

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 38, No. 22

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

June 2019



COURTESY OF DARRION HENRY

KEEPING THEM HOME – Cincinnati Princeton four-star defensive end Darrion Henry (left), five-star offensive tackle commit Paris Johnson Jr. (center) and four-star linebacker Jaheim Thomas (right) are among Ohio State head coach Ryan Day's top targets for the 2020 recruiting cycle.

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Ohio State's New Coaching Staff Delivers On Promise To Prioritize In-State Recruits

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When athletic director Gene Smith first introduced Ryan Day as Ohio State's 25th head football coach Dec. 4 at the Fawcett Center, the two-year offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach replaced seven-year head coach Urban Meyer with a rather direct message to the Ohio prep scene.

"To the high school coaches in Ohio: We have the best coaches and some of the best high school programs in all of America here in Ohio," Day said. "And it will continue to be our first priority to recruit Ohio football players. Every young football player in the state of Ohio should dream about one day becoming a Buckeye. And it's our staff's responsibility to make sure we recruit them at the highest level."

Six months later, Day and the Buckeyes have kept their word as they have navigated recruiting the classes of 2020 and '21.

BSB went to press with OSU's 2020 class at nine commitments with three from the Buckeye State – all along the offensive line.

Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star tackle Paris Johnson (6-7½, 295) has headlined the list as an in-state commitment since June 28, 2018, but two more local tackles joined him after Day took over. Cincinnati Elder three-star Jakob James (6-5, 275) and Norwalk, Ohio, three-star Trey Leroux (6-8, 355) committed, both almost immediately after Day and fourth-year offensive line coach Greg Studrawa

extended the offers.

James and Leroux have been on Ohio State's radar since the summer of 2018. Each camped last June and visited for multiple game days in the fall, and they were kept abreast of the Buckeyes' 2020 recruiting efforts as the 2019 class filled itself out first.

Meyer had recruited both project tackles, but Day made the executive decision in the spring to offer both – and avoid potentially missing out on them down the road.

"When I was here for the (early) signing day (Dec. 19), I think the question was asked about Ohio offensive linemen," Day said. "I said that was going to be an emphasis and it is. We're all over that. I mean that's from when we wake up in the morning until we go to bed at night. That's not going to change. There are great players in the state of Ohio. We're out there being aggressive and going after them."

James accepted an on-the-spot offer during a visit Jan. 21. Leroux nearly did the same after his came on a March 8 visit, stepping back briefly before jumping on it three days later. As he works toward his senior year, Leroux has a long road ahead in development, but transparency by Day and Studrawa has accelerated the progress.

"They've always been honest with my recruiting process, which wasn't always the case (with other schools)," Leroux told BSB. "But they were being honest

Continued On Page 8

From The Message Board

We recently asked our readers and staff members which of the recently departed Ohio State quarterbacks they would be rooting for, as well as other thoughts on Matthew Baldwin (TCU), Tate Martell (University of Miami) and Joe Burrow (LSU) on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum.

Here are some of the responses:

"I respect Burrow, and don't care whether Martell succeeds or fails, and wish Baldwin well, although I think he was foolish to transfer when he did. Tomczak broke an ankle shortly before the season began and we know what Cardale did as a third stringer! If Fields looks less than outstanding in first three games, Baldwin might have found himself as the starter before B1G conference games began!?"

– Terrier Buck

"I think we are experiencing this now, the ability to transfer and play immediately. It seems for the most part that players will be able to play immediately even if their excuse is a bit on the lame side. I think we will know better next year how the portal is going to roll on a consistent basis."

– PeyoteBuck

"None of the above. They are no longer Buckeyes. I will be interested to see how they do. But to 'root' for any of them? No."

– mrbigbux

"I'd say 1. Burrow 2. Tate 3. Baldwin"

– Tiffin Buckeye

"I suspect that all of us will follow the progress of all three. But I also sense that, for whatever reason, many were 'rooting' for Burrow last season, as long as LSU and Ohio State didn't hook up in the postseason."

– Frank Moskowitz, BSB

"At the end of the day, they're still kids. Even if I were a fan, I'd never not hope for the best. All three ended up in tough situations and want to play, and I don't blame them, so I'll absolutely hope they get the most out of their second chances."

– Garrett Stepien, BSB

"I think Garrett made some good points here. And for me, the biggest thing is that they all want to play. With the amount of work the players put in, they want to play in the games. So if that's not going to happen at one school, I think they should be able to try somewhere else."

– Joe Dempsey, BSB

"Burrow, Martell, Baldwin. Baldwin was not there long enough to make an impact."

– Mcarr

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

Ohio State's search for a new athletic director ended May 16 when university president Edward H. Jennings announced the hiring of Rick Bay. The move was set to go into effect June 30 when Hugh Hindman retired.

Bay's hire surprised many because the Oregon athletic director was not one of the rumored names mentioned in the nationwide search. He became the first non-Ohio educated athletic director for the Buckeyes. He also had been a reserve quarterback at Michigan.

He became Ohio State's fifth athletic director, following L.W. St. John (1912-46), Dick Larkins (1947-69), J. Edward Weaver (1970-76) and Hindman (1977-84).

30 Years Ago – 1989

Almost 20 years after Ohio State installed artificial turf in Ohio Stadium, the Buckeyes were set for a return to natural grass for the 1990 season. Athletic director Jim Jones announced the decision June 1, following months of speculation that the university would indeed replace the Horseshoe's surface with natural grass.

"We will begin work the day after the (1990) state high school football playoffs are over," Jones said. "It's our intention to have the finest playing field in the country when we open the 1990 football season."

25 Years Ago – 1994

Ohio State head coach John Cooper indefinitely suspended left tackle Eric Moss and defensive lineman Timiko Payton after the players were arrested June 2 on felony charges in connection to misuse of a credit card. Cooper used words such as "embarrassed" and "upset" to express his feelings about the matter before he said he would issue no further comment until it was resolved in the courts.

Payton was academically ineligible in the spring but expected to return for the fall. Moss was set to start as the Buckeyes' left tackle for the 1994 season.

According to OSU police reports, the offenses took place at a bank machine in the Drake Union. Officials said between \$300 and \$5,000 was taken, but The Columbus Dispatch cited a source who indicated \$1,000

was taken in a week's time, and Moss and Payton were both identified by the ATM's surveillance camera.

20 Years Ago – 1999

Five years into his job as Ohio State athletic director, Andy Geiger received another five years in May when he was extended with a base salary of \$250,000.

Geiger's contract extension ran through June 30, 2004, when he would be 65. His new base salary was nearly double the \$130,000 annual pay he was given in 1994

"In our progression, I don't know if there is a better job than this," Geiger told BSB. "This is one of the few schools that is like this. It is filled with enormous potential, some of which we are realizing and some of which is still in front of us."

15 Years Ago – 2004

As BSB went to press in early June, the felony robbery charges against former Ohio State football players Louis Irizarry and Ira Guilford stemming from a May 1 on-campus incident were still pending. Irizarry and Guilford were originally scheduled for arraignment May 11, but both cases were continued until June 7.

Neither player appeared in court June 7, but court records indicated Irizarry entered a not-guilty plea through lawyer James Tyack and was released on a \$10,000 bond. Guilford's paperwork had not been filed by the time BSB went to press.

Irizarry and Guilford had each been charged with one count of robbery, a second-degree felony, for allegedly punching and kicking a 20-year-old university student at 3 a.m. May 1 and running off with his wallet. Head coach Jim Tressel originally suspended the two before athletic director Andy Geiger said a few days after the attack that both would be removed from the team.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Former Ohio State running back Maurice Clarett expressed his desire to play football again upon release from prison when he published a blog entry titled "How I'm Feeling."

"I can't hold back these feelings anymore," Clarett wrote. "I want to play football again. I have a deep desire to play. I love the game. I have so much penitentiary aggression pinned up inside of me. I want to hit someone. I want to run the ball. I want to tackle someone. I want to play. I am going to play somewhere. I cannot accept how things ended. I won't accept how they ended."

In September 2006, Clarett's lawyers struck a plea deal over armed robbery charges, leading to his sentence of 7½ years in prison with the possibility of getting out in 3½, leaving him eligible for release in 2010 at 26 years old.

Five Years Ago – 2014

Junior defensive end Jamal Marcus was no longer with the football program, an Ohio State spokesperson confirmed to BSB.

The 6-2, 249-pounder from Durham, N.C., had played in 13 games as a sophomore in the Buckeyes' 2013 season and recorded two sacks for 10 yards. He added two pass breakups and a forced fumble, but his 2014 spring camp featured him on the second- and third-team defenses before missing the spring game due to academic issues.

One Year Ago – 2018

Ohio State's incoming freshmen arrived in full June 4 for summer enrollment.

After nine players had enrolled early for spring semester, 17 of the 26 signees from the Buckeyes' 2018 recruiting class followed.

The 17 included offensive tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere; tight end Jeremy Ruckert; running back Brian Sneed; H-back Jaelen Gill; wide receivers Kamryn Babb, Cameron Brown, Chris Olave and L'Christian "Blue" Smith; defensive linemen Tyler Friday, Javontae Jean-Baptiste, Tyreke Smith and Taron Vincent; linebackers Teradja Mitchell and K'Vaughan Pope; safeties Marcus Hooker and Josh Proctor; and athlete Alex Williams, who told BSB he would begin his Buckeye career playing defensive end.

Chaump Revolutionized Ohio State's Offense



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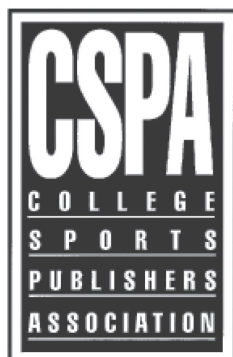
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No. 10	Nov. 17	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 24	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 1	No. 24	August

The next issue (July cover date) will be mailed July 2.

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Charter Member

How might the history of Ohio State football have been rewritten had Woody Hayes not been so rigid in his old-school thinking and embraced the philosophy of the young quarterbacks coach he hired off a Pennsylvania high school sideline in 1968?

George Chaump began his coaching career at the age of 25 at Shamokin High School in his native Pennsylvania, and seven years later, after leading John Harris High School in Harrisburg to a 58-4 record and six straight Central Pennsylvania championships, he found himself one of the youngest assistants on Hayes' staff as the Buckeyes prepared for what would be a magical 1968 season.

Chaump, who died May 19 at the age of 83, often wondered how he got the job at Ohio State. Over the years, whenever I contacted him for a story on which I was working, not only was I treated to a master class on the intricacies of offensive football, Chaump would regale me with stories about his 11 seasons on the staff of one of college football's legendary head coaches.

"I'm not really sure why Woody hired me in the first place," Chaump told me last fall when I was writing a story about Rex Kern. "Our philosophies regarding offense certainly weren't the same. I've always thought that what I was talking about in those days resonated with Woody, but he was never quite able to commit to it."

Most observers believed Chaump was hired because he had delivered one of his star players to the Buckeyes. Future All-America tight end Jan White had been an all-state performer for Chaump's teams at John Harris, helping them to win 35 consecutive games at one point.

But Chaump was an innovative young coach who saw unlimited offensive possibilities for the Buckeyes – but only if he could get Hayes to adopt a new way of thinking.

"When I got there," Chaump said, "the offense was monotonous – all 'Dead-T' sets, no imagination, no spreading out the field, no using receivers. Finally, I was at lunch with a bunch of the assistants and I said, 'Is this the way Woody runs all of his meetings? Geez, we're all treated like a bunch of elementary kids. Do we ever get a chance to ask questions?'"

Offensive line coach Hugh Hindman, who had played for Hayes at Miami (Ohio) before joining his staff at Ohio State, answered drolly, "Sure, George. Go ahead and ask a couple of questions."

When the staff reconvened after lunch, Hayes began diagramming plays based upon his fullback-oriented offense. That's when Chaump raised his hand and asked if he could diagram some plays of his own. He drew up several options on how to get the ball to his more athletic players in space, most of it out of an I-formation. Hayes then asked his young assistant if he thought a tailback was better at running the ball than a fullback, and when Chaump answered in the affirmative, the windows began to rattle.

"Nobody's gonna come in here and tell us we're not gonna run the fullback!" Hayes erupted. "If you think you're gonna come in here and change that, you're not gonna work here! You get the hell outta here and I mean right now! Go ahead! You're gone!"

A red-faced Chaump gathered his belongings and slowly crept out the room only to be stopped in the hallway. Hayes opened the door and yelled, "Hey, George! Get back in here! I've never fired a coach in my life, and I'm not gonna break my record for the likes of you."

When Chaump returned, Hindman told Hayes that he should listen to his newest

assistant.

"Coach, I played for you," Hindman said. "I've coached under you, and I understand you. I know how emotional you get. But let me tell you something. Quite frankly, I think we should talk about those ideas George had on the board. I think we should talk about them and see what we can do."

One by one, the rest of the offensive assistants agreed.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

"He was suddenly like a little boy up there," Chaump remembered. "Finally, he said, 'Well, if we're gonna do this, we better learn more about it.'"

Chaump sent away for films from programs that used the I-formation, and the new offense was installed during spring practice. Then when the Buckeyes unveiled their new look in the fall, fans couldn't believe what they were seeing.

"We lined up in the slot-I and 80,000 people in Ohio Stadium thought it was an illegal formation," Chaump said with a laugh.

The Buckeyes rolled to a 35-14 victory against SMU in the 1968 season opener, touching off an undefeated national championship run that culminated in a 27-16 win against defending national champion USC in the Rose Bowl.

Philosophy Vs. Philosophy

Over much of the next decade, Chaump coached a succession of excellent quarterbacks, including Cornelius Greene, who won the 1975 Silver Football Award as the Big Ten's Most Valuable Player, and the silky-smooth Rod Gerald. But Greene and Gerald were each run-oriented quarterbacks in a run-oriented attack that regularly churned out 1,000-yard rushers and helped make Archie Griffin the only player to win back-to-back Heisman Trophies.

On the recruiting trail in 1977, however, Chaump believed he saw a chance to alter the future of Ohio State football.

Art Schlichter was breaking records about an hour south of the OSU campus at Miami Trace High School, and Chaump thought Schlichter was the player who could finally change Hayes' three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust philosophy.

First, however, Chaump had to talk the youngster into becoming a Buckeye.

"Not many people know this, but I was all set to go to Michigan," Schlichter told me in 2008 for a story I was writing to mark the 30th anniversary of his first game at Ohio State. "I had met Bo Schembechler the summer before my senior year of high school, and that meeting had pretty much made up my mind that I was going to go to Michigan. I felt Bo was younger (than Woody) and I thought he was more inclined to change and throw the ball."

"I didn't really want to go to Michigan, but I was looking at Ohio State and their production at quarterback. They never had a one that I knew of who went to pros except for Rex Kern, and when he got there, they made him a defensive back. It wasn't like Ohio State was Quarterback U."

Enter Chaump.

The assistant was constantly in Hayes' ear about Schlichter. He delivered miles of film of the young quarterback to the head coach's

office and then sat with Hayes while they analyzed the tape. He even hustled the coach out of his office on a Friday night before game day, bundled him in a car and drove him to Miami Trace to see the quarterback phenom in person.

"Art was the best high school quarterback I've ever seen, and I've seen a lot of them," Chaump once told me. "Everybody would just shake their heads when they saw what that kid could do. There was no question in my mind that he was going to be a star."

Once Hayes got to see Schlichter for himself, he knew everything Chaump was saying was true. At that point, Ohio State football was about to change.

"Woody told me that they were going to move Rod out to wide receiver and that I would play – that I would start," Schlichter said. "He told me that, and he told my father that. That was pretty much it after that. I was going to Ohio State."

"But it was George Chaump that was the catalyst for that. He is probably the reason why I went to Ohio State in the first place."

Hayes followed through with his promise to make the freshman QB his starter. But after a disastrous opener against Penn State during which Schlichter was intercepted a school-record five times, the Buckeyes averaged only 12.9 pass attempts per game the rest of the 1978 regular season.

"As I'm sure you know, Woody wasn't that enamored with the passing game," Chaump told me in 2008. "As a result, we had a talented quarterback but never devised the type of offense to allow him to perform well. Our passing game (against Penn State) that day consisted of keeping both backs and the tight end in for protection. That only left two guys in the patterns. In short, we didn't give Art what he needed to be successful. We sent him into battle unarmed."

"To say the least, it was very frustrating. I have always wondered if what happened to Art that day had anything to do with the difficulties he has had in life. That continues to bother me to this day."

What Might Have Been

As poorly as the 1978 season began, it ended even worse with the firing of Hayes after the coach punched an opposing player near the end of Ohio State's 17-15 Gator Bowl loss to Clemson.

Chaump sought to become Hayes' successor and had the support of several team members, most notably Schlichter, who indicated he would consider a transfer if his quarterbacks coach didn't get the job.

In the end, however, Iowa State head coach Earle Bruce – an OSU alum who had spent six seasons on Hayes' staff, including four alongside Chaump – was hired as head coach of the Buckeyes. Bruce tried to get Chaump to stay on in Columbus, but Chaump decided instead to accept an offer from Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach John McKay to become his quarterbacks coach.

"I thought about staying, and in fact, I originally told Earle that I would stay," Chaump told me last year. "But then I got to thinking about it, and I guess I would have to admit I was a little hurt about not getting the job. I had an offer from an NFL team and I decided to take it."

All of which leads me to a similar question to the one I posed at the beginning of this column: How might the history of Ohio State football have been rewritten had the school promoted Chaump, who embraced a pass-happy attack, rather than hiring Bruce, an unapologetic disciple of Hayes and his ball-control approach?



Trustees Approve Day's Contract

The Ohio State Board of Trustees approved Buckeye head football coach Ryan Day's contract on May 31.

Day's five-year, \$4.5 million deal – which officially began on Jan. 2 – will pay him a yearly base salary of \$850,000; \$2.39 million in media, promotions and public relation obligations; \$1.25 million in apparel/shoe/equipment; and \$10,000 in Coca-Cola appearance payments.

Day's contract will run through the 2023 season and includes retention payments of \$250,000 if he remains employed by the university on Jan. 31 of 2022 and 2024. He can also earn incentive-based bonuses for winning the Big Ten East (\$50,000); winning the Big Ten Championship Game (\$100,000); making the College Football Playoff (\$200,000); winning a semifinal game (\$250,000); and winning the national championship (\$350,000).

Other incentives include \$50,000 for being named the conference's coach of the year and \$75,000 for earning national coach of the year honors.

Day will also receive a \$1,200 per month vehicle stipend; a golf membership to a mutually agreed-upon course; access to a private jet for recruiting purposes (50 hours) and personal use (50 hours); 12 football tickets, five press box credentials, two parking passes and a suite to each home football game; and two tickets to each home basketball game.

If the Buckeyes achieve a cumulative grade-point average above 3.0 for the fall and spring semesters, Day will receive a \$50,000 bonus. He will earn a \$100,000 bonus if the team GPA is above 3.3 and \$150,000 if it's better than 3.5.

Day, who replaces former head coach Urban Meyer, made \$400,000 during his first season as Ohio State's offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach in 2017. He was given a \$600,000 raise and made \$1 million in 2018 but also received a \$487,000 lump-sum payment for filling in as interim head coach during Meyer's three-game suspension last season.

Kickoff Times Announced For Some OSU Games

On May 30, Ohio State announced kickoff times for six games during the 2019 season, including the season opener against Florida Atlantic and the regular-season finale against archrival Michigan.

FOX had announced earlier in the month its plans to air the biggest game of the week at noon rather than a prime-time or late-afternoon slot. That's, of course, welcome news for the Buckeyes,

who have been forced to play many conference road games over the last few seasons at night.

The first three games of the 2019 season – home against Florida Atlantic and Cincinnati and on the road at Indiana – will begin at noon. Ohio State is scheduled to play a pair of night games in October, however, with the homecoming contest at Michigan State scheduled for 7:30 and the Friday night tilt at Northwestern set for 8:30 p.m. The Game against Michigan will remain in its traditional noon time slot.

Kickoff times for the Buckeyes' six additional regular-season games will be announced within six to 12 days of each contest.

Former OSU Assistant George Chaump Passes

Former Ohio State assistant football coach George Chaump died on May 19 at the age of 83.

Chaump coached under Woody Hayes from 1968-1978 and has often been credited with modernizing the Buckeyes' offense. The program was seven years removed from a Big Ten title upon his arrival but averaged 32 points per game and won the national championship during his first season in Columbus.

After 11 seasons at Ohio State, Chaump became an assistant with the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He also spent time as the head coach at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Marshall and Navy.

Chaump helped restore the Thundering Herd program following the 1970 plane crash that took the lives of 77 people, including 37 football players and eight coaches. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame and Marshall Sports Hall of Fame.

For more on Chaump, see Editor's Notebook on page 3.

Former Buckeye Lee Traded To The Chiefs

The New York Jets traded former Ohio State linebacker Darron Lee to the Kansas City Chiefs on May 16 in exchange for a sixth-round pick in the 2020 NFL draft.

The transaction occurred nearly two weeks after the Jets declined Lee's fifth-year option, which would make him a free agent after the upcoming season.

A first-round pick in the 2016 NFL draft, Lee appeared in 40 games (37 starts) for New York over three seasons. He recorded 238 tackles, 11 pass break-ups, four sacks, three interceptions and one pick-six.

Lee had the most productive season of his career in 2018 but was suspended for the final four games of the season for violating the NFL's substance abuse policy.

Lee, who was a two-year starter at Ohio State and helped lead the Buckeyes to the 2014 national title, will get a fresh start in Kansas City, which is looking to revamp its defense after a slew of off-season departures following a trip to the AFC Championship Game.

The Chiefs did not feature any former Buckeyes on their roster last season but have since added Lee and running back Carlos Hyde, who signed a one-year, \$2.8 million deal in March.

Pryor Signs Deal With Jacksonville

Former Ohio State quarter-

back-turned-professional wide receiver Terrelle Pryor has signed a one-year deal with the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The 29-year-old Pryor played in six games and recorded 14 catches for 235 yards and two touchdowns with the New York Jets last season but was cut after he suffered a groin injury. He then signed with the Buffalo Bills but was released after he hauled in just two receptions for 17 yards in two games.

Pryor, who entered the NFL in the 2011 supplemental draft as third-round pick of the Oakland Raiders, was 3-7 as a starting quarterback. He completed nearly 57 percent of his passes for 1,953 yards and nine touchdowns but threw 11 interceptions. He also spent time with the Seattle Seahawks, Kansas City Chiefs and Cincinnati Bengals but did not see any action with any of those teams beyond the preseason.

The 6-4, 227-pounder switched to wide receiver and subsequently had the best season of his career. Playing for the Cleveland Browns in 2016, Pryor pulled down 77 receptions for 1,007 yards and four touchdowns.

Pryor also played for the Washington Redskins but suffered an ankle injury that eventually required season-ending surgery. He will now be reunited with former Ohio State teammate Andrew Norwell on the Jaguars' roster.

Washington Finds New Home With Dolphins

The Miami Dolphins signed former Ohio State defensive tackle Adolphus Washington to a one-year contract on May 23.

The 6-4, 295-pound Washington was selected in the third round of the 2016 NFL draft by the Buffalo Bills but was waived by the team last September. He was acquired by the Cincinnati Bengals just a few weeks later but played in just four games before landing on injured reserve with a knee issue on Nov. 23.

Washington, who was waived by the Bengals in April, has recorded just 62 tackles, 4½ sacks and three pass break-ups in 35 appearances. He will find himself among familiar company in Miami, though, as the Dolphins now have four former Buckeyes on the roster, including linebackers Raekwon McMillan and Jerome Baker and offensive tackle Isaiah Prince.

Ginn Puts Money Where His Mouth Is

In early May, former Ohio State and current New Orleans Saints wide receiver Ted Ginn Jr. boldly declared himself the fastest player in the NFL and offered \$10,000 to anyone who thinks they could beat him.

Ginn will now get the chance to prove just how fast he is in "40 Yards of Gold," a 40-yard dash tournament featuring the aforementioned Baker, Baltimore Ravens running back Mark Ingram, Chicago Bears running back Rarik Cohen, Cleveland Browns running back Kareem Hunt, Minnesota Vikings cornerback Trae Waynes, Saints running back Alvin Kamara and Washington Redskins cornerback Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie, among others.

The players will run parallel 40-yard dashes in a bracket-style competition, which will be held June 29. The players will be split into offensive and defensive divisions, with the winners of each set

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And VIP subscribers will receive a certificate good for \$10 dollars off at Roosters restaurants, the "Fun, Casual Joint."

There will also be special private sales on tickets, dining and travel throughout the year, and other benefits are sure to be added.

"I am frequently asked how long we will continue publishing the print version of Buckeye Sports Bulletin," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "The readers will decide that."

"Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers are a family, and the VIP Program will help us hold the line on subscription rates as more and more of our readers find themselves on fixed incomes but still enjoy reading the print edition of BSB and struggle to meet the rising costs. Those who can afford to do so can help those who are less fortunate but share the same passion for Buckeye Sports Bulletin."

With the \$50 Brutus VIP upgrade, Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers will have their names and cities listed in the annual Football Preview issue and the Michigan issue as supporters of BSB. Those who add \$100 to their subscription will have their names and cities listed in all 24 issues each year as BSB Scarlet patrons. Those who donate \$125 or more will be designated as Elite patrons in each issue, and the four largest Elite donors to the Buckeye Sports Bulletin VIP program will have their names listed in each issue in the credit box on page 3 as a Wachsman Donor, in honor of the late BSB assistant publisher, Karen Wachsman.

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to face off in the championship, though it's unclear if Ginn's money will be the prize.

Originally a five-star cornerback from Cleveland Glenville, Ginn won a national championship and two state titles in the 110-meter hurdles, a third state title in the 300-meter intermediate hurdles, and a state title in the 200-meter run. He also ran a 4.37-second 40-yard dash at the 2007 NFL combine.

Smith Finds Home In Big Apple

After spending four seasons with the Dallas Cowboys, former Ohio State running back Rod Smith signed a one-year, \$895,000 deal with their NFC East rival, the New York Giants, the team announced on May 8.

Smith, who rushed for 549 yards and 10 touchdowns at Ohio State but was dismissed from the program during his senior year following a failed drug test, was not selected in the 2015 NFL draft. He was signed by the Seattle Seahawks and played in just one game before being released.

Dallas claimed Smith off waivers just one day later, and he appeared in 48 games for the Cowboys at running back and on special teams. He rushed for 364 yards and five touchdowns and hauled in 30 receptions for 272 yards and one more score, serving as the primary backup to former Ohio State running back Ezekiel Elliott.

Smith was effectively replaced on the roster when the team selected two running backs in April's draft, one of whom

was fellow former Ohio State running back Mike Weber. He now finds himself as the backup to former Penn State and current Giants running back Saquon Barkley.

Rose Back In Columbus With AFL's Destroyers

The Arena Football League's Columbus Destroyers on May 23 announced the addition of former Ohio State defensive end Robert Rose. He becomes the first former Buckeye to sign with the team since its return to action this spring following a 10-year hiatus.

A five-star prospect from Cleveland Glenville, Rose recorded 31 tackles and six sacks during his Ohio State career (2006-09). He's spent time with the Cowboys, Dolphins and Seahawks; the Canadian Football League's Hamilton Tiger-Cats; and the AFL's Cleveland Gladiators and Las Vegas Outlaws.

The Destroyers were off to an 0-6 start on the season.

Shaw Wins Lacrosse National Championship

Ohio State defensive back signee Bryson Shaw wrapped up his high school athletic career on May 28 by leading Potomac (Md.) Bullis School to a 13-8 win over Salisbury, Conn., in the 2019 GEICO High School Lacrosse National Tournament finals.

"It's awesome just to end a lacrosse career on that note," Shaw said. "To go out that way means a lot to me. Just to accomplish that, it's a dream come true,

2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2018 Record
Aug. 31	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	12 p.m.	FOX	5-7 (3-5 Conference USA)
Sept. 7	CINCINNATI*	12 p.m.	ABC	11-2 (6-2 American Athletic Conference)
Sept. 14	at Indiana	12 p.m.	FOX	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*	7:30 p.m.	ABC/ESPN	7-6 (5-4 Big Ten)
Oct. 18	at Northwestern*	8:30 p.m.	FS1	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*	12 p.m.	FOX	10-3 (8-1 Big Ten)
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

* 2018 bowl team
** at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

for sure."

The 6-2, 180-pound Shaw totaled 66 points for the Bulldogs this season (38 goals and 28 assists), including two goals in the national championship. He was selected to take part in the Under Armour All-America Lacrosse Classic in Baltimore on Jun. 29, but it's unclear if he will be able to participate since he will already be enrolled in classes in Columbus.

Johnson's Coaching Career Continues

On May 31, former Ohio State linebacker Pepper Johnson was named the defensive coordinator and linebackers coach of the XFL's new Los Angeles franchise.

Johnson, who played for the Buckeyes from 1982-85 and earned All-America honors as a senior, was drafted by the New York Giants in the second round of the 1986 NFL draft. He won Super

Bowl XXI and Super Bowl XXV with the Giants.

A two-time Pro Bowler, Johnson also played for the Cleveland Browns, Detroit Lions and New York Jets. He retired from the NFL in 1998, having recorded 983 tackles, 25½ sacks, 14 interceptions and 12 forced fumbles.

Johnson's coaching career began as an assistant linebackers coach for the New England Patriots, where he was reunited with his former head coach in Cleveland and former assistant coach in New York, Bill Belichick. Over the next 14 seasons, he served as the Patriots' linebackers coach or defensive line coach, winning three Super Bowls (XXXVI, XXXVIII, XXXIX).

Johnson had short stints as the defensive line coach for the Buffalo Bills and New York Jets before moving on to the now-defunct Alliance of American

Continued On Page 6

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Continued From Page 5

Football this spring, where he served as linebackers coach for the Memphis Express. The league suspended operations in April.

Baldwin Returns Home, Selects Horned Frogs

Former Ohio State quarterback Matthew Baldwin on May 7 announced his decision to transfer to TCU, where he plans to apply for immediate eligibility.

Baldwin, who played his high school ball at Austin (Texas) Lake Travis, redshirted last season and competed this spring with sophomore transfer Justin Fields for the Buckeyes' starting quarterback spot. He left the program in April with hopes of playing closer to home, however.

"Just four or five years ago, TCU was in the talk for the College Football Playoff," Baldwin said. "They struggled last year, but they had a lot of injured guys. They can be a winning program."

Baldwin completed 20 of 36 passes for 246 yards and two touchdowns in Ohio State's spring game on April 13 but also threw a pair of interceptions while splitting time between the first- and second-team offense.

Even if Baldwin is granted a waiver to play right away, he will join a crowded quarterback room at TCU. The Horned Frogs not only return part-time starter Michael Collins and redshirt freshman Justin Rogers, but they added Kansas State transfer Alex Delton and incoming freshman Max Duggan to the roster this offseason.

Smith Selects Cincinnati As Transfer Destination

On May 16, nearly two months after he left the Ohio State football program, former wide receiver L'Christian "Blue" Smith announced his transfer to Cincinnati.

Smith, who was a four-star prospect from Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne, actually picked the Buckeyes over the Bearcats and the Kentucky Wildcats out of high school, but he quickly found himself buried on a loaded depth chart and redshirted during his lone season in Columbus. He played just five snaps on offense and did not record a single catch.

"Sometimes your path take a detour but the mission stays the same," Smith said. "Second chances don't happen

often, but when they do you must be ready."

Smith is the second former Buckeye wideout to transfer to Cincinnati this offseason, joining walk-on Garyn Prater, who landed a scholarship offer from the Bearcats after entering the transfer portal in April.

Ohio State is set to host Cincinnati on Sept. 7, but Smith will be forced to sit out the upcoming season unless he receives a waiver for immediate eligibility.

LaRoe Adds Depth To Quarterback Room

Former Texas A&M quarterback Jagger LaRoe announced on May 19 his transfer to Ohio State as a preferred walk-on.

"It's my privilege to join a team and program with the richest heritage in college football, The Ohio State University Buckeyes and Buckeye Nation," LaRoe said on Twitter. "I want to thank Coach (Ryan) Day and Coach (Mike) Yurcich for your confidence in me. To my new Buckeye teammates, I'm ready to get to work."

The 6-3, 216-pound LaRoe, a native of Colleyville, Texas, did not see any playing time in his lone season with

Former OSU Golfer Ryan Armour Posts Top-25 Finish At Memorial Tournament

Playing in front of a Buckeye-friendly crowd in nearby Dublin on May 30-June 2, Ohio State product Ryan Armour registered a top-25 finish at the Memorial Tournament for the second year running. He finished at 5-under par, good for a tie for 22nd and \$87,360 in winnings at the tournament founded by Buckeye great Jack Nicklaus.

Will Grimmer, who completed his senior season at Ohio State when the Buckeyes finished 13th at the NCAA championships on May 27, received an invite as well, missing the cut after shooting 75-77 through two rounds.

Armour opened the tournament with three consecutive rounds of 1-under 71 before posting a 70 in the final round to tie with Bryson DeChambeau, the 2018 Memorial Tournament champion, and three others.

The Akron native competed at Ohio State from 1995-98, earning third-team All-America honors in 1998 and All-Big Ten honors in 1995 and '98.

Grimmer, from Cincinnati, had a decorated career for the Scarlet and Gray, posting six top-10 finishes and a win during his senior season. He has qualified for the U.S. Open twice previously and is set to compete for the United States at the Arnold Palmer Cup in June.

Armour's final score had him 14 strokes back of the winner, Patrick Cantlay, who shot a final-round 64 to win by two strokes over Australian Adam Scott.

— Tim Moody

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the Aggies. He comes to Columbus as a redshirt freshman with four years of eligibility remaining and can play immediately thanks to recent NCAA transfer rule changes regarding walk-ons.

LaRoe threw for 3,029 yards and 33 touchdowns compared to just five interceptions during his senior season at Colleyville. He opted to walk on at Texas A&M over similar opportunities at Houston, Illinois, Liberty, Louisiana Tech, North Carolina, Northwestern, Oklahoma State, Princeton, Rice, West Virginia and Yale.

Ohio State now has six quarterbacks on its roster entering the 2019 season, with Fields, Kentucky transfer Gunnar Hoak, senior Chris Chugunov and walk-ons Danny Vanatsky and J.P. Andrade.

Russell Among NBA's Most Improved Players

Former Ohio State and current Brooklyn Nets point guard D'Angelo Russell was named a finalist for the NBA's Most Improved Player award on May 17.

Russell underwent arthroscopic knee surgery and played in only 48 games in 2017-18, averaging just 15.5 points, 5.2 assists and 3.9 rebounds per game. Brooklyn finished the season 28-54.

In 2018-19, Russell averaged 21.1 points, 7.0 assists and 3.9 rebounds in 81 games. He became a first-time all-star while leading the Nets to a 14-win improvement and their first playoff appearance since 2015.

The other finalists are Sacramento Kings point guard De'Aaron Fox and Toronto Raptors forward Pascal Siakam. The winner will be announced during the 2019 NBA Awards on June 24 at 9 p.m. on TNT.

Elliott Offers To Pay For Youngster's Funeral

The aforementioned Elliott has offered to pay for the funeral of Jaylon McKenzie, an eighth-grade football player who was shot and killed near his hometown of St. Louis on May 5. He was 15 years old.

"For him to reach out to me was unbelievable," said McKenzie's mother, Sukeena Gunner. "Jaylon loved Ezekiel Elliott. He talked about him all the time. When Ezekiel was playing, he would sit in front of the TV. His eyes were glued

to the TV, watching him. Just for him to reach out to me and help me in this difficult time leaves me speechless."

McKenzie was a running back and defensive back at Mason-Clarke Middle School in East St. Louis. He was recently featured by Sports Illustrated as one of the nation's future stars and already held football scholarship offers from Illinois and Missouri.

Elliott Involved In Incident At Festival

Elliott may be in trouble with the NFL again after an incident at the Electric Daisy Carnival music festival in Las Vegas on May 19 when he was handcuffed but not arrested for pushing a security guard. Elliott could come under scrutiny for possibly violating terms of a previous suspension for alleged abuse against a former girlfriend.

The security guard, 19-year-old Kyle Johnson, a 6-0, 185-pound defensive back for Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, Calif., did not want to press charges. He later got an apology from Elliott for the shove, which was captured on video, but Johnson then told KCBS-TV in Los Angeles that the apology was not genuine.

"He didn't maintain eye contact," Johnson said. "It didn't seem sincere at all."

Elliott's attorney, Frank Salzano, told TMZ the security staff overreacted and misconstrued the situation when Elliott was seen arguing with his girlfriend around 3 a.m. in the parking lot of the venue. On the video, he never touched her but several times used his body to block her from walking away while arguing.

Later, Elliott tried to enter an area in which he was not supposed to be, according to Johnson. They were face-to-face when Elliott bodied Johnson into a metal gate and he fell.

Yahoo Sports reported that an NFL source said the video is reviewable under the NFL's personal conduct code, particularly because Elliott was suspended six games in 2017 after the NFL investigated domestic violence allegations brought against him by former girlfriend, Tiffany Thompson.

No Need To Miss Any Buckeye Action

The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, the popular Interview Issue, is scheduled to be mailed on July 2. However, there is no reason to miss any of the Ohio State sports action between now and then.

The electronic BuckeyeSports.com is available 24/7/365 with all the breaking news posted, including the latest in recruiting, and then discussed by readers and staff on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum. With the high school football camps coming up in June, readers will want to check in on a daily basis.

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Buckeyes Balancing In-State, National Prospects



TREY LEROUX/TWITTER

HOMEGROWN TALENT – Three-star offensive tackle commit Trey Leroux, second from left, with his parents, Tami (far left) and Tony (far right), take a photo with Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith during the Buckeyes' annual spring game on April 13.

Continued From Page 1

and always told me where I was at, what I needed to do to get the offer, so I always knew what I was going for."

James and Leroux are just the tip of the iceberg, especially on the offensive line. OSU was one of the first offers out to Richfield (Ohio) Revere 2021 offensive tackle Ben Christman (6-6, 299), who appeared on its radar in the fall before an offer Feb. 5. With over 20 scholarship offers already with Alabama (April 30) and Georgia (April 24)

as two SEC blue bloods among the national list, Christman's early bond with Day and Studrawa – highlighted by a recent visit March 29 – puts Ohio State in a strong position for the next cycle.

"It's always a priority, so we want to make sure that in the next class that's a huge emphasis as well," Day said.

The offensive trenches in particular were an area that the Buckeyes needed to examine more carefully after hiccups from recent years, culminated by the staff missing on targets and scrambling for late additions in 2019.

Part of the reason Day brought Studrawa back, the head coach said, was the offensive line coach's Ohio ties as a Fostoria native. Studrawa echoed Day's sentiments about getting ahead – and staying ahead – in the Buckeye State with a sharper emphasis on recruiting locally.

"I think we're going to look at it more carefully," Studrawa said. "By that I mean sometimes guys are late developers. I think at times we all make the mistake of crossing a guy off the list a little bit too soon. We always look at Ohio first. We're making a commit-

ment to get to know those guys early, see their skill set early and say, 'OK, he's going to be even better next year. Let's get after him.'

"Before it was like, 'Whoa, whoa, be careful with Ohio guys because as soon as you offer he's going to say yes. Make sure you're right.' Right now, we're trying to make sure that it's an absolute emphasis to evaluate those guys, get to know those guys, get them in here, get a great evaluation of their skill set and then if we think it's going to be good, let's go get him."

Ohio high school coaches have long

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COVER STORY

believed OSU needed to go with that approach regardless of who is at the helm.

Meyer's national-first mind-set brought blue-chip talents from all across the map to Columbus, but with a wait-and-see perspective held by many of Ohio State's top national targets going forward, Day and the Buckeyes' coaching staff have no choice but to recruit Ohio more aggressively.

Cleveland Heights head coach Mac Stephens has sent players such as junior wide receiver Jaylen Harris (6-5, 215) and sophomore defensive end Tyreke Smith (6-4, 267) to OSU in recent years and potentially has another on the way with Day's staff evaluating 2020 three-star defensive tackle Justin Wodtly (6-3, 271), who boasts nearly 20 offers, including from Big Ten programs such as Michigan State.

"So often, when you hear head coaches take over programs in the state of Ohio, a lot of times, they say they're going to recruit the state of Florida or certain areas," Stephens told BSB. "But I've got to be honest, I've

watched a lot of high school football all over the country, and I think the state of Ohio is as good or better than you're going to find in most states when it comes to high school football.

"There's just a wealth of talent throughout the state, but especially when you look at northeast Ohio and then the Cincinnati part of Ohio, with some of the schools from both regions that produce some great talent. I think you would be missing the boat if you didn't go after some of that talent, not to mention, just talent all over the state."

The Ohio-first philosophy starts at the top with Day, but the staff that surrounds him entering his first year is also important. The cabinet includes wide receivers coach Brian Hartline, who attended Canton (Ohio) GlenOak before starring at Ohio State as a wideout from 2005-08.

Hartline's efforts have had national impacts, with the most recent example coming May 31 when Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia five-star Julian Fleming (6-2, 199) committed

as the No. 1 wide receiver in the 2020 class, but local stars such as 2021 Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star Jayden Ballard (6-1½, 164) are coming up the ranks.

"I can tell you this – he's well-liked by his position group," Stephens said of Hartline. "I know Jaylen speaks very highly of him. Jaylen looks forward to learning from him every day. He brings a different dynamic to that receiver room that I think has paid off this year. It will continue to pay off in the future. I know they're recruiting some dynamic receivers

and already have some dynamic young guys on the roster. So I think, ultimately, it's going to pay huge dividends."

With camp season set to start in June, the next wave of local talent is on deck for Day and the Buckeyes' upcoming evaluations. If the past six months have served as any indication, OSU will be watching in-state prospects closer now more than ever.

"We're recruiting the kids from Ohio harder than anybody in the country," Day said. "It's going to continue to be a priority."

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Why Did New York Giants Pass On Haskins?

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Since he announced his declaration for the 2019 NFL draft Jan. 7, Dwayne Haskins appeared destined to join the New York Giants. On paper, it almost made too much sense for the Giants to take the former Ohio State quarterback.

Haskins grew up in Highland Park, N.J., just over 30 miles from New York's stadium in East Rutherford, and rooted for the Giants from Pop Warner through high school while developing the pure pocket-passing presence necessary for an NFL offense.

But instead of going with Haskins with the No. 6 overall pick in the first round April 25, quarterback-needy New York selected Duke's Daniel Jones, a stunner until Giants general manager Dave Gettleman revealed after the draft that he and his front-office staffers targeted the former Blue Devil early in the process, according to ESPN's Jordan Raanan.

"Jones and Missouri's Drew Lock were the headliners in Mobile, Alabama," said Raanan, who referenced the Jan. 26 Senior Bowl. "Lock was right behind Jones on the Giants' board. The Senior Bowl would be Gettleman's first exposure to them in a game environment. He had seen Ohio State's Dwayne Haskins play in the Big Ten Championship (Game) and Oklahoma's Kyler Murray and West Virginia's Will Grier when they met in a

(Nov. 23) Thanksgiving weekend match-up."

Three offensive series into the Senior Bowl, Gettleman was sold on Jones (6-5, 221), who completed 237 of 392 passes (60.5 percent) for 2,674 yards and 22 touchdowns to nine interceptions in 11 games while Duke went 8-5 (3-5 ACC) in 2018.

"Seeing Jones in person was an important box for Gettleman to check," Raanan said. "Watching a quarterback live, he can see and hear them throw to determine arm strength, the way they interact with coaches and teammates, how they react between series and their body language – things you can't get from watching tape."

New York crunched tape and did its homework on Haskins (6-3, 231), who blew Jones out of the water statistically last year with 373 of 533 passes completed (70.0 percent) for 4,831 yards and 50 touchdowns to eight interceptions as OSU went 13-1 (8-1 Big Ten) while winning Big Ten and Rose Bowl titles. The Athletic's Ross Tucker, however, pointed to inexperience as a concern for the Giants and others around the league.

"Two of Haskins' offensive linemen (Michael Jordan and Isaiah Prince) and a backup running back (Mike Weber) were all drafted, plus two Ohio State receivers (Parris Campbell and Terry

McLaurin) were selected on day two of the draft in the second and third rounds," Tucker said. "Four of (Kyler) Murray's offensive linemen, the best unit in the country, were drafted in the first four rounds. Plus, while at Oklahoma, Murray got to throw the ball to the first wide receiver to come off the board, Marquise 'Hollywood' Brown. The other receiver for the Sooners, CeeDee Lamb, is projected to be one of the top picks in next year's draft."

"All of which is just to suggest that it's fair to wonder how Jones would have fared if he were the quarterback at Ohio State or Oklahoma instead of Duke. I know that's the question I'd be asking."

After the Giants passed on Haskins, he fell nine spots before his name was called at No. 15 overall in the first round with the Washington Redskins, putting both in the NFC East, potentially for years to come, and putting the pressure on Gettleman to be right about Jones when Haskins was an option, The Athletic's Dan Duggan said.

"The Giants didn't want to risk waiting to take Jones with their other first-round pick (No. 17 overall)," Duggan said. "That showed the type of conviction that is necessary when drafting a franchise quarterback. But the question that will linger is if the Giants got the right one, because there were other options."

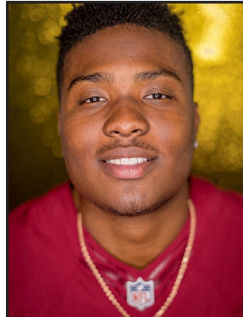
"Haskins went 15th to the Redskins and Lock remained on the board at the end of the first round. There was also the option of trading for 2018 first-round pick Josh Rosen, who became expendable after the Cardinals took Kyler Murray with the first pick. Gettleman said that he reached out to the Cardinals and told them 'if things happen, we might have an interest.' Obviously, the Rosen interest was extinguished when the Giants took Jones."

While Haskins has already started his career in Washington, which is down the road from where he went to high school at Potomac (Md.) Bullis, the fall from six to 15 in the draft cost him some money.

"The Giants had a chance to bring Haskins home to New Jersey with the No. 6 pick but opted for Jones instead," said NJ Advance Media's Ryan Dunleavy. "Haskins slipped to No. 15, where the Redskins eagerly were waiting. It cost Haskins about \$11.1 million, which is the difference in signing bonus expected for Jones and Haskins under the rookie wage scale slotted by draft position."

New York thinks it got its guy in Jones. Did the Redskins do the same with Haskins? The 2019 season and beyond will reveal the true answer.

"In a way, both the Giants and Redskins represented homecomings for the Ohio State product, but Haskins grew up a Giants fan going to camps," Dunleavy said. "No more. He laughed when he heard they didn't pick him."



Dwayne Haskins



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169 Student-Athletes Receive Degrees From OSU

By **ANDREW LIND**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

One hundred and sixty-nine current and former Ohio State student-athletes received their degrees during spring commencement on May 5.

Among the group of graduating Buckeyes were former NFL greats Santonio Holmes (Pittsburgh Steelers) and Nick Mangold (New York Jets), who earned their diplomas through the university's degree completion program, and former NBA player Greg Oden, who spent the last few years as an Ohio State student assistant coach.

Current football players who earned their degrees include offensive tackle Branden Bowen, linebacker Justin Hilliard, defensive tackle Antwan Jackson, long snapper Liam McCullough and wide receiver C.J. Saunders. Former linebacker Nick Conner, whose career ended prematurely because of injuries, and kicker Bryan Kristan, who walked on to the program in 2016 and played three seasons with the Buckeyes, also received their diplomas.

Several members of the basketball team, including guards C.J. Jackson, Joey Lane and Danny Hummer, graduated this semester, while former player and student assistant coach Andrew Dakich received his master's degree in sports coaching.

Other notable student-athletes from Ohio State's Olympic sports who earned their degrees include hockey forward Mason Jobst and sprinter Karrington Winters, who were named Ohio State's Big Ten Medal of

Honor recipients back in April; All-America wrestlers Micah Jordan, Myles Martin, Joey McKenna and Kollin Moore; and all-conference softball player Lilli Piper.

A complete list of Ohio State's 169 graduates, including their majors, can be found below in alphabetical order by sport:

Baseball – Hugh Cherry, sport industry; Andrew Fishel, finance; Kobie Foppe, sport industry; Nathanael Romans, operations management; Thomas Waning, operations management.

Men's Basketball – Andrew Dakich, sports coaching; Danny Hummer, economics; C.J. Jackson, sport industry; Joey Lane, marketing; Greg Oden, sport industry.

Women's Basketball – Karlie Cronin, sport industry; Asia Doss, civil engineering.

Cheerleading – Justin Baker, middle childhood education; Grant Burks, marketing; Kathleen Devine, human resources; Dominic DiCarlo, accounting; Alexis Fye, chemical engineering; Gabriel Gemberling, construction systems management; Aubrey Jenkins, art education; Richard Johnson III, material science engineering; Daniel Korot, chemistry; Kristen Lippert, psychology; Alyssa Schaefer, psychology; Samantha Shah, psychology; Trevor Steyn, communications.

Men's Cross Country/Track and Field – Evan Stifel, nursing.

Women's Cross Country/Track and Field – Courtney Cloudy, marketing; Christine Frederick, accounting; Sarah Kanney, marketing; Jessica Passwater, nursing; Vanessa Robinson, communications; Lillian Saniel-Banrey, architecture;

Emily Stoodley, environmental science.

Men's Diving – Stephen Romanik, construction systems management.

Men's Fencing – Marc-Antonio Blais Belanger, mechanical engineering; Jax Diaz-Miranda, marketing; Jędrzej Herczak, world politics; James Hu, operations management; Domenik Koch, finance; Anurup Krishna, microbiology; Oliver Shindler, criminology.

Women's Fencing – Alexandria Alpy, neuroscience; Haley Cloyd, Zoology; Gabriella Leccese, history; Casey Cole, sociology; Courtney Daniels, accounting; Hannah Pany, psychology; Jaelyn Lee, finance; Alexis Long, communications; Nikolette Schroeder, international studies; Casey Carvalho, logistics management; Amanda Huang, finance; Janelle McClelland, speech and hearing science; Jamie Stone, psychology.

Football – Branden Bowen, human development and family science; Nick Conner, logistics management; Justin Hilliard, marketing; Santonio Holmes, family resource management; Antwan Jackson, human development and family science; Bryan Kristan, finance; Nick Mangold, operations management; Liam McCullough, finance; C.J. Saunders, accounting.

Men's Golf – Will Grimmer, communications; Timothy Kelly, communications; John Mancinotti, finance; Caleb Ramirez, sport industry; Daniel Wetterich, finance.

Men's Gymnastics – Evan Bluemel, landscape architecture; Joseph Bonanno, health sciences program; Paris McGee Jr., journalism; Joseph Smith, food, agriculture and biological engineering; Alexander Wilson; civil engineering.

Men's Hockey – Dustin Carlson, sport industry; Wyatt Ege, family resource management; Freddy Gerard, communications; Mason Jobst, real estate; Matthew Johnson, family resource management; Brendon Kearney, finance; Sasha Larocque, earth sciences; Thomas Parran, English; Sean Romeo, finance; John Wiitala, finance.

Women's Hockey – Lauren Boyle, marketing; Charley Dahlquist, communications; Jincy Dunne, psychology; Madison

Field, sport industry; Erin Langermeier, finance; Jacyn Reeves, human development and family science.

Men's Lacrosse – Matthew Borges, finance; Lukas Buckley, finance; Brian Lang, finance; Matthew Sallade, sport industry; Cullen Sowder, finance.

Women's Lacrosse – Alyssa Amorison, psychology; Megan Camden, communications; Hannah Gantt, communications; Erika Keselman, operations management; Caroline Mackrides, pharmaceutical sciences; Mackenzie Maring, accounting; Erin Nagle, biology; Bailey Parrott, finance.

Rifle – Anthony Cuzzo Jr., food, agriculture and biological engineering; Bailey Urbach, neuroscience; Brendan Whitaker, math; Quintin Wotring, biology.

Rowing – Sophie Blair, communications; Sierra Cydrus, health promotion, nutrition and exercise science; Ida Kruse, natural resource management; Bianca Piloseno, materials science and engineering; Rachel Serafy, communications; Madison Sheahan, public management, leadership and policy.

Men's Soccer – Alexander Nichols, biology; Parker Siegfried, environment, economy, development and sustainability; Christian Soldat, aerospace engineering.

Women's Soccer – Brianna Gazmarian, sport industry; Meghan Kammerdeiner, psychology; Kylie Knight, human resources.

Softball – Briana Betschel, human development and family science; Megan Choinacky, pharmaceutical sciences; Emily Clark, sport industry; Lilli Piper, sport industry; Morgan Ray, health sciences program; Alexandra Vargas, communications.

Men's Swimming – Blake Dickmann, civil engineering; Brandon Fronczak, actuarial science; Oliver Knabb, sport industry; James McGraw, biomedical engineering; George Pappas, finance; Grant Pinchot, exercise science; Brad Shannon, international studies; Ryan Wagner, marketing.

Women's Swimming – Meg Bailey, physical education; Mikayla Murphy, marketing; Kerrigan Vargo, psychology; Halime Zeren, human nutrition.

Synchronized Swimming – Lane Starrett, Zoology; Elizabeth Walsh, human nutrition; Rachel Warren, sport industry.

Men's Tennis – Martin Joyce, finance; Alexander Kobelt, marketing; Charles Shewalter, finance; Hunter Tubert, finance.

Women's Tennis – Anna Sanford, neuroscience; Olivia Sneed, sociology.

Men's Track – Duan Asemota, communications; Drelan Bramwell, communications; Cole Gorski, marketing; Jerry Jackson, construction systems management; Max Seipel, middle childhood education; DaJuan Seward, human development and family science.

Women's Track – Deja Bell, sport industry; Alexis Dowdy, human development and family science; Karrington Winters, communications; Mikaela Seibert, fashion and retail studies; Olivia Small, human nutrition.

Men's Volleyball – Sanil Thomas, finance; Zachary Yerington, sport industry.

Women's Volleyball – Olivia Dailey, communications; Taylor Hughes, human resources; Jasmine Koonts, sport industry.

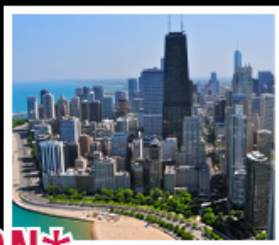
Wrestling – John Dijulius, sociology; Ke-Shawn Hayes, logistics management; Micah Jordan, sport industry; Myles Martin, sport industry; Joey McKenna, operations management; Kollin Moore, logistics management; Joshua Powell, pharmaceutical sciences.

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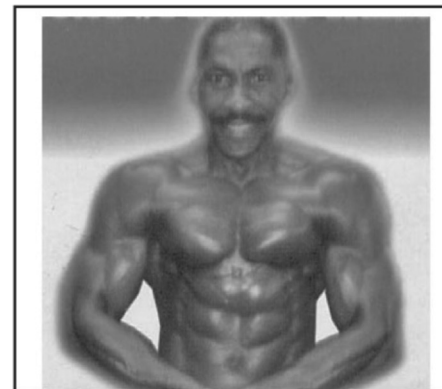


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Ohio State Sets Academic All-Big Ten Record

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

On May 29, the Big Ten Conference announced a league-best 237 Ohio State student-athletes had earned academic all-conference honors for spring and at-large sports.

Spring sports include baseball, golf, lacrosse, women's rowing, softball, tennis, and track and field, and at-large sports include fencing, pistol, rifle, men's volleyball, women's ice hockey and women's synchronized swimming.

Ohio State totaled a Big Ten-record 449 academic all-conference honorees, with 106 from both fall and winter sports. That surpasses the mark set by the Buckeyes last fall (393).

In all, 1,824 student-athletes from the 14 conference schools were recognized by the Big Ten for maintaining a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 or higher. Ohio State fencers Benjamin Marcus and Aleksandra Kolmykova were among the 30 Big Ten student-athletes with an unblemished 4.0 cumulative grade-point average.

The complete list of Ohio State's spring and at-large academic All-Big Ten honorees for 2019 can be found below, listed alphabetically by sport.

Baseball – Dominic Canzone, Jr., sport industry; Matt Carpenter, Sr., finance; Brady Cherry, Sr., sport industry; Dillon Dinger, So., logistics management; Andrew Fishel, Sr., finance; Kobie Foppe, Sr., sport industry; Aaron Hughes, So., pre-mechanical engineering; Andrew Magno, Jr., sport industry; Nate Romans, Sr., operations management; Scottie Seymour, Jr., finance; Griffan Smith, So., logistics management; Ridge Winand, Gr., master's in sport administration.

Men's Fencing – Ahmed Al Tayeb, Sr., pharmacy; Leon Cao, Jr., electrical engineering; Matthew Comes, So., mechanical engineering; John Culpepper, Jr., political science; Jax Diaz Miranda, Sr., marketing; Frank Ditullio, So., human development; Ethan Edwards, So., political science; William Gaziano, So., finance; Matthew Hayes, So., psychology; James Hu, Sr., finance; Domenik Koch, Jr., finance; Benjamin Marcus, So., history; Calvin Ong, Sr., marketing; Oliver Shindler, Sr., marketing; Liam Smith, Jr., industrial design.

Women's Fencing – Alexandria Alpy, Sr., neuroscience; Gabriela Cecchini, So., political science; Natalia Falkowski, Jr., finance; Nicole Fisher, So., psychology; Aleksandra Kolmykova, Jr., finance; Alexa Laskaris, Jr., health science; Gabriella Leccese, Sr., history; Sarah Merza, Jr., psychology; Emma Von Dadelszen, Sr., health science.

Men's Golf – JonErik Alford, So., sport industry; Will Grimmer, Sr., communications; Laken Hinton, So., sport industry; Jack Mancinotti, Sr., finance; Kevin Stone, So., finance; Will Voetsch, Sr., finance; Daniel Wetterich, Sr., finance; Justin Wick, Sr., marketing.

Women's Golf – Lexie Long, Sr., communications; Alanis Sakuma, So., aviation management; Yukie Sasaki, So., hospitality management; Niki Schroeder, Sr., international studies; Sofia Seldemirova, So., marketing; Adeena Shears, Jr., human development and family science.

Women's Ice Hockey – Samantha Bouley, Jr., mathematics; Lauren Boyle, Sr., marketing; Charly Dahlquist, Sr., communications; Jincy Dunne, Sr., psychology; Madison Field, Sr., sport industry & communications; Rebecca Freiburger, Jr., exercise science; Erin Langermeier, Sr., finance; Emma Maltis, So., health science; Jacyn Reeves, Sr., human development and family science; Elise Riemenschneider, Jr., communications; Liz Schepers, So., health science; Tatum Skaggs, So., special education; Olivia Soares, Jr., sport industry; Lynsey Wallace, So., animal science; Amanda Zeglen, So., consumer and family financial services.

Men's Lacrosse – Colby Barker, So., sport industry; Matthew Borges, Sr., finance; Lukas Buckley, Sr., finance; J.T. Bugliosi, So., finance; Chase Bunce, Sr., accounting; Omari DeBerry, So., sport industry; Jeff Henrick, Jr., sport industry; Griffin Hughes, So., communication; Justin Inacio, So., biology; Jack Jasinski, Sr., exercise science education; Josh Kirson, Jr., finance; Tre Leclair, Jr., sport industry; Logan Maccani, Sr., accounting; Caleb Mahoney, Jr., civil engineering; Jed Manning, So., finance; Nick Musci, Jr., finance; Jack Rennillo, So., international business; Evan Riss, So., finance; Joey Salisbury, Jr., accounting; Colby Smith, So., biology; Jackson Smith, So., finance; Cullen Sowder, Sr., finance; Ryan Terefenko, Jr., sport industry; Brendan Wallace, Jr., political science.

Women's Lacrosse – Kimberly Apuzzo, Jr., speech and hearing sciences; Hannah Brink, So., human resources; Sage Darling, Jr., speech and hearing sciences; Sara Dickinson, Sr., health sciences; Regina Doty, Jr., civil engineering; Lindsay Epstein, So., communications; Riley Ewing, So., logistics management; Hannah Gantt, Sr., communications; Sarah George, Jr., child and youth studies; Liza Hernandez, Jr., human resources; Erika Keselman, Sr., operations management; Caroline Mackrides, Sr., pharmaceutical sciences; Carli Mager, So., biochemistry; Mackenzie Maring, Sr., accounting; Meghan Matey, Jr., communications; Jaclen Moxley, Jr., exercise science education; Erin Nagle, Sr., biology; Baley Parrott, Sr., finance; Jill Rizzo, Jr., marketing; Emily Skrzypczak, Jr., health sciences; Alex Vander Molen, Jr., accounting.

Men's Rifle and Pistol – Jacob Buchanan, Jr., sport industry; Zachary Dahmen, Sr., finance; Robbie Delagrance, Jr., criminology and criminal justice studies; Anthony McCollum, Sr., mechanical engineering; Bernard Melus, So., electrical and computer engineering; Patrick Sardo, Sr., architecture; Brendan Whitaker, Sr., math; Quintin Wotring, Sr., biology.

Women's Rifle and Pistol – Mica Harr, So., neuroscience; Ali Kissell, Jr., athletic training; Emily Nothnagle, So., psychology; Emily Rust, Sr., marketing; Rhiann Travis, Jr., agricultural communications; Bailey Urbach, Sr., neuroscience; Megan Wilcoxson, So., communications.

Women's Rowing – Divya Batchu, So., public health; Michayla Binkley, Jr., psycholo-

gy; Sophie Blair, Sr., communications; Mane Bravo Alvez, So., social work; Sierra Cydrus, Sr., health promotion, nutrition and exercise science; Meg Cymanski, So., communications; Rachel DeWitte, So., communications; Anjali Fernandes, Jr., English; Simone Fishel, Jr., food science and technology; Maddie Frenberg, Jr., animal science; Lena Harper, So., industrial and systems engineering; Leonie Heuer, So., human development and family science; Kayla Kuntzman, So., animal science; Olivia Kwiecinski, Jr., environment, economy, development and sustainability; Grace Libben, Jr., public health; Kendell Massier, Jr., speech and hearing science; Alessandra Montesano, So., communications; Samantha Morrison, So., biology; Michaela Nordhaus, So., psychology; Lexie Nothdurft, So., international studies; Cailly O'Toole, So., sport industry; Erin Parker, So., business; Maddie Perrett, Jr., biology; Ida Petersen, So., biochemistry; Madison Sheahan, Sr., public management, leadership and policy; Kelly Stainbrook, So., biochemistry; Sierra Tiede, Jr., international studies.

Softball – Bri Betschel, Sr., human development and family science; Kallie Boren, So., technical education and training; Niki Carver, So., special education; Megan Choinacky, Sr., pharmaceutical science; Emily Clark, Sr., sport industry; Kat Duvall, Sr., integrated language arts and English education; Andi Farrah, Jr., health sciences; Skylar Hayward, So., radiological sciences; Megan McMenemy, So., health sciences; Claire Nicholson, So., human development and family science; Lilli Piper, Sr., sport industry; Morgan Ray, Sr., health sciences; Spencer Sansom, Jr., physical activity and coaching specialist.

Women's Synchronized Swimming – Kaitlyn Carboun, Jr., international studies and political science; Phoebe Coffin, Jr., human development and family science; Wenjing Deng, Sr., electrical engineering; Rachel Jager, So., environment, economy, development and sustainability; Breanna Malone, Jr., arts management; Alex Meredith Le Roux, Sr., health sciences; Renee Stehlik, So., health sciences; Stephanie Thielemann, Sr., psychology; Elizabeth Walsh, Sr., human nutrition; Sarah Walsh, So., health sciences; Rachel Warren, Sr., sport industry.

Men's Tennis – Martin Joyce, Sr., finance; Alex Kobelt, Sr., marketing; John McNally, So., marketing; Kyle Seelig, Sr., child and youth stud-

ies; Tim Seibert, So., finance; Hunter Tubert, Sr., finance; Jacob Wareti, Jr., health science; JJ Wolf, Jr., communications.

Women's Tennis – Andrea Ballinger, Sr., psychology; Emma DeCoste, So., business; Shiori Fukuda, Jr., communications; Mary Beth Hurley, So., health science; Danielle Wolf, Sr., communications.

Men's Track & Field – Steven Bauers, So., finance; Paul Bete, So., finance; Asa Burke, Jr., human development and family science; Coty Cobb, Sr., communication; Noah Corbett, So., actuarial science; Peter Hayden, So., economics; Matthew Hurley, Jr., criminology and criminal justice; Luke Landis, Sr., economics; Kyle McKinney, Sr., marketing; Robby Oswald, Jr., international studies; DaJuan Seward, Sr., human development and family science; Aaron Wood, Jr., civil engineering.

Women's Track & Field – Brittany Atkinson, Sr., accounting; Aziza Ayoub, So., biology; Lailah Elliott, So., communications; Emma Hoellrich, So., operations management; Megan Hoffman, Jr., speech and hearing science; Sarah Kanney, Sr., marketing; Devon Leahy, Jr., biology; Brooke Mangas, So., special education; Abby Nichols, Jr., speech and hearing science; Sarah Okefor, Jr., health profession exploration; Sade Olatoye, Sr., health sciences; Alexis Pyles, Jr., biology; Julia Rizk, Sr., finance; Lilly Sanie-Banrey, Sr., architecture; Mikaela Seibert, Sr., fashion and retail studies; Kilee Soehnlén, So., exercise science education; Sarah Stanley, Sr., finance; Emily Stoodley, Sr., environmental science; Lainey Studebaker, Jr., exercise science education; Grace Thomas, Jr., health promotion, nutrition and exercise science; Annie Ubbing, Jr., communications; Claire Wiles, Sr., operations management; Karrington Winters, Sr., communications.

Men's Volleyball – Jason Bruggemann, Jr., mechanical engineering; Reese Devilbiss, Jr., health sciences; Todd Herget, So., marketing; Andrew Hillman, Jr., finance; Shawn Hughes, Jr., aerospace engineering; Martin Lallemand, So., industrial systems engineering; Blake Leeson, Gr., master's in sport management; Luke Meidel, So., neuroscience and African-American and African studies; Chase Moothart, Jr., sport industry; Robbie Murphy, So., marketing; Aaron Samarin, Gr., master's in sport management; Sanil Thomas, Sr., finance; Jamie Wolmering, Sr., civil engineering.

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Comparing Ohio State's Top Recruits Across Eras

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Was Art Schlichter the Justin Fields of his time? How about Chris Spielman being as coveted as Terrelle Pryor?

Those are debatable questions without a right or wrong answer because comparing eras of college football recruiting leaves room for interpretation. However, when it comes to naming the highest-rated recruit to become a Buckeye, there is no doubt – well sort of.

When Fields transferred to Ohio State in January after his freshman season at Georgia, the quarterback bolted to the top of the class as the top signee ever for the Buckeyes according to the 247Sports players composite rankings.

Fields was the No. 2 player in the nation in the 2018 class behind Trevor Lawrence of Clemson, who led the Tigers to a national championship as a freshman this past season.

Fields had a composite rating of 0.9998 to tie for eighth all-time. He edges Pryor, who in 2008 was deemed to also be the second-best prospect nationally that year with a rating of 0.9997 to rank 12th all-time. The only other Buckeye recruit to break the top 50 was Ted Ginn Jr. at No. 23 (0.9992) in 2004.

Fields is the king but with a caveat: The 247Sports composite goes back only to the year 2000.

That got us at BSB wondering where players prior to the turn of the century would stack up if there were a standardized rating

system for them.

We elicited the opinions of two people with intimate knowledge of how the Buckeyes recruited over the years.

Jack Park is the longtime historian of the football program whose encyclopedic memory and dogged research is unmatched.

Bill Conley was an assistant coach for the Buckeyes who mined the country in search of premier players for coaches Earle Bruce, John Cooper and Jim Tressel after playing for Woody Hayes, and he is a contributor to BSB.

In recent phone interviews with each, they offered their thoughts and stories.

This is not an all-inclusive list by any means, but it's fun nonetheless to stroll down memory lane to a time when recruits didn't announce their choices on national TV or via Twitter and a five-star rating was reserved for movie or restaurant reviews.

The 1990s

It's not always the most sought after recruits who turn out to be the best.

That was the case for Eddie George, who went from an unknown prospect at a prep school to winning the 1995 Heisman Trophy his senior season at Ohio State.

"He was a sleeper," Conley said.

George grew up in Philadelphia but in the 10th grade transferred to Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy. He was not an outstanding player and spent an extra year in school to improve his recruiting stock. It worked. A student trainer at Ohio State was a friend of George and asked Conley to check him out.

"I got film of him," Conley said of George. "He was a star on the field. He wasn't recruited at all except for us and Louisville. Then once we started on him the other ones wanted to get in on him. Fortunately, the second week of December he committed.

"At Fork Union, they were only allowed to accept calls once a week, a Monday. I called every Monday from September to the first part of November."

Conley and Park each mentioned linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer as a one of the biggest gets for the Buckeyes in the 1990s. The "Big Kat" was a USA Today All-American as a senior in 1995 at Westerville (Ohio) South before becoming the first true freshman to start at linebacker for the Buckeyes.

He played three seasons, and as a junior he was a consensus All-American and won the Dick Butkus Award (best linebacker). Katzenmoyer was the 28th overall pick of the New England Patriots in 1999. He was on injured reserve for a neck injury when the Patriots won the Super Bowl for the 2001 season and retired after that.

Conley puts Katzenmoyer on par with two Buckeye icons in one regard.

"The one that stands out that was recruited by everybody in America was Chris Spielman," Conley said. "He was probably the biggest hyped guy of the '80s. The '70s would be Archie Griffin. The '90s would have to be Andy Katzenmoyer."

Park listed defensive tackle Luke Fickell (1993-96), wide receiver Terry Glenn (1993-95), running back Robert Smith (1990, '92) and defensive end Mike Vrabel (1993-96) as standout recruits whom Cooper landed. Smith was the No. 1 recruit nationally in the class of 1990, according to United Press International.

Conley said in those days a system like the star rating was used by the coaches at Ohio State. The prospects were divided by colors on a board depending on their perceived ability.

"The only ranking by numbers for example, was if we were going to offer three linebackers," he said. "On our recruiting board we would list the top six guys we wanted, in order.

"You obviously want 1 through 3 but if you didn't get all those guys you went to the No. 4, guy, the No. 5, which in some situations turned out better than the No. 1s."

It would be interesting to go back and rate some of the Buckeyes out of high school prior to 2000.

"Cris Carter, Orlando Pace, Corey Stringer, Robert Smith, Shawn Springs. They were big-time national recruits," Conley said. "In today's world they'd all be five stars obviously."

Pace lived up to the billing as a Parade magazine All-American as an offensive lineman and an honoree on the USA Today All-America team as a defensive lineman from Sandusky, Ohio, in 1993.

At OSU (1994-96) he was a two-time All-American on the O-line, won the Outland Trophy as best lineman in 1996 and that same year finished fourth in the Heisman voting. After a long NFL career, mostly with the St. Louis Rams, he was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2016.

The 1980s

The decade began with Bruce in his second season as the successor to Hayes and ended with Cooper at the helm after replacing Bruce following the 1987 season.

While it was Cooper who made it a pri-

ority to expand the recruiting base beyond the Buckeye State border, it was an Ohio boy who may have been the biggest haul when Spielman signed his letter of intent in February 1984.

Spielman often recounts how the Buckeyes had help in getting him to Columbus. He was intent on playing for Bo Schembechler at Michigan, but Spielman's father would have none of that and basically said commit to OSU or else.

While at Massillon (Ohio) Washington, he was the first high-school athlete to have his picture on the box of Wheaties in a time when it meant something. He didn't disappoint in Columbus. He was a three-time All-Big Ten choice and a two-time All-American. As a senior in 1987 he won the Lombardi Award as the best college player based on performance, leadership, character and resiliency.

Carter, who played for the Buckeyes from 1984-86, was a ballyhooed recruit from Middletown, Ohio. In his final season he became the first OSU wide receiver to be named All-American. His college career was cut short when he was ruled ineligible for the 1987 season after signing with an agent. He left as the school's career leader in catches (168).

Offensive guard Jim Lachey – a St. Henry, Ohio, product – was coveted by Bruce, and he got results in an OSU career from 1981-84, earning All-America status his senior season. After graduation he went on to win a Super Bowl with the Washington Redskins in 1992 and was an All-Pro selection three times.

His blocking paved the way for Dayton Roth running back Keith Byars (1982-85) to finish second in the 1984 Heisman Trophy balloting to quarterback Doug Flutie of Boston College after rushing for a then school-record 1,764 yards with 22 touchdowns.

Among those cited by Park as being highly sought and signed by Ohio State were quarterback Mike Tomczak and running back Vince Workman.

Conley, noting George's recruitment as an exception, said there are very few secrets among competitors even before the age of social media.

"In spring recruiting you had your areas," he said. "I'd go to south Florida. The recruiters would all stay at the same hotel. At night you'd go out to a little tiki bar behind the hotel and everybody would talk about the recruits.

"It's funny, really, the coaches shared those names in a lot of ways so you're always recruiting the same guys. The top programs always recruit the same guys."

The 1970s

One name that topped both charts for Conley and Park was Schlichter's.

The rocket arm from Washington Court House (Ohio) Miami Trace was wanted by all the big-time programs and could be considered as impactful a signing as Ohio State ever had.

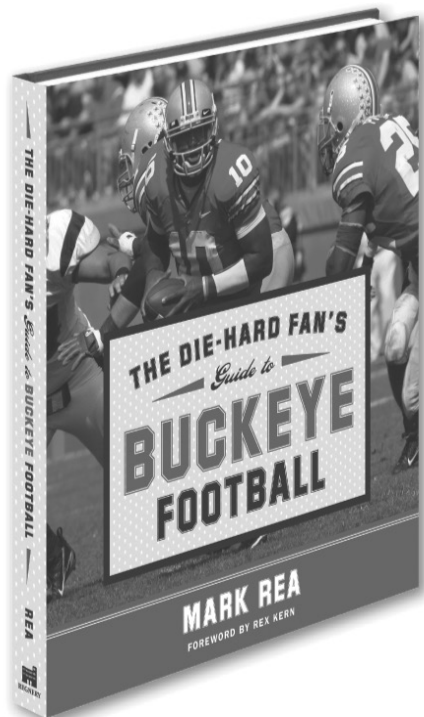
Hayes, of course, was known for saying three things can happen when you pass and two of them are bad, but college football was changing and he needed to revamp his thinking. Enter Schlichter for the 1978 season.

"Everybody wanted him and it was rumored he was going to Penn State," Park said. "It was a big story when he decided to come to Ohio State."

Schlichter became a four-year starter; in

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each of his latter three he finished among the top six vote-getters for the Heisman Trophy.

In order to get the freshman Schlichter behind center, popular senior QB Rod Gerald, the starter the previous two seasons, would have to be supplanted. Hayes gave no indication leading into the season opener vs. Penn State who would start.

"Nobody knew who was going to be at quarterback until the team took the field," Park said. "I can see it yet, both Gerald and Schlichter took the field. Gerald went to the wide receiver position and Schlichter took over at quarterback.

"One thing that hurt Schlichter, particularly that first year was their passing patterns and everything were pretty archaic."

Schlichter was overwhelmed against the Nittany Lions and threw five interceptions in a 19-0 loss. He rebounded over the course of the season, the offense evolved with the help of 11-year assistant coach George Champ, who died May 19 at age 83, and the Buckeyes had a new weapon.

Although Schlichter will be forever known for throwing the pick that led to Hayes punching Clemson linebacker Charlie Bauman and the coach's dismissal after the 1978 Gator Bowl, by the time he was through he held many school passing records that stood until Dwayne Haskins' brilliant 2018 season.

"He was the first pure throwing quarterback at Ohio State," Conley said of Schlichter. "He was recruited to be a passer. He could run the ball, too, but he was a passing quarterback.

"He was an era-setter in that way."

Before Schlichter's arrival there was Griffin, the only two-time Heisman Trophy winner. Although he was prolific at Columbus Eastmoor (1,787 rushing yards and 29 touchdowns in 11 games as a senior), Park doubted that Griffin would have been a five-star recruit back in the day, possibly because he was only 5-9 and 189 pounds.

The only five associated with Griffin his freshman season of 1972 at Ohio State pertained to the depth chart. Griffin got one chance to carry the ball in mop-up duty vs. Iowa in a 21-0 win during the season opener but fumbled the handoff.

By the time the Buckeyes played their next game two weeks later on Sept. 30 vs. North Carolina at Ohio Stadium, Griffin knew the pecking order.

"He went into the game as the fifth-team tailback," Park said.

But running backs coach Rudy Hubbard had seen something out of Griffin in practice that week, and when the Buckeyes got off to a slow start against the Tar Heels, he

suggested to Hayes that Griffin be given another chance.

"Archie was surprised to get into the game," Park said. "He got about halfway to the huddle and realized he forgot to take his helmet with him."

Griffin settled down and set a school record by running for 239 yards in a 29-14 win, and the rest was history.

For part of his career he was able to run behind Cleveland John Hay right tackle John Hicks (1970-73), who as a senior won the Outland Trophy and the Lombardi Award and finished second in the Heisman voting.

The 1960s

The freshman class of 1967 that was ineligible to play at the time became the iconic "Super Sophomores" that upset No. 1 Purdue 13-0, pulverized Michigan 50-14 and capped an unbeaten season by defeating O.J. Simpson and USC 27-16 in the Rose Bowl to win the 1968 national title.

Names like quarterback Rex Kern, running back John Brockington, safety Mike Sensibaugh and cornerback Jack Tatum were among the many talented players who entered Ohio State together.

Park said two of the most important recruits from that class were halfback Larry Zelina, who was a Parade All-American out of Cleveland Benedictine, and tight end Jan White from Harrisburg, Pa.

"(Zelina) was all set to go to Notre Dame, but Kern talked to him after he had already committed to Ohio State and got Larry to change his mind," Park said.

"White's the guy who really perfected the tight end at Ohio State. He could run like a deer. He had the speed of a wide receiver, but he could block just like a lineman. He was an underrated player. He was an All-American his last year (1970)."

Another great from that class was middle guard Jim Stillwagon, a unanimous All-America selection as a junior and senior.

"I'm not sure how highly recruited he was, but he turned out to be one of the best to ever play for Ohio State," Park said.

Fabulous '50s

Howard "Hopalong" Cassady from Columbus Central played for the Buckeyes from 1952-55. The Buckeyes won the national title in 1954, and he claimed the Heisman Trophy the next season as well as being named the Associated Press Athlete of the Year for 1955.

In his first college game in 1952 he came off the bench to score three touchdowns vs. Indiana. Two weeks later, Cassady rushed for more than 100 yards to help the

Buckeyes upset top-ranked Wisconsin 23-14 in Ohio Stadium.

For all that Cassady accomplished, Park said his biggest achievement might have been to keep Hayes employed. Following a 16-9-2 record for Hayes his first three seasons, the fans were getting restless. Cassady had a big season in 1954, and OSU went 10-0 to be crowned champions.

"Hop was a guy who really helped save his job," Park said.

Running back Bob Ferguson (1959-61) of Troy, Ohio, was a special player, noted Park, and was selected as an All-American his final two seasons. In 1961, he was runner-up to Syracuse's Ernie Davis for the Heisman Trophy.

The Early Years

One would think that the legendary Chic Harley (1916-19) would have been a highly sought recruit, so we will just make it a given that the school's first three-time All-American would be at the top of any list and let's skip ahead a few decades.

Does Paul Sarringhaus ring a bell? Probably not, but the halfback from Hamilton, Ohio, proved to quite a find and in his junior season helped Paul Brown in his second season as coach to a national championship in 1942.

"Paul Sarringhaus was the tailback in the single-wing that really made that offense work," Park said. "He was a passer, a runner, a receiver. He probably did the place kicking and became an All-American."

Vic Janowicz came to Columbus from Elyria, Ohio, in 1948 and in his junior year (1950) won the Heisman Trophy.

That season he played about 50 minutes a game as a two-way player, not uncommon

in those days. He was a tailback and safety and handled the kicking duties. He totaled 561 yards passing and 34 rushing with 17 touchdowns.

In 1951, Hayes became coach and went away from the single-wing to the T formation. Janowicz had fewer opportunities to handle the ball, plus he battled injuries, and he did not win back-to-back Heismans.

That did not diminish his career in the eyes of Park.

"He was probably the greatest all-around player Ohio State ever had," Park said. "He was very, very highly touted and proved to be everything they said he was, although he didn't play that well his senior year."

Park holds him in such high regard, he made it personal.

"Old No. 31. My license plate number is JP31. That's in honor of Vic Janowicz," he said.

Different Times

Labeling recruits by the number of stars attached to their names isn't the only change over the years. With the early signing periods in December, the task of getting the right commitment is harder.

"You're recruiting a guy before you do all your homework," Conley said. "Now, coaches are forced to make early offers because they fear they'll lose a shot at getting a guy."

And, don't try to compare eras when discussing who is the highest rated recruit of all time at Ohio State.

"It's all so much different when you go back to guys like Janowicz and Cassidy," Park said. "They played both ways. You had 11 guys on offense and 11 on defense. When they switched possession oftentimes the same 22 guys stayed on the field."

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McCord Felt At Home During Unofficial Visits

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State's 2021 recruiting class received a significant boost April 30 when Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep four-star quarterback Kyle McCord committed to the Buckeyes. His decision followed a pair of unofficial visits this spring, which included a trip to Columbus for the annual spring game just April 13.

"The biggest thing for me was just my relationship with the coaching staff," McCord told BSB. "I have a great relationship with (head coach Ryan) Day and (quarterbacks coach Mike) Yurcich. Seeing what the staff did with Dwayne (Haskins) last season was really impressive. Every time I'm on campus, it just feels like home. And on top of that, they recruited me the hardest out of every school."

The 6-3, 204-pound McCord – who is considered the eighth-best pro-style quarterback and No. 115 prospect overall in the class of 2021 – picked Ohio State over nearly two dozen offers from programs such as Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, North Carolina, Penn State, Pittsburgh, Rutgers, Syracuse, Texas A&M, Virginia Tech and West Virginia, among others.

"I think constant communication was huge in the process," McCord said. "I talk on the phone with them three or four times a week. Both of the quarterback backgrounds are very elite, too. Obviously, Coach Day has been in the NFL before, and Coach Yurcich put (former Oklahoma State and current Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback) Mason Rudolph in the NFL as well. Those two elements were really important for me."

McCord took his first unofficial visit in early February, shortly after he received an offer from the Buckeyes, and he immediately fell in love with



KYLE MCCORD/TWITTER

NEXT IN LINE – Ohio State quarterback commit Kyle McCord (left) met with former Buckeye signal caller Dwayne Haskins during his unofficial visit for the annual spring game on April 13.

the program. He spent a considerable amount of time that afternoon with Day and Yurcich, toured the Woody Hayes Athletic Center and met with several current players.

"Just being in the facilities, I could

sense the winning attitude all of the coaches and players have," McCord said.

As mentioned, McCord returned to campus for the spring game on April 13. And while he was drawing plays on the

whiteboard for Day, Haskins and former Ohio State and current New Orleans Saints wide receiver Michael Thomas walked in the room.

"They took time to speak with me and tell me about their experiences in the program," McCord said, noting how he felt starstruck throughout the conversation. "Those were two awesome experiences talking with them. It really made me feel like a part of the family. It was a pretty cool experience."

The coaching staff had offers out to several other quarterbacks at the time, but McCord – who threw for a school-record 2,883 yards and 38 touchdowns to lead the Hawks to a state championship last fall – seemingly separated himself from the pack during those visits. A strong performance on the camp circuit this spring, which included position MVP honors at The Opening New Jersey Regional and an invitation to the Rivals Five-Star Challenge, also helped solidify his status as the staff's top target.

"I think what separates me from other quarterbacks is that I'm a winner, I'm very accurate and I'm more advanced mentally than a lot of other quarterbacks my age," McCord said. "I owe a lot of that to my coaches and my dad, but I think those three things really set me apart from others. Those three things are very important at Ohio State and in their system, too, so I think it's a perfect fit."

McCord's commitment notably had a ripple effect on the other quarterbacks, including La Grange Park (Ill.) Nazareth five-star J.J. McCarthy, with whom he's become friends in recent years. McCarthy grew up an Ohio State fan but committed to Michigan just a few weeks after McCord's decision and has since voiced his desire to turn the tide in the rivalry.

"I wouldn't say that changes our relationship too much," McCord said. "We both are very competitive, so I think that rivalry will be even more fun going against him and That Team Up North every year. I think it just adds another level of competition between us now that he's committed there."

Though he and five-star defensive end commit Jack Sawyer, who hails from Pickerington (Ohio) North, give the Buckeyes one of the top-rated recruiting classes in the country early in the cycle, McCord is already focused on surrounding himself with some of the nation's best prospects.

"I've been in contact with a bunch of guys," McCord said. "I've been talking to guys like (Steilacoom, Wash., four-star athlete) Emeka Egbuka and (Philadelphia Neumann Goretti four-star safety) Tysheem Johnson to try and start to build our 2021 class."

However, there's no doubt McCord's biggest target is his teammate at St. Joseph's, four-star wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr.

"He's one of my best friends off the field, so it would be a lot of fun to continue to play together and spend a few more years with him in school," McCord said. "I want him to make the best decision for himself, but – at the same time – he knows how badly I want him to commit to Ohio State. I don't really have to say too much to him."



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2021 QB Commit Could Be Future Of Offense

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Before Kyle McCord could even think about an Ohio State commitment April 30, he had to prove himself as his high school's starting quarterback in the fall. Despite double-digit offers before he did so much as take a snap for Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep in 2018, the sophomore quarterback was basically an unknown.

Then the school's offensive coordinator, Tim Roken, oversaw McCord's development from day one and knew the quarterback was going to be something special.

"It was interesting because a young man who really didn't play as a freshman for us became a starter," Roken, whom St. Joseph's promoted Dec. 23 to head coach, told BSB. "That showed a lot, from a character perspective, in choosing to come here because he could have gone many other places and been a four-year starter but didn't. So we were grateful for the opportunity to have him here and get a chance to coach him."

Once the Hawks' season got underway, though, McCord took off and never looked back. The 6-3½, 204-pounder led the Hawks to a 13-0 overall mark and the Pennsylvania 6A state championship.

By the numbers – he completed 201 of 302 passes (66.6 percent) for a school-record 2,883 yards and 38 touchdowns – McCord shone on his way to a well-deserved honor as Philadelphia Catholic League MVP, perhaps making the break-out campaign look easy from afar.

But to understand what McCord brings the Buckeyes as head coach Ryan Day's handpicked quarterback of the future for the 2021 recruiting class, knowing where he came from is equally important.

"He's very confident in his ability," Roken said. "I know there's a very fine line between confidence and cockiness, but he's not the type of kid who walks around with a big head and an ego."

Springing Into Action

After the Prep went 13-1 in 2017, ultimately falling short of the coveted Pennsylvania 6A state championship with its 41-21 loss to Gibsonia Pine-Richland, McCord's recruiting quickly heated up.

As the son of a Division-I quarterback – his father, Derek, played the position at Rutgers from 1988-92 – he brought a buzz into the 2018 spring evaluation period. Temple, Boston College, Rutgers and Michigan started the flurry of offers in February before Syracuse, West Virginia, Baylor and Penn State carried the scholarships momentum deep into June.

"He goes out in the spring and picks up a bunch of offers before he even steps on the field," Roken said. "A lot of people, I think, in the area and outside the (St. Joseph's) program thought, 'What's going on here? This kid hasn't even stepped on the field. He's picked up all these offers. What's this about?' He never flinched and he's the type of kid that's always been humble and is going to stay hungry and wants to learn because he wants to be great."

"He's got that mind-set. He took the spring and really developed into the summer and hit the ground running. The kids really rallied around him because you see



KYLE MCCORD/TWITTER

NEXT IN LINE – McCord completed 201 of 302 passes (66.6 percent) for a school-record 2,883 yards and 38 touchdowns as a sophomore to lead St. Joseph's Prep to the state championship.

the way he carries himself, on and off the field, he's a leader and the guys rallied around him. He went out and proved why, throughout the year, why he got all those offers leading into it."

Proving His Worth

McCord did not take long to validate his hype.

In the 2018 season opener against Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep, a neutral-site game played Sept. 8 at Rutgers, he started off with a statement 35-27 win.

The victory was the first of many on St. Joseph's national schedule.

"The game wasn't going our way for most of it, and we turned it around a little bit offensively in the second half," Roken said. "He led a drive down and threw a two-point conversion to take the lead with a defensive end trying to run right through him. (McCord) stared at (the defensive end) and put it on (the intended target), ended up completing it and we ended up winning the game in the fourth quarter."

The next weekend, the Hawks hosted Olney (Md.) Good Counsel and recorded a similar triumph, 34-27.

"We get down late and we have to put together a two-minute drive, and he didn't flinch," Roken said. "I told him, 'These are moments you're made for. This is what you live for. It's great competition and this is why you came here. Let's go get this thing done.' He went over, rallied his offensive line and the group, and they went down and put together a two-minute drive and won the ballgame."

The early adversity prepared McCord, after 10 straight double-digit wins, for the Dec. 8 state title against Harrisburg, Pa., which resulted in a 40-20 victory – but not before some early adversity.

"The interesting one is the final game where you have all this pressure leading up to the final game and everything, and he goes out and hadn't really thrown an interception since the St. Peter's game in week (one), and he throws an interception

on his first attempt and it goes pick-six to the house," Roken said. "So a lot of kids at his age, in that moment, would bury themselves."

"Our guys are phenomenal. They rallied around him and had the confidence in him. I got on the headset and said, 'Hey, we're not going to lose this 7-0, we're not going to win it 7-0. You made a mistake. It is what it is. Go back to work and do what you do.' And then it was three times down the field – bang, bang, bang – three possessions in a row that we go down and score and go up 21-7. And then we rallied and at the end of the half had a big (defensive) interception. The whole team took off in the second half, and we finished strong."

Finding The Fit

Since he assumed his new post as head coach Dec. 4, Ryan Day has wasted no time in getting acclimated to the recruiting classes of 2019 and '20, moving swiftly but diligently through the evaluation process for '21 and identifying Ohio State's potential quarterback of the future along the way.

With sophomore Justin Fields (6-3, 223) projected as the Buckeyes' starter for 2019, plus the July 2018 commitment of Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star Jack Miller (6-4, 210) for 2020, Day and passing game coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich made the move to offer several blue-chip prospects at the position in 2021.

Along the way, six signal callers reported scholarship offers from OSU: Dallas Parish Episcopal's Preston Stone (6-2, 205, May 10), Charlotte (N.C.) Myers Park's Drake Maye (6-4, 200, Nov. 4), La Grange (Ill.) Nazareth Academy's J.J. McCarthy (6-2, 180, Dec. 11), Washington (D.C.) Gonzaga's Caleb Williams (6-1, 190, Jan. 21), Harbor City (Calif.) Narbonne's Jake Garcia (6-2, 185, Jan. 29) and Cheshire (Conn.) Academy's Jack Brandon (6-3, 185, March 24).

"This has been a recent phenomenon

the last year or two, the amount of quality quarterbacks around the country that are really looking at Ohio State," Buckeye Grove recruiting analyst Marc Givler told BSB. "It just feels like it used to be that if you didn't have a guy locally, like Ohio or the Midwest or western Pennsylvania or something like that, then it might be a struggle to get a nationally ranked quarterback to go to Ohio State. That's not the case now. These guys are knocking down their doors. They had great options in 2021 already. Day has a lot of clout right now after what he did with Dwayne Haskins. And then even though he hasn't taken a snap yet, I think Justin Fields choosing to go play with Day also gave him an added boost with recruits and people around the country."

Sorting through OSU's 2021 options, Day handpicked McCord, who visited Feb. 2 and April 13 before committing 17 days later.

What He Brings

Part of McCord's comfort level with Day and Yurcich circled back to Ohio State's offense and the scheme the Prep runs. Roken attended McCord's initial visit Feb. 2 and saw potential for his quarterback to have the same success Haskins had in 2018 as a pocket passer.

"It's funny, going out (to Columbus) and talking to Coach Yurcich and Coach Day and talking about some of the things they're doing offensively, they're very similar to some of the things that we do here as well," Roken said. "I think the biggest thing that will carry over for him to the next level and that is the biggest comparison to what we do offensively is the down-the-field shots."

"What they've shown with Dwayne this year and just his vertical passing game, Kyle gets pegged as that pro-style guy, but he's an athletic kid that can kind of hurt you, be strong in the pocket and get outside of and be able to hurt you down the field. That's where they see the comparisons with him a little bit, between him

and Dwayne, being able to be strong and standing in there in the pocket and spin the ball down the field but being able to escape and get outside and keep his eyes down the field and get the balls to his guys downfield and be able to hurt guys that way as well.

"He can get there if he needs to pick up a few. He's a deceptively athletic guy where he's going to get out and he's going to gain a couple. We've got to continually teach him to protect himself because he's a competitor and a tough kid and wants to lower the shoulder sometimes, but sometimes it's a little more of business decisions where you've got to protect your body a little bit.

"So he's done a great job with that and that's where I think the biggest comparisons (are) with him going into that offense and the things that they're looking for him to do. They're very comparable there."

After one year as the Buckeyes' starter, Haskins declared for the 2019 NFL draft and was selected with the 15th overall pick by the Washington Redskins. 247Sports sees the same type of high-ceiling potential for McCord.

"Wide-shouldered frame with good height and size," McCord's evaluation said. "Strong arm and accurate. Spins ball well. Poised under pressure. Great leadership qualities. Plays with high IQ. Can throw 15-yard out on line. Touch to throw over linebackers on intermediate routes. Has quick release with good arm angle. Fits balls into tight windows. Accurate throwing on run. Moves in pocket. Extends plays. Needs to continue to develop escapability. More consistency needed on deep balls. Multi-year starter at top-15 program. Projects to be an early round NFL draft pick."

With two more seasons of football left at the high school level before he can sign his letter of intent and enroll at OSU,

McCord has a long way to go before those evaluations can even be considered.

But with his college decision mapped out ahead of time, McCord can place the focus on putting himself in the best-possible position to get there under Day and Yurcich.

"You don't find many guys at his age with the arm power and arm strength, the accuracy, the footwork," Roken said. "At times, we're going to play with a lot of tempo and speed and we want to play really fast. So to be able to make decisions in split seconds where things are moving and now with the added run-pass option, we've had some more running quarterbacks in the past where you're reading first level. Now you add those second- and third-level reads. That was something that he progressed with and developed at that.

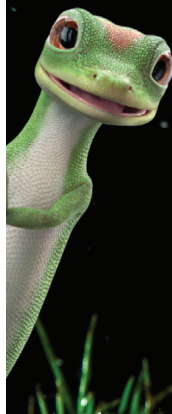
"And then it's just to continue to work our down-the-field passing game. We may mix in some more pro-style stuff to develop him in that sense, too, because we want to make sure that when these guys leave – whether it's Kyle or anybody – when these guys leave, they're prepared for wherever they go, college wise, to be able to make an impact. Guys have him pegged as a pro-style guy, so we want to work more of the drop backs and stuff like that for him – play actions and stuff like that for him.

"He's done a great job from a leadership standpoint. The hard part is, again, going into last year, he's had to lead more by example and now he's more confident in that sense and can lead by his voice a little bit as well. He's working his tail off in the weight room. I know some of the quarterbacks don't get known as the weight room warriors kind of guys, but he works his tail off in there. They all really hold themselves accountable, but he's done a great job of leading that tribe."

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5-Star WR Julian Fleming Commits To OSU

Ohio State got its top target May 31 when Julian Fleming announced his commitment. He took to Twitter in the morning and revealed the Buckeyes pledge through a video.

"When you see me, you see a five-star prospect," Fleming said. "You see a can't-miss football player. You see someone who's been given advantages because of my size, my speed and my potential. You see someone who can help your favorite team."

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Garrett Stepien

"But I am more than just a football player. I am a son, I'm a brother and I will become a man. I work when nobody else is looking so I can be what I'm destined to become – for me, my family, no one else. To you, I am a football player."

"To you, home is a place. To me, home is a feeling. To me, Ohio State is home. Go Bucks."

The five-star wide receiver from Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia has long been on OSU's radar.

Before he revealed Ohio State with Alabama, Clemson, Georgia and Penn State among his five finalists, Fleming's road to the decision started Feb. 7, 2018, when the Buckeyes offered.

The 6-2, 199-pounder initially came to Columbus June 17, 2018, followed by a pair of visits later in the year – Nov. 3 for OSU's 36-31 win over Nebraska and Nov. 24 for its 62-39 victory against then-No. 4 Michigan.

Fleming first trimmed his list Dec. 25 when he named a top 10, cutting further Feb. 16 with a top six of Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, Ohio State, Oregon and Penn State.

The 247Sports composite's No. 6 overall prospect, No. 1 wide receiver and No. 1 player in Pennsylvania for 2020 followed the February update with trips to see the Tigers (March 9) and Buckeyes (March 23) around the Nittany Lions (Feb. 23 and March 16).

Of his five official visits, Fleming's first came April 12-14 for the Crimson Tide's spring game. Fleming was slated for an official visit with the Bulldogs the weekend of May 31-June 2 but ultimately canceled. He released his final five May 10.

Fleming's commitment brings OSU's 2020 class to nine pledges: Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson (6-7½, 295); Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional four-star center Luke Wypler (6-3½, 285); Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star quarterback Jack Miller (6-4, 210); Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic four-star wide receiver Gee Scott (6-2½, 207); Rockwall, Texas, four-star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba (6-1, 188); Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star defensive back Lejond Cavazos (6-1, 190); Cincinnati Elder three-star offensive tackle Jakob James (6-5, 275); and Norwalk, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Trey Leroux (6-8, 355).

Fleming joins Scott and Smith-Njigba as the third wide receiver in the class,

with all three recruited by head coach Ryan Day and position coach Brian Hartline.

Top Target Sets OV To OSU

In May, one of the Midwest's top targets for the 2020 recruiting class set two of his five official visits, planning late-spring trips with a Big Ten emphasis.

First, Cameron Martinez officially visited Northwestern the weekend of May 17-19. The four-star athlete from Muskegon, Mich., had also set an official visit with the Buckeyes for the weekend of June 21-23.

Steve Wilftong of 247Sports first reported the news. According to Allen Trieu of 247Sports, Michigan and Notre Dame are also in the running to land an official visit from Martinez, who would have three more available after the trips with the Wildcats and OSU.

The 5-11, 175-pounder is the 247Sports composite's No. 368 overall prospect, No. 23 athlete and No. 10 player in Michigan for 2020.

Among close to 30 offers, Martinez landed one Feb. 15 from Ohio State, which is recruiting him on both sides of the ball.

"I'm better with the ball in my hands," Martinez told BSB. "But naturally, I think I'm better at defense. A lot of teams give me the option of what I want to do, so it's really going to come down to how I feel and what I want to play. If I could, I would play both right now."

Day and Hartline have a vision for Martinez on offense, while co-defensive coordinators Greg Mattison and Jeff Hafley are fighting for his services on defense, particularly at the hybrid linebacker/safety "bullet" position.

"When they offered me ... it seemed like I was more on the defensive side," Martinez said. "I came down there (March 29) and Brian Hartline loved me on the offensive side. He thought he could see me at the H-back position like the K.J. Hill, Parris Campbell type because they're not really recruiting any H-backs right now."

"So he really liked me on that side. Coach Day really liked me on the offensive side. But Hafley and (special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach Matt) Barnes and, of course, Mattison, they want me on defense. So they're kind of fighting over me right now."

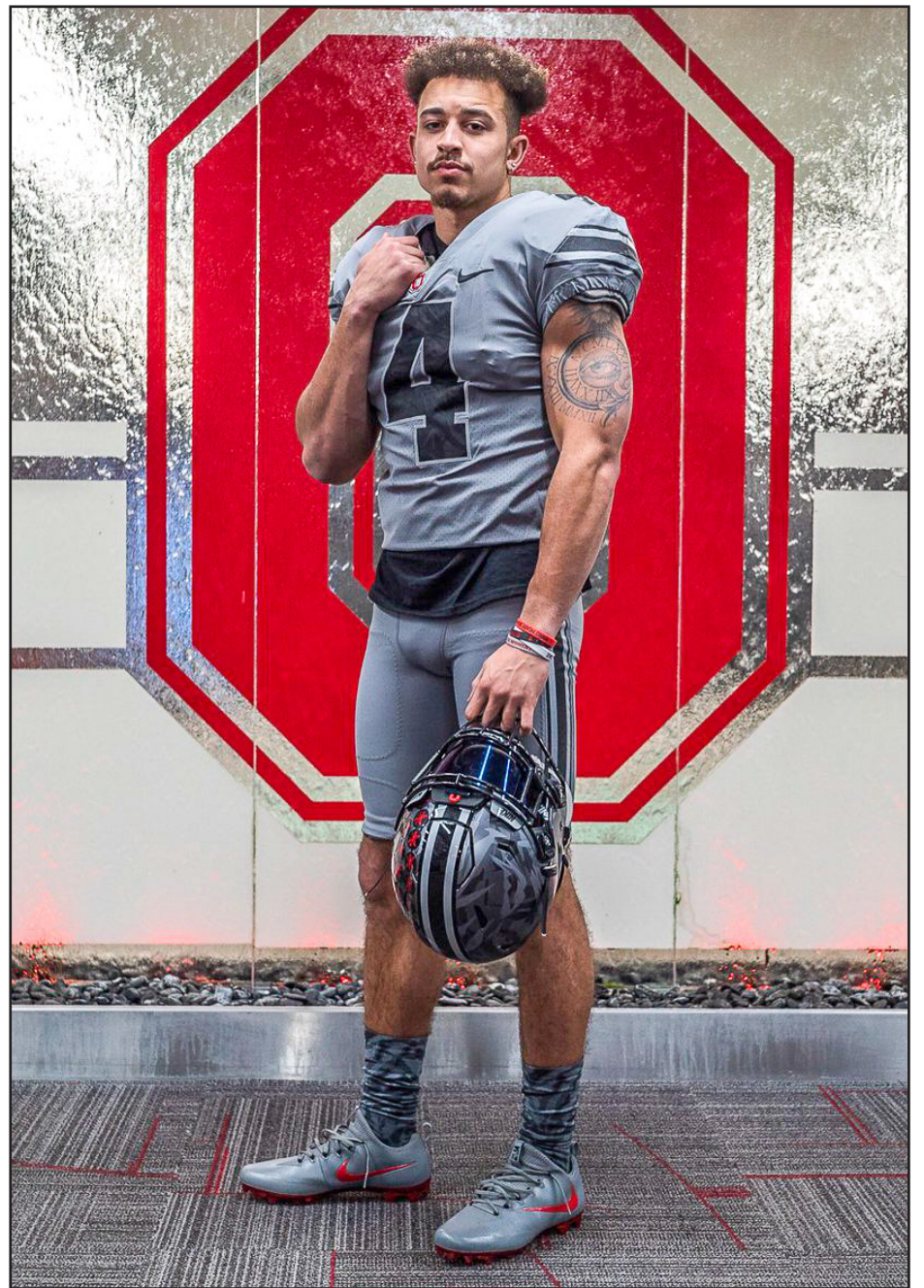
"So it's kind of going to come down to me. I think, personally, if I had to choose right now, I would maybe play defense because Coach Hafley's more of my guy. But I'm in contact with Hafley and Hartline a lot. They're cool."

The official visit will mark Martinez's first trip to Columbus since an unofficial visit March 29.

"A lot of it was with Coach Hafley, too, and Coach Day, but he's just an energetic guy," Martinez said of Hartline. "Every time I talk to people, they say there's no coach like Hartline. He showed me – he had a presentation for me, talked about (wide receiver potential) – he really gets the best out of his players. With a coach like that, that gets you better, it's good."

2020 4-Star CB Releases Final 5

A top target at a premium position, Clark Phillips included Ohio State in his final five May 1. The four-star cornerback



JULIAN FLEMING/TWITTER

BOOM – Pennsylvania five-star wide receiver Julian Fleming picked Ohio State over Alabama, Clemson, Georgia and Penn State.

from La Habra, Calif., continues to consider the Buckeyes, who are recruiting him with California, Notre Dame, Oregon and UCLA.

Phillips took to Twitter and revealed the news.

"Blessing to be where I am today," Phillips' tweet read.

As the 247Sports composite's No. 46 overall prospect, No. 4 cornerback and No. 9 player in California for the 2020 recruiting class, Phillips has climbed OSU's board since its offer Jan. 24.

The 5-10½, 178-pounder announced his top 12 in February before he visited Columbus for an Ohio State practice March 29 at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

Day and the Buckeyes sit in a solid position for Phillips, according to 247Sports national recruiting analyst Greg Biggins.

"He's probably going to take at least three of those (official visits late) in the spring, and I think he's going to make a late-summer decision," Biggins, who is based in Los Angeles, said May 3 on the 247Sports Recruiting Podcast. "Right now, if I were to 'crystal ball'

him anywhere, it would be to The Ohio State University. But watch out for Notre Dame. They've done a great job."

"He's already taken unofficial trips to all five of those schools, so Notre Dame is doing a great job and Cal is kind of hanging in there as well as probably the top West Coast school on his list. But I think the Buckeyes are in a pretty solid spot at this point."

Day and Hafley secured OSU's first cornerback for the 2020 class April 12 when Lejond Cavazos (6-1, 190) recommitted, and Phillips is among the short list of preferences to join the four-star defensive back from Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy.

As a junior in 2018 at La Habra, Phillips recorded 18 tackles and two interceptions for the Highlanders.

He played both ways for his high school team, starting at wide receiver and catching 54 receptions for 1,120 yards (22.4 average) and 19 touchdowns.

Phillips was among the top camp performers Feb. 10 at The Opening Regional in Los Angeles and clocked a verified time of 4.54 seconds in the 40-yard dash.

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ASK AN ANALYST

With Lettermen Row's Jeremy Birmingham

Upon his Dec. 4 introduction as Ohio State's head football coach, Ryan Day said he wanted to prioritize Ohio. How has Day fared with in-state recruiting in the time since then?

"Clearly it's a priority for him and the coaching staff to recruit the state – not just in 2020, but they've already extended six or seven different 2021 offers, which is unheard of, really, at least in the last decade of Ohio State football recruiting because it was so stringent with Urban Meyer and his staff that they'd just wait until a kid was almost always heading into his senior year before they would even consider offering an Ohio kid.

"But the commitment from the staff is there. I think that they're seeing a little bit of – the truth is, so many kids in Ohio don't really have that desire to commit immediately. I think there's some lacking results when you think about some (2021) guys like (Pickerington [Ohio] Central wide receiver) Lorenzo Styles (6-1, 170) and (Ironton, Ohio, linebacker) Reid Carrico (6-3, 218). Previously, you'd expect those guys to commit immediately. Lorenzo Styles is a Buckeyes legacy. It's just a different world.

"But what they're doing is obvious. It's certainly been not just lip service. I think a lot of people just expected what had happened in the previous decade, which is, 'We're going to recruit Ohio more,' but then they don't. Some of that has to do with the fact that there's actually a lot more talent in Ohio right now. That's in the class of 2020 and 2021. That certainly helps. But I don't think you're going to ever see Ryan Day and this staff abandon recruiting nationally just to recruit Ohio because they have to recruit Ohio. It has to be because of talent."

Ohio State has its potential quarterback of the future for each of the next two recruiting classes, but depth is needed. How do Day and the staff

approach the position, particularly for 2020, and are there any names to keep an eye on?

"I think it's obvious that they're still going to need to take a 2020 quarterback to complement (Scottsdale [Ariz.] Chaparral four-star commitment) Jack Miller (6-4, 210). But if you look at what they've done over the past few weeks to address that position, they have assessed the immediate concerns.

"(Kentucky junior graduate transfer) Gunnar Hoak (6-4, 212) will be gone by 2021, (La Verne [Calif.] Bonita 2019 walk-on commitment) JP Andrade (6-3, 205) is not a guy who I think you should expect to be there for 4-5 years. I think, if he ends up developing, you could see a Kory Curtis-type of situation where he walks on at Ohio State for two or three years and gets an opportunity to go play at a place like Bryant University or wherever, then you go take that scholarship offer (as a transfer).

"I think it's important for 2020 to add a quarterback, somebody who they can use and say, 'Hey, this guy's an athlete/quarterback.'

"Taking it way back, if you look back at the 2002 class, there was Justin Zwick who was the clear-cut quarterback and then you brought in Troy Smith at the very end of the class. Smith was the athlete, kick returner, quarterback, running back, whatever. That type of complementary addition makes it easier for the incoming bell cow like Jack to understand that this is a need-based issue, not necessarily wanting to have an insurance policy for him because Miller is an elite quarterback and one of the four or five best in the country. You don't risk rocking that boat unless it's something that he's on board with and that has been thoroughly explained."

Nationally, 2020 has potential for historic depth. As Ohio State fills in its class, Clemson is a main contender for top targets. How much

concern is there for the Buckeyes with the Tigers seemingly taking all of the blue-chip prospects out there on the board?

"Oh, they have to pay attention to it. You want to win at everything. Urban Meyer was really the first coach at Ohio State to acknowledge that. They did pay attention to the rankings, the recruiting rankings. They said that, 'If we're competing, we want to win.' But back in 2017, Ohio State signed (five) five-star players in that class. That's what you should do when you're coming off national championships and the College Football Playoffs.

"You have a coach (in Dabo Swinney) that's young and dynamic and has a long-term contract. Clemson plays in a league that they will own in the next decade or longer. And quite honestly, the Buckeyes have to be concerned, just like everyone else. But all it should do is force them to pick their game up and realize that, in college football's arms race, you're never really done building.

"They're going to have to continue to renovate, continue to innovate and, most importantly, Ryan Day and this team are going to have to win games. And when they do that, you're going to continue to see Ohio State be one of the top three or four recruiting teams in the country because their staff is young and dynamic and adaptable, and that's what you have to be in today's college football landscape. It's why (Alabama head coach) Nick Saban, despite the fact that his staff isn't young, continues to innovate with the best of the best. What Clemson's doing is remarkable, but it's not as unheard of as I think people want to pass it off. They're going to finish with six or seven five-star kids in that class, probably. Again, that's what Ohio State did in 2017. That's what Alabama does, pretty much, every other year. It's about maintaining that success. You do that by winning games on the field."

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4-Star H-B Drennen Closing In On Decision

Continued From Page 20

Paris Johnson Jr. Transfers High Schools

To graduate early from high school and enroll early in college next spring, Ohio State 2020 five-star offensive tackle commitment Paris Johnson Jr. is transferring across Cincinnati from St. Xavier to Princeton.

While the practice is fairly common for college-bound football players, St. Xavier does not permit students to graduate early under any circumstances. Princeton head coach Mike Daniels confirmed the matter to BSB.

The 6-7½, 295-pound Johnson, the 247Sports composite's No. 7 overall prospect, No. 1 offensive tackle and No. 1 player in Ohio for 2020, pledged June 28, 2018, to the Buckeyes. He has, however, been involved with other schools since then, fielding interest and taking visits elsewhere since Dec. 4 when OSU announced the retirement of seven-year head coach Urban Meyer after the 2018 season.

With the Vikings, who went 3-7 in 2018 but will surely have higher expectations in the fall, Johnson joins two friends and top Ohio State targets in the 2020 four-star duo of defensive end Darrion Henry (6-6, 260) and outside linebacker Jaheim Thomas (6-5, 218). The trio has frequently taken visits together, such as to Alabama and Georgia, but also a March 30 trip to see the Buckeyes in which Day's photos with Johnson, Henry and Thomas went viral on Twitter.

Michael Drennen Nears End Of Recruitment

Late last June, Michael Drennen walked into the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, emerged from Urban Meyer's office with an offer and became one of Ohio State's top targets for the 2020 recruiting class.

Close to a year later, the four-star all-purpose back from nearby Dublin (Ohio) Coffman remains a priority pros-



MICHAEL DRENNEN/TWITTER

CLOSING TIME – Dublin (Ohio) Coffman four-star H-back Michael Drennen has been on Ohio State's radar for the past year and is set to make a decision in the coming months.

pects with Meyer's head-coaching baton passed to Day.

Living so close, Drennen has been to Ohio State frequently, and he has OSU atop his options.

"It's always great going to Ohio State because it's Ohio State," Drennen told BSB. "I'm from Ohio, so everybody's in my ear (saying), 'Ohio State, Ohio State.' I love Ohio State."

The 5-10½, 187-pounder has taken

visits to Ohio State for game days in the fall and several offseason return trips since then.

After he capped his Ohio Stadium experiences Nov. 24 when the Buckeyes beat Michigan 62-39, Drennen came back Dec. 15 with Dublin Coffman teammate and 2021 safety prospect A.J. Kirk (6-0, 200).

Drennen made two more return trips for spring camp in a three-day span

March 21 and 23, reconnecting with Day and running backs coach Tony Alford. His visits also included the April 13 spring game.

"Mostly, I'm not going to lie, I talk to Coach Day," Drennen said. "We text a lot. He's cool. He's a cool dude. Half the time we text – a lot of coaches text you mostly about football. We're just having normal conversations about life, for real, so he's a cool dude. I really like that."

With the play-calling duties as Ohio State's second-year offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach in 2018, Day's unit took off, featuring heavy doses for running backs and H-backs.

Drennen's potential future with the Buckeyes has been discussed at each spot.

While Alford wants Drennen to operate out of his room, he may get overruled by Day, who sees a player like the aforementioned Hill (6-0, 185) and redshirt freshman Jaelen Gill (6-0, 195) in the 247Sports composite's No. 199 overall prospect, No. 5 all-purpose back and No. 5 player from Ohio for 2020.

"Probably H-back," Drennen said of where he might end up. "Coach Alford, he's the running backs coach, so he wants me at running back. But I feel like (in) Coach Day's (offense), I feel like he thinks I'm more of an H-back, like a K.J. Hill or Jaelen Gill."

"I feel like I'm definitely a good running back. I've played running back my entire life. But when I do line up in the slot, I know what I'm doing and I feel very comfortable. I'm more comfortable than a lot of running backs (would be there), so I feel like that definitely sepa-

rates me from everybody else.”

Tennessee (Feb. 15) and Alabama (March 26) are among the southeast schools standing out for Drennen after he made recent visits, although his choices continue to include offers from regional programs such as Penn State (Dec. 12) and Notre Dame (Jan. 26).

“Alabama, that’s just – it’s Alabama,” Drennen said. “It’s much different from any other school, for sure. Tennessee, I love going to Tennessee. I’ve been to Tennessee (several times since) my freshman year, so it’s my dad’s favorite school and he loves seeing me in that uniform. I’m definitely getting back there, for sure.”

As he navigates his recruitment, Drennen looks to schedule all five official visits between the summer and fall.

“I’m going to try to do most of my officials in the summer, but I’m going to probably do two in the fall, so I can see a few games,” Drennen said. “I’m going to narrow (the offer list) down late spring, early summer.”

Until he makes his next move, which most likely will include hometown OSU, Drennen focuses on all-around improvement after he capped his junior campaign with sharpened versatility from running back to slot receiver.

“I feel like, since I’m playing with mostly people my age now, so I’m getting older,” Drennen said. “I just feel like I can see the game differently now. It’s much slower than when I was a freshman, and I just feel like I’m getting better overall – catching the ball, bursting, elusiveness, all of that.”

2021 In-State WR Becomes Top Target

Ohio State opened its one-day position camps June 9 of last year in Columbus with an eyebrow-raising offer to a rising sophomore wide receiver at the time.

After his standout performance against defensive players in the 2019 and 2020 recruiting classes, Jayden Ballard was a rare instance of an in-state underclassman on the Buckeyes’ board so early.

OSU’s only other 2021 scholarship extended in Ohio at the time was to Pickerington North defensive end Jack Sawyer (6-5, 220), who picked up his bid April 9, 2018, and committed Feb. 3.

Over the past 12 months, Ballard has quietly navigated the process. The 6-2, 175-pounder lets his game do the bulk of the talking.

He followed a breakout 2018 season at Massillon Washington, in which the Tigers went 14-1 overall, with an overpowering performance March 31 during The Opening Regional Canton inside the Paul L. David Athletic Training Center.

From intermediate routes to streaks downfield and jump balls, Ballard joined Martinez among the camp’s most dominant receivers on the day.

“(The Opening) was way harder than some of the corners I go against,” Ballard said. “They’re much bigger than I am.”

The Opening offered Ballard an opportunity to showcase his skills, and he did, recording a 4.08-second 20-yard shuttle and 33.30-inch vertical jump before clocking a 4.60-second 40-yard dash May 5 at Massillon Washington’s college showcase, the latter of which Ohio State attended.

“(The process) hasn’t been that tough,” Ballard said. “And I haven’t

been thinking about that (recruiting) stuff yet because I’m only a sophomore, so I’m just trying to keep going, moving forward.”

Ballard’s recruitment spiked after the Buckeyes entered the equation with roughly 20 offers in total, the latest from Oregon (Feb. 19) and Michigan State (May 8).

Beyond plans to see the Ducks at some point in the summer, Ballard’s involvement with home-state OSU has been active.

After gameday visits in the fall, the spring brought Ballard back to Ohio Stadium for the April 13 spring game, building the bond with Day and Hartline.

“I like them both a lot, Coach Hartline and Coach Day,” said Ballard, who has weekly communication with Day and Hartline, the latter of whom is also from Stark County as a North Canton, Ohio, native. “(Hartline is) personable.”

Prior to the annual scrimmage, Ballard stopped by campus Feb. 2 for junior day.

“(It was about) just talking to Coach Hartline and seeing more stuff,” Ballard said.

While he has potential down the road to become a top receiver at the next level, Ballard puts his recruitment on the back burner, working hard, knowing he has big shoes to fill in the Tigers’ 2019 campaign.

“Just getting really strong in the weight room and getting a little more faster,” Ballard said of the offseason focus before he enters his junior year. “Becoming

more of a go-to receiver. Without (2019 Michigan State wide receiver signee) Tre’Von Morgan, I’ll have to step up.”

Spring Evaluation Period Produces Myriad Offers

Day and coaches hit the road for the spring evaluation period in May and passed out numerous offers.

Among the bids, the following came for the 2020 class: Norfolk (Va.) Maury four-star wide receiver KeAndre Lambert (6-0½, 172); Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter’s Prep outside linebacker Cody Simon (6-1, 218); Draper (Utah) Juan Diego Catholic four-star defensive end Xavier Carlton (6-7, 262); The Colony, Texas, three-star safety Christian Gonzalez (6-1, 193); Chattanooga (Tenn.) McCallie School four-star defensive end Jay Hardy (6-4, 270); and River Ridge (La.) John Curtis three-star athlete Corey Wren (5-9, 170).

The bulk of the scholarship offers were for the 2021 recruiting cycle, including Kingsland (Ga.) Camden County athlete Shawn Hardy (6-3, 190); Grandview, Texas, tight end Dametrious Crownover (6-6, 235); Tampa (Fla.) Jefferson tight end Gage Wilcox (6-4, 228); Matthews (N.C.) Weddington all-purpose back Will Shipley (5-11, 198); Baltimore Mount Saint Joseph wide receiver Dont’e Thornton (6-4, 179); Denton (Texas) Ryan defensive end Ja’Tavion Sanders (6-3½, 220); Blairstown (N.J.) Blair Academy defensive end Aaron Armitage (6-4, 240); Henderson (Nev.) Liberty tight end Moliki Matavao (6-6, 240); Orem, Utah,

offensive tackle Kingsley Suamataia (6-5, 288); and Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal offensive tackle Cullen Montgomery (6-5, 290).

Aurora (Colo.) Cherokee Trail tight end Sam Hart (6-5, 225); Littleton (Colo.) Heritage tight end Terrance Ferguson (6-5, 220); Lexington (Ky.) Frederick Douglass offensive guard Jager Burton (6-3, 271); Fort Collins (Colo.) Fossil Ridge offensive tackle Trey Zuhn (6-5, 260); Westlake Village (Calif.) Oaks Christian athlete Ethan Calvert (6-3, 230); Upland, Calif., outside linebacker Jonathan Flowe (6-1, 195); Lakeville (Minn.) South offensive tackle Riley Mahlman (6-8, 260); Hyattsville (Md.) DeMatha linebacker Greg Penn (6-1, 225); Mountain Island Charter athlete Gabriel Stephens (6-3, 195); Miami Northwestern safety Kamren Kitchens (5-10, 174); and Ramseur (N.C.) Eastern Randolph athlete Kaemen Marley (6-2, 206) also landed offers from the Buckeyes in recent weeks.

More bids were offered for the class of 2022, including Kingsland (Ga.) Camden County running back Jamie Felix (5-10, 190); Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter’s Prep defensive end Keith Miles Jr. (6-3½, 261); Argyle (Texas) Liberty Christian safety Cristian Driver (5-11, 170); and Fort Worth (Texas) Nolan Catholic running back Emeka Megwa (6-0, 200).

For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers, daily.

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1989

While Sarasota, Fla., defensive back Chico Nelson and Mount Holly, N.J., linebacker Alonzo Spellman passed their college entrance exams, two other recruits from Ohio State’s 1989 class were in academic hot water.

San Diego linebacker Tyrone Morrison failed to pass his latest Scholastic Aptitude Test and took the exam again June 2, making him the only incoming recruit who had not satisfied the Prop 48 requirement. If he passed the test, he would maintain freshman eligibility.

Chillicothe, Ohio, defensive lineman Chuck Jones fell one-half credit short of high school graduation, and the Buckeyes were forced to withdraw his scholarship offer.

20 Years Ago – 1999

Signed to Ohio State’s 1999 recruiting class, Miami Killian offensive lineman Bryce Bishop (6-5, 315) was ready for life with the Buckeyes.

Despite some problems arising prior to National Signing Day in February – he had received an in-home visit Jan. 31 from OSU assistant coach Bill Conley during the NCAA-designated quiet period before official visits to nearby Miami and Florida State – Bishop never doubted his future in Columbus.

“I knew the whole time I was going to Ohio State,” Bishop said. “I just wanted to take all of my visits first.”

15 Years Ago – 2004

Ohio State’s 2005 recruiting class grew by two defensive linemen in May when Ryan Williams (6-5, 240) of Mission Viejo, Calif., and Todd Denlinger (6-3,

280) of Troy, Ohio, committed to the Buckeyes.

Williams and Denlinger joined Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward offensive lineman Alex Boone (6-8, 296); Lancaster, Ohio, offensive lineman Jim Cordle (6-5, 285); and Cleveland Glenville defensive back Jamario O’Neal (6-1, 190) as OSU’s early pledges.

“I’ve always wanted to be a Buckeye,” said Williams, who was born about an hour southwest of Columbus in Washington Court House before he and his family moved to California. “Ever since I was born, it was the team I wanted to play for.”

10 Years Ago – 2009

As the Buckeyes looked to build their 2010 recruiting class, they had two quarterbacks on the radar in Cincinnati Moeller’s Andrew Hendrix (6-3, 220) and Westlake Village (Calif.) Oaks Christian’s Nick Montana (6-1, 185).

Originally, Ohio State had told Montana – the son of Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana – that it would not offer another signal caller after head coach Jim Tressel did so Feb. 4. However, after the May 24 offer to Hendrix, Montana was still considering OSU.

“I know there’s a lot of speculation and everything that they’re dropping (on my list) because they offered another quarterback, but they’re not at all,” Montana said. “I talked to Coach Tressel about it. I told them, ‘I’m not going to think any less of you guys because you have to do what you have to do.’”

Five Years Ago – 2014

Ohio State ended a drought of nearly

four months on the recruiting trail May 27 when Plains (Ohio) Athens quarterback Joe Burrow (6-4, 210) committed to the Buckeyes’ 2015 class.

The move marked OSU’s first pledge since Feb. 11, as Burrow stayed home over offers from West Virginia and Michigan, among others.

“It was huge,” said Burrow, who was the nation’s No. 26 quarterback at the time. “It was a big monkey off my back to finally commit, especially to a great school like Ohio State. The opportunity to win multiple national championships is great. My family and I have talked about that over the last couple of weeks and said if they do offer, that’s great, I will commit. And if they don’t, so be it. But it happened.”

One Year Ago – 2018

While the Buckeyes pursued Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange’s Zach Harrison – the 247Sports composite’s No. 2 overall prospect at the time for the 2019 recruiting class – the five-star defensive end’s quiet personality kept Ohio State’s recruitment in the shadows.

With offers from Clemson, Michigan and Penn State, among others, Harrison (6-6, 240) had OSU among the favorites as defensive line coach Larry Johnson led the process.

“The defensive line pedigree is something that, obviously, gets (Harrison’s) attention from what they’ve done recently,” Olentangy Orange head coach Zebb Schroeder told BSB. “The success the program has had and the relevance, not only on a local scale but also on a national scale. I think he understands that Coach (Urban) Meyer runs an elite program. That’s Ohio State. Ohio State is a traditional, elite program, and so are the other three or four schools recruiting him.”

Comfort With Coaches Led To Diallo's Pledge

By **ANDREW LIND**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State put the finishing touches on its Big Ten-best 2019 recruiting class April 19 when Napa (Calif.) Prolific Prep three-star center Ibrahima Diallo issued his letter of intent.

The 7-0, 200-pound Diallo – who is considered the 54th-best center and No. 291 prospect overall in his class – had committed to the Buckeyes just a few days prior over offers from DePaul, Florida State, Pittsburgh and South Florida.

He was a late addition to the class but became a top priority for head coach Chris Holtmann following freshman forward Jaedon LeDee's transfer to TCU.

"I really like the coaches," Diallo told BSB. "All coaches are going to tell you the same thing, but the way we connected – I really don't know how to explain it."

Diallo, a native of Senegal who moved by himself to United States in 2016, caught the eye of the staff during the 17th annual Flyin' to the Hoop Basketball Invitational in Dayton in January. He then visited campus for the first and only time the weekend of March 10, at which time he watched Ohio State overcome a 23-point deficit to Wisconsin in the final home game of the year. And

though the Buckeyes ultimately lost in overtime, Diallo came away impressed with the program nonetheless.

Prior to the game, Diallo spent a considerable amount of time with Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith and student assistant coach Greg Oden. And afterward, he landed an offer from the Buckeyes.

Over the next few weeks, Holtmann and his staff focused on the NCAA Tournament. But following Ohio State's second-round loss to Houston, the third-year head coach boarded a plane and visited Diallo in California.

It was at that moment Diallo knew he wanted to be a Buckeye.

"That meant a lot," Diallo said. "For the head coach to travel all the way out to see me, that's something that means a lot to me. It was great."

Diallo admitted he briefly had second thoughts following the departure of assistant coach Mike Schrage, who on April 5 accepted a job as Elon's head coach. But assistant Ryan Pedon followed that up with a flight of his own to California, which reassured Diallo he was making the right choice.

"(Schrage) was the main one recruit-

ing me," Diallo said, noting he understood Schrage's decision to lead his own program, "but I'd been talking to all the other coaches, so it didn't have a huge impact."

After a phone call to his parents back in Senegal, Diallo made the staff aware of his intentions.

"It's really tough to be far away from my family," Diallo said, explaining how his family was involved in every step of the recruiting process despite the distance from home. "Any school I talked to, they knew about it. They know every step I take in my life. They were very excited for me."

"The coaches were really, really excited, too. They just told me they can't wait to get me on campus."

Bellefonte (Pa.) West four-star power forward E.J. Liddell; Bettendorf, Iowa, four-star point guard D.J. Carton; Wolfeboro (N.H.) Brewster Academy four-star small forward Alonzo Gaffney; and Diallo not only combine to make up the Big Ten's best recruiting class, but also the No. 9 overall class in the country, according to 247Sports. And though the four aren't set to enroll in classes until later in June, they have

already grown close through countless text messages.

"We talk all the time," Diallo said. "They're my guys. They were telling me multiple times to commit and that I wouldn't be sorry about it."

There's no doubt Diallo – who averaged 11.3 points, 10.8 rebounds and 3.5 blocks per game as a senior – is the least-heralded member of the group and he remains pretty raw on the offensive side of the ball. But his 7-9 wingspan and imposing presence will make him a valuable tool on defense and on the glass.

"Ibrahima is a terrific young man and young big with upside and potential," Holtmann said. "He has been coached well and has played against quality competition. His measurables speak for themselves, but we were also really struck by his maturity in the recruiting process."

"As with most freshmen, especially bigs, we understand there will be a process to his development. Having said that, we are really excited about what his future holds."

Diallo will likely serve as the backup to junior center Kaleb Wesson, who tested the NBA draft waters but recently announced his decision to return to school for at least one more season.

"I know one thing," Diallo said. "I'm going to give my best every game."



Ibrahima Diallo

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OSU vs. Nebraska: Sept. 25-30 – 5-night motorcoach trip with 1 overnight in each direction: 1 night at Juner's Castle Casino in Rock Island, Ill.; 3 nights at the Embassy Suites in Omaha, Neb., with breakfast daily, city tour of Lincoln, game tickets and transportation; and 1 night on return at the Marriott Pere Marquette in Peoria, Ill. \$1,199 pp based on two to a room. **Also offering air trip Sept. 26-29** with roundtrip air from Columbus to Omaha and 3 nights at the Embassy Suites in Omaha with breakfast daily, game tickets and transportation, and city tour of Lincoln. \$1,449 pp. Land only package available for Omaha portion.

OSU vs. Northwestern: Oct. 17-20 – 3 nights motorcoach trip to Chicago with game on Friday nights permitting extra free time in Chicago with 3 nights in downtown Westin Magnificent Mile Hotel in the center of downtown Chicago with breakfast daily, game tickets and transportation and Mafia themed tour of Chicago. \$979 pp based on two to a room. **Also offering air trip Oct. 17-20** with 3 nights in Chicago at the

Westin Magnificent Mile Hotel in the center of downtown Chicago with breakfast daily, game tickets in Ohio State section with transportation, roundtrip airport transportation and Mafia themed tour of Chicago. \$1,289 pp based on two to a room. Land only package is available.

OSU vs. Rutgers: Nov. 14-17 – 3 night motorcoach trip to New York with 3 nights accommodations in the heart of Manhattan at the Sheraton Times Square with breakfast daily, Tour of Hudson River Valley, game tickets with transportation. \$1,149 pp based on two to a room. **Also offering air trip from Nov. 14-17** with 3 nights at the Sheraton Times Square with breakfast daily, airport transportation roundtrip, tour of the Hudson River Valley, game ticket and transportation. \$1,589 pp based on two to a room. Land only package is available.

OSU vs. Michigan, "Big Game in the Big House": Nov. 29-30 – 1 night motorcoach trip with accommodations for Friday night at the MGM Resort and Casino in Detroit including breakfast on Saturday and game ticket with return to Columbus after the game. \$609 pp based on two to a room.

Reds vs. Indians trip: July 6-7, 2019 – motorcoach trip and overnight in Cincinnati including two games with club seating. \$489 pp based on two/room.

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2019 COLUMBUS CLIPPERS SCHEDULE

APRIL						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
				IND 6:05	IND 6:05	IND 6:05
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
IND 2:05	LOU 6:05	LOU 6:05	LOU 11:35 AM	@DUR 6:35	@DUR 7:05	@DUR 6:35
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
@DUR 5:05	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 11:00 AM	@LOU 7:00	@TOL 7:05	@TOL 5:05
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
@TOL 2:05		NOR 6:35	NOR 6:35	NOR 11:35 AM	DUR 7:15	DUR 7:15
28	29	30	Dime-A-Dog Mondays and Selected Tuesdays			
DUR 2:05	@IND 7:05	@IND 11:05 AM				

MAY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
STAR WARS NIGHT May 25			1	2	3	4
			@IND 1:35	@TOL 6:35	@TOL 7:05	@TOL 5:05
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
@TOL 1:05		CHA 6:35	CHA 6:35	CHA 6:35	SYR 7:15	SYR 7:15
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
SYR 2:05		@PAW 6:05	@PAW 6:05	@PAW 11:05 AM	@SYR 6:35	@SYR 1:05
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
@SYR 1:05		TOL 6:35	TOL 6:35	TOL 11:35 AM	IND 7:15	IND 7:15
26	27	28	29	30	31	
IND 2:05	IND 2:05	@NOR 6:35	@NOR 6:35	@NOR 12:05	@DUR 7:05	

JUNE						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Celebrate our Clippers 10th season Anniversary All-Star Team at Huntington Park on Bobblehead Tuesdays						1
						@DUR 6:35
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
@DUR 5:05	TOL 7:05	TOL 7:05	TOL 7:05	NOR 7:05	NOR 7:15	NOR 7:15
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
NOR 2:05		@ROC 7:05	@ROC 7:05	@ROC 12:35	@LHV 7:05	@LHV 6:35
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
@LHV 1:35		ROC 7:05	ROC 7:05	ROC 12:05	LHV 7:15	LHV 7:15
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
LHV 2:05	TOL 7:05	TOL 7:05	@IND 7:05	@IND 7:05	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 6:30
30	#ClipShow					
@LOU 2:00	  					

JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	@TOL 7:05	@TOL 7:05	@TOL 7:05	LOU 7:05	LOU 7:15	LOU 7:15
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
LOU 2:05				IND 7:05	IND 7:15	IND 7:15
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
IND 4:05	@SWB 7:05	@SWB 7:05	@SWB 12:05	@SWB 7:05	@BUF 7:05	@BUF 6:05
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
@BUF 1:05		SWB 7:05	SWB 7:05	SWB 12:05	GWN 7:15	GWN 7:15
28	29	30	31	Celebrate Military & First Responders Every Tuesday		
GWN 4:05	@IND 7:05	@IND 7:05	LOU 7:05			

AUGUST						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Every Wednesday are \$1 days on special items				1	2	3
				LOU 7:05	@IND 7:15	@IND 7:05
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
@IND 1:35		PAW 7:05	PAW 7:05	PAW 12:05	BUF 7:15	BUF 7:15
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
BUF 4:05		@GWN 7:05	@GWN 7:05	@GWN 7:05	@CHA 7:04	@CHA 7:04
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
@CHA 5:05	LOU 6:35	LOU 6:35	LOU 6:35	LOU 6:35	TOL 7:15	TOL 7:15
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
TOL 4:05	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 7:00	@LOU 7:00	@IND 7:15	@IND 6:05

SEPTEMBER

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

1 @TOL 6:05 2 @TOL 1:05

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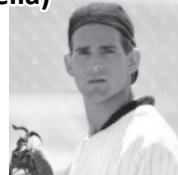
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Wesson Returns After Testing NBA Draft Waters

The May 28 announcement by the Ohio State men's basketball team that center Kaleb Wesson would return for his junior season didn't qualify as breaking news.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

It would have been shocking if the release said anything else because there weren't many factors favoring him to declare for the June 20 NBA draft. He had entered his name for the draft on April 10, but doing so did not jeopardize his remaining two years of eligibility once he withdrew.

What it allowed Wesson to do was put out feelers among people in the league to see where he stood in the two-round draft. He was not listed on the mock drafts, which was not a complete surprise.

Wesson needs to mature on and off the court, and another season at Ohio State surrounded by head coach Chris Holtmann's deepest and best roster in his three seasons can only benefit Wesson.

He was an honorable-mention All-Big Ten selection in 2018-19 after leading the Buckeyes (20-15) with 14.6 points and 6.9 rebounds per game, but he was suspended the final three games of the regular season for unspecified violations of athletic department policy.

Also, Wesson was kept out of his second college game in 2017-18 for being late to team meetings, and he and three teammates were scratched from the starting lineup early last season against Samford for being late to the pregame preparation.

"He and his family really went about this process in a great way," Holtmann said in the

release. "We stayed in regular communication, and I know he and his family appreciated the feedback they received from the NBA advisory committee as well as NBA organizations. As we begin the work ahead for the 2019-20 season, I know Kaleb understands the work ahead and I know he is anxious to join his teammates."

Wesson (6-9, 270) continues to shape his body to get NBA-ready and has shown more mobility, quickness and range each season at OSU. The process began in high school when he dropped more than 40 pounds between his junior and senior years to about 280 pounds.

A positive of his staying put is a chance to play one more season with his brother, senior-to-be forward Andre Wesson. The siblings led Westerville South in suburban Columbus to a Division I state title in Andre's senior season in 2016.

For the Buckeyes, Kaleb Wesson's presence will put them in position for a third straight NCAA Tournament with a team that has seven returnees and adds four freshmen from a recruiting class of four that ranks 13th nationally and first in the Big Ten according to the 247Sports composite. Also, C.J. Walker, a transfer point guard from Florida State who sat out last season, will be eligible.

Position specific, Ohio State was thin in the post, especially as sophomore Kyle Young struggled through injuries in the second half of the season.

Incoming freshman Ibrahima Diallo from Napa (Calif.) Prolific Prep is raw and will need time to get bulk on his 7-0, 200-pound frame, so having Kaleb Wesson around will allow him time to develop.

If there's a reason, outside of the obvious money-making opportunities, that Wesson might be eager to move to the next level it's because his game is better suited to the more physical NBA. The Big Ten plays rough, but he spent last season frustrated by constantly

being in foul trouble and it led to him being his worst enemy at times with off-the-ball infractions, especially early in games.

He fouled out in five of the final 17 conference games (including the tournament) and had four fouls in four others. Wesson committed a foul once every 8.04 minutes and averaged 3.21 fouls a game. Andre Wesson's numbers were 10.38 and 2.86.

Another Player On Board

The Buckeyes added another player on May 22 when California forward Justice Sueing transferred after two seasons with the Golden Bears. He will sit out the 2019-20 season to comply with the NCAA transfer rules and have two years of eligibility beginning with the 2020-21 season.

The 6-7, 217-pound Honolulu native led California last season in scoring (14.3) and rebounding (6.0). Sueing was second on the Golden Bears as a freshman with 13.8 points and 5.4 rebounds.

"We are excited about the addition of Justice to our program," Holtmann said. "He brings experience, positional versatility, ability to score as well as a natural ability to impact the game in a variety of ways. He is hungry to continue to grow and develop as a player."

The Golden Bears last season were 8-23 overall and last in the Pac-12 at 3-15, leading to the firing of coach Wyking Jones. Sueing announced his intention to transfer shortly after the hiring of Mark Fox.

"I want to thank God for blessing me with this opportunity," Sueing said on Twitter. "I also want to thank my family, friends and coaches that have supported me throughout this journey as well."

He was a three-star recruit out of Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei and the 45th-best power forward in the class of 2017, per the 247Sports composite.

The Buckeyes' other newcomers to the roster next season in addition to Sueing and Diallo are three four-star freshmen – point guard D.J. Carton and forwards E.J. Liddell and Alonzo Gaffney.

Following In The Footsteps

If all goes as planned, power forward Kaleb Etzler (6-8, 195) will follow his uncle, Doug Etzler, to Ohio State.

The younger Etzler, a junior at Convoy (Ohio) Crestview, verbally committed May 12 to the Buckeyes for the class of 2021.

"All throughout my life I've dreamed of playing Division I basketball, and I am blessed to have the opportunity to pursue those dreams. After some time talking to my family, coaches and friends, I am proud to announce that I will be staying in my home state and continuing my academic and basketball career at The Ohio State University," he post-

ed on Twitter.

Kalen Etzler is Holtmann's first 2021 commit. The four-star prospect is the No. 2 player in Ohio for that cycle according to 247Sports. He and his brother, Javin, who will be an incoming freshman for Miami (Ohio), helped Crestview to the Division IV state title in March.

Doug Etzler played for OSU from 1992-95 and as captain his senior year averaged 16.3 points per game. He was named Crestview's coach on May 8 and will coach his nephew (Kalen) in the gym named for Doug's father, Ray Etzler, who retired as Crestview's coach in 1994 after 28 seasons.

Bring On The Big Boys

Fans who've complained about soft pre-season schedules at home will have less to gripe about this season after it was announced May 29 that the Buckeyes will host Villanova on Nov. 13 as part of the Gavitt Tipoff Games.

The Wildcats, the 2016 and 2018 national champions, were 26-10 last season and mirrored OSU in bowing out in the second round of the NCAA Tournament. No time has been set for the game which honors Big East founder Dave Gavitt.

OSU is 2-0 in the Gavitt Games with wins against Providence in 2016 and Creighton in 2018. The Buckeyes are 2-1 all-time vs. Villanova.

Prior to facing the Wildcats, the Buckeyes host Cincinnati in the season opener on a date to be determined.

While the full preseason schedule has not been released, the Buckeyes will also play an ACC opponent in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge, Kentucky in Las Vegas on Dec. 21 in the CBSSports Challenge, and West Virginia on Dec. 29 at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in the inaugural Cleveland Classic.

OSU Makes Top Three

Keon Johnson, the top 2020 prospect in Tennessee according to 247Sports, has Ohio State among his three finalists along with Tennessee and 2019 NCAA champion Virginia.

The 6-5, 180-pounder from Bell Buckle (Tenn.) Webb School said he will announce his college choice on Aug. 6. He is the No. 7 shooting guard in the country and 30th-rated player nationally.

The four-star recruit averaged 24.6 points, 8.6 rebounds, 3.2 assists, 3.0 steals and 2.4 blocks this past season. He is a two-time Tennessee Division II-A Mr. Basketball winner and was named the The Tennessean's Boys Basketball Player of the Year on May 31.

His mother, Conswella Sparrow Johnson, was a two-time Class AAA Miss Basketball at Shelbyville, Tenn., in 1994 and 1995 and later a two-time All-SEC player at Auburn.



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"Your Head to Toe Buckeye Source"

Former Walk-On Lineman Earns Scholarship

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It is rare for a walk-on to earn a scholarship at a powerhouse program such as Ohio State, and when one earns a scholarship, it is much celebrated. In recent years, videos of creative scholarship announcements for walk-ons became popular on Facebook and Twitter.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day showed knowledge of his personnel when opting not to award fifth-year senior offensive lineman Kevin Woidke his hard-earned scholarship in an over-the-top fashion.

Following a team workout, assistant running backs coach Eric Miscuda told Woidke that Day wanted to see him in his office. When Woidke walked in, the scholarship papers were on the coach's desk.

From Day's office, Woidke made his way to the locker room, where an intuitive teammate, fifth-year defensive tackle Jashon Cornell, grew suspicious.

"I walk in the locker room and Jashon saw the paperwork," Woidke told BSB. "I wasn't going to tell really anybody, and then I walk in and Jashon saw the paperwork and he just gave me a big smile and started freaking out."

"I had the paper all folded up and I don't know how he could tell, but he did, and then everyone came up and congratulated me, so it was cool. You see like all the other kids where a police officer walks in and pretends to read a warrant and it's just a scholarship – I'm just not that kind of person."

The scholarship did not come out of nowhere, but Woidke was surprised by

the timing of it. The Cleveland native had high hopes but did not expect anything until after spring camp.

"I went up to him after a mat drill and just told him my goal is to earn a scholarship this next year and it doesn't matter when it happens," Woidke recalled. "It was what I was trying to do and I just wanted to make sure he knew that. He appreciated it. And a week and a half later it showed up, so that was perfect."

Woidke's parents, Clare and Jim, were overjoyed by the news of their middle son earning a scholarship at Ohio State, a testament to his hard work. The news did not come as a complete surprise, either, because of a conversation Kevin Woidke had with offensive line coach Greg Studrawa.

"There was always hope because Coach Stud had said something about a year ago," Clare Woidke said. "He's like, 'If a scholarship becomes available, I want you to get it. I will talk to Coach (Urban) Meyer.'"

Even though the Scarlet and Gray transitioned from Meyer to Day at the helm, Woidke stayed on track to earn a scholarship if the opportunity presented itself. The timing worked out because Ohio State had a scholarship opening for Woidke for the spring semester.

While Woidke was excited about earning a scholarship, he was also relieved because he became nervous when he heard, "Coach Day wants to see you in his office now."

"He handled it exactly how I would

have wanted it to be handled," Woidke said of Day. "He didn't make a big deal about it. He called me in, he was like, 'All right, here's the scholarship. We're able to give it to you but we need this, this and this from you in terms of you need to make sure you go hard, you need to definitely get into the two-deep, try and battle for a starting position, and then keep working and not making any core-value issues.'"

Being a backup on the depth chart is important to earn a scholarship for the Buckeyes. Woidke spent the majority of spring camp competing with the second-team offensive line, playing guard due to injuries among the O-line.

"It was cool," Woidke (6-6, 305) said of playing guard. "It was definitely different. It was my first time in my whole football career – college or high school – that I had to play guard. I'm not used to pulling and I'm obviously a taller guy. I don't really play as low as I usually should."

"But we were really depleted, you could tell we didn't have a lot of people in there, especially at guard. We had way more tackles than guards so Coach Stud asked me to move down to guard because he knew I could do it after last fall camp."

Injuries on the offensive line forced Woidke into action at guard for a few practices before the 2018 season, helping him gain his coach's trust that he would help out wherever possible.

Helping his teammates is a part of who Woidke is, going back to his time at Cleveland St. Ignatius. Following

the news of Woidke's scholarship, St. Ignatius head coach Chuck Kyle, who has won an Ohio-record 11 Division I state championships, spoke highly of the former Wildcat.

"It's a great tribute to the kind of young man he is," Kyle said. "He's helped the team every way he can. The coaches will tell you that. He's worked his way up to where he's battling at the second-team offensive line. He's quite deserving. He's earned it. We're very proud of him."

Woidke has come a long way since his days at one of the nation's premier prep schools, where he took a while to get acclimated.

"When I came in we had 106 kids on the freshman team, and I was the 106th kid off the bench," Woidke recalled. "I was awful, and then somehow started my junior varsity year. I was literally the last kid to get off the bench. I'm pretty sure my buddy who is in med school right now got in the game before me. And he is the least athletic kid I've ever met in my entire life."

After playing junior varsity as a sophomore, Woidke started for two years at tackle for the Wildcats, making him one of few juniors to start. He progressed from bench warmer to starter at St. Ignatius and helped lead the Wildcats to the playoffs as a senior.

Woidke received multiple scholarship offers from FCS schools, such as Fordham and Indiana State. An excellent student, Woidke also garnered interest from Ivy League schools, including Columbia, where current Ohio State defensive quality control coach Matt Thurin had previously recruited him.

Without any major offers, Woidke



Kevin Woidke



SONNY BROCKWAY

NEXT IN LINE – Walk-on-turned-scholarship offensive lineman Kevin Woidke (No. 63) played a game-high 64 snaps during Ohio State's annual spring game on April 13. He also lined up at left tackle during extra-point attempts and the Buckeyes' lone field-goal try.

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

considered both pursuing a collegiate football career and hanging up the cleats. A text message from former Ohio State walk-on linebacker Kyle Berger, who was Woidke's high school teammate, changed his life.

"I'm sitting in my basement senior year of high school, end of October, so the season's starting to wind down," Woidke recalled. "I get a text from Kyle out of the blue saying, 'Hey, what do you think about walking on? What are your plans for next year?' I was like, 'Nothing, really. I'm still kind of looking around.' He goes, 'What do you think about walking on here?' I said, 'That would be awesome.'"

Former Ohio State offensive coordinator and offensive line coach Ed Warinner had taken an interest in Woidke but could not reach out to him at the time because of coach-recruit contact rules.

Woidke enrolled at Ohio State in June 2015, and the road to earning a scholarship demanded hard work and perseverance from the Cleveland native.

Woidke was dead set on becoming a dentist at the time, and he talked about the difficulties of transitioning into an Ohio State football player. With the stresses of balancing everything, including challenging coursework, Woidke questioned what he had gotten himself into.

While he was struggling to adjust to his new life, Berger offered words of encouragement, telling him to push through the tough times because better days were ahead. Woidke's parents raised him to stick to his word and stay strong amid adversity.

"As a parent, there's a good kind of struggle," Clare Woidke said. "If you're struggling because you're growing so much, emotionally, cognitively, physically and you're stretching yourself, that's a good kind of struggle. You'll be better for that, so that's kind of always been our attitude as parents."

Woidke decided to pursue other options for a major but stuck it out on the gridiron. Once he got through his first summer, Woidke never looked back, excelling in the classroom and grinding to see the field on Saturdays.

Through four years Woidke locked up four OSU Scholar-Athlete honors. Studying commercial real estate and urban analysis, he earned Academic All-Big Ten accolades the past two seasons.

As a Buckeye, Woidke has enjoyed the advantages of Real Life Wednesdays and networking opportunities. Ryan Stamper, the assistant athletic director in charge of player development, assists the players in that regard, and Woidke has taken advantage of the opportunities he may not have had elsewhere.

"That's what's cool," Woidke said of OSU's player development program. "Definitely Stamp's done a great job with that. Everywhere you go you're going

to maybe get an internship through the program, but not like this where they have the job fair. Stamp does a great job with that."

In addition to academic success and helpful career networking, Woidke improved to the point where he became an on-field contributor.

As a redshirt sophomore, Woidke cracked the Buckeyes' special teams lineup at "Rocker," which is the position between the tackle and the wing on field goals and extra points. Woidke played in 12 games in 2017, including the final nine, and 14 games in 2018.

Stepping up as a leader and performing well in his special teams role helped give Woidke national recognition. He was nominated for the Burlsworth Trophy, which goes to the most outstanding FBS college football player who began his career as a walk-on.

"It meant a lot," Woidke said of being nominated. "(Ohio State communications director) Jerry Emig set that up for me. He asks the coaches who's put in the effort to deserve the nomination. Even if you just get nominated, you get a plaque and everything, you get your name in the magazine and stuff. So it's definitely really cool and it was awesome to get to see that my coaches and Jerry obviously appreciated me."

To see his hard work pay off was rewarding to both Woidke and his parents, who were both athletes themselves. Jim and Clare played basketball, with Jim at Case Western and Clare at Georgetown. Clare was impressed with how walk-ons are treated at Ohio State, being a D-I powerhouse.

"The kids that are walk-ons get all the same gear, they get the same food, they're one team," Clare Woidke said. "And that's such a great culture as a parent for me. I think it's such a great culture for you to have that age athlete, where you teach them the whole culture is, 'Hey, things are earned.'"

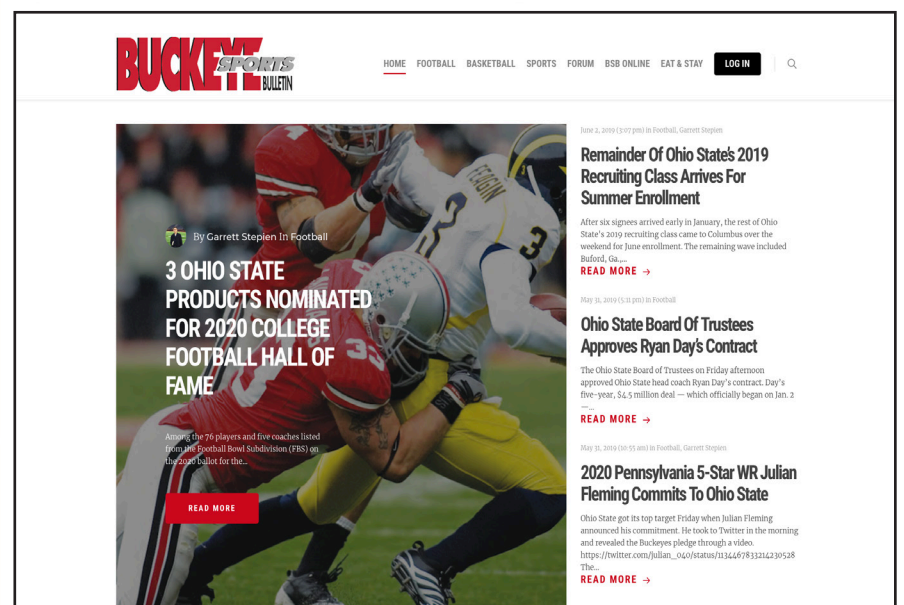
It has been four years since his parents told him to get through his first season and then decide if we would stay on the team. The Woidke family is thrilled he stuck it out and learned valuable lessons from his journey.

"I don't know enough about college football in terms of how other programs appreciate their walk-ons and that kind of thing," Clare Woidke, who was a three-sport athlete at Cleveland St. Joseph Academy and was inducted into that school's hall of fame, said. "But at Ohio State, it's like it doesn't matter if you're a walk-on or a five-star recruit, you have to work your butt off."

"You earn what you get. It isn't just because of your scholarship; you automatically earn this time. If a walk-on does things to earn reps or whatever, they respect that. It's really such a credit to the program."

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LHP Morgan Ray Caps Excellent Collegiate Career



OHIO STATE SOFTBALL/TWITTER

FLAMETHROWER – Former Ohio State pitcher Morgan Ray posted a team-best 18 wins and became the first Buckeye in 12 years to throw multiple no-hitters in the same season. She will continue to play softball on the professional level in the Czech Republic.

By **JOE DEMPSEY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In high school, Morgan Ray threw 10 no-hitters at Frenchtown, Mont., but she entered her senior season at Ohio State without accomplishing the feat collegiately.

Early in her senior campaign, Ray combined to throw a no-hitter with sophomore righthander Skylar Hayward against Army. Hayward went the first five innings, and Ray shut down the last two.

While the no-hit performance from the right-handed duo was impressive, two hitless innings from Ray is nothing to write home about. After all, she tossed 10 no-hitters as a prepster and two shutouts in both her sophomore and junior seasons at Ohio State.

She enjoyed a solid start to the season, but Ray took it to the next level in the second game of a doubleheader at Portland State on March 12.

"She warmed up really well, but the weather was really cold," sophomore catcher Claire Nicholson said of Ray. "It was raining and it was freezing outside, so we were kind of adjusting to that. And she came out and she was just unreal. Every pitch was working, she was throwing super hard and she just looked great on the mound, really comfortable."

Ray rolled through all seven innings, allowing four walks with six strikeouts in a 7-0 no-hit victory.

"At Portland State, they didn't have it on the scoreboard, she didn't know what was going on," head coach Kelly Kovach Schoenly said of Ray. "So I go up to her after the game, I'm like, 'You did it!' And she's like, 'I did what?' She had no idea."

"It's kind of fun that it's not about her in her head, she's not keeping track of hits and all the stuff. But that day – she has the ability to throw it strictly past people – but she was moving the ball really well and they had some good hitters that she was being super careful about, pitching on the corners and doing a good job. In general, she's just a quality pitcher with a lot of ways to beat people."

Softball is a superstitious sport. Perhaps it was a blessing that Ray didn't know she was amid a no-hit performance.

"I think when you do know is when you jinx it," Ray said of no-hitters. "I've had a couple times where I find out in the middle of the game and of course, the next batter gets a hit or whatever."

"I didn't know and it was fun because when I don't know that means that I'm cruising and doing pretty well, so I wasn't really focused on that. I was kind of just focused on having fun with my team, and then it happened at the end and it was pretty fun."

Ray notched her second career no-hitter in a 9-0, run-rule win in five innings against Illinois at Buckeye Field on April 26. She allowed just one walk in the fifth inning and became the first Buckeye in 12 years to toss two no-hitters in the same season.

Ray is a very team-oriented individual, earning the respect of her peers and coaches for both her ability and attitude.

"She's a really good leader on this team," Nicholson said of Ray. "A lot of people look up to her, and she's always positive. Nothing out of her mouth is ever negative, which is really nice to have a teammate like that who you can look to. She works really hard to make relationships with every person on the team, so she knows each of us really well."

She's proven to be an excellent pitcher and teammate, but how did a young woman from Frenchtown and its population of 1,825 become the ace at Ohio State?

Schoenly had gone out to California to recruit a different player, but Ray's Washington-based travel team was at the same tourney. Ray struck out the player whom Schoenly was recruiting three times, immediately grabbing the coach's attention with her "really live wrist."

Ray came to Columbus for the size, culture and tradition of Ohio State. Also a solid student, Ray has earned Easton/National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-America Scholar-Athlete honors each year and was a Big Ten Distinguished Scholar as a junior.

After graduating with a degree in health sciences and a minor in Spanish, Ray wants

to play professional softball overseas. She also plans on earning her master's in health administration.

As a freshman, Ray went 3-2 and finished third on the team with 63 innings pitched. While she was serviceable in the circle, her 4.00 ERA and 46 strikeouts left more to be desired.

"Thinking of all four years as a whole, one thing I've noticed about Morgan is she trained all year long," Schoenly told BSB. "So the training that she put in in September, October and November is what makes her capable to throw the amount of innings she throws now. She trains at a different level to me. Strength and her ability to get the most out of her body – that has made her the dominant pitcher that she is and that she's able to throw that many innings."

As a sophomore, Ray finished second on the team with a 2.35 ERA and third with 62½ innings. She showed drastic improvement, posting a team-best .217 batting average against and throwing two complete-game shutouts in a 6-5 season.

With another offseason of her relentless workout regimen, Ray took another giant step as a junior. She finished the season with a team-high 18 wins, 13 complete games, two shutouts and 157½ innings.

Ray earned NFCA All-Midwest Region second-team honors, finishing third in the Big Ten with a .197 opposing batting average, fifth in wins, seventh in strikeouts (145) and ninth in ERA (2.58).

In addition to enhancing her physical abilities, Ray sharpened her mind as well. She worked with sports psychologists, learning how to handle her nerves and elevate her game when it matters most. Ray said some of her toughest outings were where she learned the most.

"I think that's something that unfortunately comes with failure, which is inevitable in our game," Ray told BSB. "You're going to fail and so I think that's one thing that I've been really working on is learning from those mistakes. Not making it bigger than it is, putting the game in perspective and just slowing the game down and taking each

batter one at a time is the main thing. I would make it this big deal, 'Oh my gosh, I lost the game for my team,' when there's a lot of things that go into one win or one loss."

"So I think just being able to put it in perspective and like Coach Jordan (Clark) always says, 'When crap hits the fan, turn the fan off.' That's one thing I say in my head, 'Turn the fan off.' Everything's just adding on, adding on. Rather than letting it spiral, turn it off, put it in perspective and stay in the moment."

Mentally and physically prepared for her final season as a Buckeye, Ray excelled in the circle, posting an 18-10 record with a 2.22 ERA in 186 innings.

Schoenly noticed Ray's improvement in dealing with the pressures of certain situations.

"I've seen her multiple times where she feels it coming on, the moments getting big, and she'll either tell me to come out and talk to her, or she'll call the catcher out or she'll talk to her second baseman," Schoenly said of Ray. "She is a very aware player of how her heart rate is going, how the game is going and it's just elite the way she's able to sense it."

Ohio State faced a talented North Carolina team May 17, in its first NCAA tournament game, but Ray was up to the task. She delivered a two-hit, complete-game shutout, and the Buckeyes won 1-0.

The shutout marked Ray's eighth of the season and the complete game was No. 16 for the senior. Opposing batters hit just .173 off her, and she totaled 192 strikeouts while ranking No. 17 in the nation in hits allowed per seven innings at 4.18.

"It was my goal when I was younger, I've always wanted to be the one who was the go-to," Ray said. "I think at this point I've really put a lot of time in to try and get there and to be the person that everyone trusts or the person that people want out there."

"I think just working my butt off to get here, but also I want to play the game. We're here to play a game and have fun, and I like going out there and being able to be there for my team."

Myles Martin Bounces Back With High Expectations

By **JOE DEMPSEY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Myles Martin did not end his historic Ohio State career the way he wanted, but even at his lowest point, he showed what Myles Martin is all about. Already a three-time All-American and a national champ, Martin entered his senior season as the person to beat at 184 pounds.

He didn't just coast to an undefeated regular season and Big Ten title, he dominated his way there. The Penns Grove, N.J., native notched four pins, four tech falls and five major decisions on his way to a 20-0 record entering the NCAA championships, where Martin was the favorite.

With all eyes on him and the Buckeyes hoping to make a push at Penn State for the national team title, Martin lost to Cornell's Max Dean in the semifinals. The Big Red 184-pounder is an excellent wrestler in his own right, but Martin had already handled him with ease twice in the past four months – a 17-7 major decision at the Cliff Keen Invitational and a 13-6 victory in a dual meet at Cornell.

"I think it was just me being overconfident, knowing that I was going to win the match," Martin told BSB. "I didn't see a way that I was going to lose the match."

Martin said that in the 100 scenarios of how the match might go in his head, all 100 were victories. After the crushing defeat, Martin was straight-up stunned.

"I've never felt that before because even when I lost, I didn't know how to feel because I just felt drained," Martin said. "And then I didn't expect it to happen, like I was literally in shock."

To add to the physical and mental toll of his unexpected defeat, the 6-1 Martin weighed in 11 pounds above weight following the match.

At this point Martin could have easily said he was injured, like his opponents had done to avoid him in the past, and called it a collegiate career.

But that's not what Myles Martin is about.

"You just suck it up and you do it for the team," Martin said. "You come back, you take third. And it was tough to do. And it was just kind of cool that everyone stood up when I won and stuff, but it still hurt."

"It still sucked. Because even after I took third, I'm like, 'I shouldn't have been there. I shouldn't have been in third place, I should have been in the finals, I should have won it.' And it just sucked."

Months removed from the national championships, the pain in Martin's voice is still raw.

He had strived his entire Buckeye career to get back atop the pedestal as a national champ, where he stood as just the 15th true freshman in NCAA history in 2016. However, he came up short and he had himself to blame.

"It's a sport where it's just you," Martin said. "It's not like you have a whole team to where you can share the blame. It's just you. And you knowing that it's just you makes the bads hurt a lot more. But then the good is just way more satisfying, too, because it's like you're not sharing the good with anyone but yourself."

Although he did not achieve his ultimate goal, Martin became just the seventh four-time All-American in the long and successful history of Ohio State wrestling.

Although Martin enjoys the thrill of throttling his opponent into submission and earning wins as an individual, there is no denying his affinity for the team aspect of wrestling.

Earlier in the season, BSB asked Martin about wrestlers helping each other with technique in spite of vast differences in weight. Martin gave a thorough, thoughtful answer about how sound technique transcends weight class, which ended in his praise of freshman 125-pounder Malik Heinselman, who had his redshirt pulled in January.

"It's cool to see him being interested in it,

interested in learning," Martin said of Heinselman. "It just shows me that he really loves wrestling and really wants to do well. And for being a true freshman, you've got to show that."

"Because Coach pulled you for a reason, he obviously sees something in you, we all see something in him. So he wants to get better and we're going to make him better, whether we want to or not, just because we love him."

In one conversation with Martin, one can tell his care for his teammates is genuine. In that same conversation, one will quickly realize that he is also an incredibly pensive person.

The physical nature of wrestling is obvious, but what may be more important to success is the mental aspect of the sport.

"One thing I've noticed with myself, just recently, I think I wrestle better when I don't even care about the outcome," Martin said. "Obviously, you want to win. It's a given."

"But with me, I feel like when I tell myself I want to win or I tell myself I shouldn't lose to people, it puts a little bit of pressure on myself. So then when I'm ready to compete, I won't compete how I would wrestling in the practice room, where I don't care who takes me down."

While Martin usually appears to effortlessly take down his opponents, the mental battles fought inside his own head often present more of a challenge. He said when he tells himself that he "should" win a match, doubt creeps into his mind, asking, "What if I don't win?" Martin said his wandering mind can be detrimental, so he's worked to clear his mind before bouts.

Wrestling is a grueling sport, with weight cutting, strict training regimens and physical practices. Collegiate wrestling is particularly brutal with student-athletes spending the academic year competing with their team, and the rest of the year training and competing in freestyle tournaments.

The wear and tear can affect anyone, even the sport's best. Following his third-place finish at the NCAA championships, Martin immediately began preparing for the U.S. Open, with his eyes set on the World Trials.

"I hate to say it but around nationals I was pretty drained," Martin said. "Mentally, I just needed a break, too. So going into the Open, it was tough to get ready for that because I didn't get much time off. And then getting ready to gear up for this tournament, the World Trials, I'm just trying to compete the best I can and then after this take a good break to rest my body, rest my mental – the stress of training and competing becomes a lot sometimes."

Martin wants the 86-kilos (189 pounds) spot for the United States. He's hungry to prove he is the nation's best at his weight, but once he claims his spot, he plans to take that much-needed break.

In addition to more time to rest, Martin does not have the same coaching supervision as he did as a wrestler at Ohio State.

"I've always just trusted in the coaches," Martin said. "What do you guys want me to do? I'll do it. You guys want me to run a mile today? I'll go run a mile today.' It's good because I can actually feel what my body feels."

Self-driven since birth, Martin knows he will have to amp it up when it's time, but he looks forward to being able to give his body a day off when it needs it.

Admittedly not the biggest fan of school, Martin has enjoyed the beginning of his postcollegiate career. Despite not having to sit in a classroom for mandatory attendance anymore, Martin is still learning and growing.

"I've been a lot more happy since I first came into college because I think my perspective changed," Martin said. "I think wrestling is one of those sports where it's like an ongoing class about yourself. And I think when you think you've figured it out, God will hit you with another situation that's like, 'What the frick, where'd this come from?'"

"And then you continue to learn more about you and it makes you more wise and it makes you stronger as a person. And you learn to deal with certain things, and it makes you appreciate wrestling. It makes you appreciate the bad times, and it makes you appreciate the good times. The good times make you feel better, but you won't get the good if you don't go through the bad."

Wrestling has clearly impacted Martin in many ways, but he wasn't always sure it was the sport for him. He got into the sport initially only because he was too young to play football, which is what his father coached. Martin quickly became an excellent wrestler but nearly switched sports at one point.

"I almost gave up wrestling for basketball my seventh-grade year," Martin said. "My dad called me crazy because I was pretty decent at wrestling at the time and I just started out playing basketball. I just liked it so much and it was so fun. All my friends did it, and I don't know, I just like basketball a lot. It's pretty fun."

Fast-forward to Martin's legendary career in Columbus, and it looks like his pops probably made the right call. But his son's love for hoops has not gone away. Martin said he watches more basketball than wrestling, and to no one's surprise, the competitive athlete prefers to play rather than to watch.

His hoop dreams took a back seat to his pursuit of perfection on the mat, and it paid off. Martin's successful journey was unusual for a young African-American man from Penns Grove, N.J., traveling to McDonogh School, a boarding school in Owings Mills, Md., for high school and proceeding to wrestle at Ohio State.

"Me being an African-American wrestler," Martin said, "especially from where I'm from, I think it just shows you can do whatever."

Wrestling is a predominantly white sport, and Martin said he's grown accustomed to being one

of the few black athletes in the sport. He said he's been fortunate enough to not experience animosity from others but has experienced prejudice.

"Sometimes when people meet me they don't expect me to be outgoing or nice or just the way I am," Martin said, "because of how stereotypes are, how society is and how they never met you so their mind is already thinking, 'Oh, he must be this kind of guy.' They can see your haircut, they see that you like earrings, chains, you like all that stuff. And then they talk to you, and then it's like everything changes."

Martin credited his father for helping him prepare to face discrimination from a young age. The younger Martin told BSB, "You can't control what other people think."

His unlikely path to wrestling stardom led Martin to become the first African-American athlete to sign to Rudis. Martin's clothing line is opening this summer through the company, and the former Buckeye has hopes for his own signature shoe, which must be earned through performance.

With his eyes on the 2020 Olympics and beyond, Martin leaves a storybook Ohio State career in the rearview. BSB asked him how he'd like to be remembered by Buckeye Nation.

"Just someone who loved wrestling and who wasn't afraid to wrestle, ever," Martin said. "Someone who was always willing to wrestle no matter what, who had fun doing it – do things that no one could really do. I want my style to not be able to be replicated by anyone. I want it to be unique by me and I want people to know that you can't hit this move unless you were born the way I was born."

"Stuff like that. It makes them like you a little bit more, makes them want to be you a little bit more, and it makes them appreciate your wrestling. I just want them to appreciate my wrestling and appreciate the type of person I was."

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Ohio State's Winters Shines On And Off The Track

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Karrington Winters leaves Ohio State as one of the most decorated student-athletes in the school's illustrious history.

Ten years ago, she had not even run track yet. It was during a family picnic that Winters raced the boys in her family for the last piece of cake. After the 12-year-old Winters smoked the boys in the race, her parents enrolled her in track and field.

That same year, Winters placed third in the 400-meter run at nationals. As a 13-year old, Winters broke the national 800-meter run record, and she placed first in the 400-meter run and third in the 200-meter dash.

Her success did not stop there, and Winters became a three-time Ohio High School Athletic Association Division I state champion in the 400-meter dash at New Albany.

Winters wanted to run track collegiately but was not initially sure where, with many offers to consider. Her track coach, Otis Winston, who was a former Ohio State basketball and track athlete, helped direct her toward donning the scarlet and gray. She is grateful for Winston's guidance.

"It's the perfect balance of intercollegiate athletics and academics," Winters told BSB. "It's unmatched. It's a world-renowned university, and then with coaching like Karen Dennis and Joel Brown, it's a world-class athletic environment. So it was the best of both worlds for me."

Academics hold high importance to Winters, who is an OSU Scholar-Athlete, Academic All-Big Ten honoree and Big Ten Distinguished Scholar.

"She is the total package," Dennis, director of track and field, told BSB. "Karrington is the most organized, disciplined, goal-oriented student I've met in my entire career. In high school she knew what she wanted to do. She had organized notebooks and projects that depicted her future. And she wrote her own roadmap,

and she followed the map.

"And I want to give credit to her parents who obviously did an excellent job of keeping her focused as well as keeping her humble. Karrington is a young lady who is a sister to all the women out here. She's a sister to all the men out here."

Winters and Nick Gray of the men's team date, and the two speedsters have been together since high school. He credits her for inspiring him to be better in all areas.

"Unlike me, Karrington excels in the classroom," said Gray, who recently broke Jesse Owens' long-standing school 100-meter record. "She just got the Big Ten Medal of Honor – that's huge. Especially staying focused in my classes, she's my tutor, my mom, my principal."

The Big Ten Medal of Honor is the conference's most prestigious award and recognizes academic and athletic excellence. It was first awarded in 1915 to one student-athlete from the graduating class of each university who had "attained the greatest proficiency in athletics and scholastic work."

"She's leaving probably one of the most mature and will be one of the most highly successful people and alum that we've had here," Dennis said of Winters. "It's just gratifying to see someone come in, she was kind of timid, kind of afraid to compete, but throughout that first year when she went to Poland and represented the United States, I think she grew up there. She realized, 'You know what, I am good enough to be at the Ohio State, and I'm going to be someone that they're going to be proud of.' So I'm happy she got that award, well-deserved."

Winters went to Bydgoszcz, Poland, to represent the United States at the IAAF U20 World championships as a part of the 4x400-meter relay team in 2016. The squad consisting of Winters, Lynna Irby, Anna Cockrell and Samantha Watson took gold for the United States.

In addition to excelling as a runner and a student, Winters has grown as a leader at Ohio State. She likes to share what she's learned with others and provide peer guidance.

"She knows how to navigate around the university, and she shares that knowledge with other student-athletes who come in," Dennis said of Winters. "They all come in with a little bit of trepidation, and she came in with a little trepidation, but she trusted her plan and followed her own roadmap. I think that the university has afforded her with a lot of opportunities in terms of just a chance to experience leadership.

"A lot of people shy away from leadership. Karrington not only stuck her foot in the water, she jumped right in. And as the president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, she learned a lot about the mechanisms of Ohio State administrative conduct with athletics. She's recommended some of the different types of policies for our student-athletes."

On the track, Winters had a record-breaking career in Columbus. She broke the program's 600-meter run record at the indoor Big Ten championships as a sophomore to claim her first career individual conference title.

Like her boyfriend, Winters is quite superstitious about having her one specific pair of leggings for every race.



OHIO STATE TRACK AND FIELD/TWITTER

STUDENT-ATHLETE – Ohio State track standout Karrington Winters is a three-time first-team All-American and three-time Big Ten Distinguished Scholar.

"Every single time I go to the track to race and warm up and everything, I have to wear the same pair of leggings, and I've worn these leggings since high school. That's probably my biggest superstition, I have to have those leggings on, like I will go crazy if I don't have them on.

"And it's gotten to the point where if we're at multiday meets, I will hand wash them. I'll take a Tide pod with me, crack the Tide pod open and then wash them and then hang them to dry and I'll go out there wet if I have to."

In addition to her victories in the 400- and 600-meter runs, Winters thrived as a part of relay teams while at Ohio State.

As a sophomore, the 4x400 relay team of Winters, Beatrice Hannan, Aaliyah Barnes and Maggie Barrie set the school record at 3:31.23 at the NCAA championships. The quartet became the first women's 4x400-meter relay in Ohio State history to earn first-team All-America honors.

"She's been a steady contributor to our program," Dennis said of Winters. "She's had some ups and downs. She's got a partially torn patellar tendon right now, but you see she's still out here giving to her team. And that's who she is. She's all about team. She's all about making sure that our brand is one that if she has anything to do with it, it will

always be a strong one."

A dynamic runner since she started, Winters probably has too many medals to count. None of her medals meant as much as the Big Ten Medal of Honor.

"It really means the world to me, and it just makes it all worth it," Winters said. "With dealing with my injury this year, I feel like I had a lot of ups and downs and I started thinking, 'Am I going to leave a legacy? Am I going to leave a mark? And to hear my name called was absolutely amazing.

"It almost brought tears to my eyes onstage, but I was very teary-eyed after because it just made everything worth it. Even back to high school track and middle school and my parents putting so much into traveling every weekend, getting me the best spikes out there, the best gear, it makes it all worth it. That was definitely for my parents, for sure."

In order to better introduce BSB readers to Ohio State's Olympic sports teams and athletes, we have shifted to more featured-oriented coverage of the various squads. Buckeye Sports Bulletin will provide a roundup of all games, matches and meets involving OSU's teams each Monday on our BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all print subscribers.



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LHP Lonsway Sparks Buckeyes' Run To Big Ten Title

Ohio State redshirt freshman left-handed starting pitcher Seth Lonsway did not want to miss an entire season due to academic issues with his former high school, but it may have been a blessing in disguise. Not being able to take the field was difficult for Lonsway, but it gave him a different point of view.

"It made me more hungry," Lonsway told BSB. "Sitting out and watching, I got to see the game from a different perspective and I wasn't

FROM THE STRETCH

Joe Dempsey

in that compete mode for quite a while. So it definitely made me more anxious and more hungry to get back to playing the game I love. And it's made me really cherish and value all the opportunities I get.

"I get to take the field and take the mound. So you've just got to try to always remember, the game can be taken from you at any point, whether it's reasons like last year or say an injury. It put me through some adversity, and I think it definitely helped feed my competitiveness for this year."

Lonsway's change of perspective helped him take the hill with confidence and pitch like someone beyond his years.

With Ohio State on the outside of the Big Ten tournament late in the season, it needed to get hot down the stretch. Lonsway dominated Penn State, allowing five hits and one walk in an eight-inning shutout on May 11. The left-handed workhorse threw 123 pitches and set a career high with 13 strikeouts.

A week later, the Buckeyes traveled to Purdue and Lonsway followed up his performance against the Lions on the road, allowing one unearned run on two hits and two walks over eight innings May 17. The Celina, Ohio, native tossed 112 pitches and broke his career night with 14 punch-outs.

Lonsway got hot at the right time and gained national recognition for his lights-out performances, becoming NCBWA National Pitcher of the Week and Collegiate Baseball National Player of the Week in addition to Big Ten Pitcher of the Week and Big Ten Freshman of the Week.

On the season, Lonsway was named Big Ten All-Freshman and earned third-team All-Big Ten honors.

Lonsway took the mound to open the Big Ten tourney for the Buckeyes against archrival Michigan on May 22. Despite some control issues, Lonsway pitched well, allowing one run on one hit and seven walks in 5½ innings, with six strikeouts.

Despite the big opening-round win to start the tournament, Ohio State had to advance without injured freshman right-handed starting pitcher Garrett Burhenn.

"It was very exciting," Lonsway said. "We were definitely kind of nervous with going on a few days' rest, but we knew what we needed. We were playing like there was no tomorrow, so we did all we could and we did whatever it took."

Lonsway took the hill once again for the Scarlet and Gray against Minnesota on May 26. He held the Golden Gophers to one run on four hits and one walk, with six strikeouts in five innings.

Following the defeat of Minnesota, Ohio State found itself with one game left against

Nebraska. Win and the Buckeyes would become Big Ten tournament champions and clinch a spot in the NCAA tournament.

The Buckeyes toppled the Huskers with Lonsway and pitcher Griffan Smith earning Big Ten All-Tournament Team honors, along with junior left-handed reliever Andrew Magno, who won the tournament's most outstanding player nod.

The Big Ten tournament was hosted at TD Ameritrade Park in Omaha, Neb., where the Huskers awaited with the majority of 17,503 fans on their side.

"It was awesome," Lonsway said. "It was so cool, even though it was a lot of Nebraska fans, but it was still a neat atmosphere. It truly felt like a championship game, just unbelievable. I think it goes to show what we can put ourselves into and up against as far as the atmosphere and the crowd. We've kind of faced that adversity now, and I think it helped us grow and mature."

Perfect Game and D1Baseball.com have Lonsway, who was drafted in 2017 by the Reds, as a premier Big Ten prospect, ranking No. 4 and No. 6 in the conference, respectively.

There is no doubt that Lonsway has MLB aspirations, but he made it seem like his arm would have to fall off for him to stop taking the mound for the Buckeyes. He could have easily told the coaching staff he was sore and unable to play, but the redshirt freshman lefty rose to the occasion, instead.

"What it says is Seth Lonsway's a top prospect because he's a competitor," said Ohio State head coach Greg Beals. "Because he wants to win, because he wants to be really good – that's why he's a top prospect. He's obviously been gifted, he's blessed, but he's a great competitor and that's why he's a top prospect. Great competitors want to compete, and Seth wanted to compete yesterday and it was great to see it. That's going to fuel that prospect in him."

Magno Thrives In Closer Role

Andrew Magno struggled out of the bullpen in his first two years of the transition from being a starter at nearby Dublin (Ohio) Scioto to a reliever at Ohio State.

After making only four appearances as a freshman, Magno struggled as a sophomore in 16 appearances, allowing 12 runs in 7½ innings for a 14.09 ERA. The lefty had some issues with command in 2018, walking 14 batters, hitting four more, and throwing three wild pitches in limited work.

Within the span of a year, Magno went from wild and inconsistent to the rock of the Buckeye bullpen and one of the better relievers in college baseball.

As a junior, Magno went 5-3 with a league-leading 2.09 ERA and 14 saves, which marked the second most in the conference.

"He's just been a very consistent guy for us coming out of the bullpen," Lonsway said of Magno. "And I think his confidence level is in a really good spot compared to where he was last year."

"I think that was kind of a thing for him from last year to this year. His mentality has changed, and you can tell how with the way he carries himself. He comes in, he's very confident. You know he's going to throw strikes."

"So that's just the biggest thing I've noticed with him is he gets ahead on guys early, he establishes strike one right away. And with him coming in, you just have that confidence and know that he's going to get the job done for us."

Magno showed drastic improvement with



OHIO STATE BASEBALL/TWITTER

SO LET'S WIN THAT OLD CONFERENCE NOW – Ohio State won seven of its final eight games to secure a spot in the Big Ten tournament and then became the lowest seed to ever win the conference title (No. 7).

his command, striking out 75 batters and surrendering just 36 walks. While Magno's 31 appearances might not seem like a lot for such an important pitcher, he displayed excellent stamina in the back end by working 64½ innings.

Beals admitted to BSB that he hadn't known how the team was going to replace second-team All-America closer Seth Kinker entering 2019. He found his man in Magno.

"It means a lot," Beals said of Magno's importance. "We lost Seth Kinker from last year, kind of that go-to guy, 'What do you need? I got it, Coach.' And so Mags has taken that over and has really, really grown. Not just from last year to this year, but from March 15 to May 15, he's grown in these last two months."

"He's always had leadership, he's always been a great teammate for the bullpen guys. I think the success he's having is fueling that leadership as well. The success is coming from his trust and confidence in himself, though. He's always had good stuff, and now in his mind, he has cleared himself in a way that he can get that good stuff at a consistent rate now."

One would think Magno made significant changes to his pitching techniques, given the monumental shift in his success on the mound, but the 5-11 hurler credits his mind-set.

"I think it's mentality," Magno said. "I came in last year and I was like, 'I've got to do this well so I don't get taken out of the game,' and so I was more thinking about doing things well and trying to be perfect. And now it's just you come in, and you've got five freshmen in the bullpen and someone's got to step up."

"So I'm going to go out there and attack and do my job and show what it's like to be a reliever to these freshmen, and so I got that role. And coming into the season I knew I was probably going to be in that role, but you can't just take it for granted. I'm following up a second-team All-American, so you've got to step into that role and you've got to make it yours. And that's what I've been trying to do."

When it matters most, Magno rises to the occasion. He thrives under pressure and was named the Big Ten tournament's Most Outstanding Player after claiming four saves on

the week and allowing zero runs in 9½ innings of relief.

In a narrow game with the Big Ten tournament title and an NCAA berth on the line, Magno tossed 3½ scoreless innings with four strikeouts against Nebraska.

Then, in the Buckeyes' 9-8 win in 13 innings against McNeese in the NCAA Regional, Magno threw a career-high 7½ innings of relief with a career-high 12 strikeouts, allowing just one run on five hits and two walks. He was named to the NCAA Nashville Regional All-Tournament Team.

"Deal breaker," Beals said of Magno. "That's the difference between average and good. We have some other pieces that weren't there (last year), but when we didn't have go-to, lockdown Andrew Magno up until April, we were an average baseball team."

"So that's a big piece. There's a lot of pieces to the puzzle that took time to really come together, but Andrew Magno is probably the biggest piece."

Canzone Breaks Program Record

Junior right fielder Dominic Canzone broke Nick Swisher's program-record streak from 2002 of reaching base safely in 51 consecutive games, ending the season at 59 straight contests.

Canzone, a Cuyahoga Falls (Ohio) Walsh Jesuit product, put together his best season yet, leading the Big Ten in hitting (.345) and slugging (.620).

The Sagamore Hills, Ohio, native notched an outstanding .444 on-base percentage, and his 88 hits ranked fifth in Ohio State history for a single season.

After hitting just seven home runs in his first two seasons, Canzone showed improved power, launching 16 long balls, which tied teammate Brady Cherry for the third most in the conference.

For coverage of Ohio State's postseason action, including play in the NCAA tournament, go to the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers.

Former Assistant Returns To OSU, Fills Out Staff

Tamika Jeter is coming home.

Formerly of the Ohio State women's basketball team as a graduate assistant (2002-03) and assistant coach (2004-08), the Dayton native is back in Columbus to join seventh-year head coach Kevin McGuff's staff for the 2019-20 season, the program announced May 16.

"We certainly wanted to get that finished as

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Garrett Stepien

quick as we could," McGuff told BSB. "I think she's going to be a great hire. She's going to be a terrific role model for the young women in our program. She's an Ohio native and is well known here with the high school and AAU coaches. So she'll bring a great presence from that standpoint, and she's a winner. As we aspire to continue to build this program, I think she'll be a great fit."

Jeter spent the past three years (2016-19) as an assistant coach at Penn State before the Nittany Lions parted ways with longtime head coach Coquese Washington (2007-19) March 8.

Jeter replaces Jennifer Sullivan, who left the Buckeyes April 15 following the 2018-19 campaign after one year and joined Tennessee's staff as an assistant coach under new head coach Kelly Harper.

With Ohio roots, Jeter's coaching career after OSU took her to Kansas from 2008-10. She stepped away from the game for three years (2011-14) with work in the private sector – contributing to ESPN as a women's basketball analyst, among other positions – before jumping back into coaching for two seasons at Kentucky (2014-16).

Jeter played college basketball for four years at Connecticut (1999-2002), where she was named 1999 National Freshman of the Year and led the Huskies to the 2000 (when she was named Most Outstanding Player) and 2002 national championships. Her career field-goal percentage of 70.3 percent still stands as the NCAA's all-time mark.

Before she shone with the Huskies, Jeter first crossed paths with McGuff in the late 1990s. Then an assistant coach at Notre Dame (1996-2002), he was unable to secure Jeter's signature with the Fighting Irish, but his recruitment built a bond that continued into coaching.

"Our relationship started when, as the assistant coach at Notre Dame, she told me no," McGuff said with a laugh. "I tried to recruit her ... and I really got to know her and (the Jeter) family at that point. She obviously chose UConn, but I've known her since all the way back to high school."

Drafted by the Minnesota Lynx at No. 6 overall in the 2002 WNBA draft, Jeter played professionally for six seasons there before she finished her playing career with the Connecticut Sun. Jeter shot 66.8 percent in

2003, setting the league's record for single-season field-goal percentage before winning the 2008 Dawn Staley Community Leadership Award, which is given annually to a WNBA player who best exhibits characteristics of a community leader.

"What really sets her apart is her personality," McGuff said. "She's got a wonderful personality, just lights up a room, really connects with people easily, and that's something I really noticed. As a coach, you enjoy that you get the chance to recruit somebody that really engages in the process. You get to know them. She was that person. She also had a great family, really nice people. Her father, unfortunately, has since passed, but I got to know her mom and dad real well. They were fun people. So it's never good when it doesn't go your way, but everything else outside of that was fun because she and her family were great to know."

Jeter was inducted into the Ohio Basketball Hall of Fame in 2013, and she joins longtime staff member and fourth-year associate head coach Patrick Klein with fourth-year assistant coach Carrie Banks on the OSU bench.

After Sullivan's departure, third-year special assistant to the head coach Ericka Haney had been serving as Ohio State's acting third assistant coach while the Buckeyes were recruiting during the first two evaluation periods from April 19-23 and April 26-28. When the third evaluation period got under way from May 17-29, Jeter stayed off the road after she gave birth to her second child.

Haney, who played for McGuff at Notre Dame (1998-2002) as a member of the Fighting Irish's first national championship team in 2000-01, smoothed the transition. She brought experience from her coaching career's previous stops on Chicago State's staff (2003-06) and as Louisiana Tech's director of operations (2006-07) before becoming Florida Gulf Coast's recruiting coordinator (2007-09).

"It was great because she was a former AAU coach and (Elite Youth Basketball League) coach," McGuff said of Haney, who spent eight years (2009-17) as a director of girls basketball for four different Florida high schools. "She knows a lot of those people (players and coaches). So that was good. She had a really great presence for that and made

an impact that weekend. But in general, she's an excellent role model for the players in our program. She has a real passion for helping them grow as young women. She puts a lot of time into that."

Local Star Stays Home

After Ohio State signed five prospects to its 2019 class Nov. 16 and inked two late targets in April, the Buckeyes added one more recruit before summer enrollment begins at the end of June.

Pickerington (Ohio) Central four-star guard Madison Greene, who originally signed Nov. 19 with Penn State, was released from her National Letter of Intent. She instead elected to stay home at OSU, which was in contact not long after her release.

"Obviously, we've been watching her since she was real young," McGuff said. "I've always loved her as a player. We were on some other people as well in the state. And then Penn State did a great job, they did a great job recruiting her and they got her. That was a big deal for them. And then when they changed with their coaches, then she got out of her letter of intent."

"Her father called and said, 'Hey, their staff was let go. She's not sure what she wants to do.' So we said, 'Hey, if she gets out of her letter of intent, let us know.' So she got out of the letter of intent, they got back with us and they let us know. We had already known her, and she knows Ohio State – she grew up here – and it felt right for her."

She shared the commitment May 11 on Twitter.

"As it turned out, I think she's a great fit or a great complement for the other kids we have coming," McGuff said. "So I'm really excited. She makes other people better. She's got great competitive character, and I just think she'll be a really good fit with this class."

Greene was a marquee member of the Nittany Lions' class which ranked No. 18 nationally in the espnW HoopGurlz Recruiting Rankings, as the No. 60 overall prospect and No. 13 point guard for 2019.

She tallied 1,015 points, 355 assists and 323 rebounds in her first three years at Pickerington Central as the Tigers went 77-11 overall. She averaged 16.0 points, 5.8 assists and 5.6 rebounds throughout her senior season en route to becoming a two-time first-team All-Ohio honoree.

"No question, she's a winner," McGuff said. "She does what it takes to win. She's a relentless worker in the gym. Anyone who's been around her, coached her will tell you that. I just think we had a really good year, culturally, this past year. We brought in some great kids, and I think she's going to be another great addition."

Before the end of Greene's final year at Pickerington Central, when the Tigers went 28-2 but lost 52-31 to Cincinnati Mount Notre Dame in the Division I final of the Ohio High School Athletics Association Girls State Basketball Championships March 16, PSU parted ways with Washington

"Madison Greene is a point guard's point guard," Washington said Nov. 19. "She has the leadership skills to make everybody around her better. I think that's one of her best gifts is her ability to make her teammates shine. She's tough as nails, she really gets after it on the defensive end of the floor and she's just a winner. She finds a way to help her team make the necessary plays to win."

McGuff confirmed Washington's assessment.

"She's smooth with the ball in her hands,"

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McGuff said. "She can push the tempo. She understands the dynamics of the offense. And she just has a dynamic for getting other people better, like most point guards. She's also a tenacious defender. She's got a toughness to her on that end of the floor as well."

The Ohio State Numbers Game

Greene gives the Buckeyes eight incoming players as McGuff reloads the roster once again.

OSU already had Canton (Ohio) McKinley five-star guard Kierstan Bell (6-1), Indianapolis North Central five-star guard Rikki Harris (5-11), Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ the King five-star wing Kaelynn Satterfield (6-0), Dublin (Ohio) Coffman five-star guard Jacy Sheldon (5-7) and Pamplona, Spain, three-star forward Aixa Wone (6-2) in its No. 4 class.

Ohio State picked up another freshman later in April when Nitra, Slovakia, forward Rebeka Mikulasikova (6-3) announced her commitment. She was joined later that month by Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter 2017 guard Braxtin Miller (5-10), who transferred from Oklahoma State.

Greene will be immediately eligible with Bell, Harris, Satterfield, Sheldon, Wone and Mikulasikova as the freshmen.

McGuff told BSB that the Buckeyes would explore a hardship waiver for Miller with the NCAA, but OSU is currently prepared to enter the 2019-20 season without her, should she sit out the year as a transfer.

At 13 scholarships, McGuff believes the team is capped on recruits or transfers for the upcoming campaign, although the NCAA allows up to 15.

"I'll be shocked if we add any more this year," McGuff said. "It's such a tricky thing nowadays. I've never really been one to want to be above 12 or 13 ever, but nowadays, with the portal, it's easy to transfer. On one hand, you might have the extra one or two (scholarships open). But on the flip side of that, does (filling

those) force people out quicker? I don't know.

"That's the kind of dance that coaches are doing these days. But we'll, most likely, hold pat right where we're at. And I like where we're at with '20 and some of the kids. We're in a really good place, so I think we'll want to make sure we have space to bring in the right kids in these couple of classes."

News From The Recruiting Trail

Ohio State has secured two pledges for 2020 in Westerville (Ohio) South's three-star duo of guard Anyssa Jones (5-9) and forward Gabby Hutcherson (6-2), placing the Buckeyes' focus on building around those commitments.

Ahead of the May 17-29 evaluation period, McGuff was set to see prospects play in tournaments across Louisville, Ky.; Atlantic City, N.J.; and Detroit.

While the exact prospects McGuff watched in those tournaments are unknown, the general crop of recruits on OSU's radar include Cashmere, Wash., 2020 five-star guard Hailey Van Lith (5-7); Oakland (Calif.) Bishop O'Dowd 2020 three-star guard Daylee Dunn (5-10); Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne 2021 three-star guard Aubryanna Hall (5-11); Aurora (Colo.) Grandview 2022 center Lauren Betts (6-7); and Hopkins, Minn., 2022 forward Maya Nnaji (6-4).

"There are a handful of kids, at least, in each class - 2020, '21, '22, '23 - that are from the state," McGuff said. "And certainly, in the Midwest, it's strong there. That's a big, big push for us and point of emphasis for us. I think we've done a really good job, to this point, to get ourselves in position to get some of these kids. I also think hiring Tamika will kind of further that process in a positive way. So that's kind of where we're at. Not that we won't go outside of that. We'll also dabble a little bit internationally to kind of supplement the kids we're getting here. That's kind of where we're putting our focus right now."

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Beilein Leaves Michigan For Cleveland Cavaliers

Michigan basketball coach John Beilein left the Wolverine helm after 12 seasons to become the Cleveland Cavaliers' head coach on May 13. The 66-year-old coach signed a five-year deal, surprising many across college hoops and in the NBA.

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

"We shared some of the best moments of my life together, and I will always be grateful for that," Beilein said of his time at Michigan. "At the same time, I felt very strongly about this new and exciting opportunity with the Cavaliers. I love the position the team is in to build and grow, and this was something I felt was the perfect fit for me."

Beilein left collegiate athletics for the NBA after 41 years of coaching at that level. The award-winning coach posted an 829-468 record, including a 278-150 ledger at Michigan, where he won two Big Ten tournament titles.

Although the Wolverines did not win a national title under Beilein's tutelage, they made it to the Final Four twice.

The Cavaliers are excited about Beilein's offensive mind and ability to mentor players, as they have a young roster.

"John is one of the most accomplished and innovative basketball minds and leaders in the entire game," Cavaliers general manager Koby Altman said. "He has a unique ability to create an outstanding culture that will promote the development of young players and provide a solid structure to the entire program, not to mention the fact that John Beilein wins everywhere he goes."

"We are excited Coach Beilein is joining our organization as we continue to build the foundation that any enterprise needs to be successful and competitive year in and year out."

Beilein expressed his gratitude for the Maize and Blue on Twitter.

"Thanks to everyone at the University of Michigan for their incredible support these last 12 years," Beilein posted in a tweet. "Our fans, alums, leaders, players and students are amazing. It has been a heck of a ride and I hope you enjoyed our teams and staff as much as I did! Go Blue Forever!"

The news of Beilein's departure left Michigan with a void atop its men's basketball program.

"I was saddened when John told me this morning of his decision to leave Michigan for a head coaching position in the NBA," Michigan athletic director Warde Manuel said. "However, I am incredibly thankful for his 12 years of service to this university."

"Above and beyond being our all-time winningest coach, John is a tremendous role model for the game of college basketball. He is an outstanding educator, community member and a man of great integrity, and he and Kathleen will be missed. My priority now is to commence a full national search for our next basketball coach."

Fab Five Member Howard Hired To Replace Beilein

Less than two weeks later, Michigan hired alum Juwan Howard to replace Beilein on May 22. He signed a five-year deal, starting at \$2 million annually.

"I am very excited about the opportunity to lead the University of Michigan's storied basketball program," Howard said. "As a 'Michigan Man,' I know the place our program has in college basketball, and I embrace the chance to build onto that history and lead us to championships both in the Big Ten and national level."

"I cannot wait to get started. It feels great to be coming home."

Howard became the front-runner for the job after Providence's Ed Cooley withdrew his name from consideration and signed a multiyear contract extension to stay with the Friars.

"We have found someone with high integrity, great character and a coach who has unbelievable knowledge of the game of basketball," Manuel said of the hiring. "Juwan has proven himself to be a tremendous leader, a wonderful communicator and a developer of talent. We couldn't have asked for a better role model for the young men in our program. We are excited to welcome back a member of the family to Ann Arbor."

Howard, 46, had been an assistant coach with the Miami Heat since September 2013, following his retirement after a 19-year pro career with eight franchises.

The Chicago native also interviewed for the head-coaching vacancies with the Los Angeles Lakers and the Minnesota Timberwolves during this offseason.

Howard was a member of the famous Fab Five 1991 recruiting class at Michigan and became the No. 5 pick in the 1994 NBA draft. He was an All-Star with Washington in 1995-96 and won an NBA championship with the Heat in 2011-12.

His former Fab Five teammate, Jalen Rose, said hiring Howard was a "no-brainer" for Michigan.

"Now that there's a vacant job in Ann Arbor, let's do a blank canvas as to who should be the No. 1 candidate. To me, that should be a no-brainer," Rose said on ESPN's "Get Up" morning television show. "There's a guy named Juwan Howard that's from Chicago, which means he's going to help recruit that market."

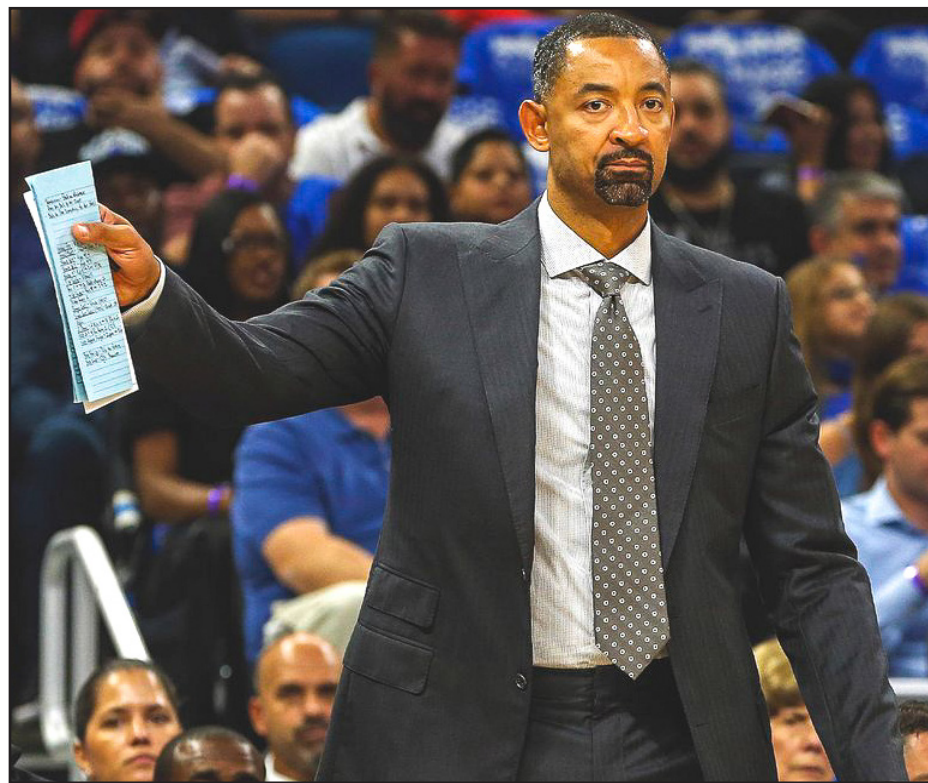
"For those who don't know, he was always the adult in the room among us."

Maryland Restructures Athletic Medical Model

Nearly a year after offensive lineman Jordan McNair suffered heatstroke at an offseason football workout that led to his death, the University of Maryland announced it is implementing one of the most significant of 20 recommendations it received from its commission on student-athlete health and safety.

Maryland's athletic medical care model will be restructured and the school will hire a head team physician who reports to the director of the University Health Center and, ultimately, to the university president.

Although the physician will oversee athletics, the position will be based in



MICHIGAN BASKETBALL/TWITTER

FAB FIVE – A little more than a quarter century after he left Michigan for what turned out to be a 19-year NBA career, former Wolverines forward Juwan Howard was named the head coach at his alma mater.

the campus's University Health Center. Rod Walters, who led Maryland's independent review and now chairs the recently established athletic medical review board, told reporters an accredited head physician should be permitted "autonomous decision-making."

Matthew Leiszler is the head football team physician at Notre Dame and another review board member. He said separating coaches and doctors is essential to player safety.

"As athletic departments are moving forward, I do anticipate this is going to be a trend, and I'm really pleased to see the University of Maryland really leading this trend within college athletics," Leiszler said. "It is a little unique at this point. I think it's going to serve the University of Maryland extremely well, and it's going to improve and really continue excellent care for the student-athletes at the University of Maryland, which is the priority."

"In order to provide independent medical care in a student-athlete-centered medical model, we thought the first priority was to move that out of athletics, specific for the University of Maryland."

Athletic director Damon Evans said the university will launch a national search to fill the head team physician role, which he said could be a long process.

"Obviously, geography was a concern," Walters said. "Our recommendation was to make this a College Park-based program. Consultants are one thing, but (for) day-to-day care, we wanted to make sure there was some locality with that and proximity to the campus."

Evans added that the university also hired two more athletic trainers, one who works with football full time, as well as a second mental health professional for the department.

Charles Scheeler, a Baltimore attorney who helped lead the eight-person commission that issued the report on

the football program's culture, made it clear that he thought player health and safety must be prioritized.

"Every single (sports medicine expert) will tell you that the independent medical model is vital," Scheeler said. "Because the people who make the decisions about a student's health should be doctors, not people who are paid by whether they win an athletic competition. That's the only way to ensure that the decisions about a student's health are being made for the right reasons."

"Maryland has been subject to a tragic student-athlete death. It is Maryland's responsibility to become the leader in student-athlete health and well-being. That is the only acceptable legacy for Jordan McNair's tragic death."

Michigan Moves Forward Without Top Rusher

Michigan senior running back Chris Evans has been suspended for the 2019 season, head coach Jim Harbaugh announced while speaking at the Best of Midwest football camp at Grand Valley State on June 2.

Evans, who has rushed for 1,722 yards and 14 touchdowns in three seasons with the Wolverines, was suspended by the university in February due to an academic issue. He appealed the ruling in an effort to have the suspension reduced from a full year to a half year, which would have allowed him to participate during his senior season, but was denied.

Evans has reportedly secured a job in Ann Arbor delivering food and will continue to train to stay in football shape. He will be able to return to the university and the football program when the one-year suspension is over in January 2020, at which time he'll be a fifth-year senior.

Michigan kicks off its season on Aug. 31 against Middle Tennessee State.

Grid Blue Bloods Battle Through The Years

What constitutes a blue blood?

Depends on what it is you're trying to classify, I suppose. When it comes to college football, different people will have different ideas. There really is no true metric. It comes down mostly to opinion.

Still, when a recent Twitter meme was unveiled listing the blue bloods of college football, two things stood out to me – how limited it was (eight teams), and which teams were missing (Penn State, Miami, Florida State). To my way of thinking, those are the 11 programs that are college football royalty. They have multiple national titles, can claim double- (and sometimes triple-) digit All-Americans, have dominated the rankings and have legendary coaches.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

For the sake of this particular Twitter discussion, the list was capped at eight – Alabama, Michigan, Nebraska, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Texas and USC. Few will argue that those teams belong in the ruling class, and know that when they are good, college football is better for it.

The original poster of this chart did a few things with the teams, showing their records through the decades, how many titles they've won, all that good stuff. Someone asked an interesting question about how each of the blue bloods has done against the others – there was no answer.

So, being the Facts Man, I figured it was time to dig in, do the research and save the day. And that's exactly what I did.

Starting with the 1920s, I checked how all the teams did against each other. Not surprisingly, many of the teams had spotty records in the early going because college football was still

in its infancy. Starting in the 1960s, things really picked up.

Oh sure, there were often great bowl matchups between a number of these squads, but there were also great intersectional regular-season contests – most notably Texas and Oklahoma, who were for much of the time in different conferences.

The Buckeyes accorded themselves well, ending with a winning record in the 1950s (8-6) and 1960s (10-4). Things took a bit of a dip starting in the 1970s, as OSU went just 15-27-2 against the other blue bloods from 1970 to 1999. Many of those losses were, of course, to Michigan, but there were also setbacks to Oklahoma, USC and Alabama.

OSU reclaimed its footing in the 2000s thanks to Jim Tressel and Urban Meyer, and the Buckeyes have the best record of the octet since the millennium changed. The Buckeyes are 26-9 against the other blue bloods since 2000, including 16-3 since 2010.

While overall records can be misleading as conferences have different strengths, this is how all eight teams look against each other since 1920, ranked by wins:

Notre Dame 93-70-6 (.569)

Texas 74-57-3 (.563)

Ohio State 74-68-5 (.520)

USC 73-72-8 (.503)

Alabama 19-21-2 (.476)

Oklahoma 94-106-8 (.471)

Michigan 70-81-5 (.465)

Nebraska 54-76-3 (.417)

A couple of things stand out: First, that the criticism of Alabama's schedule on a yearly basis has merit. The belief is that the "grueling" SEC slate is enough to challenge anyone, so why make things tougher by always playing a really good team in the nonleague? Only problem with that is there is no other SEC team on this list, and the Tide often eschews a real meat game for a lower-echelon Power Five foe (Louisville last year, Duke this year).

The other thing is that Notre Dame still isn't

afraid to schedule powerhouses. While the meeting with USC is an every-year thing, the Irish have done a nice job keeping the schedule filled with good to excellent teams. Texas will play Alabama, OSU and Michigan in the next 10 years, so the Longhorns seem to relish a challenge.

If fans can get through this year's mediocre slate of FAU, Cincinnati and Miami (Ohio), the next few years should be really intriguing.

The Buckeyes, aside from league show-downs with Nebraska each of the next three seasons, face Notre Dame in 2022-23 and Texas in 2025-26, meaning more opportunity to pad their record against the all-time elite programs.

Games like those certainly get the blood – blue or otherwise – going.

Recruiting Is Rolling

The recent commitment of Pennsylvania receiver Julian Fleming showed that the Buckeyes' recruiting machine is still going strong – at least for the time being.

While no one is going to be as hyper-focused as Meyer was when it came to recruiting, Ryan Day and his staff are living up to the high standards expected by Buckeye Nation.

Receivers coach Brian Hartline really seems to be the star, reeling in Garrett Wilson for 2019 and now nabbing Fleming, who grew up about 90 minutes from State College and who made numerous trips to Penn State in his lifetime. Many thought he was a lock for the Nittany Lions, so getting him could prove to be huge. There is a lot of time before signing day 2020, and anything could happen – Fleming could flip. But the energy level and excellence level has so far not wavered, and that as much as anything should keep the Buckeyes in the mix for a CFP berth for the foreseeable future.

You can't win without players, and OSU ranks third nationally for 2020 when you break down the rankings by average rating per player. The Buckeyes are at 93.73, just a shade behind No. 2 Georgia. Clemson is leading the field at 95.40. Penn State is currently 15th (90.25), Michigan 18th (89.90) and Illinois 20th (89.46).

Calling It A Day

One of the first coaches I encountered when hired at Buckeye Sports Bulletin – in the days before the Internet – was men's volleyball coach Pete Hanson. My only exposure to volleyball was what we played during family picnics and a bit at summer camp – certainly not high-level stuff. I didn't know much about the rules, the strategy or the nuances of the game.

During one of those early-year interviews, Hanson actually offered some help to a young reporter, with a hope that he could understand the game better, enjoy covering the team more and bring a better understanding to the readers. He accomplished that mission, as volleyball is now one of my favorite OSU sports to attend.

Hanson announced his retirement in mid-April, calling it a career after leading Ohio State to over 700 wins and three national titles. The fact that a Midwest school was able to consistently be a power in the world of volleyball was nothing short of amazing.

There aren't the number of high school teams here as there are out west, kids don't play it year-round here as they do there. So, to break through and not only excel, but be the top dog, was a testament to Hanson's ability to coach and to connect with people.

Hanson is, to me, the Archie Griffin of Ohio State's Olympic sports programs. Just as I have never heard anyone say a bad word about Archie, Hanson also draws universal praise. People I know who met him just once, or only had passing contact with him, said that he was as nice as could be. To paraphrase Woody Hayes, you may win with people, but you also win by treating people the right way.

Hanson did that and was able to etch his name in Ohio State coaching lore. He'll be right up there with Woody and Meyer and Fred Taylor and Marty Karow and others who have taken their teams to the top of the mountain.

There aren't many coaches who truly leave a legacy, both on the court and off. Pete Hanson has done that.

Bravo, Coach.



OKLAHOMA FOOTBALL/TWITTER

BEST OF THE BEST – Ohio State and Oklahoma have split both of their home-and-home series, with the Buckeyes winning in 1983 and 2016 and the Sooners walking away victorious in 1979 and 2017. Coincidentally, neither team has won on its home field.

Vegas Experts Have High Expectations For Fields

I am back from my annual trip to the College Sports Publishers Association meeting in Las Vegas. It is my tradition while out there to pick up the odds sheets on the chances of various teams to win the college football and basketball national championships. I will come back to those picks later.

As you may know, the books in Vegas will take action on almost anything, and I was more struck by the listed odds to win the Heisman Trophy.

Judging by the reaction on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum, I was clearly more surprised than others at the fact that Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields was listed with 8-1 odds to win the Heisman along with quarterbacks such as Oklahoma's Jalen Hurts and Nebraska's Adrian Martinez, behind only Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa, last year's runner-up, and Trevor Lawrence, who led Clemson to the CFP national championship last season.

I found this a fairly lofty ranking for a guy who had played very few meaningful downs as a freshman at Georgia last season. While he posted strong numbers in his limited action with the Bulldogs, the bulk of his production came against the likes of Austin Peay, Middle Tennessee State and Massachusetts.

To put Fields' odds to win the Heisman in perspective, teammate J.K. Dobbins, who has two 1,000-yard rushing seasons under his belt, was well behind with 60-1 odds. Other running backs such as Wisconsin's Jonathan Taylor, who finished ninth in the Heisman balloting last season, had 15-1 odds, and Clemson's Travis Etienne, who finished seventh in the voting, was at 30-1.

Now you might say that those backs have longer odds because the Heisman has become a quarterback's award. How does that explain that Jake Fromm, who started ahead of Fields at Georgia, has 25-1 odds, meaning that the bookmakers think he is more than three times less likely to take home the hardware than a player who couldn't beat him out with the Bulldogs? Former Buckeye Joe Burrow, who has a year as a starter at SEC power LSU on his résumé, was well back at 150-1 odds.

We all know of Fields' reputation coming out of high school. And as mentioned, he posted strong numbers when he was able to see the field last season. But Tate Martell was also highly regarded coming out of high school and also had solid numbers against lesser competition as a freshman at Ohio State. He is nowhere to be found on the odds sheet, which goes all the way to 200-1 odds. I'm just surprised Fields' odds are not closer to something like those of Michigan quarterback Shea Patterson, who checked in at 60-1 and is a more proven commodity.

This is a good news, bad news situation.

The good news is that the guys in Vegas know their stuff. If they are only willing to pay eight dollars on every buck wagered on Fields if he wins the Heisman, that means they think he has a legitimate chance to win the coveted award. It's pretty exciting to think that the Ohio State football team has a player with that kind of talent.

On the other hand that's putting some pretty heavy pressure on a player with limited experience and who didn't look especially good in the Ohio State spring game (though the rules did not favor his skills) and is in somewhat of a do-or-die situation now that Martell and Matthew Baldwin have abandoned the Buckeye quarterbacks room.

And you know how Buckeye Nation can be when they don't get superstar production from superstar prospects. Think Terrelle Pryor.

Of course who would have guessed, at this same time last year, that Dwayne Haskins

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

would make an unexpected but legitimate run at the 2018 Heisman? If you are out in Vegas, maybe you should put a couple of bucks down on the latest Buckeye quarterback.

As for the top picks to win the CFP national championship, the oddsmakers are becoming pretty predictable. You or I could have come up with these choices.

Clemson is favored to repeat as champion at 2-1, with perennial contender Alabama just behind at 11-5. Georgia (7-1) and Ohio State (8-1) round out a potential final four as of the May 13 sheet I picked up. Oklahoma, another usual playoff suspect, comes in next at 15-1, along with Michigan, of all schools.

The infatuation that the "experts" have with Jim Harbaugh and his Wolverines never ceases to amaze me. Was it the 62-39 whupping administered by Ohio State in The Game that impressed the oddsmakers or the 41-15 pasting by Florida in the Peach Bowl that followed? It's time for Harbaugh and Co. to earn their respect – maybe by beating their rival for the first time in their esteemed coach's tenure.

Elsewhere in the Big Ten, perennial West Division power Wisconsin better watch out. Nebraska is at 30-1 odds to win the national title, while the Badgers are at 75-1. Northwestern, which won the division last season, would pay a whopping 500-1 if the Wildcats won the CFP crown.

In the East Division, after Ohio State and Michigan, Penn State is at 75-1 and Michigan State had 200-1 odds to win all the marbles.

The Spartans fare much better on the hardwood, where they were the favorites to win basketball's crown at 8-1, followed by defending champion Virginia and basketball blue bloods Kentucky and Duke, all with 17-2 odds.

Ohio State opened at 40-1 but had dropped to 50-1 by the time of my visit.

Keep The Presses Running

Much of the discussion at the CSPA meeting centered on the demise of print publications within our group. Such Big Ten stalwarts as Michigan's The Wolverine and Penn State's Blue White Illustrated now publish monthly, and Purdue's Gold and Black Illustrated and Spartan Magazine at Michigan State have dropped print altogether and are now online only.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers still support a weekly publishing schedule, and we are both proud of and thankful for that fact. However, the fate of our sister publications around the conference and the state of the newspaper industry in general makes it important that BSB readers continue their commitment.

In that regard, we are very pleased and humbled with the initial response to our VIP subscriber program. Not only have many of you responded, but many of you have elected to show your support at the highest tiers. Elite and Scarlet level donors will have their names listed in each issue of Buckeyes Sports Bulletin. Brutus level VIP subscribers will have their names and hometowns listed in the Football Preview and Michigan issues. We are still looking for four Wachsman level donors, who will be recognized in each issue in the credit box on page 3. For information on how to become a VIP subscriber, see page 4.

Your VIP upgrade can easily pay for itself with its 20 percent discount on all non-sale

items at Conrads College Gifts and a 5 percent discount on any Ohio State football road trip booked through Reynolds Travel. And VIP subscribers are immediately \$10 to the good with their discount coupon from Roosters, the Fun, Casual Joint.

All VIP upgrades will help to maintain subscription rates, which is especially important for many of our longtime subscribers who are now on fixed incomes.

We are aware that Buckeye fans can get their Ohio State sports news at any number of free Internet sites. Remember, however, that Buckeye Sports Bulletin offers so much more than just a chance to hold a newspaper in your hands.

BSB assistant publisher Becky Roberts and I, who have a combined 60-plus years here, edit every story that goes into BSB in an effort to make sure each article is as well written and accurate as possible. Columnists Mark Rea, Mike Wachsman, Rich Exner and I have all been on the Ohio State beat for 30 years or more, longer than many of the online writers have been alive.

Columnist and contributor Bill Conley played for Woody Hayes and coached under Earle Bruce, John Cooper and Jim Tressel, helping recruit some of the greatest players in Ohio State history. And staff writer and hockey beat reporter Craig Merz covered his first game on the ice for BSB in 1981.

Remember also, that the Buckeye Sports Bulletin phone number is listed on page 3 of every issue. A live person answers the phone 24 hours a day to help you with any orders, questions or problems you may have. You may even get me on the phone when you call, and I look forward to chatting with you.

You would be amazed at how often we get calls from people looking for the phone number of a competing website. It seems that many of these sites have little interest in customer service. And by the way, BSB offers a 24/7 website, BuckeyeSports.com, as a complement to our print publication.

There is truth in the old axiom, "You get what you pay for."

What Happens In Vegas

My trip to Las Vegas started one of the longest and most meandering threads ever on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum. It started innocently enough when, as a self-styled stadium geek, I mentioned that on my way from the airport to my hotel I was excited to pass by the skeleton of what will be the new stadium for the Raiders, who will be migrating from Oakland.

Then it got into the Electric Daisy Carnival, a massive musical festival going on at the time (which radically drove up room rates), which coincidentally was attended by Ezekiel Elliott, who ended up being handcuffed at the festival after a dispute with a security guard following an alleged confrontation with his girlfriend. That led to speculation that I was out there partying with Zeke.

Later, when a Lamborghini roared through downtown Las Vegas, I jokingly speculated that it was Zeke, which brought up James Bond roaring through downtown in the movie "Diamonds Are Forever," which led to a discussion on who was the best James Bond (a tie on The Forum between Sean Connery and Daniel Craig) with a brief mention of Bond one-hit wonder George Lazenby.

After that it was a discussion on parking and tailgating at the new stadium and then, whether the Raiders were a national brand and where Raider fans would come from once the team relocated to Las Vegas. The last time I checked, the thread, which had plenty of other stops in between, had moved on to Las Vegas Bishop Gorman High School, alma mater of Martell.

If you are not already reading and posting on The Forum, jump in. You never know what will be the next topic. At the least you can help decide the minor disagreement between me and Mark Rea as to whether Timothy Dalton is underrated as James Bond.

Listen To That Coach

I found something interesting in our report in this issue on the hiring of Tamika Jeter to round out women's basketball coach Kevin McGuff's staff. Jeter played her college basketball for the storied Connecticut program, and her career field-goal percentage of 70.3 percent while there still stands as the NCAA's all-time mark. She went on to the WNBA and shot 66.8 percent for Minnesota in 2003, setting the league's record for single-season field-goal percentage.

If I were a player on the Buckeye squad and Jeter started talking about shooting, I would listen!

McGuff, Jeter and the Ohio State staff will be welcoming eight new players to the roster this season. It marks the second year in a row that the Buckeyes have had a similar turnover. Sweeping changes like that over just two seasons are sure to present their challenges, but with any luck the influx of young players this year will provide more stability for several years to come. Last year the Buckeyes helped fill the roster with numerous one-and-done graduate transfers.

And speaking of transfers, in the women's basketball report on pages 34-35, McGuff, who still has scholarships to give this year, had an interesting quote about the age of the transfer portal that is probably relevant in myriad college sports right now.

"I'll be shocked if we add any more this year," McGuff said of more recruits. "It's such a tricky thing nowadays. I've never really been one to want to be above 12 or 13 ever, but nowadays, with the portal, it's easy to transfer. On one hand, you might have the extra one or two (scholarships open). But on the flip side of that, does (filling those) force people out quicker? I don't know. That's the kind of dance that coaches are doing these days."

Pros Highlight Grad List

The list of football players graduating at spring commencement May 5 was not as long as it has been lately, but it still grabbed your attention. Nick Mangold and Santonio Holmes, who played in the NFL for 11 and nine years respectively, joined one-time overall NBA No. 1 draft pick Greg Oden in getting their degrees through the university's degree completion program.

I love that program. It encourages athletes, frequently many years removed from their initial departure from campus, to come back and finish what they started. It's doubtful that Mangold, Holmes or Oden needed the degrees. Surely they are each financially set. But it gives them that sense of accomplishment, says a lot about the culture in the Ohio State athletic department, and sets a good example for future Buckeye athletes who leave school for whatever reason.

Other football players who received their sheepskins included Nick Conner, Justin Hilliard, Antwan Jackson, Liam McCullough and C.J. Saunders.

For a complete list of the graduating athletes, see page 12 of this issue.

FOR ATHLETES

HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works. It can happen when your brain gets bounced around in your skull after a fall or hit to the head.

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS

Headache · Nausea · Vomiting · Balance problems · Dizziness · Double or Blurred vision · Sensitivity to light or noise · Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy · Memory problems · Confusion · Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

REPORT IT. Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. It's up to you to report your symptoms. Your coach and team are relying on you. Plus, you won't play your best if you are not feeling well.

GET CHECKED OUT. If you think you have a concussion, do not return to play on the day of the injury. Only a health care provider can tell if you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to school and play. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

GIVE YOUR BRAIN TIME TO HEAL. A concussion can make everyday activities, such as going to school, harder. You may need extra help getting back to your normal activities. Be sure to update your parents and doctor about how you are feeling.

WHY SHOULD I TELL MY COACH & PARENTS ABOUT MY SYMPTOMS?

Playing or practicing with a concussion is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery.

While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. This can put you at risk for a more serious injury to your brain and can even be fatal.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON

<http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/concussion>



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention