



Finishing The Puzzle



TIM MOODY

THROUGH THE FINISH LINE – Ohio State head coach Ryan Day completed his first recruiting class by adding two offensive line prospects on National Signing Day.

Buckeyes Add 2 Linemen On NSD To Complete Day's 1st Recruiting Class

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State's second time through the early signing period was supposed to bring a better sense of what to expect on National Signing Day, but the Buckeyes had anything but ordinary circumstances between December and February.

Despite the Dec. 4 announcement of head coach Urban Meyer's retirement and offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Ryan Day's promotion, OSU overcame a potential disaster and kept its 2019 class, for the most part, intact.

In nine weeks since athletic director Gene Smith introduced Day as Meyer's successor, Ohio State lost three commitments but signed 17 prospects, adding two at the buzzer Feb. 6 to get the group the Buckeyes needed before spring camp starts the week of March 4.

"I think the biggest challenge early on is getting to know everybody," Day said. "Then when the staff

got put into place, we still wanted those guys to make sure they built relationships with 2019s. The loyalty there was off the charts, the families we made connections with, recruiting, has been awesome. Then going with the 2020s.

"When you look at what we've done as a culture since August, with the coaching change, we've only had two guys leave the program – (senior linebacker) Keandre Jones, (sophomore quarterback) Tate Martell. One was a grad transfer, one a quarterback. When you keep the retention, it shows about the culture in the coaching change, but also it isn't about signing 27 guys because you're retaining guys. Guys want to stay in the program. That's the strength of our team right now."

Filling The Void

OSU inked 15 letters of intent Dec. 19 with Day leading the way in the two weeks after his introduc-

QB Fields Granted Immediate Eligibility

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Even before he officially took over as head coach, Ohio State's Ryan Day knew he'd have a huge hole to fill for 2019.

Quarterback Dwayne Haskins hadn't announced his decision to leave for the NFL just yet, but the writing was on the wall. Haskins was projected as the top quarterback in the draft, meaning his stock wouldn't improve with another year in school.

After succeeding Urban Meyer on Jan. 2, Day needed just two days to secure his quarterback of the future. The problem at the time was that there still was no guarantee Georgia transfer Justin Fields, the highest-rated prospect ever to enroll at Ohio State, would be allowed to play this year.

By Feb. 8 – two days after Day had finalized his first recruiting class as head coach – his most important recruit became official when the NCAA granted Fields' waiver request for immediate eligibility. Now the signal caller can enter spring camp knowing what everyone thought they knew all along: If all goes to plan, he'll be leading the Buckeyes onto the field Aug. 31 against Florida Atlantic.

"I am happy for Justin and his family," Day said in a statement. "I also want to express my appreciation to the NCAA for its assistance in getting this matter resolved efficiently and with such a positive outcome for Justin."

Overall, the process was quick, but it was still Day's biggest recruiting win of the year, even if Fields doesn't count toward the 17-man class. Day still identified a target – Fields entered the NCAA transfer portal in mid-December – then he vetted that target and convinced him to commit. It had to be a

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RECRUITING
WRAP-UP**

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Better Than Imagined

It was 1997 when my wife and I experienced our first Rose Bowl Game. It turned out to be a more exciting trip than we would have ever imagined. Our neighbors, whose son lived near Pasadena, were going and they invited us to join them. We were able to obtain tickets and accommodations, so off we went.

Upon arriving in California, we discovered that our motel was full of Arizona State fans, but that made it a lot of fun, especially since we won the game.

To our surprise one of our hosts worked at the Walt Disney studios. Since they were closed for the holidays, we were able to take what amounted to a private tour of the entire lot, including lunch at the commissary and a visit to Walt Disney's office. This was very interesting since it held several of his Oscars, which we got to hold. Later that evening we visited the park where we could see the floats up close. Beautiful doesn't describe how magnificent these floats really are. Our appreciation of them greatly increased.

Next of course was the parade itself. We observed curbside along with thousands of others, which added interest because of the comments of the locals. Seeing the OSU band was especially exciting for us. I thought the traditional ramp entrance was my all-time favorite, but this was a close second.

Now comes the game. We couldn't have picked a better one as OSU scored to win the game with less than two minutes remaining in a 20-17 victory for the Buckeyes – when the game was over, no one wanted to leave.

There were many outstanding players for both teams, but I must mention one in particular: Pat Tillman for ASU. I am sure that you are familiar with his story. Tillman entered the Army soon thereafter and unfortunately he was killed defending his country. My service time was long over by then but I would have been proud to exchange salutes with him. Tillman was a fine sportsman, an outstanding player and a great American hero.

That's it. Your observations about your first Rose Bowl are right on. They are the best. This is America at its finest.

Lou Sullivan
Warren, Ohio

(Editors note: Tillman had 11 stops, including two tackles for loss, in the Rose Bowl for the Sun Devils.)

All About The Parade

Always enjoy 100 percent of BSB and especially enjoyed all of the Rose Bowl coverage. Tim Moody, James Grega and Garrett Stepien did a good job of sharing their impressions of

their first Rose Bowl. It brought back memories of my first, and I agree with the strongest memory Frank Moskowitz had, that being the parade.

My first Rose Bowl brought out one memory where I disagree with two of the guys when they said there's not a bad seat in the stadium. I had a friend with Coca-Cola who got me two tickets on the 50-yard line. It was the 1968 OSU-USC game. That's the good news with the bad news, the seats being in the famous front row. The box seats were low enough that because of O.J. Simpson and all of his teammates standing most of the game all I could see were the end zones.

Still a day I will never forget, ever. Buckeyes win, Simpson shines with his long run and everything from start to conclusion was perfect, even though I didn't see a lot of football. No Jumbotron then, either.

The Rose Bowl will always be the best of the best. You asked us to share our first. That's mine.

Craig Washing
Montgomery, Ala.

There In Spirit

In 1954 Ohio State went undefeated, won the Big Ten, was declared national champions and won the 1955 Rose Bowl game.

In 1954 we were freshman. In that day, freshmen were ineligible to play varsity. But we had the distinct pleasure of being the "hamburger squad" for the varsity. We must have done a good job preparing that 1954 team. Even though we did not get to travel to Pasadena, we like to think we were part of that Rose Bowl championship.

Our 1957 team also won it all, including the Rose Bowl. Therefore we like to think that we won two Rose Bowls, in 1955 and 1958.

Ron Cook
Lima, Ohio
OSU Football Letterman
1955, 1957

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From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

Among the 25 recruits Ohio State signed to its 1984 class, the Buckeyes brought in three USA Today first-team All-Americans on National Signing Day on Feb. 8.

Massillon (Ohio) Washington linebacker Chris Spielman headlined OSU's group as one of the most coveted prep players ever. Other first-teamers included Cincinnati Princeton tight end Alex Higdon and Brecksville (Ohio) Broadview Heights punter Tom Tupa.

30 Years Ago – 1989

Ohio State men's swimming coach Dick Sloan shared his plans to retire after the 1989 season. Sloan, 52, had been head coach of the Buckeyes for 14 years. He was only the fourth coach in program history, mentoring four All-Americans, eight Big Ten champions and two national title winners.

Sloan had been rumored for a position within the athletic department upon his retirement. Asked about what prompted the retirement, Sloan simply said he had "some good, some bad and a lot of personal" reasons.

25 Years Ago – 1994

While the NFL draft remained more than two months away, one former Ohio State player was surging up the list of best-available prospects.

That was recent Buckeye defensive tackle Dan "Big Daddy" Wilkinson, who was one of draft analyst Mel Kiper's top two players. Kiper ranked Wilkinson with Tennessee quarterback Heath Shuler.

Kiper gave Shuler the edge to go No. 1 overall to whichever team tried to trade up with the Cincinnati Bengals, who held the pick, while Wilkinson was slated to go second to the Indianapolis Colts.

Kiper also had former fullback Jeff Cothran among the prospects to keep an eye on after watching him in the East-West Shrine Game and the Senior Bowl.

"Everyone knew Cothran was a devastating lead blocker," Kiper said, "but they also learned he had a hard-charging, north-south running style."

20 Years Ago – 1999

Recruiting violations put a damper on Ohio State's 24-member recruiting class of 1999 when Miami Killian lineman Bryce Bishop was temporarily declared ineligible after he signed his letter of intent with the Buckeyes.

The day Bishop returned from an official visit with Miami (Fla.), OSU recruiting coordinator Bill Conley said he talked to him for about 10 minutes outside his home Jan. 31. That same day, assistant Shawn Simms saw Jacksonville, Fla., defensive back Roshard Gilyard, who eventually signed with Auburn.

According to NCAA rules, coaches were not allowed to

make in-person, off-campus contact with players that day. If Conley and Simms instead checked on each recruit Jan. 30, it would have been considered legal contact.

Head coach John Cooper was concerned with the possible repercussions from the encounters.

"There are so many rules, but there is no excuse for not knowing," Cooper said. "I should have known it. We all should have known it. But I know we did not knowingly violate the rules."

15 Years Ago – 2004

In the NFL, a couple of hires made by the Buffalo Bills and new head coach Mike Mularkey had ties to Ohio State.

On Feb. 3, Buffalo named Steve Szabo its new defensive backs coach. He was hired after his 2003 season spent as a volunteer assistant with the New England Patriots, previously serving eight years as linebackers coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars. Szabo worked with the Buckeyes from 1979-81 under former head coach Earle Bruce.

Two weeks prior, Mularkey had named Bobby April as his special teams coach. April had been fired from his post in a similar position with the St. Louis Rams. Previously, he was with OSU on former head coach John Cooper's staff in 1991.

10 Years Ago – 2009

To compensate for tough economic conditions, Ohio State's athletic department explored its options to make up for an estimated \$1.2 million budgetary shortfall for the fiscal year ending June 30.

While the university tried selling discounted basketball tickets, one thing OSU was sure not to do was get out of a football contract to play Toledo inside Cleveland Browns Stadium in 2009.

Bill Jones, Ohio State's assistant athletic director for ticketing and premium seating, told BSB that game would not adversely affect the school's bottom line.

"That is actually an away game for us," Jones said. "That's a Toledo home game, so it's not a loss for us at all."

In fact, Jones said the Buckeyes' contest with the in-state Rockets would actually benefit OSU fans.

"We'll make out fine because we'll get more tickets," Jones said. "For example, if we went to Toledo, they may give us the typical 4,000 tickets like Big Ten schools would do. But with us playing in Cleveland, we'll actually get quite a few more tickets than we could normally on a typical away game. Monetarily, it's not going to hurt or help us more than anything else."

Five Years Ago – 2014

On Jan. 30, Ohio State's board of trustees approved Dr. Michael V. Drake as the university's 15th president. Drake,

who graduated from Stanford and the University of California at San Francisco, was slated to take over the position's full-time responsibilities June 30.

Athletic director Gene Smith, who received a four-year extension and promotion to university vice president Jan. 28, had met Drake at the NCAA's annual convention and governance dialogue earlier in the month and was looking forward to working with his new boss.

"I'm certain that our philosophies align, our values align," Smith said. "I have all the trust in the world that the trustees, that search group, would find someone that aligns with who we are. I feel comfortable regardless of the contract (extension). I feel comfortable that we are going to match."

One concern with Drake was his lack of experience at a school as sports-centric as Ohio State. Drake had been at UC Irvine, a Division I university but one without football, since 2005. Drake was going from a school that cut five sports in 2009 to one with a broad-based program of 36 sports.

"The biggest challenge is things are on a greater scale," Drake said. "We're a Division I athletics and academics institution (at UC Irvine), we've won national championships, but nothing compares to Ohio State. The level of intensity and heft and importance and weight of this university are as great as any that exist."

One Year Ago – 2018

After head coach Urban Meyer addressed Ohio State's 2018 recruiting class Feb. 7 during a press conference in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center team room, Gene Smith shared some news.

Meyer, who had just completed his sixth season with the Buckeyes, was set to receive a two-year extension from Smith as he ramped up recruiting efforts for the 2019 class and beyond.

At the time, Meyer's contract was slated to expire in 2020. The move came after an opposing head coach, Clemson's Dabo Swinney, told Fairfield five-star offensive tackle Jackson Carman that Meyer was nearing the end of his career. Carman, the No. 1 player in Ohio, chose the Tigers over OSU on National Signing Day.

"I don't know where that's coming from," Meyer said in regard to questions about his long-term future. "That's never come from me, and we're going to sign an extension here soon because the university has been good enough to extend something to me. I feel great and I don't know, once again, for someone to bring that up in recruiting, that's easy to fight against because it's not true."

Meyer's contract, which he signed in 2015, had been paying him \$6.5 million annually.

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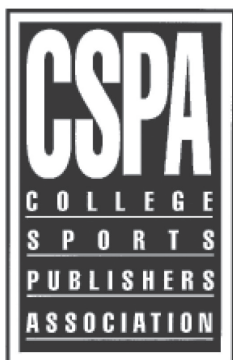
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Charter Member

'19 Season Hinges On Defensive Improvement

Thanks to the early signing period instituted by college football a couple of years ago, National Signing Day in February has been reduced for fans from a second Christmas Day to something akin to Labor Day. It's still kind of a holiday but features hardly any of the excitement.

Ohio State's recruiting class of 2019, billed as the first under new head coach Ryan Day, obviously has Urban Meyer's fingerprints all over it. The class was essentially completed in December with only two of the eventual 17-member roster – offensive linemen Dawand Jones and Enokk Vimahi – actually signing on signing day, and six of the newcomers already enrolled in class and ready to go March 4 when spring ball starts.

Perhaps more important to me than any of the 17 names contained in this year's recruiting class are the other newcomers to the Ohio State program. You probably think I'm referring to Justin Fields, the highly-regarded transfer quarterback from Georgia who will be eligible to play for the Buckeyes in the fall. But just as vital – and probably more so in terms of the long-term effect on the program – are the new assistant coaches Day has hired for his first staff.

That is especially true on defense, a unit that is coming off a season of historic proportions – and not much of that history very good.

The fact that Ohio State's offense was so productive this past season helped to mask the fact that opponents essentially ran up and down the field against the Buckeyes. The one-time Silver Bullets became more like the Silver Sieve, yielding averages of 25.5 points and 403.4 yards per game.

No OSU defense in the 128 previous seasons of program history had ever allowed an average of 400 yards per game, and that tells only a fraction of the story. Opponents chalked up gains of 20 or more yards on 53 plays this season, an average of nearly four per game. Six times during the season, opponents broke off plays of 75 or more yards against the Buckeyes.

And now you know why Day virtually cleaned house with line coach Larry Johnson the only defensive assistant left standing.

Not that Greg Schiano suddenly forgot how to do his job. New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick obviously doesn't think so after hiring Schiano as his new defensive coordinator. But with a roster chock full of highly-ranked prospects from every corner of the country, something was defensively out of whack at Ohio State in 2018 and alarmingly so.

Whether Schiano, Alex Grinch, Billy Davis and Taver Johnson stayed or not, improvement was probably inevitable in 2019. There is simply too much talent and experience returning for the Buckeyes, beginning with the fact that nine players who started the Rose Bowl on defense return next season.

Of course, that could be a double-edged sword depending upon your opinion of some of those starters. Greg Mattison, Jeff Hailey, Al Washington Jr. and Matt Barnes might have differing opinions on those players as well.

If there was one glaring issue the past couple of years with the Ohio State defensive staff, it might have been the way it evaluated personnel with regard to getting the right players on the field.

For example, what exactly did coaches see in 2017 that made them believe Chris Worley could handle the middle linebacker spot? Why did they stick with Tuf Borland

last year when he was clearly not at full-speed? Jeffrey Okudah wasn't good enough to get more than one 2018 start at cornerback? Why wasn't Brendon White in the safety rotation for most of the season?

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Perhaps it's oversimplification to believe that what we see on Saturday afternoon is in direct contrast to what the coaches see throughout the practice week. Still, something – personnel, scheme or a combination of both – went terribly wrong with the Ohio State defense last season, and it is up to Day and his new defensive assistants to identify the problems and get them fixed.

If they don't, Fields had better be everything the hype says he is – and maybe even more.

What Do I Know?

For nearly a decade beginning in 2005, I used the first column after National Signing Day to offer a sentence or two about newly-minted Buckeyes.

Many times, I turned out to be fairly prescient about the newbies. For example, I wrote in 2005 that James Laurinaitis had "a motor that never stops," and two years later offered that while Dane Sanzenbacher "lacks the size or blazing speed you'd like to see in a receiver, the kid is a winner." Another noteworthy observation came in 2009 when I opined that although Carlos Hyde was ostensibly signed as a fullback, I saw him as "much more than just a battering ram and extra blocker on obvious passing downs."

Before you think I was always correct with my assessments, check out a few of the times I swung for the fences and came up empty.

Shawntel Rowell (2008) – Anyone who knows OSU defensive coordinator Jim Heacock understands that the Buckeyes like to rotate as many linemen as possible in and out of the game. Provided he keeps his weight from being a problem, Rowell can step into that rotation and make an impact at defensive tackle. He could be the sleeper of this class.

Melvin Fellows (2009) – Another five-star prospect who loves to rush the passer. I know they all tend to play the same position, but what kind of problems would it present for opposing quarterbacks to have Lawrence Wilson, Thad Gibson, Nathan Williams and Fellows all on the field at the same time? I can dream, can't I?

Chad Hagan (2010) – One of my picks for sleeper of the class. No one talked much about Hagan after he committed last summer, but I'm eager to see a 207-pound safety with 4.29 speed. It wouldn't be surprising to see Hagan get some playing time next fall on special teams and maybe even in the regular secondary rotation.

Kenny Hayes (2011) – Another rangy defensive end who likes to rush the passer. Some liken him to Bobby Carpenter while others see another Will Smith in the making. Here's hoping Hayes just comes close to being as good as those two were for the Buckeyes.

Jamal Marcus (2012) – There are highlight reels, and then there is the one put together on this 6-2, 235-pound monster.

But you don't have to believe me. Go to YouTube, type in Marcus' name and marvel for yourself at nearly six minutes of a guy terrorizing opponents from sideline to sideline.

Joey O'Connor (2012) – A 6-4, 295-pound offensive lineman with a bit of a mean streak. A former ice hockey player whose approach to football was once described as "vicious and unrelenting." Good enough for me.

I think you now get the idea why I don't offer those assessments anymore.

Rowell got into academic trouble at Ohio State and transferred to Iowa Western Community College, where he played a year before winding up at West Virginia. He was the starting nose tackle for the Mountaineers in 2012 and totaled 42 tackles.

After redshirting as a freshman, Fellows played in five games, totaling 11 minutes, for the Buckeyes in 2010 and then had to accept a medical waiver because of chronic knee injuries.

Hagan appeared in seven games for the Buckeyes in 2011 and was credited with two tackles before he transferred to Division II California University of Pennsylvania. He completed his college career there in 2016, seeing 11 games of action as a reserve linebacker and special teams player.

Blinding headaches and a coaching change in 2012 led Hayes to transfer to Toledo after which his life took a turn for the worse. He spent seven months in prison in 2016 after pleading guilty to one count of child endangerment. Hayes recently resurfaced as a member of the Toledo Thunder, a minor league football team in his hometown.

Marcus, who played sparingly during his first two seasons at Ohio State, was poised to contend for a starting defensive end position when academic problems got him kicked off the team in the summer of 2014. He transferred to Akron, where he earned third-team All-MAC honors in 2015. But injuries plagued Marcus during his senior year, and an NFL tryout with the Cleveland Browns in 2017 ended with a foot injury.

Injuries also derailed O'Connor, who underwent microfracture surgery on his left knee in 2012. The Colorado native left OSU and returned home, eventually transferring to Colorado State. After sitting out the 2013 season due to transfer rules, O'Connor was forced to give up football because of recurring knee problems.

Ready For More Football?

Five former Ohio State players are attempting to get another shot at NFL stardom by participating in the inaugural season of the Alliance of American Football, an eight-team professional league that kicked off Feb. 9.

Offensive tackle Chase Farris, defensive tackle Tracy Sprinkle and cornerback Doran Grant are on the roster of the Atlanta Legends, wide receiver Jalin Marshall is a member of the Orlando Apollos, and tight end Marcus Baugh is with the San Diego Fleet.

Marshall made the biggest splash among ex-Buckeyes during the league's opening weekend. In addition to scoring the first touchdown in league history – an acrobatic, first-quarter catch worth 26 yards – Marshall later took a reverse handoff and threw a 5-yard touchdown strike to Apollos quarterback Garrett Gilbert during Orlando's 40-6 victory against Atlanta.

The league plans to play a 10-game schedule with playoffs beginning April 20 and the inaugural championship game set for April 27.

OHIO STATE

INSIDER

Hafley: DBs Will Turn And Look

Are you an Ohio State football fan? If you answered yes, chances are you've been frustrated at some point over the last two years when a defensive back failed to turn his head and look for the ball.

The numbers show that those frustrations might actually be pretty reasonable. In 14 games last season, the Buckeyes finished with just 11 interceptions, including just three among the starting cornerbacks. In 2017 the team had 13 picks while the corners had just four. Those numbers pale in comparison to 2016 when the Buckeyes racked up 21 interceptions, including four each for cornerbacks Marshon Lattimore and Gareon Conley. Over the past two years, the corners simply haven't made as many plays on the football.

But you can expect that to change in 2019 under the direction of co-defensive coordinator/defensive backs coach Jeff Hafley, who was asked Feb. 6 if he wants the cornerbacks to turn and look for the ball in coverage. He was thrilled to answer the question.

"All right, so here's the deal on that one, and if I see any of you guys tweet – do you think that we as DB coaches sit there and say, 'Don't look back for the ball?' Like my wife used to come up to me after games and be like, 'Hey, why don't our guys turn back and look for the ball?'" Hafley said. "I'm like, 'Do you want to see my individual tape?' All we do is practice turning and looking for the



JOSH WINSLOW

WATCH THE BALL – Defensive back Shaun Wade, now a sophomore, led Ohio State with three interceptions in 2018.

ball. DB coaches teach to turn and look for the football.

"We promise you we will practice to teach – this is awesome that you asked this because now no one can tweet this out or say this. We are going to work on turning and

looking and trying to intercept the football when we're in man."

Hafley did explain that there are certain situations where turning to look isn't the best strategy, but the Buckeyes will be aggressively going after the ball in 2019.

The new Ohio State assistant, who joined head coach Ryan Day's staff from the San Francisco 49ers, also shed some light on his philosophy when it comes to filling out the lineup. The bottom line is that, no matter who started last season, the top players will get on the field.

"For me, the best guys are going to play, and I mean that," he said. "I've started free agents over first-round draft picks. If I see a guy outworking another guy, I mean, the whole room is going to see that. The whole defense is going to see it. So if that guy shows that he's better, we're going to get the best guys on the field, and I want guys

to feel that way. It's our job to play the best players."

Hafley also said the Buckeyes won't necessarily rely on press man coverage as often as they have in years past with more coverages set to be mixed in. He also hasn't committed to rotating three cornerbacks as Ohio State has done for the past few years but said he's going to find a way to get deserving players on the field.

Former U-M Coaches Meet Columbus Press

Greg Mattison began his collegiate coaching career in 1976 and through 2018 had made stops at nine colleges and with one NFL team, but there's no program he has been associated with more than Michigan. In fact, Mattison has spent a total of 13 years on staff with the Wolverines during two stints, including six total seasons as defensive coordinator.

So what do you do after an eight-year run at Michigan that began in 2011? As far as Mattison is concerned, you head a few hours south to become the co-defensive coordinator at archrival Ohio State.

He was hired by Day earlier this year to replace Greg Schiano, who is now with the New England Patriots. Mattison jumped at the opportunity to coordinate again after spending the last four years as Michigan's defensive line coach.

"I'm very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work at two of the greatest programs in the country and in all of college football," Mattison said Feb. 6. "Luckily you add Notre Dame in there, I kind of say, wow, I've had a pretty good run.

"The big thing, leaving Michigan was a very tough decision. I spent 13 years there. But I also spent 19 out of the last 24 years coordinating, and to have the opportunity to have a co-coordinator (position) at a great university like Ohio State was something that – an opportunity that I really wanted to pursue, and that was the biggest thing."

As rare as it is for a coach to change sides in the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry, it actually happened twice this year. Along with Mattison, Day hired Michigan assistant Al Washington, a Columbus native, to be his linebackers coach.

Washington's situation is a little bit different. He grew up in Columbus and his father, Al Sr., played for the Buckeyes. Washington attended Boston College, where he coached with (and was coached by) Day. He eventually ended up at Michigan in 2018 but spent just one season with the Wolverines before taking the opportunity to return to his hometown.

Like Mattison, though, it wasn't a simple choice for Washington.

"It was a hard decision," Washington said. "When you're in place, wherever you are, you try to be all in. It's not like a steppingstone place. So you really – not only are you involved, your family is involved. It's tough. You know, it's really tough. But

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No BSB Print For 3 Weeks

Per Buckeye Sports Bulletin's traditional post-Recruiting Wrap-Up schedule, the next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin will not be mailed until March 5, a three-week gap.

However, the Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff will still be hard at work, providing all the Ohio State sports news at our electronic BuckeyeSports.com website, free to BSB subscribers.

Football recruiting is ongoing and well covered at BuckeyeSports.com, and readers will also want to follow both basketball teams, the hockey and wrestling teams and much, much more. Additionally, subscribers can talk about recruiting and other events of the day with members of the BSB staff and other Buckeye fans on BuckeyeSports.com's Forum.

As we continue our look at the Ohio State quarterback, we have turned things around on Reprint Thursdays with stories from games against some of the greatest quarterbacks of all time who have faced the Buckeyes in the BSB era. The next installment will feature one of the all-time greats in Peyton Manning on Feb. 14.

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again, like you think about where you are, this is home for me. This is an unbelievable situation and program. You're excited in the same breath.

"But when you respect where you come from, when you respect the situation you were in, it's always a little more difficult."

Day, for his part, admitted that the Michigan ties for Mattison and Washington were a consideration in the hiring process. He also stressed that he wasn't specifically trying to steal coaches from Michigan's staff, and he even called Wolverines head coach Jim Harbaugh before making the moves.

"Like anytime when you're hiring somebody, you want to call their boss and talk to them, obviously get their permission before you address them," Day said. "So I went ahead, did that, had a conversation. I didn't really know Coach up until I had that conversation with him."

Fields Surprised By Martell Transfer

On Jan. 4, quarterback Justin Fields announced his transfer from Georgia to Ohio State. The following day, he was at a Buckeye basketball game in Columbus sitting court-side with quarterback Dwayne Haskins and retired head coach Urban Meyer.

Fellow signal caller Tate Martell was at that game, too, but he wasn't sitting with the trio that become the center of attention at Value City Arena. Less than two weeks later Martell, a sophomore, had transferred to Miami (Fla.) to continue his collegiate career.

Fields, who found out Feb. 8 that he had been granted a waiver by the NCAA to be immediately eligible in 2019, met the Columbus media for the first time Feb. 6 and noted he wasn't expecting Martell to bolt when he picked Ohio State.

"I knew of him, but I didn't really know him," Fields said of Martell. "I guess you can say I was surprised that he left, but we've got to do what's best for us and I wish the best of luck to him."

With Martell gone, the Buckeyes have just three scholarship quarterbacks on the roster for 2019 – Fields, redshirt freshman

Matthew Baldwin and fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov, a graduate transfer from West Virginia. Fields and Baldwin are expected to compete for the starting job this spring, although Fields is a heavy favorite.

The newest Buckeye quarterback had good things to say about his competition.

"Matthew is a great guy and a great competitor," Fields said. "I can tell through what we've been doing that he's smart in the film room, and he's just a nice guy overall."

Fields has been developing a relationship with the receivers as well, including freshman Garrett Wilson, a five-star recruit who was one of six early enrollees this winter.

Wilson, who was high school teammates with Baldwin at Austin (Texas) Lake Travis, noted that Fields is a "humble kid" who has fit in well in Columbus.

"It took probably two days before he started opening up to at least me, but he's a super cool kid," Wilson said. "I like him a lot. He knows what he wants. He's come here and he's grinding. He's working just like everybody else, doesn't expect anything. He's a hard worker and he's going to be a good player."

10 Buckeyes Invited To NFL Combine

It seems like there's an annual tradition of Ohio State having a plethora of athletes invited to the NFL Scouting Combine, and 2019 will be no different. A total of 10 former Buckeyes were invited to the combine this year with the workouts set to take place March 1-4 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, where those 10 players helped Ohio State win each of the past two Big Ten title games.

Ohio State's 10 invitees are behind only Alabama and Clemson this year as the Crimson Tide and Tigers each had 11 players invited.

The former Buckeyes set to compete at the combine are defensive end Nick Bosa, wide receiver Parris Campbell, wide receiver Johnnie Dixon, Haskins, defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones, offensive lineman Michael Jordan, wide receiver Terry McLaurin, offensive tackle Isaiah Prince, cornerback Kendall

2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2018 Record
Aug. 31	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	TBA	TBA	5-7 (3-5 Conference USA)
Sept. 7	CINCINNATI*	TBA	TBA	11-2 (6-2 American Athletic Conference)
Sept. 14	at Indiana	TBA	TBA	5-7 (2-7 Big Ten)
Sept. 21	MIAMI (OHIO)*	TBA	TBA	6-6 (6-2 Mid-American)
Sept. 28	at Nebraska	TBA	TBA	4-8 (3-6 Big Ten)
Oct. 5	MICHIGAN STATE*	TBA	TBA	7-6 (5-4 Big Ten)
Oct. 18	at Northwestern*	TBA	TBA	9-5 (8-1 Big Ten)
Oct. 26	WISCONSIN*	TBA	TBA	8-5 (5-4 Big Ten)
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	TBA	TBA	5-7 (3-6 Big Ten)
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	1-11 (0-9 Big Ten)
Nov. 23	PENN STATE*	TBA	TBA	9-4 (6-3 Big Ten)
Nov. 30	at Michigan*	TBA	TBA	10-3 (8-1 Big Ten)
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

* – 2018 bowl team

** – at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

Sheffield and running back Mike Weber. Of the 10, Bosa, Haskins, Jones, Jordan, Sheffield and Weber all departed for the professional ranks with eligibility still on the table.

A tentative combine schedule has running backs, offensive linemen, kickers and special teamers set to work out Friday, March 1. Quarterbacks, wide receivers and tight ends are next, followed by defensive linemen and linebackers that Sunday. The defensive backs are scheduled for March 4.

With 10 invitees this year, Ohio State reached 60 combine participants from the seven teams coached by Meyer.

OL Signee Planning Mission Trip

Ohio State received a letter of intent from Kahuku, Hawaii, four-star offensive guard Enokk Vimahi, providing a big boost to Day's first class on Feb. 6. That boost might last only one season before a two-year hiatus, though.

Vimahi's plan as things stand is to play his first season at Ohio State before departing on a two-year mission trip, meaning he wouldn't be back with the Buckeyes until 2022.

Day said during his National Signing Day press conference that the Vimahi family had communicated those plans during the recruiting process, and he said Ohio State would be supportive regardless of his choice.

"The communication about the mission, it's something that he and his family will decide kind of at the end of this year and go from there," Day said. "If they decide they want to go for a two-year mission, we'll support that. He'd go away for two years, then come back."

AD Smith Resigns From CFP Committee

After two years, Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith stepped down from

Continued On Page 6

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Continued From Page 5

the College Football Playoff selection committee, executive director Bill Hancock announced Feb. 8.

"Gene has been an invaluable member of our CFP selection committee," Hancock said. "As a former football student-athlete, coach and now collegiate administrator, his influence is deeply appreciated. This is a significant time commitment, and we understand Gene's need to focus on his primary responsibility on campus."

Smith, who had one year left on his term with the CFP, said in a statement that he wanted to spend more time focused on the Buckeyes' transition as Day replaces Meyer.

"Serving on this committee has been an honor," Smith said. "Contributing to this great sport is always a privilege, and I will

miss the time with my colleagues. It is imperative for me to have 100 percent focus in helping our new coach with his transition at The Ohio State University this fall."

In Smith's place, the CFP management committee picked Iowa athletic director Gary Barta for the selection committee under a three-year term starting this year.

"I'm honored to be invited to work on the CFP selection committee," Barta said. "I look forward to serving alongside the other 12 committee members. I've known many of the people involved for years and know they're passionate about college football and have all demonstrated character and integrity throughout their careers."

Despite two years with Smith on the selection committee, Ohio State missed the CFP each season. The Buckeyes went 12-2 in 2017 and 13-1 in 2018. Individuals on the committee with ties to a specific school are required to recuse themselves from the discussions involving that institution during CFP selection meetings.

Schiano Back In NFL

About a month after he left Ohio State to pursue NFL opportunities, Schiano found a new home. According to a Feb. 6 report from the Boston Globe's Jim McBride, Schiano has been hired as defensive coordinator of the New England Patriots.

The news ends weeks of speculation after Schiano's name was linked with New England's efforts to replace linebackers coach and de facto defensive coordinator Brian Flores, whom the Miami Dolphins hired as head coach.

In three years with the Buckeyes from 2016-18, Schiano called the defense. He

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additionally coached the safeties throughout his first two seasons before OSU hired co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Alex Grinch last January. Grinch left Ohio State for Oklahoma, where he will look to reconstruct the Sooners' defense as coordinator.

NFL Network's Ian Rapoport first reported Jan. 23 that Schiano was in Mobile, Ala., for the Senior Bowl and on the cusp of assuming a top defensive role with New England to replace Flores.

Buckeyes All Over New Pro League

The Alliance of American Football, a new professional football league, debuted in early

February, and plenty of former Buckeyes were in on the action.

Playing for the Atlanta Legends are offensive tackle Chase Farris, defensive tackle Tracy Sprinkle and cornerback Doran Grant. Wide receiver Jalin Marshall is with the Orlando Apollos, and tight end Marcus Baugh plays for the San Diego Fleet.

Atlanta struggled in the season opener, a 40-6 loss to Marshall's Apollos. Sprinkle tallied one tackle while Grant had two. Marshall was a standout, catching three passes for 51 yards and a score while throwing a 5-yard touchdown pass as well.

The Fleet lost their opener, 15-6, to San Antonio. Baugh had two catches for 11 yards.

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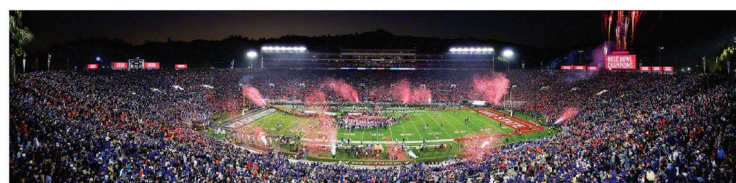
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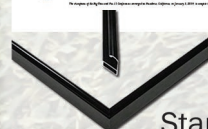
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Nester Flips To Virginia Tech After Late Battle

Continued From Page 1

tory press conference and as he prepared the offense for its Jan. 1 Rose Bowl against Washington. Ohio State lost two pledges during the Dec. 19-21 early signing period – Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star safety Jordan Battle (6-1, 187) to Alabama and Oak Park, Mich., four-star quarterback Dwan Mathis (6-6, 205) to Georgia. Then OSU's long and winding re-recruitment of Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley four-star offensive guard Doug Nester ended with the 6-6½, 305-pounder's flip to Virginia Tech on National Signing Day.

But with the Buckeyes' addition of Georgia transfer quarterback Justin Fields (6-3, 225) on Jan. 4 and a pair of top targets in the trenches on National Signing Day, needs were addressed. OSU earned signatures from Kahuku, Hawaii, four-star offensive guard Enokk Vimahi (6-4½, 263) and Indianapolis Ben Davis three-star offensive tackle Dawand Jones (6-8, 360) on Feb. 6, softening the blow of Nester's departure.

"O-line was an area of concern for us," said Day. "We had to go out there and kind of uncover all the stones."

Vimahi, whom Ohio State offered Jan. 4 before a Jan. 25-27 official visit sealed the deal and allowed the Buckeyes to beat out Oklahoma and Southern California in just one month, announced in favor of OSU about 30 minutes before Day took the lectern at 1 p.m. in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center team room, 7:30 a.m. in Hawaii. Five hours later, Jones followed suit during a ceremony at Ben Davis in Indianapolis.

"He is a terrific, two-sport athlete who was offered scholarships in both football and basketball," Day said of Jones, who nearly committed to Kent State in the fall for basketball before a football offer spree exploded in November and December, including Ohio State on Nov. 21. "We love his athleticism and length. He comes from one of the premier high school programs in Indiana and the Midwest."

Vimahi marked an extraordinary recruitment for Day, who gave credit to several Buckeyes for assisting in getting the 247Sports composite's No. 124 overall prospect and No. 7 offensive guard from Hawaii to Ohio in four weeks. OSU offered Vimahi one day before the All-American Bowl at the Alamodome in San Antonio, eventually delaying his Jan. 19 commitment announcement before he officially visited Columbus the weekend prior to National Signing Day.

"It started honestly in the All-American game when (Vimahi) got around some of our guys, including (wide receiver) Garrett Wilson, (center) Harry (Miller) and (defensive end) Zach Harrison," Day said. "The feedback we got about him was through the roof, he and his family. That proved to be true. We thought he'd be a great fit here."

"We wouldn't just go over to Hawaii if it wasn't a good fit. It was. Then he came up for a visit, (and) we all hit it off. That was great. Then we were able to spend some time out at school with he and his parents. We all hit it off. There were some connections with some of the guys on our team, too, that knew each other. That was really good."



TIM MOODY

CHANGE OF HEART – Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley four-star guard Doug Nester flipped from Ohio State to Virginia Tech on National Signing Day.

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COVER STORY

Setting The Stage

Ohio State's finish for 2019 was going to be small by design. After the Buckeyes signed 26 recruits in 2018, finishing second in the 247Sports composite team rankings behind only Georgia, they saw their 17-member group for 2019 slide to 14th despite an elite haul in terms of quality.

According to the 247Sports composite's average player rating, OSU finished third at 91.87, which topped the Big Ten and trailed only Alabama (94.38) and Georgia (93.32) nationally.

"The quality is what I keep going back to," Day said. "A couple people asked how come it's not a bigger class. I think some people may not understand you only have 85 scholarships every year. You can only sign up to 85. Again, going back with we don't have a lot of guys leaving the program voluntarily – we only had so many spots this year, only two going into this last signing day."

Among the additions, six are already enrolled early. Harrison, Wilson, Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian four-star running back Marcus Crowley (6-1, 200), Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic four-star safety Ronnie Hickman (6-1, 200), and the Mentor, Ohio, four-star duo of offensive tackle Ryan Jacoby (6-5, 270) and defensive end Noah Potter (6-5, 250) are on campus with Fields.

One of the biggest difference makers for the quality of the class was Harrison. As the 247Sports composite's No. 12 overall prospect, No. 2 strongside defensive end and No. 1 player in Ohio from Lewis Center Olentangy Orange, he chose to stay home over Michigan and Penn State.

Scheduled to arrive in June are Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic four-star running back Steele Chambers (6-2, 215); Cleveland St. Ignatius four-star linebacker Tommy Eichenberg (6-3, 225); Memphis (Tenn.) Whitehaven three-star tight end Cormontae Hamilton (6-2, 263); Wake Forest, N.C., three-star defensive tackle Jaden McKenzie (6-3, 285); Miller; Lexington, Ohio, four-star linebacker Cade Stover (6-4, 225); St. Louis Cardinal Ritter College Prep four-star wide receiver Jameson Williams (6-2, 170); Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne three-star athlete Craig Young (6-4, 200); Jones; and Vimahi.

Out of those anticipated arrivals, the Buckeyes' in-state haul comprised just two

players in Eichenberg and Stover, one of whom was nearly a five-star talent in national recruiting analyst Tom Lemming's eyes.

"He was almost a five-star player," Lemming said of Stover. "I gave him four stars-plus. He's an athlete who plays a lot of positions, and he's still, I think, able to gain 20 more pounds because of his length and frame. He can run, he's got tremendous football instincts, and I think he's going to have a tremendous career at Ohio State. He's got all the tools to be a major, major talent."

Day echoed those sentiments, adding that Eichenberg and Young – a versatile addition from nearby Indiana – give OSU's linebackers a solid boost.

"Those three guys right there, really good athletes," Day said. "Cade Stover, Gatorade Player of the Year, excellent athlete. Tommy comes from a great program. We were happy to get him down the stretch in December. Then Craig Young, an excellent athlete that can do a lot for us."

Now the focus shifts to 2020, when Ohio State is projected to have a much bigger class with around 25 scholarships likely to open up. While the Buckeyes' finish in 2019 had questions, Day smoothed things over, setting up for top-ranked potential in each of the next two cycles with stability and time on OSU's side.

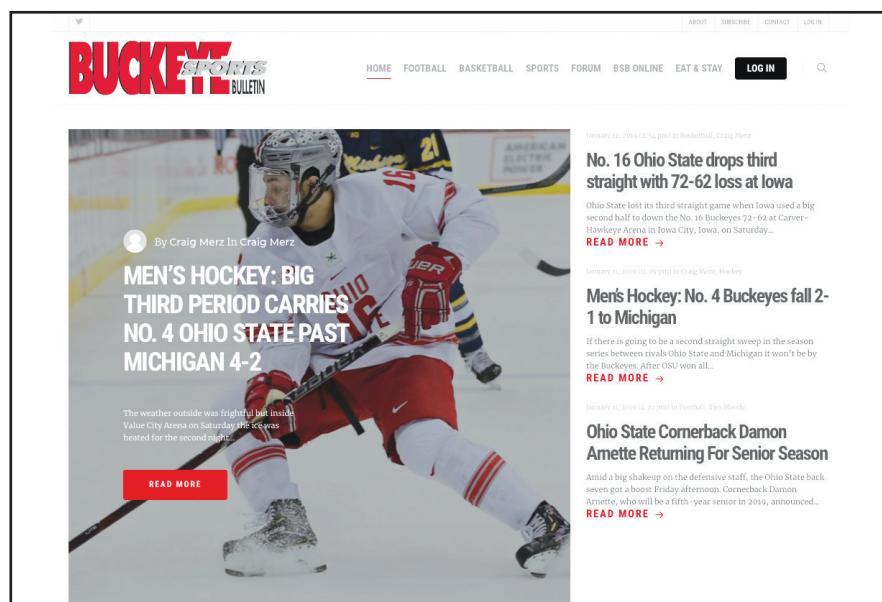
"When you're walking in these shoes, you notice things you didn't notice before," Day said. "More than when I was an assistant coach, I realized what great kids we have, from all the way across the board. When you're just in the offense, working with the quarterbacks, you're in the offensive world, you know those guys. You see the guys on defense, wider picture, you realize what great kids they are."

"What a great university this is, the power Ohio State has all over the country. Whether I'm in Hawaii, Seattle, New York, Cleveland, it doesn't matter. There's Buckeyes everywhere. When you walk in, have that block 'O' on your shirt, people respect you. People pull for Ohio State."

"You shouldn't have to compromise when you go to recruit a student-athlete here. You should be able to recruit a great player, great families and a great student. We've done that here and will continue to do that."

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Ohio State Starts 2021 Class With Momentum

In the two weeks prior to Feb. 6, National Signing Day dominated Ohio State recruiting headlines. As the Buckeyes completed their class of 2019, they also got ahead on 2020 and 2021, building momentum for the next two. OSU's action on the trail produced its first commitment for 2021, while waves were made with top targets and priority prospects in 2020 as well.

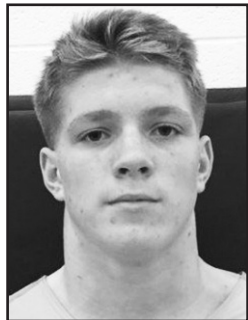
RECRUITING OUTLOOK

Garrett Stepien

Ohio State completed its 2019 class ranked 14th nationally in the 247Sports composite team rankings with 17 letters of intent but third when looking at average player rating (91.87). With seven commitments for 2020, the Buckeyes sit fourth nationally. On the board in 2021, OSU became one of just seven teams to have gained a pledge for that year.

Sawyer Becomes 1st 2021 Buckeye

Super Bowl Sunday started with an Ohio State commitment in the afternoon when the Buckeyes added Jack Sawyer to the 2021 recruiting class.



Jack Sawyer

The 6-5, 219-pound defensive end from Pickerington (Ohio) North took to Twitter when he announced his decision to stay home at OSU on Feb. 3. "First, I want to thank all of my family and friends who have pushed me my whole life and made me the person I am today," a note posted to Sawyer's tweet read. "Second, I want to thank every single coach and university that has taken their time to recruit me. I appreciate everything you guys have done. I also want to give a big thanks to every coach I have had along the way that has helped me get to this point in my career. This whole recruiting process has been a great experience and I've met some amazing people along the way."

"With that being said, I've talked with my family and decided I have to do what's best for me and my future. That's why I'll be committing to THE Ohio State University!! Big thank you to Coach (Ryan) Day and (defensive line coach Larry) Johnson for

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1989

National Signing Day took a twist for Ohio State's 23-member recruiting class of 1989 when Cincinnati Forest Park defensive back Carlton Gray (6-2, 180) picked Miami (Fla.) over the Buckeyes during a Feb. 3 press conference at his high school.

However, the next day he switched the decision and actually committed to UCLA. Gray said he simply wanted to get away from home, which left OSU in third place behind the Hurricanes and Bruins.

"I wanted to leave Ohio, grow up on my own," Gray said. "What it came down to was that I wanted to leave, and that's the decision I made."

Ohio State did everything it could to get Gray to Columbus, including head coach John Cooper and eight assistant coaches visiting Gray at school in late January. During the first week of February, nearly two dozen Buckeye players took part in a teleconference with Gray. The following night, two-time Heisman winner and assistant athletic director Archie Griffin called Gray over the phone. Nothing worked as Miami and UCLA got to Gray at the buzzer.

25 Years Ago – 1994

After Ohio State lost five offensive linemen to graduation at the end of the 1993 season, the Buckeyes replaced those departures with five top prospects in the trenches among the 20 signees they reeled in for their 1994 recruiting class.

The reinforcements included Brooks Burris (Logan, Ohio; 6-8, 280), Harvey (Ill.) Thornton Township's Winfield Garnett (6-7, 310), Eric Gohlstin (Cleveland St. Ignatius; 6-5, 295), Orlando Pace (Sandusky, Ohio; 6-8, 305) and Coffeyville (Kan.) Junior College's Jamie Sumner (6-4, 300).

"It's probably the best class we've had since I've been here," Cooper said. "It's a good, solid group of players that a lot of other people wanted as well."

20 Years Ago – 1999

The balance of keeping in-state talent home and going hard after national targets paid off in a big way for Ohio State's 24-signee recruiting class of 1999, which finished second to Texas in the national consensus poll.

The Longhorns, led by first-year head coach Mack Brown, hauled in 13 SuperPrep All-Americans and six USA Today All-USA

players, including offensive player of the year Chris Simms, to edge the Buckeyes.

Like OSU's approach in Ohio, UT kept the top players in the talent-rich Lone Star State home.

"They got 10 of the top 25 players in the state, and nobody has done that since 1978," said Bobby Burton of Texas-based The National Recruiting Advisor. "Texas did it that year, and 17 of their signees ended up getting drafted."

15 Years Ago – 2004

Headlined by 14 Ohioans, Ohio State announced 23 signees in its 2004 recruiting class on National Signing Day, but with several side notes.

The group included quarterback Todd Boeckman, who was already on campus as a grayshirt, and it excluded well-rated Ohioans Tony Pittman and A.J. Trapasso, in addition to two other incoming players whose scholarships were instead going to count toward the 2005 cycle.

"I think it's a very special class, I really do," said recruiting coordinator Bill Conley, adding that the coaching staff was excited about the Buckeyes' entire haul.

Securing in-state signees, Conley stressed, was of increased importance to OSU with how highly-regarded Ohio's senior class graded out compared to other years.

"All in all, I believe it was a very good class," said head coach Jim Tressel.

10 Years Ago – 2009

With 25 signatures to finish National Signing Day on Feb. 4, Ohio State signed its largest recruiting class since 2002.

The Buckeyes also got their 2010 cycle started when Cincinnati Anderson five-star offensive tackle Andrew Norwell committed.

"He has the potential to be one of the best offensive linemen to ever come out of Ohio," Norwell's coach, Jeff Giesting, told BSB.

The 6-6, 255-pounder picked OSU after going to Columbus on several occasions in 2008. Norwell attended the spring game in April, followed by the fall opener against Youngstown State in September.

"I liked it, going up there," Norwell told BSB in December. "It's a cool stadium, the fans are great. It means I've accomplished a lot to get an offer from there. All my hard work paid off."

Five Years Ago – 2014

To cap Ohio State's 2014 recruiting class

at 23 members, the Buckeyes welcomed a surprise addition Feb. 5 when Montclair, N.J., three-star defensive end Darius Slade (6-5, 240) announced in favor of OSU.

The 6-4, 230-pound Slade, who originally committed to Nebraska and then flipped to Michigan State prior to National Signing Day, came to Columbus after a late push from newly hired defensive line coach Larry Johnson.

Prior to Ohio State, Johnson had coached Slade's cousin, Miami Dolphins defensive tackle Jared Odrick, while at Penn State.

"We're talking about relationships that develop over years," Johnson said. "It's just not today. I've known (Slade). There was a relationship. It was just a matter of him deciding what he wants to do. So we communicated and talked and at the end of the day, he's a Buckeye. I'm really excited about that."

One Year Ago – 2018

Ohio State closed its 2018 recruiting class Feb. 7 with some surprises, signing Tampa (Fla.) Berkeley Prep five-star offensive tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere (6-6, 272) and Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic four-star defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste (6-5, 215).

"We just signed 26 players at a very highly ranked class," head coach Urban Meyer said. "A class that I think it follows suit the last two that we have brought in here as far as academic fit for Ohio State University, culture fit and a character fit. I just want to credit our staff because they did a phenomenal job."

Although the Buckeyes missed out on Waldorf (Md.) North Point four-star offensive tackle Rasheed Walker (6-6, 290), who went with Big Ten rival Penn State instead, Petit-Frere's announcement the morning of National Signing Day softened the blow.

"We had to," Meyer said of getting Petit-Frere. "Max Wray and then obviously Thayer Munford is going to be a very good player. But everybody in the country is looking for the tall, athletic elongated guys that can bend, and they're hard to find. That's why they're paid so well in the NFL because those body types are hard, hard to find. And you throw in a 3.8 GPA on top of that, a very intelligent guy, a very mature guy, and he's a great finish to that class."

OSU finished second nationally in the 247Sports composite team rankings, behind only Georgia.

Sawyer starts the Buckeyes' 2021 group with a bang as he wraps up his recruitment almost two years before the early signing period arrives in December 2020. The five-star Sawyer is the 247Sports composite's No. 3 overall prospect, No. 1 strongside defensive end and No. 1 player in Ohio for 2021.

As a sophomore, Sawyer led Pickerington North to a 6-4 overall record. His six sacks paced the Panthers, and he added 62 tackles with 15 for losses.

"Here, we've obviously had some really special kids," Pickerington North head coach Nate Hillerich told BSB. "But what's

a little different about (Sawyer) is his toughness, his work ethic and attitude. You find so many times that kids – the four-star, the five-star kids – they don't work as hard in the offseason. They don't play every play hard. They take plays off. He's one of those kids that he doesn't do that. He's just a special player. He's a motor. He has all of those things that are going to make him special at the next level."

A two-sport star, Sawyer's athleticism and size led to Division I looks in football and basketball. Cincinnati, Michigan, Kentucky, Michigan State, Penn State,

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ASK AN ANALYST

With Buckeye Grove's Marc Givler

Given where the offensive line group was in December with only two signees, how should OSU feel about its recruiting results in the trenches after adding two more on National Signing Day?

"Ultimately, it is a results-oriented business. So it's not – you can't get too caught up in how you get to a certain point. It's just that you get there. I can't imagine Ohio State's going to want to do this again next year, where they are scrambling for essentially three offensive linemen in the last eight weeks of the cycle. Certainly, how they got to this place is not ideal. But, ultimately, they got a couple more tackles. They got a guy in (five-star center) Harry Miller who is, I think, a candidate to play very early along the interior. He's definitely one of the best guys in the country. And if they can add (Rutgers grad transfer Jonah) Jackson to this, as a guy who can kind of come in next year and immediately either start or provide quality depth – but I imagine would start, I don't think they'd bring him in not to start – then it essentially worked out. But I don't think that they want to redo this process over again, in terms of how they arrived to where they got to."

As things stand, sophomore quarterback Justin Fields, redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin and fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov are Ohio State's only scholarship quarterbacks. With spring camp set to start March 4, when might OSU be able to pull in a fourth signal caller, or is that idea too unrealistic after how much recruiting the position has changed due to the transfer portal?

"I think it's going to be very difficult to add a graduate transfer – or, really, any transfer – quarterback at this point. Maybe there's a situation of a young guy who leaves

a program after a year in the next few months that can make some sense. I know that the (Nick) Starkel kid has come up (from Texas A&M). It's going to take a kid who's pretty sure of himself, and it's going to take a kid who isn't particularly looking at the depth chart, which is – again, it's going to be hard to find in the transfer market because a lot of guys transfer because of the depth chart. It's just going to be hard because it just seems so set up for Ohio State the next few years with what their quarterback situation is going to be.

"It's going to be Justin Fields. ... Then it's going to be Matthew Baldwin after that. It seems very set. But I think it's going to be hard to get a quality player to come in and have the confidence to either shake that up or the patience to kind of let that go. I ultimately think they're going to have to take a second quarterback, maybe, in 2020. But if certainly not in 2020, then 2021 is going to have to be a two-quarterback class. But I think they're going to have to take a very hard look at a second quarterback in 2020."

With 17 signees, Ohio State capped the cycle ranked 14th nationally and third in the Big Ten, according to the 247Sports composite team rankings. However, the Buckeyes finished third nationally in average rating (91.87) behind Georgia (93.82) and Alabama (94.38). Overall, what do you make of OSU's group?

"I think it's hard to be upset with how this finished, given you changed coaches on Dec. 4. I think if everyone is being honest with themselves, they would have expected more carnage after Urban Meyer retired. I really think that. I know they lost three very good players in (Huntington [W.Va.] Spring Valley four-star offensive

guard) Doug Nester, (Oak Park, Mich., four-star quarterback and Georgia signee) Dwan Mathis and (Fort Lauderdale [Fla.] St. Thomas Aquinas four-star safety and Alabama signee) Jordan Battle. Battle, especially, is the one I think personally stings the most. Battle, I think, is a real difference-maker. I think he's a big-time player. They may have lost him anyway. That was already starting to get dicey with just the Urban Meyer rumors and everything else. Alabama had already dug their heels in there anyway.

"Without the turmoil, without the coaching change, this class probably is closer to 18, 19, 20 kids. I think they would have added a lineman or a couple linemen anyway (on offense), and then they obviously would have liked to have kept Mathis, Battle and Nester. So there's a little disappointment there in terms of not quite keeping it all together, but I just don't know how you can look at this and – knowing what happened with Urban – think this was a huge failure. I think Ryan Day did a fantastic job keeping things together at the end, and he ended up pulling off a surprise with (Kahuku, Hawaii, four-star guard Enokk Vimahi). So it is what it is.

"The class has six or seven guys at the top that I think are very good. They're going to come in and contribute pretty early. Then you go from there and you build towards 2020. I've said this for a year, really – the 2019 class sort of got a feel for nationally that, if there's a year to maybe not have your best class and to not maybe have 25 kids sign, it's this year. It's not the best class nationally for anybody. The opposite of that is true next year when it's just loaded everywhere in 2020. They're going to have a ton of scholarships, too. So I think there's an opportunity here to really load up in 2020."

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

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

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Darvon Hubbard	RB	6-0	200	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Jakob James	OT	6-5	275	★★★	Cincinnati Elder
Paris Johnson	OT	6-7	285	★★★★★	Cincinnati St. Xavier
Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Gee Scott	WR	6-3	211	★★★★	Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	6-1	188	★★★★	Rockwall, Texas
Luke Wypler	C	6-3½	285	★★★★	Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional

Player in the class of 2021 who has issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jack Sawyer	DE	6-5	219	★★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) North

Maryland, Pittsburgh, OSU, Indiana, Georgia Tech, Rutgers, Notre Dame, Purdue, Oklahoma and Virginia offered him in football over the past year and a half. Stony Brook – under the direction of second-year head coach Jeff Boals, a former Ohio State assistant under former head coach Thad Matta from 2009-16 – became his first basketball offer in July.

Sawyer took multiple trips to campus throughout Ohio State's 2018 season. He came to Columbus for the Buckeyes' games

against Tulane (Sept. 22), Minnesota (Oct. 13) and Michigan (Nov. 24).

Huge Recruiting Weekend Preceded Signing Day

Before the Buckeyes raced to the finish line for 2019, Ohio State hosted underclassmen Feb. 2 with notable names from 2020 and 2021 on campus.

Headlining the rising seniors, Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson (6-7½, 295) was back in Columbus,

Final 2019 247Sports Composite Ohio Rankings

Rank	Name	Position	High School	College
1.	Zach Harrison	DE	Olentangy Orange	Ohio State
2.	Jowon Briggs	DT	Cincinnati Walnut Hills	Virginia
3.	Zeke Correll	C	Cincinnati Anderson	Notre Dame
4.	Cade Stover	OLB	Mansfield Lexington	Ohio State
5.	Nolan Rumler	OG	Akron Hoban	Michigan
6.	Jestin Jacobs	OLB	Clayton Northmont	Iowa
7.	Ryan Jacoby	OT	Mentor	Ohio State
8.	Tommy Eichenberg	ILB	Cleveland St. Ignatius	Ohio State
9.	Noah Potter	DE	Mentor	Ohio State
10.	Erick All	TE	Fairfield	Michigan

and he linked up with two prospects from his hometown when Princeton's four-star duo of defensive end Darrion Henry and outside linebacker Jaheim Thomas appeared on campus.

Henry (6-6, 260) and Thomas (6-5, 218) made multiple gameday trips to Ohio Stadium throughout the fall, most recently Nov. 24 while taking in OSU's 62-39 rout of Michigan, before administrators at Princeton received an in-school visit from Day and Larry Johnson to check on both Jan. 11.

Offered last year after his Feb. 19 visit, Henry has been atop the Buckeyes' board, emerging as a national recruit with 25 offers. He is the 247Sports composite's no. 46 overall prospect, No. 4 strongside defensive end

and No. 2 player in Ohio – behind only Paris Johnson.

On the other hand, Thomas has been on Ohio State's radar but has yet to land an offer, despite his top-300 status as the 247Sports composite's No. 255 overall prospect, No. 17 outside linebacker and No. 4 player in Ohio leading to 25 offers.

The 2021 duo of recently offered Philadelphia St. Joseph's quarterback Kyle McCord (6-3, 195) and wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. (6-3½, 174) were joined by teammate and Ohio State offer candidate Jeremiah Trotter Jr. (6-0, 190). While the Buckeyes extended offers Jan. 16 to McCord and

Continued On Page 12

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Ohio State In On 2021 Ohio Prospects Early

Continued From Page 11

Harrison, they continue to keep their eyes on Trotter. Like Harrison, whose father is Hall of Fame receiver Marvin Harrison, Trotter is another NFL legacy as the son of former linebacker Jeremiah Trotter, who played for three teams in the league. Trotter currently holds offers from Maryland, Temple, Syracuse, Houston, Baylor, Oklahoma State and Central Florida.

Speaking of legacies, one with an Ohio State bloodline returned to campus when Pickerington (Ohio) Central 2021 wide receiver Lorenzo Styles Jr. (6-1, 170) made the trip. Among his 14 offers early on, including Notre Dame and Michigan, Styles picked up an offer Dec. 7 from the Buckeyes and had previously visited Nov. 24. He is the son of former OSU linebacker Lorenzo Styles (1992-94).

Nine days after Ohio State extended an offer Jan. 24 to Blake Corum, the 2020 four-star running back from Baltimore St. Frances made it to Columbus. The 5-9, 180-pounder possesses 29 offers after he added Tennessee (Jan. 24) and Penn State (Jan. 29) to his growing list later in the week. Corum is the 247Sports composite's No. 244 overall prospect, No. 19 running back and No. 12 player in Maryland.

From up north, Donovan Edwards drove down to Columbus for an Ohio State visit after Day and co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison stopped by Jan. 17 at West Bloomfield, Mich., for the 2021 running back and 2020 four-star safety target Makari Paige (6-3, 182). The 5-11, 190-pound Edwards picked up an offer Sept. 22 during his gameday trip to Ohio Stadium for the Buckeyes' 49-6 victory against Tulane. He holds 14 offers – from Indiana, Kentucky,

Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota, Missouri, Notre Dame, Penn State, Pittsburgh, Purdue, Oregon and Syracuse, in addition to OSU. Another product of West Bloomfield also made the trip to Ohio's capital in 2021 defensive back prospect Maxwell Hairston (6-0), who has yet to receive an offer but visited Michigan (Jan. 26) beforehand.

OSU Targets Another In-State 2021 DE

Ohio State started its 2021 class strong with Sawyer and wasted no time pushing hard for another in-state defensive end for that cycle. The Buckeyes hosted Najee Story among their Feb. 2 visitors and offered the Solon, Ohio, prospect.

The 6-4, 220-pounder picked up an offer from West Virginia two months ago, his first, after he visited the Mountaineers the

weekend of Nov. 23. He added offers from Michigan, OSU and Penn State between late January and early February.

"I did speak with (running backs coach Tony) Alford the night I got back from Michigan, and he told me he intended to do something in person but that wasn't possible because things got canceled," Story told Bill Greene of 247Sports. "He went ahead and offered me a scholarship right then. Ohio State has been the team I've watched growing up, so for them to offer me is hard to put into words.

"I was (at Ohio State) for bowl practice earlier (in December) and spoke with Ryan Day. He told me that they are going to seriously recruit me, and he wanted to make sure I did not leave the state of Ohio. I think all of these teams are going to recruit me hard, but my focus will be on getting better as a player."

Story missed the second half of his sophomore season in 2018 with a broken leg, suffered Oct. 5 during Solon's 21-0 loss to Euclid, but he showed enough throughout six games to emerge early on recruiting radars of Power Five programs. Among the suitors, the Wolverines appear to be making a big impression early on.

"I was at Michigan last week for a junior day, and they offered me at the end of the visit," Story said. "They gave us a tour and told us what Michigan was all about, and then they took us to a bowling alley afterward.

"Before we left, their new defensive line coach Shaun Nua came over to me and said he couldn't let me leave without giving me a Michigan offer. I was very surprised by that, to be honest. It felt amazing, and I was pretty speechless because I had just met Coach Nua that day. This was my first visit to Michigan, and everything was great."

Ohio State Offers 2021 Athlete On NSD

The morning of signing day, the Buckeyes offered Dallas (Ga.) Paulding County 2021 athlete Smael Mondon. The 6-3, 220-pounder announced the offer from OSU to mark his seventh overall. Mondon also holds offers from Duke, Florida, Mississippi State, N.C. State, Tennessee and Virginia Tech.

Mondon plays outside linebacker and running back for Paulding County, where in his sophomore season for the Patriots he had two touchdowns and 172 yards on 55 carries (3.1 average) at running back in eight games.

Buckeyes Offer In-State 2021 OT

Ohio State offered Richfield (Ohio) Revere 2021 offensive tackle Ben Christman on Feb. 5. OSU's offer to the 6-6, 299-pounder came less than a month after Alford, the area recruiter, checked on Christman at the high school Jan. 11.

"I called Tony Alford last week and we were talking for a little bit, and he told me he wanted me to speak to Coach Day," Christman told Greene. "We spoke for a little bit and Coach Day said some nice things about my play, and then he went ahead and gave me the offer to play for Ohio State.

"They are a big-time school, and that was very exciting news to hear. The offer caught me off guard, to be honest, and I wasn't expecting it at all. I was shocked, and I'm extremely grateful to have this offer. It was very exciting to get an offer from Ohio State, just as all offers are exciting to me."

Prior to Ohio State, his seventh offer, Christman started to blow up in recruit-



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Superlatives For Ohio State's 2019 Recruiting Class

Ohio State didn't have one of the nation's top classes in the rankings for 2019 – the Buckeyes finished 14th in the 247Sports composite – but the group is still chock full of talented prospects. In fact, in terms of average rating, Ryan Day's first class in charge finished third in the nation.

Of the 17 signees, six have already arrived on campus, giving them a chance to play early, while the other 11 will hit the ground running this summer. With the class finalized, we handed out superlatives for the newest Buckeyes.

Most Likely To Succeed: Harry Miller has it all. The five-star center is already 6-4 and 310 pounds, and he hasn't even arrived on campus yet. As the nation's No. 30 overall prospect in the 247Sports composite, Miller is the second-highest rated player in the class, but he might be the surest thing in the group. The Buford, Ga., native has a chance to break into the two-deep right away along the interior offensive line and eventually become a multiyear starter for the Buckeyes.

Future Captain: Four-star offensive tackle Ryan Jacoby (6-5, 270) out of Mentor, Ohio, was identified early in the process by Ohio State, and it's easy to see why the Buckeyes wanted him in the fold. On the field he has high potential for sure, but Jacoby is impressive off the field as well. As an early enrollee he has attacked winter workouts with a positive attitude despite a big step up from the high school level. He has the poise and attitude that it takes to be a captain in Columbus and could be joining a long line of Ohio natives to earn that distinction.

First To The Field: What happens when a team loses three of its top six receivers in a single year? Well, at Ohio State at least, those players are replaced by one of the highest-rated prospects in program history. That's where five-star wideout Garrett Wilson enters the equation. He's already on campus as an early enrollee, and assuming the 6-1, 180-pound player can keep up from a physical standpoint, he has the ball skills to immediately lock down a

spot in the rotation. It wouldn't even be a shock to see the Austin (Texas) Lake Travis product starting games by the end of the year.

Fan Favorite: Mansfield (Ohio) Lexington four-star linebacker signee Cade Stover showed off a taste of his personality with a commitment video filmed on his family's farm. If that didn't endear him to Ohio State fans already, his play on the field certainly will. The in-state star is listed at 6-4 and 225 pounds already, and Stover proved in high school that he has the ability to make plays all over the field. He'll only get bigger, faster and stronger going forward as he aims to join the ranks of star linebackers from the Buckeye State. The fans are going to enjoy watching that process play out.

Biggest Recruiting Win: Adding some offensive linemen late in the process was important, but there was nothing more important for Ohio State's 2019 class than getting five-star defensive end Zach Harrison to stay home with the Buckeyes. That's exactly what the Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange product did, spurning heavy pursuit from Big Ten East rivals Michigan and Penn State to enroll early in Columbus. Now Harrison (6-5, 243) will be honing his skills while wearing scarlet and gray instead of one shade of blue or another.

Underrated (For Now): Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy running back Marcus Crowley (6-1, 200) was a three-star prospect, but that doesn't do his skill set justice. Crowley was the Gatorade Player of the Year in Florida after rushing for more than 2,000 yards and averaging over 10 yards a carry as a senior. Now Crowley is enrolled early in Columbus in a running back room that has just two returning contributors in J.K. Dobbins and Master Teague. Crowley has a chance to see the field early and, if his development goes as planned, could have a Chris Olave-esque impact by the end of the 2019 season.

– Tim Moody

National Team Rankings

Rk.	Team	Signees
1.	Alabama	27
2.	Georgia	24
3.	Texas	24
4.	Texas A&M	27
5.	LSU	25
6.	Oklahoma	24
7.	Oregon	26
8.	Michigan	26
9.	Florida	25
10.	Clemson	29
11.	Auburn	21
12.	Tennessee	23
13.	Penn State	23
14.	Ohio State	17
15.	Notre Dame	22
16.	Florida State	22
17.	Washington	22
18.	USC	26
19.	South Carolina	24
20.	Nebraska	27
21.	Stanford	23
22.	Ole Miss	31
23.	Arkansas	25
24.	Mississippi State	21
25.	Purdue	26

*247Sports composite rankings

Houston Willowridge 2021 wide receiver Latrell Neville (6-3, 195), and he has since set his commitment date for Sept. 15, 2020.

He possesses 27 offers – 19 of which came after OSU got involved – but plans to make a decision one way or another by that deadline in honor of his late father.

Texas A&M has been involved in Neville's recruitment as well. While he plans to take a trip to Columbus for spring camp at some point in March or April, according to Jeremy Birmingham of Lettermen Row, Neville's visit with the Aggies the weekend of Dec. 17 marks his latest. Neville made the in-state trek to College Station with Stafford, Texas, 2020 three-star defensive end prospect Robert Wooten (6-3, 230).

For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers, daily. For simple sign-up information, see page 5.

ing after he finished the season. Christman picked up offers from Cincinnati (Sept. 24), Pittsburgh (Dec. 3) and Toledo (Dec. 5) upon the completion of his sophomore campaign. Kent State offered Jan. 21, followed Jan. 24 by Iowa State and Penn State.

In the middle of basketball season with Revere, Christman's schedule is full on weekends. However, he plans to make his return to Columbus and visit the Buckeyes once the hoops campaign wraps up after Feb. 22.

"For me, I'm just grateful that they watched my film, evaluated me, and think that I'm good enough to play for Ohio State," Christman said. "So far, Coach Alford has been the coach doing the recruiting for Ohio State. I have not had the chance to meet

(OSU offensive line coach Greg Studrawa) yet, but I'm sure we will definitely meet at some point."

Christman is not yet rated in the 247Sports composite, but he is widely expected to be among the top available prospects at his position.

2020 4-Star RB Releases Top 8

Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star Darvon Hubbard became Ohio State's first running back for 2020 when he announced his commitment July 25, but the Buckeyes are involved with an abundance of highly ranked prospects at the position for the cycle. One of OSU's tar-

gets is Mesquite (Texas) Poteet four-star Seth McGowan.

The 5-11, 200-pounder possessed 27 offers before he trimmed his list of preferred programs to eight. Among his cut, he included Ohio State, which offered May 17.

McGowan's top eight also included Alabama, Georgia, LSU, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Southern California and Texas A&M. He is the 247Sports composite's No. 109 overall prospect, No. 10 running back and No. 16 player in Texas.

2021 WR Target Sets Commitment Date

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Rankings Not A Concern For Multitalented Young

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Which position Craig Young will play at Ohio State is yet to be determined, but that isn't because there is not a spot for him on the field. The three-star Buckeye signee from Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne can play a number of different positions.

Wayne head coach Derrick Moore used the versatile Young in a variety of ways on the way to a 9-3 season and a 4A sectional title.

"We played him at defensive end, outside linebacker, corner, safety – wherever we felt like we needed to shut a team down," Moore told BSB.

Not only was Young a staple on the

Wayne defense, he also impacted the game on offense. Standing 6-4, 200 pounds, he used his combination of size and speed to thrive at wide receiver, hauling in 35 receptions for 700 yards and 12 touchdowns as a senior.

Young also rushed for a score and averaged a stellar 20.0 yards per catch, but despite his success at wideout, he was mainly recruited to play defense at Ohio State.

"I'm not sure where they will put me at, but it really doesn't matter to me," Young told BSB. "I just want to get on the field."

While making plays all over the field, Young recorded 42 tackles, including 10 tackles for loss and 5½ sacks. He added two pass deflections, one forced fumble, one blocked field goal and one fumble

recovery that he returned 45 yards for a touchdown.

In addition to his success on the football field, Young is a standout track athlete. As a junior, he won the sectional finals in the 100-meter and 200-meter dashes, and he eventually took third place in the state final with a blazing time of 10.58 seconds in the 100.

"Explosive, very fast," Moore said when describing Young. "A word that comes to mind is versatile. He's very versatile, can play a lot of positions – wherever they choose to put him. He's the type of player that listens, works hard and he's a big-play guy."

When an athlete is extremely physically gifted concerns may arise regarding his or her work ethic. Those who are inherently athletic often do not have to work as hard as others to achieve success, but Young does not take his ability for granted.

"Me running that fast is just a blessing, just God-given athletic ability. I'm really thankful for that," Young said. "I know that everything comes easy to me, and I always keep something in my head. I always believe that there's somebody out there that's the same as me, but also working. And if I keep that in my head, I just know I have to keep working harder and just to be the best I can be."

Young's athletic prowess does not end on the gridiron or the track. He averaged 17.4 points and 7.5 rebounds for the Wayne basketball team as a junior.

Initially, Young had decided to sit out his senior seasons for basketball and track, but ultimately he had a change of heart.

"I was just thinking to myself that I was being selfish to the seniors I came in with," Young said. "We've been playing with each other ever since seventh grade, and I was just being really selfish with myself and just not finishing out my high school career. It's not all about me, it's also about the people I came in with so I just decided to play with them and have fun with the rest of my senior year."

While competing with his high school teammates for the last time, Young pre-

pares to join a talented crop of incoming freshmen in Columbus. Within an Ohio State recruiting class featuring three five-star recruits and nine four-star prospects, Young represents one of five Buckeye commits with a three-star rating. The Hoosier State native is the No. 611 overall prospect, No. 34 athlete and No. 11 player in Indiana for the 2019 class, according to the 247Sports composite.

"It doesn't really mean anything to me," Young said. "I don't really get into all that rankings like I used to. Rankings don't show anything but what people say about me. And the people that rank the people, half of them haven't ever played football before, so rankings don't mean anything."

"You have to show me that you're a five-star in the game, so I don't really get into all the rankings. But I am very thankful to be that prospect in the country that's really getting looked at."

Despite his rare combination of size and speed, he had just one Big 12 offer (Iowa State), two MAC offers (Toledo and Central Michigan) and six Big Ten offers (Ohio State, Michigan State, Wisconsin, Purdue, Iowa and Indiana).

With Young's physical gifts and versatility, there's a good chance he would have received more offers had he dragged out his recruitment until the Feb. 6 deadline. However, Young wanted the opportunity to be pushed toward reaching his lofty potential and he committed to OSU on June 15.

"I think Coach Urban Meyer had a lot to do with it," Moore said of Young's decision. "I think after speaking with him, sitting down with his parents, I think when we walked out of that office, his decision was made. I think he challenged Craig to be the best Craig that he can be, instead of just settling for coming someplace where he wouldn't be pushed, he wouldn't be challenged."

"And then I think ultimately, you have, if things work out, the opportunity to be drafted into the NFL. And that's what Ohio State has done in the past. They do a great job of preparing their players both, not only physically, but mentally and then financially for teaching them the ropes of our financial literacy going into the NFL, and that was big for his father."

Young said the recruiting process was great, but also long and stressful. He added that Meyer challenging him sparked a lightbulb above his head that maybe Columbus was where he belonged, regardless of if Meyer was at the helm or not.


"Ohio State is going to be Ohio State without Coach Urban Meyer," Young said. "Even though he's a great coach, Coach Ryan Day is also a great coach."

Young is excited to get on campus and compete during fall camp. In the meantime, he will continue to lead Wayne's basketball and track teams as a senior, which he cherishes as more opportunities to compete.

Moore expects the three-sport standout to succeed in the competitive atmosphere at Ohio State.

"He and I share a desire to win," Moore said. "I hate to lose, and I think he might be, in 16 years of coaching, one of the kids who shared that the most with me. He hates to lose, whether it's pitching sticks or playing basketball or video games or an argument or whatever it is, he wants to beat the person that he's facing."

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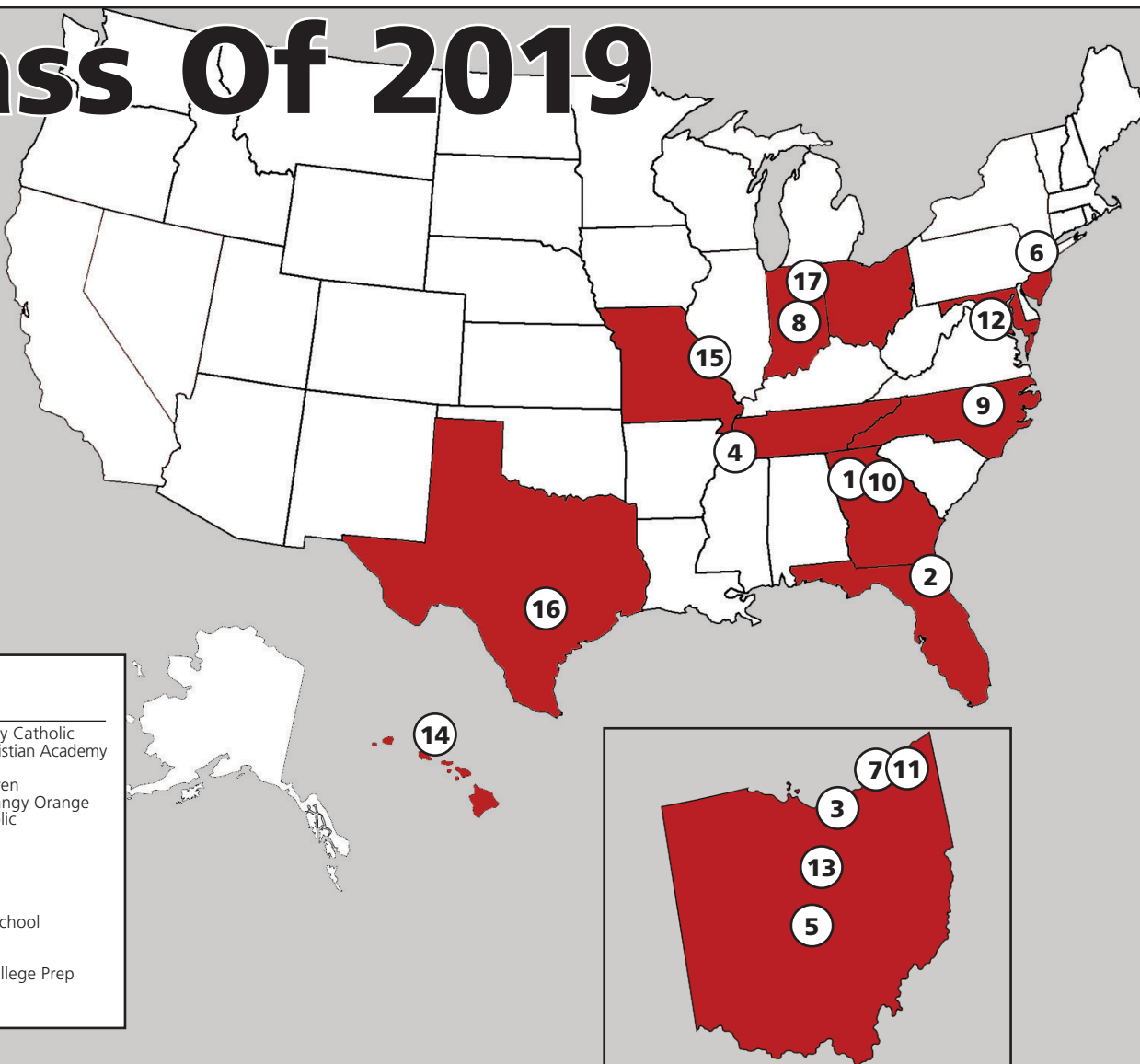
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OSU's Class Of 2019

After receiving 15 letters of intent during the early signing period in December, Ohio State added two more commits Feb. 6 to complete a 17-man recruiting class spanning from Hawaii to Florida.



Player Key (*Early Enrollee)

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	High School
1.	Steele Chambers	RB	6-2	215	Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic
2.	Marcus Crowley*	RB	6-1	200	Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy
3.	Tommy Eichenberg	LB	6-3	225	Cleveland St. Ignatius
4.	Cormantae Hamilton	TE	6-2	263	Memphis (Tenn.) Whitehaven
5.	Zach Harrison*	DE	6-5	243	Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange
6.	Ronnie Hickman	S	6-1	200	Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic
7.	Ryan Jacoby*	OL	6-5	270	Mentor, Ohio
8.	Dawand Jones	OT	6-8	360	Indianapolis Ben Davis
9.	Jaden McKenzie	DT	6-3	285	Wake Forest, N.C.
10.	Harry Miller	OL	6-4	310	Buford, Ga.
11.	Noah Potter*	DE	6-5	250	Mentor, Ohio
12.	Bryson Shaw	S	6-2	175	Potomac (Md.) The Bullis School
13.	Cade Stover	LB	6-4	225	Lexington, Ohio
14.	Enokk Vimahi	OG	6-4	270	Kahuku, Hawaii
15.	Jameson Williams	WR	6-2	170	St. Louis Cardinal Ritter College Prep
16.	Garrett Wilson*	WR	6-1	180	Austin (Texas) Lake Travis
17.	Craig Young	ATH	6-4	200	Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne

All rankings from the 247Sports composite



CLASS OF 2019



STEELE CHAMBERS

RB • 6-2 • 215

Roswell (Ga.)

Blessed Trinity Catholic

Rank: ATH 11, Overall 231, GA 26



ACCOLADES: Chambers started for three years at Blessed Trinity Catholic for coach Tim McFarlin. He rushed for 244 yards and three scores in addition to throwing a touchdown pass in a prelim to the Georgia 4A state championship game, where he ran for 98 yards and tallied five tackles on defense in a victory. He totaled more than 1,500 yards and 25 scores as a senior after being the Region 7AAAA Player of the Year as a junior. He was an All-Georgia selection by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and an all-state linebacker pick by the Georgia Athletic Coaches Association.

CHAMBERS SAYS: "(The Buckeyes) preach about the brotherhood, which connects with me because we have that same thing here at (Blessed Trinity). It just felt like one big family over there. (Game day in Columbus) is just crazy, almost out of hand. So many people in the crowd and just amazing."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "At running back he brings a lot of physicality, plays with lean, has very good contact balance and light feet. He's more of a long-strider and not overly sudden. He has average length on defense and doesn't showcase dynamic breakaway ability on offense." – Barton Simmons, 247Sports

PERSONAL: During a 2017 interview with Born to Compete, Chambers mentioned that he was taking dance lessons to help with his footwork. He played in the All-American Bowl. Chambers' parents are Stacy and Eric Chambers.

COMMIT DATE: April 18, 2018



MARCUS CROWLEY

RB • 6-1 • 200

Jacksonville (Fla.)

Trinity Christian Academy

Rank: RB 26, Overall 370, FL 44



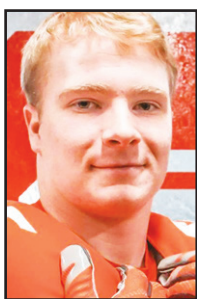
ACCOLADES: While committed to Miami (Fla.) for most of his senior season at Trinity Christian Academy, Crowley exploded with 2,325 yards and 28 touchdowns as he led the team to its 13-1 campaign that ended in the state final. For his efforts, Crowley was named Florida's Gatorade Player of the Year.

CROWLEY SAYS: "I'm perfectly fine (with being under-recruited). I'm glad I got the chance to play here. I'm glad (running backs coach) Tony (Alford) reached out to me. I wouldn't want to be any other place, and I'm not mad that I was I guess under the radar. I still did what I did. I had to grind, and I'm just happy."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He had a terrific senior season gaining over 2,000 yards for one of Florida's top programs. Good vision, power, he breaks tackles at the line of scrimmage and downfield and had a lot of big runs on film en route to averaging 10.5 yards per carry in his final campaign. He is a decisive runner that can get around the edge on the prep level, not sure he has the athleticism to be an elite back on the next level. But he's a smart, hard-nosed downhill player." – Steve Wiltfong, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Crowley played high school football with Shaun Wade and Tyreke Johnson, a pair of Ohio State cornerbacks, at Trinity Christian Academy. His parents are Shelly and Michael Wright.

COMMIT DATE: Nov. 4, 2018



TOMMY EICHENBERG

LB • 6-3 • 225

Cleveland
St. Ignatius

Rank: ILB 19, Overall 327, OH 8



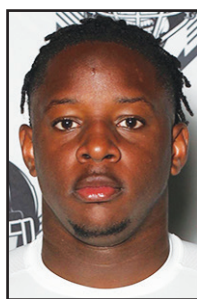
ACCOLADES: Eichenberg was a first-team All-Ohio selection. He had 126 tackles (80 solo), including 23 tackles for loss and eight sacks as a senior. Eichenberg made big-time plays for the Wildcats, adding seven quarterback hurries, five forced fumbles, five pass breakups and one interception.

EICHENBERG SAYS: "I've always wanted to go there, my entire life. That's my dream school. I couldn't pass up the opportunity. Growing up, my entire family watched Ohio State every Saturday. I always wanted to play for them."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He's a thicker bodied prospect, not quite as long as other linebacker prospects, who will begin college with a good muscle base. He's a very explosive hitter, strong, takes on blockers with the same violence, and is a strong tackler. He has good closing speed and plays at full speed consistently. He runs through contact and attacks ball carriers with good angles. He shows instincts and headiness in dropping into zone coverage but still needs additional experience in man to man." – Allen Trieu, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Eichenberg is also a standout track and field athlete, finishing eighth in the state in the shot put as a junior. He was originally committed to Boston College but decommitted in November. His parents are Heather and Gregg Eichenberg.

COMMIT DATE: Dec. 6, 2018



CORMONTAE HAMILTON

TE • 6-2 • 263

Memphis (Tenn.)
Whitehaven

Rank: TE 25, Overall 586, TN 18



ACCOLADES: Hamilton was named to The (Memphis) Commercial Appeal's All-Metro team as a junior. He helped his school to the Class 6A semifinals that year as well while playing for coach Rodney Saulsberry. He averaged more than 20 yards per catch and was a 2018 preseason 6A all-state honoree before leading his team to the state finals.

HAMILTON SAYS: "The reason that made me choose Ohio State is because their great education program for their student-athletes. I just loved when I went up there twice – spring game and I went back up there for a camp – and ever since I've just been loving it. They love me, I love them. I'm ready to rock and roll."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He has soft hands and rugged after-the-catch ability. He wins one-on-one balls in the red zone on the high school level and is fearless and dependable over the middle. He plays faster than he is on film and accelerates quickly after catching the ball. He doesn't have that ideal frame or length at the position but has the skill set to contribute in every facet at tight end, including as a blocker." – Steve Wiltfong, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Hamilton took a 12-hour Greyhound bus ride to Columbus for Ohio State's Friday Night Lights camp in July before earning his offer on the visit. Hamilton's mother is Nikki Gilmore.

COMMIT DATE: July 27, 2018



ZACH HARRISON

DE • 6-5 • 243

Lewis Center (Ohio)
Olentangy Orange

Rank: SDE 2, Overall 12, OH 1



ACCOLADES: Rated the consensus top player in Ohio, Harrison has been clocked at 4.47 seconds in the 40-yard dash and 10.7 seconds in the 100 meters. He was a first-team All-Ohio honoree by the Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association in addition to being the Delaware County Defensive Player of the Year. During his senior season, Harrison tallied 14 tackles for loss and seven sacks in just seven games played.

HARRISON SAYS: "I don't think I've scratched the surface (of my athletic potential). I have a long way to go, which is exciting. I'm decent right now, but I'm waiting for it to take off."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "Has generational testing numbers at his size and the athletic versatility to play wide receiver. He uses his hands effectively to read and shed in the run game. He eats up space in the zone-read game, possesses twitch and suddenness and can bend the edge as a pass rusher. His speed in pursuit is elite. He is very raw as a pass rusher." – Barton Simmons, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Harrison committed to Ohio State in December after seriously considering Michigan, where his main recruiters were Greg Mattison and Al Washington, who are now on Ohio State's staff. He was invited to The Opening in 2017 and 2018 and was a finalist for the All-American Bowl Man of the Year award. Harrison is the son of Tracey and Jimmie Harrison.

COMMIT DATE: Dec. 19, 2018



RONNIE HICKMAN

S • 6-1 • 200

Wayne (N.J.)
DePaul Catholic

Rank: S 10, Overall 115, NJ 3



ACCOLADES: As a two-way standout at DePaul Catholic, Hickman excelled at wide receiver and cornerback. A torn ACL ended his senior season early, but not before he racked up 609 yards and nine touchdowns on just 26 catches. In addition to averaging 23.4 yards per reception, Hickman recorded 19 tackles and five pass breakups. As a junior, he reeled in 44 receptions for 809 yards and 10 touchdowns. Hickman also contributed 44 tackles, two interceptions and nine pass breakups to help DePaul Catholic win New Jersey's Non Public Group III state title.

HICKMAN SAYS: "I think you can't go wrong with this place. And they're not just a football program. They're dominating in the world outside of football, and I think that I can succeed if football doesn't work. I can succeed off the field just as well."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He runs well with elite acceleration. He hits hard in the running game, reads games well and sheds blocks. He fills run gaps quickly and correctly. He has loose hips and can quickly change direction in coverage, plus stop-start ability. He also has good ball skills." – Brian Dohn, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Hickman is nicknamed "The Rocket," and although it is often assumed the nickname is for his speed, the moniker came before he could even run. When he was young, Hickman loved to pretend to take off like a rocket ship, and his father coined the nickname. Hickman was also a standout for the DePaul Catholic lacrosse team. His parents are Hanifah Crawley and Ronnie Hickman Sr.

COMMIT DATE: April 13, 2018



RYAN JACOBY

OL • 6-5 • 270

Mentor, Ohio

Rank: OT 23, Overall 283, OH 7



ACCOLADES: First-team All-Ohio as a junior and senior, Jacoby secured Mentor's offensive line, holding down the blind side in each year as the starting left tackle. With Jacoby plowing ahead up front, Mentor's offense soared with averages of 41.2 and 36.9 points per game, respectively, during the 2017 and 2018 seasons as the Cardinals reached the state finals in consecutive campaigns.

JACOBY SAYS: "I don't think there was ever a doubt in my mind that I was coming here after I committed. Coach (Urban) Meyer is a great guy and I'm going to miss him a lot, but Coach (Ryan) Day brings a new face to the program, new opportunities and a new energy that I think is going to be good for the program."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He checks off nearly every box I look for in an offensive lineman, in that he has great feet, a nasty attitude, and is highly intelligent. Jacoby is very athletic for his size and is a great pass blocker already, a rarity in high school offensive linemen." – Bill Greene, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Born and raised a Buckeye fan, Jacoby started out as a hockey player before trying football in the seventh grade. Since then, he has stuck to the latter sport, becoming a rock and leader on Mentor's offensive line under head coach Steve Trivisonno. On the football team, Jacoby became teammates with defensive end Noah Potter, who also signed with Ohio State. As a freshman and sophomore in high school, Jacoby wrestled as well. His parents are Lisa and Michael Jacoby.

COMMIT DATE: March 1, 2018



DAWAND JONES

OT • 6-8 • 360

Indianapolis
Ben Davis

Rank: OT 84, Overall 1,022, IN 13



ACCOLADES: In his first year as a starter in 2017, Jones helped lead Ben Davis to an undefeated 6A state championship. The Ben Davis offense was electric, averaging 47.3 points per game and scoring 50 or more points six times. The Indianapolis native was an Indiana Football Coaches Association Top 50 team selection as a senior. He was also effective as a junior, earning a 6A All-State selection by paving the way for an offense that averaged 28.5 points per game.

JONES SAYS: "Ohio State has been my No. 1 since I left that practice I went to of their Michigan week. It looks like the best fit for me for the next three or four years. When I went there it was a brotherhood. I get to go against the best of the best every week. Once I visited I fell in love."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "I saw Jones and he's a big kid. He'll benefit from a redshirt year at Ohio State. But I like his overall athletic ability. Once they get him and work with him for a year, nutrition-wise and weight-wise, I think they will feel like they got themselves a real steal." – Tom Lemming, CBS Sports

PERSONAL: A two-sport standout, Jones was averaging 18.2 points, 9.2 rebounds and 1.8 blocks, and making 79 percent of his shots through the first five games of his senior season. Jones took his recruitment down to the wire, weighing both Division I football and basketball scholarships before eventually signing on National Signing Day. His mother is Deanna Jones.

COMMIT DATE: Feb. 6, 2019



JADEN MCKENZIE

DT • 6-3 • 285
Wake Forest, N.C.

Rank: DT 58, Overall 769, NC 35



ACCOLADES: McKenzie recorded 71 tackles and 10½ sacks as a senior, earning a selection to play in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas, an annual all-star game between players from North Carolina and South Carolina. As a junior, he compiled 97 tackles, 23 tackles for loss and nine sacks. The four-year letter winner totaled 28½ sacks over his final three seasons at Wake Forest. McKenzie finished his high school career on a 45-game winning streak. He was a key cog in a dominant defensive line that led Wake Forest to three consecutive 4A state championship victories.

MCKENZIE SAYS: "I feel like it drives me to be better, and that's why I knew I want to take on that challenge of going to Ohio State because I know they recruit some top, top-of-the-line dudes and so I wanted to go over there and try to compete."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He is a great run defender and can eat up blockers to free up his teammates to make easy tackles. Expect him to make an impact after getting acclimated to the strength and conditioning program in Columbus." – Marc Givler, Buckeye Grove

PERSONAL: McKenzie is originally from New Orleans. He pledged to the Buckeyes during the early signing period after becoming a focus of defensive line coach Larry Johnson late in the process. His mother is Quandra McKenzie.

COMMIT DATE: Dec. 19, 2018



HARRY MILLER

OL • 6-4 • 310
Buford, Ga.

Rank: C 2, Overall 30, GA 6



ACCOLADES: Miller helped Buford reach the Georgia Class 5A quarterfinals in a 10-3 senior season. He paved the way for Buford's high-powered offense, which averaged 41.6 points per game in 2018 and scored 50 or more points on four occasions. He helped lead Buford to an 11-2 record and an appearance in the state semifinals as a junior. The Buckeye signee participated in Nike's The Opening in June with other elite prospects and was named the camp's most valuable offensive lineman.

MILLER SAYS: "To me, I always try and prove my worth, but it's up to me to put in work to do it. Rankings don't affect my work, but my work affects my ranking, that's how I view it."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "Solid, barrel-chested build with little bad weight. He is developed from a weight-room and strength standpoint. He possesses average athleticism and length. He plays left tackle in high school but projects on the interior at the next level. A strong run blocker who plays with a nasty disposition. He does a great job getting a push in the run game and has a knack for finishing blocks." – Charles Power, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Miller is a straight-A student and likely class valedictorian. He is very dedicated to helping out the less fortunate, taking multiple mission trips to Nicaragua. He was scheduled to announce his commitment in the Central American country before that trip was canceled. Miller was a finalist for the All-American Bowl Man of the Year Award. His parents are Kristina and Sean Miller.

COMMIT DATE: June 10, 2018



NOAH POTTER

DE • 6-5 • 250
Mentor, Ohio

Rank: SDE 23, Overall 334, OH 9



ACCOLADES: Potter was an All-Ohio selection as a junior and a senior at Mentor for head coach Steve Trivisonno. He finished with more than 25 tackles for loss as a senior to lead the Greater Cleveland area. He also helped Mentor to the Division I state title game in 2017 as a junior.

POTTER SAYS: "It's a little different being at the bottom (when I enrolled early), but I knew coming in I wasn't going to be on the top anymore. Any guy came from the same background I did – a highly-recruited guy and I am just going to try and work hard."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "Twitchy when the ball is snapped, terrific hands, outstanding hips, has a bevy of pass rushing moves, also torques his way between offensive linemen as a run stuffer. He is an aggressive football player, physical, and a finisher as a tackler." – Steve Wiltfong, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Potter's older brother, Micah, played basketball at Ohio State before transferring to Wisconsin before of the 2018-19 season. He was one of six players to enroll early in January after signing in December. Potter is the son of Ronda and Tim Potter.

COMMIT DATE: April 16, 2018



BRYSON SHAW

S • 6-2 • 175
Potomac (Md.)
The Bullis School

Rank: S 45, Overall 577, MD 10



ACCOLADES: Shaw was named the Bullis School's most valuable player and the Defensive Player of the Year in the Interstate Athletic Conference as a senior. The speedy safety had a propensity for the end zone as a junior, catching five touchdowns, rushing for a score, and also returning a fumble and a kickoff for six. Defensively the conference MVP made his presence felt with 30 tackles, 2½ tackles for loss, 1½ sacks and two forced fumbles.

SHAW SAYS: "Big plays are my thing. Every time I get the ball in my hands, I want to get into the end zone."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He's a pure athlete. He has tremendous acceleration and body control and is built to play free safety but has a linebacker mind-set. He is physical in run and pass game. He breaks on ball well in front of him and has speed to cover to sideline in zone. He has impressive closing speed, takes great angles and can change direction at a high rate of speed. Must add strength and upper-body mass. Technique needs improvement in man coverage. He must work on backpedal and transition after opening his hips." – Brian Dohn, 247Sports

PERSONAL: He was once committed to Maryland as a lacrosse player. Shaw was originally targeted by former Ohio State co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Alex Grinch, who departed for Oklahoma after Shaw signed in December. Shaw was committed to Wisconsin before flipping to the Buckeyes. His parents are Jill and Bryn Shaw.

COMMIT DATE: April 28, 2018



CADE STOVER

LB • 6-4 • 225
Lexington, Ohio

Rank: OLB 7, Overall 114, OH 4



ACCOLADES: Named Ohio's Mr. Football by the Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association and Gatorade Player of the Year, Stover was all over the field for Lexington. Stover's senior season showcased his versatility as he racked up 163 tackles and four interceptions on defense as a hybrid linebacker/safety and 1,477 yards and 17 touchdowns on offense as a running back.

STOVER SAYS: "They have only talked about linebacker. They tell me outside linebacker. Of course I would like to go in and play, but I'm just working to get bigger, faster and stronger. If they need me on the field, that would be amazing to be out there. But if not, then I'll be working to get out there. If it's just me – if I'm the one linebacker in the class – or if I'm one out of 60, I just need to keep working."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "Tall with a frame that can add significant weight. Plays multiple sports for much of the year and should get significantly bigger once in a college strength program. Not out of the question he could grow into an edge player in time. A highly productive two-way player, working at safety/linebacker and running back. Oftentimes plays deep safety, showing high-level movement and coverage skills for a player of his size." – Gabe Brooks, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Also a star basketball player for Lexington after earning second-team All-Ohio honors as a junior, Stover has set his school's all-time scoring record, shattering a 1,329-point mark that had stood since 1954. Stover's parents are Chelsi and Trevor.

COMMIT DATE: April 29, 2018



ENOKK VIMAHI

OG • 6-4 • 270
Kahuku, Hawaii

Rank: OG 7, Overall 124, HI 2



ACCOLADES: Vimahi played in the All-American Bowl and the Polynesian Bowl after participating in The Opening over the summer. Kahuku went to three straight state title games from 2015-17 and averaged nearly 300 yards and 30 points a game during his senior season. He comes from a high school that has produced 17 NFL players.

VIMAHI SAYS: "I want to go to a program that is competitive as well both on and off the field – academically challenging as well as their conference and their schedules."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "One of the top-five offensive line prospects in Hawaii, Vimahi is a terrific offensive lineman. He'll be an offensive guard prospect for Ohio State. He's a big, physical kid with good straight-ahead speed." – Tom Lemming, CBS Sports

PERSONAL: Vimahi, a Mormon, is planning to take a two-year mission trip after his first season in Columbus before returning to complete his college career. He's just the second player from Hawaii ever for Ohio State and the first to sign a letter of intent. The other was punter Scott Terna of Punahou High School, who walked on in the mid-1990s. Vimahi is the son of Lori and David Vimahi and has an older brother, Alike, who signed a letter of intent with Utah in 2017.

COMMIT DATE: Feb. 6, 2019



JAMESON WILLIAMS

WR • 6-2 • 170

St. Louis Cardinal Ritter
College Prep

Rank: WR 13, Overall 82, MO 1



ACCOLADES: Williams led his team to a Class 3 state title as a senior while catching 68 passes for 1,626 yards and 22 touchdowns. He had eight 100-yard games along the way, including one with 257 yards and five scores. He was selected for the Under Armour All-America Game as well.

WILLIAMS SAYS: "The environmental part of the city, it wasn't just football. I loved the city in general. ... It's going to feel great playing in front of 100,000 every home game in the 'Shoe.'"

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He has exceptional explosiveness and speed and is one of the faster players in the country with the track times to back that up. He eats up cushion quickly and is fluid in his breaks. He can make cuts without needing to throttle down too much and can take short passes and go the distance from anywhere on the field. He is also a dangerous return man." – Allen Trieu, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Williams also starred in track for Cardinal Ritter. He broke former Ohio State running back Ezekiel Elliott's state record in the 300-meter hurdles and won two state track and field titles as a junior. He's the son of Tianna and James Williams.

COMMIT DATE: Sept. 28, 2018



GARRETT WILSON

WR • 6-1 • 180

Austin (Texas)
Lake Travis

Rank: WR 2, Overall 20, TX 3



ACCOLADES: As an all-around receiver, Wilson starred at Lake Travis, ending his senior season with 1,151 yards and 19 touchdowns despite missing time due to injury. Before enrolling early for Ohio State's spring semester, Wilson spent Jan. 5 at the All-American Bowl in San Antonio, where he capped his high school career by catching two touchdown passes and being named the game's Man of the Year for excellence in community service, academics and athletics.

WILSON SAYS: "Two years ago, I went in and I trusted what Coach (Ryan) Day said to me about the passing game, because they haven't completely done it yet. He told me that they plan to pass the ball a lot, so seeing it this year, it was just awesome to watch and fun to watch and I can't wait to be a part of it."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "Not the biggest receiver, but plays bigger than listed size thanks to good athleticism and above-average bulk relative to frame. Strong-handed wideout who plucks the ball consistently. Dangerous in the vertical game. Stretches the field with initial burst and above-average downfield speed. Very good route-runner. Can line up in multiple spots." – Gabe Brooks, 247Sports

PERSONAL: Wilson was a three-sport athlete – football, basketball and track – with Division I basketball offers. He averaged 21 points per game in his junior season and received first-team All-Central Texas honors. Originally from the Columbus area before moving to Austin. He is the son of Kenny and Candace Wilson.

COMMIT DATE: April 29, 2018



CRAIG YOUNG

ATH • 6-4 • 200

Fort Wayne (Ind.)
Wayne

Rank: ATH 35, Overall 609, IN 11



ACCOLADES: Originally recruited by Ohio State as a wide receiver, Young shot up the Buckeyes' board as an athlete when he flashed his versatility at multiple defensive positions during a one-day camp in June, committing days later. His ability on both sides of the ball showed on the football field for Wayne when he caught 35 passes for 700 yards and 12 touchdowns on offense as a wide receiver and added 27 tackles, three interceptions and 1½ sacks on defense as an outside linebacker. Young totaled over 600 all-purpose yards.

YOUNG SAYS: "The (OSU) coaches are real. They don't sugarcoat anything. Everything they do is – it's a winning program. You can't fail here. You've got to come and bust your butt. They're going to be on you. That's what I want. I want them to be on me."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "One of the fastest prospects in the Midwest, he could play anything from receiver to safety to linebacker on the next level. He's a long athlete with intriguing upside, but very raw and inconsistent. He will need nurturing but has flashed crazy potential, a blow-by-you receiver with the traits to develop into a top pass rusher. Boom-or-bust prospect for the Buckeyes. Should be able to contribute immediately on special teams." – Steve Wiltfong, 247Sports

PERSONAL: As a three-sport athlete at Wayne, Young starred in basketball and track on top of football. As a junior, he averaged 17.4 points and 7.5 rebounds per game and won the sectional 100-meter (10.7 seconds) and 200-meter (22.43 seconds) sprints. His parents are Antoinette and Shabaka Young.

COMMIT DATE: June 15, 2018



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Fields, Baldwin To Fight For Starting QB Spot

Continued From Page 1

good fit for both sides, and it was clear off the bat that would be the case.

"When he became available, we investigated it, felt like it was a great fit, so he's done a nice job so far," Day said Feb. 6, two days before Fields' eligibility request was granted.

The fit was certainly right for Day. He was getting a highly-rated player at his biggest position of need. The fit was right for Fields, too, as he'll be learning from Day, who developed Haskins into a top NFL prospect despite having just one season as a starter. That's the goal for Fields, too – to get to the league as soon as he can.

"I think I made more of a business decision, and Coach Day, he's been in the NFL so he knows what it takes to get there," Fields said Feb. 6. "Just the offense and how successful it was last year, I just hope to do the same thing again.

"It's really all in God's plan, but I hope I can get there (the NFL) as soon as I can."

The term "business decision" might sound impersonal, but college football is a business. The players want to get to the NFL, and the coaches – especially at a school like Ohio State – are fine with that. It's one of the biggest recruiting pitches the Buckeyes have at their disposal.

"We don't apologize for developing guys," Day said. "To see Dwayne's development the last two years is pretty remarkable. I think that's one of the selling points that we have."

Now it's up to Fields, a Kennesaw, Ga., native, to prove he can live up to the lofty expectations that come with being a former five-star recruit and one of the hottest names in college football. The 6-3, 225-pound signal caller acquitted himself nicely in limited action at Georgia, going 27 of 39 for 328 yards and four touchdowns without throwing an interception. He ran 42 times for 266 yards and four more scores as well.

But that was as a backup to Jake Fromm, a second-year starter firmly entrenched in his position. Now Fields will be learning a new offense on the fly as spring practice approaches, and he'll still have to compete with redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin to win the starting job.

That battle gets started in earnest in early March when spring practice begins. For now, it's about attacking winter workouts with full effort and trying to master a complicated offense while learning from a position coach – Mike Yurcich – who is still learning the offense himself.

"Well, this offense is kind of different from Georgia," Fields said. "But I also think being in that Georgia pro-style offense, that has prepared me for this offense. And of course I have some things to learn, but I hope I can get them down and get started quickly."

As Fields learns the offense, Yurcich is learning Fields as well, in addition to Baldwin, fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov and walk-on Daniel Vanatsky, the other two signal callers in the room. Like Fields, he's in a new setting after Day hired him away from Oklahoma State to be quarterbacks coach and passing game coordinator. He's learning a new offense and building relationships with an entirely new position room.

But that's just part of the process – part of the new challenge.

"It's a process, and nowhere near where it needs to be, obviously," Yurcich said. "It takes time. It takes time, and it takes an



TIM MOODY

READY TO PLAY – Quarterback Justin Fields, a transfer from Georgia, was awarded immediate eligibility by the NCAA after a waiver request was granted, meaning he can take the field for Ohio State in the fall.

investment on both ends and an openness and just trying to create a dialogue.

"For me as a quarterback coach, I have to try to learn how the quarterbacks learn the best, and everybody processes information a little bit differently."

By the time Ohio State does get Fields on the practice field, a lot of that process could be complete. He'll be just over two months into his time in Columbus, he'll have had a chance to learn the offense off the field and he'll have an opportunity to prove himself as a leader.

Then comes year one for Fields, and

for the second season in a row, Ohio State will have a first-time starter at quarterback. Haskins, of course, shattered the expectations for such a situation, but the Buckeyes are set to get at least two years out of Fields.

"I think there's a lot of things that you save in the first year," Day said. "I think it's all about what you put on a quarterback's plate. I think they can handle so much in the first year, then you get into year two and three, they start to be able to take more on as it goes."

Now it's time to sit back and see what Day and a quarterback of that talent level can do.



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OSU Slides In Consensus Poll Despite Quality Class

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The annual arms race for college football recruiting supremacy between Alabama, Georgia and Ohio State ended with two of the three teams atop the 2019 recruiting class while one fell out of the top 10 entirely.

After the Bulldogs knocked off the Crimson Tide for the class of 2018's top spot last February, Nick Saban returned to his throne as he guided 'Bama back to No. 1 in BSB's annual consensus poll.

The combined rankings take final polls from Rivals, ESPN, Bleacher Report and national recruiting analyst Tom Lemming of CBS Sports Network and Prep Football Magazine. It is based on a system with 25 points awarded for finishing first in a poll while one point is awarded for coming in 25th.

"Alabama and Georgia are the two teams that almost won it the past couple of years when it comes to recruiting. Alabama has been at it for eight years," Lemming told BSB. "They just keep going. I love their philosophy – just going after nothing but blue-chip athletes. They also have a lot of guys, but they know how to pick the right ones. Alabama offers a ton of people, but they never really recruit the weaker guys at the bottom of that offer list. They always go after the top targets. I love how they handle their recruiting.

"They still had a top-five year (in 2018), but it wasn't what it had been. The reason

for it was they were taken by surprise by the early signing period. With all of the kids signing early, they weren't able to steal as many kids as they normally could at the end of the year. This year, they were more prepared."

While the Buckeyes nearly claimed the title in the past cycle, tying UGA with 26 signees but finishing in second place in the consensus poll, the same could not be said this time around. With a smaller class by design due to fewer available scholarships, Ohio State's 17 signees brought quality but lacked numbers as the Buckeyes finished 15th in the consensus poll.

"All of them stand out," Lemming said of OSU's class. "When Ohio State recruits, they're bringing in all blue-chippers. It would have been a sure top-10 team if they had the same numbers as everyone else, so it's a different story, number-wise, but I can't think of any reaches at all. It looks to me as if they're all blue-chippers."

But unlike Alabama, Georgia and every other team in the consensus poll's top 25, OSU underwent a coaching change. Head coach Urban Meyer's retirement was announced Dec. 4 – 15 days before the early signing period – and Ryan Day took over Jan. 2 with just over a month remaining before National Signing Day on Feb. 6.

Despite the scramble for OSU, Day held onto the majority of Meyer's recruits, losing three but keeping 15 who signed in December before adding two more in February. Going from second to 15th in the span of a cycle gives off the idea that Ohio

State's efforts on the trail took a hit, but that is not necessarily true. In fact, Lemming said, Day's two-month stretch was impressive.

"In talking to the kids, they don't see

any difference between Ryan and Urban," Lemming said. "They mention that Ryan was recruiting them all year anyway. It looks like he's learned well from Urban, and I would expect Ohio State, no doubt, to finish in



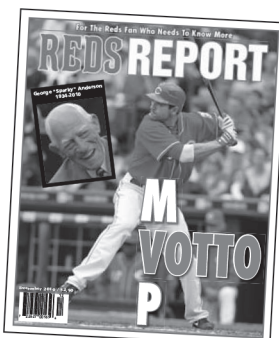
TIM MOODY

TOP OF THE CLASS – Austin (Texas) Lake Travis five-star wide receiver Garrett Wilson was Ohio State's highest-rated out-of-state 2019 signee.

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BSB Consensus Poll

Rk.	Team	Pts.
1.	Alabama (3).....	99
2.	Georgia (1).....	97
3.	Texas	88
4.	Oklahoma.....	87
T-5.	LSU.....	84
	Texas A&M	84
7.	Oregon.....	72
8.	Michigan	71
9.	Florida	67
T-10.	Clemson	62
	Tennessee	62
12.	Penn State.....	57
13.	Auburn.....	52
14.	Notre Dame.....	48
15.	Ohio State	43
16.	Washington	38
17.	Florida State	34
18.	South Carolina.....	32
19.	USC.....	30
20.	Nebraska	24
21.	Arkansas.....	20
22.	Ole Miss	18
23.	Stanford	13
24.	Mississippi State.....	9
25.	Wisconsin	3

Teams received points based on their placement in four top-25 polls. Points assigned to teams are in inverse proportion to their placement in a poll (25 points for first, 24 points for second, etc.). First-place votes in parentheses.

Also receiving points in the poll were Miami (Fla.) (2), Virginia Tech (2), Purdue (1) and N.C. State (1).

the top 10 next year. They've got the power of Ohio State behind them, but also he's learned how to recruit from Urban Meyer and how to be a relentless recruiter because that's what it takes. To get five-star players, you've got to recruit them two or three years these days and understand. He's picked up a lot from Urban."

While the Buckeyes are in line for a monster 2020 group under Day, two Big Ten rivals took advantage of OSU's low numbers and recruited well enough to finish higher in the consensus poll. Michigan signed 26 and finished eighth while Penn State took 23 to check in at No. 12.

Although the Wolverines lost out on Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange five-star defensive end Zach Harrison (6-5, 243), who stayed home and signed with Ohio State, U-M managed to keep Tulsa (Okla.) Booker T. Washington five-star safety

National Recruiting Experts' Rankings

TOM LEMMING	RIVALS	ESPN	BLEACHER REPORT
1. Alabama	1. Georgia	1. Alabama	1. Alabama
2. Georgia	2. Alabama	2. Georgia	2. Georgia
3. Texas	3. LSU	3. Texas A&M	3. Oklahoma
4. LSU	4. Texas	4. Oklahoma	4. Texas
5. Oklahoma	5. Oklahoma	5. Texas	5. Texas A&M
6. Texas A&M	6. Texas A&M	6. Oregon	6. LSU
7. Florida	7. Oregon	7. LSU	7. Michigan
8. Michigan	8. Florida	8. Michigan	8. Tennessee
9. Clemson	9. Clemson	9. Florida	9. Oregon
10. Oregon	10. Michigan	10. Clemson	10. Ohio State

Daxton Hill (6-0½, 186) and Norcross (Ga.) Greater Atlanta Christian five-star defensive tackle Chris Hinton (6-4, 280) to headline Jim Harbaugh's top-10 class.

"You have to count the numbers – that's why they're No. 8 in the country – but their class is big," Lemming said of Michigan. "Also, they landed some pretty big ball-players. I think their major loss was Zach Harrison to Ohio State, but everything else was them getting what they wanted. In spite of a couple big losses at the end of the year (62-39 to Ohio State on Nov. 24 and 41-15 to Florida on Dec. 29), they really did well in recruiting. I think that's a testimony to Harbaugh because he lost (linebackers coach Al) Washington and (defensive line coach Greg) Mattison (to Ohio State) but didn't skip a beat in January.

"They went out and got whom they needed, so you've got to give them a lot of credit because everyone was kind of playing down the idea of Michigan finishing well after the end of the bowl season. They came around and did a great job. With their numbers, they almost got twice as many as Ohio State did, and that's the reason for the difference."

However, the Buckeyes were ahead of the Wolverines in terms of pound-for-pound quality, Lemming added. Particularly with Harrison, U-M's loss was OSU's gain.

"He's a local kid, but more importantly, he's a great player," Lemming said of Harrison. "The way Ohio State's been recruiting local kids, they're not putting much of an emphasis on them like the old previous several coaches – Jim Tressel, John Cooper and Earle Bruce – had done. But to get a five-star player like that, it was super important, particularly since Michigan was the other school recruiting him. But they went out and got him, so they got a great player and kept that great player away from Michigan. That's a win-win situation."

Similar to OSU, the Nittany Lions took somewhat of a step back but still strung together a solid class under James Franklin. Since settling in Happy Valley five years ago, Franklin's efforts on the trail have put PSU's talent level up there with the likes of Ohio State and Michigan in the Big Ten East.

"He's one of the great recruiters nation-

ally, James Franklin," Lemming said. "They didn't have a great year like they thought they would. But they got two of the top five running backs. Franklin is phenomenal. I put him up there with Urban Meyer, Nick Saban, Phil Fulmer and Mack Brown and Pete Carroll. Those are the best of the past 20 years, and I throw him right in there. He's also got a relentless style of recruiting. It picked up in the Southeastern Conference (at Vanderbilt from 2011-13) like Urban did (at Florida from 2005-09). He's a step above what Bill O'Brien did at Penn State. He's taking it to another level."

Florida's ninth-place finish in the consensus poll might have the Gators on the rise sooner rather than later after Dan Mullen took over for Jim McElwain following the Gators' dreadful 2017 season that ended at 4-7. Mullen is from the Meyer coaching tree, serving as an offensive coordinator on Meyer's staff at Florida from 2005-08 before he started his head-coaching career at Mississippi State from 2009-17 and then took over the Gators in 2018. Mullen guided UF to the Sunshine State's best group with 25 signees after down years for Florida State (17th with 22 signees) and Miami (28th with 17 signees).

"Florida, if you remember, finished poorly last year," Lemming said. "They rebounded well. Everyone else is the usual suspects in the top 10. They're always doing well.

"In that job, you should always do well. There's so much talent in Florida, so to me, that's not that big of a surprise.

"(Mullen) came from Mississippi State.

He had been at Florida before. He understands recruiting. It would have been a bigger surprise had he not done well because he knows how that conference recruits and knows Florida. He was there with Urban. He's a terrific recruiter himself. Florida had such a good year beating out Miami and Florida State. They went out and won that in-state recruiting."

Another surprise was Arkansas, which went 2-10 on the field but finished 21st on the trail in the consensus poll and 19th for Lemming. The Razorbacks received 25 signatures, including one-time Ohio State target and Murfreesboro (Tenn.) Blackman four-star wide receiver Trey Knox (6-5, 215).

"They had a horrible year on the field, but the key to recruiting, the great ones – they just go after it," Lemming said. "(Little Rock [Ark.] Pulaski Academy four-star) Hudson Henry, one of the top tight ends in the country – out of Arkansas – stayed home. But they also hit Dallas hard. That's what really made them good. (Head coach Chad) Morris came from SMU last year, and that's part of a big reason why that happened."

As the Buckeyes turn the page to 2020, they do so after their momentum mounted on National Signing Day with last-second additions of Kahuku, Hawaii, four-star offensive guard Enokk Vimahi (6-4½, 263) and Indianapolis Ben Davis three-star offensive tackle Dawand Jones (6-8, 360). The pair of offensive linemen filled a major need for OSU and provided quality assets to cap the 2019 class as Day leads the program forward.



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U-M, PSU Jump OSU In Recruiting Rankings

By **TIM MOODY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Ohio State has dominated recruiting in the Big Ten for years, but the Buckeyes didn't finish atop the conference this time around. In fact, they weren't even second.

For the 2019 recruiting cycle, Michigan checked in at No. 8 nationally and first in the Big Ten in the 247Sports composite team rankings. Penn State finished 13th nationally, one spot ahead of the Buckeyes as Ohio State signed just 17 players. The Wolverines received 26 commitments and Penn State had 23.

Both Ohio State and Penn State, though, finished higher than Michigan in terms of average player rating. The Buckeyes paced the Big Ten at 91.87 while Penn State checked in at 91.01. Michigan's average rating was 90.78.

Beyond the usual suspects, Nebraska finished in the top 20 as well (No. 19) after Scott Frost inked 27 prospects in his first full recruiting cycle with the Cornhuskers. Purdue ascended into the top 25 as well (25th) with 26 commits, including four four-star prospects.

Illinois finished last in the conference at No. 63 nationally after signing just 13 players, although the Fighting Illini's average player rating of 86.79 ranks in the middle of the pack in the conference.

What follows is a rundown of each Big Ten team's recruiting class – excluding Ohio State and Michigan (a recap of the Wolverines' haul can be found on page 23) – listed in order of final team ranking. Each team's number of commits is listed in parentheses.

No. 13 Penn State (23)

While the Nittany Lions finished second in the conference for the second year running, their national ranking took a dive in 2019. After finishing sixth a year ago, head coach James Franklin's 23-man class fell out of the top 10, but it was still a stellar group led by Mineral (Va.) Louisa County five-star linebacker Brandon Smith, the

nation's No. 18 overall player and No. 1 inside linebacker.

Penn State signed a total of five top-100 players, including two four-star running backs who were once Ohio State targets in Stafford (Va.) North Stafford's Devyn Ford (No. 79) and Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy's Noah Cain (No. 98). The other two top-100 signees were Princeton (N.J.) Hun School guard Caedan Wallace (No. 81) and Brooklyn (N.Y.) Canarsie defensive end Adisa Isaac (No. 92).

With quarterback Trace McSorley out of eligibility, Franklin got two potential signal callers of the future in the form of Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic four-star Taquon Roberson and Eugene (Ore.) Sheldon four-star Michael Johnson. Roberson is rated No. 274 overall and eighth among dual-threat quarterbacks. As one of 11 signees to enroll early, he should have a chance to compete for playing time right away. Johnson, who also enrolled early, is the No. 380 overall prospect and No. 15 dual-threat QB.

Although they were heavily involved with Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange five-star defensive end Zach Harrison, who signed with the Buckeyes, the Nittany Lions didn't end up with a single Ohio player in their 2019 haul.

No. 19 Nebraska (27)

Despite a 4-8 debut season, Frost still managed to reel in a top-20 class with an average player rating of 88.48 – and he has seven of them already on campus, including four-star all-purpose back Wandale Robinson (No. 87) of Frankfort (Ky.) Western Hills, who was recruited by Ohio State as well.

Of the 27 signees, six were rated four-stars while the rest were all three-star recruits. Twenty-five of them were rated among the top 1,000 players nationally, and each of the four-stars was ranked in the top 300.

Robinson is certainly the standout of the

group, but Frost also got an in-state boost in the form of Omaha Burke four-star linebacker Nick Henrich, who checks it at No. 146 nationally. He was the highest-rated player in Nebraska for the 2019 class as one of five in-state signees.



James Franklin

No. 25 Purdue (26)

Here's the bad news for Purdue: The Boilermakers signed just three players from their home state. But it's not actually bad news when you consider they reeled in 11 commits from Ohio and Michigan, including seven from the Buckeye State alone. That provided a huge boost for Jeff Brohm's squad as the coach still managed to snag each of the top two players in Indiana as well.

The class is highlighted by those two Hoosier State prospects – four-star West Lafayette defensive end George Karlaftis (No. 59) and four-star Indianapolis Warren Central wide receiver Davis Bell (No. 113), who was also a one-time Ohio State target. Karlaftis is the third highest-rated Purdue signee of the Internet era, according to 247Sports. Bell is fifth.

The crop of Ohio prospects who signed with Purdue was led by West Chester Lakota West three-star defensive tackle Steven Facheux (No. 395) and Reynoldsburg three-star athlete Mereshawn Rice (No. 498).

No. 27 Wisconsin (19)

Although Wisconsin signed just two top-300 prospects, both of them were gems. The crop of 19 signees for Paul Chryst's team is led by five-star offensive tackle Logan Brown, the nation's No. 17 overall player out of Grand Rapids (Mich.) East Kentwood.

The true high point of the class might be four-star quarterback Graham Mertz, though. The Leawood (Kan.) Blue Valley North pro-style prospect is No. 65 nationally, and the Badgers held off interest from most of the nation's top programs – including Ohio State – after Mertz committed back on Oct. 8, 2017.

The only other four-star in the class is Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bishop Dwenger offensive tackle Joe Tippmann (No. 325).

Wisconsin received letters of intent from two Ohio prospects, including Columbus St. Francis DeSales three-star defensive tackle Rodas Johnson, who had some contact with Ohio State throughout his recruitment. Akron Hoban three-star athlete Quan Easterling picked the Badgers as well.

No. 30 Michigan State (19)

Like Ohio State, Michigan State wasn't flush with open scholarships, signing just 19 prospects, including 17 three-stars and a pair of four-stars.

The Spartans' class was highlighted by a player Ohio State targeted early on, but Belleville, Mich., four-star guard Devontae Dobbs committed early and stuck with his home-state team, giving Mark Dantonio the nation's No. 51 overall player. The Spartans also signed Dobbs' teammate, four-star cornerback Julian Barnett (No. 57), in a divergent class.

After the Belleville duo, the next-highest-rated recruit was Youngstown (Ohio) Cardinal Mooney three-star linebacker Luke Fulton at No. 424 nationally. He was one of six Ohio prospects in the class, joining nine Michigan natives, two Illinois products and an Indiana recruit as the Spartans stayed close to home for the entire class outside of Australian three-star punter Jack Bouwmeester.

No. 38 Indiana (21)

Among the Hoosiers' 21-man class are three four-star prospects, including former Ohio State commit Sampson James. The four-star running back from Avon, Ind., flipped to the Hoosiers this fall directly after visiting Ohio State on Oct. 7. James was among five players who enrolled early in Bloomington last month.

The other two four-stars in the group are Carmel, Ind., defensive end Beau Robbins (No. 256) and Merrillville (Ind.) Andrian outside linebacker Cameron Williams (No. 301).

Indiana signed one Ohio prospect – Cleveland St. Ignatius two-star long snapper Sean Wracher – in the group as well.

No. 40 Iowa (22)

Late in his recruitment, Ohio State tried to go after Clayton (Ohio) Northmont four-star outside linebacker Jestin Jacobs. The nation's No. 258 player stuck with his commitment to the Hawkeyes, though, becoming the highest-rated player in Iowa's class. He's joined as a four-star signee by Holstein (Iowa) Ridge View offensive tackle Ezra Miller (No. 354) and Norwalk (Iowa) Senior offensive tackle Tyler Endres (No. 377).

The Hawkeyes missed out on Iowa's top player, though, as Council Bluffs Lewis Central four-star quarterback Max Duggan signed with TCU instead. Kirk Ferentz's team turned to Englewood (Colo.) Cherry Creek three-star Alex Padilla to fill the quarterback void in the class instead.

No. 42 Minnesota (22)

Among 22 commits, Minnesota inked 21 three-star prospects, and head coach P.J. Fleck had no issues with traveling around the country to do it. In total, the Golden Gophers signed at least one player from Florida (3), Georgia (3), Minnesota (3), Missouri (3), Illinois (2), Ohio (2), Texas (2), Nevada (1), Oklahoma (1), Pennsylvania (1) and Wisconsin (1).

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Big Ten Team Rankings

Rk.	Team	Signees
8.	Michigan.....	26
13.	Penn State	23
14.	Ohio State.....	17
20.	Nebraska.....	27
25.	Purdue	26
27.	Wisconsin	19
30.	Michigan State.....	19
38.	Indiana.....	21
40.	Iowa	22
42.	Minnesota.....	22
50.	Northwestern.....	19
60.	Maryland	17
61.	Rutgers	19
63.	Illinois.....	13

*247Sports composite rankings

The group also included two quarterbacks, which is notable considering that the two signal callers to start games for Fleck last season – Zack Annexstad and Tanner Morgan – were both freshmen last year.

The highest-rated player in the class is Saint Charles (Ill.) North three-star corner Tyler Nubin (No. 391), followed by Rockwall, Texas, three-star quarterback Jacob Clark (No. 454). Clark is listed as a pro-style quarterback while Eden Prairie, Minn., three-star Cole Kramer, who enrolled early, is a dual-threat.

No. 50 Northwestern (19)

Despite stricter academic restrictions than many other schools, Northwestern has become a contender in the Big Ten West under Pat Fitzgerald, and he was able to sign 19 three-star prospects after finishing last in the Big Ten in recruiting a year ago. The group is led by Houston St. John's wideout Genson Hooper-Price, who checks in at No. 388 overall and No. 47 at his position.

Much like Minnesota, the Wildcats went national for their class, signing just three in-state players in addition to prospects from Texas (5), Georgia (2), Missouri (2), Florida (1), Indiana (1), Maryland (1), Massachusetts (1), Michigan (1), Minnesota (1) and Ohio (1). The Buckeye State signee is Milford three-star offensive tackle Connor Foster (No. 734).

Northwestern's class also took a hit back on April 25 when Snoqualmie (Wash.) Mount Si three-star quarterback Cale Millen

Wolverines Finish Atop Big Ten Rankings

Ohio State dominated recruiting in the Big Ten when Urban Meyer was at the helm, finishing with the highest-rated class in the conference each year from 2012-18. The Buckeyes were first in 2011, too, for that matter.

Michigan, though, took advantage of some turmoil in Columbus this year to finish with the conference's best 2019 recruiting class as Ohio State slipped to third (Penn State was second). The Wolverines' haul, which includes two five-stars, 14 four-stars and 10 three-stars, finished eighth in the 247Sports composite team rankings as well.

The cycle marked the first time since 2007 that Michigan finished with the Big Ten's best class.

"We'll be really proud about the class we'll sign, (the work will be) worth it," head coach Jim Harbaugh said back in December just before the early signing period. "It's a lot of work. But it sure doesn't seem like work. You're doing the things you love to do."

Michigan's class is highlighted by the two five-star prospects – Tulsa (Okla.) Booker T. Washington safety Daxton Hill and Norcross (Ga.) Greater Atlanta Christian School defensive tackle Chris Hinton, the nation's No. 14 and No. 31 overall prospects, respectively.

Hill's recruitment wasn't exactly easy for the Wolverines, though. He initially committed to Michigan on Sept. 18 before flipping to Alabama on Dec. 8. Eleven days later – Dec. 19, the first day of the early signing period – Hill reversed that decision, inking his letter of intent with the Wolverines.

After Hill and Hinton, Michigan signed one more top-50 player – Westlake Village (Calif.) Oaks Christian four-star running back Zach Charbonnet. The Nation's No. 46 overall player and No. 4 back was among eight prospects who enrolled early in Ann Arbor.

The group also included a few Ohio prospects, including Akron Hoban four-star guard Nolan Rumler (No. 174 overall), Fairfield four-star tight end Erick All (No. 346), Cincinnati Moeller three-star guard Zach Carpenter (No. 556), Clayton Northmont three-star defensive end Gabe Newburg (No. 777), Lakewood St. Edward three-star wide receiver Quintel Kent (No. 966) and Columbus St. Francis DeSales three-star safety Joey Velazquez (No. 1,044). Velazquez was once committed to Ohio State to play baseball but opted to head north for a chance to play both sports at the next level.

– Tim Moody

decommitted before eventually signing with Oregon. The Wildcats ended up without a quarterback in the class.

No. 60 Maryland (17)

A year of turmoil resulted in a plunge in the recruiting rankings for Maryland, which finished No. 28 nationally a year ago. After offensive lineman Jordan McNair died following an offseason workout, a lengthy investigation eventually led to the firing of head coach DJ Durkin, who was replaced by Matt Canada in an interim capacity before the Terrapins hired Alabama offensive coordinator Mike Locksley to lead the program forward.

Locksley, who did not join the Terrapins full time until after the Crimson Tide played in the national title game, still managed to bring in two four-star prospects in what ended up being a small class. The group is highlighted by Upper Marlboro (Md.) Dr. Henry Wise four-star wideout Isaiah Hazel (No. 224) and New Orleans Warren Easton four-star quarterback Lance LeGendre (No. 279), who was

widely expected to sign with Florida State before choosing Maryland.

Locksley signed one Ohio prospect in the class in Cincinnati Winton Woods three-star defensive end Anthony Booker, the 40th-ranked player in the state.

Maryland's class also took a hit the day before National Signing Day when Virginia Beach (Va.) Ocean Lakes three-star cornerback Tayvion Land decommitted and subsequently signed with Liberty.

No. 61 Rutgers (19)

Former Ohio State assistant Chris Ash's team finished second-to-last in the Big Ten recruiting rankings for the second year in a row, reeling in 21 three-star prospects. Ash went coast-to-coast for the class, but there was a heavy New Jersey presence with nine in-state players committing to the Scarlet Knights.

The highest-rated player in the group is Coatesville (Pa.) Area running back Aaron Young (No. 619), followed by Warren (Ohio) Warren G. Harding running back Kay'Ron Adams (No. 737).

Newark (N.J.) Barringer quarterback Zamar Wise, the No. 24 dual-threat in the nation, wasn't technically signed yet, though Rutgers is still pursuing him. He still has some academic work to do before inking a letter of intent. Hillside, N.J., defensive end Brian Ugwu committed on National Signing Day but is considered a blue-shirt candidate for the time being, meaning he wouldn't count toward the scholarship limit until 2020.

No. 63 Illinois (13)

It's a small class, but Lovie Smith's squad reeled in a talented group of prospects for 2019. The class has an average player rating of 86.79, up from 83.81 a year ago. That's thanks in large part to three top-300 signees, including Duncanville, Texas, four-star athlete Marquez Beason (No. 99), Saint Louis Trinity Catholic four-star athlete Isaiah Williams (No. 116) and his teammate, four-star linebacker Shammond Cooper (No. 286).

The 13 signees come from five different states, including five staying home in Illinois. The Illini didn't technically sign a quarterback, although Williams could be a signal caller at the next level.



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Early OSU Commit Leads 2020 Ohio Prospects

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

During Urban Meyer's seven-year run as Ohio State's head coach, there weren't many gripes from the fan base, especially where recruiting was concerned. If there was a gripe, though, it was that Meyer often pursued national prospects before turning to in-state players.

Of course, the Buckeyes typically still ended up with the best players from inside the state's borders, but others who could have made an impact ended up at places such as Michigan, Michigan State or Indiana on a regular basis.

Now that Ryan Day has taken over as head coach, he has stressed repeatedly the importance of recruiting in Ohio. What follows is a breakdown of the top 10 Ohio prospects for the 2020 class, as rated in the 247Sports composite, for a look at which Buckeye State products could continue being Buckeyes in college.

Paris Johnson, OT Cincinnati St. Xavier

Not only is Paris Johnson (6-7½, 295) Ohio's top prospect for 2020, but he's one of the best overall players around. The Cincinnati native checks in as the No. 6 prospect nationally and No. 1 offensive tackle in the 247Sports composite. As of now, he's the only five-star prospect in the state for his class.

The good news for the Buckeyes is that Johnson is already committed – in fact, he's been committed since June 28 and has made numerous unofficial visits in the time since.

That said, Johnson was certainly taken aback when Meyer retired in December and has since taken unofficial visits to schools such as Tennessee and Georgia Tech. There's no huge concern of a flip, though, as Johnson has become a key recruiter for Ohio State's 2020 haul.

Darrion Henry, DE Cincinnati Princeton

In recent years especially, the nation's best defensive linemen have regularly looked at Ohio State, thanks in large part to defensive line coach Larry Johnson. Henry (6-6, 260) is no exception as he already holds an offer from the Buckeyes while also considering Michigan and Penn State.

Paris Johnson has been vocal on social

Class Of 2020 In-State Prospects

The top 10 players in the state of Ohio for the 2020 class, as rated in the 247Sports composite rankings.									
Overall Rk.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School	Top Colleges		
6.	Paris Johnson	OT	6-7½	295	★★★★★	Cincinnati St. Xavier	Committed to Ohio State		
46.	Darrion Henry	DE	6-6	260	★★★★	Cincinnati Princeton	OSU, Michigan, PSU		
182	Michael Drennen	APB	5-11	195	★★★★	Dublin Coffman	OSU, Michigan, Notre Dame, PSU		
255.	Jaheim Thomas	OLB	6-5	218	★★★★	Cincinnati Princeton	Michigan, MSU, Notre Dame, Wisconsin		
284.	DeaMonte Trayanum	OLB	6-0	215	★★★★	Akron Hoban	Ohio State		
308.	Kalil Branham	WR	6-1	190	★★★★	Columbus Northland	Committed to Michigan		
361.	Terry Lockett	ATH	6-0	165	★★★	Geneva SPIRE Academy	UC, Iowa, Minn., Nebraska, Purdue		
376.	Jutahn McClain	APB	5-10	180	★★★	Fairfield	Michigan, Ohio State		
452.	Caden Clark	TE	6-4	246	★★★	Akron Hoban	Committed to Alabama		
453.	Demeatric Crenshaw	QB	6-2	205	★★★	Pickerington Central	BC, UC, Georgia Tech, IU, Kentucky		

media about trying to get Henry to join Ohio State's class, and as of Feb. 7, 100 percent of the 247Sports' crystal ball predictions pegged Henry as a future Buckeye.

Henry received an Ohio State offer last February and has visited numerous times since, most recently an unofficial visit during the first weekend of February.

He is the No. 46 overall player and No. 4 strong-side defensive end.

Michael Drennen, APB Dublin Coffman

Drennen, a four-star all-purpose back prospect from nearby Dublin, already has a strong offer list that includes Ohio State, Michigan, Notre Dame and Penn State.

According to his 247Sports profile, Drennen made visits to Ohio State as far back as April 2017 before eventually receiving an offer from the Buckeyes on June 22, 2018. His overall offer list has grown to 27, but the Big Ten East's top three teams, along with Notre Dame, have become central in his recruitment.

As of Feb. 7, there were three crystal ball predictions that had Drennen ending up at Ohio State with one for Michigan.

The 247Sports composite rates Drennen the No. 182 player nationally and No. 3 all-purpose back.

Jaheim Thomas, OLB Cincinnati Princeton

Thomas, a teammate of Henry's, is another on the list of Queen City prospects whom Paris Johnson has been heavily promoting. He visited in early February with Henry, and the four-star prospect already holds two crystal ball predictions in favor of the Buckeyes.

Ohio State has certainly shown plenty of interest in Thomas, but an offer hasn't been extended just yet. Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame and Wisconsin have all

gotten in on his recruitment early, but the Buckeyes are widely considered a likely landing spot.

In fact, Thomas was being recruited by Al Washington at Michigan before Washington left to take over as linebackers coach in Columbus, so a relationship with his potential future position coach has already been budding.

Thomas is rated the No. 255 player in the nation and No. 17 outside linebacker.

DeaMonte Trayanum, OLB Akron Hoban

While Trayanum is listed as a running back in some cases, the 6-0, 215-pound prospect also has the potential to play linebacker at the next level. In fact, the four-star prospect is rated the No. 23 outside linebacker and No. 284 overall player in the nation.

He holds a dozen offers nationally, including one from Ohio State, which is the only school listed as "warm" on his 247Sports recruiting profile. As of Feb. 7, 83 percent of crystal ball predictions had Trayanum ending up at Ohio State with the rest of the votes all in for Michigan.

His offer list also includes Boston College, Notre Dame and Penn State, among others.

Kalil Branham, WR Columbus Northland

A four-star prospect from Columbus? A ranking like that almost always means a player is headed to Ohio State.

That doesn't look likely to be the case early for Branham (6-1, 190), who committed to Michigan on June 19, 2018. Branham doesn't hold an offer from the Buckeyes at this point, despite numerous unofficial visits over the years. His offer list also includes Boston College, Cincinnati and Kentucky.

Branham is rated the No. 308 overall player and No. 58 wide receiver. The Buckeyes already hold commitments from two four-star wide receivers in the class as well – Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic's Gee Scott and Rockwall, Texas, prospect Jaxon Smith-Njigba.

Terry Lockett, ATH Geneva SPIRE Academy

Lockett (6-0, 165) is the first Ohio prospect on the list who checks in as a three-star player in the composite rankings. He holds just five offers so far, from Cincinnati, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and Purdue, although he unofficially visited Ohio State on Oct. 13 for the Buckeyes' 30-14 win over the Golden Gophers.

Luke Fickell's Bearcats are the most recent offer for Lockett, although the two crystal ball predictions currently in both have him ending up at Minnesota with head coach P.J. Fleck.

Lockett is the No. 361 overall player and No. 27 athlete in the 247Sports composite.

Jutahn McClain, APB Fairfield

While rated a three-star all-purpose back, McClain (5-10, 180) already holds 18 offers, including opportunities from Michigan and Ohio State. He was offered by the Buckeyes on Oct. 13 after the Wolverines extended their offer on Aug. 25.

There's only one crystal ball prediction in for McClain so far, which lists him as likely "undecided," but Michigan and Ohio State have certainly been central in his recruitment so far.

The 247Sports composite rates McClain the No. 376 overall player and No. 6 all-purpose back.

Caden Clark, TE Akron Hoban

There was a time when it seemed unlikely that Clark would end up anywhere other than Ohio State. That was when his older brother, Danny, was committed to the Buckeyes in the 2017 class. In fact, Danny Clark was committed to Ohio State for a few years before backing off that pledge late after the Buckeyes added Tate Martell.

Danny Clark ended up at Kentucky – he has since announced plans to transfer – while Caden Clark, a three-star prospect, eventually committed to Alabama on July 31. The Buckeyes, though, were part of a recent flurry of offers for the younger Clark that also included Miami (Fla.) and Iowa.

Clark (6-4, 246) is rated No. 452 overall and the No. 9 tight end for 2020.

Demeatric Crenshaw, QB Pickerington Central

Ohio State already has four-star quarterback Jack Miller committed in the 2020 class. The Buckeyes, though, are thin at the position when it comes to numbers, so this might be a cycle when they consider taking two. Perhaps that will provide a chance for Crenshaw (6-2, 205) to end up in Columbus.

So far Crenshaw holds offers from Boston College, Cincinnati, Georgia Tech, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisville and Toledo, while Ohio State is the only other school listed on his 247Sports recruiting profile.

Crenshaw is rated the No. 453 overall player and No. 10 dual-threat quarterback for 2020.

Bonus: Jakob James, OT Cincinnati Elder

As things stand, James is the No. 30 player in Ohio for 2020, but that rating seems likely to change. The 6-5, 275-pound offensive tackle received an offer from Ohio State on Jan. 21 and committed on the spot, becoming the second in-state tackle to pledge with the Buckeyes for the 2020 cycle.

James is rated the No. 859 overall player and No. 87 tackle so far, but there's plenty of time for his standing to skyrocket before National Signing Day for his class.



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Buckeyes Pursuing Many Of Nation's Top Recruits

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ohio State football team brought in a remarkable amount of elite talent from out-of-state schools during Urban Meyer's tenure in Columbus. His successor, Ryan Day, is striving to continue the tradition of seeking out the nation's best players, regardless of region.

After ranking third in the country with a 91.87 average rating for his first recruiting class as head coach, Day turns his focus to the 2020 recruiting cycle.

What follows is a breakdown of 10 of Ohio State's highest-rated targets outside of the Buckeye State for the 2020 class. The prospects are listed in order of national ranking, according to the 247Sports composite.

Bryan Bresee, DE Damascus, Md.

Bresee is the No. 1 recruit in the nation at any position. The 6-5, 290-pound defensive end has a rating of .9995 by 247Sports, tying him with former All-Americans Leonard Fournette and Adrian Peterson for the 15th-highest rating of all time. Bresee is the fourth-highest rated defensive end recruit in 247Sports composite history behind Jadeveon Clowney, Robert Nkemdiche and Da'Quan Bowers. Bresee also plays basketball for Damascus, averaging 13.7 points and 11.9 rebounds through the first nine games of his junior season.

The multisport athlete will not likely rush his recruitment, but the 247Sports crystal ball predictions have Ohio State tied with Clemson and Penn State at 30 percent each, ahead of his home state school of Maryland at 10 percent.

Julian Fleming, WR Catawissa (Pa.) S. Columbia

Fleming is the No. 5 overall prospect and No. 1 wide receiver in the nation. The Catawissa, Pa., native's .9977 rating makes him the No. 1 player in Pennsylvania and a top-150 national recruit in the history of 247Sports. Ohio State has been active in recruiting Fleming, who hauled in 69 catches for 1,462 yards and 20 touchdowns as a junior. Fleming has taken at least three unofficial visits to Columbus thus far, catching the Nebraska and Michigan games this past season after first visiting in June.

The 6-3, 210-pound wideout is also a basketball standout, averaging 20.0 points, 9.3 rebounds and 2.6 assists, while making his presence felt defensively with 2.7 steals and 1.6 blocks per game. The two-sport athlete has seven double-doubles through the first 12 games of his junior season.

Penn State holds 82 percent of crystal ball predictions and Ohio State has 18 percent.

Fleming is well aware of what analysts are saying about his recruitment, even going as far as donning Ohio State gloves during a two-touchdown performance in a 69-16 playoff victory.

"I can't let anyone assume, so I've got to switch up some hints so no one is ahead of the game," Fleming said. "I mean people just assume (Penn State) because I've been there. It's just close to home. Ultimately, it's going to be where I can get most developed and hopefully make a career out of football."

Kelee Ringo, CB Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro

Ringo is the No. 10 overall prospect

Class Of 2020 National Prospects

Ten of the top players OSU is pursuing in the 2020 class from around the nation, as rated in the 247Sports composite rankings.									
Overall Rk.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School	Top Colleges		
1.	Bryan Bresee	DE	6-5	290	★★★★★	Damascus, Md.	ALA, CLE, UGA, OSU, PSU		
5.	Julian Fleming	WR	6-3	210	★★★★★	Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia	CLE, UGA, U-M, OSU, PSU		
10.	Kelee Ringo	CB	6-2	205	★★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro	OSU, OKLA, ORE, USC, WASH		
11.	Kendall Milton	RB	6-2	210	★★★★★	Clovis (Calif.) Buchanan	ALA, FSU, Fresno St., UGA, LSU		
14.	Justin Rogers	OG	6-2½	311	★★★★★	Oak Park, Mich.	UGA, OSU, UK, LSU, U-M		
15.	Mekhail Sherman	OLB	6-3	234	★★★★★	Washington (D.C.) St. John's College	ALA, CLE, UGA, OSU, PSU		
26.	Rakim Jarrett	WR	6-0	182	★★★★★	Washington (D.C.) St. John's College	ALA, UF, LSU, OSU, TENN		
30.	Fred Davis	CB	6-2	177	★★★★★	Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian	ALA, UF, FSU, UGA		
35.	Luke Wypler	C	6-3½	285	★★★★	Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional	Committed to Ohio State		
65.	Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral	Committed to Ohio State		

and No. 2 cornerback in the country. The Scottsdale, Ariz., native recorded 31 tackles, one tackle for loss, four passes defended and one interception as a junior. The No. 1 recruit in Arizona has a split prediction between Washington and Texas as far as the crystal balls are concerned, but other programs are very much in the race.

The 6-2, 205-pound cornerback visited Columbus for the game against Minnesota and came away impressed.

"I could definitely see myself there in two years," Ringo told Lettermen Row. "There is no doubt I will be taking an official visit there. The biggest thing to do when I come back is getting my mom out there to see everything and get the experience."

Kendall Milton, RB Clovis (Calif.) Buchanan

Milton is the No. 2 running back recruit and No. 11 overall prospect nationally. The 6-1, 211-pound tailback took 175 carries for 1,514 yards and 23 touchdowns as a sophomore, with a stellar average of 11.6 yards per carry. The Clovis, Calif., native added eight catches for 117 yards and two scores.

The No. 4 recruit in California is predicted to go to USC (75 percent) according to the crystal ball forecasts, with Alabama at 12 percent and 12 percent undecided. Ohio State offered the talented back more than a year ago on Jan. 26, 2018.

"Milton has family in Columbus and says he has high interest in Ohio State," wrote Bill Kurelic of 247Sports. "The Buckeyes have a real shot, but it will not be easy. Landing Milton to go along with the other offensive weapons in the Buckeyes' 2020 class would be spectacular."

Justin Rogers, OG Oak Park, Mich.

Rogers is the No. 1 guard prospect and No. 14 overall player in the nation. The Oak Park, Mich., native has been on Ohio State's radar for a while, picking up an offer on July 26, 2017, after attending camp five days prior.

Since that summer, the 6-2½, 311-pound lineman has made seven unofficial visits to Columbus. Rogers is the No. 1 player in Michigan, and the crystal ball predictions have Ohio State leading at 53 percent, ahead of Georgia at 47 percent.

Mekhail Sherman, OLB Washington (D.C.) St. John's

Sherman is the No. 2 outside linebacker and No. 15 overall prospect in the 2020 class. The 6-3, 234-pound outside linebacker recorded 51 tackles, including 18 tackles for loss, seven sacks, one forced fumble and two pass breakups as a sophomore. The Washington, D.C., native received an offer from Ohio State on Jan. 29, 2018.

"Sherman had a great visit to Ohio State

in late July, and I look for him to make it back in the spring," Kurelic wrote of the No. 1 player in D.C. "I still think this is going to be a battle that will include the likes of Alabama, Clemson, Georgia and Penn State, but I like the Buckeyes' chances."

Rakim Jarrett, WR Washington (D.C.) St. John's

Sherman's teammate, Jarrett, is the No. 4 wide receiver and No. 26 overall prospect in the class. The 6-0, 182-pound wideout took an unofficial visit to Columbus in July and then again on Nov. 24 for The Game. The No. 2 player in D.C. is predicted to go to Ohio State (89 percent), ahead of Maryland (11 percent) among crystal ball forecasters.

Fred Davis, CB Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian

Davis is the No. 3 cornerback and No. 30 overall prospect in the country. A Jacksonville, Fla., native, Davis attended the same high school as current Buckeye corners Tyreke Johnson and Shaun Wade as well as freshman running back Marcus Crowley.

The 6-2, 177-pound corner recorded 48 tackles (36 solo), 1½ tackles for loss, 12 passes defended and one interception as a junior. Davis is a speedster who tests off the charts, clocking in at 4.3 in the 40-yard dash with a 36.1-inch vertical leap.

"It was really important to get up and see Ohio State," Davis told Lettermen Row. "My former teammates and I don't really talk about schools like that with each other, though. We just are enjoying this process and it's a blessing. It's definitely a place I see myself. I want to be around the best and nothing other than the best."

Luke Wypler, C Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph

Wypler is the No. 1 center and No.

35 overall prospect in the country. The Montvale, N.J., native took an unofficial visit to Columbus on March 11 and received an offer on June 9. The 6-3½, 285-pound lineman verbally committed to Ohio State on July 7.

Wypler is the No. 1 player in New Jersey and is already a cornerstone of the Buckeyes' class.

Jack Miller, QB Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral

Miller is the No. 4 pro-style quarterback and No. 65 overall recruit in the nation. The 6-4, 210-pound signal caller took an unofficial visit on Oct. 28, 2017, when the Buckeyes pulled off a thrilling fourth-quarter comeback to defeat Penn State, 39-38. The Scottsdale, Ariz., native visited Columbus twice more before verbally committing July 1.

Miller has been indirectly tied to Meyer since his days at Florida, with his family befriending then-Gator quarterback Tim Tebow. The former Heisman winner was influential in Miller's decision, informing the gunslinger of what a great coach Meyer is to play for.

Miller remained committed to Ohio State when Meyer stepped down and Day stepped in.

"He was recruited by Coach Day and Coach Meyer for this new explosive passing offense, and Coach Day created it," Miller's father, Jack Miller Sr., told the Arizona Republic. "They, as well as others, have confirmed the offense will be run by Coach Day with the same explosiveness."

In addition to the coaching change, the Buckeyes brought in Justin Fields to be their quarterback. Miller, who plans to enroll early in the winter of 2020, was unbothered by the news.

"I'm solid," Miller told Lettermen Row after Fields' transfer to Columbus. "I don't really care too much."



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Muhammad's Offense A Positive Surprise For OSU

Luther Muhammad was recruited out of New Jersey as a defensive specialist with his contributions at the offensive end of the court seen as a bonus.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

That the freshman guard (6-3, 185) has adjusted nicely to the college game in both aspects has been a major reason that Ohio State was able to come out of its January funk still looking and playing like team that could earn a second consecutive NCAA Tournament bid.

When the Buckeyes (16-7, 6-6 Big Ten) needed him most, the Jersey City (N.J.) Hudson Catholic product delivered, scoring a career-high 24 points, grabbing six rebounds (tying his best mark), making one turnover and getting three steals in leading the Buckeyes to a 70-60 win at Nebraska on Jan. 26 to snap a five-game losing streak, the longest for the program in 21 years.

He made three three-pointers in the second half, including one that gave OSU a 59-49 lead with under five minutes left to stop a 6-0 Nebraska run.

The Cornhuskers were within 62-56 with a minute to play before Muhammad made all six of his free throws down the stretch.

Three games later, he was at it again to help the Buckeyes down Penn State 74-70 at Value City Arena on Feb. 7 for their third win in four games. Muhammad led OSU with 20 points and dished out four assists while not committing a turnover in 38 minutes.

Ohio State coach Chris Holtmann said he expected Muhammad to be a contributor as a rookie.

"We felt he was going to make a strong, immediate impact," he said. "Now, did I anticipate in a game that goes down to the wire that he has 20 points, four assists, no turnovers? I'm not saying that, but we anticipated him making a real impact from day one."



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KEVIN DYE

SCORING TOUCH – Freshman guard Luther Muhammad is third on the team with 10.1 points per game in 2018-19.

"Some of that's when you look at our roster too. We're kind of building our roster and knew there would be a great opportunity for him."

Muhammad had nine points, including a free throw with 8.8 seconds left for the final points of the game when the Buckeyes defeated Indiana 55-52 on Feb. 10 for their third straight win.

He is averaging 10.1 points and 3.0 rebounds while starting all but one of the 22 games he has played. He sustained a shoulder injury late in the 72-62 loss to Syracuse on Nov. 28 and missed the following game at Minnesota on Dec. 2 but returned to score six points in 35 minutes at Illinois three days later.

If there is a criticism of Muhammad, it's that he doesn't shoot enough. Imagine that. He's had seven games where he's taken six or fewer shots. That's why his teammates have urged him to fire away more often.

"They just tell me if I'm open shoot," he said. "Sometimes I pass up a shot I should take."

Not that he wants to be a ball hog. "It's just playing within the team," he said. "It's not trying to go out of your way to get a bucket. It's staying within the offense. If you've got a shot, take it – just making the right reads and playing the right way, playing good basketball."

He credits the veterans on the team with making him feel more comfortable in the offense as the season has progressed.

"It's having great teammates like Andre (Wesson), Keyshawn (Woods), C.J. (Jackson), older guys that have been through this already," he said. "They're pushing me every day and having confidence in me, and me having confidence in myself."

He drew laughter during the Penn State postgame press conference when asked if his offense was underrated because of his defensive work.

Without hesitation, Muhammad said, "Yes, most definitely I think my offense is underrated."

He also got chuckles when it was men-

tioned he might have done some jawing with the Nittany Lions after nailing a three-pointer.

"I don't really talk too much, but if you start it, I'm going to finish it," he said.

He was more serious when it came to defending Penn State's talented guard Josh Reaves, who scored 20 points against the Buckeyes.

"It was great. I'm a freshman. It's the first time playing at this level," Muhammad said. "I'm very excited. I want the test. I want the challenge. I want somebody to push me to bring the best out of me every game. It was a great experience."

Holtmann likes the way Muhammad has taken to adding scoring to his repertoire, noting that as a coach he no longer needs to urge him to shoot more.

"We talked about that, but I haven't sensed a whole lot of tentativeness from him to be honest with you," the coach said. "A couple of our other guys have. I've had that conversation. He's been pretty assertive. We need him to stay that way."

"I'd much rather have a kid we can teach than a guy who's struggling with assertiveness and confidence. I want them to play freely and aggressively and err on the side of that, if they're going to err."

Young And Restless

Sophomore forward Kyle Young returned for the Penn State game after missing four games with a stress fracture in his lower right leg.

At the time of the injury following the Jan. 18 game against Maryland, he had started 12 of 17 games, averaging 7.3 points and 4.8 rebounds while hitting 73.2 percent (52 of 71) of his shots from the floor.

His presence (6-8, 205) was sorely missed with sophomore center Kaleb Wesson frequently in foul trouble.

Young entered at the 15:07 mark of the first half vs. the Nittany Lions and grabbed his first rebound 17 seconds later before immediately turning it over.

"It was great because I knew he was hungry to be back," Muhammad said. "He

BIG Men's Basketball

	Conf.			Overall		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Michigan	11	2	.846	22	2	.917
Purdue	10	2	.833	17	6	.739
Michigan State	10	3	.769	19	5	.792
Maryland	9	4	.692	18	6	.750
Wisconsin	9	4	.692	17	7	.708
Iowa	8	5	.615	19	5	.792
Ohio State	6	6	.500	16	7	.696
Minnesota	6	7	.462	16	8	.667
Illinois	5	8	.385	9	15	.375
Indiana	4	9	.308	13	11	.542
Rutgers	4	9	.308	11	12	.478
Northwestern	3	9	.250	12	11	.522
Nebraska	3	10	.231	13	11	.542
Penn State	1	11	.083	8	15	.348

Jan. 29 Scores

Maryland 70, Northwestern 52
Wisconsin 62, Nebraska 51

Michigan 65, Ohio State 49

Jan. 30 Scores

Rutgers 66, Indiana 58
Minnesota 86, Illinois 75

Jan. 31 Score

Purdue 99, Penn State 90 (OT)

Feb. 1 Scores

Iowa 74, Michigan 59
Wisconsin 69, Maryland 61

Feb. 2 Scores

Indiana 79, Michigan State 75 (OT)

Ohio State 76, Rutgers 62
Illinois 71, Nebraska 64

Feb. 3 Score

Purdue 73, Minnesota 63

Feb. 4 Score

Penn State 59, Northwestern 52

Feb. 5 Scores

Illinois 79, Michigan State 74
Michigan 77, Rutgers 65

Feb. 6 Scores

Maryland 60, Nebraska 45
Wisconsin 56, Minnesota 51

Feb. 7 Scores

Ohio State 74, Penn State 70
Iowa 77, Indiana 72

Feb. 9 Scores

Michigan 61, Wisconsin 52
Michigan State 79, Minnesota 55
Illinois 99, Rutgers 94 (OT)
Purdue 81, Nebraska 62

Feb. 10 Scores

Ohio State 55, Indiana 52
Iowa 80, Northwestern 79

Feb. 12 Games

Purdue at Maryland, 6:30 p.m.
Michigan State at Wisconsin, 7 p.m.
Michigan at Penn State, 8:30 p.m.

Feb. 13 Games

Rutgers at Northwestern, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Nebraska, 9 p.m.

Feb. 14 Game

Illinois at Ohio State, 7 p.m.

Feb. 16 Games

Maryland at Michigan, Noon
Indiana at Minnesota, 2 p.m.
Penn State at Purdue, 4 p.m.
Iowa at Rutgers, 6 p.m.
Northwestern at Nebraska, 8:30 p.m.

Feb. 17 Game

Ohio State at Michigan State, 1 p.m.

Feb. 18 Game

Illinois at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.

Feb. 19 Games

Purdue at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Nebraska at Penn State, 7 p.m.
Maryland at Iowa, 8 p.m.

Feb. 20 Games

Rutgers at Michigan State, 6:30 p.m.
Northwestern at Ohio State, 8:30 p.m.

Feb. 21 Game

Michigan at Minnesota, 7 p.m.

Feb. 22 Game

Indiana at Iowa, 9 p.m.

Feb. 23 Games

Penn State at Illinois, Noon
Ohio State at Maryland, 2 p.m.

Purdue at Nebraska, 4 p.m.
Wisconsin at Northwestern, 8:30 p.m.

Feb. 24 Games

Michigan State at Michigan, 3:45 p.m.
Minnesota at Rutgers, 6:30 p.m.

2018-19 Ohio State Men's Basketball Statistics

16-7 Overall (6-6 Big Ten)
Statistics through games of Feb. 10

Player	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds		PF-FO	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									O-D	T-Avg.						
Kaleb Wesson	23-22	572-24.9	112-213	.526	19-47	.404	95-131	.725	54-93	147-6.4	79-3	42	52	13	22	338-14.7
C.J. Jackson	23-22	710-30.9	97-227	.427	44-110	.400	57-71	.803	10-87	97-4.2	45-1	83	57	5	27	295-12.8
L. Muhammad	22-21	665-30.2	75-170	.441	30-66	.455	43-58	.741	13-53	66-3.0	44-1	45	33	2	24	223-10.1
Andre Wesson	23-22	655-28.5	70-147	.476	23-67	.343	42-56	.750	28-70	98-4.3	67-2	35	38	12	9	205-8.9
Kyle Young	19-12	418-22.0	56-77	.727	1-5	.200	20-35	.571	31-59	90-4.7	42-0	19	17	11	13	133-7.0
D. Washington	23-2	381-16.6	59-155	.381	31-89	.348	10-18	.556	5-47	52-2.3	31-0	24	24	0	4	159-6.9
Keyshawn Woods	23-7	596-25.9	57-143	.399	16-55	.291	22-27	.815	9-58	67-2.9	49-0	59	31	2	12	152-6.6
Musa Jallow	23-6	324-14.1	22-56	.393	8-25	.320	13-20	.650	22-42	64-2.8	25-1	7	15	7	11	65-2.8
Jaedon LeDee	21-1	136-6.5	14-32	.438	0-3	.000	30-40	.750	14-24	38-1.8	21-0	5	10	5	2	58-2.8
Justin Ahrens	15-0	98-6.5	9-26	.346	6-22	.273	1-2	.500	2-14	16-1.1	8-0	3	8	2	3	25-1.7
Joey Lane	9-0	26-2.9	4-5	.800	3-4	.750	0-0	.000	0-6	6-0.7	2-0	6	3	0	2	11-1.2
Danny Hummer	6-0	17-2.8	1-3	.333	0-1	.000	0-2	.000	0-1	1-0.2	4-0	1	3	0	2	2-0.3
TEAM									27-30	57-2.5				8		
Ohio State	23	4,598	576-1,254	.459	181-494	.366	333-460	.724	215-584	799-34.7	417-8	329	299	59	131	1,666-72.4
Opponents	23	4,594	514-1,258	.409	151-463	.326	311-413	.753	212-534	746-32.4	452-13	249	302	62	141	1,490-64.8

OSU Men's Basketball Signees

Players in the class of 2019 who have signed letters of intent to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the 247Sports composite.)

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

didn't need too much motivation to come in the game and give his all. That also helped. We just told him come in, continue to play his game and play within the team and he'll do good, and he did."

Young made a key basket in the paint with 1:03 left in the game, using a hesitation move to also draw a foul, for a 71-70 lead. He then blocked a shot at the other end to help preserve the victory.

He played 25 minutes and had six points and six rebounds.

"I thought his shot-fake finish was big there late," Holtmann said. "Showed great poise and rebounded it well. He played with activity. That's who Kyle is. We've missed that, and we've missed his experience, too."

Holtmann figured he would get about 15 minutes out of Young in his first game back.

Muhammad was more surprised that Young played at all considering he had started working out only a few days earlier.

"When he said he was playing, I was, 'You're playing?' " Muhammad said. "He came in and didn't miss a beat. He was still out there doing his job, rebounding, being another key part of our defense blocking and everything, so it was good to see."

Young had three points and three rebounds in 19 minutes vs. the Hoosiers.

For The Future

DJ Carton, a 247Sports composite four-star point guard, set the Bettendorf, Iowa, career scoring mark on Feb. 8. His 1,083 points surpassed Cole Clearman's record of 1,072.

Carton, Wolfeboro (N.H.) Brewster Academy four-star forward Alonzo Gaffney

and Belleville (Ill.) West four-star forward EJ Liddell are part of Ohio State's 2019 class that is ranked 10th nationally and first in the Big Ten by 247Sports.

Holtmann said Feb. 6 that there may be a fourth player added.

"I don't have a timeline," he said. "We certainly could, and that could come in the form of another freshman or in the form of a graduate transfer."

There are no commitments for the two available spots in the 2020 class, but Holtmann is confident he'll have no trouble filling them.

"I feel good about the guys we're on and the guys we've built a relationship with, but I also know that's pretty fluid," the second-year coach said. "It's always a great challenge to follow up a great recruiting class with another great recruiting class, but that's the challenge in front of us right now. That '20 class is very, very important as we build this thing because the first three or four classes are very critical."

Next Up

The Buckeyes will have six games before BSB next goes to press, beginning Feb. 14 vs. Illinois. They play Feb. 17 at Michigan State, return home three days later to face Northwestern, go to Maryland on Feb. 23, host Iowa on Feb. 26 and play at Purdue on March 2.

They finish the regular season March 6 at Northwestern and home March 10 vs. Wisconsin before the Big Ten tournament March 13-17 in Chicago.

For results of the games before BSB next goes to press and all the other basketball news, go to BuckeyeSports.com, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

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After Loss To U-M, OSU Finds Winning Touch

By JAMES GREGA & CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writers

The Ohio State men's basketball team went 3-1 at Michigan, home to Rutgers and Penn State and at Indiana since BSB last went to press.

The win over Indiana moved the Buckeyes to 16-7 overall and 6-6 in conference play.

What follows are recaps of the loss to the Wolverines and the wins against Rutgers, Penn State and Indiana.

Michigan 65, Ohio State 49

Ohio State hung with Michigan for much of the first half, but the Wolverines showed why they were the No. 5 team in the country at the time when they pulled away from a six-point halftime lead for a 65-49 victory at Crisler Center in Ann Arbor on Jan. 29.

The Buckeyes led 26-25 with 2:27 left in the first half on a jumper by senior guard C.J. Jackson but went scoreless from there, and U-M reeled off seven straight points for the 32-26 lead going into the break.

It was all Michigan (20-1, 9-1) in the second half to send the Buckeyes to their sixth loss in the past seven games in a feisty affair that included a scuffle in the second half resulting in several technical fouls for each team before a crowd of 12,707.

"We're nowhere near our capabilities," Jackson said. "Just in the first half, we're down six against a team that's going to have a really good season. That shows we can compete against the best when we're at our best."

Sophomore center Kaleb Wesson led the Buckeyes with 12 points but played only 21 minutes. Jackson added 11 points and a team-high eight rebounds, but each made only one field goal in the second half.

U-M junior guard Xavier Simpson from Lima (Ohio) Senior tore up the Buckeyes with a triple-double – 11 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists. Jordan Poole led the Wolverines with 15 points, and Ignas Brazdeikis added 14.

The Buckeyes got off to a good start when junior forward Andre Wesson drained a three-pointer for a 17-12 lead with 11:23 to go before the break.

U-M took the lead for good at 27-26 on a Simpson jumper with 2:10 left. Brazdeikis followed with a trey and Charles Matthews made a second-chance basket with 24 seconds to go for the final points of the half.

The rivals went scoreless to start the second half before Kaleb Wesson nailed a three to cut the deficit to 32-29 with 17:36 to play, but the Wolverines gradually built their lead to 44-33 on a three-pointer by Poole with 12:35 to play to help ensure their 20th straight home win.

"I thought we had some open looks where we just missed, and then there was a stretch where they made some open looks that we didn't make and it kind of broke the game open," said Ohio State coach Chris Holtmann.

With 8:05 left, Kaleb Wesson was called for a foul and a technical. While the play was being reviewed, Wesson was confronted by some Michigan players, and he, teammate Keyshawn Woods, Simpson and U-M's Jon Teske (who had been fouled by Wesson) were assessed technicals.

Teske made both free throws for a 52-38 advantage as Kaleb Wesson exited the game.

After the game, Simpson was more than willing to take a verbal shot at the Buckeyes.

"Guys are tough with their mouth but they're not tough with their play," he said. "A lot of guys like to, you know, talk – which

I appreciate. We feed off that. That gets us going."

Ohio State shot 36.5 percent (19 of 52) from the floor and committed 19 turnovers. Michigan was 40.7 percent from the field (22 of 54) and turned it over nine times. The Buckeyes made 23.8 percent (5 of 21) from beyond the arc while U-M hit 37.0 percent (10 of 27).

Michigan turned Ohio State's miscues into 20 points, while the Buckeyes had just seven points off turnovers.

Ohio State 76, Rutgers 62

Ohio State got back in the win column Feb. 2 thanks in large part to big man Kaleb Wesson.

The Westerville, Ohio, native scored Ohio State's first 12 points of the game, and the Buckeyes came away with a 76-62 home win over Rutgers, avenging a 64-61 loss to the Scarlet Knights in Piscataway, N.J., on Jan. 9. Wesson finished with 27 points, just four off of his career high of 31.

Wesson opened the game by making his first six shots from the floor, including three from behind the three-point line. He missed just one shot in the first half and had 21 at the break as the Buckeyes took a 37-29 into the locker room in front of 14,961.

Unlike most teams that have played Ohio State this season, Rutgers head coach Steve Pikiell elected not to double-team or trap Wesson in the post but said it would have been hard to do so with the way he was hitting perimeter shots.

"It is hard to trap a guy popping out for three," Pikiell said. "He had nine points from there and then (four) from the foul line. Plus, that's not what we do. We have enough big guys and big bodies. But when he is stepping out and hitting threes, that is a whole different assignment."

"When he has nights like this, you're not going to beat Ohio State at Ohio State."

Ohio State led by as many as 13 in the first half (37-24 at 1:37) and made more shots from behind the arc (seven) than inside the arc (six). Of the 13 made shots, Wesson had eight.

"I kind of think he took what the defense gave him," Holtmann said. "Obviously, he was on a roll there and we knew he was on a roll, and a lot of that was just within the flow of the offense. I thought he did a really good job in the second half not settling for some threes when he could have. He had one in the corner that he passed, drove it, passed it to Keyshawn. I thought that was as good a play as he made, as crazy as that sounds."

The second half featured a different start, as Wesson was held scoreless for the first 9:07 of the frame. In his stead, Ohio State got major contributions from Jackson who accounted for the first five Buckeye points of the second half and took on the scoring load for Holtmann's squad.

Jackson finished with 20 points, 17 of which came in the final 20 minutes. He also added a team-high seven boards. Freshman guard Luther Muhammad and Woods also finished in double-digits scoring, finishing with 12 and 11, respectively.

The Scarlet Knights never got closer than six points in the second half, which came on the first basket of the half by Shaquille Doorson to make it 37-31. Ohio State's lead swelled to as many as 16 in the final seconds.

"This was a complete game for us in a lot of ways," Holtmann said. "I was really proud of our older guys. Now when I'm talking about our older guys, I'm also talking about our sophomores. Shot-making can cover up

Michigan 65, Ohio State 49

Jan. 29, 2019												
Crisler Center • Ann Arbor, Mich.												
		1	2									F
OSU (13-7, 3-6 B1G)		26	23	-								49
U-M (20-1, 9-1 B1G)		32	33	-								65
Ohio State												
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
A. Wesson	29	2-5	3-3	1-1	1	4	8					
K. Wesson	21	5-12	0-0	3-4	1	4	12					
Muhammad	32	1-5	0-0	0-4	0	2	3					
Jallow	27	0-2	0-0	2-1	0	1	0					
Jackson	30	4-6	3-3	1-7	4	1	11					
Washington	16	2-8	0-0	0-1	2	0	5					
Ahrens	11	2-5	0-0	1-2	0	0	4					
Lane	1	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0					
LeDee	9	2-3	0-0	2-0	1	2	4					
Woods	24	1-6	0-0	0-3	1	3	2					
Totals	200	19-52	6-6	11-24	10	17	49					
Percentages: FG: 36.5%. FT: 100.0%. 3-point goals: 5-21 (A. Wesson 1-2, K. Wesson 2-2, Muhammad 1-3, Jallow 0-2, Jackson 0-1, Washington 1-5, Ahrens 0-3, Woods 0-3). Team rebounds: 1. Blocked shots: 4 (K. Wesson 3, A. Wesson). Turnovers: 19 (Woods 4, Muhammad 3, Jallow 3, A. Wesson 2, Washington 2, K. Wesson, Jackson, Ahrens, LeDee, TEAM). Steals: 4 (Muhammad, Jackson, Washington, Woods).												
Michigan												
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Brazdeikis	35	4-7	4-4	0-3	1	2	14					
Teske	25	1-4	2-2	2-3	0	2	4					
Matthews	31	3-8	2-2	1-2	1	1	9					
Poole	38	5-14	2-2	0-0	0	2	15					
Simpson	36	5-13	0-0	2-8	12	2	11					
DeJulius	1	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	0					
Livers	23	4-6	1-2	0-4	0	4	12					
Nunez	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Castleton	1	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Johns	3	0-0	0-0	1-0	0	0	0					
Davis	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Brooks	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	1	0					
Totals	200	22-54	11-12	8-21	15	14	65					
Percentages: FG: 40.7%. FT: 91.7%. 3-point goals: 10-27 (Brazdeikis 2-3, Matthews 1-3, Poole 3-10, Simpson 1-5, Livers 3-5, Castleton 0-1). Team rebounds: 2. Blocked shots: 3 (Teske, Poole, Simpson). Turnovers: 9 (Brazdeikis 3, Poole 3, Matthews, Livers, TEAM). Steals: 11 (Poole 3, Livers 3, Brazdeikis 2, Simpson 2, Matthews). Officials: Eppley, Higgins, Broski. A: 12,707.												

some things. We made 13 threes (on 28 shots, 46.4 percent) and our guys were taking great shots."

The Scarlet Knights were led Eugene Omoruyi, who poured in 19 points to go along with eight rebounds. Ohio State held star Rutgers guard Geo Baker to just five points in 36 minutes of game action.

Ohio State 74, Penn State 70

Sophomore forward Kyle Young returned after missing four games because of a stress fracture in his lower leg to help Ohio State hold off Penn State 74-70 at Value City Arena on Feb. 7.

He was fouled while making a layup with 63 seconds left to give OSU a 71-70 lead. Young missed the free throw to extend the margin but made up for it with a block of a shot by Lamar Stevens with 37 seconds left.

After a scramble, the ball went out of bounds to Penn State, but there was one second left on the shot clock. Stevens grabbed the in-bound lob over Jackson and scored at the rim, but after a review it was ruled the shot was too late and the Buckeyes got the ball back with 32 seconds left.

Andre Wesson was fouled and made the second of two free throws for a 72-70 score with 29 seconds left, and OSU got a break when an open layup by Penn State's Rasir Bolton rolled the hoop. Jackson grabbed the rebound and was fouled with 19 seconds to play.

He made a pair of free throws for a 74-70 lead, and the Nittany Lions (8-15, 1-11) missed two desperation shots at the end to the relief of the 15,824 in attendance for the ugly game.

There were 44 fouls, 23 on PSU, and one technical on each team.

"That was a rugged, Big Ten fight, that's for sure," Holtmann said. "Give our guys a lot of credit. I thought they made gutsy, gutsy plays and finished the game like we needed to."

Ohio State 76, Rutgers 62

Feb. 2, 2019												
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio												
		1	2									F
RU (11-10, 4-7 B1G)		29	33	-								62
OSU (14-7, 4-6 B1G)		37	39	-								76
Rutgers												
	Total	FG	FT	Reb.	A	PF	Pts.					
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Omoruyi	31	7-11	5-8	6-2	6	2	19					
Doorson	14	4-4	1-3	0-1	0	1	9					
Baker	36	2-10	0-0	1-1	3	1	5					
Mathis	20	1-8	0-0	1-2	1	0	3					
Harper	22	1-1	0-0	1-0	0	0	3					
Carter	11	1-3	0-0	1-1	0	2	2					
Johnson	23	2-3	1-2	3-5	3	3	5					
McConnell	24	5-10	1-2	1-2	0	4	14					
Kiss	14	1-5	0-2	0-3	0	0	2					
Thiam	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	1	0					
Totals	200	24-55	8-17	15-21	14	14	62					
Percentages: FG: 43.6%. FT: 47.1%. 3-point goals: 6-19 (Baker 1-6, Mathis 1-2, Harper 1-1, McConnell 3-6, Kiss 0-4). Team rebounds: 5. Blocked shots: 2 (Mathis, McConnell). Turnovers: 12 (Omoruyi 3, Baker 3, Mathis 2, Johnson 2, Harper, Carter). Steals: 4 (McConnell 4).												
Ohio State												
	Total	FG	FT	Reb.	A	PF	Pts.					
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
A. Wesson	26	1-6	3-4	0-3	2	5	5					
K. Wesson	38	10-12	4-4	2-2	5	2	27					
Muhammad	34	4-6	0-0	0-2	2	4	12					
Jallow	18	0-3	0-0	1-3	0	1	0					
Jackson	35	8-14	0-1	1-6	3	2	20					
Washington	7	0-2	0-0	0-1	0	1	0					
Ahrens	7	0-1	1-2	0-0	1	0	1					
LeDee	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Woods	30	4-7	1-2	0-4	3	1	11					
Totals	200	27-51	9-13	4-21	16	16	76					
Percentages: FG: 52.9%. FT: 69.2%. 3-point goals: 13-28 (A. Wesson 0-3, K. Wesson 3-4, Muhammad 4-6, Jallow 0-1, Jackson 4-7, Washington 0-2, Ahrens 0-1, Woods 2-4). Team rebounds: None. Blocked shots: 2 (K. Wesson, Ahrens). Turnovers: 6 (Muhammad 3, K. Wesson, Jallow, Jackson). Steals: 5 (K. Wesson, Jackson, Ahrens, LeDee, Woods). Officials: Riley, Green, Beaver. A: 14,961.												

Muhammad led the Buckeyes with 20 points and did not commit any of the 18 OSU turnovers that helped Penn State erase a 15-point lead in the first half, when the Buckeyes committed 12 of their miscues resulting in 13 Lion points.

Jackson and Andre Wesson each had 15 points, with Wesson pulling down 10 rebounds. Stevens and Josh Reaves had 20 points for Penn State, with Stevens credited with a game-high 12 off the boards.

The Buckeyes were feeling good about themselves, carrying a double-digit advantage for much of the opening 20 minutes, but let much of it slip away to lead 34-31 at halftime.

After Penn State raced to an 8-2 lead in the first three minutes, the Buckeyes responded in a big way with an 11-0 run over a 3:07 span. A free throw by Stevens interrupted the streak, but Ohio State followed with 10 straight points and a 23-9 advantage with 9:32 left thanks to a three-pointer by Kaleb Wesson.

The Buckeyes were up 28-13 at the 5:14 mark on a baseline drive by Muhammad and Penn State still trailed 33-20 with 3:04 to go before the Nittany Lions went on an 11-1 run to pull to within three points by the break.

Ohio State built the lead back up to nine on a Woods bucket to make it 46-37 with 16:26 to play, but the Nittany Lions responded with a 12-0 run to take the lead, 49-46, at the 12:19 mark. It was nip and tuck until the Buckeyes went back up by seven on a Jackson basket and a pair of Kaleb Wesson free throws, 68-61, with 3:14 on the clock.

Penn State forced the frantic finish from there.

Ohio State got a measure of revenge for last season when the Nittany Lions were a thorn in the side of the Buckeyes.

OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Ohio State 74, Penn State 70

Feb. 7, 2019 Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio									
	1	2							F
PSU (8-15, 1-11 B1G)	31	39	-						70
OSU (15-7, 5-6 B1G)	34	40	-						74
Penn State									
Min.	Total FG	FT	Reb.						
Stevens	37	6-16	8-9	3-9	2	3	20		
Watkins	19	3-6	0-1	0-1	0	2	6		
Dread	25	1-3	0-0	0-1	0	2	3		
Wheeler	33	2-5	0-0	2-3	3	5	4		
Reaves	37	9-15	1-2	1-3	1	4	20		
Jones	3	0-0	0-0	0-2	0	1	0		
McCloskey	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Bolton	29	4-12	5-5	0-0	2	3	15		
Harrar	12	1-3	0-1	0-0	0	3	2		
Buttrick	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Totals	200	26-60	14-18	9-21	8	23	70		
Percentages: FG: 43.3%. FT: 77.8%. 3-point goals: 4-14 (Stevens 0-1, Dread 1-2, Reaves 1-6, Bolton 2-5). Team rebounds: 5. Blocked shots: 1 (Watkins). Turnovers: 11 (Bolton 5, Stevens 2, Reaves 2, Dread, TEAM). Steals: 12 (Wheeler 5, Reaves 5, Watkins 2).									
Ohio State									
Min.	Total FG	FT	Reb.						
A. Wesson	35	4-7	6-8	2-8	2	2	15		
K. Wesson	19	1-2	3-4	0-2	2	5	6		
Muhammad	38	5-11	8-8	0-5	4	2	20		
Jallow	5	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Jackson	35	5-9	4-4	0-2	1	2	15		
Washington	13	3-5	1-2	0-1	1	2	9		
LeDee	1	0-0	1-2	0-0	0	0	1		
Young	25	3-3	0-1	1-5	0	4	6		
Woods	29	1-5	0-0	0-4	1	4	2		
Totals	200	22-44	23-29	5-28	11	21	74		
Percentages: FG: 50.0%. FT: 79.3%. 3-point goals: 7-14 (A. Wesson 1-2, K. Wesson 1-1, Muhammad 2-4, Jallow 0-1, Jackson 1-3, Washington 2-2, Woods 0-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 4 (Young 2, A. Wesson, Jackson). Turnovers: 18 (Jackson 5, Woods 4, A. Wesson 3, K. Wesson 3, Young 2, Washington). Steals: 5 (K. Wesson 3, A. Wesson, Jackson). Officials: McJunkins, Sciroto, Wymer. A: 15,824.									

"With that motivation coming into the game, we knew we had to get this one."

Ohio State shot 50 percent (22 of 44) from the floor, including 7 of 14 from beyond the arc, and 79.3 percent (23 of 29) from the free-throw line. Penn State made 43.3 percent (26 of 60) of its field goals and was 77.8 percent (14 of 18) on foul shots.

Ohio State 55, Indiana 52

A young team turned to a veteran and Andre Wesson responded to help the Buckeyes to their third straight win and fourth in five games with a 55-52 victory over Indiana at Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall in Bloomington, Ind., on Feb. 10.

His dunk put Ohio State ahead 54-52 with 20 seconds left, and Muhammad added a free throw with 8.8 seconds to play to deaden the crowd of 17,222.

The Buckeyes (16-7, 6-6) have won four of five after a five-game losing streak.

Andre Wesson led Ohio State with 15 points, making 7 of 11 field goals. Kaleb Wesson and Jackson each had 10 for the Buckeyes.

After OSU went ahead 54-52, Romeo Langford's three-pointer rolled the rim and came out with 12 seconds left. Freshman guard Duane Washington grabbed the rebound for OSU and was fouled. Another foul put Muhammad at the line, and he made 1 of 2 free throws.

"We were fortunate that that three by Romeo rimmed out, but our guys made plays," Holtmann said on the OSU-IMG Sports Network after the game. "They stayed poised in a tough environment."

Ohio State led 23-21 at halftime with Kaleb Wesson scoring six points. Ohio State shot 38.5 percent from the floor (10 of 26) while Indiana hit 34.8 percent (8 of 23).

The Buckeyes had used a 9-0 run to jump to an 11-2 lead by the 15:22 mark, hitting five consecutive shots following a missed Muhammad jumper to start the game. But Ohio State was plagued by turnovers throughout the first half, committing nine that resulted in 11 points for the Hoosiers.

Three of the miscues in less than two minutes allowed Indiana to pull to within two

Ohio State 55, Indiana 52

Feb. 10, 2019 Assembly Hall • Bloomington, Ind.									
	1	2							F
OSU (16-7, 6-6 B1G)	23	32	-						55
IU (13-11, 4-9 B1G)	21	31	-						52
Ohio State									
Min.	Total FG	FT	Reb.						
A. Wesson	27	7-11	0-0	1-3	0	3	15		
K. Wesson	30	5-9	0-2	1-3	3	3	10		
Muhammad	32	3-10	1-2	0-1	2	1	9		
Jallow	20	0-2	0-0	1-5	1	2	0		
Jackson	35	4-10	0-0	2-2	4	1	10		
Washington	17	2-4	0-0	0-3	1	3	6		
Ahrens	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
LeDee	3	0-0	0-0	2-2	0	0	0		
Young	19	1-3	1-2	0-3	1	2	3		
Woods	16	1-3	0-0	0-0	1	0	2		
Totals	200	23-52	2-6	10-25	13	15	55		
Percentages: FG: 44.2%. FT: 33.3%. 3-point goals: 7-16 (A. Wesson 1-4, K. Wesson 0-1, Muhammad 2-4, Jackson 2-4, Washington 2-3). Team rebounds: 6. Blocked shots: 4 (K. Wesson 2, Young 2). Turnovers: 15 (A. Wesson 3, K. Wesson 3, Jackson 3, Muhammad 2, Washington, LeDee, Young, Woods). Steals: 5 (A. Wesson 2, K. Wesson, Muhammad, Jackson).									
Indiana									
Min.	Total FG	FT	Reb.						
Smith	24	4-8	0-1	1-2	0	2	8		
Morgan	35	1-7	1-2	3-11	2	1	3		
Langford	38	6-13	0-0	0-1	3	2	15		
Durham	28	1-2	0-0	0-3	1	0	2		
Phinisee	28	2-9	1-2	1-1	0	2	5		
Green	25	3-8	2-2	0-2	3	1	10		
Davis	16	3-4	0-0	1-0	2	4	6		
Anderson	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Fitzner	4	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	3		
Totals	200	21-53	4-7	8-21	11	12	52		
Percentages: FG: 39.6%. FT: 57.1%. 3-point goals: 6-20 (Smith 0-1, Morgan 0-4, Langford 3-7, Phinisee 0-2, Green 2-5, Fitzner 1-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 1 (Morgan). Turnovers: 10 (Smith 2, Morgan 2, Langford 2, Green 2, Davis, TEAM). Steals: 8 (Morgan 2, Langford 2, Smith, Phinisee, Green, Davis). Officials: Kimble, Boroski, Szec. A: 17,222.									

at 11-9. OSU led 21-14 with 3:58 left on a three-pointer by Washington, but the Hoosiers were able to climb to within two at the break when Al Durham scored a transition bucket for the final points of the first half with 24 seconds left.

After Indiana tied it at 23 early in the second half, the Buckeyes reeled off seven straight points, including a three by Muhammad, for a 30-23 lead.

Andre Wesson picked up his third foul with 15:17 left in the game, a blow to the Buckeyes because he had kept Juwan Morgan, who averages 15.9 points, scoreless to the that point.

With Wesson out, Morgan made an old-fashioned three-point play five seconds later to make it 34-28 for his only points of the game. Morgan did have a game-high 14 rebounds. Wesson reentered with 11:55 left and OSU up 39-34.

Ohio State led 44-38 after Andre Wesson hit a basket to end a 4:20 drought for the Buckeyes, and he followed with a three-pointer to make it 47-38 before got Indiana consecutive treys by Langford, Devonte Green and Langford again to tie it at 47 with 4:54 left.

Andre Wesson made a layup but that was countered by a jumper by Rob Phinisee to make it 49-49. Green's three-pointer with 1:46 to play gave the Hoosiers their first lead, 52-49, but Jackson tied it with a three of his own with 1:11 left.

Andre Wesson took over from there. OSU shot 44.2 percent from the floor (23 of 52), including 43.8 percent (7 of 16) on three-pointers, and was 2 of 6 (33.3 percent) from the free-throw line. Indiana shot 39.6 percent (21 of 53), made 6 of 20 treys (30.0 percent) and was 4 of 7 (57.1) percent from the line.

OSU won the battle of the boards 35-29.

After a careless first half with the ball, the Buckeyes had six turnovers in the second half for a total of 15.

"You want to yank everybody for every turnover, but you also don't want your group playing tentative," Holtmann said. "We have to keep working on that area."

Langford had 15 points and Green 10 for the Hoosiers (13-11, 4-9), who have lost nine of 10, including four in a row at home.



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Senior Forward Waterman Steps Up For Buckeyes

When the Ohio State women's basketball team reloaded prior to the 2018-19 season with a group of graduate transfers and freshmen, head coach Kevin McGuff looked to fifth-year senior forward Makayla Waterman to provide guidance and leadership.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Garrett Stepien

With the most experience as a Buckeye over the past four years, despite a lesser role, Waterman embraced her chance to lead Ohio State as she entered the campaign.

Of late, Waterman has answered the call, producing a pair of career-best games in OSU's wins over Illinois (78-70, Jan. 31) and Penn State (78-73, Feb. 6). Waterman led Ohio State past the Fighting Illini with 18 points and seven rebounds then followed up the next week against the Nittany Lions with 19 points and seven rebounds.

In addition to providing an energetic presence for the Buckeyes' defense, Waterman's offensive approach has evolved with more attacking and finishing. In the two victories, she made 15 of her 19 free throws to complement a 10-of-15 mark from the field and a 2-for-4 clip on three-pointers.

"I think I just have been attacking more," Waterman said. "My teammates, they're really good about getting me the ball. We felt like I had another mismatch (Feb. 6 vs. PSU). This girl was a lot bigger than me, maybe couldn't guard me on the perimeter. My teammates, my coaches were good about recognizing that, and I was just able to get to the free-throw line tonight."

On the season, Waterman has started all 21 of OSU's contests, averaging 8.5 points and 5.4 rebounds in 31.9 minutes while shooting 38.5 percent from the floor. As a junior, Waterman spent her 2017-18 season battling through injuries and nearly walked away from basketball before giving the sport one last shot.

"I think Makayla's anxious and hungry to finish up on a positive note," McGuff said. "Being a fifth-year senior, she's invested a lot in this program. She's doing a great job."

Beyond the numbers, Waterman's rise has come in the locker room. With three freshmen and four graduate transfers, all seven first-year players in the program have relied on Waterman to show them the ropes.

"I think that, from the beginning, I told them they can come to me with any questions," Waterman said. "I've been here for the longest, four years. I've been in (McGuff's) system for a while. I think that, from the beginning of the season, I've kind of shown that I'll help anybody that needs help. I like that, to be a leader. I'm a vocal person. I like doing it. So I think that the young kids, especially, because they're going to be in the program for a lot longer, they come to me and ask me for advice, and it's just fun to be able to help them."

Among the grad transfers, starting point guard Carmen Grande has gone to Waterman for constant advice. As the Ball State transfer has morphed into OSU's floor general, she credits her rise and the team's overall cohesion to Waterman.

"I feel like she's the voice that everybody listens to, and she knows what to say and when to say it," Grande said. "She's always



SONNY BROCKWAY

BIGGER ROLE – Fifth-year senior forward Makayla Waterman (24) has started all 22 games for Ohio State this season.

going to play hard, which is really important to just set an example for everybody. But she's been huge, and we know that when she's playing well. Even when she's not playing well, she's rebounding or doing something that just helps. We definitely do better."

Waterman came to Columbus from Kettering (Ohio) Fairmont in McGuff's 2014 recruiting class with aspirations of a coaching career after she completes her final go-around at Ohio State. The Buckeyes have unfinished business with five regular-season games left in Big Ten play, but Waterman is already on track for a move to the sidelines once she walks off the hardwood for her last game.

"She has been great," McGuff said. "She's a great communicator. She's very positive, very clear with her communication, which you need on the court. When we make adjustments and we do something new, this is stuff she's been around for five years now. She can articulate that with her teammates. That's been critical for us."

Recognizing those aspirations, Waterman was selected by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association to the 17th annual "So

You Want To Be A Coach" program April 3-5 in Tampa, Fla., at the WBCA Convention. The program's objectives are "to increase the understanding and application of skills necessary to secure coaching positions in women's basketball, increase the understanding and awareness of competencies necessary for success in coaching, introduce female basketball players to coaches and administrators, and raise awareness of the existing talent pool of female basketball players who have a passion and interest in coaching the game of women's basketball."

"'So You Want To Be A Coach' is the longest-running education program the WBCA offers, and it remains as popular with member coaches and student-athletes today as it was when it began 16 years ago," said WBCA executive director Danielle Donehew. "'So' is the entry point for women's basketball players who want to coach. Because of their participation in it, more than 400 former college women's basketball players are currently working as coaches or in some role in our sport. Our partnership with WeCOACH (an organization that helps women break into coaching) enables us to make this program even better."

BIG Women's Basketball

	Conf.			Overall		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Maryland	11	2	.846	22	2	.917
Iowa	10	3	.769	19	5	.792
Rutgers	9	3	.750	17	6	.739
Michigan State	6	5	.545	16	6	.727
Michigan	7	6	.538	16	9	.640
Purdue	7	6	.538	16	10	.615
Northwestern	7	6	.538	14	10	.583
Indiana	6	6	.500	17	7	.708
Minnesota	6	7	.462	17	7	.708
Nebraska	6	7	.462	11	13	.458
Ohio State	6	7	.462	10	12	.455
Penn State	3	9	.250	10	13	.435
Wisconsin	2	10	.167	11	13	.458
Illinois	2	11	.154	10	14	.417

Jan. 28 Score

Ohio State 65, Minnesota 55

Jan. 31 Scores

Iowa at Michigan, postponed
Penn State at Michigan State, postponed
Maryland 75, Wisconsin 57
Rutgers 69, Indiana 64

Ohio State 78, Illinois 70

Minnesota 61, Northwestern 54
Nebraska 84, Purdue 64

Feb. 3 Scores

Michigan State 74, Purdue 66
Iowa 81, Penn State 61
Indiana 82, Nebraska 78
Michigan 76, Wisconsin 70
Minnesota 60, Rutgers 46

Northwestern 76, Ohio State 59

Feb. 4 Score

Maryland 80, Illinois 66

Feb. 6 Scores

Minnesota 65, Indiana 61
Ohio State 78, Penn State 73

Feb. 7 Scores

Maryland 72, Northwestern 57
Purdue 72, Illinois 50
Michigan 67, Nebraska 61
Iowa 86, Michigan State 71

Feb. 10 Scores

Maryland 62, Rutgers 48
Minnesota 73, Northwestern 64 (OT)
Michigan 66, Penn State 62
Illinois 78, Wisconsin 68
Nebraska 67, Purdue 61

Iowa 78, Ohio State 52

Feb. 11 Game

Indiana at Michigan State, 7 p.m.

Feb. 14 Games

Minnesota at Purdue, 6 p.m.
Ohio State at Rutgers, 7 p.m.
Indiana at Michigan, 7 p.m.
Nebraska at Maryland, 8 p.m.
Illinois at Iowa, 8 p.m.
Michigan State at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.
Penn State at Northwestern, 8 p.m.

Feb. 17 Games

Maryland at Iowa, 1 p.m.
Penn State at Minnesota, 2 p.m.
Northwestern at Purdue, 2 p.m.
Wisconsin at Ohio State, 2 p.m.
Michigan at Illinois, 3 p.m.
Michigan State at Nebraska, 4 p.m.

Feb. 18 Game

Rutgers at Indiana, 7 p.m.

Feb. 20 Game

Illinois at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.

Feb. 21 Games

Ohio State at Michigan State, 6 p.m.
Minnesota at Maryland, 7 p.m.
Rutgers at Michigan, 7 p.m.
Purdue at Penn State, 7 p.m.
Iowa at Indiana, 8 p.m.
Nebraska at Northwestern, 8 p.m.

Feb. 24 Games

Michigan at Michigan State, 2 p.m.
Penn State at Illinois, 4 p.m.

Feb. 25 Games

Maryland at Purdue, 6:30 p.m.
Wisconsin at Rutgers, 7 p.m.
Iowa at Nebraska, 8:30 p.m.

Feb. 26 Game

Indiana at Northwestern, 8 p.m.

Feb. 27 Game

Penn State at Michigan State, TBA

Feb. 28 Games

Minnesota at Rutgers, 6:30 p.m.
Ohio State at Wisconsin, 9 p.m.

2018-19 Ohio State Women's Basketball Statistics

10-12 Overall (6-7 Big Ten)
Statistics through games of Feb. 10

Player	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds		PF-FO	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									O-D	T-Avg.						
Dorka Juhasz	20-18	549-27.5	89-198	.449	14-53	.264	44-69	.638	46-120	166-8.3	38-0	15	43	10	26	236-11.8
Carly Santoro	22-22	690-31.4	77-196	.393	32-94	.340	62-95	.653	31-65	96-4.4	36-0	29	48	2	23	248-11.3
M. Waterman	22-22	696-31.6	62-163	.380	8-32	.250	51-71	.718	45-75	120-5.5	74-4	39	53	35	26	183-8.3
Janai Crooms	22-12	525-23.9	66-147	.449	13-30	.433	19-46	.413	8-61	69-3.1	43-1	40	61	12	17	164-7.5
Carmen Grande	22-22	736-33.5	52-179	.291	21-67	.313	36-42	.857	15-64	79-3.6	56-0	106	62	2	36	161-7.3
Aaliyah Patty	22-4	396-18.0	59-123	.480	4-22	.182	18-28	.643	17-64	81-3.7	69-5	5	37	17	13	140-6.4
Adreana Miller	22-9	358-16.3	32-102	.314	23-58	.397	18-25	.720	16-21	37-1.7	42-1	5	17	4	5	105-4.8
Jensen Caretti	18-0	178-9.9	22-59	.373	7-24	.292	9-12	.750	4-24	28-1.6	3-0	11	11	6	6	60-3.3
Najah Queenland	22-1	296-13.5	21-52	.404	6-19	.316	9-13	.692	13-27	40-1.8	33-0	17	26	1	11	57-2.6
Savitha Jayaraman	1-0	2-2.0	0-1	.000	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0-0	0-0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0-0.0
TEAM									32-39	71-3.2			4			
Ohio State	22	4,426	480-1,220	.393	128-399	.321	266-401	.663	227-560	787-35.8	394-4	267	362	89	163	1,354-61.5
Opponents	22	4,425	508-1,265	.402	134-415	.323	302-414	.729	241-570	811-36.9	402-4	283	336	63	143	1,452-66.0

OSU Women's Basketball Signees & Verbal Commits

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

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 via ESPN.com.)

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

Graduate Guard Surpasses
Career Milestone

OSU's offense has seen its production spike in recent outings with the pair of 78-point performances registered in the wins over Illinois and Penn State.

Part of Ohio State's increase comes from Grande, whose career as a distributor hit the 800-assist plateau in the Buckeyes' victory against the Lions. She's the 25th player to hit the mark and second Buckeye (Samantha Prahalis, 901). With four assists vs. PSU, she reached 803 on her career between 697 at Ball State and 106 in Columbus.

"Carmen's got a great feel for the game," McGuff said. "She executes on offense really

well and she knows where everybody's supposed to be, and then she loves to get other people involved. So she's a really special player that way, and that's a great milestone for her."

Grande is also OSU's fourth-leading scorer with 7.7 points per game. She had a lighter reaction to the news of her assists milestone.

"Shout out to everybody that caught my pass and made a layup, because I wouldn't have done it without them," Grande said with a laugh.

Freshman Forward Works
Back From Injury

Along with graduate guard Carly Santoro's rise among Ohio State's top scor-

ers with 11.8 points per game, Grande and Waterman have headlined the Buckeyes' surge as Ohio State has won three of its last four despite the limited status of one of OSU's best players.

Freshman forward Dorka Juhasz, who sprained her ankle Jan. 20 in Ohio State's 62-58 loss to Michigan and sat out the Buckeyes' subsequent two contests against Maryland (70-57 loss, Jan. 24) and at Minnesota (65-55, Jan. 28), worked back to playing shape in time for OSU's win over PSU.

Against Penn State, Juhasz started and returned to form with her seventh double-double performance of the season as she posted 14 points and 11 rebounds in 33 minutes.

"The practice before Northwestern (76-59 loss, Feb. 3), she was in the whole time," McGuff said Feb. 5. "That was the first practice she had where she could participate and everything, so she should be good to go now."

The 6-4 forward's presence on the floor provided Ohio State a punch in appearances against Illinois and Northwestern. Juhasz had just three points on 1-of-5 shooting against the Illini but grabbed five rebounds and was plus-nine on the floor for the Buckeyes in nearly 18 minutes off the bench.

"It was good to see her back out there (against Illinois)," McGuff said Jan. 31. "We needed her, obviously. One thing that I thought was really good, her size and her length bothered them a little bit around the basket because their post players are good."

Between the Illini and Lions, Juhasz made progress with 14 points and seven rebounds against the Wildcats. With his talented freshman back to form, McGuff acknowledged what Juhasz's status means to OSU.

"We need her," McGuff said. "Obviously, she's played really well of late. We need her to be at 100 percent for us to be successful."

Plank's Lady Buck
Of The Month

Santoro, a Bowling Green transfer, averaged 14.5 points per contest in January, stepping up when the Buckeyes needed her most later in the month, helping fill the void left by Juhasz. For her efforts, Santoro was named Plank's Lady Buck of the Month for January. In the games Juhasz missed Jan. 24 against Maryland and Jan. 28 at the Golden Gophers, Santoro scored 23 and 16, respectively. She capped her month with 16 points, highlighted by three triples, against the Illini while Juhasz was limited.

In early January, after she took a back seat with three points against the Hoosiers, Santoro scored a season-high 25 against the Spartans. After a five-point outing against the Lions, Santoro poured in a game-high 23 against Maryland.

Plank's Cafe



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5th-Year Senior Guard
Bellevue, Ohio

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Buckeyes Win 3 Of 5 As Season Winds Down

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

After BSB last went to press, the Ohio State women's basketball team picked up three wins from five contests, starting with a 65-55 victory at Minnesota on Jan. 28.

From there, the Buckeyes beat Illinois, fell to Northwestern, held off Penn State and lost to Iowa to move to 10-12 overall and 6-7 in Big Ten play.

What follows are recaps of each of those five contests, which lead into the final five games of the regular-season slate.

Ohio State 65, Minnesota 55

Fueled by a 16-0 run that kept Minnesota scoreless for roughly seven minutes during the fourth quarter, Ohio State bounced back Jan. 28 with a 65-55 win over the Golden Gophers before 3,740 at Williams Arena in Minneapolis.

Without Dorka Juhasz (sprained ankle) for the second straight game after the freshman forward missed OSU's 70-57 loss to Maryland on Jan. 24, head coach Kevin McGuff started freshman forward Aaliyah Patty, and she answered the call with a career-best 20 points.

Patty, who paced Ohio State (8-10, 4-5 Big Ten) with 8-of-15 shooting and a 2-of-3 clip on three-pointers, led all scorers while Carly Santoro contributed 16 points on 7-of-11 shooting.

"(Patty) shot the ball really well," McGuff told BSB. "She can make shots. She just hasn't really shown it in games yet, but she made some really big shots in the third quarter vs. Minnesota that allowed us to kind of take the lead and stretch the game out."

After the Gophers held a 16-10 lead at the end of the first quarter, the Buckeyes rebounded for a 15-12 second quarter that trimmed the deficit to 28-25 at halftime.

Ohio State heated up in the third quar-

ter, when its 18-15 edge in the frame left a 43-43 tie heading into the last 10 minutes. The Buckeyes had been down 32-25 after the Gophers' Taiye Bello's free throw seven seconds into the third quarter and Irene Garrido Perez's triple, but a 9-2 run capped by fifth-year senior Makayla Waterman's three-pointer at the 6:50 mark made for a 34-34 tie before the teams ended the rest of the period in a 9-9 stalemate.

Minnesota made its first shot of the fourth quarter on Bello's jumper 41 seconds in but missed its next seven attempts from the field as OSU took over the subsequent seven minutes. After Patty's pair of free throws at the 9:02 point knotted the score at 45, Patty's layup with 7:20 to go put Ohio State ahead and sparked what would become the 16-0 spurt that left the score 59-45 after Waterman's layup with 3:32 to go. Patty's layup with 2:09 left gave the Buckeyes their largest lead of the night, 61-46, before the Gophers ended the drought from the floor on Kenisha Bell's triple at the 1:48 mark. Minnesota outscored OSU, 6-4, in the remaining minute and change, but it proved too late as Waterman's free throw with 25 ticks on the clock iced the double-digit win for the Scarlet and Gray.

The Gophers were held to 18-of-60 shooting (30.0 percent) from the field and 7 of 21 (33.3 percent) on three-pointers. The Buckeyes, meanwhile, were 25 of 55 from the field (45.5 percent) and a solid 7 of 14 (50.0 percent) from beyond the arc.

Minnesota did, however, hold a 43-33 edge on the boards with Bello pulling down 18 rebounds to go along with 12 points. Destiny Pitts had a team-high 19 points for Minnesota.

Ohio State 78, Illinois 70

While Ohio State welcomed back its top scorer and rebounder Jan. 31 against Illinois, a collective effort fueled by several seniors propelled the Buckeyes to their 78-70 win

Ohio State 65, Minnesota 55

Jan. 28, 2019												
Williams Arena • Minneapolis												
	1	2	3	4	F							
OSU (8-10, 4-5)	10	15	18	22	65							
MINN (13-7, 2-7)	16	12	15	12	55							
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Waterman	37	3-9	2-4	0-6	3	3	9					
Patty	30	8-15	2-2	1-5	0	4	20					
Grande	36	1-7	3-4	0-5	8	2	6					
Crooms	31	4-9	1-2	2-1	4	3	9					
Santoro	38	7-11	0-0	2-6	0	1	16					
Queenland	1	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Caretti	10	1-1	0-0	0-2	1	0	3					
Miller	18	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	2	2					
Totals	200	25-55	8-12	7-26	15	15	65					
Percentages: FG: 45.5%. FT: 66.7%. 3-point goals: 7-14 (Waterman 1-3, Patty 2-3, Grande 1-4, Santoro 2-2, Caretti 1-1, Miller 0-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 6 (Waterman 4, Patty, Crooms). Turnovers: 11 (Grande 3, Waterman 2, Patty 2, Crooms 2, Queenland, Miller). Steals: 8 (Waterman 3, Grande 3, Patty, Santoro).												
Minnesota	Total	FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Bello	33	5-11	2-4	5-13	1	4	12					
Perez	39	1-4	0-0	0-0	2	2	3					
Lamke	20	1-7	0-0	4-2	0	0	2					
Pitts	40	7-13	0-0	0-4	4	3	19					
Bell	32	3-11	9-13	1-1	4	4	16					
Staples	9	0-4	0-0	1-0	0	1	0					
Kapose	12	0-5	1-2	4-2	2	1	1					
Brunson	15	1-5	0-0	0-0	0	1	2					
Totals	200	18-60	12-19	19-24	13	16	55					
Percentages: FG: 30.0%. FT: 63.2%. 3-point goals: 7-21 (Perez 1-4, Pitts 5-9, Bell 1-4, Staples 0-2, Brunson 0-2). Team rebounds: 6. Blocked shots: 4 (Bello 4). Turnovers: 17 (Bell 7, Bello 3, Kaposi 3, Pitts 2, Lamke, Brunson). Steals: 4 (Bello 2, Lamke, Bell). Officials: Kantner, Brooks, Forsberg. A: 3,740.												

over the Fighting Illini before 3,804 at Value City Arena in Columbus.

After Juhasz had missed the previous two games as she recovered from a sprained ankle, she returned for OSU vs. Illinois but appeared rusty with three points on 1-of-5 shooting in 18 minutes off the bench.

But Ohio State's next-person-up approach paid off. Waterman, a fifth year senior forward, tallied a team-high 18 points, and Santoro (16 points), Carmen Grande (15 points) and Adreana Miller (14 points) each scored in double figures.

Ohio State 78, Illinois 70

Jan. 31, 2019												
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio												
	1	2	3	4	F							
ILL (9-12, 1-9)	18	8	23	21	70							
OSU (9-10, 5-5)	17	17	14	30	78							
Illinois	Total		FG	FT	Reb.							
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Wittinger	35	7-14	3-3	1-4	1	0	18					
Andrews	26	3-4	0-0	0-5	1	5	6					
Beasley	30	8-15	5-6	1-4	3	5	23					
Rice	33	2-6	0-0	1-3	1	4	5					
Joens	10	0-1	0-0	1-1	1	4	0					
Ephraim	8	0-1	3-3	0-1	0	3	3					
Shewan	6	0-1	1-2	1-0	0	0	1					
Scott	26	3-10	3-4	0-5	0	1	11					
Robins	2	0-0	0-0	0-1	1	1	0					
Blazek	13	1-3	1-2	2-2	0	0	3					
Kirkpatrick	10	0-2	0-0	0-2	1	1	0					
Totals	200	24-57	16-20	9-30	9	24	70					
Percentages: FG: 42.1%. FT: 80.0%. 3-point goals: 6-18 (Wittinger 1-3, Beasley 2-3, Rice 1-4, Scott 2-6, Kirkpatrick 0-2). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 2 (Wittinger 2). Turnovers: 16 (Scott 4, Beasley 3, Wittinger 2, TEAM 2, Andrews, Joens, Ephraim, Shewan, Kirkpatrick). Steals: 4 (Wittinger, Andrews, Beasley, Scott).												
Ohio State	Total		FG	FT	Reb.							
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Waterman	31	6-9	5-5	2-5	3	2	18					
Patty	15	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	4	3					
Grande	37	4-12	5-6	1-5	5	3	15					
Crooms	34	3-7	3-4	0-6	3	1	9					
Santoro	33	4-9	5-10	0-1	4	0	16					
Juhasz	18	1-5	0-0	1-4	0	2	3					
Miller	20	4-8	2-2	0-1	0	1	14					
Caretti	11	0-2	0-0	0-2	1	0	0					
Queenland	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	2	0					
Totals	200	23-54	20-27	5-25	16	15	78					
Percentages: FG: 42.6%. FT: 74.1%. 3-point goals: 12-27 (Waterman 1-3, Patty 1-1, Grande 2-5, Santoro 3-7, Juhasz 1-3, Miller 4-7, Caretti 0-1). Team rebounds: 2. Blocked shots: 3 (Waterman, Grande, Caretti). Turnovers: 12 (Waterman 3, Patty 2, Crooms 2, Santoro 2, Juhasz 2, Grande). Steals: 6 (Waterman 3, Crooms, Juhasz, Miller). Officials: Daley, Tieman, Lukanich. A: 3,804.												

"We're really trying to outwork people at this point," Waterman said.

Ohio State (9-10, 5-5), which shot 42.6 percent (23 of 54) from the field and 44.4 percent (12 of 27) from long range, opened an action-filled first quarter with an 8-2 advantage before the Illini eventually took an 18-17 lead into the quarter break.

After the sides traded buckets to begin the second quarter, OSU ripped off an 8-2 run for a 27-22 lead at the 2:43 mark. Ohio State initially blew its chance to create separation when Illinois closed the gap to 27-26 at the 1:17 mark. The Buckeyes responded

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Feb. 3, 2019									
Welsh-Ryan Arena • Evanston, Ill.									
OSU (9-11, 5-6)	12	15	15	17	59				
NU (14-8, 7-4)	16	18	23	19	76				
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.		A	PF	Pts.	
Waterman	18	1-4	0-0	2-1	3	4	2		
Patty	21	2-3	2-2	0-6	0	5	6		
Grande	32	1-3	2-2	0-2	5	0	5		
Crooms	30	4-8	0-0	1-2	3	1	10		
Santoro	25	2-8	6-7	0-6	0	1	10		
Juhasz	27	6-13	1-2	1-6	0	3	14		
Caretti	15	1-5	2-2	0-3	2	0	5		
Miller	22	3-7	0-0	2-1	0	3	7		
Queenland	9	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0		
Totals	200	20-52	13-15	7-27	13	18	59		

Percentages: FG: 38.5%. FT: 86.7%. **3-point goals:** 6-22 (Waterman 0-1, Grande 1-3, Crooms 2-4, Santoro 0-3, Juhasz 1-4, Caretti 1-4, Miller 1-3). **Team rebounds:** 1. **Blocked shots:** 6 (Waterman 2, Juhasz 2, Patty, Miller). **Turnovers:** 20 (Grande 6, Crooms 4, Santoro 4, Waterman 2, Patty 2, Juhasz, Caretti). **Steals:** 6 (Juhasz 4, Grande, Caretti).

Northwestern	Total	FG	FT	Reb.		A	PF	Pts.	
Kunaiyi-Akpanah	29	4-14	9-10	8-5	1	3	17		
Scheid	28	3-11	0-0	0-3	2	2	7		
Pulliam	35	8-17	7-8	1-3	2	1	23		
Burton	33	3-8	0-0	1-5	6	0	7		
Hamilton	19	5-6	0-1	0-2	4	3	12		
Wood	22	3-3	0-0	3-2	4	1	6		
Wolf	11	0-1	0-0	0-1	1	3	0		
Hopkins	12	1-7	0-0	0-1	0	1	2		
Galernik	7	1-3	0-0	0-0	0	0	2		
Jamison	4	0-0	0-0	1-1	0	0	0		
Totals	200	28-70	16-19	16-23	20	14	76		

Percentages: FG: 40.0%. FT: 84.2%. **3-point goals:** 4-15 (Scheid 1-7, Burton 1-4, Hamilton 2-3, Galernik 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 2. **Blocked shots:** 7 (Kunaiyi-Akpanah 2, Wolf 2, Burton, Galernik, Jamison). **Turnovers:** 9 (Kunaiyi-Akpanah 2, Pulliam 2, Wood 2, Burton, Hopkins, Jamison). **Steals:** 14 (Kunaiyi-Akpanah 4, Burton 4, Hamilton 2, Scheid, Pulliam, Wood, Wolf). **Officials:** Napier, Cross, Enterline. **A:** 1,283.

by ending the first half with a 7-0 spurt in the closing 57 seconds as they took their largest lead at that point, 34-26, into the locker room with a pair of Waterman free throws, a Janai Crooms layup and a three-pointer by Miller.

The Illini clawed back with a 9-3 run to start the third quarter, and OSU's near-double-digit lead evaporated to a 37-35 margin at the 6:27 mark. The teams traded triples on the subsequent five scoring possessions, with Juhasz capping the run of threes with her only basket of the night giving the Buckeyes a 46-41 lead with 3:58 left in the quarter.

Ohio State went up 48-44 at the 1:45 mark on a pair of free throws from Grande before Illinois stole back momentum behind Brandi Beasley's jumper and Arieal Scott's three-pointer for a 5-0 spurt to put the Illini ahead 49-48 heading into the fourth quarter.

The Illini's lead was short-lived.

After a free throw by Mackenzie Blazek put Illinois up 51-48, OSU came back with a 10-0 run on consecutive three-pointers by Santoro and Miller, followed by Grande's jumper and a pair of free throws by Crooms which gave the Buckeyes 58-51 lead with 5:41 left in the period.

"When you step into it and have confidence to knock it down, that's what we were doing," Santoro said.

Illinois stopped the drought on an Alex Wittinger field goal that cut Ohio State's lead to 58-53 with 4:25 on the clock, but that was the closest the visitors would get until the final minute of the game. Ohio State led by as many as 11 three times, the last on a pair of Miller free throws with 1:12 remaining. The Illini then went on a 10-3 run to narrow the margin to four, 72-68, before the Buckeyes salted the game away with six free throws in the final 28 seconds.

"We really allowed them to get comfortable for stretches in that second half and put ourselves in a tough spot," McGuff said.

Beasley led all scorers with 23 points for the Illini, while Wittinger chipped in 18.

Northwestern 76, Ohio State 59

Northwestern turned 20 Ohio State

turnovers into 25 points and gave up the ball only nine times themselves as the Wildcats beat the Buckeyes, 76-59, before 1,283 at Welsh-Ryan Arena in Evanston, Ill., on Feb. 3.

Juhasz returned to form while still coming off the bench with a team-best 14 points and seven rebounds, complemented by 10 points apiece from Santoro and Crooms to round out the double-digit scorers for OSU (9-11, 5-6), but ball security cost the Scarlet and Gray any chance of keeping up with Northwestern (14-8, 7-4).

A blow-for-blow first quarter last tilted in favor of the Buckeyes at the 1:37 mark when Juhasz's bucket put the visitors ahead 12-10. However, Northwestern closed the opening frame's final 1:15 on a 6-0 spurt to take momentum with a 16-12 lead.

Santoro's and-one layup for the three-point play 1:30 into the second put OSU within a point, down 19-18, but the Wildcats created separation between the 7:38 and 2:13 marks on a 13-2 run for a 32-20 advantage. Ohio State ended the first half with a 7-2 spurt over the final 1:56, starting on Crooms'

triple and ending on Miller's make in the paint at the buzzer, that cut the deficit to 34-27 at the break.

Unfortunately for the Buckeyes, the momentum did not spill into the second half. OSU fell behind in the third quarter when the Wildcats posted a 23-15 advantage to take a 57-42 lead into the final 10 minutes.

"That third quarter and into the fourth, we locked down defensively," Wildcats head coach Joe McKeown said. "We made it hard for them to get to the rim. They have a lot

Continued On Page 34

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OSU Falters Vs. Iowa After Topping Penn State

Continued From Page 33

of interchangeable parts, they've got three-point shooters, they've got a great point guard who can attack, they've got big kids who can step out and shoot, and I thought we defended that pretty well."

Northwestern took its largest lead of the game with 4:49 to go when Pallas Kunaiyi-Akpanah's and-one layup made it 76-46 to cap the Wildcats' 19-4 run to open the fourth quarter, but the Buckeyes ended the contest with a 13-0 response in the final 4:29.

Crooms woke OSU up with a jumper in the paint, followed by junior guard Jensen Caretti's pair of free throws at the 3:30 mark. With 2:28 left, Caretti knocked down a triple. Juhasz added buckets at the 1:43 and 14-second marks, while Miller's make in the paint with 58 seconds to go came between.

In addition to problems with the ball, Ohio State shot 38.5 percent (20 of 52) from the field and 27.3 percent (6 of 22) on three-pointers. Grande was the worst offender for the Buckeyes with six miscues, while Crooms and Santoro each had four. Northwestern was little better from the floor than the Buckeyes, shooting 40 percent (28 of 70), but got off 18 more shots than the Buckeyes thanks to the turnovers and a 39-34 edge on the boards. The Wildcats went 4 of 15 (26.7 percent) from downtown.

Northwestern was led by Lindsey Pulliam's game-high 23 points, in addition to Kunaiyi-Akpanah's 17 points and Jordan Hamilton's 12 points.

Ohio State 78, Penn State 73

McGuff was concerned that Ohio State took a step back at Northwestern, but the Buckeyes rebounded Feb. 6 against Penn State.

It took some late-game heroics, coming after blowing a 10-point lead, but OSU (10-11, 6-6) pulled out a 78-73 win over the Nittany Lions before 4,264 at Value City Arena in Columbus.

"I'm really proud of our kids for hanging in there," McGuff said. "They showed a lot of character down the stretch, and especially our upperclassmen showed great leadership."

The teams battled in the first quarter, with neither team taking more than a three-point lead, and the Buckeyes led 14-12 after 10 minutes.

OSU jumped out to an 18-12 lead at the 8:31 point after layups from Crooms and Juhasz to start the second quarter. However, Penn State (10-12, 3-8) stormed back on a 7-0 spurt to retake a 19-18 lead at the 7:13 mark. The teams battled back and forth from there, and Juhasz's layup with one second left before halftime left the game tied at 29.

The Buckeyes began the third quarter with momentum when Grande and Santoro

splashed consecutive triples, putting OSU up, 35-29, at the 8:29 point. Ohio State started to pull away with a 49-39 lead on a Crooms layup with 3:01 to go in the period, the largest of the game, but the Lions rallied in the last 2:39, going on a 12-2 run that knotted the score at 51 heading into final 10 minutes.

Ohio State went up 61-57 on a Grande basket with 5:26 to go, but the Lions came back to take a 66-63 lead after a pair of Teniya Page free throws with 3:30 showing on the clock.

OSU answered with Grande's three-point at the 3:08 mark that tied it up, and the Buckeyes retook the lead, 68-66, on Waterman's free throws with 2:40 left before Penn State's Amari Carter did the same to knot it back up. Waterman made it to the line again at the 2:08 point and put the Buckeyes ahead 70-68. Grande's layup gave OSU a 72-68 edge at the 1:38 mark, but the Lions refused to go away.

After PSU stayed alive on Jaida Travascio-Green's triple at the 1:20 mark, Siyeh Frazier's jumper with 30 seconds left put Ohio State down 73-72. Out of a timeout, Grande fielded the inbound pass and drove to the basket for the go-ahead layup with 21 seconds remaining for a 74-73 lead.

Penn State called timeout for the final possession, where Waterman blocked a layup attempt that went out of bounds with 18 seconds left and was initially ruled Lions ball before replay reversed the call on the floor. The Buckeyes inbounded the ball to Santoro, who was fouled with 14 seconds to go and calmly sank both free throws – and then another pair with four seconds left – to post the 78-73 final.

Ohio State had Santoro (team-high 20 points), Waterman (19 points), Juhasz (14 points) and Grande (14 points) score in double figures. OSU went 49.0 percent (24 of 49) from the floor and 38.5 percent (5 of 13) on three-pointers.

Page led PSU, which shot 41.3 percent (26 of 63) from the field and 26.3 percent (5 of 19) from long range, with a game-high 22 points.

Iowa 78, Ohio State 52

After a competitive finish to the second quarter kept Ohio State within two buckets of Iowa at halftime, the No. 16 Hawkeyes pulled away in the third quarter and handed the Buckeyes a 78-52 loss Feb. 10 before 5,344 at Value City Arena in Columbus.

Megan Gustafson, the 6-3 reigning Big Ten Player of the Year and NCAA leading scorer at 27.2 points per game, scored a game-high 29 for Iowa (19-5, 10-3) and proved a mismatch nightmare for OSU (10-12, 6-7) while also pulling down 16 rebounds.

After going down in an 8-0 hole 3:20 into the first quarter, the Buckeyes finally got

Ohio State 78, Penn State 73

Feb. 6, 2019										
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio										
	1	2	3	4	F					
PSU (10-12, 3-8)	12	17	22	22	73					
OSU (10-11, 6-6)	14	15	22	27	78					
Penn State	Total FG		FT	Reb.						
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Smith	27	3-10	1-2	6-1	1	2				
Carter	32	2-8	2-2	0-3	0	3	8			
Ortiz	23	0-2	0-0	0-2	3	1	0			
Frazier	28	6-9	5-6	1-5	0	4	17			
Page	32	7-13	7-7	0-1	7	4	22			
McDaniel	25	3-10	1-1	1-5	0	1	8			
Ebo	13	3-4	0-0	0-1	0	2	6			
Travascio-Green	13	1-5	0-0	0-0	1	4	3			
Wallace	7	1-2	0-0	1-2	2	3	2			
Totals	200	26-63	16-18	11-22	14	24	73			
Percentages: FG: 41.3%. FT: 88.9%. 3-point goals: 5-19 (Carter 2-6, Ortiz 0-1, Page 1-4, McDaniel 1-3, Travascio-Green 1-5). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 2 (Smith, Ebo). Turnovers: 8 (Frazier 3, Ortiz 2, Carter, Page, McDaniel). Steals: 7 (Carter 2, Frazier 2, Smith, Page, McDaniel).										
Ohio State	Total FG		FT	Reb.						
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Juhasz	33	5-10	4-4	4-7	3	3	14			
Waterman	34	4-6	10-14	2-5	0	3	19			
Grande	38	6-11	0-1	1-3	4	2	14			
Crooms	35	4-9	0-0	1-6	0	3	9			
Santoro	37	4-8	11-13	0-1	0	2	20			
Patty	7	0-0	0-0	0-1	1	2	0			
Queenland	2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0			
Miller	6	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	1	0			
Caretti	8	1-3	0-0	0-2	0	0	2			
Totals	200	24-49	25-32	8-27	8	17	78			
Percentages: FG: 49.0%. FT: 78.1%. 3-point goals: 5-13 (Juhasz 0-1, Waterman 1-1, Grande 2-3, Crooms 1-2, Santoro 1-3, Miller 0-1, Caretti 0-2). Team rebounds: 1. Blocked shots: 4 (Waterman 3, Crooms). Turnovers: 14 (Crooms 5, Patty 3, Juhasz 2, Santoro 2, Waterman, Grande). Steals: 7 (Waterman 2, Grande 2, Crooms 2, Santoro). Officials: Roberts, Krommenhoek, Resch. A: 4,264.										

Iowa 78, Ohio State 52

Feb. 10, 2019										
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio										
	1	2	3	4	F					
Iowa (19-5, 10-3)	19	12	27	20	78					
OSU (10-12, 6-7)	9	18	10	15	52					
Iowa										
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Stewart	24	3-5	1-1	2-4	4	4	7			
Gustafson	33	14-19	1-1	5-11	0	4	29			
Sevillian	27	2-5	0-0	0-4	2	0	6			
Davis	33	3-9	0-0	0-2	4	0	7			
Doyle	34	5-13	5-8	0-2	6	1	16			
Taiwo	13	1-2	0-0	0-5	1	1	3			
Ollinger	21	0-1	1-2	1-1	2	0	1			
Czinano	7	2-3	2-3	0-2	0	2	6			
Cook	5	1-1	0-0	1-0	2	0	3			
Sanders	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0			
Ramos	2	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0			
Totals	200	31-58	10-15	9-34	22	12	78			
Percentages: FG: 53.4%. FT: 66.7%. 3-point goals: 6-19 (Sevillian 2-5, Davis 1-6, Doyle 1-5, Taiwo 1-2, Cook 1-1). Team rebounds: 2. Blocked shots: 2 (Gustafson, Ollinger). Turnovers: 12 (Sevillian 3, Davis 3, Doyle 2, Stewart, Taiwo, Cook, TEAM). Steals: 4 (Doyle 2, Sevillian, Ollinger).										
Ohio State										
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Juhasz	25	5-10	2-4	4-6	0	2	12			
Waterman	27	2-7	0-0	1-5	1	5	5			
Grande	21	0-2	0-0	1-1	0	0	0			
Crooms	34	4-9	1-2	0-4	7	3	10			
Santoro	28	0-6	0-0	2-2	1	0	0			
Miller	20	3-9	3-4	1-1	0	1	11			
Patty	26	5-10	1-4	1-1	1	5	11			
Caretti	10	1-5	0-0	0-1	0	0	3			
Queenland	8	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	1	0			
Jayaraman	2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Totals	200	20-61	7-14	10-22	10	17	52			
Percentages: FG: 32.8%. FT: 50.0%. 3-point goals: 5-19 (Juhasz 0-2, Waterman 1-1, Grande 0-1, Crooms 1-2, Santoro 0-2, Miller 2-4, Patty 0-2, Caretti 1-3, Queenland 0-2). Team rebounds: 1. Blocked shots: None. Turnovers: 7 (Santoro 2, Juhasz, Waterman, Grande, Crooms, Queenland). Steals: 6 (Crooms 2, Santoro, Miller, Patty, Caretti). Officials: Dickerson, Bonner, Enlund. A: 5,344.										

on the board at the 5:40 mark with a basket from Crooms, who started and posted 10 points while distributing seven assists. The Hawkeyes eventually led 19-9 after the first period.

OSU had some momentum in the second quarter after Patty's layup 18 seconds in started an 8-1 surge that trimmed Iowa's lead to 20-17. Patty's pair of layups at the 3:12 and 2:52 points gave Ohio State its first lead, 27-26, but Gustafson's jumper with 1:39 left in the period sparked the Hawkeyes' 5-0 spurt that left the Buckeyes down 31-27 at halftime.

"We wanted to throw a couple things at her – play man, play zone, a little box-and-one on her – just to try to get them difference looks," McGuff said of Gustafson, whom the defense limited to 10 points in the first half. "That's why I thought, in the second quarter, that kind of got them back on their heels and took them out of their rhythm."

OSU stumbled out of the break in the third quarter, as Iowa busted a 14-5 run to lead 45-32 at the 5:11 mark. Patty's layup with 4:34 left in the period brought Ohio State closer to single digits, 45-34, but Iowa kept its foot on the pedal and never led by less than 12 points the rest of the contest. The Hawkeyes closed the final 3:26 of the frame

on a 13-3 surge that buried the Buckeyes, 58-37, heading into the fourth quarter.

OSU showed signs of life in the last 10 minutes, starting with a 5-0 spurt from Waterman in the first 2:20 of the period to cut Iowa's lead to 58-42. Those proved to be Waterman's only points of the game, though, and the Hawkeyes woke up immediately after with an 8-2 spurt that put them up 66-44 with 5:18 to play in the game.

Ohio State mounted momentum for the last time when Juhasz scored six straight points to make it 66-50 at the 3:51 mark, but Iowa closed the door with a 12-2 run en route to the 78-52 final.

Ohio State shot 32.8 percent (20 of 61) from the field and 26.3 percent (5 of 19) on three-pointers, led by Juhasz's 12 points and team-high 10 rebounds as she posted her eighth double-double of the season. Off the bench with 11 points apiece, Miller and Patty rounded out the Scarlet and Gray's double-digit scorers with 11 points each off the bench.

The Hawkeyes shot 53.4 percent (31 of 58) from the field and, aided by Gustafson's 14-of-19 shooting, held a 46-28 advantage on points in the paint. Iowa went 31.6 percent (6 of 19) from long range.



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Harbaugh Calls For Brady Statue In Ann Arbor

Following the New England Patriots' 13-3 victory against the Los Angeles Rams in Super Bowl LIII, Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh argued that former Wolverine quarterback Tom Brady deserves a statue in Ann Arbor, Mich.

BIG TEN NOTES

Joe Dempsey

Harbaugh, a former Michigan and NFL quarterback himself, took his son Jack to the game at the Mercedes Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

Harbaugh hosts a podcast with his father, Jack, called "Attack Each Day," where he used the platform to express his wishes for a tribute to Brady.

"I think it's time, don't you, for a Tom Brady statue to be built right here," Harbaugh said. "Right in front of Schembechler Hall, or do you put it in the stadium? Where do you put the Tom Brady statue?"

Right in front of Schembechler Hall may be too crowded for another statue as one depicting the building's namesake, legendary Michigan coach Bo Schembechler, fills that space.

Michigan director of recruiting Matt Dudek suggested it go right on Stadium Boulevard, across from Ann Arbor Pioneer High School and in front of Michigan Stadium. Harbaugh then suggested the statue be erected in the tunnel at the Big House.

"I think we can all agree now, Tom Brady ... he's lapped the field in football," Harbaugh said. "You're synonymous now with Babe Ruth, with Michael Jordan. The university he attended should build a statue."

Brady played for the Wolverines from 1995-99 before going on to win six Super Bowls with the Patriots.

Maryland Player Hospitalized

Maryland sophomore safety Raymond Boone was hospitalized for precautionary reasons following a team workout Feb. 5. He was released the next day.

"I want to make sure everyone knows that I'm doing just fine," said Boone in a statement released through an athletic department spokesperson. "My blood sugar was low, and I went to the hospital just to be cautious. I appreciate all of the support that I've received."

Rebecca Jordan, the mother of Maryland offensive guard Johnny Jordan, said, "Johnny told us that Raymond was struggling to recover after a run. The train-



JOSH WINSLOW

COACH SPEAK – Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh has called for the university to build a statue in honor of former Wolverine quarterback Tom Brady.

ing staff stepped in and removed him from the field. They took him to the training room where they appeared to follow the new protocols that were set in place."

The Maryland spokesperson acknowledged the incident in a statement and said Boone "was accompanied to the hospital by our medical training staff and team physician."

Boone was taken to the Maryland Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore after the workout at Cole Field House.

Boone's hospitalization scare happened less than one year after sophomore offensive lineman Jordan McNair suffered exertional heatstroke at a team workout in May and died two weeks later. An independent investigation found that school officials failed to properly diagnose heatstroke and treat McNair, and multiple staffers – including head coach DJ Durkin – were fired as a result.

Rebecca Jordan, whose son was a roommate and close friend of McNair, added, "Please note that the Jordan McNair Foundation is educating people about this kind of event and that thanks to their efforts what happened to Jordan will not happen again to another athlete."

B1G Seeks Feedback

The Big Ten reached an agreement to

use Athlete Viewpoint's survey platform to collect and evaluate feedback from student-athletes at each of the 14 schools in the conference. Athlete Viewpoint uses its surveys to analyze data gathered from student-athletes confidentially.

The agreement with the Big Ten marks Athlete Viewpoint's first conference deal. The company, which was founded by Jennifer Cross and her husband, Michael, who is an associate athletic director at Penn State, already works with the NJCAA and Women Leaders in College Sports as well as 40 schools.

"This will mark the first time we're surveying across all of the member institutions in a conference," Jennifer Cross said. "The more data you have, the better you can present a big-picture look at things."

After students submit their confidential answers, each client school receives feedback from the survey. Athlete Viewpoint prides itself on its ability to generate higher response rates by making the surveys easy to access on mobile devices.

Athlete Viewpoint had already been working with three schools in the Big Ten: Illinois, Minnesota and Rutgers. Each school can still create customized surveys separate from the conference.

Survey results and analysis will be forwarded to the Big Ten Advisory Commission, which is a group of former student-athletes who help mold policy within the conference.

"The surveys will identify trends and current concerns of today's student-athlete," said Brad Travolia, the Big Ten's deputy commissioner and chief operating officer.

Storming The Court

When the clock struck zero at Illinois' 79-74 upset win against Michigan State on Feb. 5, a sea of fans poured onto the court in ecstatic fashion. A similar scene occurred when Iowa pulled off an upset of its own, defeating No. 2 Michigan, 74-59, at home Feb. 1.

There are strong opinions on both sides of the court-storming argument and its acceptance, but it remains a college tradition that is legal under Big Ten rules.

"There is no policy in place, and therefore no fines," said Jason Yellin, who is the assistant Big Ten commissioner for communications. "The postgame situations are managed locally, by the institutions themselves. That's up to them if they want to do something. From a conference perspective, there are no policies prohibiting it."

Other conferences are not so accepting of having fans take over the field of play following a game. The Southeastern Conference has had a ban in place since 2004, but the penalties were raised in 2015 to \$50,000 for a first offense, up to \$100,000 for a second offense, and up to \$250,000 for the third and subsequent offenses, said spokesman Herb Vincent.

Kentucky was fined \$100,000 when football fans stormed the field following the Wildcats' upset win against Mississippi State on Sept. 22. LSU football was fined \$100,000 after beating Georgia on Oct. 13, and Texas A&M was fined \$50,000 following a seven-overtime, 74-72, takedown of LSU on Nov. 24, Vincent added.

The Big-12 conference also penalizes schools that cannot control their fans. Texas Tech was fined \$25,000 and reprimanded by the conference for violating sportsmanship standards when men's basketball fans took the court following a win against No. 2 West Virginia. A Mountaineer player was reportedly reprimanded for striking a Texas Tech fan who had rushed the court.

The act of charging the field of play had led to many verbal altercations and even injuries. Des Moines Register columnist Randy Peterson suffered a broken leg when Iowa State fans stormed the court after a win against intrastate rival Iowa in 2016.

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OSU's Parran Making An Impact Off The Ice

The Ohio State men's hockey team has received national recognition for its play, ascending to the top ranking in the polls at the start of this season and maintaining a top-five spot for the course of the season.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

Now the Buckeyes are being noticed for office activities as well with senior defenseman Tommy Parran from Shaker Heights, Ohio, being named Feb. 5 as one of five finalists for the 2019 Hockey Humanitarian Award presented by the Hockey Humanitarian Award Foundation.

The award is presented to the student-athlete who makes significant contributions not only to his or her team but to the community through leadership and volunteerism. The winner will be announced April 12 during the Frozen Four weekend in Buffalo, N.Y.

The other finalists are Cam Beecy (Norwich), Jake Bunz (Wisconsin), Annie Pankowski (Wisconsin) and Luke Rivera (SUNY-Fredonia).

Parran is the first member of the OSU men's program to be a finalist. There were 17 nominees nationally for this year's award before the list was pared.

"It's not as much about winning the award," he said. "It's the recognition it brings to community service and the involvement that student-athletes are consistently doing across the board."

Parran, an English major with a history minor, is on the executive board of the Ohio State Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) as the director of community service. He is also part of Peer Educators, a group of athletes who help make the transition to college easier as well as helping current students.

The passion for helping others was ignited while a student at Saint Ignatius High School in Cleveland, where he and his friends started a program to share lunch every Friday with

the homeless at a mission across from the school.

"We had a class strictly for service, and it spilled over," he said. "That's something that's always been a part of my life, and I'm glad I'm able to keep it going here."

In his role with SAAC he coordinates outreach programs to the community as well as works with other OSU sports to get them involved in service work.

"The athletic department gives us athletes so many resources to do what we want as far as extracurricular activities," Parran said. "There's been teams that have been really, really outgoing and do a lot of service, and then other years maybe not so much."

Before he graduates, he would also like to see a day annually committed to events that helps others such as Habitat for Humanity or the Mid-Ohio Food Bank.

"I know there used to be a day of service in the athletic department, and we got away from it so we're trying to do our best to bring it back and institute that as a yearly policy," Parran said.

He credits former teammates Logan Davis and Christian Lampasso for inspiring him to look beyond the rink while at OSU.

"It makes you feel better about life when you're helping other people," Parran said. "In the greater scheme of things, it's only a couple of hours in your week that you're out in the community doing things."

"It's making those little sacrifices instead of taking that extra nap or sitting around looking at your phone. It makes a big difference to those kids and those teachers in the community so it's the least we can do."

He said he hopes to pass the torch in the locker room, so to speak, to sophomore goalie Evan Moyse and sophomore forward Austin Pooley.

"That's what people don't understand, what this university is about, the opportunities you have here," Ohio State coach Steve Rohlik said. "Everybody sees the hockey players, but there's opportunities away from the rink."

"That's what really separates this place, and Tommy has taken advantage of so many of those things outside the ice sheet that for

him, the connections he's made, the relationships he has, what he's going to get out of this place, he's going to be set for life because of that."

Parran traveled to Thailand in the summer of 2017 with a group from the athletic department through Global Vision International to interact with the youth there.

He said he conveyed to them that sports can be more than the recreational activities they are used to.

"We were able to show them if you do pursue this and do use sports to your ability it can change your life completely," he said. "It can get you an education. It can get you resources you wouldn't have been able to have."

So why does Parran make time for so many service projects?

"The community is what supports us," he said. "We're here, we're playing, we're going to school, but you kind of want to have a greater footprint than those two things."

By the way, Parran celebrated being a finalist by scoring in the 4-1 win at Wisconsin on Feb. 9. It was his first goal since Dec. 31, 2016.

More Plaudits

Parran isn't the only Buckeye up for an award. Senior defenseman Sasha Larocque is among 10 finalists for the 2018-19 Senior CLASS (Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School) Award, recognizing those who show excellence in the areas of community, classroom, character and competition.

The winner will also be announced during the Frozen Four weekend.

How Swede It Is

Freshman forward Gustaf Westlund from Stockholm, Sweden, entered January with no career goals and exited as the Varsity Club Icer of the Month.

He had five goals and three assists in just four games, missing the two games vs. Michigan because of an injury. He had two goals and an assist vs. Michigan State on Jan. 4, two scores vs. Penn State on Jan. 18 and a goal and two assists the next night vs. the Nittany Lions.

On Fire

The No. 3 Buckeyes (19-5-4, 12-3-3-2 Big Ten) ran their winning streak to seven games since BSB last went to press with series sweeps of Notre Dame at home Feb. 1-2 and at Wisconsin on Feb. 8-9.

Ohio State played the final three games without junior forward Tanner Laczynski, Westlund and Larocque because of injuries but still improved to 11-1-3 in the past 15 games.

OSU has an 11-point lead on second place Michigan with six games left in pursuit of its first regular-season conference title since winning the Central Collegiate Hockey Association in 1972.

The Buckeyes beat the Fighting Irish 4-2 in the opener at Value City Arena with senior Freddy Gerard scoring twice and senior Sean Romeo making 27 saves. Sophomore Tommy Nappier stopped 30 shots for his fourth shut-out of the season the next night for a 2-0 victory behind goals from junior defenseman Matt Miller and junior forward Carson Meyer.

Miller then scored the winner with 9.5 seconds left in overtime at Wisconsin in the first game for a 2-1 defeat of the Badgers. Senior John Wiitala scored, and Romeo saved 20 of 21 shots.

In the rematch, Nappier came within 1:40 of his fifth shutout, but the Buckeyes still won

BIG Men's Hockey

	Pts.	W	L	T	SW	GF	GA
Ohio State	41	12	3	3	2	61	33
Michigan	30	8	7	4	2	60	56
Minnesota	27	8	9	3	0	64	65
Penn State	26	8	9	1	1	75	72
Notre Dame	25	7	8	2	2	41	48
Michigan State	24	6	10	4	2	56	73
Wisconsin	22	5	8	5	2	47	57

Overall records – Ohio State 19-5-4, Michigan 12-11-6, Minnesota 11-14-4, Penn State 16-10-2, Notre Dame 14-10-3, Michigan State 10-15-5, Wisconsin 9-14-5.

Feb. 1 Scores

Michigan State 4, Wisconsin 1

Ohio State 4, Notre Dame 2

Michigan 4, Minnesota 2

Feb. 2 Scores

Wisconsin 2, MSU 2 (OT, WIS SO W)

Minnesota 4, Michigan 3

Ohio State 2, Notre Dame 0

Feb. 8 Scores

Penn State 7, Minnesota 2

Michigan 5, Michigan State 3

Ohio State 2, Wisconsin 1 (OT)

Feb. 9 Scores

Penn State 6, Minnesota 2

Michigan 5, Michigan State 2

Ohio State 4, Wisconsin 1

Feb. 12 Game

Michigan at Notre Dame, 7:05 p.m.

Feb. 15 Games

Minnesota at Ohio State, 6 p.m.

Penn State at Michigan State, 7 p.m.

Wisconsin at Notre Dame, 7:05 p.m.

Feb. 16 Games

Minnesota at Ohio State, 6 p.m.

Wisconsin at Notre Dame, 6:05 p.m.

Penn State at Michigan State, 7 p.m.

Feb. 22 Games

Wisconsin at Penn State, 6:30 p.m.

Ohio State at Michigan, 6:30 p.m.

Notre Dame at Minnesota, 9 p.m.

Feb. 23 Games

Notre Dame at Minnesota, 5:30 p.m.

Ohio State at Michigan, 6 p.m.

Wisconsin at Penn State, 7 p.m.

March 1 Games

Michigan State at Ohio State, 6:30 p.m.

Penn State at Notre Dame, 7:05 p.m.

Arizona State at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

Michigan at Wisconsin, 9 p.m.

March 2 Games

Michigan State at Ohio State, 5 p.m.

Penn State at Notre Dame, 7:05 p.m.

Arizona State at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

Michigan at Wisconsin, 9 p.m.

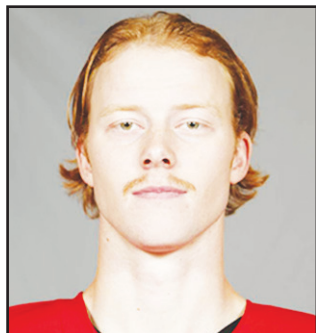
4-1 for their sixth straight win vs. the Badgers. Senior Dakota Joshua, Parran and junior Miguel Fidler staked the Buckeyes to a 3-0 lead. After the Wisconsin goal, senior Mason Jobst scored shorthanded into an empty net with one second left as the Buckeyes moved to 10-1-4 on the road.

Nappier had 29 saves and is second in the NCAA with a 1.60 goals-against average and a .946 save percentage. He leads the nation in winning percentage (11-1-2, .857). His career record is 15-1-2.

The Buckeyes return home to play Minnesota on Feb. 15-16 at 6 p.m. each night. Following a Feb. 22-23 series at Michigan, they complete the regular season at Value City Arena against Michigan State on March 1 (6:30 p.m.) and March 2 (5 p.m.).

For a complete recap of Ohio State's series against Notre Dame and at Wisconsin, go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

VARSITY CLUB ICER OF THE MONTH For January



Gustaf Westlund
Freshman Forward
Stockholm, Sweden

Ohio State Has Sights On Title Despite Losses

The No. 6 Ohio State wrestling team dominated a pair of duals in the state of Illinois before suffering a tough home loss to No. 1 Penn State on Feb. 8. The Buckeyes have dropped consecutive duals at home, including a 19-17 loss to No. 4 Michigan on Jan. 25 and the 28-9 loss to the Nittany Lions. Despite the late-season defeats, Ohio State remains focused on peaking in March with its sights on a national title.

ON THE MAT Joe Dempsey

"Absolutely," senior Kollin Moore said when asked if there is an expectation for Ohio State to be among the top teams in the nation. "People change, but the expectation stays the same. So right now we want people who want to win, who want to win national titles. We want to win a national title no matter what the circumstances, no matter how good Penn State is this year or however good they're going to be the next couple years.

"We haven't gone into this year thinking, 'Man, I hope we get a trophy.' It's, 'We're going to win this thing.' And if you don't have that mind-set, you might not end up getting a trophy. So we want to win. I think we can. It just all has to click in March."

Complete details of Ohio State's wrestling meets can be found at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB subscribers.

Jordan Longs For Title

Fifth-year senior Micah Jordan was in his redshirt season when his brother Bo and the Buckeyes won the 2015 national title. At times overshadowed by some of the sport's greatest athletes, Jordan has excelled as a Buckeye, posting an 84-18 record through his first three seasons and placing fourth and sixth at nationals as a sophomore and junior, respectively.

With the program losing his brother and all-time great Kyle Snyder to graduation, Jordan has stepped up as a staple in the Ohio State lineup, beginning his final season with a 19-1 record.

Ohio State assistant coach Tervel Dlagnev said he's aware that Jordan might not receive the attention he deserves outside of the program but that his importance is not lost among the Scarlet and Gray.

"He means a lot," Dlagnev said. "He's an awesome leader. He leads by example. He's a very mature individual. He's the kind of kid that's not very vocal, and so that's why he kind of gets lost to the wayside and accolades of other teammates, but he's not overlooked in here. Every time a dual comes up, we're leaning on 149 to be one of our big point scorers in that dual, so he's definitely not overlooked in here."

Dlagnev was an accomplished wrestler himself, winning back-to-back Division II national championships for the University of Nebraska at Kearney. The coach knows from his own experience what the fifth-year senior will have to do to get over the hump.

"This year, the big message for Micah is, although you're a senior and you haven't won the nationals yet, and it's difficult to

wrap your mind around – before you win something really big it's hard to wrap your mind around really doing it. The first time you win something really important, you kind of have doubts until you do.

"And so for him, it's just managing those doubts, like yes, it can be you, you can be the national champ. You're in the conversation, you're one of three of the favorites and you're going to be in the conversation. You just have to do everything right."

Jordan has high hopes for the conclusion of his collegiate career but remains focused on his day-to-day improvement and his effort, two things he feels he can control.

"I would say reaching my full potential," Jordan said of his goals for his final season. "I wouldn't be devastated if I lose matches and everything else, but I'll be mad if I go out there and I don't put it all on the line.

"Being able to go out there every match and wrestle to my full potential, being prepared every match, and throughout this season the big thing is just being a better version of yourself than the last one. So every time I step out on the mat, I want to be a better version of myself than the last time I stepped on the mat."

Jordan isn't shy about his aspirations but admits that preventing his nerves from building up and his mind from overthinking will be challenging as he chases a championship.

"I think I can be a Big Ten champ, be a national champ, for sure," Jordan said. "I think definitely I can do something like that, but it's just every day I've got to focus, every day I've got to be in the moment and prepare every day for those chances and those opportunities that I'm going to get."

Jordan has set himself up for a strong finish to the season, dominating opponents but still making adjustments along the way. With extra attention to detail and a unique training regimen, Jordan is making his push for the coveted individual national title in March.

"We have him on a very, very specific training schedule that's fitting his needs because I don't know if he's going to wrestle internationally," Dlagnev said. "This might be his last couple months of wrestling in his life so we just wanted to put him in the best place possible."

McKenna At Another Level

Another Ohio State wrestler who has a tremendous track record but has not won a national title is Joey McKenna. The former Stanford transfer won two Pac-12 titles before coming to Columbus and claiming a Big Ten championship.

On the way to his conference titles, McKenna has been flat-out dominant on the

mat. The 141-pounder went 58-6 at Stanford and posted a 21-2 record as a junior for the Buckeyes, including 9-2 against nationally ranked opponents with three wins coming against top-five foes.

After a 14-0 start to the season, McKenna dropped a 7-6 decision to No. 6 Nick Lee of Penn State for his first loss. Volunteer assistant coach Bo Jordan, who was McKenna's teammate a season ago, said he's noticed enhanced consistency coming from the senior in his final season.

"He just seems like every day in the practice room he doesn't have a bad day, or if he's a little off, it's very minor," Jordan said. "There's not really hot and cold days, and I think we've seen that with our wrestling too. He's very hot right now. We haven't seen many cold days. He's been at his peak performance pretty much every time, so he's looking to keep that."

McKenna will likely meet Lee again in pursuit of his fourth conference title at Williams Arena at the University of Minnesota on March 9-10 at the Big Ten championships. As a junior, McKenna did not allow a single point on his way to winning the individual Big Ten title.

Associate head coach J Jagers, who won back-to-back titles at 141 pounds for Ohio State in 2008 and 2009, has taken notice of McKenna's work ethic and attention to detail.

"Joey's very deliberate," Jagers said. "Every day he knows exactly what his goal is for that workout. He's just a complete professional when it comes to the sport from diet, strength, cardio and then wrestling."

"There's no wasted minutes in practice for him. He's not going through the motions ever. He's critically thinking, deliberate in practice and I think his wrestling – it's showing. He's very aware of where he needs to be on the mat. He's been doing great."

Jagers is so impressed with McKenna's will to win and versatility as a wrestler that he compares him to an all-time great, former Buckeye Logan Stieber, who is one of just four wrestlers to ever win four individual national championships.

"Joey's unique, man," Jagers said. "I tell people he can do it all. I like to compare him a little bit to Logan. Obviously, they're the same size and they went to the finals at the (World Team) Trials this year and Logan had five or six things that just nobody could stop, he's A-plus in five or six areas. He can shoot that double leg, he can slide by."

"But for Joey, he's B-plus, A to A-plus in every position, he can throw a little, he can ride, he can get out on bottom, he can turn, he can shoot, he has short offense, he has short offense-defense, so he is a complete

BIG Wrestling

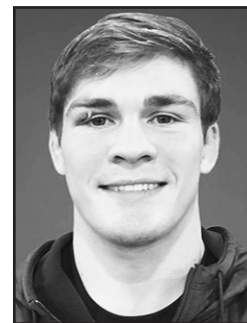
	Conf.			Overall		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Iowa	7	0	1.000	12	0	1.000
Penn State	7	0	1.000	11	0	1.000
Michigan	6	1	.857	10	1	.909
Minnesota	6	2	.750	13	3	.813
Ohio State	5	2	.714	9	2	.818
Nebraska	5	3	.625	11	4	.733
Rutgers	4	3	.571	11	5	.688
Michigan State	3	4	.429	9	6	.600
Wisconsin	3	5	.375	8	5	.615
Purdue	2	5	.286	6	8	.429
Indiana	1	6	.143	4	10	.286
Illinois	1	6	.143	2	7	.222
Northwestern	1	7	.125	3	10	.231
Maryland	0	6	.000	0	9	.000

wrestler. I call him a pure wrestler. And I think this year he's made a bigger commitment to his top wrestling, getting back points. He's so complete."

Although McKenna has not won an individual national title, he has already made a name for himself on the national stage as an amateur. In addition to two third-place finishes at the NCAA championships, McKenna brought home a bronze medal at the 2017 World U23 Wrestling Championship in Bydgoszcz, Poland.

McKenna continued his excellence by winning an individual title at the 2018 U.S. Open in the summer. Ohio State head coach Tom Ryan is quick to mention McKenna's international success when comparing him to highly ranked opponents.

"There are great college wrestlers and then there's Joey McKenna," Ryan said. "Joey's at another level. There are a handful of college wrestlers who are really, really elite when you look at the world stage. He's one of them."



Joey McKenna



Kollin Moore

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Synchronized Swimming Striving For Perfection

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Imagine you're a Division I athlete going for your third straight national title, and someone tells you that your sport isn't really a sport.

That's the life of an Ohio State synchronized swimmer. Team captains Rachel Warren, a senior, and junior Kaitlyn Carboun admitted that it can be frustrating when their sport is slighted by such comments because they know the effort required when chasing perfection.

"We do a lot of work outside of the water with running and cardio and lifting weights," Carboun said. "And then, during our routines that we swim it's very hard endurance-wise. We are using our legs or our arms at all times. There's really no moment that we're resting. Even if it looks like we are, we're still working to keep our bodies up and out of the water."

"And the amount that we hold our breath

really makes us tired as well. You feel it in your body how tired you are, but you just keep mentally pushing through till the end because you know you just have to finish it off, you have to bring it home and win that routine."

To succeed in synchronized swimming, one must not only be physically capable but have incredible mental fortitude. Head coach Holly Vargo-Brown understands why the nature of the sport is widely misunderstood.

"When there's not enough promotion of it, what the people know is what they see," Vargo-Brown said. "A photograph of a synchronized swimmer with a smile on her face, with an arm sticking out, and they think, 'Oh, that's synchronized swimming.' When they actually see it live and in-person, anyone would know that that takes a lot to be able to do that."

"They're lifting weights, they're doing

a heavy flexibility program, they're doing swimming workouts in the water, they're doing long hours of practices of counting the same section over and over again until it's actually as perfect as it can be."

Although the insults directed at their sport

may be annoying, the Buckeyes remain focused on their perennial goal of winning the national championship. Warren and her senior teammates lost in the national finals as freshmen, but after winning back-to-back titles, she had forgotten that feeling of that first win until her wide-eyed freshman teammates spotted the championship rings on her fingers.

"They were like, 'This is so cool, we can't wait to win it,'"

Warren recalled. "So it's like I forgot that feeling, because I already have two. It's a big deal, but I forgot the feeling of holding someone else's, and them being a part of it is so huge. We're leaving Ohio State with national championships under our belt – that's a big thing."

Winning is the expectation at Ohio State, especially for the winningest program in school history. The difficult nature of synchronized swimming and the multitasking skills required to be successful indicate that the sport is not for the faint of heart.

"It is incredibly difficult," Vargo-Brown said. "They're upside down in 10 feet of water, never touching the bottom, holding their legs in positions that are matched up with another person next to them for an entire four-minute routine."

"They're holding their breath, in a team event, they're having to use their own bodies, not a bottom, not a solid place, but using their own bodies in an unstable medium of water and launch people 15 feet out of the water. I mean, it is actually incredible what they are able to do."

The team with a remarkable 31 national titles to its name works tirelessly to uphold its reputation. The Buckeyes take advantage of the excellent facilities and elite training

staff at Ohio State, setting them apart from the competition.

"Even our strength and conditioning coaches, they push us the same as every other sport," Warren said. "We are a strong team, and I think that's what sets us apart from the other schools who have synchronized swimming. We're focusing on being strong, powerful athletes, not light and whatever like that, so it's like we're a different program."

Although solo competitions exist in synchronized swimming, it is very much a team-oriented sport. And the togetherness of the Ohio State synchro team plays a big role in its success.

"I think a big thing here is we do it for each other," Carboun said. "As much as we want the national championships for ourselves, you work harder so that the person next to you can also get that national championship."

Even though the Buckeyes have brought home back-to-back national titles, they want nothing more than a three-peat. The Ohio State synchro team is the best in the country, but the swimmers haven't forgotten the dedication that brought them to that point.

"We work really, really hard and, a lot of people say we look effortless in the water in competitions, and that's our goal," Warren said. "So we bust our butt every single day of the week, early, we trudge through the snow, we're running, we do a lot that a lot of people don't know, but we all do it together."

"And it's so inspiring to see someone across the pool working her butt off. And people stay after practice, or people are working on their own and talking to the coaches. It's just a lot of commitment and a lot of trust that everybody is fighting for the same thing."

In order to better introduce BSB readers to Ohio State's Olympic sports teams and athletes, we have shifted to more feature-oriented coverage of the various squads. Buckeye Sports Bulletin will provide a roundup of all the games, matches and meets involving OSU's teams each Monday on our BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all print subscribers.



Holly Vargo-Brown

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2019 FOOTBALL (All Times TBA)

Aug. 31 FLORIDA ATLANTIC.
Sept. 7 CINCINNATI; **14** at Indiana; **21** MIAMI (OHIO); **28** at Nebraska.
Oct. 5 MICHIGAN STATE; **18** at Northwestern; **26** WISCONSIN.
Nov. 9 MARYLAND; **16** at Rutgers; **23** PENN STATE; **30** at Michigan.
Dec. 7 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

MEN'S BASKETBALL (16-7, 6-6 BIG TEN)

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, L 72-62.
Dec. 2 MINNESOTA, W 79-59; **5** vs. Illinois at Chicago, W 77-67; **15** BUCKNELL, W 73-71; **18** YOUNGSTOWN STATE, W 75-56; **22** vs. UCLA at Chicago, W 80-66; **29** HIGH POINT, W 82-64.
Jan. 5 (8) MICHIGAN STATE, L 86-77; **9** at Rutgers, L 64-61; **12** at Iowa, L 72-62; **18** (19) MARYLAND, L 75-61; **23** PURDUE, L 79-67; **26** at Nebraska, W 70-60; **29** at (5) Michigan, L 65-49.
Feb. 2 RUTGERS, W 76-62; **7** PENN STATE, W 74-70; **10** at Indiana, W 55-52; **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
(10-12, 6-7 BIG TEN)**
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, W 76-69.
Dec. 2 CINCINNATI, W 69-56; **5** at Washington, L 69-59; **16** FLORIDA at St. John Arena, W 46-41; **20** vs. Butler at West Palm Beach, Fla., L 66-53; **21** vs. Virginia Tech at West Palm Beach, Fla., L 81-73; **28** at Purdue, L 60-42; **31** NEBRASKA, L 78-69.
Jan. 5 at (4) Maryland, L 75-69; **10** (25) INDIANA, W 55-50; **14** (25) MICHIGAN STATE, W 65-55; **17** at Penn State, W 76-71 (OT); **20** at Michigan, L 62-58; **24** (11) MARYLAND, L 70-57; **28** at Minnesota, W 65-55; **31** ILLINOIS, W 78-70.
Feb. 3 at Northwestern, L 76-59; **6** PENN STATE, W 78-73; **10** (16) IOWA, L 78-52; **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 GYMNASTICS (0-2)

Jan. 12 Rocky Mountain Open at Colorado Spring, Colo., 4th/6 (398.500); **26** at (1) Oklahoma, L 423.950-395.400.
Feb. 2 at (4) Michigan, L 413.900-402.700; **15/17** Winter Cup at Las Vegas.
March 2 ARNOLD CHALLENGE, 1:30 p.m.; **8** MINNESOTA/NEBRASKA, 6 p.m.; **16** at Iowa, 7 p.m.; **24** ILLINOIS, 5 p.m.
April 5-6 Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa; **19** NCAA Qualifier at Champaign, Ill.; **20** NCAA Championships at Champaign, Ill.

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS (4-2, 3-1 BIG TEN)

Jan. 5 at (7) Georgia, L 196.600-194.900; **12** at (25) N.C. State, W 196.025-194.550; **19** at Penn State, W 196.075-194.850; **27** at Michigan State, W 196.200-195.225.
Feb. 2 IOWA, W 195.000-194.775; **8** at Maryland, L

195.950-194.250; **16** NEBRASKA, 4 p.m.; **23** Big Five Meet at Toledo, Ohio, 6 p.m.

March 2 WEST VIRGINIA, 4 p.m.; TEMPLE, 4 p.m.; **9** BOWLING GREEN, 4 p.m.; **17** at West Virginia, 2 p.m.; vs. N.C. State at Morgantown, W.Va., 2 p.m.; vs. Penn State at Morgantown, W.Va., 2 p.m.; **23** Big Ten Championships at University Park, Pa.

April 4 NCAA Regional First Round; **5** NCAA Regional Second Round; **6** NCAA Regional Final; **19** NCAA Semifinals at Fort Worth, Texas; **20** NCAA Championships at Fort Worth, Texas.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (19-5-4, 12-3-3 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, T 2-2 (OSU 3x3 OT Win); T 2-2 (OSU 3x3 OT Win).
Dec. 28-29 MERCYHURST, W 3-1; W 5-4.
Jan. 4-5 at Michigan State, T 7-7 (OSU 3x3 OT Loss); W 6-0; **11-12** MICHIGAN, L 2-1; W 4-2; **18-19** at (13) Penn State, W 4-1; W 6-4.
Feb. 1-2 (11) NOTRE DAME, W 4-2; W 2-0; **8-9** at Wisconsin, W 2-1 (OT); W 4-1; **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
(18-12-0, 12-10-0 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, L 3-0; W 2-0; **15-16** MERCYHURST, W 2-1 (OT); W 9-2.

Jan. 5-6 MINNESOTA WHITECAPS (exhibition games), L 3-2 (OT); L 3-1; **11-12** (1) WISCONSIN, W 1-0; L 5-2; **18-19** at Minnesota Duluth, L 5-2; L 6-3; **25-26** (2) MINNESOTA, L 7-2; L 7-1.
Feb. 1-2 at St. Cloud State, W 4-0; W 5-0; **8-9** BEMIDJI STATE, L 3-2; W 5-1; **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.

SWIMMING & DIVING

Sept. 27 ALABAMA, Men: W 156-144; Women: W 181-119.
Oct. 12/13 TEXAS A&M, Men: W 199-153; Women: L 209-142; **13** LOUISVILLE, Men: W 192- 161; **27** vs. Virginia Tech at Christiansburg, Va., Men: L 182-171; Women: W 225-128; vs. Penn State at Christiansburg, Va., Men: W 250-103; Women: W 231-122.
Nov. 2 DENISON, Men: W 221-75; Women: W 224-75; AKRON, Women: W 174.5-124.5; **9** KENYON (exhibition); **10-11** ACC/Big Ten Challenge at West Lafayette, Ind., Men: Big Ten wins 179-174; Women: Big Ten wins 251-102; **15-17** OHIO STATE INVITATIONAL, Men: 1st/9; Women: 4th/11.
Jan. 4-5 at Florida, Men: L 317.50-263.50; Women: L 403-178; vs. Kentucky at Gainesville, Fla., Men: W 336-245; Women: L 375-206; **19** at Michigan, Men: L 202-98; Women: L 196-104; **25-26** Shamrock Invitational at Notre Dame, Ind., Men: 1st/4; Women: 3rd/4.
Feb. 16-17 WINTER INVITAIONAL; **20-23** Women's Big Ten Championships at Bloomington, Ind.; **27-March 2** Men's Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa.
March 3 LAST CHANCE MEET (women); **10** Last Chance Meet at TBA (men); **14-16** CSCAA National Invitational at Cleveland; NCAA Zone Diving at West Lafayette, Ind.; **20-23** Women's NCAA Championships at Austin, Texas; **27-30** Men's NCAA Championships at Austin, Texas.

MEN'S TENNIS (8-0)

Jan. 7 COLUMBUS CHALLENGER, NTS; **20** CLEVELAND STATE, W 5-0; W 4-0; XAVIER, Canceled; **26** VCU, W 4-0; **27** ARKANSAS, W 4-1; TOLEDO, W 4-0.
Feb. 2 (9) STANFORD, W 6-1; **8** ARIZONA STATE, W 6-1; **10** (24) GEORGIA, W 4-0; **12** SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 6 p.m.; **15** ITA National Indoor Team Championships at Chicago; **20** KENTUCKY, 2 p.m.; **24** NOTRE DAME, Noon.
March 1 at Penn State, 4 p.m.; **11** at Texas A&M, 7 p.m.; **14** at Texas, 6:30 p.m.; **22** MICHIGAN STATE, 6 p.m.; **24** at Michigan, Noon; **29** WISCONSIN, 6 p.m.; **31** MINNESOTA, Noon.
April 5 at Nebraska, 7 p.m.; **7** at Iowa, Noon; **12** at Northwestern, 7 p.m.; **14** at Illinois, 1 p.m.; **19** PURDUE, 6 p.m.; **21** INDIANA, Noon; **26-28** Big Ten Tournament at Ann Arbor, Mich.
May 3 NCAA First & Second Round; **10** NCAA Regional; **16** NCAA Championships at Orlando, Fla.

WOMEN'S TENNIS (4-2)

Jan. 19 Michigan Tournament at Ann Arbor, Mich., NTS; **26** ITA Kickoff at Atlanta vs. Geogia Tech, W 4-0; **27** ITA Kickoff at Atlanta vs. Kentucky, W 4-1.
Feb. 1 (6) TEXAS, L 4-3; **3** NOTRE DAME, W 6-1; **8** ITA National Team Indoors at Seattle vs. (4) Duke, L 4-3; **10** ITA National Team Indoors at Seattle vs. (10) Syracuse, W 5-2; **20** CLEVELAND STATE, 10 a.m.; AKRON, 6 p.m.; **23** at Arizona State, 2 p.m.; **24** vs. TCU at Tempe, Ariz., Noon.
March 3 BAYLOR, Noon; **13** at UNLV, 10 a.m.; **17** PENN STATE, Noon; **22** at Nebraska, 5 p.m.; **24** IOWA, Noon; **29** at Michigan State, 5 p.m.; **31** at Michigan, 1 p.m.
April 5 WISCONSIN, 6 p.m.; **7** MINNESOTA, Noon; **12** PURDUE, 6 p.m.; **14** INDIANA, Noon; **20** at Northwestern, 11 a.m.; **21** at Illinois, Noon.

INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

Jan. 11-12 Kentucky Invite at Lexington, Ky., NTS; **19** Simmons-Harvey Big Ten Invitational at Ann Arbor, Mich., NTS; **24-26** New Balance at New York, NTS.
Feb. 1-2 Rod McCravy Memorial at Lexington, Ky., NTS; **7-9** Tiger Paw Invite at Clemson, S.C., NTS; **15** BUCKEYE TUNE UP; **16** Alex Wilson Invitational at Notre Dame, Ind.; **22-23** Big Ten Championships at Ann Arbor, Mich.
March 8-9 NCAA Championships at Birmingham, Ala.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL (4-8, 0-2 MIVA)

Jan. 4 CHARLESTON, W 3-0; **5** PENN STATE, W 3-1; **10** at (5) BYU, L 3-0; **12** at (11) Stanford, L 3-1; **18** GEORGE MASON, L 3-1; **19** ERSKINE, W 3-1; **26** at Ball State, L 3-1.
Feb. 1 SAINT FRANCIS, L 3-2; **2** LINCOLN MEMORIAL, W 3-1; **5** at (15) Purdue Fort Wayne, L 3-0; **8** at (6) U.C. Santa Barbara, L 3-0; **9** at (1) Long Beach State, L 3-0; **15** at Lindenwood, 8 p.m.; **16** at Quincy, 8 p.m.; **21** LEWIS, 7 p.m.; **23** LOYOLA CHICAGO, 2 p.m.
March 1/3 MCKENDREE, 7 p.m.; 2 p.m.; **8** at UCLA, 8 p.m.; **9** at USC, 11 p.m.; **15** LEES-MCRAE, 7 p.m.; **19** at Penn State, 7 p.m.; **22** LINDENWOOD, 7 p.m.; **23** QUINCY, 7 p.m.; **29** at Loyola Chicago, 8 p.m.; **30** at Lewis, 8 p.m.
April 4 PURDUE FORT WAYNE, 7 p.m.; **6** BALL STATE, 7 p.m.; **13** MIVA Quarterfinals; **17** MIVA Semifinals; **20** MIVA Finals; **26** NCAA Play-In Match at campus sites; **30** NCAA Play-In Match at Long Beach, Calif.
May 2 NCAA Semifinals at Long Beach, Calif.; **4** NCAA Finals at Long Beach, Calif.

WRESTLING (9-2, 5-2 BIG TEN)

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, 1st/43 (148).
Dec. 9 (19) WISCONSIN, W 23-13.
Jan. 6 (4) N.C. STATE, W 26-10; **11** at Indiana, W 43-3; **13** MICHIGAN STATE, W 37-4; **25** (5) MICHIGAN, L 19-17.
Feb. 1 at Illinois, W 23-14; **3** at Northwestern, W 27-15; **8** (1) PENN STATE, L 28-9; **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 Did Well On Trail Amid Coaching Change

College football recruiting is a hard job that never ends. Coaches spend countless hours evaluating, calling, texting, emailing and using all forms of social media to contact and follow the top high school football prospects from around the country.

COACH'S CORNER With Bill Conley

This recruiting process includes visiting the schools and homes of those prospects as many times as the NCAA rules allow. Then comes trying to convince them to come to summer camp on campus, take an official visit and eventually sign a letter of intent with your university.

The whole idea is how to best sell your college football program to the most talented number of elite players as possible. As a coach and recruiter, you must not only be a great salesman, you must find out such things as what is each prospect's "hot button" that will determine where he will commit along with who has the most influence on his final decision.

The best recruiters are those coaches who leave no stone unturned when trying to land a top recruit. The X's and O's of college football are important, but the size and speed of those X's and O's are more important. A ton of coaches can put together solid offensive and defensive schemes, but it takes talented athletes to execute those schemes. It's no surprise that the most successful programs are loaded with players who are among the very best in college football.

Recruiting During Transition

As mentioned, recruiting is a tough part of the job description for a college coach. Add to that a change in head coaches during the season, right after the season, or right after the bowl games are concluded. Those situations are really difficult for the staff to deal with because assistant coaches try to keep committed athletes in the fold or try to keep the uncommitted recruits warm until a new head coach is determined.

At the same time, those same coaches are making contact with colleagues from other programs for a future position in case they are not retained by the new head coach. It's a real gamble to think you are secure in your current position. It's only smart for you to seek another job as soon as possible. The window of opportunity closes very quickly in college football.

When John Cooper was fired the day after the Outback Bowl loss to South Carolina in January 2001, myself and my colleagues experienced one of those nightmares in terms of job security and recruiting. Time is of the essence, and the quicker a new coach can be hired, the better the chance of having a good recruiting class. Every day that the transition lingers on, the less the chance of final success in recruiting.

Jim Tressel was hired on Jan. 18, 2001, and the 16 days between Cooper's firing and the hiring of Tressel seemed like an eternity. As recruiting coordinator, I made the decision to still bring recruits in for visits during that 16-day period even though the university hadn't hired a new coach. There is no doubt we lost out on the chance to land some national talent, but we were able to salvage and sign a lot of good players. There was no early signing period in December of 2000, so we were dealing with the traditional signing day of the first Wednesday in February.

Fortunately, we ended up with the No. 6

recruiting class that season. Among the signees that year were running backs Lydell Ross and Maurice Hall, defensive end Simon Fraser, placekicker Mike Nugent and super athlete Chris Gamble.

The Urban Meyer to Ryan Day transition this year was a much smoother process for the program than in 2001. In a smart move by the athletic administration, the new head coach was named the same day Meyer announced his retirement. Since Day was already on staff and the wheels of recruiting would not be slowing down, the transition ended up doing little harm.

Even though the Buckeyes did not end up with one of the top 10 classes for 2019, it was mainly due to the limited number of scholarships available. The final finish of No. 14 in the recruiting ranking isn't bad at all, but not where the Buckeyes are accustomed. The Ohio State coaching staff could sign only seventeen total recruits, but the class was very solid in terms of quality.

Final Signing Day Surprises

The loss of previously committed four-star offensive lineman Doug Nester of Spring Valley High School in Huntington, W.Va., was a real blow to the Buckeyes' recruiting efforts. Nester had been committed to Ohio State since the late summer of 2017 but signed with Virginia Tech on National Signing Day.

Flags on Nester went up when he decided at the last minute to not sign on the initial signing date in December. A guy who had seemed very solid for the Buckeyes said he was still committed but wanted to take a few more visits to other schools before signing day. That statement, in recruiting talk, meant he wasn't really committed at all. Nester visited Virginia Tech the last visitation weekend before signing day then signed with the Hokies on the following Wednesday.

The loss of Nester not only contributed to the Buckeyes' drop in the final recruiting rankings, but also hurt in terms of incoming quality at the offensive line. Ohio State ended up signing Enokk Vimahi from Hawaii and Dawand

Jones of Indianapolis on signing day, which was a definite plus in terms of offensive line depth, but the departure of Nester was huge and especially painful since it was to Virginia Tech.

Big Ten rivals Michigan and Penn State ended up higher ranked than the Buckeyes, but the Wolverines ended up signing 26 players when all was said and done and the Nittany Lions 23. In a lot of ways final recruiting rankings is an inexact science. It won't be till several seasons down the road before one knows exactly how good a certain class ends up being. It does, however, seem the best three programs in the Big Ten did their job in terms of recruiting in 2019 and have a good chance of staying the premier programs in the conference.

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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Spring Brings Extra Intrigue For OSU This Year

While many Ohio State fans have Aug. 31 – the official head coaching debut of Ryan Day – circled on their calendar, I am more jazzed for March 4 – the official start date of the Buckeyes' 2019 spring practice.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

Far from your run-of-the-mill spring drills, OSU has that new car look and smell – and with five new assistant coaches that's understandable. The defense got an overhaul as Day brought in co-coordinator Greg Mattison and linebackers coach Al Washington from Michigan, secondary coach Jeff Hafley from the San Francisco 49ers and special teams/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes from Maryland. He also added quarterbacks coach and passing game coordinator Mike Yurcich from Oklahoma State on offense.

It's a different look, for sure, and the new coaching staff will be getting a look at a host of new players, including newly-eligible quarterback Justin Fields, who transferred from Georgia with three seasons of eligibility. Fields is expected to win the job, but nothing is guaranteed – especially with a coaching staff operating with a clean slate. Joining Fields in the quarterbacks room are holdovers Matthew Baldwin, Chris Chugunov and Daniel Vanatsky, a walk-on.

"It's a process," Yurcich said about his new task. "It takes time and it takes investment on both ends. For me as a quarterbacks coach, I have to learn how they learn the best. Everybody is different. It's a great opportunity during the off-season to take the time to learn about each individual."

The most interesting hire, from this corner anyway, is Mattison. Not only was he pilfered from the staff of the Buckeyes' biggest rival, but he has been successful in multiple stints with the Wolverines (as well as in the NFL). He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table, as well as this little nugget: The last time he was a co-coordinator, he won

a national title. It was under Urban Meyer at the University of Florida. That's where he first met Day, who radiated star potential even then. That's why it was an easy choice when Day asked him to hop aboard the Buckeye Express.

"I'm very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work at two of the greatest programs in the country and in all of college football. Luckily you add Notre Dame in there, I kind of say, wow, I've had a pretty good run," Mattison said. "The big thing, leaving Michigan was a very tough decision. I spent 13 years there. But I also have spent 19 out of the last 24 years coordinating, and to have the opportunity to have a co-coordinator at a great university like Ohio State was something that... I really wanted to pursue, and that was the biggest thing."

Spring drills should be high-tempo, with a lot of moving parts and new wrinkles. Even though Ohio State's offense broke records in 2018, the 2019 edition will look more like a true Ryan Day production. Fields provides more of a natural running component than Dwayne Haskins did, but make no mistake – he has a live arm and can challenge opponents downfield. Think of him as a younger, bigger version of Oklahoma's Kyler Murray. He wants to stay in the pocket and throw the ball, but if flushed out he can use his legs as weapons.

The defense should be more aggressive, and one of the bright spots of the signing day press conference with the new assistants was Hafley saying that OSU defenders will turn and look for the football. So many times last season you would see a defender beaten by a step and he would never locate the football, never even turn his head.

That's all in the past.

"All right, so here's the deal on that one, and if I ever see any of you guys tweet – do you think that we as DB coaches sit there and say, 'Don't look back for the ball'? Like my wife used to come up to me after games and be like, 'Hey, why don't our guys turn back and look for the ball?' I'm like, 'Do you want to see my individual tape?' All we do is practice turning and looking for the ball. DB coaches teach to turn and look for the football. We promise you we will practice to teach – this is awesome that you asked this because now no one can tweet this out or say this. We are going to work on

turning and looking and trying to intercept the football when we're in man. Now, there's certain parts of the field where it's not good to do that. So if we don't do it in a game, it might be a certain part of the field. But I promise you, come and watch individual, we'll turn and look for the ball."

Even with all of the new faces, most eyes will be focused on Day. Will he do things the way Meyer did? Will he be more or less hands on? How will he handle the spring game, which often serves as a trial run for the upcoming season? Will he be able to handle life in a fish-bowl, where every misstep is magnified a hundred-fold? That last part won't truly be known until the season kicks off, but how he handles himself this spring, with the inevitable growing pains of a new team and trying to get everyone acclimated, will at least be a small glimpse.

The spring game will take place April 13, and it will be interesting to see if it is, as it was under Meyer, a glorified situational scrimmage or if it more closely resembles a "game," with offense going against defense for the duration.

Whatever happens, OSU's spring practice will be watched closely.

Comprehension Problem

National Signing Day has come and gone – though some might say that was the case back in December, when the majority of the high-profile recruits inked with their respective programs. But there were a few signatures added Feb. 6, including a pair of linemen who should benefit Ohio State greatly.

An area of concern, offensive line became a priority for the Buckeyes. All indications are that they made out nicely, bringing in a pair of four-star blockers in tackle Ryan Jacoby and guard Enokk Vimahi and three-star tackle Dawand Jones. Five-star center Harry Miller rounds out the quartet, which should be a strong foundation for years to come. Interesting note about Vimahi – he is just the second player ever from Hawaii to grace the Buckeyes' roster, following punter Scott Terna.

Miller is among a trio of five-star talents signed by Ohio State, along with Texas receiver Garrett Wilson and Ohio defensive end Zach Harrison. The latter two are already on campus and should push for playing time this fall.

If fans pay attention to the recruiting websites, they may think the Buckeyes had an underwhelming class.

After all, the 247Sports composite had OSU's 17-player haul touted 14th nationally, behind league foes Michigan (eighth) and Penn State (13th). A little playing around with the numbers, however, shows that the Buckeyes are actually third, behind only Alabama and Georgia.

Now, this isn't some plot by yours truly to make the Buckeyes look better. No, this is actually the best way to read the rankings. Looking at things from an average recruit

rating perspective, the Buckeyes came in at 91.87. Alabama was well in front (94.38) and Georgia (93.32) second. Using the average recruit rating is the most equitable way to rank teams, as it allows for class-size discrepancies. The Crimson Tide signed 27 and the Bulldogs added 24. In 247Sports' system, that will make for a bigger point total and put those teams higher. In the average recruit ranking, there is more of a quality over quantity dynamic.

So if you see a newspaper or website touting Michigan and Penn State as having better recruiting classes than the Buckeyes, don't buy it. By the fairest measure, the Buckeyes added better talent than either of their East Division rivals.

Looking at a couple of individual OSU recruits, don't be shocked if linebacker Tommy Eichenberg and running back Marcus Crowley get into the mix sooner rather than later. Eichenberg plays a position of need and underwhelming production (save for Malik Harrison), and Crowley enters a position room without a ton of depth after Mike Weber declared for the NFL and Brian Snead left the program.

Not Ready For Prime Time

The atmosphere was electric, the stakes were high, the attention was legit – the only thing missing was the Ohio State wrestling team.

Looking to show that it belonged in the national title discussion, the Buckeyes were bamboozled and battered by top-ranked Penn State 28-9 in front of a raucous sellout crowd on Feb. 8 at venerable St. John Arena, site of many great wrestling duals. This, unfortunately, was not one of them.

The night got off to an unexpectedly poor start as Luke Pletcher (133) and Joey McKenna (141) both lost one-point decisions against lower-ranked foes. So rather than OSU being ahead at least 6-0 as expected, they were down 5-0 (Penn State's bench was assessed a one-point unsportsmanlike conduct deduction) and it was uphill from that point as the meat of the Lions' lineup was ahead.

At night's end, only Micah Jordan (149), top-ranked Myles Martin (184) and freshman Malik Heinselman (125) fought to victory. Penn State showed that there is a big gap at the top between itself and Ohio State, or whoever else lays claim to No. 2. Barring injuries, the Lions appear to be a good bet to win their eighth crown in the last nine years (interrupted only by Ohio State's 2016 title) under the guidance of Cael Sanderson. Maybe Ohio State is a better tournament team than dual team – that happened a lot under Russ Hellickson, who would watch his team sometimes muddle through dual meets against inferior foes only to finish top five in the national tournament. Whatever the case, the Buckeyes have a lot of work to do to truly get into the national title discussion.

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Ever-Evolving Transfer Process Not Perfect Just Yet

If you are like me, a few weeks back you had probably never heard the term “transfer portal.” Now the term is ubiquitous.

I thought at first it was just some Internet term for the traditional transfer process of which I was unaware. There is a whole new language out there that, unless you have your head buried in your device while sipping your \$5 coffee at Starbucks, you would not know. These words, terms and phrases spread like wildfire, leaving you wondering under which rock you have been living because no one uses these terms with you.

But the transfer portal turned out to be a real thing and is something that has helped contribute to the recent wild flurry of movement by players among different schools.

First of all, don't feel bad if you were not aware of the transfer portal. It only came into existence in October of 2018. The portal allows players to announce their interest in possibly transferring without permission from their current school. Once players are in the portal, any coach can contact them. Current coaches can no longer block communication between opposing coaches and athletes.

These are definite victories for the student-athletes. On the downside for the players, the current school can cancel an athlete's scholarship at the end of the semester in which that athlete entered the portal.

There seems to be a slight difference of opinion between me and others in the office who believe that student-athletes should have as much freedom to move about as possible. In principle, I agree with that. And in the spirit of full disclosure I should admit that I went to three different undergraduate schools and another three graduate schools. There may be another school or two that I don't remember, so I moved about myself with the only restrictions being I had to gain admission and I had to be able to pay for my studies.

But my movements did not affect 100 or so teammates and the hopes and happiness of thousands of fans and alumni, the latter of whom are really irrelevant to this conversation. Team sports are built on continuity, and I am already seeing some collegiate sports chaos and the new rules have been in place for only a couple of months.

Those advocating a free market in college athletics invariably point to the fact that coaches change jobs all the time. I find that a bit of a flimsy argument. One would hope that an athlete would base his college choice on the school in addition to the coach. It's not like athletes are bound to slavery. You transfer, you sit out a year and get your academics in order and get acclimated to your new school, and then you hit the field, court or pool.

I could be easily persuaded to get behind waiving the year off if there was a coaching change. And there are always hardship waivers. I am just concerned that hardship waivers are going to get so out of control and easy to obtain that an athlete will have a fight with his or her boy- or girlfriend and petition for a hardship waiver. Get the right lawyer and away you go. By the way, who pays for these attorneys?

While advocating for the welfare of student-athletes, I would love to, at the same time, try to retain some order on the college landscape.

There is one recent development that I absolutely love, and that is the graduate transfer concept. I think it is great to reward an athlete dedicated enough to balance athletics and academics to the point of being able to graduate before his or her eligibility is used up with the right to transfer without restrictions. That is why I applauded Joe Burrow. He earned the

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

right to have the option to do what was best for him and his family by working hard both on the field and in the classroom.

An offshoot of the graduate transfer rule is that I see athletes working harder to maintain progress toward their degree, which theoretically is what this is supposed to be about (the operative word here being theoretically) so that they can increase their options down the line.

The ultimate effect of all the new rule changes needs to be monitored. Anything that makes the student-athlete experience more beneficial and positive for the student-athlete is a plus. I just don't want to see things turn into a college sports version of the Wild, Wild West.

By the way, when it comes to sports such as football and basketball, much of the movement between schools has to do with better positioning to make it to the pros. If athletes think their movement is restricted by the NCAA, wait until they have to navigate the ins and outs of player movement as a professional.

A New Shirt

Another term I was not familiar with showed up in this issue of BSB – a blueshirt. I was obviously familiar with a redshirt and I believe that former Buckeye quarterback Todd Boeckman was the first grayshirt with whom I was familiar. But a blueshirt? Never heard of it.

As I understand it a blueshirt can be put on scholarship once he arrives on campus and count against the next year's scholarship total, but not play. The catch is that the blueshirt cannot have been “officially recruited.” That means the player cannot have taken an official visit, nor can there be any “arranged” off-campus face-to-face interaction between the player and coaches. The player is free to visit campus unofficially. The player cannot have received a written scholarship offer from the school.

There is also, apparently, a greenshirt but I am already in shirt-sensory overload. I will try to figure that one out for a future column.

Forgot Or Never Knew?

As I get older I get more forgetful, but I don't think I will ever forget the numbers 2-10-1, John Cooper's record against Michigan, nor the years 1994 and 1998, the years Coop and his team came out on the winning side of that ledger.

However, it wasn't until we started our online feature on great quarterbacks who have faced Ohio State during the Buckeye Sports Bulletin era that I realized Tom Brady, now in the discussion as the greatest pro quarterback of all time, was at the helm for one of those Wolverine losses, the 31-16 Buckeye victory in 1998.

I guess I would have to have known at the time that Brady was the quarterback, but you would think the thought that he lost to the Buckeyes in such a lopsided era in The Game would have crossed my mind at some point in the last 21 years.

I know full well why my brain didn't retain that Brady started twice against Ohio State, bouncing back for a 24-17 victory in 1999. He simply wasn't that highly regarded at the time – just another faceless Wolverine quarterback like Steve Smith or Scott Dreisbach or John Navarre. He certainly wasn't in the class of a

Jim Harbaugh, Elvis Grbac, Todd Collins or Chad Henne. Thus his selection in the sixth round of the 2000 NFL draft. The pros obviously didn't think that highly of him either.

He was outdueled by Ohio State's Joe Germaine in the Buckeye victory. Germaine was ranked fifth all-time in BSB's recent reader poll to determine Ohio State's top quarterback ever. He was drafted in the fourth round in the 1999 draft by the St. Louis Rams, the 101st player taken overall, 98 places higher than Brady would ultimately be drafted the following year.

The Buckeyes jumped out to a 21-3 lead and stifled the Michigan running game (the Wolverines had just 4 net rushing yards), forcing Brady to the air a Michigan-record 56 times, and he completed a school-record 31 passes for 375 yards, another Wolverine record. But he also threw two interceptions and was sacked seven times as Michigan finished the regular season 8-3 and 7-1 in the Big Ten while the Buckeyes were 10-1, 7-1. A Michigan victory would have left the Wolverines undefeated in conference play and sent them to the Rose Bowl.

“We came down here for one reason, and we just didn't get it done today,” Brady said.

Germaine, meanwhile, was an efficient 16 of 28 for 330 yards and three scores without an interception. David Boston helped Germaine turn in the big day, catching 10 passes for 217 yards including two scores from 30 and 43 yards out and another catch of 58 yards.

He had the better of Wolverine senior Tai Streets, who had burned the Buckeyes with a 69-yard touchdown reception in 1996 and had nine catches for 118 yards and Brady's only scoring toss this time around.

“Tai Streets is a great receiver,” Cooper said. “I'm glad to see him leave here.”

Unfortunately, the Buckeyes did not have Germaine to do battle with Brady the following season.

The future New England great was hardly spectacular against Ohio State in the 24-17 Michigan victory in Ann Arbor in 1999. Brady was 17 of 27 with two touchdowns and no interceptions but generated only 150 yards through the air. Ohio State's Steve Bellisari, however, was just 8 of 20 for 84 yards and two interceptions to go with a pair of TD passes.

Ohio State actually led, 17-10, midway through the third quarter and retained the lead when Brady came face-to-face with a future Buckeye star. Brady had driven the Wolverines to the OSU 12 and to the cusp of evening the game, but he was stripped of the ball by Buckeye freshman safety Mike Doss. Clinton Wayne recovered to thwart the drive. Just prior to Doss's strip, the Buckeyes had an interception and 57-yard return by fellow safety Gary Berry nullified by a holding call.

“There was a momentum change there when the refs took that interception away from me,” Berry said.

Brady would throw a TD pass late in the third quarter and another in the fourth to even his record against the Buckeyes at 1-1. Michigan finished the season 9-2, 6-2, while OSU fell to 6-6 and 3-5 in the conference.

BSB stories covering both games against Brady and his Wolverines were reprinted on BuckeyeSports.com as part of our Reprint Thursdays on Jan. 31.

We had both sides of the Super Bowl covered as we also ran reprints on Feb. 7 covering Ohio State vs. current Los Angeles Rams quarterback Jared Goff when the Buckeyes traveled west to face the then-freshman's Cal team in 2013.

The Buckeyes played Goff and the Bears without star quarterback Braxton Miller, sidelined with a knee injury, but super-sub Kenny Guiton was more than up to the task, completing 21 of 32 passes for 276 yards and four touchdowns without an interception in the Buckeyes' 52-34 victory. One of those TD passes went to Devin Smith for 90 yards, the longest play from scrimmage in OSU history. To make sure people were talking about Guiton, not Goff, the senior QB added 92 yards rushing on 14 carries and was not sacked.

Not that Goff had a bad day. He was 31 of 53 for 371 yards with three touchdowns and one interception. He helped Cal rack up 503 yards of total offense to go along with their 34 points.

“They are a great team,” Goff said of the No. 4 Buckeyes, who had yet to lose a game under second-year coach Urban Meyer. “They're all they're talked up to be. But there were chances we had to score two or three more touchdowns that we slipped on. There were a few turnovers we had that we shouldn't have had. We get a slip here, we get a break here and it could have been different.”

Guiton may have won the battle, but Goff won the war. Goff is slated to make a base salary of just shy of \$4.3 million in 2019 according to spotrac. At last check, Guiton was toiling as wide receivers coach at Stephen F. Austin.

All reprints on BuckeyeSports.com are archived for your information and entertainment. Simply click on the “BSB Online” tab on the home page and then click on “BSB Reprints” on the drop-down menu. Click on the picture of the reprint you wish to enjoy and read from there.

The next rival quarterback to be featured on Reprint Thursday will be Peyton Manning on Feb. 14.

Brady winning another Super Bowl touched off a spirited debate on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum as to who is the greatest pro quarterback of all time. I chipped in with Johnny Unitas and many other great QBs were offered, with those who believe greatness is determined by championship rings generally siding with Brady. The thread even took a strange turn to a discussion of Hall of Famer Joe Namath and an affair with singer Janis Joplin.

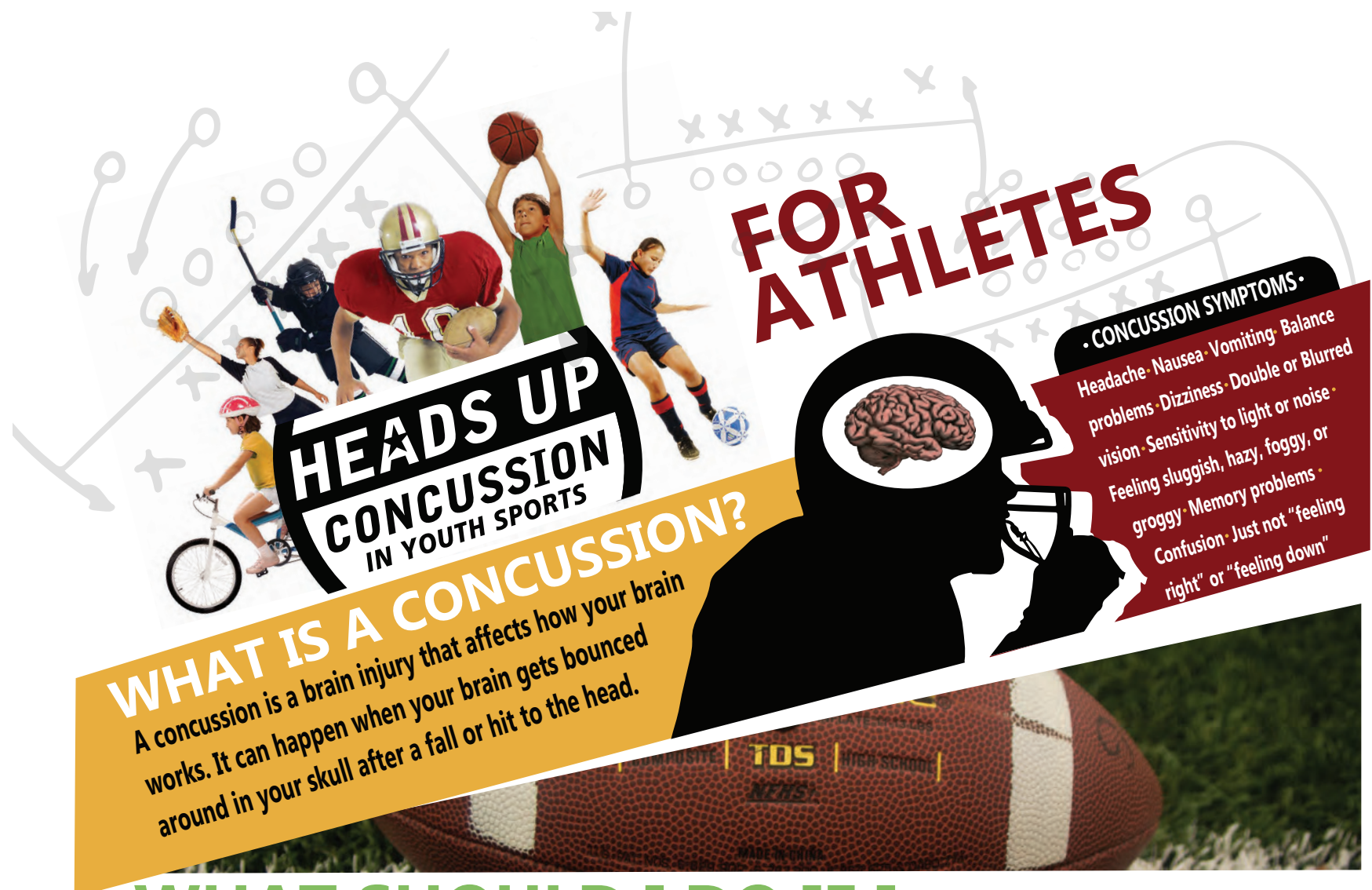
It's not too late for you to put in your two cents' worth. Go to the Forum and look for the “Who IS The Greatest” thread.

No Need To Wait

Each year at this time there is an odd gap between BSB print publications. The next print issue is not scheduled to be mailed until March 5, at which time we will return to publishing every other week through spring football.

There is no need to miss out on any of the Buckeye news, however, as members of the BSB staff will be posting stories every day at BuckeyeSports.com and they will also be manning The Forum, answering any questions and interacting with readers. In fact, those readers frequently come up with breaking news of their own.

If you are not already enjoying this free service for Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers, look for the simple sign-up instructions on page 5 of this issue or give us a call at (614) 486-2202 and we will be glad to answer any questions.



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

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