

Like Eichenberg, Jacobs has official visits to spare. Outside of his official visit to Iowa the weekend of June 22, Jacobs has not taken any officials elsewhere, thus leaving the door open for a return trip to Columbus in December or later.

Jacobs is the 247Sports composite's No. 312 overall prospect, No. 16 outside linebacker and No. 7 player in Ohio.

2020 Commits, Targets Return To Campus

While the 2019 class headlined the visitors, Ohio State also hosted an abundance

of talented recruits from the 2020 cycle for The Game. Several commitments made cross-country trips to campus for the first time in months, while a few top targets were also in attendance.

Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star defensive back Lejond Cavazos (6-0, 186); Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star quarterback Jack Miller (6-4, 210); Marietta, Ga., four-star offensive tackle Jake Wray (6-5, 290); and Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson (6-7, 285) were the Buckeyes' pledges back in Columbus for The Game.

They were joined by a long list of targets, headlined by Washington (D.C.) St. John's College's blue-chip trio of five-star outside linebacker Mekhail Sherman (6-3, 234), four-star wide receiver Rakim Jarrett (6-0, 182) and four-star defensive tackle Tre Williams (6-1½, 308). Sherman, Jarrett and Williams – each top-125 prospects nationally for 2020 – went to OSU on a late-July unofficial visit and returned for the first time since then.

Other priority prospects in attendance for 2020 included Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy five-star cornerback Fred Davis (6-0½, 177); Cincinnati Princeton four-star defensive end Darrion Henry (6-6, 260); Ferndale, Wash., four-star offensive guard Geirean Hatchett (6-5, 275);

Cincinnati Princeton four-star outside linebacker Jaheim Thomas (6-5, 218); Kentwood (Mich.) East Kentwood three-star offensive guard Dallas Fincher (6-4, 260); Bay City (Mich.) Central three-star wide receiver Devell Washington (6-4, 200); Rockwood (Mich.) Oscar A. Carlson three-star wide receiver Ian Stewart (6-3, 200); Oak Park, Mich., three-star wide receiver Maliq Carr (6-6, 215); Brownsburg, Ind., defensive tackle Dane Middlebrook (6-1, 310); Cincinnati Elder offensive tackle Jakob James (6-5, 260); and Tyrone (Ga.) Sandy Creek safety Brian Branch (6-0, 175).

Rounding out the visitors for The Game, notable underclassmen in 2021 were also on hand. That list included Pickerington (Ohio) North defensive end Jack Sawyer (6-5, 219); Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley offensive tackle Wyatt Milum (6-7, 245); Belleville, Mich., defensive end Damon Payne (6-4, 255); West Bloomfield, Mich., running back Donovan Edwards (5-11, 190); Atlanta Pace Academy wide receiver Jayden Thomas (6-2, 185); Dublin (Ohio) Coffman safety A.J. Kirk (6-0, 200) and Pickerington (Ohio) Central wide receiver Lorenzo Styles (6-1, 170), son of the former Ohio State standout of the same name.

Ohio State even invited a 2022 prospect to The Game as Dayton Centerville quarter-

Continued On Page 28

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Top Hawaii Prospect Picks Huskies Over Bucks

Continued From Page 27

back Chase Harrison (6-2, 185) made his second trip to Columbus in the past two months. He also visited Sept. 22 for the Tulane game.

Ohio State Offers Massive 2019 OT

Ohio State's search for offensive line-

men in 2019 continued Nov. 21 when the Buckeyes offered Indianapolis Ben Davis three-star offensive tackle Dawand Jones. The 6-8, 380-pounder picked up his offer from OSU after he spent the day in Columbus for an unofficial visit, watching practice and checking out campus.

Jones, a budding football player with Power 5 offers from Ohio State and oth-

ers plus Division I offers in basketball, is massive but athletic. He has added football offers from Louisville (Nov. 25), Michigan (Nov. 17), TCU (Nov. 14), Florida State (Nov. 13), Southern California (Nov. 7) and Indiana (Oct. 31) in the past month.

With three of his five official visits spent, the most recent coming the weekend of

Nov. 9 to USC, Jones told Kyle Neddenriep of The Indianapolis Star that he plans to focus on football recruiting. That attention includes an official visit to Ohio State in the near future, before tentatively deciding his commitment on Dec. 17.

"I think I'm going to take one (official visit) to Ohio State and then somewhere else for the last one," Jones said. "Probably TCU, but we'll see. We're trying to do Sunday-Monday officials so I don't have to miss a game of basketball, of course. I just don't want it to get in the way of basketball."

Jones is the 247Sports composite's No. 985 overall prospect, No. 85 offensive tackle and No. 13 player in Indiana.

OSU 2019 DT Target Picks Washington

Faatui Tuitele closed his recruitment on Nov. 18 when he committed to Washington over Ohio State and others. The four-star defensive tackle from Honolulu St. Louis unofficially visited Columbus on April 6 and picked up an offer from the Buckeyes. He included OSU in his top five May 21. The list also featured the Huskies alongside Alabama, Clemson and Texas.

The 6-4, 300-pounder considered the Buckeyes but never made his way back to OSU before he arrived at the decision. Tuitele is the 247Sports composite's No. 42 overall prospect, No. 4 defensive tackle and No. 1 player in Hawaii for 2019.

2020 5-Star DE Picks Alabama

Chris Braswell took an unofficial visit to Ohio State the weekend of Nov. 3 for the Nebraska game, but his subsequent trip to Alabama sealed the deal for him as he committed to the Crimson Tide on Nov. 25. The early decision came after the 6-3, 211-pounder unofficially visited Alabama for the Iron Bowl against Auburn.

OSU offered the five-star defensive end from Baltimore St. Frances on Oct. 3. He is the 247Sports composite's No. 19 overall prospect, No. 1 weakside defensive end and No. 2 player in Maryland for 2020.

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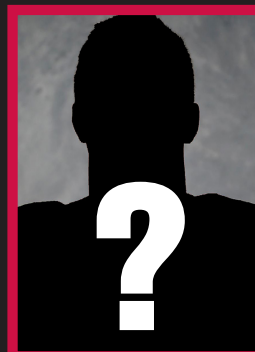
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Illinois' Smith Gets Extension Despite 4-8 Season

Among the multiple coaching changes around college football after the final week of the regular season, there was a surprise extension handed out in the Big Ten.

BIG TEN NOTES James Grega

Lovie Smith, who was hired as the head coach at Illinois in 2016, had his best season in 2018. However, that still resulted in only four wins.

Nonetheless, Smith was signed to a two-year extension, which means his contract will now run through the 2023 campaign.

"This extension demonstrates my belief in Lovie Smith, his staff and the plan they have for the future success of Illinois football," athletic director Josh Whitman said. "I have studied our program extensively, and I see steady progress, both in the development of our

current players and the talent we are adding to our roster. To date, we have remained one of the youngest teams in college football, with only nine seniors and nearly 80 freshmen and sophomores. As our players grow in strength, skill and experience, more wins will follow."

Smith, who came to Illinois after 11 years as an NFL head coach with both the Chicago Bears and Tampa Bay Buccaneers, has won just nine games in three seasons with the Fighting Illini and has compiled a 4-23 record in the Big Ten. Despite all of that, Whitman remains confident that the 60-year-old Smith is the man for the job.

"We recognize that our work is far from finished, with improvement needed in every phase of our program's development, but our plan is sound and our resolve is stronger than ever," Whitman said. "As I have said on many occasions, stability and continuity are key to building a foundation that will yield long-term success. With the opening of our new facility next summer, and the continued efforts of our staff and student-athletes, the success we all covet is within reach. I applaud Coach Smith, his staff and our team for their commitment and

steady progress, and I stand ready, as we all should, to help them in whatever way possible to continue building upon their momentum."

Smith, who spent a season at Ohio State as a defensive backs coach in 1995 and played for former Buckeye head coach John Cooper at Tulsa from 1977-79, said he is grateful for the opportunity to build the Illinois program.

"The University of Illinois is an incredible place to coach and teach," Smith said. "We love living here in Champaign-Urbana and representing our state's flagship institution. We will continue working every day as we move our football program forward. Our new football performance center, the Smith Football Center, which will be completed next summer, will be among the best in the nation.

"I want to thank Josh Whitman and Chancellor Robert Jones for continuing to believe in what we are working to accomplish. Those of us around the program see the progress being made each and every day, and we expect to be competing for championships very soon. Our incredible fans and everyone on our campus deserve nothing less."

Illinois has not posted a winning season since 2010, when Ron Zook led the Illini to a 7-6 record and a win in the Texas Bowl.

Brohm Maintains He Is Happy At Purdue

Purdue head coach Jeff Brohm has led the Boilermakers to bowl games in back-to-back seasons in his first two years in West Lafayette, Ind., and because of his success, rumors of him leaving for an opening at his alma mater have continued to swirl.

BIG 2018 Standings

East Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Ohio State	8	1	.889	11	1	.917
Michigan	8	1	.889	10	2	.833
Penn State	6	3	.667	9	3	.750
Michigan State	5	4	.556	7	5	.583
Maryland	3	6	.333	5	7	.417
Indiana	2	7	.222	5	7	.417
Rutgers	0	9	.000	1	11	.083

West Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Northwestern	8	1	.889	8	4	.667
Wisconsin	5	4	.556	7	5	.583
Iowa	5	4	.556	8	4	.667
Purdue	5	4	.556	6	6	.500
Minnesota	3	6	.333	6	6	.500
Nebraska	3	6	.333	4	8	.333
Illinois	2	7	.222	4	8	.333

Nov. 23 Score

Iowa 31, Nebraska 28

Nov. 24 Scores

Ohio State 62, Michigan 39

Purdue 28, Indiana 21

Northwestern 24, Illinois 16

Penn State 38, Maryland 3

Minnesota 37, Wisconsin 15

Michigan State 14, Rutgers 10

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BIG TEN NOTES

Brohm, the former starting quarterback (1992-93) and offensive coordinator (2008) at Louisville, maintained that he is focused on the head coaching job at Purdue despite the opening in Kentucky after the Cardinals fired Bobby Petrino following a 2-8 start to the season.

"I want Louisville to do what's best for them," Brohm said after Purdue's 28-21 win at Indiana, which made the Boilers bowl-eligible at 6-6. "I'm a fan. But right now, I'm the coach at Purdue. This is where I want to be and I like it here."

Brohm's Boilermakers finished the 2017 season 7-6 with a win in the Foster Farms Bowl, meaning he's now 2 for 2 becoming bowl-eligible with Purdue.

Gophers, Boilers Bowl Eligible; Maryland Misses Out

As mentioned above, Purdue is bowl-eligible for the second straight year after a second straight 6-6 regular season. In the process, the Boilermakers knocked in-state rival Indiana out of bowl contention, as the Hoosiers fell to 5-7 on the season for the second straight year.

Also in the Big Ten West, Minnesota posted its first bowl-eligible season of the P.J. Fleck era with a 37-15 victory over Wisconsin in Madison, Wis., on Nov. 24. It was the first win over Wisconsin for Minnesota since 2004, and the Golden Gophers brought back the Paul Bunyan Axe to Minneapolis.

"This is why you coach," Fleck said. "These are moments and memories you'll remember forever. When you hold the axe, now you know why everybody wants it so much. It's a very surreal feeling."

The Gophers were one week removed from a 10-point loss at home to Northwestern and at one point this season lost four in a row to Maryland, Iowa, Ohio State and Nebraska.

"This is for everybody," Fleck said. "We're a small part of it. This tradition has been going on for 128 years, we are a speck. This has been the biggest roller-coaster journey of my head coaching career."

In the Big Ten East, Penn State kept Maryland out of bowl contention with a dominating 38-3 performance on Senior Day in

State College, Pa. The Big Ten has nine teams eligible for bowl games with Ohio State (11-1), Michigan (10-2), Penn State (9-3) and Michigan State (7-5) out of the East and Northwestern (8-4), Wisconsin (7-5), Purdue (6-6), Minnesota (6-6) and Iowa (7-5) out of the West.

B1G Players Of The Week

Certainly Ohio State quarterback Dwayne Haskins would be far and away the Big Ten Player of the Week after his performance against Michigan. However, this section of BSB focuses on the other 13 schools in the conference.

In Purdue's 28-21 victory over Indiana, freshman wide receiver Rondale Moore caught 12 passes for 141 yards and a pair of scores to help vault the Boilermakers into the postseason. On the year, Moore has caught 103 passes for 1,164 yards and 12 scores as a true freshman. He leads the Big Ten in all three major receiving

categories. His 103 receptions are the most in the FBS, and his 2,048 all-purpose yards rank fourth in the nation.

In Penn State's win over Maryland, the Nittany Lion offensive line paved the way for 310

rushing yards with three different players toting the ball more than 10 times. Quarterback Trace McSorley accounted for three touchdowns in his final home game while passing for 230 yards and rushing for another 64.

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Return To St. John Arena A Resounding Success

For the first time in nearly a decade, Ohio State returned to St. John Arena to play a men's basketball game, and the contest unfolded like a celebration and homage to the past.

COURT REPORT

James Grega

The Buckeyes defeated Cleveland State, 89-62, but the game was hardly the story of the night. Ohio State donned throwback jerseys dating back to the Clark Kellogg era, and the cheerleaders on the baseline did as well. The music played during pregame warmups predated the 1990s as did the music played during timeouts throughout the contest.

Even head coach Chris Holtmann got in on the throwback theme, donning a salmon-colored blazer that he admitted his wife strongly encouraged him to wear.

"I got it about a month ago and finally put it on today," Holtmann said after his team's win Nov. 23. "I went downstairs, looked in the mirror and had some serious second thoughts. If my wife was not there pushing me out the door, you would have seen me in a dark suit."

As for the event itself, Holtmann said he thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere and the setting it provided for an Ohio State



KEVIN DYE

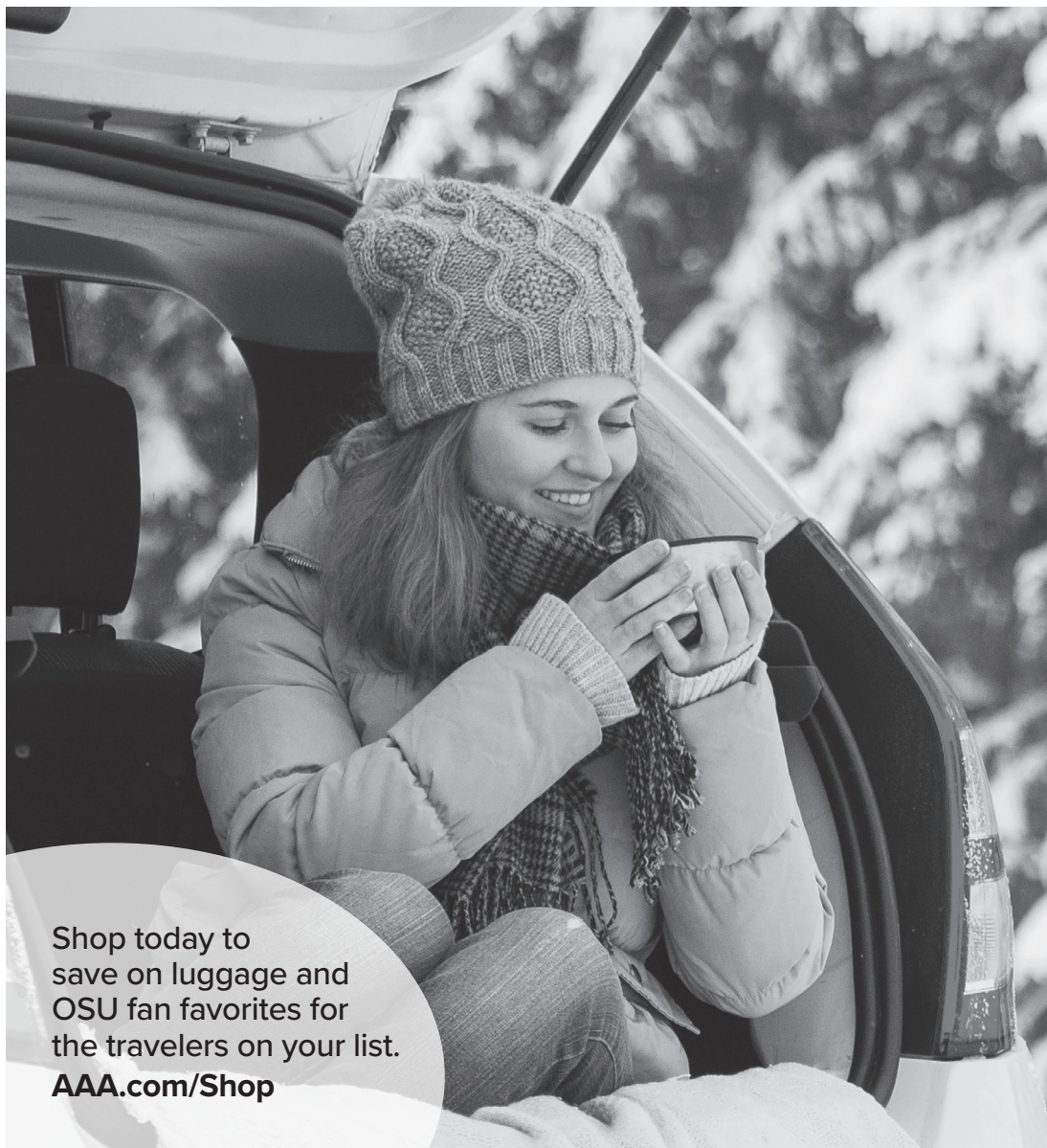
BLAST FROM THE PAST – Sophomore forward Kyle Young (25) and the Ohio State men's basketball team donned throwback uniforms for a game against Cleveland State at St. John Arena on Nov. 23.

program that is still working to re-enter the ranks of national powers.

"I want to thank Gene Smith and our administration for allowing this to happen,"

Holtmann said. "I think all of the people from marketing, social media, trademarking, with the retro theme help, it was a fun night and something we anticipate doing on a regular

basis. Obviously the Schottenstein Center is our home and we recognize that, but this was a fun night for our fans and our basketball community and Buckeye Nation."



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Late-Arriving Buckeyes Hold Off Samford

A number of Buckeyes arrived late to the facilities Nov. 20 as Ohio State was preparing to take on Samford, and the home team played like it for the majority of the first half.

Ohio State needed a second-half comeback to defeat the Bulldogs 68-50 in front of 10,725 at Value City Arena as Kaleb Wesson, Andre Wesson, Kyle Young and Luther Muhammad were all scratched from the starting lineup for failing to arrive on time for "game day preparation," per an Ohio State spokesman.

Jaedon LeDee, Duane Washington, Musa Jallow and Keyshawn Woods joined regular starter C.J. Jackson in the lineup as the Buckeyes got off to a slow start. Samford opened the game on an 11-4 run before Ohio State knotted the score at 11 with five of the points coming from Kaleb Wesson off the bench.

The majority of the first half featured a back-and-forth affair that included a pair of lead changes and four tie scores before the Bulldogs took a 32-29 lead into the locker room.

After Samford scored the first three points of the second half, Ohio State went on a 17-3 run that was highlighted by a play in which both Jackson and Muhammad went into the crowd to save a loose ball. The possession ended in a three-point basket from Andre Wesson, bringing the fans in attendance to their feet.

Kaleb Wesson said he felt the team needed a play like that in order to spark the defensive-laden run Ohio State went on to take the lead for good.

"Just seeing that your brothers are giving that great an effort when we're down, that is something that we do all the time, but just seeing it in a game when you really need it, that was a tough (play)," the younger Wesson brother said.

Woods, who poured in 14 points in a season-high 37 minutes of action, said that the play energized the crowd, which in turn energized the players.

"It got our crowd into it a lot. Our crowd got loud after that, and then (Kaleb) drew a charge," Woods said. "They were electrified even more, and I feel like that sparked our run."

After allowing Samford to shoot an even 50 percent (14 of 28) in the first half, Ohio State's defense ramped up in the second

Ohio State 68, Samford 50

Nov. 20, 2018												
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio												
		1	2									F
Samford (4-1)		32	18	-								50
Ohio State (5-0)		29	39	-								68
PFW	Total FG FT	Reb.										
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Allen	32	2-5	0-0	2-8	0	3	4					
Guerrero	28	1-6	0-0	0-5	0	3	2					
Austin	36	4-7	0-0	2-5	0	4	11					
Sharkey	38	5-17	1-1	1-1	5	2	11					
Gordon	27	7-13	3-4	0-2	0	3	18					
Nolan	15	0-3	0-0	0-1	1	2	0					
Thomas	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	2	0					
Lakic	8	0-2	0-0	1-2	0	1	0					
Dye	11	2-4	0-0	0-1	0	4	4					
Totals	200	21-57	4-5	6-26	7	24	50					
Percentages: FG: 36.8%. FT: 80.0%. 3-point goals: 4-15 (Allen 0-1, Austin 3-5, Sharkey 0-4, Gordon 1-3, Nolan 0-1, Lakic 0-1). Team rebounds: 1.												
1. Blocked shots: 1 (Guerrero). Turnovers: 15 (Sharkey 5, Gordon 4, Allen 3, Austin, Lakic, Dye). Steals: 2 (Austin, Nolan).												
Ohio State	Total FG FT	Reb.										
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
LeDee	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Jallow	7	1-4	0-0	1-0	0	0	2					
Jackson	30	2-11	4-5	0-9	3	1	8					
Washington	14	1-6	2-2	0-2	2	1	4					
Woods	37	5-8	3-3	1-3	4	3	14					
Muhammad	35	3-6	1-3	1-2	1	2	8					
A. Wesson	31	3-5	0-2	0-5	3	2	7					
Young	13	3-4	0-1	1-4	0	2	6					
K. Wesson	31	5-8	9-12	3-4	1	2	19					
Totals	200	23-52	19-28	9-30	14	13	68					
Percentages: FG: 44.2%. FT: 67.9%. 3-point goals: 3-20 (Jackson 0-5, Washington 0-4, Woods 1-4, Muhammad 1-2, A. Wesson 1-3, Young 0-1, K. Wesson 0-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 2 (Woods, A. Wesson). Turnovers: 12 (Jackson 3, A. Wesson 3, Washington 2, K. Wesson 2, Jallow, Woods). Steals: 4 (K. Wesson 2, Jallow, Jackson). Officials: Floyd, Garrison, Simpson. A: 10,725.												

half. The Buckeyes held the Bulldogs to just 24.1 percent (7 of 29) shooting from the floor while Holtmann's squad got on track offensively, shooting 50 percent (14 of 28) in the final 20 minutes.

Samford head coach Scott Padgett said he thought Ohio State did a better job in the second half of not settling for jump shots and getting into the lane offensively.

"I think they did a great job of saying in the second half, 'We are not going to settle.' The threes that they took in the second half were better threes than they took in the first half," Padgett said. "We didn't do as good a job of taking away the middle of the high post area. They did a good job of moving the ball."

For the second game in a row, Kaleb Wesson led the Buckeyes in scoring as he dropped in 19 points off the bench and also collected seven rebounds. The 19 points matched a career high which was set last season in an 83-58 win over Wisconsin.

— James Grega

OSU Triumphant In St. John Arena Return

Ohio State's return to St. John Arena, the first in eight years, was a massive success.

The Buckeyes, led by brothers Kaleb and Andre Wesson, defeated Cleveland State on Nov. 23, 89-62, behind a balanced scoring attack and before a raucous crowd in the venue Ohio State used to call home.

Ohio State donned throwback uniforms, as did the cheerleaders, and the music played throughout the arena was almost exclusively from the 1970s and 1980s. Four Buckeyes scored in double figures, led by Kaleb Wesson, who matched his career high of 19 points for the second straight game. After failing to score in double figures in each of his last three games, C.J. Jackson scored 10 in the first half and finished with 17 on 7-of-10 shooting. Andre Wesson chipped in 11 while freshman Luther Muhammad added 10 in the win.

Chris Holtmann, donning a salmon-colored blazer in honor of the throwback night, played 10 players in the first half as Keyshawn Woods, Musa Jallow, Duane Washington, Jaedon LeDee and Justin Ahrens all saw time in the opening frame off the bench.

Holtmann said rotating 10 players in the first half was a combination of the plan entering the game and sloppy play, as the Buckeyes led by just three, 20-17, with 8:41 to play in the first half.

"I thought guys came in and gave us good minutes. I thought Justin gave us a good minute or two," Holtmann said of the timeout he called in order to send Ahrens into the game.

Ahrens played seven minutes, scoring three points and adding an assist in the win.

The Wessons, playing in the gym their father, Keith, played in during his time as a Buckeye, were particularly dominant against the Vikings. The two combined for 30 points and nine rebounds, while Kaleb collected a career-high four steals.

The duo said playing in the arena that their father once played in was unique, but that they still enjoy calling the Schottenstein Center home.

"It was special," Kaleb Wesson said. "There was a lot of hype around this game. We even got new jerseys. It was even more special because our dad played here."

Added brother Andre, "This place has so much history. Because our dad played here, that was something special."

Ohio State led 38-29 at halftime and led

Ohio St. 89, Cleveland St. 62

Nov. 23, 2018												
St. John Arena • Columbus, Ohio												
		1	2									F
Cleveland State (2-4)	29	33	-	62								
Ohio State (6-0)	38	51	-	89								
Cleveland St.	Total FG FT			Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Eichelberger	20	3-5	3-4	5-4	1	3	9					
Kenic	17	6-10	0-0	0-1	1	2	13					
Appleby	27	4-10	0-0	1-3	4	1	9					
Highsmith	12	1-4	2-2	0-0	0	2	5					
Millner	26	1-6	8-10	0-3	1	2	10					
Thomas	23	2-5	0-0	0-2	2	1	6					
Williams	17	2-6	0-0	0-3	1	1	4					
Hill	21	1-5	1-2	1-5	0	1	3					
Walker	15	1-4	0-0	1-0	0	0	3					
Johnson	14	0-4	0-0	2-2	1	1	0					
Popovic	8	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	2	0					
Totals	200	21-60	14-18	12-26	11	16	62					
Percentages: FG: 35.0%. FT: 77.8%. 3-point goals: 6-21 (Kenic 1-3, Appleby 1-4, Highsmith 1-3, Millner 0-1, Thomas 2-2, Williams 0-3, Hill 0-1, Walker 1-2, Johnson 0-1, Popovic 0-1). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 4 (Johnson 3, Appleby). Turnovers: 18 (Appleby 6, Johnson 3, Highsmith 2, Millner 2, Hill 2, Eichelberger, Thomas, TEAM). Steals: 5 (Appleby 2, Millner, Thomas, Hill).												
Ohio State	Total FG FT			Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
A. Wesson	27	4-7	2-2	0-3	2	1	11					
Young	16	3-4	2-2	3-0	0	3	8					
K. Wesson	26	8-15	3-3	1-5	3	3	19					
Muhammad	25	4-7	2-3	0-3	2	0	10					
Jackson	26	7-10	0-0	1-3	3	2	17					
Jallow	17	0-2	2-2	0-1	0	3	2					
Washington	17	1-6	1-2	0-2	3	3	4					
Ahrens	7	1-2	0-0	0-0	1	1	3					
Lane	6	1-1	0-0	0-1	2	1	3					
LeDee	12	2-4	2-3	2-6	0	1	6					
Woods	18	3-5	0-0	0-3	1	2	6					
Hummer	3	0-1	0-2	0-0	0	1	0					
Totals	200	34-64	14-19	8-29	17	21	89					
Percentages: FG: 53.1%. FT: 73.7%. 3-point goals: 7-19 (A. Wesson 1-3, K. Wesson 0-3, Muhammad 0-2, Jackson 3-4, Jallow 0-2, Washington 1-2, Ahrens 1-2, Lane 1-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 3 (A. Wesson, Young, Ahrens). Turnovers: 12 (A. Wesson 2, Jackson 2, Ahrens 2, LeDee 2, Jallow, Washington, Lane, Hummer). Steals: 11 (K. Wesson 4, Lane 2, Woods 2, Muhammad, Jallow, Hummer). Officials: Phillips, Green, Oglesby. A: 13,276.												

by as many as 30 in the second half while shooting 59.4 percent (19 of 32) from the floor for the stanza. The Buckeyes shot 53.1 percent for the game (34 of 64).

The Buckeyes never trailed, and the blowout win allowed Holtmann to empty his bench with walk-ons Joey Lane and Danny Hummer both seeing playing time in the closing minutes. Lane buried a three-pointer with 3:42 to play, bringing the capacity crowd of 13,276 at St. John Arena to its feet. Hummer was the only eligible Buckeye who failed to register a point against the Vikings, though he did record a steal.

Cleveland State was led by forward Stefan Kenic, who scored 13 points on 6-of-10 shooting. Seth Millner added 10. A bright spot for the Vikings was their play on the boards, as they outrebounded the Buckeyes, 38-37. LeDee led Ohio State with eight rebounds.

— James Grega

OSU Men's Basketball Signees

Players in the class of 2019 who have signed national letters of intent 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

The game itself provided little excitement. Ohio State led by as many as 30 in the second half and coasted to an easy win, moving to 6-0 on the year.

Moving forward, Holtmann said he and the administration will consider the idea of playing conference games or perhaps more high-profile games at St. John Arena in the future, although he admitted nothing has been set in stone.

"It is something we have talked about a little bit and tossed around that idea. But we want to get some feedback on how this night was. Logistically, it is a lot of work.

There are questions about the amenities, but it is not something we have said no to," he said. "We have considered it. Is it something we will do maybe two games a year? I don't think it will be more than that, but we think we'd like to make it an annual thing and we have talked about playing a Big Ten opponent (at St. John Arena)."

Holtmann Alters Lineup In Samford Win

Prior to Ohio State's 68-50 win over Samford, the Buckeyes announced a drastic

change to their rotation with graduate-transfer guard Keyshawn Woods, freshman forward Jaedon LeDee, sophomore forward Musa Jallow and freshman guard Duane

Washington inserted into the starting lineup alongside senior guard C.J. Jackson.

Continued On Page 34

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Tardiness Leads To Starting Lineup Adjustment

Continued From Page 33

The change, as Holtmann quickly announced via a tweet from assistant athletic director for communications Dan Wallenberg, was due to players showing up late for pregame preparation at the Schottenstein Center.

Sophomore forward Kaleb Wesson, junior forward Andre Wesson, freshman guard Luther Muhammad and sophomore forward Kyle Young all dressed and played starter-like minutes against Samford but came off the bench in the victory. Holtmann said after the game that tardiness had become a minor issue at the early point of the season and he felt a need to send a message to his team.

"It was just a minor team infraction of being late that I felt we needed to address. We had talked about it in the last week about the importance of that, and I just felt like this was the response I needed to have," Holtmann said. "They are great kids.

Awesome kids. They took it in stride, and we move on."

Kaleb Wesson, who tied a career high with 19 points against Samford (and again against Cleveland State), said the brief benching was something he and the rest of the team needed to keep their awareness high for the remainder of the season.

"That helped a lot as far as me and the other guys," he said. "Sometimes we lose focus, and stuff like that just brings us back. The little things are going to get us beat one day so if we nip it in the bud right now at the beginning of the season, that will really help."

Balanced Scoring Pacing Buckeyes

Through six games in the 2018-19 season, Ohio State is undefeated and three different Buckeyes have led the team in scoring at some point during the young campaign.

Kaleb Wesson has outscored his teammates in four of the six games. However Jackson has the season-high point total

for the Buckeyes after scoring 25 against Purdue Fort Wayne on Nov. 11. At Ohio State's next game against Creighton on Nov. 15 in Omaha, Neb., it was Woods who led the Buckeyes, chipping in 19 off the bench.

Woods, who didn't score against South Carolina State on Nov. 18 in the game following his 19-point outburst, said Ohio State's players truly don't care who scores, as long as the team gets the win.

"We don't care who scores the ball," Woods said after dropping in 14 against Samford. "If you got an open shot, shoot the ball. That is our motto. 'We want to feed the big fellow (Kaleb Wesson) as much as possible because he draws a lot of attention. Once we get in the paint, we kick out. For us, it is all about the right shot in our offense. We get energized after an extra pass. That is just something we like to do.'"

Through six games, Kaleb Wesson is leading Ohio State in scoring, averaging 14.7 points per game while Jackson was right behind him at 12.7. Washington and

Muhammad are each averaging 9.5 per game, and Woods, who leads the team in assists with 20, chips in 8.3 points per game to round out the Buckeyes' top five scorers.

Buckeyes Enter Top 25 In Week 3

Following four straight wins to open the season, the Buckeyes entered the Associated Press top-25 poll at No. 23 in the nation after being unranked to begin the year.

The Buckeyes finished the 2017-18 season ranked 17th in the nation but were picked to finish in the middle of the conference this year. Cleveland State head coach Dennis Felton said that when the Vikings began preparations for Ohio State, the Buckeyes were not yet ranked but he felt that OSU was worthy of a top-25 standing.

"They play hard, consistently," Felton said. "They play hard at both ends and are very well-coached and well organized. They are physical, which is an important part of



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being a successful team. They are going to win a lot of games this year. As soon as I started watching them, I told our coaching staff, 'They are a top-25 team.' Regardless of whether they are ranked or not, they are one of the best teams in the country right now with the way they are playing."

Buckeyes Sign 2019 Class

After a slight delay, the final two Ohio

State 2019 commits signed to play for Holtmann during the week of Nov. 19.

DJ Carton and EJ Liddell both signed their national letters of intent to play for the Buckeyes after Alonzo Gaffney had signed a week prior. Gaffney and Carton then made a brief trip to Columbus to take in Ohio State's win over Cleveland State at St. John Arena and were joined by 2021 Ohio prospects Kalen Etzler (Crestview High School), nephew of for-

mer Buckeye Doug Etzler, and Seth Wilson (Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary High School).

Another Ohio prospect, 2020 center Zach Loveday, was spotted on the sidelines of Ohio Stadium a day later with basketball assistant coach Ryan Pedon. Loveday, out of Gallipolis, Ohio, is rated the No. 2 player in the state in his class.

Carton, a five-star point guard from Bettendorf, Iowa, is rated in the 247Sports

composite as the No. 25 overall player and No. 2 point guard for 2019. Liddell, a four-star forward from Belleville (Ill.) West, is the nation's No. 49 overall player and No. 10 forward in the class. The duo joined Gaffney, a four-star out of Wolfeboro (N.H.) Brewster Academy from Garfield Heights, Ohio, and the nation's No. 40 overall player and No. 8 forward, to make up the No. 9 overall class and the top-ranked haul in the Big Ten.



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Graduate Guard Embraces 'Unconventional' Path

On an Ohio State women's basketball team full of graduate transfers, Najah Queenland wasn't a typical fifth-year arrival. "I'm an interesting story," she said.

After three seasons spent at Pacific, about a half-hour south down Interstate 5 from her hometown of Sacramento, Calif., the 5-10 guard decided to take what she called an "unconventional" route for the 2018-19 campaign. Queenland sat out her senior season with the Tigers and sorted through the options, ultimately landing at Ohio State after she committed in November 2017 and came to Columbus over the summer.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Garrett Stepien

Three games into her career with the Buckeyes, Queenland's experience under head coach Kevin McGuff's staff has been everything she was sold on as a recruit.

"I honestly love it here," Queenland said. "It's been really good, on the court and off the court."

Starting the trend of McGuff's recruitment on the graduate-transfer market, where OSU snagged four others as well, Queenland's role on the team has been bigger than she first imagined.

After graduate-transfer guard Ashanti Abshaw from Cleveland State tore her ACL during a preseason scrimmage with Louisville over the weekend of Oct. 20-21, Ohio State needed its remaining quartet of one-year rentals – Ball State's Carmen Grande, Bowling Green's Carly Santoro, La Salle's Adreana Miller and Queenland – to step up even more.

Asked about Abshaw's absence as the Buckeyes approached the season in November, McGuff mentioned Queenland in particular among the group of players he wanted to see step up after the late-preseason injury.

"Najah and (junior guard) Jensen (Caretti) and just more perimeter players

(need to contribute)," McGuff said. "They're playing more minutes. Probably more of just spreading out the minutes, everybody's minutes are going up a bit."

Although the way her opportunity for a bigger role in the rotation unfolded wasn't how she had hoped for it to happen with Abshaw's season over, Queenland (4.3 points per game on 5-of-7 shooting) envisioned the chance for more minutes when she announced her decision to come to OSU.

After what she called a "good" freshman campaign for Pacific, despite just 2.3 points averaged in 29 appearances off the bench in 2014-15, Queenland stepped up the next season. As a sophomore in 2015-16, she was the Tigers' fourth-leading scorer with 8.3 points per game – starting all 30 contests – while averaging 2.5 assists for second on the team.

But when her production dipped as a junior in 2016-17 – she played in 25 games but started only nine while averaging 4.8 points and 2.0 assists – Queenland admitted things were off. Unhappy, she chose to step away from the program as Pacific entered its 2017-18 campaign.

"My first three years – you're 18, right out of high school and everything's new," Queenland said. "I wouldn't say I was in the best environment. I wasn't happy there, my whole time. I think my freshman year was good, but after that, I wasn't completely happy. So that just changes a person. People around you might be negative, too. So I wasn't as happy – obviously I was 18, 19, 20, and I wasn't mature."

Away from an organized team, Queenland aimed to stay sharp as she trained in her off time last winter. When she wasn't working out, Queenland was stacking her game up against men in pickup games at the local gym in Sacramento, often staying until closing time. As she approached her move to Ohio State, Queenland revved up the preparation.

"I have a gym membership, so I always pretty much did open gym with guys," Queenland said. "Every single day, my mom would call me, like, 'Are you going to come home soon?' I'm like, 'Oh, maybe, I don't know.' So it was fine. I would say there was a few months where I took off too much and I would only do open gym instead of training,

OSU Women's Basketball Commitments & Signees

Players in the class of 2019 who have signed letters of intent to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect ESPN.com rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School/Hometown
Kierstan Bell	G	6-1	★★★★★	Canton (Ohio) McKinley
Rikki Harris	G	5-11	★★★★★	Indianapolis North Central
Kaelynn Satterfield	W	6-0	★★★★★	Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ The King
Jacy Sheldon	G	5-7	★★★★★	Dublin (Ohio) Coffman
Aixa Wone	F	6-2	★★★	Pamplona, Spain

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
Anysa Jones	G	5-9	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South

but I knew about a month before I came here that I needed to train hard. After that, I knew. I at least had something to look forward to. In that little lull period of October (2017) through March (2018), it was like, 'OK, what am I doing?' Once I had a goal, then I knew, like, 'OK, my training is a lot easier.'"

Only three games into her stint with the Buckeyes, who next play a pair of home contests inside Value City Arena against North Carolina (5-2) on Nov. 29 at 7 p.m. and then Cincinnati (5-2) on Dec. 2 at 2 p.m., Queenland has a long way to go. With limited time to make an impact in her only season at OSU, though, Queenland takes what she learned from the offseason onto the court.

"Now that I'm here, I made sure of my actions throughout the summer," Queenland said. "I watched how I said stuff to people. I made sure I wasn't overstepping my boundaries. I made sure that, OK, in the summer we all create our friendships so that when we get to times like this (in the season), you understand that I'm not saying this because I don't like you. It's because it's in the moment. So I think that I really just learned how to communicate with my teammates better, how to be a better teammate and also outside of basketball just maturity."

Miller Flashing As Starter On Wing

Similar to Queenland, Miller transferred to Ohio State as a graduate with the objective of starting fresh and taking her game to the next level.

From Somerset, N.J., Miller made her move in May to become a Buckeye after she spent the past three seasons with La Salle in Philadelphia.

"At that time, I was very restricted (with transfer options)," Miller said. "A lot of Atlantic-10 schools that I knew wanted to recruit me, but I just wanted to get out of my comfort zone and my box and play better competition. I knew most of the teams that recruited me, and I just wanted to see new faces and have a different style of play."

"Ohio State, honestly, was my only decision. I knew right away I wanted to go here and be far away from home – that's a big part – but offensively I love the way that they attack and get to the rim. Everyone's involved. That's what I really love because at La Salle, I felt like not a lot of players were involved. People had their own roles, but I feel like here, everyone is involved offensively and defensively."

Against A-10 competition, Miller posted 11.0 points per game in 89 appearances with 65 starts, leading the conference in free-throw shooting at 88.6 percent as a fourth-year junior in 2016-17.

Since arriving at OSU, Miller has made her mark. Clicking with Ohio State's influx of

graduate transfers, freshmen and returners, she worked into McGuff's lineup and has produced in flashes over the Buckeyes' first few games.

Miller is averaging 5.3 points and shooting 30.0 percent (3 for 10) on three-pointers, giving OSU a multifaceted option on both sides of the floor early in the season.

"When I first started practice, it was really hard, to be honest," Miller said. "It was a big transition – more mentally than physically. I feel like there was a lot of different plays and a whole different offense and different way to read the defense, so that put a big toll on me. But now I'm just actually getting used to it, being more comfortable. I'm actually seeing myself in the offense and defense. Before, I was more of an offensive player. But now, I'm more into the defense as well. So this transition has been good, overall, because I'm learning a lot. I see myself getting better."

Ohio State lists Miller as a guard, but that classification doesn't entirely do her skill set justice. Standing at 5-11, she brings balance and versatility to McGuff's rotations, able to fill in across various lineups that the Buckeyes go with. Through the first three contests, OSU has started Miller with Grande, Santoro and the forward combo of fifth-year senior Makayla Waterman and freshman Dorka Juhasz.

"I think we're making progress, but it's still a long way to go, I would tell you," McGuff said. "Just with so many (new) people, trying to get what we're trying to do. But we're making progress. Sometimes it feels like a war of attrition, though."

Those first few contests have been up and down for Ohio State, which is 1-2 in the early going. The Buckeyes opened with a 71-47 loss to then-No. 22 South Florida on Nov. 6, bounced back with a 55-41 win over Detroit Mercy three days later and suffered an 85-53 defeat at No. 2 Connecticut on Nov. 11.

After its West Coast weekend in northern California was canceled due to air quality concerns with the Camp Fire wildfire in Paradise, Calif., OSU has had a longer layoff than expected leading up to the Nov. 29 return to action against the Tar Heels and then the Bearcats four days later. The non-conference slate doesn't let up in December at Washington (Dec. 5) and against Florida (Dec. 16) before the West Palm Invitational in West Palm Beach, Fla., with Butler (Dec. 20) and Virginia Tech (Dec. 21).

For Miller, though, that is why she decided to spend her final season in Columbus.

"We're playing top teams," Miller said. "When you play top teams, you have a chance to be ranked and reach your ceiling. The competition level is definitely higher, but mentally, more than anything, I have to prepare because we're going against some really great teams."

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Frosh Ended Up On Scarlet Side Of Rivalry

Ohio State senior center Mason Jobst still thinks highly of freshman linemate Gustaf Westlund even though the Swedish import kept a secret from him. Westlund, unbeknownst to Jobst, was once a commit to ... wait for it ... Michigan.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

"I did not know that," Jobst said when that tidbit was revealed to him by BSB four days before the football game between the rival schools, no less. "I had no idea. I'm going to have to ask him about that."

"I like him anyway."

Well, he should. Westlund has smoothly slipped into the left wing spot on the top line with Jobst and junior Carson Meyer.

"There's some pressure," Westlund said. "They're obviously good players. It's a lot of fun playing with them. Those two guys work really hard, and I see myself as a similar player."

Westlund (6-0, 175) leads Ohio State with nine assists through 14 games as of Nov. 24. It's a testament to his abilities that coach Steve Rohlik tried to match players best suited for him rather than vice versa.

"I was almost looking around at the other guys, wherever he would fit in the best with some of the other centers," Rohlik said. "Gustaf is really a natural center who's playing out of position. I tip my cap to him to go out there. He's at a good fit right now on that line."

Rohlik's biggest complaint with Westlund is his high number of penalties. His nine for 18 minutes are second on the team.

"It takes a little adjustment how games are called at this level," Westlund said. "I have to get used to it, but I can't change the way I play. I'm not a big player but I like to play hard out there."

Rohlik can appreciate Westlund's style.

"He's got a lot of skill, but the thing that drives him is his compete," the coach

said. "He's taken a few more penalties than I would like him to, but I love his compete and I'm never going to back him away from that. That's what separates him right now."

Jobst marvels at Westlund's skills.

"His hands are unbelievable," he said. "He's very shifty and his hockey sense is there. He's definitely getting more comfortable now too, which is good."

One area where Westlund needs work is his shooting. His 47 shots are the most on the team without recording a goal. Westlund said being a passer is something natural for Swedish players.

"There's a lot of good play-makers in Sweden for sure," Columbus Blue Jackets Swedish center Alexander Wennberg said. "I don't know if it's something about how you grow up playing. Everyone's different. We have a lot of good scorers too."

Jobst isn't worried about Westlund.

"Although he doesn't have a goal yet, he shoots the puck and creates some offense," Jobst said. "It will come. I keep telling him to shoot the puck and don't try to make too many pretty plays and you'll find the back of the net. Just keep working hard."

Much of Westlund's skating ability comes from his sports background growing up in Stockholm, Sweden, where he excelled not only in hockey but soccer and tennis as well.

"My family and my friend group back home have this philosophy that different kinds of sports contribute to every single sport," he said. "I feel like soccer and tennis have definitely contributed to my hand-eye coordination, agility and footwork."

Westlund came to Ohio State after spending two seasons playing junior hockey in Lincoln, Neb. Prior to that, Westlund left Sweden four years ago to attend The Gunnery Prep High School in Connecticut.

"I'm not going to lie, it was a hard decision, but I definitely feel I made the right one," he said. "It's one of the best decisions I made."

His surroundings helped him avoid being homesick.

"My first year in the States I spent at a prep school so it was like a small community," Westlund said, "the same way as college. There were so many people around you, teachers to take care of you. It wasn't that bad."

"The two years in junior, which was a lot of fun, was a more different lifestyle from being at school and having the social base around."

Another adjustment was playing more than 70 games a season in juniors with three or sometimes four games a week compared to the weekend college schedule.

"The seasons back home in Sweden were shorter too, like here, around 40 games," he said. "Playing 70 games is a lot different from what I was used to back home. This here is not too

different."

Now about the Maize and Blue.

Westlund, who was born in Paris, committed to Michigan on Nov. 16, 2016, before legendary Wolverines coach Red Berenson announced his retirement after the 2016-17 season to be replaced by Mel Pearson.

"I was recruited by the old staff," Westlund said. "I took a different path."

He does find the irony now that he understands what the OSU-Michigan rivalry means in all sports.

"To be honest, I didn't before I got here," he said.

Westlund committed to Ohio State on Jan. 19 of this year.

"I love it here. I'm so glad it worked out for me," he said.

Westlund said he is from the same neighborhood as Wennberg.

"He played for the same organization I played for back home in Sweden when I was growing up," Westlund said. "I don't know him very well, but we have a lot of friends in common in Stockholm."

Westlund will be 21 on Dec. 12. Jobst,

who will be 25 by season's end, said entering college at an older age is an advantage.

"You're a little bit more mature," he said. "You stayed in juniors a little longer so you have more confidence. It plays a big role in where he's at."

Still, as a first-year player Westlund gets treated like a rookie occasionally.

"We give him a hard time," Jobst said. "It's pretty funny watching him try to get around campus. He's good at asking questions, though at times he seems a little lost."

At least that's not a problem on the ice.

Penn State Split

The No. 5 Buckeyes split a home series with No. 6 Penn State the weekend of Nov. 23-24. The Nittany Lions (10-3-0, 2-2-0-0 Big Ten) won the opener 4-3 before the Buckeyes (9-4-1, 4-2-0-0) rallied for a 5-2 victory the next night.

Jobst opened the scoring each game. His tally in the rematch was a record-breaker. His 87th point in a Big Ten game set the league mark for the most career points in conference games only. He has a league-record 41 goals, and his 46 assists rank third all-time.

In the series opener, PSU scored twice in a 5:24 span of the second period for a 2-1 lead. The first goal ended senior Sean Romeo's program-record shutout streak at 204:27.

Austin Pooley scored shorthanded and John Wiitala tied the score, 3-3, in the third period before Denis Smirnov scored a power-play goal to give Penn State the win.

In the second game, the Buckeyes got goals from Ronnie Hein, Dakota Joshua, Sasha Larocque and Brendon Kearney – the latter two were shorthanded into empty nets – to overcome a 2-1 deficit. Tommy Napier made 38 saves for the Buckeyes.

Ohio State plays at Minnesota on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1.

For a complete recap of Ohio State's series with Penn State, go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



Gustaf Westlund

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FOOTBALL (11-1, 8-1 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 (18) Michigan State, W 26-6; **17** at Maryland, W 52-51 (OT); **24** (4) MICHIGAN, W 62-39.

Dec. 1 Big Ten Championship Game vs. Northwestern at Indianapolis, 8 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL (6-0)

Nov. 1 UNC PEMBROKE (exhibition), W 81-63; **7** at Cincinnati, W 64-56; **11** PFW, W 107-61; **15** at Creighton, W 69-60; **18** SOUTH CAROLINA STATE, W 89-61; **20** SAMFORD, W 68-50; **23** CLEVELAND STATE at St. John Arena, W 89-62; **28** SYRACUSE, 7:15 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 (1-2)

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

Nov. 6 (22) USF, L 71-47; **9** DETROIT MERCY, W 55-41; **11** at (2) UConn, L 85-53; **16** at Sacramento State, canceled; **18** at Stanford, canceled; **29** NORTH CAROLINA, 7 p.m.

Dec. 2 CINCINNATI, 2 p.m.; **5** at Washington, 11 p.m.; **16** FLORIDA at St. John Arena, 1 p.m.; **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.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (9-4-1, 4-2-0 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, W 3-0; W 1-0; **16-17** WISCONSIN, W 4-0; W 3-1; **23-24** (6) PENN STATE, L 4-3; W 5-2; **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 (11-5-0, 7-3-0 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, L 2-1; L 4-2; **16-17** MINNESOTA DULUTH, W 3-1; W 4-1.

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 (12-20, 3-17 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, L 3-1; **10** MARYLAND, L 3-0; **16** (7) WISCONSIN, L 3-0; **17** (3) MINNESOTA, L 3-2; **23** at (6) Nebraska, L 3-0; **24** at Iowa, L 3-2.

WRESTLING (3-0)

Nov. 3 vs. Navy at Owings Mills, Md., W 28-9; **11** Ohio Intercollegiate Open at Cleveland, NTS; **16** at California Baptist, W 42-0; **18** at Arizona State, W 22-17; **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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Buckeyes' Dominance Of Michigan Continues

The pressure to win The Game was clearly on Jim Harbaugh and the Michigan Wolverines on Nov. 24. Harbaugh had never beaten Urban Meyer since returning to his alma mater as head coach, and this would be four losses in a row to his archrival if the Wolverines didn't live up to their pregame hype that "this was their year" to make amends and take it to the Buckeyes.

COACH'S CORNER With Bill Conley

Prior to kickoff, TTUN had most of the statistical advantages, especially on the defensive side of the ball. Michigan fans and most of the sports media thought the game wouldn't even be close. Even many Buckeye fans were skeptical that the Ohio State offense could mount any type of a ground game against the nation's best defense and if the Buckeye defense, which had seemed so vulnerable to big plays this season, could stop the running attack of Wolverines running back Karan Higdon, who had already rushed for over 1,100 yards this season.

Adding to Michigan's confidence was the steady improvement of quarterback Shea Patterson, the Ole Miss transfer who had finally brought the stale Wolverine offense back to life this season. Patterson had shown the ability to put long drives together while keeping the ball away from the opposition and letting the Michigan defense stay fresh on the sidelines. Patterson also proved an efficient quarterback throwing the football and making positive yards with his feet when necessary. The question for Mr. Patterson was could he perform his magic in the 'Shoe, an environment which he had never seen?

The greatest rivalry in college football is a "players" game, and just as the heat was on Harbaugh and Patterson going into the game, it was also on the entire Michigan squad. There is not a player on the Michigan

team who has experienced a victory over Ohio State, and if they didn't find a way to win in 2018 in Columbus, another graduating class of Wolverines would never taste sweet victory over their rivals from south of the state line.

They really thought this was their year to end the Buckeye streak and return home victorious, but the Buckeye football team had other plans, and by the time the game clock struck zero, Michigan's so called "Revenge Tour" was history.

Higdon Swarmed

The Buckeye defense knew they had to make the Michigan offense one-dimensional. That meant trying to corral their great running back Karan Higdon. This was indeed a tall task for Greg Schiano's crew that had struggled all year stopping the run game while giving up long breakaways like it had at Maryland the week before in College Park. A defense that had been outplayed and outscored at times this season had to stop one of the very best running backs in the country if it had any chance to beat the Maize and Blue.

It seemed as if Higdon had honey on his jersey because every time he carried the ball, he was swarmed by an entire hive of Buckeye defenders. Malik Harrison and his fellow linebackers gave the talented Michigan running back nowhere to go and nowhere to hide. Higdon was held to just 72 rushing yards and never crossed the goal line. It wasn't until the fourth quarter of play, long after the outcome of the game was established, that the Michigan ground game topped the 100-yard mark. The Buckeye defenders were on a mission to establish their superiority over a Michigan offense that had seemed unstoppable running the football.

Mission accomplished.

Extraordinary Olave

The Ohio State-Michigan rivalry is usually highlighted by the play of experienced upperclassmen who pledge to give their all for 60 minutes to give their team

the best chance of victory. As Woody Hayes would often say, "Great players play great in the Michigan game." Whether it is a Rex Kern, Chris Spielman or J.T. Barrett for the Buckeyes, or a Charles Woodson, Desmond Howard or Jim Mandich for The Team Up North, it's usually those heralded players who make the difference when it's all said and done. It is rare that a true freshman makes a major statement by the way he plays in a game of this magnitude.

Ohio State wide receiver and special teams contributor Chris Olave became one of those rare exceptions in his first Michigan game. Not only did Olave make his mark in history by scoring the first touchdown of the game on a 24-yard reception from Dwayne Haskins, but he added another 24-yarder in the second quarter.

Two touchdowns for a true freshman is remarkable enough but when Olave blocked a Michigan punt that was returned for a touchdown by Sevnyn Banks – another true freshman – in the third quarter to all but put the nail in the coffin of the Wolverines, it was apparent this young guy from California understood the importance of this Midwest rivalry. It was especially impressive that in his postgame interview Olave stated he wanted his senior teammates to go out victorious in their last game in the Horseshoe.

Spectacular Offensive Line

Everyone knew the offensive line of Ohio State had to play at a very high level for the Buckeyes to establish enough of a running game to keep the Michigan defense honest. They also had to be exceptional at pass protection in order to give Dwayne Haskins the necessary time to deliver the pigskin to his stable of wide receivers.

The Buckeye offensive line did those two assignments to perfection by opening up holes in the Wolverine defense, allowing Buckeye ball carriers to put up 171 yards rushing for the day. Equally impressive in terms of protection, the line never gave up a sack, allowing their record-breaking quarterback to throw for nearly 400 yards for the day. I say "steaks for the day" for the beef up front.

Case for Playoffs

The Ohio State Buckeyes definitely became contenders for the College Football Playoff with their dominating win over Michigan. The team that saw those hopes practically disappear after the devastating loss to Purdue arose from the dead and established itself as one of college football's very best.

Assuming that Alabama beats Georgia in the SEC championship game and Clemson wins the ACC, those two teams along with Notre Dame are shoo-ins. LSU, Michigan and Washington State are out due to losing this week, and Central Florida is probably eliminated because their starting quarterback broke his leg. That leaves Ohio State and Oklahoma as the two teams fighting for the last spot in the playoffs. Both the Buckeyes and the Sooners have explosive offenses but aren't as impressive defensively. Ohio State, however, helped its case by throttling down Patterson and company. The committee is likely to choose whichever team is the most impressive in the upcoming conference championship games.

Oklahoma plays its archrival Texas for

Conley Answers Readers' Questions

Former Ohio State player and coach and current Buckeye Sports Bulletin columnist Bill Conley continues to answer questions from readers on BuckeyeSports.com.

Conley offers his expertise on all things Buckeye, past and present, in his insightful and entertaining way. In his most recent session with BuckeyeSports.com readers on Nov. 21, Conley answered a diverse group of questions on a variety of topics, many regarding The Game. He talked about big plays and big games in the rivalry, his experiences and the best players from TTUN that he saw as a player and a coach. He also commented on whether Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh was on the hot seat, recruiting against Ohio State's archrival, the Michigan player that got away and Cie Grant's singing.

Conley will have his final scheduled Wednesday Q&A session on The Forum on November 28. Readers should watch The Forum at the BuckeyeSports.com site for information on how to get their questions in the queue. The coach will begin answering at 3 p.m. Columbus time. Also watch for details on his next appearance after that.

If you are not already enjoying the benefits of BuckeyeSports.com, free with your BSB subscription, see page 4 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.

the Big 12 title, and the Buckeyes take on Northwestern for the Big Ten crown. Both Texas and Northwestern are ranked teams. It very well might be the best defensive performance by Oklahoma or Ohio State that determines who gets the nod from the committee.

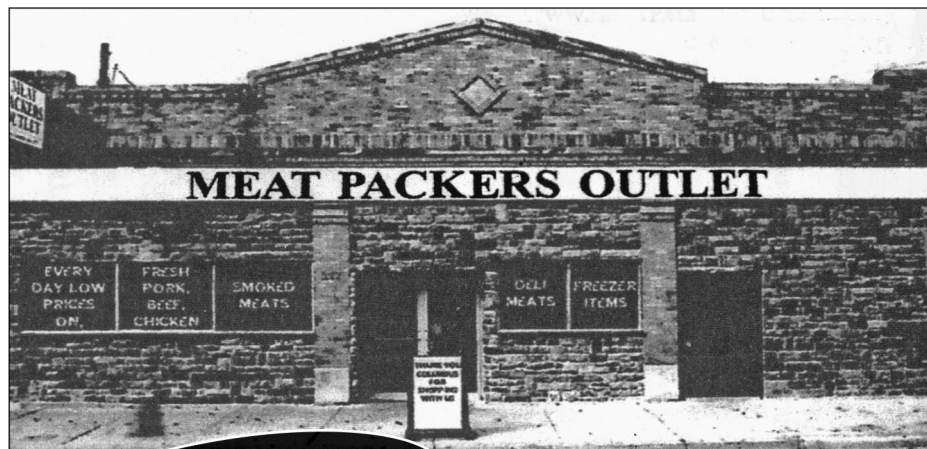
Cheers For Urban

Being the head coach at Ohio State is not easy. The expectations are high and the losses, however few there have been, sometimes are scrutinized more than the victories are celebrated. As the head coach, you are responsible for your players and actions off the field along with their performances on the field. You get paid the big bucks, but you earn them.

The last four months, in many ways, have been pure hell for Urban Meyer. Embarrassing events this summer, unjust criticism from the national sports media, a three-game suspension, health issue and subpar team performances at times all have added up to a nightmare for a man who has done his job very well. Not only has he handled events and conditions admirably but has secured his legacy as one of the very best football coaches in Ohio State gridiron history.

We all should salute a man who has stood tall and responded remarkably to adversity.

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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OSU's Huge Win Vs. U-M Is Hard To Describe

Epic. Monumental. Historic. Unexpected.

There don't really seem to be words to describe Ohio State's dominating 62-39 victory over hated rival Michigan. It's easy to say that it was merely the Buckeyes finally living up to their potential, but that would be selling them short.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

This was so thorough, so complete, that it left Michigan broken.

The Wolverines slunk off the Ohio Stadium field dejected, glassy eyed and forlorn, wondering what it is that went wrong. Didn't they have the best defense in the country? Ohio State made that defense look like a Pop Warner outfit, rolling up 567 yards and scoring the team's most points in the history of the storied rivalry.

This was going to be the year for the Wolverines. This was going to be the time.

The Buckeyes were sputtering, pairing a wondrous offense with a leaky defense and having a recent history of allowing adversity to bother them. Michigan would bring in a physical, street-fight mentality, and Ohio State would surely wither.

Um, not quite.

Ohio State was, on this day, a team that looked worthy of playing with anyone.

"I think Ryan Day and Kevin (Wilson), everybody, I think we're the second offense in America," OSU coach Urban Meyer said. "And I know we struggle all the time or whatever. But the second offense in America just put up a bunch of yards on the number one defense in America."

"We just have great players and a really good offensive staff, and that's how you do what we did. Did we see that? No. No. The guys just went out and played."

It could have come off as a boast, as an I-told-you-so to the rest of the country – and some doubters in Buckeye Nation – but it was very matter-of-fact.

Which begs the question, where has this bunch been all season?

It looked nothing like the group that barely hung on against Maryland, struggled against Nebraska or got its doors blown off against Purdue. This was a group that was prepared and focused, and they went out and performed.

"That was a love game," Meyer said. "That was one of those things, you hear the word 'brotherhood' and why do you really play? Why does a true soldier fight? It's not for hatred of those in front of you, it's love for those behind you. And that's a great quote we live by, and they proved it today."

It was evident almost from the word go that the Buckeyes weren't going to look like the confused group they have been for the majority of this season.

The defense held Michigan to an opening three-and-out, then the offense took over. OSU went 57 yards in six plays, among them a nifty first-down run by Dwayne Haskins which seemed to catch the Wolverines off guard.

Haskins has become a much more proficient runner in recent weeks, no longer resembling a baby giraffe taking its first steps. There is a smoothness, a confidence, that was missing previously. Haskins' legs have suddenly become a weapon, which must be disheartening to opposing defenses since his arm is already so proficient at producing damage.

The Buckeyes found the end zone to lead 7-0 three and a half minutes into the game and never looked back.

"It's a crazy win," Haskins said. "We saw a lot of man coverage, a lot of one-high, so we knew that we could get a lot of one-on-one matchups and crossing routes on them. We made some plays when it mattered most. It was a great win today."

And yes, there was a certain satisfaction in shattering the 60-point plateau against the Maize and Blue.

"I don't know about 62," Haskins said with a smile on whether he anticipated the score. "I knew we were going to come out and put on a show. The playmakers made plays. That's what mattered."

Michigan had the look of a team that was improving during the season, winning 10 straight after a narrow opening road loss to Notre Dame – a team that almost certainly punched its ticket to the College Football Playoff by outlasting rival USC later the same evening.

Jim Harbaugh had what many felt was his best team, and he had his hand-picked quarterback in Ole Miss transfer Shea Patterson, a Toledo native who grew up dreaming about playing in The Game. The Wolverines had two elite cover men in David Long and Lavert Hill, a snarling middle linebacker in Devin Bush and a pair of the best defensive linemen in the country in Rashan Gary and Chase Winovich.

None of that mattered.

"It didn't go good, didn't end up good," Harbaugh understated. "We take responsibility for that."

Harbaugh has legit coaching cred after turning around Stanford and going to a Super Bowl in San Francisco. But this was the Michigan alum's dream job, the place he called home. And when he took the head coaching position, his main goal, the thing that kept him up nights, was beating Ohio State.

His first three efforts were a mixed bag – a blowout in Ann Arbor, one epic double-overtime game in Columbus where his team went toe-to-toe with an OSU crew that was superior, and last year's contest that saw his Wolverines wither in the second half when Haskins relieved an injured J.T. Barrett.

This was going to be the year. This was Michigan's time.

Only it wasn't.

"They played great," Harbaugh said. "Their third quarter especially. They ran a lot of speed plays that got out on the perimeter and got loose. We also set them up in good field position with a couple of turnovers, and of course the blocked punt, which contributed to the score as well."

So if not this year, when?

Ohio State was a home underdog in the rivalry for the first time since 2004 and for just the eighth time in Meyer's time in Columbus.

"We didn't need the underdog score point," Haskins said of his team's motivation. "We didn't need the Revenge Tour. We didn't need the guaranteed win. We know what this game means to our school, to our teammates and to our coaches."

"I just knew in practice this week that I needed to bring a different energy, like I did against Maryland. I gave it my all today. And I'm glad we got the win."

Meyer was as loose and happy in the post-game as he's been all season. Blasting your rival will do that, it seems.

He reflected on not only the victory but what it meant in terms of the season and the adversity that has been faced.

"I'm extremely proud of our guys, the way they've fought through it," Meyer said of the

adversity. "And like someone was saying, nothing's ever good enough. We obviously had some adversity earlier in the year – not some, big-time adversity. And to come back against your rival and play like that, that's a focused team that loves each other and cares about each other."

There may have been just a bit more to it than that, however.

"We had a chip on our shoulder and wanted to show who we really were," said linebacker Malik Harrison, who was all over the field, netting seven tackles, two tackles for loss and a sack. He also was in Patterson's face much of the afternoon. OSU's linebackers have been much maligned during the season, rightfully so, as the weak link of the defense. But on this day, they were nearly flawless.

Fellow backer Tuf Borland was a wrecking ball, leading the team with 10 stops, and Pete Werner chipped in with six. Michigan hit a couple of plays here and there, taking advantage of a handful of missed assignments by the Buckeyes. But those were few and far between.

"That was a rugged week for our defense last week, rugged," Meyer said. "To come out and play like they did against that team was awesome."

Aside from the dozen penalties – most of which were the correct call, despite protestations from OSU fans – there wasn't much to grouse about.

Even the offensive line, which has at times looked like a 98-pound weakling, held up against what was supposed to be one of the best defensive lines in the country.

"I take a peek down here and under sacks it says zero," Meyer said.

So where does this leave Ohio State?

Ready to head to Indianapolis, for one thing.

The Buckeyes will face surprising Northwestern for the Big Ten crown, and they cannot get caught up in playing the Wildcats' game, which is akin to a root canal. They need to be fresh and focused and ready to pounce, as they were against Michigan.

After that, it could be on to the College Football Playoff, something that just three weeks ago seemed like a ridiculous proposition. Just winning out won't be enough for OSU, though. It will need some help, in the form of an Oklahoma loss to Texas in the Big 12 championship game. The Longhorns won a 48-45 thriller over the Sooners in the regular season, so it seems a good time to get behind Tom Herman. Can anyone say "Hook 'Em, Horns"?

Where does the loss leave Michigan?

Still with a shot at the Rose Bowl, but that wasn't what the season was supposed to be about.

The Wolverines sounded like a beaten bunch afterward.

"I'm pretty shocked the outcome was like this," safety Tyree Kinnel said. "They slowly devastated us throughout the game with all the yards they were putting up and how easily they

were scoring. It was tough. It was extremely tough. We made adjustments at halftime, and then they came out and beat us with something else. They had a great game plan and completely beat us today."

How completely?

So much that belief has been replaced by wishing.

"We've got a bright future ahead of us," U-M receiver Nico Collins said. "I'm hoping next year we can get that win."

Hoping?

That's about as complete as it gets. When a team hopes for victory instead of believes in it, the game is already lost.

Already A Legend

It took time for Chris Olave to work his way into the receiver rotation, but it will be difficult to keep him off the field going forward.

The freshman from California etched his name into The Game lore, catching a pair of touchdowns and blocking a punt that was returned for a score by fellow freshman Sevyn Banks.

"Buckeye Nation, get used to that one now," Meyer said of Olave, who finished the afternoon with 48 yards and touchdowns on both of his grabs. "That's the real deal."

He joins others such as Tyvis Powell (hero of the 2013 42-41 game), Tom Klaban (kicked four field goals in 1974), Tim Biakabutuka (ran for 313 yards in 1995) and Todd Plate (two interceptions in 1988) as unsung heroes of the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry. And the good thing is that he has at least two more seasons to play.

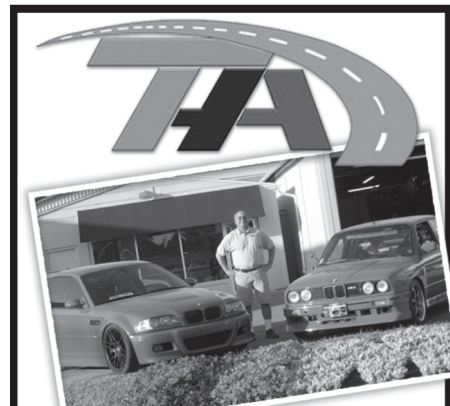
Dandy Dozen

It's pretty simple, really – wins by Alabama and Clemson in their league championship games put both teams into the CFP. Notre Dame is already in. That leaves the fourth spot for either Ohio State or Oklahoma – or, possibly, Georgia, if it can beat the Crimson Tide. A nail-biting SEC title game could leave the door open for both Georgia and Alabama to make the field, in which case both the Sooners and Buckeyes would be on the outside looking in.

The best advice is for OSU to take care of business in Indianapolis and then let everything else work itself out.

1. Alabama
2. Clemson
3. Notre Dame
4. Georgia
5. Oklahoma
6. Ohio State
7. Michigan
8. UCF
9. Washington
10. Penn State
11. Florida
12. Texas

In the mix: LSU, Mississippi State, Washington State, Kentucky, Fresno State, Missouri, Utah, Boise State.



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OSU Did What It Had To, And Then Some, Vs. U-M

So, that was something.

In a game that Ohio State was supposed to lose – at least if you ask the masses (hint: never ask the masses) – the Buckeyes systematically toppled No. 4 Michigan, 62-39, in Columbus. This was the year that Jim Harbaugh was going to beat Urban Meyer. Ohio State's six-year streak in The Game was coming to an end.

MOODY MUSINGS Tim Moody, Editor

It seemed like many of the Scarlet and Gray faithful had even convinced themselves that was OK, that losing to Michigan and going to the Rose Bowl while the Wolverines waltzed into the College Football Playoff wouldn't be the worst thing in the world.

First of all, I will never believe a single fan who says they would rather go to the Rose Bowl than the playoffs. It's always better to have a chance, no matter what the result may be. It would be better to lose, again, 31-0 in the semifinals than win the Rose Bowl for the first time since 2010. And don't even get me started on the fact that Ohio State wouldn't be, you know, guaranteed to win in Pasadena if those fans got their way.

Secondly, everyone who assumed Michigan was going to win The Game missed out on some pretty key signs.

I'm not going to sit here and say I saw a blowout win for Ohio State coming – nobody could have reasonably predicted that – but I

expected the Buckeyes to win. You can read my prediction on BuckeyeSports.com from Nov. 23 if you need proof.

There were two pretty simple reasons for that prediction: 1. Ohio State's offense, led by sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins, could very well be the best in program history. Sure, the numbers aren't the best on the ground, but Haskins is by far the best passing quarterback the Buckeyes have ever had, this is the deepest receiving corps we've seen in Columbus, and the offensive line – mediocre for most of the season – seems to be suddenly rounding into form. Most of it comes down to Haskins on his right arm, though, as he's somehow become underrated by many. 2. The Buckeyes' defense, led by sophomore linebacker Tuf Borland, was better suited to play against Michigan than almost any other opponent this season. The Wolverines are a pro-style attack. They do what they do, and players like Borland are born to play in that kind of matchup.

In the 115th edition of The Game, you saw both those points manifest in the form of one of the most dominant victories in the history of the rivalry. Haskins was, as he has been all year, magnificent, completing 20 of 31 passes for 396 yards and six touchdowns. He became the Big Ten's single-season leader for passing yards and passing touchdowns while tying the program record for touchdown tosses in a single game. Again.

The running game wasn't too shabby, either. Mike Weber – a one-time Michigan commit – gained 96 yards on 13 carries with a touchdown. Sophomore J.K. Dobbins was held to just 46 yards on 12 tries, but he

got tough yards when it mattered. Oh, and Haskins continued to be a sudden rushing threat, gaining 34 tough yards on seven attempts. With him running like that, this offense certainly looks unstoppable.

And that offensive line? They've been the weakest point on the team for much of the season, but they played their best game against Michigan. The group paved the way for a 4.8-yard average on the ground and didn't allow a sack against what was the nation's No. 1 defense going in.

Now, the defense. Like I said, players such as Borland are born to play in games like this. He finished with 10 tackles. And Ohio-raised defenders such as Malik Harrison (7 tackles, 1 sack, 2.0 tackles for loss), Brendon White (5 tackles, 1 interception); Robert Landers (4 tackles, 1 sack) and Jonathon Cooper (3 solo tackles, 1 sack) all had arguably their best games of the season – probably the best games of their careers.

I still can't blame anyone for picking Michigan, though. The Wolverines certainly looked like the better team all season. They were ranked fourth, they were undefeated in the Big Ten and their defense looked unbeatable. Ohio State, on the other hand, struggled with lesser opponents at every turn while failing to find a pulse on defense for much of the year.

But the Buckeyes, playing at home, had advantages in The Game that were simply overlooked. Maybe they were overlooked by Michigan, too.

Whatever the reason was, that was the best performance in the Ohio State-Michigan game I've ever seen – yes, even better than a 42-7 win in 2008 or that 42-13 victory in 2015.

You'll have to ask somebody else to compare it to the 50-14 victory in 1968.

Playoffs? Maybe This Year

Last week, I titled a section of my column, "Playoffs? Maybe Next Year."

Whoops.

Forgive me for assuming the obvious in that regard. After a 52-51 overtime win at Maryland, Ohio State certainly didn't look like a team bound for the College Football Playoff, even if it managed to dispatch Michigan and go on to win the Big Ten title game against Northwestern.

As things stand heading into that showdown in Indianapolis, though, the Buckeyes' playoff hopes are very much alive, but they don't control their own fate.

Let's assume Alabama and Clemson win their respective conferences. They'll join Notre Dame as the three locks in the CFP field in that case.

Then it will come down to Oklahoma or Ohio State for the final spot. If the Sooners lose to Texas in the Big 12 title game next week and the Buckeyes win, then Urban Meyer's squad will be in. If Oklahoma and Ohio State win, then things get interesting. It'll be up to the committee to pick that fourth team, and they've proved all season long that they respect Oklahoma's accomplishments more than what the Buckeyes have done.

If that scenario comes true, then Ohio State will likely be undone by a stunning road loss to an overmatched Big Ten West opponent for the second year in a row.

But there's still a chance, and based on the way this season has gone, that's all Meyer's men could have hoped for.

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Win Was No Surprise, But 'The Game' Was Stunning

When home fans are chanting "*Overrated! Overrated!*" as they were at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 24, it's usually a good thing. It almost always means that the home team has scored an upset over a strong opponent. In the case of Ohio State's stunning 62-39 win over archrival Michigan, Buckeye fans could just as easily have been chanting "*Underrated! Underrated!*" because that's what it turned out Ohio State may have been.

When I say "stunning" victory, I don't say that because it was surprising Ohio State won the game. Anyone who follows the rivalry knows that either team can win the game in any given year. That's what makes it a rivalry.

The victory was stunning because of just how dominant Ohio State was. Please note that the game could have easily been 69-39, but Buckeye head coach Urban Meyer called off the dogs at the Wolverine 7 with 52 seconds to go after easily marching 41 yards in four plays. Personally, I would have gone ahead and run up the score due to a dislike for Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh dating back to a certain guarantee back in 1986. But I don't have to face the Wolverines next season. Truth be told, in some ways it's more humiliating to call off the dogs. The act makes it clear who is in complete control.

I thought one of the telling moments in the game came well after the decision was no longer in doubt. Buckeye defensive back Shaun Wade put the big stick on Michigan tight end Sean McKeon in the flat after a short pass with Ohio State leading 62-32 and less than 5 minutes to play. I mean laid wood cleanly, but put the hammer down. And McKeon came up wanting to fight Wade. Nothing says, "Every pundit outside of the state of Ohio said we were going to dominate and go to the College Football Playoff and instead we are getting our butts whipped in front of 106,588 people and a national television audience for the seventh time in a row" like the frustration shown by McKeon.

What's Wade supposed to do? Hold up on the play because your team didn't answer the bell in its biggest game of the season? Sometimes you just have to take your licking like a man. Fortunately a fellow Wolverine held McKeon back before he made an even bigger fool of himself.

So what set the stage for this outcome to be so "stunning"?

I think the assumption that Michigan was going to dominate started with the equally stunning play of Ohio State's defense in its 52-51 overtime win over Maryland the week before. How could a team that was that terrible on defense beat the No. 4 team in the nation in a rivalry game that is traditionally decided by good defense?

The talking heads not only saw the Ohio State defensive ineptitude against the Terrapins, but on the flip side saw that Michigan, 10-1 and on a roll, came into the game with the top-rated unit in the nation in terms of total defense and passing defense. What those same "experts" seemed to overlook was the fact that Ohio State was No. 2 in the nation in total offense and passing offense. And while the Buckeyes, also 10-1 though frequently winning ugly, had given up 51 points against Maryland, they had scored 52.

If you actually took the time to look at the numbers, you could see that it shaped up to be a classic matchup, about as even as it gets.

So what took it from a classic matchup to a Buckeye rout?

For one thing, the experts seemed blinded by the arrival in Ann Arbor of quarterback Shea Patterson, the missing piece that would

finally put media darling coach Harbaugh over the top and make Michigan relevant again on the national scene. Patterson did his job, turning in a fine season as he led the Wolverines to 10 straight victories heading into The Game.

What those outside of Ohio seemed to forget was that Ohio State was led by a record-setting, Heisman Trophy-caliber quarterback in Dwayne Haskins, who maybe slipped off the radar a bit when he turned in a couple of mere mortal performances during the dog days of the season. By the time Michigan and Ohio State met on Nov. 24, Patterson was a mere afterthought in the wake of Haskins' monumental performance.

Michigan was also going to throw in a 1,000-yard running back in Karan Higdon behind a dominant offensive line – coached by former Buckeye line coach Ed Warinner, no less – against the porous Buckeye run defense that had allowed Maryland (339 rushing yards) and freshman Anthony McFarland (298 yards) to dominate on the ground the week before. Higdon was going to run wild against Ohio State.

Higdon, however, mimicked his coach from 32 years previous and guaranteed a Michigan victory. Coincidentally or otherwise, the Buckeye defense bottled up Higdon in the first half in particular and for much of the game.

Higdon picked up 8 yards on his first carry of the game but gained just 7 net yards on his next seven carries. By the time he ripped off a 15-yard run to start a drive in the middle of the second quarter, the Wolverines were already down 14-6. On the next play he was held to 4 yards, and three plays later Michigan was forced to punt. Ohio State took the ball and drove 79 yards to make it 21-6, and Higdon would not carry again in the first half.

He ended up with a respectable, though modest, 72 yards on 15 carries with a long of 24, a run that came with his team trailing 48-25 in the fourth quarter – hardly the McFarland-esque performance that so many had been expecting.

Don't forget, also, as so many people apparently did, that there was far more pressure on Michigan in this game than the Buckeyes. The Wolverines were the team that everyone was penciling in for their first visit to the College Football Playoff. This Wolverine squad was the team that was going to finally meet the expectations that had been assumed under Harbaugh.

And talk about pressure. What about the streak? Michigan had defeated Ohio State only twice since the Buckeyes defeated the Wolverines 310 days after Jim Tressel's hiring in 2001, and one of those victories came in Ohio State's dysfunctional year of 2011. I lived through the 2-10-1 John Cooper era and know how the pressure mounts with each passing loss. It's impossible to avoid the outside noise as you are constantly reminded of your ineptitude. Ultimately, you are not just playing your rival, but you are also playing against the streak.

Ohio State, on the other hand, was the scandal-rocked team with the ailing coach and the sieve for a defense that had been written off long ago, despite its 10-1 record. The Buckeyes could play free and loose, just as

teams such as Purdue and Maryland had done against Ohio State earlier in the year.

All that pressure on the Wolverines played into another factor in the blowout. The game was being played in Ohio Stadium. Once the Buckeyes jumped out to an early lead, the crowd revved up and the doubts for the Wolverines started rising. Sure, Michigan crept back into it, thanks largely to a bungled kickoff return by Demario McCall late in the first half, but the visitors were never able to overcome the Buckeyes and their 12th man.

While I never went so far as making a prediction for this edition of The Game, I honestly wasn't surprised at the victory. I told those of you who asked me a couple of weeks back that I was more concerned about the Michigan State game than I was the battle between the rivals (this of course was before the Maryland debacle), because I knew the Buckeyes would be focused and amped up for their game with Michigan.

While the defense had struggled for much of the season, it always seemed to come up big when it mattered, and rivalry week would be the impetus to give them the edge the Buckeyes needed.

Make no mistake about it, the defense was still suspect against Michigan, giving up 39 points and 401 yards, but six of those points should be charged against the special units after McCall's gaffe, and at key times the stop troops were stout, allowing the Wolverines to convert on just 6 of 14 third-down attempts, including just 2 of 8 in the final three quarters.

The Buckeye defenders also, for the most part, avoided their season-long Achilles' heel, the big play. Michigan's longest play, a 43-yard pass from Joe Milton to Nico Collins, came when Ohio State was already leading, 62-32, and the Wolverines' longest touchdown came from just 23 yards out on a pass from Patterson to Collins.

Ohio State's much-maligned linebacking corps turned in its best game of the season, including its much-maligned middle linebacker, Tuf Borland, who led all tacklers with 10 stops. Fellow 'backer Malik Harrison played at an All-Big Ten level with seven tackles, including two for loss and a sack.

The defense's strength, the line, also played one of its best games of the season, recording two of Ohio State's three sacks and turning in what seemed like many more quarterback hurries than the two for which the line and the team were given credit.

Safety Brendon White rounded back into form after an inconsistent outing against Maryland, tallying five stops and an interception to help solidify the secondary. But oh, those pass-interference calls!

Toss that defense in with Ohio State's prolific offense and you have a 62-39 Ohio State victory and the Buckeyes back in the playoff hunt.

It reminds me of a joke that loyal BuckeyeSports.com Forum poster Tiffin Buckeye submitted when we were collecting Michigan jokes awhile back.

Q. How do you make Wolverine cookies?

A. You put them in a big bowl and beat them for three hours.

Well it wasn't a bowl this time around, it was a horseshoe, and with ads and injuries,

Ohio State beat them for four hours and two minutes. But it was a huge Buckeye victory, nonetheless.

At some point, Michigan is going to beat Ohio State again. Maybe that win will swing the pendulum the other way, like the Buckeyes' win in the 2001 game under Jim Tressel turned things in the Buckeyes' favor. But speaking as an OSU grad and fan, not a journalist, I must say I am going to really savor this one.

I did want to remind outsiders and Buckeye fans alike that back in July, Meyer was considered one of the top two or three coaches in all of college football. He didn't suddenly become a mediocre football coach just because he was overly loyal to the grandson of a late mentor. Meyer demonstrated to Harbaugh, once again, what it takes to be an elite college football coach.

I do have one criticism of Meyer and his staff, however. And I am at odds with some on the BSB staff with this one.

Enough with bringing in quarterback Tate Martell for one play here or there. You have arguably the best quarterback in the country in Haskins with two great running backs and a host of great receivers. Why take your best player off the field and why interrupt the rhythm that your line and skill players have been building all game for a gimmick that hasn't worked all season?

Sorry for bringing up a Michigan Man, but does Bill Belichick take out Tom Brady when the Patriots get in the red zone?

No Championship Print BSB

For those of you who have been putting off signing up for access to BuckeyeSports.com, BSB's 24/7, full-service website, or have been avoiding it because you are stubborn, now is the time. There will be no print issue of BSB following the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 1. The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, our big Bowl Preview, is scheduled to be mailed on Dec. 12.

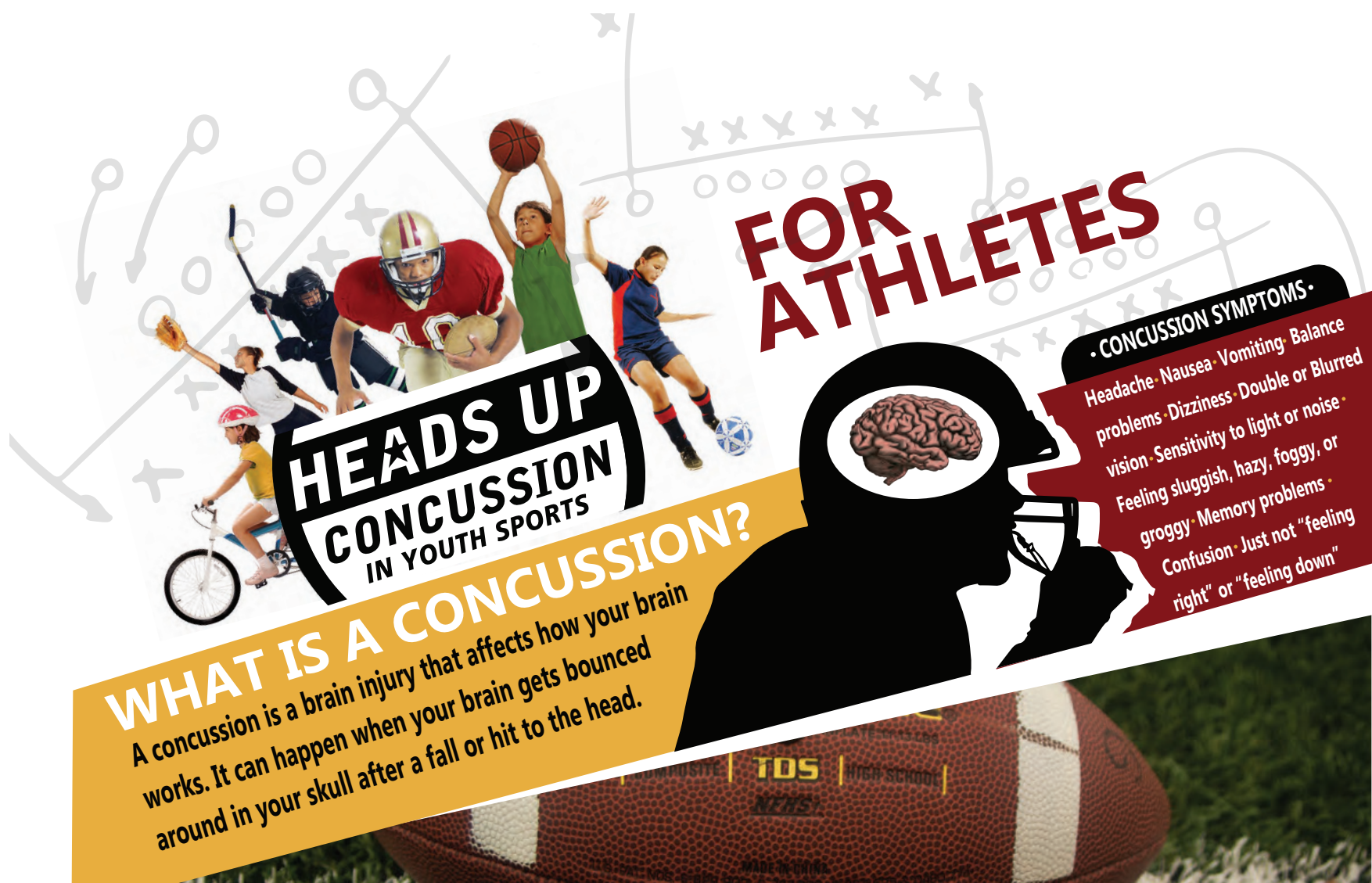
However, BuckeyeSports.com offers the BSB staff an enhanced opportunity to cover the game with Northwestern in Indianapolis. There will be daily stories leading up to the game, gameday coverage and ample coverage immediately following the game on the Saturday night of the championship and on Sunday, Dec. 2. BSB staff members and readers will also be discussing the game on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum.

We will once again be having an in-game thread on The Forum during the game with the Wildcats, including instant updates and analysis, as well as a little fun as readers and staffers frequently express their exasperation with the wildly unpredictable Buckeyes. While some readers don't like to break away from watching the game, you should at least check in during ads or between quarters. BSB staffer Garrett Stepien has been doing an outstanding job of updating stats and providing video highlight clips throughout the games. Readers can also offer their picks for Buckeye leaves after the game.

There will be condensed coverage of the Big Ten Championship Game in the Bowl Preview print issue.

Note also that with the early football recruiting signing period that starts Dec. 19 rapidly approaching, readers will also want to monitor Ohio State's progress toward its 2019 class daily on BuckeyeSports.com.

If you are not already enjoying this electronic service, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers, look for simple sign-up instructions on page 4 of this issue. Or give us a call at (614) 486-2202 and we will gladly get you started.



**FOR
ATHLETES**

**HEADS UP
CONCUSSION
IN YOUTH SPORTS**

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works. It can happen when your brain gets bounced around in your skull after a fall or hit to the head.

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS:

Headache · Nausea · Vomiting · Balance problems · Dizziness · Double or Blurred vision · Sensitivity to light or noise · Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy · Memory problems · Confusion · Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I
THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?**



REPORT IT. Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. It's up to you to report your symptoms. Your coach and team are relying on you. Plus, you won't play your best if you are not feeling well.

GET CHECKED OUT. If you think you have a concussion, do not return to play on the day of the injury. Only a health care provider can tell if you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to school and play. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

GIVE YOUR BRAIN TIME TO HEAL. A concussion can make everyday activities, such as going to school, harder. You may need extra help getting back to your normal activities. Be sure to update your parents and doctor about how you are feeling.

**WHY SHOULD I
TELL MY COACH &
PARENTS ABOUT
MY SYMPTOMS?**

Playing or practicing with a concussion is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery.

While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. This can put you at risk for a more serious injury to your brain and can even be fatal.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON

<http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/concussion>



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention