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Vol. 38, No. 23

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

July 2019

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**THE
INTERVIEW
ISSUE**

TIM MOODY

BIG MAN ON CAMPUS – Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith, 62, has helped the Buckeyes become one of the nation's most profitable and most successful athletic departments, earning more than \$200 million in revenue and winning numerous championships during the 2018-2019 academic year.

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Ohio State Athletic Department Continues To Thrive Under Gene Smith's Leadership

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

The Ohio State University Board of Trustees recently voted to approve a two-year contract extension for athletic director Gene Smith, which will keep him running one of the largest athletic departments in the country through at least the 2021-22 academic year.

Ohio State is one of just three schools, joining Texas and Texas A&M, whose revenue exceeded the \$200 million mark – \$203.8 million, to be exact. Football continues bring in the most revenue, totaling \$110.7 million, while men's basketball was a distant second with just under \$24 million. The Buckeyes also receive a significant boost from media rights, which reached \$42.6 million from ESPN, FOX and the Big Ten Network.

The football, men's hockey, men's tennis and women's track and field programs won Big Ten titles. The men's basketball team won an NCAA Tournament game, and the baseball team won the conference tournament. The women's synchronized swimming program won its 32nd national title, as well.

The Buckeyes also once again had a record number of academic all-conference and scholar-athletes, so it's safe to say the athletic department is thriving under Smith's leadership.

Shortly after he returned from the NCAA meetings in Indianapolis, Smith sat down with Buckeye Sports Bulletin to discuss Ohio State's athletic success,

Urban Meyer's health, the future of the football program under Ryan Day, expectations for the basketball program and much more.

BSB: I want to start by asking about the overall health of the athletic department, as well as its successes and places to improve?

Smith: "I think everything we do, we can improve in. If you're not working hard every single day to get better, then you're not focused on what you should be focused on. We're coming off of a relatively successful year, so while we're pleased with the academic performance of our student-athletes – we ended up with a cumulative GPA of 3.22, and 34 of our 36 teams all had an average GPA of 3.0 and higher – we can improve by getting those other two up there. Our graduation success rate is at 86 percent and (federal graduation) rate is at 75 percent, so you can improve in those categories.

"One of the things I'm most proud of is that 86 percent of our graduates from last year have jobs, they're going pro or they're going to grad school. Our goal is to get that north of 90 percent next year. That's a very important piece for us because, if you come here and you do what you're supposed to do, you're going to graduate. Our promise to the families and that young person is that you're going to get a job. That is why you go to college."

BSB: One of your major successes this year was the opening of the Covelli Center. What did it take to initiate that process and see it to completion? And do you have any other new projects on the horizon?

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From The Message Board

We recently asked our readers and staff members on the BSB Forum which team — aside from Alabama or Clemson — they would like to see Ohio State play in an early-season, nonconference matchup and why. Here are some of the responses:

"I personally think Georgia would be a fun game given the way the two teams have recruited against one another, as well as the Justin Fields factor. Throw in the fact that Georgia (and Oklahoma) are mentioned alongside Ohio State in any conversation about who is the third-best team in College Football Playoff era, and it would easily be the biggest nonconference game of the year."

– Andrew Lind, BSB

"I think Ole Miss would have some tasty tailgate food. Buttermilk biscuits and Southern fried chicken. I could go for that."

– PeyoteBuck

"I was thinking about a traditional power that Ohio State has never played before, but as I thought about it, between regular-season games and bowls, I couldn't come up with such a team ... I finally settled on Ole Miss. Ohio State must have not played the extreme South teams because of segregation issues, and the squads have never met in a bowl game."

– Frank Moskowitz, BSB

"Ideal annual opponent would probably be Notre Dame, but it was often said that Woody owed his success to two things: He never lost to Michigan and he never played Notre Dame. In the near term, I would like to see a home-and-home series with LSU once Joe Burrow is gone. Great, passionate fans and gameday atmosphere."

– Terrier Buck

"I think an Ohio State-Notre Dame matchup would be great for many reasons. Geographically, the two schools are close, and there are Buckeye fans in South Bend and Fighting Irish fans in Columbus. Both schools have massive, international fan bases, and they are two of the most storied football programs in the country. Also, Notre Dame can play against subpar opponents and then reap the benefits of not being in a conference, qualifying for bowl games or the College Football Playoff. This matchup would make sure both teams earn their spots."

– Joe Dempsey, BSB

"I would pick The Citadel so we can be like Alabama."

– Tiffin Buckeye

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

Attorneys for Curt Curtis continued to gather evidence for the former football player's lawsuit against Ohio State after he crashed through a plate glass door at French Field House in October 1983 while running sprints during a practice, severely injuring his leg. Curtis' lawyers asked for \$4.5 million, which was predicated on the injury, suffering and pain, and his potential professional career in either the USFL or NFL.

Blaine Fielding, who was representing Curtis, planned to pursue the lawsuit on three levels – that Ohio State should not have had players running in the vicinity of the doors, that the doors should have been laminated in safety glass and that the doors should not have been locked.

Steve Samuels, director of the Court of Claims Defense Section in the Ohio attorney general's office, claimed that they had no case.

"We don't think they'll be able to make out a case for liability," Samuels said.

30 Years Ago – 1989

On July 3, right before BSB went to press, Ohio State named Randy Ayers as its 11th head men's basketball coach in program history.

Elevated from assistant coach after three-year head coach Gary Williams resigned June 13 and left for his mater, Maryland, Ayers became the first black head basketball coach in OSU history. At 33, he also was the youngest head coach in the Big Ten.

"Our program and the young people in it have great potential," said Ayers, who reportedly accepted a five-year contract with a base salary of \$75,000 for the first year, "and my commitment is to do the best job I possibly can and to maintain always the Buckeye tradition of honesty and integrity."

25 Years Ago – 1994

The Ohio State men's basketball program received a one-year probation from the NCAA after an 18-month investigation stemming from violations made during the recruitment of Cincinnati high school player Damon Flint. The NCAA also publicly admonished the university for failures in both rules awareness and compliance to those rules.

It additionally singled out Ayers for not recognizing

and reporting the infractions when they occurred. As a result, the Buckeyes lost one scholarship for the 1994-95 season and Ayers could not recruit off-campus until the spring of 1995.

During Flint's junior year, OSU assistant coach Paul Brazeau met with Flint and Cincinnati Woodward head coach Jim Leon at Damon's restaurant, an off-campus site.

NCAA rules specified that there could be no contact outside of the university campus. After the meeting, Brazeau gave Leon \$60 to pay for the meal and transportation and gave him nylon gym bags and coaches' notebooks, also NCAA violations.

20 Years Ago – 1999

After Sports Illustrated had sparked controversy in Columbus during the summer of 1998 by reporting on questions surrounding Andy Katzenmoyer's academic eligibility, the drama arose again in June 1999 when SI published an article stating an anonymous letter writer had claimed that the former Ohio State linebacker received preferential treatment on grades and obtaining classes he needed to stay eligible.

The letter, allegedly written by an OSU faculty member, said Katzenmoyer had a grade change from failing to a C-plus, participated in a speaking class where all 22 students received an A and was admitted into an already full class by a professor.

"To suggest we're trying to get kids through or putting pressure on people to get kids through is totally false," said university vice president for student affairs David Williams.

Katzenmoyer, who was set to begin his rookie year with the NFL's New England Patriots, told WBNS-TV in Columbus that he did struggle at times academically but "earned every grade I got."

15 Years Ago – 2004

On June 8, Ohio State athletic director Andy Geiger fired men's basketball coach Jim O'Brien. Geiger called the move one of the hardest things he ever had to do, but he felt like OSU was left with no choice after O'Brien admitted to giving recruit Aleksandar Radojevic money.

The search to replace O'Brien reportedly focused on Vanderbilt head coach Kevin Stallings, Rice head coach Willis Wilson, Penn head coach Fran Dunphy and for-

mer Los Angeles Lakers assistant coach Jim Clemons.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Incoming freshman Jaamal Berry avoided serious trouble after facing a June felony drug possession charge, enrolling at Ohio State on time June 22 for the start of summer classes.

The 18-year-old Miami native ran a red light in his hometown and was stopped by police just after midnight June 11. An officer noticed a clear plastic bag of what turned out to be roughly 28 grams of marijuana on the back seat of Berry's car, according to police reports. He was arrested and later released the same day on \$5,000 bond.

The 5-11, 195-pounder was the nation's No. 8 running back in the 2009 recruiting class.

Five Years Ago – 2014

Before he began his Ohio State career, Cincinnati Moeller 2014 five-star recruit Sam Hubbard was considered a linebacker, slated to give the Buckeyes depth at the position in the fall.

However, a picture posted on Instagram with Hubbard next to tight ends Nick Vannett, Jeff Heurman and Marcus Baugh led to speculation that the 6-6, 230-pounder had switched to tight end at the start of his freshman summer, a move BSB later confirmed.

OSU's other linebackers coming from the 2014 class included Raekwon McMillan, Kyle Berger and Dante Booker.

One Year Ago – 2018

In the wake of junior Joe Burrow's announced transfer May 8 to LSU, sophomore Dwayne Haskins was presumed as Ohio State's starting quarterback for the 2018 season. Head coach Urban Meyer confirmed that notion June 15 at the sixth annual Ohio State Football Job Fair.

"Dwayne is our starting quarterback," Meyer said.

Fifth-year senior H-back Parris Campbell said that entering fall camp with Haskins as the known starter would help the Buckeyes get into a rhythm once the campaign started.

"It's hard when you have multiple quarterbacks trying to get into a rhythm," Campbell said. "Knowing that he's the guy, it definitely makes it a lot easier."

Breaking Down Ohio State's Upcoming Schedule



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 P.O. Box 12453
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 bsb@buckeyesports.com

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PUBLISHER
 Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
 Becky Roberts

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
 Mark Rea

PRINT PRODUCT COORDINATOR
 Andrew Lind

ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR
 Garrett Stepien

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
 Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
 Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
 Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
 Bob Roehm David Breithaupt
 Bill Conley Mark Schmetzer
 Joe Dempsey Steve Siegfried
 Rich Exner Jeff Svoboda
 Mike Wachsman Craig Merz

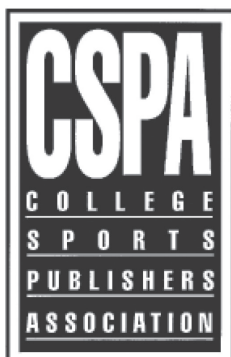
ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
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2018-19 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 38)

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No. 5	Oct. 6	No. 17	March 9
No. 6	Oct. 13	No. 18	March 23
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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 (August cover date) will be mailed the week of August 24.

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Charter Member

Since Ryan Day was named head football coach at Ohio State, it has been an offseason devoid of bad news. There have been no major off-the-field incidents, recruiting keeps purring along as before, and the transition to Day from Urban Meyer – a sure thing for induction into the College Football Hall of Fame if there ever was one – has been seemingly effortless.

Of course, the proof of Day's worth will be in the pudding of the 2019 schedule, which, by the time you read this, will begin in fewer than 60 days.

Here is what the Buckeyes will face this fall as they attempt to win another Big Ten championship and make their first trip since 2016 to the College Football Playoff.

Aug. 31 vs. Florida Atlantic – After guiding the Owls to an 11-3 record and Conference USA championship in 2017, Lane Kiffin (the onetime Boy Wonder of Coaching) saw last year's team lose four of its final six games to finish at 5-7.

A large part of FAU's problem last season was a defense that ranked 11th in the 14-team C-USA in scoring defense. The Owls gave up 31 or more points five times and twice surrendered 50 or more.

The game will mark the first-ever meeting between Florida Atlantic and Ohio State, but Kiffin is no stranger to the Buckeyes. He was Nick Saban's offensive coordinator at Alabama in 2014 when OSU took a 42-35 decision against the Crimson Tide on the way to the national championship.

Sept. 7 vs. Cincinnati – Does anyone think Luke Fickell might have this game circled in red on his calendar?

Counting his time as a player, assistant coach and interim head coach in 2011, Fickell has spent nearly half of his life at Ohio State. But he has since become the toast of Nippert Stadium, leading the Bearcats to an 11-2 season last year, their best record in nearly a decade.

Still, Fickell and his team have a tall order in front of them. Not only is Cincinnati just 2-14 all-time against Ohio State, the Bearcats haven't beaten the Buckeyes since a 24-0 shutout in 1897. In the 11 contests since then, OSU is undefeated in the series and has outscored UC by a 394-99 margin.

Sept. 14 at Indiana – The Hoosiers have had their moments during the first years with Tom Allen as head coach. But four losses by eight points or fewer two seasons ago followed by three more such defeats last year leave IU still searching for its first winning season since 2007.

Offensively, the Hoosiers welcome back QB Peyton Ramsey, who threw for 2,875 yards and 19 TDs last year. Also returning is wide receiver Nick Westbrook, who caught 42 balls last year for 590 yards and four touchdowns, and top running back Stevie Scott, who rushed for 1,137 yards and 10 scores a year ago.

Defense continues to be the problem at IU, though. The Hoosiers ranked 11th in the Big Ten last year in total defense and lost safety Jonathan Crawford and linebacker Dameon Willis Jr. – their top two tacklers in 2018 – to graduation.

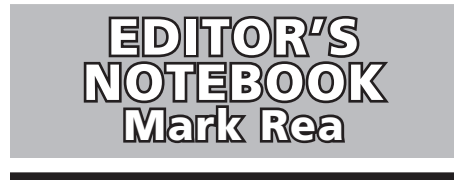
Sept. 21 vs. Miami (Ohio) – You were expecting TCU in this spot? Well, longtime Horned Frogs head coach Gary Patterson last year decided a trip to Columbus "wasn't a good business plan" for his program, and that sent the Buckeyes scurrying to fill a suddenly open spot in the schedule.

Stepping into the breach are the RedHawks, fresh off a 6-6 finish last season, their best record since 2010. Unfortunately, Miami lost the services of several players from that team, including three-year starting quarterback Gus Ragland, whose career

numbers included 6,312 yards and 56 TDs against only 13 interceptions.

Not only have the RedHawks never beaten Ohio State in five previous meetings, they're up against 125 years of history. No in-state opponent has beaten the Buckeyes since Akron took a 12-7 decision during a game played at the Ohio State Fairgrounds in 1894.

Sept. 28 at Nebraska – Former Nebraska national championship quarterback Scott



Frost returned to his alma mater last year and breathed new life into what had become a pretty pathetic program in Lincoln.

The cold, hard truth remains, however, that the Cornhuskers finished 4-8 overall and 3-6 in the conference in 2018, and those were the exact records turned in in 2017 during the final season of the failed Mike Riley experiment. Those who suddenly see Nebraska as a top-20 team and Big Ten championship contender are in danger of getting too far out over their skis.

Quarterback Adrian Martinez (2,617 yards, 17 TDs) returns, but with the exception of third-team All-Big Ten receiver J.D. Spielman, Martinez doesn't have a whole lot of help at the other skill positions. Plus, that once-proud Nebraska defense remains a work in progress. It was no better than 12th in the Big Ten in rushing, total and scoring defense last year.

Oct. 5 vs. Michigan State – While Sparty was stellar on defense for much of 2018, finishing among the nation's top 10 units in six statistical categories, including the No. 1 defense against the run, the offense could seldom get out of its own way.

QB Brian Lewerke took a huge step backward from his breakout sophomore season, running back LJ Scott got hurt and played in just five games, and Michigan State managed to score only 32 points in its final four contests combined to finish at 7-6.

Lewerke, who reportedly turned in a strong spring under new offensive coordinator Brad Salem, is back along with 236-pound battering ram Connor Heyward, who took over for Scott and rushed for 529 yards and five touchdowns. Meanwhile, most of the main cogs in the defense also return.

Oct. 18 at Northwestern – Looking for this year's Iowa or Purdue? Look no further than this Friday night affair in Evanston.

The Wildcats are fresh off a nine-win season that included a West Division championship and Holiday Bowl victory against Utah, champions of the Pac-12's South Division. Along the way, Northwestern gave Ohio State all it could handle well into the fourth quarter of the Big Ten Championship Game before running out of gas and dropping a 45-24 decision.

Northwestern loses 11 starters off last year's team, including QB Clayton Thorson and top WR Flynn Nagel. But the nucleus of the defense returns, including first-team All-Big Ten linebacker Paddy Fisher, who had a game-high 11 tackles against the Buckeyes in the league title game.

Oct. 26 vs. Wisconsin – Three straight seasons of double-digit victories under head coach Paul Chryst came to an abrupt end in 2018 when the Badgers finished at 8-5, their worst showing since 2012.

Part of the problem was that Wisconsin became a one-dimensional team on offense. While running back Jonathan Taylor was lead-

ing the nation in rushing with 2,194 yards, third-year starting QB Alex Hornibrook suffered through bouts of inconsistency and a late-season stint in the concussion protocol.

Taylor returns this year, but junior Jack Coan (515 yards, five TDs) will take over at quarterback for Hornibrook, who transferred to Florida State. Six defensive starters are back, but unfortunately for Wisconsin, that doesn't include top linebackers T.J. Edwards and Andrew Van Ginkel, who combined for 173 tackles and 21 sacks a year ago.

Nov. 9 vs. Maryland – If there was ever a program eager to turn the page from 2018, it would be the Maryland Terrapins.

Following the death of offensive lineman Jordan McNair during spring practice to the dismissal in late October of third-year head coach D.J. Durkin, it's a wonder the team found any measure of success at all, much less winning five times.

To be brutally honest, however, Maryland just isn't very good. Yes, it gave Ohio State an unholy scare in mid-November before losing a 52-51 decision in overtime, but the facts don't lie. Maryland has had exactly one winning season since it joined the Big Ten, and that was a 7-6 finish in 2014.

Nov. 16 at Rutgers – Tell me again how the presence of the Scarlet Knights benefits the Big Ten. Go ahead. I'll wait.

In the meantime, I'll tell you that Rutgers has gone 3-24 in conference play during Chris Ash's three seasons as head coach. That's the worst three-year record for any Big Ten team in nearly four decades.

Underscoring the gap between the Scarlet Knights and the upper echelon of the Big Ten is that fact that Ash's first three games against Ohio State have seen his team outscored by a combined 166-3.

Nov. 23 vs. Penn State – How many soul-crushing defeats can you stand against one opponent? Ask the Nittany Lions, who have blown late fourth-quarter leads of 12 and 11 points to the Buckeyes the past two seasons.

Penn State went on to post a 9-4 finish last year, but the team was just 1-3 against ranked opponents, including a listless 27-24 loss to No. 16 Kentucky in the Citrus Bowl that was not nearly as close as the final score might indicate.

Will this be a rebuilding year in Happy Valley? Perhaps. Gone are quarterback Trace McSorley and running back Miles Sanders, both second-team All-Big Ten performers, as well as first-team all-conference CB Amani Oruwariye.

Nov. 30 at Michigan – Once again, Jim Harbaugh and his team are getting a lot of love during the offseason despite the fact they have done next to nothing to earn it.

Harbaugh hasn't won a conference championship on the college level since back-to-back Pioneer League titles with the mighty San Diego Toreros in 2005 and 2006. He won no titles in four seasons at Stanford, the same number he has won in four seasons at Michigan.

The Wolverines continue to make bank on their tradition – a tradition that continues to fade further and further into the rearview mirror. They are 2-16 since 2001 against Ohio State, including seven straight defeats; they have never played in a Big Ten Championship Game; they have no outright conference title since 2003; they have lost five of their last six bowl games; they have no Rose Bowl appearances since 2006; they have no Rose Bowl victories since 1997; they have no national championship of any kind since 1997; and they have not won an undisputed national title since 1948.



Haskins, Olatoye Named Athletes Of The Year

Heisman Trophy finalist Dwayne Haskins and NCAA indoor track and field national champion Sade Olatoye were named Ohio State's Male and Female Athletes of the Year on June 19.

Haskins set numerous school and conference records last season while leading the Buckeyes to a Big Ten title and victory in the Rose Bowl. He threw for 4,831 yards and 50 touchdowns, completed 70 percent of his passes and finished third in the Heisman Trophy race behind Oklahoma's Kyler Murray and Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa.

Drafted by the Washington Redskins with the No. 15 overall pick in April's NFL draft, Haskins is the first football player to be named athlete of the year since Heisman

Trophy winner Troy Smith in 2007.

Olatoye, meanwhile, wins the award after setting four school records last season, including indoor (17.88 meters) and outdoor (17.88 meters) shot put along with indoor weight throw (24.46 meters) and outdoor hammer throw (67.49 meters). Her weight throw resulted in a national title at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships, while her overall efforts helped Ohio State win Big Ten titles in both the indoor and outdoor seasons.

Both athletes are now finalists for the Big Ten's Athlete of the Year award, which will be voted on and announced by the conference later this summer.

Haskins could become Ohio State's third straight conference male athlete of the year, after former wrestler Kyle Snyder won the award the last two years. Olatoye, on the other hand, would be the Buckeyes' first conference female athlete of the year since former sprinter Christina Manning in 2012.

Day Family Creates Mental Wellness Fund

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day and his wife, Christina, have teamed up with Nationwide Children's Hospital to create a fund for pediatric and adolescent mental wellness.

The fund, announced on June 5, will help raise awareness, increase education, inspire advocacy and raise funds for mental health.

"We are grateful for this generous commitment from the Day family," said Nationwide Children's Hospital Foundation president Steve Testa. "This fund will have a lasting impact for children and adolescents living with a mental illness, an area

that has traditionally been underfunded. By joining our movement, Coach Day and Christina are helping to break stigmas, improve prevention activities, enhance clinical care and create a brighter tomorrow for children and families."

Day knows plenty about the importance of mental health, as his father died by suicide when he was just 9 years old. He has been passionate about supporting mental health advocacy, behavioral health research and prevention efforts ever since, which is why his family made a personal contribution of \$100,000 to the fund.

"We are excited to join the national 'On Our Sleeves' movement in support of children and young adults living with mental illness," Day said. "There is a vitally important connection between mental health and physical health, and we want to help children and young adults who do not wear their thoughts on their sleeves when it comes to mental health issues."

Snead Dismissed Last Fall Following Assault Investigation

According to a report from The Lantern, former Ohio State running back Brian Snead was suspended from the football team and subsequently dismissed from the university last fall after he was named a suspect in the alleged rape of another student.

A consensus four-star prospect from Seffner (Fla.) Armwood, Snead appeared in just two games for the Buckeyes as a true freshman. He rushed for 37 yards and one touchdown on 11 carries in blowout wins over Oregon State and Rutgers but was suspended indefinitely prior to the third game of the season against TCU when the

allegations came to light.

Though he was suspended and unable to travel with the team to away games or be on the sidelines during home games, Snead was allowed to practice while the university conducted its investigation. He was found to have violated the student code of conduct with charges of nonconsensual sexual intercourse and nonconsensual sexual contact and was dismissed from the university on Nov. 27. No criminal charges were filed, however.

Snead announced his transfer from Ohio State in January but did not share details or the reason for his departure. He has since enrolled at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs, Iowa, but recently visited UCF as he eyes a return to FBS football.

Byars, Laurinaitis and Ward Nominated For Hall Of Fame

Former Ohio State running back Keith Byars, linebacker James Laurinaitis and offensive tackle Chris Ward are among the 76 players and five coaches from the Football Bowl Subdivision nominated for the College Football Hall of Fame's class of 2020, which were announced by the National Football Foundation on June 3.

"It's an enormous honor to just be on the College Football Hall of Fame ballot when you think that more than 5.33 million people have played college football and only 1,010 players have been inducted," NFF president and CEO Steve Hatchell said. "The hall's requirement of being a first-team All-American creates a much smaller pool of about 1,500 individuals who are even eligible. Being in



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today's elite group means an individual is truly among the greatest to have ever played the game, and we look forward to announcing the 2020 College Football Hall of Fame Class in January."

The runner-up for the 1984 Heisman Trophy, Byars rushed for 3,200 yards, good for fifth all time in school history, and 46 touchdowns during his career at Ohio State (1982-85). He was selected by the Philadelphia Eagles with the No. 10 overall selection in the 1986 NFL draft and played 14 seasons for the four different teams, making the Pro Bowl in 1993.

Laurinaitis (2005-08) was a three-time All-American at Ohio State, one of just eight Buckeyes to earn that distinction. He recorded 375 tackles, 13 sacks and nine interceptions in his career and was a three-time All-Big Ten selection, two-time Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year, Bronko Nagurski Trophy winner, Butkus Award winner and Lott Trophy winner.

A second-round pick of the St. Louis Rams in the 2009 NFL draft, Laurinaitis played eight seasons for the Rams and New Orleans Saints.

Ward, meanwhile, was a two-time All-American who helped Ohio State to at least a share of the Big Ten title in all four years of his career (1974-77). He was the fourth overall pick of the New York Jets in the 1978 NFL draft and played seven seasons with the Jets and Saints.

Ohio State currently has 25 former players in the College Football Hall of Fame, which is located in Atlanta. The Buckeyes' most recent inductee was line-backer Tom Cousineau (1975-78) in 2016.

Former Running Back Krall Passes At Age 92

Former Ohio State running back Jerry Krall, who scored a touchdown to help Ohio State defeat California in the 1950 Rose Bowl, passed away in his Rossford, Ohio, home on June 2. He was 92 years old.

A four-year letterman at Ohio State, Krall was highly recruited out of Toledo Libbey. He narrowed his list of potential colleges to Ohio State and Michigan before reportedly flipping a coin to decide his future.

Krall played three seasons in the NFL with the Detroit Lions and Chicago Cardinals before retiring to a high-profile role with Owens-Illinois, the world's leading glass bottle manufacturer.

Meyer To Open Restaurant This Fall

Corso Ventures, a Columbus-area restaurant group, announced on June 8 that it has partnered with former Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer to open a new restaurant this fall in the Bridge Park district of suburban Dublin, Ohio.

"When Corso Ventures approached me with this unique opportunity to partner with their elite restaurant and hospitality team on a Pint House in Bridge Park, it was a no-brainer," Meyer said in a press release. "Not only does Urban Meyer's Pint House allow me to stay attached to the central Ohio community, but it will also make the perfect space to host events supporting our foundation."

The restaurant, which will open in the space previously occupied by RAM

Continued On Page 6

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)

No BSB Print For Seven Weeks

The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, our big Football Preview issue, will be mailed the week of Aug. 24. That means there will be no print BSB for more than seven weeks. However, there is no reason to miss any of the Ohio State sports action between now and then.

The BuckeyeSports.com website 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 Big Ten Media Days and the start of fall camp coming up, you will want to be checking BuckeyeSports.com daily.

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If you are a subscriber and have been unable to access all features on the site, please give us a call at (614) 486-2202 and we will help you gain access. Glitches do happen from time to time.

Readers who have been experiencing postal delivery problems can also read the complete edition of each issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin online at BuckeyeSports.com on Mondays during football season and Tuesdays the rest of the year. Your copy of the paper will still arrive in your mailbox at its usual time.

If you have any questions about BuckeyeSports.com or your mail service, feel free to call us at the above number.

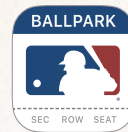


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Continued From Page 5

Restaurant and Brewery, will be based on the Short North Pint House, located in the Short North Arts District of Columbus. It will include "Urban's 7-0 Room," a private event space commemorating Meyer's perfect record against Michigan that features awards, trophies and memorabilia from Meyer's career.

"Corso Ventures has always been committed to creating fun and exciting experiences across Columbus," the company said in a press release. "The vibrancy being built in Bridge Park makes it an obvious choice, and we are thrilled to be honoring the career of Coach Meyer with a venue that we envision will be Dublin's premier destination to celebrate game day or any other special occasion."

Meyer, who lives in Dublin, is currently the assistant athletic director of athletics initiatives and relations at Ohio State and will appear on FOX's Saturday morning college football pregame show this fall.

Tennessee Titans Retire George's Number

The Tennessee Titans announced they will retire No. 9 and No. 27 in honor of late quarterback Steve McNair and former Ohio State running back Eddie George, respectively, in a ceremony during the Sept. 15 home opener against the Indianapolis Colts.

"Steve and Eddie will be forever linked as two of the driving forces for our team in the late '90s and early 2000s," Titans controlling owner Amy Adams Strunk said. "They were the heart and soul of the team, and each made the other a better player and that ultimately led to a great deal of team success. Their statistics will forever live in our record books, but their play and sacrifice is what our fans will always remember. For that and all that they have done for our team, the numbers 9 and 27 will be retired

with the all-time franchise greats."

Only six players in the history of the Titans/Oilers organization have had the distinction of having their jersey number retired, including quarterback Warren Moon (No. 1), running back Earl Campbell (No. 34), safety Jim Norton (No. 43), offensive lineman Mike Munchak (No. 63), defensive end Elvin Beathea (No. 65) and offensive lineman Bruce Matthews (No. 74).

A first-round pick by the then-Houston Oilers in 1996, George is the franchise's all-time rushing leader with 10,009 yards and 64 touchdowns over the course of eight seasons. He was a four-time Pro Bowler and led the Titans to an appearance in Super Bowl XXXIV alongside McNair, who was shot and killed in 2009.

"We were always linked at the hip during our playing careers, we've been through a lot of wars together both on and off the field, and to go down this day in history – to have our jerseys retired on the same day – is huge for us," said George, who also had his No. 27 retired by Ohio State in 2001.

Shazier Receives George Halas Award

Former Ohio State and current Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker Ryan Shazier was named this year's recipient of the George Halas Award, the Pro Football Writers of America announced on June 3. The award is given annually to the NFL player, coach or staff member who "overcomes the most adversity to succeed."

Shazier has not played football since he suffered a serious spinal injury during a Monday Night Football game against the Cincinnati Bengals in December 2017. He was given less than a 20 percent chance of walking again but has made remarkable progress in the 18 months since, which includes walking across the stage at the 2018 NFL draft, box jumping during a workout in April and dancing at his wedding in May.

"In my 35 years covering the Steelers, I've seen many players overcome much adversity, but never have I seen such determination by a player to overcome what Ryan has and to reach a point, physically and mentally, where he is," Steelers beat writer Ed Bouchette said in a press release announcing the award. "It's unbelievable how teammates talk about how he has inspired them. (Steelers vice president/general manager) Kevin Colbert and (head coach) Mike Tomlin have spoken many times about what he has meant to the organization, the front office and the players. He has been one big inspiration."

"He's going to all the meetings, watching film, breaking down opponents, going in with the scouts to watch stuff, looking at prospects at draft time, and he's on the field

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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.

"The Buckeye Sports Bulletin 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," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "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.

To upgrade your existing subscription to VIP status, with all the benefits that come with that designation, go to buckeyesports.com/vip-memberships to pay by credit card, or call us at (614) 486-2202 during regular business hours. If readers have questions on this new program, they can call the same number.

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every day. He's made remarkable recovery from an injury where many of us believed he wouldn't be able to.

"He's an inspiration to fans as well. His first public appearance was at a Steelers home game. They showed him on the Jumbotron, and the ovation was incredible. Same thing at a Penguins game. At the NFL draft, he walked without help publicly for the first time. He's been a tremendous inspiration all the way around."

Pittsburgh recently tolled Shazier's contract into the 2019 season, which means he'll be a part of the Steelers' roster, be paid a salary commensurate with his years of service in the league, continue to accrue seasons toward his players' pension and receive the same medical insurance coverage as all active players. And despite the long odds of a full recovery, Shazier continues to express his desire to resume his playing career.

"I definitely want to play," he said earlier this offseason. "I try to tell people at the end of the day, just because I got hurt, doesn't mean I lost the love of the game of football. I love football so much. I just care about the game. I really feel like the game has taken me places I never expected to go. I am putting everything into it. I feel like I was the best linebacker in the league. I don't want to leave that as my legacy. I feel like I have so much to show."

Other nominees for the award included Steelers running back James Conner, Colts quarterback Andrew Luck, Texans safety Andre Hal and Giants general manager Dave Gettleman.

Football Players Intern With WWE

Five members of the Ohio State football team completed an internship at WWE on June 12 as part of a partnership between the sports entertainment giant and the universi-

ty's Real Life Wednesdays program.

Defensive tackle Davon Hamilton, linebacker Justin Hilliard, safety Shaun Wade, long snapper Liam McCullough and offensive tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere had the opportunity to explore the WWE Performance Center in Orlando, Fla., and sat in on a presentation with the coaching staff to learn about the company's talent development system, strength and conditioning programs, in-ring training and content creation.

The group also met chief brand officer Stephanie McMahon and superstars Triple H and Shawn Michaels.

"Hosting student-athletes from the Ohio State football program, they were able to experience a complete immersion of what makes WWE so unique while seeing everything from production and marketing to a day in the life of an NXT Superstar," said director of talent development Paul Fair. "It's collaborations like these that open up doors for the future and provide so much value to all parties involved."

The Buckeyes capped off their internship by attending a taping of NXT Live! that evening.

Durbin Has Brief Stint With Columbus Destroyers

Former Ohio State kicker Tyler Durbin was signed by the Arena Football League's Columbus Destroyers on June 14 on an emergency basis to replace starter Craig Peterson, who the team announced would be unavailable for their June 15 game against the Baltimore Brigade.

Durbin, who kicked for the Buckeyes during the 2015 and 2016 seasons, converted three of his five extra-point attempts in the Destroyer's 44-39 loss. He was then released on June 18 with Peterson's reactivation to the active roster.



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"Your Head to Toe Buckeye Source"

Meyer's Health, Day's Hiring Among Smith's Priorities

Continued From Page 1

Smith: "It was a lot of work, and our fundraising team did a marvelous job in raising funding for two facilities at the same time – the Covelli and the Schumaker (Complex providing nutritional, physical and psychological support). It was north of \$90 million the team raised, and I'm so proud of them. The hardest part was raising the funding and then obviously going through the institutional approvals and getting access to the land. Both of those facilities will service all of our student-athletes in different ways."

BSB: You've done some improvements to Ohio Stadium, as well. Where is that project in terms of being completed, and are there any plans to for additional renovations in the future?

Smith: "Right now, we're finishing up with our four-year concrete maintenance program that will be concluded this year. Every piece of concrete in the stadium would have been resealed, which is really good. Then the suite and loge seat project will open up this year – it'll be done in August. Our suite holders will have access to those seats and the new club section behind it. Wi-Fi is on target to be completed this year, so that is a significant project, about \$7 million. The thing we're most focused on is maintenance – things that most people won't see, not very sexy. They won't see those things."

BSB: We're coming up on 100 years in 2022, so how much longer do you see the stadium being used?

Smith: "Forever. It's a landmark facility. It's why we invested more than \$6 million in concrete restoration. That will hold for nine to 10 years. There's no reason to believe that it won't last for a long, long, long time – minus shrinking capacity because of how fan behavior changes."

BSB: The football team won the Big Ten and Rose Bowl titles last year, but what were your overall thoughts on how the year went? You faced Urban Meyer's suspension, Ryan Day coming in on an interim basis, etc.

Smith: "Well said. You hit on it. I thought – considering the adversity that our leadership faced, the coaching staff, the support staff and then ultimately the players – it was an outstanding year. A phenomenal year. I was really pleased with how Ryan handled the games he was responsible for and really pleased with how Urban transitioned back into his leadership role. And then during that whole period of time, recruiting during the year, recruiting right after Urban's announcement and then up to signing day in December. If you look at it in totality, I thought both of them, in their changing roles, did an outstanding job."

BSB: How did you manage and pay attention to Coach Meyer's health throughout the year? I know that was something that loomed large in terms of recruiting.

Smith: "We were very open with him and he with us, using our medical staff and using the people around him on the sideline. It was certain stimuli in the game that would cause the cysts to flare and create headaches for him. We kind of understood what those were and tried to keep him calm on the sideline. It was very difficult with his personality. And that obviously led to the ultimate decision, but we tried to be very sensitive to what he had going on."

"We had (strength and conditioning coach) Mickey Marotti, (chief of football operations) Brian Voltolini and (director

of player development) Ryan Stamper and others tap him on the shoulder or pull him back when it looked like he was ready to blow. I thought we had a good management plan in place to help him lead for the rest of the season, and he did an excellent job from my view."

BSB: Meyer fell to one knee during the win over Indiana in early October, and nobody really knew the extent of his condition at that point. What did you say to him?

Smith: "When you see that in a physical way ... I knew he had challenges, but when it takes you – or any person – to their knee, we have to be concerned about whether or not he could continue the job. He has a responsibility to the student-athletes, so we intensified our conversations. We had a group meeting shortly after that game in his office with his doctor, our trainer, Mickey, Brian, Ryan and a couple other people because I felt like we needed a game management plan. During the week, he didn't have problems. I was very forthright with him and told him, 'You've got to be honest with us and be honest with people around you.' And he was so responsive, obviously. We just had to make sure he was capable of leading the team on Saturday. Once we had that meeting and set up that management plan, I was comfortable. I just told him, 'Reality is, we might have to take you out if you can't do it,' so we ended up with a great management plan and he responded perfectly."

BSB: At what point did you and Coach Meyer come to the conclusion that it was time for him to step away from coaching?

Smith: "It was really his decision. Every Sunday, we'd meet and talk, talk and talk in the morning and I would leave to go to the College Football Playoff meetings. We kind of had an agreement that if he was going to retire, he was going to need to do it right after The Team Up North game because you have signing day on Dec. 19. We were doing well. A lot of young people were committed to us. We didn't want to have a lag, so during the season, I was doing my due diligence and preparing myself for if he did want to walk away. Really, after that game, he made his decision. That Sunday morning, we met, and he made his decision. So, I had already lined up my decision on what I wanted to do for a replacement, which allowed us to move very fast. If he decided to stay, the plan would have just been shelved. But I really appreciate his humility, his openness and his honesty through all of our conversations every Sunday morning."

BSB: With Coach Meyer's departure, you've lost an all-time great coach. How difficult is it to replace him?

Smith: "It's hard. He and I established an unbelievable relationship – one that was truly difficult for people to truly understand. I remember when we lost to Michigan State (in 2015), I went into his office on Sunday morning like I always do. I gave him time to get settled. He was sitting there in the dark. I didn't turn the lights on, and I sat in the dark with him and we chatted for a long time."

"It was hard on a professional level because of what he brought our student-athletes and Buckeye Nation. The opportunity to see him perform, I'm a football guy so I was always amazed at how he was able to motivate the team and win games. Then from a personal side, it was a hard one for me because he and I got really close personally. It was very hard for me on both levels. But

I guess from a professional level, we had it pretty good. It's kind of hard to replicate."

BSB: Coach Day stepped in during Meyer's three-game suspension and led the Buckeyes to wins in each game. How do you think he performed as a head coach, and did that lead to you ultimately hiring him full time?

Smith: "That was a piece of the decision. It's interesting because that audition, so to speak, provided me some insight into how he would lead. Besides winning the games, I thought the most important thing was that he held it together. If you look back over the history of time in any situation similar to this, the thing that can be most challenging is the team. The team could become fragmented, it could implode. Whether or not you win or lose, the dynamics of the team could be pretty fragmented. Ultimately, they held strong. The culture we built – that Urban built – was sustained. He dealt with individuals like he needed to deal with them. It was a leadership moment not in just the X's and O's or on the field, but how he handled the press, which is a huge responsibility. I think he did an excellent job there. Of course, everyone thinks of the wins and losses, but I was really evaluating the other stuff."

BSB: You mentioned the process for finding Coach Meyer's replacement, but I'm sure you had some other candidates in mind besides Coach Day. Can you share any of those names?

Smith: "Nope, I can't. You know, there were obviously some people across the country who are outstanding coaches and I have a responsibility to hire the best. My pros and cons sheet included Ryan and others, but – at the end of the day – the pros with him were greater. We don't have an environment or a program that needed to be rebuilt, it didn't need to be blown up. Anytime you hire a new leader, they want to come in and change the strength program, change the academics, change the compliance, all those types of things. Our structure – in the complex organization we have – is the best it's ever been."

BSB: Did Coach Meyer have any input on Coach Day's hiring?

Smith: "Oh yeah. He and I talked about it a lot. There was a point in time, somewhere before Meyer's decision, where we talked about head coach vs. assistant coach and if there is someone who might be more right for the position. We didn't talk names because that's not his responsibility, it's mine. But we talked concept, so I listened to him on that. He gave me good insight that ultimately helped me make my decision. He was very supportive of Ryan, obviously."

BSB: How has Coach Meyer handled his new job as athletic director of athletics initiatives and relations, and do you believe he's happy with it or that he'll have an itch for coaching?

Smith: "I think he's handled it exceptionally well. He's learning. He's never operated in this space before, so there's a lot to it. He's been great with our donors and at events that we have for donors. He's been unbelievable with our leadership institute and what we're trying to do there. He taught a class, which he really enjoyed. He has accepted more speaking engagements, particularly on campus that he historically would have turned down. That's good for our environment. He's obviously going to do FOX television, and they flew him out to the U.S. Open. He was out at Pebble Beach, and he's never been there."

"The experiences that he's going through are new for him and enjoyable for him. We

went to Lima, Ohio, and we were at the Lima Correctional Institute. He went with me to something I would have done without him before. He was engaged with the environment he'd never been in. I think, right now, he's doing great. He's enjoying it and learning a lot. Coaching? Who knows? That's not for me to comment on."

BSB: You mentioned the Eugene D. Smith Leadership Institute and how some of Coach Meyer's roles are included in it. Can you explain the institute's purpose and why it was important for you to start something like that?

Smith: "It's really focused on job placement, grad school and professional (development). What we try to do is stay true to our promise with the family and the kid, to help them get on a continuum where they really home in on what they want to do around their junior year. Then we start the process of getting them aligned with that, whether it's applying to grad school or making sure they meet the requirements of grad school."

"For years, kids have come to me with a 2.82 GPA and they want to go to grad school, and I'm like, 'Eh, you're probably not going to make it.' So, what we've done is create a culture where kids understand that earlier. Our vision is to make sure that every kid when they're done here has a job, is going to grad school or is going pro."

"We had one of our donors go to one of our Real Life Wednesdays speeches where we had Ken Chenault, the CEO of American Express, talking to our football team. This donor happened to be on the board of American Express, a great guy and one of my personal friends, and he was just amazed at the impact and the questions the kids were asking. He called me a few weeks later and he said, 'Gene, do you do that for every sport?' I explained how it's kind of fragmented and that some sports do different things, but how every sophomore is required to have a résumé and everyone goes through financial literacy. He said, 'If you can develop a comprehensive program, I'll give you \$1 million to start it off.'

"He challenged us, so we met with he and his wife on maybe three or four occasions. We developed a purpose, a mission, the structure and the whole nine yards. So, it really forced us to have a comprehensive, integrated program for all student-athletes. Then he wanted to name it in my honor, so it wasn't my choice to put my name on it. It was something that he, as a longtime friend, chose to do."

BSB: That's obviously something that could define your legacy at Ohio State. You're coming on 15 years as athletic director next spring, so how much longer do you want to be or feel like you'll be here?

Smith: "I just signed a new contract through 2022, and I'm going to honor that. My wife will tell me I can keep going if the institution wants me. God has blessed me, so long as I'm healthy and passionate about what we have in front of us – and as long as I'm wanted – then I'm sure we'll go beyond that. I personally go year to year because I try not to look too far ahead. We're establishing goals and objectives for 2019-20, and we just had another meeting for that this morning."

BSB: With his current position, a lot of people see a pathway for Coach Meyer to become the athletic director once you step down. Is that something you can possibly see happening?

Smith: "Yeah, if he committed himself to

it. I don't know if he will because we've never talked about it. He'd have to commit to another level of learning. You have to learn the Big Ten and NCAA rules and regulations for all sports, figure out the political complexities of our space. He's never expressed that to me, but who knows."

BSB: You recently left the College Football Playoff committee after two years in that role. Can you give some insight into that decision?

Smith: "I really felt that I needed to be here for Ryan. Anytime I've served on an NCAA committee, I never let my core responsibility be interfered by my service to my association. This is a huge responsibility with our football program that Ryan has in his first year, so I felt like I needed to be here. My presence on Sundays and Mondays is critical, and with the CFP, I was always gone Sunday evening, Monday and Tuesday. That's my window to be here. I just felt that I needed to do that. And I only had one more year, so ..."

BSB: Sticking with the playoff, do you believe it's been successful, or do you see any issues with it? And how do you feel about possible expansion?

Smith: "I've always felt that the BCS wasn't as bad as most people thought it was - especially since we were in it every year. And I'm kind of old school, true to the bowl games. I always thought the top-tier bowl games were unbelievable experiences for young people. When we moved to the CFP, and I shared this before, but the bowls would be devalued ... and they are. Now we're starting to see a different behavior. Attendance is going down and players are not wanting to play in those games, and I see that continuing."

"I think the CFP, based upon its original intent, has been wildly successful. We can always debate who is in and who is not, but that's always been the case. You can see that with basketball committee with 68, and 69 and 70 are complaining. If it expands, it's going to be the same. It's going to 7, 8, 9 and 10. It's never going away. That's what I've always tried to tell people with the BCS, they thought that a playoff would solve everything. No, it doesn't. You have a huge demographic with people with different thoughts and opinions. At the end of the day, expansion is not going to solve what people think it will."

"However, I do believe, down the road, it's going to expand. I'm worried about it from a couple of perspectives, I really am. First and foremost, from a student-athlete welfare point of view. After we played Alabama in the semifinals, I was worried about our guys playing Oregon. That was a slugfest, that Alabama game. I go in the locker room, I go in the training room, I see them the next day, I know what their bodies are like. I thought our sports performance team and Urban did a masterful job of getting them back for another game. If we have to play The Team Up North, play a championship game, play in the quarterfinals, the semifinals and the national championship, that's a gantlet. That's

a physical gantlet. Sometimes people forget these are 17-, 18-, 19-year-old bodies. These aren't 27-year-old pros."

"I'm worried that, I'm worried about finals week, I'm worried about the holidays. I think kids should have time around Christmas. You can't push it too far back in January because we're already missing class in January. Those days are important. All of those things are worrisome. The other thing I worry about is that you can't diminish the regular season. You can't just take eight teams and have all those other teams' regular seasons be diminished for the playoff. However, I do believe sometime down the road they'll probably expand."

BSB: Another big topic in college football right now is the transfer portal. What are your thoughts on the portal and waiver process, and how can it be improved?

Smith: "One thing to note is that waivers are not being granted as often as people think. There have been a lot of high-profile cases, but there are a whole lot of waivers that were not approved. I was just in the NCAA meetings (on June 24 and 25) and we just passed it to the NCAA Council (on June 26), but we're changing - if it's approved - how the waiver committee will evaluate a young person's request for a waiver."

"I was of the opinion the institution from which the student-athlete is transferring should not have a say in whether or not that athlete should be eligible at the other institution. We should be allowed to provide information if a student-athlete was seeing a sports psychologist here or if there was an extenuating circumstance. But whether or not they're eligible to play, that shouldn't come from us. Fortunately, this new model will ask the schools that they're transferring from to provide that information. Then it's on the waiver committee to make a decision and that other school to make its case."

"The thing we're all waiting on - and we have to wait until late September - is the final data. There are a lot of young people in the portal for all sports who might not land somewhere. At the beginning, many of us thought free agency. If you're going to go in the portal, 99 percent of the time, you're going to know where you're going. Now you can take their scholarships. That kid typically won't take that risk unless they know where they're going. But that's not true. And now there are going to be a lot of kids in the portal that don't land or whose expectations won't be consistent with reality and they won't land where they thought they were going to go. I'm anxious to see the data."

BSB: Speaking of the transfer portal, Justin Fields is likely to play a major role in Day's first season as head coach. What kind of expectations do you have for this upcoming year?

Smith: "Win every game, beat That Team Up North and graduate all of your players. Our main thing is keeping our performance level high. First and foremost, he's done a

phenomenal job in the recruiting space. But he has to make sure he puts this team in a position to win. If someone is better than you or you have an off night, I get that. But a coach's job is to put the team in a position to win. How he's handled the team in the spring and how he handles them in August as they get ready, how he manages the game. All those things will be important to me. My expectation is doing the best job we can and putting them in a position to win."

BSB: Coach Day has done an excellent job recruiting thus far while also placing extra emphasis on the state of Ohio. It's a little bit different than Coach Meyer's more national approach but seems to strike a good balance between the two. What are your thoughts on securing the state's best first and foremost?

Smith: "It's important for every sport, particularly one in which there are a large number of outstanding local athletes. He's done that well. I'm a firm believer that you should let someone go if they want to transfer from your institution, but 99.9 percent of the time, if you recruit Ohio and the contiguous states, those kids will stay with you. Our risk is farther out, and that's true for every school. It's important to keep the talent in Ohio, but also important - because we're an international institution - to go wherever the best players are. There are going to be years when Ohio is down and the numbers won't be as high, but when they're high, we need to be in the mix."

BSB: We mentioned some of the decisions Day has made since he was named head coach. Did you have any uneasiness about hiring defensive assistants Greg Mattison and Al Washington away from Michigan?

Smith: "Not at all. At the bowl game, Ryan and I were constantly meeting when he had downtime, going through a list of a bunch of people and narrowing it down. He ended up with Greg and Al, and they made perfect sense. Al's father played here and he's from here, so that was a natural fit. And Greg knows most of our staff and actually worked with Urban and Ryan. So, there was a relationship with them. The knowledge and experience he brings is huge, so it wasn't about where he was coming from. It was what he was bringing. And both of them bring unbelievable talent and skills."

BSB: Chris Holtmann, meanwhile, has led the basketball program to back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances in his first two seasons in Columbus. What are your thoughts on the job he's done so far?

Smith: "It's been phenomenal. He's done an excellent job. He transitioned the right way. The young people we had at that time really bought into him and his philosophy. We obviously had a pro player in Keita Bates-Diop, and in basketball,

you need to have one. And he put Keita, Jae'Sean Tate, Kam Williams and that team in a position to win. I thought he did the same with last year's team, too. I think he's an excellent teacher and in-game coach."

BSB: Last year's team didn't play as well throughout the season but still ended up with a tournament win. What does that say about Holtmann's coaching?

Smith: "We had younger players, but a group of guys that played well together. That's the beauty of what he's capable of. He got the most out of those kids. He puts each of them in a position to win. How he's handled Kaleb (Wesson's suspension) and how he handled C.J. (Jackson). My goodness, he got everything he could out of C.J. I think he did a great job."

BSB: The Buckeyes play a difficult schedule this season with matchups against Cincinnati, Kentucky, North Carolina, Villanova and West Virginia, but they combat that with a top-10 recruiting class. Do you think the team can meet the high expectations that come along with that?

Smith: "I don't know how we'll do against those teams, but there's no question we should be able to compete."

BSB: You guys played a game at St. John Arena last season, the first in that building since 2010. Are there any plans to do that again?

Smith: "We'll do it again, off and on."

BSB: Ohio State wore throwback uniforms in that game, which leads me to my next question. In both football and basketball, how do you strike a balance between being respectful of tradition while also being attractive to fans and recruits?

Smith: "That's really cool and a good question. It's really hard. We talk about it; we meet about it and we're not just going to do it just to do it. We really make sure it ties to something like going to St. John. That makes sense to do it that one time. Would we do it again? I don't know. I doubt it because it was a special moment. And we do the same thing with football. Somewhere down the line we might do another one."

BSB: Circling back, the game at St. John was an overall great experience. It left some fans wanting more out of the Schottenstein Center. In what ways are you working to improve the experience at Ohio State's current basketball facility?

Smith: "I think the Schott gets a bad rap because I remember some games in there that were just like St. John. It just depends on who you're playing and if you're winning. I think it depends. The fans love going to St. John and being in that environment, but they don't necessarily love the restrooms, the long lines at concessions and that type of stuff. So, I think the reality is we've just got to win."

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J.T. Barrett Discusses Record-Breaking Career

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

J.T. Barrett left Ohio State as a national champion with 35 school records and four Big Ten records. From being thrust into the starting quarterback role right before his redshirt freshman season due to an injury to starter Braxton Miller to surpassing Drew Brees as the Big Ten's all-time leader in several statistical categories, Barrett etched his name in college football history.

As the only Ohio State quarterback to go 4-0 as the starter against archrival Michigan and the only three-time captain in program history, Barrett made his mark in Columbus before heading to the NFL. Now a member of the New Orleans Saints, Barrett did a one-on-one interview with BSB, reflecting on his time in the scarlet and gray and beyond.

BSB: How would you like to be remembered by Buckeye Nation?

Barrett: "A good person, a genuine person that cared, not only about the people that I was with, whether it be coaches, players, family getting me to the Ohio State football program, but also just Buckeye Nation in general. I feel like in terms of me being the best person that I can be and also the best Buckeye, a person that cares and always wanted to do what was best for the team and was willing to do whatever it took to win football games."

BSB: What is your perspective on the fourth-and-1 ruling of a first down on your run against Michigan in 2016? Did you make it?

Barrett: "Yeah, I made it. I feel like, at first, I wasn't so sure. At first, I was doing like a confident, 'Yeah I got it.' It was one of those ones where I was like, 'Woo-wee, I don't know.' It was kind of like the same thing as when we played Wisconsin in the Big Ten championship (a critical fourth-quarter fourth down) in 2017. That one, I felt like initially I got it, and then when you get knocked back, I mean, you turn to the sidelines, you see the markers, it's like, 'Oh man, I don't know.' It was kind of like the same thing on both of those plays. At first it was like, 'I got it,' but then where I landed and looked, it's like, 'Oh my,' so I feel like that was my initial thought on the field. During the play, like, 'All right I got it,' then when

you land and turn and look it's like, 'Oh snap,' a little uncertainty creeps in."

BSB: Why did you prefer the Saints over the Indianapolis Colts, who also had interest in you as an undrafted free agent?

Barrett: "That whole situation was kind of wild. I don't know if a lot of people understand how 'undrafted' goes. So, the sixth round is coming along and then you start getting phone calls, whether it be my agent or myself, you start getting phone calls from different teams. And they're basically like, 'Hey, we might want to sign you to undrafted, we don't know how our picks are going to go or we might pick you up in the sixth or seventh round. We just wanted to see if you're going to be available to come in undrafted.'"

"It's almost like you're getting recruited. And so mine was based off of at first, the calls that were coming in were, 'Hey, we want you to come out for a tryout?' Basically, you come to rookie minicamp and you're just trying out, and that's what a lot of the calls were at first. And then I got calls talking about getting signed, which obviously there's a little more stability with that. So the choices were really between the Eagles and the Saints as far as being signed."

"The Colts was just a tryout and that's what was initial. Then conversations after that were with the Eagles and Saints. And I felt like with the Saints it was just an opportunity to learn under a great quarterback as far as Drew Brees. And the system they run, I knew it was more of a traditional, NFL offense, which now you see offenses in the NFL where they're becoming more college-like, but that's just based on the plays that obviously come from college. I wanted to learn under Drew Brees and what makes him great. That was one of the main reasons, because I watched him growing up, we're shorter quarterbacks, and so with that, I wanted to just see how he worked and how he's so great. And I am fortunate to still be with the Saints and still be able to learn."

BSB: What was the biggest adjustment for you while transitioning from college to the NFL?

Barrett: "I would say like anything, the speed of the game. Things are happening really fast and competition is knocked up a level, whether it be high school to college, college to the NFL, so I would say that was one thing. And then also just

the amount of information. In college you only have certain hours of football each day based on rules of the NCAA, and there are rules in the NFL as well, but that's your job. You're there so many hours of the day. It's not the four hours that it was like in college. You're there easily eight. So with that, a lot more information has to be digested and taken in unfortunately."

"Being able to be with the Saints, I feel like with Drew (Brees) being there and Coach (Sean) Payton, and also offensive coordinator Pete Carmichael, they've been together for so long, the information just kind of piles up on each other. In that offense, there's a lot of information. I've only been there but I feel like compared to other teams, we have a lot of information. So with that, I feel like those two things stand out the most."

"I got signed, waited a couple weeks and we had rookie mini camp, and I remember sitting down with quarterbacks coach Joe Lombardi and asking questions on why things are a certain way or why we call this or that. Because he's been doing that for a long time, too, I think he left for a little bit to be an offensive coordinator but then he came back, so it was just like one of those things where this is just the way it's been and it's always worked."

"There's different things that make sense and other things were kind of scattered off and didn't seem like they fit, but it's what we do, and it works so we continue to do it. And I was like, 'Well, who am I to question anything?'"

BSB: You broke a bunch of Drew Brees' Big Ten records and even won the Griese-Brees Quarterback of the Year award three times. What's it like to be his teammate and learn from him?

Barrett: "It's wild. You see somebody on TV and watch the greatness as a fan of the game of football for my college years. And he's been in the NFL so long, so being able to see how he operates in the workplace day to day is just invaluable. The information – he's willing to answer questions. And I feel like you see certain people, and you think, 'I have an idea of how he was going to be.' But you really don't know and then you meet him and he's one of the most grounded people you'll come across – Christian man, loves his family, just does the right thing, a great leader, all of these different

things.

"He's great as far as his play on the field as well. I think it's wild to go in the quarterback room and listen to some of the conversations go on and just try to absorb all the knowledge from not only Drew, but also (offensive coordinator) Pete Carmichael and Joe Lombardi (who runs the quarterback meetings. It's pretty cool. And also Teddy Bridgewater is there. I think Teddy Bridgewater, he was a starter in this league, he's still to be a starter I believe, and he has a lot of information as well. So, having guys like that, that have been in the NFL and have all this knowledge, and be able to absorb that and take the different things that they have to say and incorporate it in my game, and then also, my mental tank, it's pretty cool."

BSB: What is your fondest memory of your time at Ohio State?

Barrett: "That first year of me starting that 2014 season. That was just a wild year. It was from the time in training camp when we all saw Braxton go down with his shoulder injury to me becoming the starter, playing the first game, losing against Virginia Tech and then all of us rallying together and just improving each week to put us in the best situation in order to be successful as a team. And people that stepped up during the season from me going down, Cardale going in ... I mean, you look back at that, if somebody said that was going to happen, all those things were going to transpire and happen, you would think someone was lying. The fact that I was able to be a part of that and win a national championship, I think that's going to be with me for the rest of my life."

BSB: When Braxton Miller went down, how did you find out you were going to be the guy? What was that like?

Barrett: "It was like 10 days before the season, so it was crazy because that Saturday I was named the backup. That spring I didn't get the backup job, Cardale did. He was playing better than I was. And then, at training camp, I was doing better than he was, and I was named the backup that Saturday. And then that Monday, Braxton goes down. And I think a lot of people assumed that because I was just named the backup, I was going to be the starter."

"I feel like that makes sense, but it's not necessarily the case. So with that, me and Cardale, we started splitting reps with the first team and it wasn't until a couple days before the game vs. Navy. That week at practice I was taking reps with the ones and did well enough to be the starter. But it wasn't like immediate. We were splitting reps."

BSB: Where was the team at mentally after the crushing early-season loss to Virginia Tech? Did you think that team could turn it around and become national champs?

Barrett: "It was wild. I mean, even after that game, I didn't play great, and me and Cardale, we were back to splitting reps because of how we lost that game. But I don't know, looking back on it, it was one of those things, like everybody took it to the chin and was like, 'We weren't prepared to win that game, we got got.' And so just buckle our chinstraps a little tighter, bite down on the mouthpiece a little harder, and get back to work."

"And I feel like everybody took that approach, not saying that we forgot what had happened, but it's also one of those things where we have to move on. We see this, we have a lot ahead of us, we can still be able to compete for a Big Ten championship. It was one of those things that just shows we've got a lot of improvement to do and we can all do it together, but everybody has to do his part. I think that was kind of the mindset then."

BSB: There was a lot of controversy over who should be the starting quarterback in



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2015. How did you regain the starting spot from Cardale?

Barrett: "I feel like everybody on the outside had their opinions on who should be the starter. But at the end of the day, me and Cardale, we were both like, 'Hey, you can tell when someone is playing better than the other person.' And people would wonder, 'How are you all still friends?' If someone is playing better than me and I'm starting, then that's obviously an issue. The best people should play, and then if someone is playing better than me, then I need to work on my game in order to make sure I'm playing."

"That was the thing at the beginning of the year – I wasn't playing that well. That was just honest. So with that, Cardale was playing and I just kept on working, kept on grinding, and then toward the end of that season I was better and able to be the starter again. But that's how all that worked, but it was just work getting back from an ankle injury."

Barrett: You have the highest passing efficiency in Big Ten history. What do you think when people knock your arm?

Barrett: "Everybody has opinions. I think it's one of those things. I understand people have opinions, and I think we live in a world where people want more and more to express their opinions. But when you say your opinion, it doesn't necessarily mean you're right. And I feel like that with myself, not even just saying something that would discredit me or whatever. I'm not saying to stop peer review, but that's just a real thing, like when you say something is opinionated, then that's just what it is, it's opinion. It's not saying that you're necessarily right, or that it even matters."

"So, when people say those things, I try to focus and take criticism from the people that really matter, my coaches and my self-criticism I have on myself. And then also, family and those things as far as outside of football. And it's something that we live in a world where everybody likes to express his or her opinions and that's fine, but it doesn't mean I have to listen or care to what you have to say either."

BSB: What does it mean to you to have the most wins against Michigan by a starting QB in OSU history?

Barrett: "Before coming to Ohio State, I grew up in the state of Texas. The rivalry you heard about in the state of Texas was Oklahoma and Texas. And to get the opportunity to go to Ohio State and see how much bigger that game is, not just to the players and the coaches that are actually a part of the game, but just the people it touches outside, like the fanbase. That's something that's talked about forever. They still talk about the 10-Year War between Bo Schembechler and Woody Hayes. It doesn't go away."

"So being a part of that game, I was grateful and appreciative of the opportunity. I feel like

I tried to do everything to make sure that we were able to win those games. And also, Coach (Urban) Meyer, he had us prepared for those games. Coach Meyer, he grew up in the state of Ohio. He knew how important that game was to people of Ohio and just Buckeye Nation in general, so with that, he would literally say, 'We can't lose that game.' So you have that mind-set."

"We prepared for that year-round. That wasn't like one of those things like, 'Oh, this time we play the Team up North.' No, it was something all year long that was put into our workouts and was always in our minds like, 'Hey, we do certain things to make sure that when it comes down to the last week in November that we are going to be mentally and physically prepared to beat the Team up North.' It was a great job by Coach Meyer having all of us ready. And as quarterback, it was the same thing, we got to be put into a position to go win that game."

BSB: What does it mean to you to be the only three-time captain in OSU history?

Barrett: "It means a lot just from the standpoint of being the leader and being able to show my teammates how much I cared and wanted to be of service to our football team – basically, pulling out all the stops in order to help us be successful and win games. I think I tried to do that with my actions. There were times when things needed to be said, and I had grown the confidence and trust of the guys where I could be able to speak in front of them. And they were able to take what I was saying and absorb it."

"And those things don't just happen, the trust to do those things, so I learned from people that were before me. I learned from people like Jack Mewhort, Ryan Shazier, Christian Bryant, those people that were leaders on our football team that year, and then, 2014, the same thing, from Michael Bennett, Jeff Heurman. From there, through my work ethic and also the actions that I showed, I was able to prove to my teammates that I cared about this team and about us winning. And I was able to be a team captain for us, and it means a lot."

BSB: Which record will be broken first, if either, four wins against Michigan or being a three-time captain?

Barrett: "Probably three-time captain, someone will come around and be a four-time captain. I don't know. I always say, records are meant to be broken. So, I don't know, 4-0, that can be broken."

BSB: What happened when you were injured during the 2014 Michigan game and what did Devin Gardner say to you when you were down on the field?

Barrett: "I remember it happening and a crazy thing – I actually didn't realize on the ground that my ankle was broken. I actually tried to reach up and get help from Jeff Heurman, but he saw it and was like, 'Oh no, you need to stay down.' And then I look at my leg and I obviously

see it's not how it was supposed to be. Then Devin Gardner's just telling me to hang in there, keep your head up."

"It's one of those things where we play a physical, violent game, so it's like when you break something, it's really out of your control. I feel like sometimes when people say, 'You got hurt,' or 'You're injured,' I feel like some people phrase that type of sentence in a way where it's almost like your fault. It wasn't my fault. So I've kind of taken that mind-set of, 'Well, I couldn't do anything about it. These are the cards that I was dealt.'"

"I was upset, but it was like you can't do anything about it, so just try to be there and support my teammates. We did an X-ray really fast back in our locker room, and then I actually went back and watched some of that game. I remember seeing the scoop and score from Darron Lee. It happened so fast."

BSB: What happened with the cameraman at Michigan in 2018? Was there any doubt you were going to test the knee and play? And how did that affect you?

Barrett: "My knee, there were at least a couple of games where I felt like it was a little unstable. And with that, there were certain things that had me, not worried, but that year was my last year, and there were a couple of times where I'd just get treatment on my knee and whatnot. And so, my knee would come in on the right side and my meniscus would pop out, which when the doctors were explaining, they said it was kind of like a little C and it came out. I mean, it came out before and I just kind of extended my leg and popped it back into place. And when it happened before, it felt fine."

"It's really weird how that used to happen, but that one (against Michigan), I just couldn't pop it back in. Fortunately, a doctor came over and he was able to pop it back in and I was able to play. But then it came out again on one of my runs,

scrambled out and got rolled up and it came out again, but then I couldn't get it back in."

BSB: What was your relationship with Urban Meyer like? And what does he mean to you and who you are today?

Barrett: "I think he was able to see the willingness I had to help us win football games at Ohio State, and he appreciated that – the time and work I put in there. Coach Meyer is one of the main reasons I went to Ohio State. He recruited a receiver out of my high school named David Nelson when he was at Florida, and he spoke highly of Coach Meyer. The things that Coach Meyer did for the football team and did for myself made us better people and also better football players. You can't really put a value on those type of things when somebody takes the time out to really help you become a better person and a better player."

BSB: What was that first practice experience like when you threw an errant pass and Coach Meyer expressed his doubts?

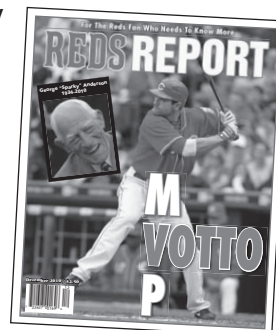
Barrett: "It was an individual drill, and I was throwing a corner route. Anyway, somebody was stationary, and we were throwing a corner route. Mind you, I was coming off my ACL and really didn't do a lot of practicing, I was just standing there. And I like one-hopped it to the guy, and man, (Meyer) got into me so crazy. He asked Coach (Tom) Herman, 'Is that what you brought here? You brought that to Ohio State, The Ohio State, you brought that here? What is that?' What was crazy was when you messed up with Coach Meyer, he always asked, 'Why? Why did you do that?'"

"I mean, I didn't mean to, it wasn't on purpose. He always made it seem like you did it on purpose, like you meant to mess up. No, I didn't mean to do it. He'd always ask why. But that was the thing, you don't have an answer. And then he was like, 'Man, we're going to have to send you to Sam Houston State.' I was like, 'Sheesh.'"

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Bill Davidge Trades Ice Rinks For Golf Links

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

To simply call Bill Davidge “Mr. Blue Jacket” for his unwavering passion and commitment to the NHL team in Columbus for nearly 20 years understates his importance to hockey throughout the state of Ohio.

He was directly involved in two of the three Division I programs in the state – Ohio State where he played and Miami as a coach – but it’s fair to say he’s helped numerous recruits land spots at Bowling Green and schools nationally through his work at hockey camps and clinics.

Thousands of others also know the former Buckeye captain for his analysis of Blue Jackets games, first on radio then on television on Fox Sports Ohio, or through his involvement in a scholarship for OSU student-athletes to honor his first wife, Leann Grimes-Davidge, a prominent tennis player for the Buckeyes and daughter of a standout player in the early 1950s for Woody Hayes. She died in 1985 from injuries in a car accident while the women’s tennis coach at Miami.

The past five years Davidge’s legion of fans have followed his battle with multiple myeloma, a cancer formed by malignant plasma cells that affects bone marrow.

Working through chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant in 2015, he announced on July 25, 2016, that he was cancer free and the multiple myeloma is in remission. He is never totally clear of the disease, but his most recent checkups have been encouraging enough that Davidge, 65, can lead a full and healthy life.

When the Blue Jackets were eliminated by the Boston Bruins in the second round of the Stanley Cup playoffs in May, it marked the end of Davidge’s broadcasting career as he heads into retirement. Ironically, one of the Bruins who helped defeat Columbus was Sean Kuraly, whom Davidge had helped coach briefly years ago and whose dad, Rick, was a star player for him at Miami.

Life comes full circle.

When BSB spoke to Davidge on June 18, he was preparing to move the next day from Columbus to Naples, Fla., with his second wife, Jayna. Once settled, you can bet his golf clubs will be getting regular use as he hangs out with several of his former Buckeye teammates who reside in the Gulf Coast area.

BSB: How often will you make it back to Columbus?

Davidge: “Once in a while. We’ve got kids and grandkids and everything. We’re going to be expecting more grandkids here in the next year. I am coming back the first of August. We’re taking a golf trip. I set up a trip along with my sons. We’re going to go over to the French Lick (Resort in Indiana), we’re going to Valhalla (Golf Club in Louisville, Ky.), we’re going to Victorian National Golf Club in Evansville (Ind.) then back through Cincinnati, go to a Reds game then come back to Columbus. We’re going to take a week, tee it up and get a chance to spend some time together.”

BSB: How’s your health?

Davidge: “I went in for the hat trick the other day – the dentist, the oncologist and the eye doctor. Saw them all in one day. Got my teeth cleaned. The oncologist said my numbers are back but they’re respectable. I don’t have to go back on chemo right now.

“I do have astigmatism in my right eye I need monitored. I was at the BMV in Florida and couldn’t pass the test. I have a cataract that’s starting to slide over. This just occurred just since the middle of March. I have to have the cataracts removed and possibly put a lens in. My astigmatism is really increasing in that eye.

We’re contemplating that when we come back to Columbus at the end of August. Other than that, I’m doing fine.”

BSB: How much golf are you doing, or are you too busy packing?

Davidge: “I played (June 10) in the Woody Hayes (Celebrity Classic). I hit a few balls on Saturday and Sunday with my grandson, and that’s been it. I’ve been too busy. Once we get down there to Naples, it will probably be every other day, I would think.”

(Davidge played hockey for the Buckeyes from 1974-77. The first two seasons were for coach Gerald Walford, before Jerry Welsh took over. Davidge had 101 points (45 goals, 56 assists) and 141 penalty minutes in 114 games. He graduated with a degree in education in 1977. Prior to that, he played junior hockey in Canada. OSU was not his first college choice.)

BSB: How did you end up at Ohio State from Dunnville, Ontario?

Davidge: “I was going to go to the University of Pennsylvania, their business school. I signed an Eastern Letter of Intent with them.

“At grade 13, we had a grade 13 up there, I ended up in training camp the week of the Summit Series (a famous Canadian eight-game series vs. the Soviet Union) in ’72. I went head-to-head with another player and crushed my cheekbone. I think I missed five weeks. This is my swan song, my final year, and I was hoping to get a scholarship. I was able to have surgery, and the first game back I had a great night. There were a pile of scouts there, one of them being Ohio State.

“Anyway, I took my SATS, did my due diligence. I started to get some play from a lot of schools, but Penn showed the most interest so I signed an Eastern Letter of Intent. I had other interests from Harvard, Cornell and Clarkson and places like that.

“Then I made a trip to Ohio State. The coach (Walford) wanted to watch my teammate Dougie Boyd play against the Detroit Jr. Wings in January of ’73. I was an offensive defenseman. I had a couple of goals, four points, I think.

“They invited us in the next week. We had the weekend off. Dougie and I flew in. We both accepted full rides. The Eastern Letter of Intent, they told me, it means nothing because it’s the National Letter of Intent that meant something.

“Then I found out I could play varsity hockey at Ohio State where at the Ivy League No. 1, back then they could never give you a full ride. No. 2, you always had to work to get the financial aid package, and, No. 3, you couldn’t play as freshmen so I came to Ohio State. The rest is history.”

BSB: What was Welsh (who was inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame in September 2018) like as a coach? He couldn’t have been more than five or six years older than you at the time?

Davidge: “He was great. He was a very good friend, and he became even more of a good friend as we went along. We coached against each other. In fact, we brought our club team up to scrimmage Ohio State my first year at Miami, and it ended up being pretty fruitful because it gives us the idea that we have some good, young kids on the club team, let’s give it a shot and go for Division I status.

“Jerry was much more than just a coach. I was a full-blown captain my senior year. I was a tri-captain my junior year so it was special there with Jerry because he had the same vision I had where we could go, what we were trying to do for the program.

“That freshman class that came in when I was a senior, that was the (OSU Hall of Famer) Paul Tilley era. Greg Kostenko. Rod McNair. Steve Jones. Rick Barker. Eddie Lisogar. That class was so talented. They really went on to set the

foundation.”

BSB: How did you feel as an assistant then head coach at Miami going against your alma mater?

Davidge: “When I left Ohio State, I wanted to be a pro but I was injured all the time. I had three concussions and all that.

“Jerry had offered me a graduate assistant’s job. I said, ‘No, you know what, I have to get another philosophy’ and I knew they just built a rink (Goggin Ice Arena) at Miami so I went down there with Steve Cady and Jack Vivian, who had started the program at that time.

“I ended up getting my master’s degree. One of the reasons I went to Miami was because my late wife, Leann, was a tennis player at Ohio State. She was from Middletown (Ohio). Her dad played football at Ohio State. You know Leann’s in the Hall of Fame at Ohio State as well as Miami. I was a year ahead of her. I went there to Miami. I laid the foundation at the hockey end of it. She came and became the women’s tennis coach right away as a graduate assistant, and the rest is history.

“As for playing against Ohio State, it was always in the back of my mind to beat them. I can remember sometime in late November (1983) they were 13-0, I think, and ranked No.1 in the country and we were 0-13 or something like that and we beat them (4-3) at our place. I think we got outshot 50-13. It was a pretty fun night.”

BSB: How did you meet Leann?

Davidge: “We were in a class together. It was a class basically dealing with body flow, time and space and everything else. Those are things we talk about in hockey today. It was almost an intellectual way of how the body breaks down, does this and does that.

“So, they would always ask you to pair up and do things. We would always pair up, and then we’d sit outside Pomerene Hall a few nights and times before she went to practice, I went to work out. She was at the north facility. I’ll tell you a great story. Leann’s dad played football for Woody Hayes. Bob has still got a record, four touchdowns and 12 receptions in one game (1952).

“Anyway, I would go over and watch them practice. The football team practiced at the north facility, and Leann practiced at the north facility. I’m sitting in the stands one day, and Woody comes up by himself.

“He says, ‘Who are you looking at from tennis?’ I said, ‘Leann Grimes over there.’ He jumps up in his seat and comes sits beside me and says, ‘Let me tell you a little a bit about the Grimes family. Look down there. Look at her jaw. She hates to lose and so did her dad.’

“He went on and on and on about Bob Grimes. Woody and Bob went toe-to-toe because Bob was an offensive tight end and Woody, of course, brought in three yards and a cloud of dust. But when Leann passed away, who was one of the first people to attend her visitation down in Middletown but Woody Hayes. Woody ended up hopping on a helicopter and coming down and spent the better part of a half hour, 45 minutes with Bob and I and the family alone before the service began.

“The Grimes family was unbelievable. They were great.”

BSB: You’ve stayed connected with the Grimes and Leann’s legacy through the Leann Grimes-Davidge Award and post-graduate scholarship given to a deserving female athlete annually at the OSU Scholar-Athlete Dinner. You’ve emceed that event many times, but this year you missed it for a good reason – the Blue Jackets had a playoff game. What does the scholarship mean to you, and will you still be involved?

Davidge: “We’ll still have it. The nice thing is a

few years back, 12 or 13, my son Rob took over in the presentation of her award then I went in and emceed the Scholar-Athlete banquet for a span of 13 years or more.

“It’s an honor because I was a scholar-athlete. I was the only scholar-athlete hockey player my first two years at Ohio State. It meant a lot to me to be acknowledged and recognized because of my academics and where I was taking it and what it took.

“To represent 700 student-athletes in a banquet hall of over a thousand people at The Ohio State University, that was pretty impressive.”

BSB: Back to your playing days. When you arrived, the OSU Ice Rink was about 10 years old. What did you think of it?

Davidge: “Well, when they recruited me they drove around it (laughs). They said there’s St. John Arena and there’s the rink over there.”

BSB: Were there plans to replace the rink, which seated about 1,500 and was 15 feet short of regulation size and seemed to be outdated even then?

Davidge: “A few years later, yes. They told me when I sat down at the Jai Lai, remember the Jai Lai, that restaurant (on Olentangy River Road by campus). They pulled out the blueprint and told me that a facility would be built my junior year. It was right on the spot where the Schottenstein is today. They told us we would be part of something special. It only took 30 years after the fact.

“The old rink was home-ice advantage. I wasn’t very big. Being 5-9, 175 pounds, I thought I was 6-4, 220. I came in hard in that rink. That’s why I was a captain. I wasn’t an awesome scorer, but I had over 100 points. I spent a lot of my first year playing defense.

“I was captain because of my work ethic. I took no (bull). We were one of the toughest teams in the CCHA. We were tough. It was our little rink. It was what it was, but we were promised the glory of a new one in ’75.”

BSB: What would it mean for hockey programs to get a new rink that isn’t shared with basketball and other events?

Davidge: “It’s their own. It’s theirs. It’s what you want. When you’ve got something you can call your own, now you have a little bit of ownership. You walk into that building (Value City Arena), you’re practicing in one building (ice rink) and playing in another, the ownership isn’t there.

“That’s why the Blue Jackets feel so much at home. The practice rink is right at Nationwide Arena. They don’t have to go to another rink. You stay in your locker room, you’re right there.

“When you’re looking around, don’t think the other teams in the (Big Ten) don’t hold that against them in the recruiting effort. I guarantee it. My hope is they’ll eventually, with the strength of the men and women and what they’re doing, some things will happen.

“I went twice to (athletic directors) Andy Geiger and Gene Smith during the lockouts (the NHL lockouts of 2004-05 and 2012-13) and volunteered my time to raise money. Geiger had a lot going on at the time with Maurice Claret fallout and all that stuff. Gene didn’t want any part of it, it wasn’t even being thought of. It’s down the list of things to do.

“In my opinion you have to have somebody like at Miami with Steve Cady (senior associate athletic director), somebody in that position that is going to sell your program to the alumni and other people to make a commitment.”

BSB: So, will you have withdrawal from the Blue Jackets at some point?

Davidge: “I feel really retired right now. I do, right now. Listen, I got over not playing. I got over not coaching. I’m getting over not broadcasting, but I’ll continue to be their biggest fan there. I’m very comfortable right now.”

Hayes Led Jim Jones To Athletic Department

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When Jim Jones graduated with his degree in mathematics from Ball State, he never envisioned the path it would put him on.

With his foot in the door at Ohio State via the physical education department, Jones ended up on the football team's radar as head coach Woody Hayes sought out improved academics for the Buckeyes.

Jones became an academic advisor – or, as Hayes called it, the 'brain coach' – and embarked on an unexpected career in OSU's athletic department.

How did he go from support staffer to administrative assistant and, eventually, one of just eight athletic directors in the department's rich history?

Jones, who held the position from 1987-94, revealed his unique path to prominence in a recent interview with Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

BSB: You started out in Ohio State's physical education department. How did that opportunity arise? Did you ever think you would end up in your job as an academic counselor?

Jones: "I went to Ohio State to get my Ph.D. It's a long story, but I'm not a phys. ed. grad. I'm a mathematics graduate. But for whatever reason, my connections from Ball State, where I came from, got me a position in the (Ohio State) physical education department.

"The rest is history because shortly thereafter, a friend of mine told me that Coach Hayes had heard about me. I don't know if that's logical or who told him or what, but at any rate, he had heard about me and wanted to talk to me. 'Would you be interested?' And I said, 'Yes, I would.' For one reason, I don't know anybody that had ever played or coached in Ohio, which I didn't, who wouldn't want to say they had on their resumé that they interviewed with Woody Hayes. So I did.

"He did a very interesting thing in the first talk. It turned out that first talk was an interview, but I didn't know that. He was an unusual bird in that, normally, if you interview with somebody, they ask you for recommendations or whatever. He didn't ask me for anything like that. What he did was he made notes to himself about the conversation we had, such as, 'Who is your best professor?' or 'Whom did you work for?' Well, subsequently, when I went back, maybe four or five weeks after that, he had called all those people. So he got his own recommendations without asking me who to call (laughs), which is an interesting idea. Most people would ask for recommendations, so I'd give them my minister or my best friend or whatever, so I know that the recommendations would all be good. Well, that wasn't what he was looking for. But at any rate, he hired me.

"He and Darrell Royal, who was the long-time football coach at Texas, were very good friends. They had been talking – I don't know how long, but I know they had been talking – and each of them had the idea that they'd like to have somebody on their staff to worry about the academic side. And so Woody beat Darryl to the punch, turns out, because I was Woody's first what he called 'brain coach.' They didn't have such a thing in the university's staff directory (laughs). And eventually, I became the athletic counselor. And now, it's a number of people. But at any rate, I was hired as the 'brain coach' on the football staff. Period. And unbeknownst to Woody, behind his back, I helped in two or three other sports because, originally, he had told me football first. So eventually, I made the job into something more than just football.

"I was the 'brain coach' and assistant to the

freshman coach. In those days, freshmen were not eligible, so freshmen were separate from the varsity in practice and everything else. So I was the assistant to the freshman coach and a 'brain coach' and I operated what (Hayes) wanted for academics for football."

BSB: As an academic advisor or 'brain coach' for the Ohio State football team right before the 1968 national championship season, what did you think of Woody initially? What did Woody think of academics?

Jones: "(Laughs.) I don't know how to answer the first question. Academics were very, very, very important to Woody. Woody used to tell (the varsity players), along with every freshman with me, 'We are going to get your football out of you, we know more about how to get a good education than you do and we're going to see you get an education.' And that was his goal. He gave everybody a hard time.

"As a result, we started, I guess, what they call study hall now. We called it study table. So four nights a week, I met with all the freshmen for two hours and made sure that they spent time studying. In other words, I was, I guess, a poorly paid proctor for a study hall. And it was my job, eventually – and my idea – to start hiring tutors. So I would bring a math tutor in or an English tutor or whatever because, in those days, you had to write themes. I don't even know what they do now. The first quarter in English then was writing themes. The second one was term papers. And the third quarter was poetry. At any rate, I would bring in a tutor to help players write themes. Not very many freshmen that I ran across came to school prepared to write one- or two-page themes. I guess everybody emphasizes that now in high school, but in those days, they didn't.

"I have a former student who was a physician who treated me for sleep apnea. They put you in a room. He came down, knocked on the door and stepped in and he said, 'Hi, Coach.' And I said, 'Wait a minute, Jeff. My name's Jim. I'm your patient, remember?' And he said, 'I need to remind you of something. My first day on campus, as a freshman football player, Coach Hayes had all of us in a room with him and you, and he gave us this lecture about academics, and he said that this man's name is either doctor, Mr. or coach. No first names. So God damn it, for the rest of my life, you're going to be one of those three.' So we laugh about it now."

BSB: What do you think about the way academic emphasis has evolved through the years? Support staffs seem to have grown exponentially, especially for academics in athletics.

Jones: "No question. It's getting bigger and bigger and bigger, and part of it's because of the emphasis and how they want to emphasize it with the players and the public. And part of it's because of the way they spend money now. We couldn't, in the old days. Money is nothing anymore in athletics. That's a terrible quote, but they have a lot more money to spend than I had.

"As I think back, I got hired as the 'brain coach.' The next day, (Hayes) came into my office. He said, 'I just came from the director of athletics and I got you more money than I thought I could ever get.' And I said, 'Coach, that's great. How much?' You ready for this? Sixty-eight hundred dollars. Period. (Laughs.) In those days, I think the top assistant coach was only making \$13,000 and Woody never made more than 50 (thousand dollars annually) the whole time he was with us. But I made \$6,800 in 1965 as the 'brain coach' – working a lot more than 40 hours a week."

BSB: Circling back to the '68 national champions, did you think that team would

be so great? What do you remember from that season, being around for Ohio State's historical run?

Jones: "There are probably a lot of assistants out there that would shudder at my answer, but you have to remember, in 1967, we recruited a great group of freshmen. But we had had two bad years in a row. And in 1967, we went up to Michigan State, which was the defending national champion, and beat Michigan State in East Lansing.

"Coach Hayes said we had been told that we were gone – that was the whole football staff – and we came back from Michigan State. Now, we hadn't played Michigan yet. But we came back and (Hayes) convinced the powers that be and the board that we had this great freshman class and we deserved an opportunity to coach them, and if we couldn't win with them, then we ought to be fired. Yeah, we thought that they were pretty good, but we didn't realize that they were going to be that good.

"As I recall, in 1968, the starters – I want to say there were 18 or 19 of them – were sophomores. And obviously, that's how we saved our jobs. They were a great offensive football team, which is not what Ohio State was known for."

BSB: What are some of your favorite stories? Favorite players?

Jones: "My first answer would be I didn't have any favorites. I was close to various ones. I was close to the quarterback, Rex Kern.

"(Kern) has a story that he loves to tell the people about me because Coach Hayes came into this staff meeting – I always sat at the foot of the table with the defensive coordinator – and (Hayes) asked me, at the start of the meeting, if I read for pleasure. And I said, 'Yes, I do.' Remember, now, all the assistants are sitting at the side of the table. And he threw this book at me and it slid across the table and fell in my lap. And he said, 'Well, then read this book, because we have a great freshman in there and he's got to pass this goddamn class.' It was psych 100 and it was the textbook for psych 100 that (Hayes) wanted me to read. And he was talking about Rex Kern. So Rex still laughs about that story."

BSB: After you were hired as an assistant director of athletics in 1969, Ohio State replaced Hayes with Earle Bruce in 1979. How did you move up, and why did Bruce make the most sense to replace Hayes?

Jones: "(The administrative move) came right after the national championship year in '69. The director of athletics retired, Dick Larkins. His associate, Ed Weaver, took over and two of us off the football staff, Hugh Hindman and Jim Jones, moved up to administration. And in those days, unlike now where you advertise the damn job for 47 people and interview a lot, there's no advertising of the job. The new director of athletics chose Hugh Hindman and me to take over in administration. So that was done in 1969.

"No, I did not (envision athletics administration). That was not where I thought I was headed. I got this call from Ed Weaver, the associate director of athletics. He needed to see me. I went to see him and he closed the door and he said, 'I think you should know that Friday I'm going to be named the director of athletics, OK?' It hadn't been announced that Dick Larkins was stepping down. He just told me that that's what was going to happen. And he said, 'When I am, it's my intention to make you an assistant.' I said, 'OK, fine.' So I'm going to be an assistant director of athletics. It's just a different title. Still working for the department.

"The rest, I guess, is history because I became a part of it. I remember telling Ed, 'Can I tell Woody?' And he said, 'No, he works for

the department. I'll tell Woody, OK?' I don't know how he told Woody or what Woody said. I know that Woody wasn't real pleased with me leaving the staff. I continued on doing somewhat the 'brain coach' and the new job for a while. I probably took three or four months into the summer.

"And then Ed (1970-77) stepped down after seven years, Hugh (1977-84) became the director of athletics, and he moved me up to senior associate, which, to my knowledge, nobody in the country had one of those, either, at the time. Well, that was his way of designating (duties). Technically, I was going to be – in today's business world, I'd be known as the chief operating officer because everybody in the department answered through me to the director of athletics and he didn't worry about anything but the big problems.

"Subsequently, Woody was dismissed and I was the No. 2 guy. Both Hugh and I had worked for Woody, and Hugh had played for Woody at Miami (Ohio). At any rate, (Hayes) was dismissed at the (1978) Gator Bowl and I was the No. 2 guy at the time. That's when we went out and hired Earle Bruce. Subsequently, Rick Bay came."

BSB: You were involved with the head-coach hire of Earle in 1979 and, ultimately, his dismissal. What do you remember from each process?

Jones: "Well, No. 1, if you remember, Earle and I were on the football staff at the same time with Hindman. In my opinion, there was no better offensive football coach, offensive mind than Earle Bruce. He did one heck of a job for us. Obviously, I participated in (hiring Bruce) with Hugh being the director of athletics. And then, of course, Rick Bay (1984-87) came. Rick is the person that dismissed Earle at the behest of the president and the board of trustees. At that point in time, Rick was not a happy camper, and he stepped down when we dismissed Earle. And they named me the director of athletics."

BSB: Right in the middle of Ohio State firing Bruce in 1987, you became athletic director. How chaotic was that stretch?

Jones: "Well, it was very hectic and it was quick. Of course, I was close to Rick and I knew everything that was going on politically. Rick was a strong supporter of Earle Bruce, and for whatever reason, Earle was crossed with the president or the board – who knows. I was not part of that decision. Rick and the president discussed what was going to happen and eventually dismissed Earle. And when that happened, because he was a strong supporter of Earle's – and rightfully so, I might add – (Bay) left. He resigned. And I became the director."

BSB: So that decision with Earle, it was out of both your guys' hands?

Jones: "Well, it was definitely out of my hands. The president and the board of trustees were the discussion people."

BSB: And Rick stepped down because he didn't agree with that move?

"That's correct. That's correct."

BSB: Ultimately, it led to your hire as director of athletics. You said you never envisioned yourself going on that type of path. What was your reaction when you finally reached the heights of that position? With how fast it all transpired, was there ever a moment when that realization hit you?

Jones: "Oh, yeah, there was that moment. The faculty rep was a good friend of mine, and he had been talking to the president, unbeknownst to me, and I think he knew that the president was not going to have a big-time search like they do now. The president talked

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Ayers, Cooper Part Of Jones' Tenure With Buckeyes

Continued From Page 13

to the board, got the approval, called me in and said, 'I've talked to the board this afternoon.' This is the same day or next day after Rick stepped down. He said, 'I've talked to the board and I'm going to name you the director of athletics.' And here I am.

"It happened so fast and so confusing that there wasn't an opportunity to sit around and think about, 'Well, do you want this job?' Or, 'How do you want to do this job?' Or, 'What would you like to ask for?' There wasn't any opportunity to worry about all of that. It just happened so fast that I'd all of sudden ended up there. To a degree, with Hindman, I'd somewhat been a director of athletics as its chief operating officer. So I was familiar with the job and what needed to be done and so on. But I didn't anticipate, one, I was going to be the director of athletics and, two, it was going to happen the way it did."

BSB: What route did you originally see yourself going before eventually ascending up the ladder of Ohio State's athletic department? Hard to imagine director of athletics was the plan all along.

Jones: "(Laughs.) No, it wasn't the plan. You're right. (Laughs.) Well, when Ed Weaver moved me from the football staff – which, I thought, was probably going to be the pinnacle of what I accomplished in my life – I got moved into administration and Ed Weaver changed my life quickly. Everything happened pretty fast after that. I didn't have an opportunity to think about, 'Well, how do I get out of this?' Or, 'Well, what else should I do?' Especially when you think about it – director of athletics, there

are a lot of those jobs. Up to the time that I had been named director of athletics, there had only been four predecessors in the history of the university — L.W. St. John, Dick Larkins, Ed Weaver, Hugh Hindman and then me. It just so happened, we didn't go outside. Everybody was always an inside person. It's just the way it was. So there was no opportunity for me to think about all of that.

"When things did die down, I sat in that red chair and thought about it. I had a strong assistant, Bill Myles, who we brought on from the football staff. He was a strong assistant, and he used to tease me about two or three things. Well, No. 1, if a kid would come in complaining or questioning a decision, he'd bring them down the hall, stand outside my office and he would say, 'You see that big red chair in there? Until you have sat in that big red chair, you will not understand the job that the director of athletics has.'

"And secondly, he used to tease me a lot because he said, 'You realize being the director of athletics at Ohio State is one of the two or three or five powerful jobs in the state of Ohio?' If you go back and look at the history book, L.W. St. John started it all and all the other successors were in the department. In L.W.'s days, the legislature used to come up to Ohio Stadium on Saturday morning to pick up their football tickets to go to the game. That made the director of athletics pretty damn strong, when you've got the legislature coming in to see you to get their tickets."

BSB: John Cooper replaced Earle. You chose Cooper, an outsider from Arizona State. What stood out about him as a candidate?

Jones: "Well, the process, first of all – the board of trustees had an idea of how they wanted the search done and what they wanted me to do and whom they wanted me to look at and find. For one thing, the board, in those days, wanted no part of anybody who had worked for or was associated with Earle Bruce. So that restricted, obviously, what we could do. Then it was my job – and I met with the president.

"We eventually had a three- or four-man committee. But Bill Myles and I, essentially, chose whom the candidates were going to be that we were going to interview. I met with the board of trustees, explained to them what we were doing and what we were looking for because they were very interested in making sure that whomever we chose had nothing to do with Earle Bruce. I'm not sure I understand that, to this day, but it is what it is.

"So it was my job, with Bill Myles, search out four or five candidates and then we had a search committee. The search committee was the president, secretary of the board of trustees, Bill Myles and myself and a faculty representative and that was it. We interviewed five or six or seven or eight (candidates) and it was my job to select one and convince the president that that's what we wanted to do. And that was John Cooper.

"The downtown people, in those days, had done their research, obviously. The Wolfe family (owners of The Columbus Dispatch) was strong in Columbus and still is, and they were effusive in their praise for John Cooper. They did their research. John, I think, was a good football coach and a damn good recruiter. Unfortunately, he had two or three things going against him. One, he had a Southern accent.

Two, he didn't beat Michigan, which doesn't help you in Ohio. In fact, I don't think, until John Cooper, any football coach had ever survived more than two losses in a row to Michigan. And of course, it was my job to convince the board – well, the athletic board as well as the board of trustees – that we were progressing and that we were on the right track. I guess they believed me – for a while, at least – because he was still the football coach when I left. (Laughs.)"

BSB: Cooper got off on the wrong foot with the Ohio State fan base in 1988, going 4-6-1. How much did that hinder his tenure as head coach? How stressful was it for you?

Jones: "Well, it was very stressful. And on top of it, you obviously want your choice to be successful. And when we weren't, it was stressful. I kept looking for reasons why that was happening, were we going in the right direction and so on. I think subsequent years turned that to be the case. You know, John's a good football coach. John had some good wins.

"At any rate, John was out of a different mold than Ohio State football coaches had been known for. He was much more open. When he came to us from Arizona State, he had done the coach's show in the stadium after the game. Woody Hayes had the longest-running coach's show in the country. For 28 years, he did it in Columbus, Ohio, on Saturday night after the home games. He did it for different reasons than anyone else. He did it because he thought it was expected of the Ohio State football coach. A lot of those people that succeeded him, one of the things that they wanted for that was some extra money, which is typical. That was not what Woody was interested in."



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BSB: The morning of the Michigan game in 1991, Ohio State announced a three-year contract extension for Cooper. The Wolverines won 31-3, though, leading to criticism of the move. Looking back on the decision, what do you think about the optics of it? Do you ever wish you could do it differently?

Jones: "No. Nope. I did it the way we should have done it. It just didn't all work out. The president wanted to talk to me about it and he was getting a lot of pressure, as was I, and obviously John was not the most popular guy in Columbus. And I said, 'Mr. President, you need to understand. No. 1, in my opinion, Ohio State embarrassed themselves by the way in which we got rid of Earle Bruce.' I said, 'I don't think that we should do that a second time. And my contention is we gave this guy five years, and I think we should live out the five years, OK? I don't think we ought to do it any different than that. And one additional thing. I think we need to add three years to his contract.' And of course, the president said, 'Oh, my God. I'll never sell that to the board.' I said, 'Well, here's the way you sell it to the board, because here's the way it ought to be looked at.'

"We were going to add three years. What I was interested in was John Cooper and his staff, as much pressure as they were getting, be able to go into a recruit's home and say, 'You don't have to worry, because Coach Cooper has a four-year contract, through your four years, OK?' That was my thinking in why we wanted to add. I think that was logical, so I've never gone back and thought any differently. Obviously, it didn't come off well in the press and the result of the game didn't help it, but nevertheless, we survived it.

"That particular Michigan game, the president – behind my back – had a PR guy release it to the press just before the kickoff that we were adding three years to the contract. Clearly, that did not sit well with the press. They didn't want to get it at the last minute. They wanted to cover the game and on and on and on. And it is what it is. I would not have released it that way, no. I was never asked, so I never had to answer that question from any press people I know of, but he decided that's the way he wanted it done and it was released – not by me – that we were adding three years to the contract. And of course, the press guys, that's not what they wanted to cover right there. They wanted to cover the game."

BSB: On the court, head men's basketball coach Gary Williams (1986-89) left Ohio State for Maryland – his alma mater – after three years. But things seemed more complicated. Why do you think Williams left?

Jones: "Well, Gary Williams was a good basketball coach. If I were to criticize him after the fact, the only criticism I have of the way he coached the team was he wound them up tighter than a ball of string. It was difficult to play for Gary Williams, and that's just how he ran his operation. I think that took its toll on our players, but that's just me.

"Why did he leave? I think part of it was he got sold a bill of goods by Rick Bay when we hired him, but I don't know that that's fair in that he came from a school, Boston College, where football was more important and hockey was more important than basketball. And I don't think he was looking for that to happen again. And it turned out that's exactly what happened.

"I told Gary this once – and no one knows this – but we had this discussion. I was in his office, and I said, 'Gary, I want you to look out the window and then I want you to take a walk with me.' We were in St. John Arena. He said, 'Well, where are we going?' I said, 'Well, we're going out and we're walking around that stadium. There is no university that I know of that has a 90,000-seat stadium in the middle of

their campus. So don't think for one minute that anything is going to be more important than football at Ohio State. That's foolish to think that way. That doesn't mean you can't be as important as football, but you're never going to outshine football in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Taylor did a super job with our men's basketball program and our basketball program was very good, but you've got to understand my point.'"

BSB: Did you ever feel like Williams was uncomfortable at Ohio State or grew tired of basketball being second to football?

Jones: "I don't have any idea. I never discussed that with him. He played at Maryland and he got that opportunity, but he had interviewed at more than one place. And I finally told him, 'You know what, Gary? You've got to decide where you want to be.' I said, 'I can't keep going to the president and telling him that I'm giving you permission to interview someplace. Because at some point in time, he's going to ask me, well, do you have the wrong guy?' And I didn't think we had the wrong guy, but I don't think he was ever comfortable at Ohio State. And Maryland, of course, was going home. Obviously, he did a hell of a job at Maryland. After the fact, they thought highly of him."

BSB: You ultimately promoted Randy Ayers, an assistant for Williams for all three seasons, to head coach in 1989. What went into the decision to hire him?

Jones: "Well, two or three things. You're talking to an old traditionalist, who had been at Ohio State for a long time and Ohio State means a lot to him, Jim Jones.

"However, when Gary Williams left us, it was late in the summertime, so that it was going to be difficult to get anybody with any kind of a job to interview at Ohio State. Because if you had done a pretty good job, you don't want it to get out, just before school starts, that you're looking to leave. That's one. You don't want that to leak out, so that made it difficult to get somebody, and that was a major problem. And (promoting Ayers) had nothing to do with other than the fact that Gary decided to leave and it was late. Most of the guys that had pretty good jobs had agreed to stay where they were and they weren't looking, so it was difficult for us. But yes, we did interview some other people. And in the end, I decided that Randy Ayers was the guy. And I think Randy did a good job with us. Subsequently, I don't know what my successors thought after I left.

"I watched Randy as an assistant to Gary and

I watched him in recruiting. You've got to look at what's important when you're hiring a coach. It's can they recruit, how's the public image and so on. He had checked all the boxes for me. The only thing that you wished that he'd had was experience. He had never been a head coach. Up till then, he had done all the other things. He had played, he been at a high level, he had been a No. 1 assistant, he had done a lot of recruiting. So he did all of those things."

BSB: Ayers got off to a good start at Ohio State, eventually clashing with Indiana and Bobby Knight, rekindling a rivalry between the Buckeyes and Hoosiers. What did you think about the rivalry between OSU and IU at that time?

Jones: "Indiana and Ohio State had a rivalry way back to Fred Taylor. Bob Knight is a good friend of mine. He was a student (playing forward for the Buckeyes from 1959-62). He had his feelings about Ohio State. I think, at one point in time of his career, I bet you he would have loved to succeed his coach, who was Fred Taylor, at Ohio State. But I don't know that. That adds fuel to the fire of the rivalry. And clearly, if you're sitting where Randy is, you don't enjoy anybody making comparisons to somebody else's program as compared to yours."

BSB: Drama came in 1993 when there were minor recruiting violations for Ohio State's pursuit of Cincinnati Woodward guard Damon Flint, who ended up signing with Cincinnati. Did it seem minor at the time?

Jones: "Well, I don't know what you want me to think. It was a minor thing. In today's world, they probably wouldn't have even looked at it. In all kinds of ways in recruiting, with what you're allowed to do and where you're allowed to take recruits and so on, today (has changed drastically).

"Part of the thing that blew up with the Damon Flint situation was because he was being recruited by Cincinnati, which is not one of the favorite schools for Ohio State and, two, we were accused of taking him to lunch over at that restaurant on Olentangy River Road, which is less than a mile and a half from the (athletics) office. I don't remember now why we went there. I don't remember now why school was closed. But at any rate, in those days, you weren't supposed to take them any place, I guess, and we did – that is, Randy's staff did."

BSB: How much did the Flint probe wear you down? Did it at all?

Jones: "No. Nope. Because I thought we

did everything that we were supposed to do. I responded to the NCAA and it is what it is. If they decide there's a violation, tell me what the violation is and what the penalty is. That didn't bother me. Obviously, it must've bothered Andy Geiger or he wouldn't have let (Ayers) go."

BSB: You ultimately resigned. Was there a buyout involved? What went into the decision to step down?

Jones: "Well, No. 1, I didn't get a buyout. No. 2, I had the maximum number of years in the retirement system already. The president and I weren't on the same wavelength, and I determined that I couldn't continue working for him and I'm sure he thought the same thing. So I just stepped down."

BSB: Did you feel like you were forced out?

Jones: "It was my decision to leave. I guess I could have fought it a little longer to see if I was going to be forced out. I didn't think about that. I just couldn't get on the same wavelength as the president. Therefore, it was up to me to leave. My predecessor, if you recall, got into a catfight with the board of trustees and the president. I was determined that I wasn't going to be one of those kinds of people.

"But I didn't get any buyout. I wish that I had, now that I look at all these numbers. (Laughs.) When I look at the fact that Gene Smith (makes a lot) – well, go back to Andy Geiger. Andy Geiger, his first salary was way more than my best salary ever. And Gene Smith, you know, makes my salary look like a custodian's salary."

BSB: How much do you pay attention to Ohio State athletics today?

Jones: "I pay a lot of attention to Ohio State and the decisions, where they go and so on. I go to all the football games, and I go to a few basketball games before I go to Florida (for the winter). I just happen to go to Florida, so I don't see many basketball games."

BSB: What are your thoughts on Gene and what he's done throughout the course of his tenure as athletic director since 2005? You were someone who was in his shoes – obviously, at a different time. But you know what comes with sitting in that red chair.

Jones: "Well, No. 1, I believe that the predecessor has no business judging your successor. Secondly, I don't see that he's done anything wrong, offensive, whatever. He's done it different. It's his ideas as opposed to what I might have done or what other people might do. I think he's done fine. He's clearly got the department in good financial shape."

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Silverman's Creativity Improved Ohio State's Brand

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ohio State brand is as powerful as that of any academic institution, Fortune 500 company or sports franchise in America, which makes the university and its athletic programs an attractive option for any student-athlete.

The person responsible for developing and maintaining the football program's portion of that brand is 28-year old Sammy Silverman, who has been the director of creative design and branding for the last seven seasons.

A 2012 graduate of The Ohio State University, Silverman turned a three-month internship with the program into a full-time gig that was created specifically for him. He worked directly under former head coach Urban Meyer and director of player personnel Mark Pantoni, who tasked him with overseeing the branding, design and marketing of the football program.

Silverman's graphic and video designs have been recognized by The National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators and have appeared on sites such as ESPN, Sports Illustrated and Yahoo! Sports. He recently announced that he was leaving the Buckeyes' football program to start his own branding and design company, SammySilv, Inc., but spent some time with Buckeye Sports Bulletin to reflect on his time at Ohio State and discuss what the future holds.

BSB: When did your interest in graphic design begin, and did you have any inspirational figures or were there any significant events that pushed you down that path?

Silverman: "My interest for graphic design stemmed from a love for art growing up. I loved to draw anything from aliens to cars to athletes. I used to tear out pages from Sports Illustrated, remove one half of it and draw the other half using the discarded piece as reference. I think they might've had a name like half-and-halves.

"Two things I've also loved and appreciated from a design standpoint were sneakers and cars. I wanted to design them. High school was where I first stumbled on the idea of 'design.' I didn't know it was something you could study like fine arts. I knew I wanted to pursue industrial design, which is also known as product design. It's very technical, as you're trying to create tangible products and product systems – with manufacturing specs in mind – to help consumers' lives. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. It is more 3D-based than graphic design, but as I went further and further into industrial design, I wasn't sure if it was the right fit for me. I got more excited designing the logos for the products I was creating for class, and that to me was a sign.

"My whole family is an inspiration to me along the journey, whether it is work ethic, compassion or creative thinking. The Nike/Jordan sneaker designer, Tinker Hatfield, was a major professional inspiration. I've never met him personally, but he designed the majority of

the Jordan line and a ton of groundbreaking Nike sneakers like the Air Max 1, which was the first time the famous Nike 'Air' bubble would be seen.

"Another influential figure would be one of my industrial design professors, Dr. Noel Mayo. When I discussed my goal working for Nike right out of college, he told me that Nike would always be there, and there's thousands of applicants every year where you're a very small fish in a very big pond. The places where you'll rise the fastest and grow the quickest is a place that doesn't have – or know they need – good design. That resonated with me and is a major reason why I decided to take a chance on a volunteer design opportunity with the Ohio State football program right after graduating because it was a place that was looking to drastically improve its marketing efforts through graphic design."

BSB: You mentioned Nike being your dream job. Was there anything specific that you wanted to do there?

Silverman: "My dream job has always been working for Nike in some facet, be it a footwear designer, graphic designer or brand director. That's changed over the years. I think it would be awesome, but my new dream is to do contracted work for Nike under my own company."

BSB: Just from following you on Twitter (@SammySilv), I knew you were really into sneakers. Do you have a favorite pair? What about a white whale – a pair that you really want but just can't seem to find?

Silverman: "The one that started it all – no pun intended – The Air Jordan 1 OG Breds. To me, it's the most iconic sneaker ever. It's beautiful. It transcended from a basketball sneaker to a fashion statement and has stood the test of time as still one of the most sought-after pairs in the sneaker game.

"As for a pair that I can't seem to find, there really isn't one. With services like Flight Club, Stock X and Goat, you can track down any sneaker you want. You just have to be prepared for that premium price tag, so it's more a matter of there being pairs I want that I just can't afford. The red and all-white 'Off-white' Air Jordan 1s are pairs I'd like to lock down someday. Other than that, the two pairs still on my list are the Air Jordan Retro 1 OG Chicago and Air Jordan Retro 3 White Cement."

BSB: "When did you notice your graphic design work was starting to attract an audience, and was there any particular work you recall that gained more renown or publicity than other works in your portfolio?"

Silverman: "I noticed my graphic design work was getting noticed when I was receiving positive responses on social media. It wasn't really something Ohio State fans had seen that frequently. Before the Ohio State football program started its own social media accounts, I was pretty much the source. I'd post the daily graphic, and staff members like (director of player personnel) Mark Pantoni and, at the time, (defensive line coach) Mike Vrabel would share it and the response was great.

"When I started doing the 'recruit-specific' design work, it wasn't really something being done at the time from a recruiting standpoint. I thought it could be a great conversation starter for the coaches as a reminder to the recruit – our target audience – about what the future can really look like. There was a graphic called 'The Missing Piece' that blew up one day. We were recruiting (tight end) Mike Gesicki, who ultimately went to Penn State, and we developed a concept of being the 'missing piece,' where the graphic was an incomplete puzzle with the recruit's face being the last piece. A bunch of media sites like Bleacher Report and Yahoo! Sports picked it up and praised the creative approach."

BSB: You mentioned your three-month internship with the program. I'm curious, what did you do during your time as an intern, and why do you believe you were hired in a full-time capacity at its conclusion?

Silverman: "When I first started as an intern, it was a voluntary position. I'd come in every day and work from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and my goal was to create one graphic each day to promote the Ohio State football program to recruits nationwide.

"After the first three months, I became a 'full-time intern' for the Ohio State athletic department where half my day was spent at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center working strictly for football recruiting, and the other half at the Fawcett Center with the creative services team. The work with football only expanded as I kept trying to take on more and more projects to help anyone with anything that might have been able to be improved by graphic design.

"Right after the 2013 season, I was approached by Notre Dame as they were looking to hire a full-time graphic designer to work for their football team. It was intriguing, but that's what I ultimately wanted with Ohio State. I told Mark Pantoni about Notre Dame, and we decided it would be beneficial to put together a presentation that laid out the current landscape of college football recruiting and creative media pointing towards the future. So that's what I did, showcasing examples and testimony, all coming to the conclusion that programs will be allocating resources to full in-house creative staffs and how we can get ahead of that.

"We met with Coach Meyer, and I gave him the pitch. He was blown away. The rest was history. I was eventually hired full time, did a quick stint with the football program and worked for a start-up company I had ownership stake in. I ultimately circled back to Ohio State football, where I grew into a director role."

BSB: When you were hired full time, what did your job entail? How did you challenge yourself in a field where there are so many untapped avenues and really aren't any boundaries?

Silverman: "My job was – and really always has been – when working for OSU, overseeing brand identity of Ohio State football. That includes establishing the style and theme for each year's seasonal campaign and recruiting class across all print and digital collateral.

"Everything we did was for recruiting. It's why our department existed. I had exceptional creative freedom and access to some of the best equipment, so during my time there, I've done graphic design, motion design, brand identity design, game program covers, recruit-specific graphics, photography, videography and video editing. That's how I challenged myself. I never wanted to stay complacent. I didn't like the term 'graphics guy' because it just seemed like I knew Photoshop and that's it. I wanted to be known as a design thinker. To identify opportunity areas where design can play a major impact. One avenue I saw was athletes and their

influence. This thought ultimately led to the formation of Brand 'U,' the first ever in-house personal brand identity development program in college football."

BSB: To follow up on that, Brand "U" basically helps student-athletes create their own personal brand while at Ohio State and allows them to add value to their name once they leave. What was your inspiration behind that, and how did you turn it from an idea to a real-life application?

Silverman: "The inspiration behind Brand 'U' came to me after helping Gareon Conley with his brand, Conley Island. Going through the brand identity process with him and seeing the value it created led me to realize that personal branding – especially for public figures like professional athletes – can be achieved without being the superstar Nike-endorsed athlete. Everyone has a name. Everyone has a brand.

"Where the start of Brand 'U' came into play was when (defensive line coach) Larry Johnson asked me a simple question. He said, 'What can we do that's different, that no one else is doing?' I told him what I just did for Gareon and he was sold, so we piloted the program with (then five-star defensive tackle) Taron Vincent and his family. I created a presentation that discussed the potential benefits of personal branding and even mocked up a brand identity system for him to show him what's possible. I presented it to him and his family. Coach Meyer sat in, too, and it was an incredible feeling to recruit a kid together, face-to-face. They were stunned, and the rest was history.

"Brand 'U' became a service for current student-athletes and one of the staples in recruiting. It was the first time at Ohio State where I felt like I made an actual impact in recruiting."

BSB: You mentioned Conley, who is now with the Oakland Raiders. He's turned Conley Island into T-shirts, sweat-shirts, wristbands and hats with his own personal brand on all of it. He also hosts camps and charity events under that moniker. What's it like to see his success story?

Silverman: "It's incredible to see the passion Gareon has with his personal brand. He gets it, and that's what I explain to recruits and their families. He understands the power of personal branding and how leveraging his NFL platform adds lasting value to his name. He's enabling himself to have financial avenues for the long run. One day, you just won't be able to play anymore. So, what will be next?"

BSB: You gave a presentation to the entire football team last spring on what Brand "U" can do for them as individuals. It was pretty cool to see in the video posted to Twitter (@OhioStateFB) how excited the players were to work with you on creating their own brand, but what we didn't get to see was the journey after that. Can you explain the process of creating a brand for a player?

Silverman: "I don't want to give too much away on the process – that's the secret sauce to Brand U. But it's approached just as any other client looking to start a brand, develop an identity and launch into the market. It starts with discovering yourself and your goals, visualizing the outputs from the research into a graphic language and connecting it all to a consistent, cohesive and memorable experience to attract a loyal audience."

BSB: As someone who grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, rooting for Ohio State, what was it like to work for the Buckeyes? Surely you were star-struck the first time you had a conversation with Coach Meyer or

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SATURDAY — 7:10

- **Tony Perez Bobblehead, presented by Kahn's** (first 20,000 fans)

SUNDAY — 1:10

- **FAMILY SUNDAY, presented by Klosterman Bakery**
- **Family Sunday Ticket Offer* 1 Full-Price Ticket + 3 Half-Price Tickets**
- **Joey Votto Fathead®, presented by Planet Fitness** (Kids 14 & younger)



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Forging His Own Path

Continued From Page 16

current and former players you cheered on?

Silverman: "It was a dream come true that I didn't even know was a dream. I never thought about working for Ohio State while I was in school or even growing up. I had no idea the athletic department had creative services, so I just wasn't aware that it could be a thing. But it ended up being a dream job, helping my favorite team recruit the best players to put out the best product. But more importantly, it was about the people I've met while I was there and the lasting relationships built.

"Yes, I'll admit that seeing guys like Coach Meyer, Mike Vrabel and (former quarterback) Braxton Miller had me star-struck at first. I remember the first time I talked to Coach Meyer. Pantoni called me into his office and Coach Meyer was sitting there. I turned the corner and immediately thought, 'Oh, (crap).' I didn't think he knew who I was, but he noticed how great the content was that we were sending out to recruits and just wanted to know more about my background, growing up, goals and dreams.

"It was nice of him to take the time to do that. He's one of my favorite people and such an influence for my career. We have a great relationship to this day. I'll say that now being around guys like Coach Meyer and NFL-bound athletes, the star-struck feeling has worn off. At the end of the day, you understand they're just people who happen to be very good – if not the best – at what they do, which is what we all strive for."

BSB: Once you settled into your role, you played an integral part in Ohio State's recruiting efforts – whether it was commitment or statistical graphics or promoting things like the coaching staff, the university's long list of traditions or the program's facilities. Aside from "The Missing Piece" graphic that you already mentioned, what were some of your favorite designs and how did you come up with your ideas?

Silverman: "It's very difficult to single out one or a few designs, but I think my favorite project was the #Dynasty19 campaign. It started with building a brand identity for the 2019 recruiting class, nicknamed Dynasty '19. We initially launched that in May 2018. Then fast-forward to two weeks before early signing day – right after the regular season – and we have no idea what our content will look like on signing day.

"(Director of creative media and post-production) Zach Swartz mentioned we should use (the video game) NCAA '14 in some way. I thought that would be great because the goal of signing day for a creative team is to be creative, original and get talked about. Everyone loves NCAA and wants to revive it. We connected NCAA '14 to Dynasty '19 with 'Dynasty Mode,' which would be the cornerstone of our content.

"After a week of getting all the equipment, creating the recruits in the game, developing a motion-graphic template to look like a custom Ohio State menu screen and splicing video-game highlight reels, Zach, (assistant director of creative media) Alex Farkas, (assistant director for creative design and branding) Cory Wonderly and myself sprinted through one of the most enjoyable and satisfying projects – especially with the cherry on top of Zach getting Coach Meyer to pass the sticks to Coach (Ryan) Day as the new head coach. It was one of the most talked about campaigns on signing day and one of our best collaborative creative efforts."

BSB: In your line of work, I'm sure there is a lot of trial and error where some ideas work right away and others need a bit of fine-tuning. When you have a boss like Coach Meyer – who, from the outside, seems very meticulous – or Coach Day,

who is surely trying to put his stamp on the program as a first-year head coach, did you find yourself going back to the drawing board more often than not? Or were they very clear in what they wanted?

Silverman: "There wasn't too much 'back to the drawing board.' College football is fast-paced, and more times than not, time doesn't permit going back to the drawing board. But more importantly, the level of trust Coach Meyer and Coach Day have in the creative staff enabled us to have our creative freedom and know that we're doing things right. They definitely would share their ideas and things they wanted done, but for the most part, they entrusted us so they can focus on other tasks at hand. Were there some missteps over the years? Sure. But we were never micromanaged. We were empowered."

BSB: What kind of role does the creative media department play in the football team's alternate uniforms? What was your favorite design and why?

Silverman: "We didn't play much of a role in the alternate uniforms, but I expressed constantly that we should be. Designers from Nike would come in once a year and talk with us to generate inspiration for alternate uniforms, patterns, apparel, graphics, etc. It was cool to talk shop with them and see the finished product. My favorite alternate is the black uniform. No question. The red numbers, vibrant chrome red Buckeye Leaves – it's just badass, though it should be worn only at night."

BSB: You recently announced that you have left the program and started your own branding and design company. What made you take that leap, and what kind of projects do you have in mind for your company moving forward?

Silverman: "I've always wanted to start my own company ever since I worked for that small start-up company I mentioned after college. I loved the hustle, the flexibility and the array of projects, but I wanted to have a focus on sports primarily. I really wanted to focus on building brands for professional athletes and share their stories, and I have a great opportunity to do just that with the network I've built throughout the years, especially with the Ohio State platform.

"I've been taking on a variety of projects from complete brand-identity design to logo design to – most recently – motion graphics for LED boards at the NHL draft. I'm open to pretty much anything design-related that piques my interest, though. It doesn't have to be sports. It's been very exciting to branch out and meet new people and learn new things. I can't wait to see what opportunities await."

BSB: Wrapping up, what do you believe was your greatest accomplishment at Ohio State? Is there anything you wish you could have done or approached differently?

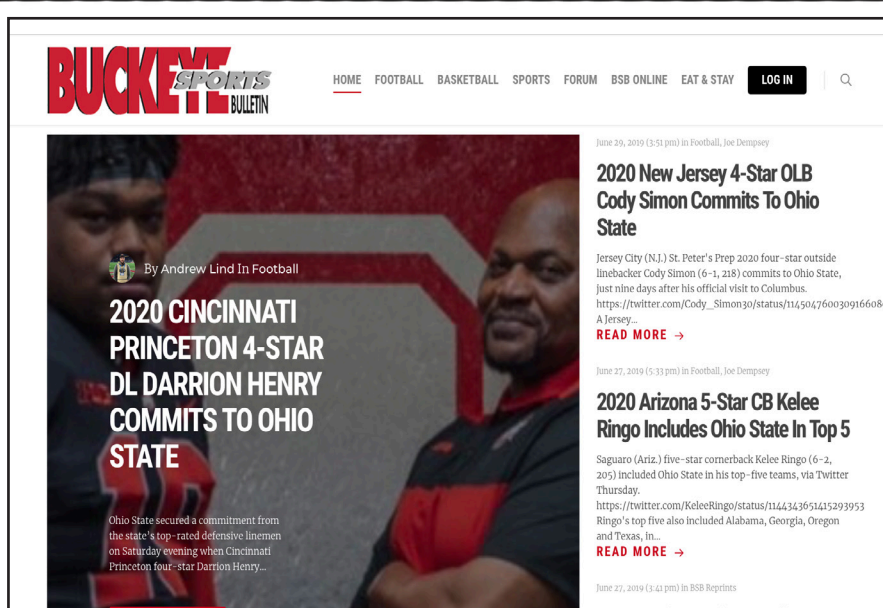
Silverman: "I think my biggest accomplishment was showcasing the value of design – the way of thinking, the process and how it can impact lives, how it's not just Photoshop or cool photos or 'sick edits.' It's a constant fight and struggle in the sports design community to have the decision makers legitimately invest in creative media teams.

"There's a dangerous trend nowadays of wanting senior- or director-level talent but offering junior-level pay. And on the flip side, junior-level positions being displayed as senior- or director-level positions where the pay and duties do not match. That mind-set needs to change. I'd like to think I've helped alter these perceptions and how valuable creative thinking can truly be.

"If I could do it all over again, I wouldn't change a thing."

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Former Coach Tara VanDerveer Still Loves Ohio State

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Before she lifted the Stanford women's basketball team to two national championships and 12 Final Fours since 1985, Tara VanDerveer got her start as head coach of a major program at Ohio State.

As the Buckeyes' head coach from 1980-85, VanDerveer took the program to new heights and elevated women's basketball's level of competition in Ohio and beyond.

Hired by assistant athletics director Phyllis Bailey after a two-year stint at Idaho from 1978-80, VanDerveer led OSU to three NCAA tournament appearances – including the 1985 Elite Eight – as a two-time Big Ten Coach of the Year in 1984 and '85.

Outside of a 1995-96 hiatus from college basketball when she led her United States women's national team to Olympic gold at the '96 Olympics in Atlanta, VanDerveer has built the Cardinal into a blue blood, following lessons taught by legends such as Bobby Knight along the way.

VanDerveer recently spoke with Buckeye Sports Bulletin about her career and why she still feels close to Columbus despite spending the past 30-plus years in Palo Alto, Calif.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin: While growing up in upstate New York, your father told you basketball would never take you anywhere. What do you recall from that?

VanDerveer: "When I was in the ninth grade, I played basketball and a lot of the boys were on teams. I was playing by myself. I was out there for hours and hours and hours. He just didn't see any future in basketball, so he would call me in and tell me, 'Come in and do your algebra homework. Basketball is never going to take you anywhere.'

"And I was like, 'Uh, algebra's never going to take me anywhere.' I had been all over the world because of basketball, so I sent him postcards, like, 'P.S., I'm in Russia. P.S., I'm in China. P.S., I'm in Australia.'"

BSB: What drew you to basketball?

VanDerveer: "Well, there wasn't any type of future I saw. It was just something I just loved. I loved sports. Our whole family's very athletic. I still ski – I went waterskiing today. I sail, I play tennis, I ride bikes. I just love sports. I watch everything.

"Basketball just hooked me. I can't tell you what it was about it. I think so much of it was just so exciting and such a brilliantly designed game."

BSB: Do you have an earliest memory of picking up a basketball? If so, what was that like?

VanDerveer: "I just remember playing in gym class. I think I was in the third or fourth grade and we did three-player weave or something like that, and that's what I remember. And I loved it."

BSB: You started your playing career at Albany in 1971-72 but finished with Indiana from 1972-75. How did those experiences shape your coaching career, and what did you take from each stop?

VanDerveer: "I was at Indiana for three years, my sophomore, junior and senior years. I had originally gone to the State University of New York at Albany. And I transferred to Indiana because I drove out to the national tournament, which was the AIAW (Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women) national tournament

at the time. It was 1972 in Illinois. So I watched the tournament, I watched Indiana. I said, 'I want to play for that team.' So I transferred to Indiana, I played on the team there. We had a great team. And we actually played Ohio State, and that's where Phyllis Bailey saw me. She saw me playing against Ohio State.

"When I graduated, I wrote to the athletic directors – in the day, they had a women's athletic director and a men's athletic director. So I wrote to the women's athletic directors, all 20 of them, and I heard back from two and one was Ohio State. So that's how I decided to go there. And it was a beautiful letter from Phyllis that was very, very encouraging for me to go to Ohio State. And when I went to Ohio State, the first time, I went as an assistant coach for Debbie Wilson (1972-80) for two years (1976-78) as I got my master's degree.

"I was the No. 1 assistant, but I did not make any money. I worked at the rec facility. I worked in one of those, checking IDs from six in the morning until 12 noon. And then we would practice in the afternoon, and then I had a JV team that I coached. I have two undefeated teams in my career. One is the JV team at Ohio State, one is the Olympic team."

BSB: How much were you making while checking IDs? I can't imagine it was much.

VanDerveer: "(Laughs). Yeah, it was not much at all. You know, it might have been enough to cover rent, but I don't even know how, unless I borrowed from my parents. And quite honestly, I was on food stamps. That's why I remember (Columbus pizza shop) Tommy's, that pizza. I remember that was a quick thing. But my second year there, I was given a stipend of \$3,500. And then graduate school was paid for, so that was good because the first year, I was paying for graduate school and rent. It was hard.

"But I wasn't unhappy. I loved it. I loved working with the players on the team. I loved being at Ohio State. And that was a big reason why I came back, after two years at Idaho (1978-80), that I came back to Ohio State. So I spent seven years – they were great years – at Ohio State."

BSB: So there was never a moment where you said, 'OK, maybe I should consider a different career path'?

VanDerveer: "Not at all. No, no. I loved it. I was so happy. Every day was really exciting. It was great."

BSB: While at Indiana, you studied head men's basketball coach Bobby Knight. Why did you watch his practices, and what did you learn from the way he coached?

VanDerveer: "I watched their practice every day. I went every day. What I learned more than anything is winning coaches have a formula. What you might do is different from what I'm going to do, but you've got to believe in what you do. Coach Knight taught basketball. Basketball was played with a purpose. I took his coaching class.

"Also, Fred Taylor was Bobby Knight's coach, and Fred Taylor was still at Ohio State when I went to Ohio State for graduate school and I took his coaching class. I became very good friends with (Taylor). Every class, I'd stay after. I'm kind of like a basketball sponge, to be honest. I just like being around coaches, talking basketball, watching basketball. At the time, it was really all men.

"So one time, I went to a clinic. I saw

this colored piece of paper in the garbage can and I pulled it out and it was about a clinic, so I went. I was the only woman there. I sat in the very front and it was like the legends of coaching. It was awesome. I learned a lot being at Indiana – playing with a purpose, teaching defense, just how to run a practice, drills, the pace of practice, corrections. (Knight) was a great coach. He is a great coach."

BSB: How much did you take from Knight and Indiana into your role as a graduate assistant at Ohio State?

VanDerveer: "A lot of it was doing it with my JV team. I really was given total freedom to coach and I loved it. I also watched all the practices that I could at Ohio State with (head men's basketball coach) Eldon Miller. Any visiting coach that came in, I would go to their practice before games. I watched all the men's games, the women's games. Obviously, I'm at all the women's games.

"It was a different time. Coaches shared a lot of information then. I had notebooks and notebooks of drills and just teaching concepts. I honestly just love being a student of the game, and it's kind of like the more I learn, the more I feel like there is to learn."

BSB: Your first head-coaching job was at Idaho. What did it mean for you to get your own team at a varsity level? What was that experience like, and how did it propel your career to where you are now?

VanDerveer: "In those days, that could happen. It might not happen now, going from a Division I team right out of college. I was a head coach at 24 years old. That doesn't happen very often now.

"I loved it. I loved it. I had a great athletic director at Idaho, Kathy Clark was her name, and she was like Phyllis. She was very supportive, a great mentor. It was a great place. In Idaho, you're a first-year coach. You're going to make a lot of mistakes. I did, but I learned from them.

"We worked hard and we had a great recruiting class. I think the year before we got there, they were 2-18. The first year, we were 17-8. That was, 'Wow.' Then the next year, we're in the (AIAW) tournament and we were doing really well. Then the next year, I left to go back to Ohio State."

BSB: That actually leads into my next question. What led you back to Ohio State? What was the state of the program?

VanDerveer: "I think, more than anything, the Ohio State program was probably ready for a change. It needed a more-positive culture. I would also say it was a big period of change. When the NCAA was coming in, it was full-time coaches. Debbie Wilson (1972-80) had been a professor and she had worked hard and done a good job, but she wasn't even a full-time coach. I was a full-time coach at Idaho. I taught one basketball coaching class at Ohio State, but basically, I was a coach. And then it was getting full-time assistants and uniforms, and all the things that women didn't have. I had a list of 20 things that, in my mind, I'm like, 'OK.'

"I said, 'They have to pay \$20,000 or I'm not going (from Idaho to Ohio State).' That doesn't sound like much now, but there was no money in women's athletics. There was no support for women's athletics. But I think Ohio State was one of the leaders. A lot of it might have been almost reluctantly in the beginning because women's sports did change things a lot. If you have to divide

up the pie differently, it can ruffle some feathers. It was hard for some other people. But I've always been someone to say, 'Hey, let's have athletic teams for both men and women.'

"So I think Ohio State, it's a gold-mine job. There's great players in this state. There's great high school basketball in the state of Ohio. Sports are so important. I drove all over the state, watching players play. The program, my first year, we might've been .500 (17-15). And then after that, we just took off. And it was awesome."

BSB: Why were you able to be so successful during your time at Ohio State?

VanDerveer: "As a coach, we had great players, flat-out great players. We had players who were very talented. I inherited a team that had Amy Tucker. I then recruited Yvette Angel, Carla Chapman, Kristin Watt. That was the first recruiting class. It was Kristin Watt, Yvette Angel, Carla Chapman and Teresa Bush. And they are fantastic.

"You look at the All-Americans – Tracey Hall, Francine Lewis – these are great, great, great players. And honestly, I just didn't have problems. They were mature, they bought into being very unselfish and they were talented. But they were real high-character people. Lisa Cline, I recruited, Nikki Lowry. These are just great, great players, and when you have great players, you look smarter. As a coach, it's a fact."

BSB: You mentioned Francine Lewis in there. There was a game in high school when Lewis and Georgeann Wells faced off. It really might have put girls basketball on the map in Ohio. What do you remember from that game?

VanDerveer: "I was at that game. Wells was 6-7 and dunked. She went to West Virginia. She was from a local Columbus school (Northland).

"The game I really remember is Francine's team (Mansfield, Ohio, Malabar) playing Jodi Roth's team (Shelby, Ohio), because they both came to Ohio State. The gym was electric and Francine was a senior, I think Jodi was a junior. It was basketball at the highest level. Francine was a magician. They called her Francine the Machine. She was awesome. Jodi Roth is a cerebral player and just an incredible talent.

"I don't know that I've coached any better players than I've coached at Ohio State. The talent that I had there was second to none. It was just outstanding players and incredible young women."

BSB: What were some of the highlights of your tenure at Ohio State when you think about it?

VanDerveer: "I think there are a lot of them. There are a lot of them. But I think it goes back to our first year (in 1980-81). We weren't very good, but we beat South Carolina, which was really ranked No. 1, 2 or 3. So that was a really big win. We went to Iowa and won in front of, like, 22,000 people. We were down 12 at halftime and came back and won that game. Then I think we had Iowa at Ohio State and beat them, in front of 10,000 people. Going to the Elite Eight, beating Penn State and then, unfortunately, Carla Chapman had an ACL (injury) and that's what held us back from going to the Final Four in 1985.

"I think one of the biggest disappoint-

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VanDerveer Reflects On Return To Ohio State

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ments at Ohio State must have been, I think, we tied for the Big Ten championship (in 1982-83) with Indiana and it was back in the day when they only had 32 teams go to the NCAA tournament and we didn't go. We had a great team and, honestly, it broke my heart. I went in to Phyllis and said, 'We need to play a better schedule. We need to host a tournament to get some good teams to come in, so we can play against better teams, so they know about our team.' So we started playing Georgia and they had a great team. And we played a really tough preseason schedule. Penn State wasn't in the Big Ten then. Cincinnati had a real good team. We went and played really good competition.

"The thing I loved, coming out for a game, was hearing the band play 'Hang On Sloopy.' I loved that. They still do that. Isn't that crazy? It's still what I love. Amy Bokker, she's a woman who's coming from Stanford to Ohio State as the new women's lacrosse coach. She's awesome. She's fantastic. But I told her, 'You're going to love "Hang On Sloopy." Get the band at one of your lacrosse games.' Ohio State's a very special place. It's a very special place."

BSB: Why does that song resonate with you so much?

VanDerveer: "I don't know. You just – that's what you remember. You come out and you smell the popcorn. We played in St. John Arena. I love St. John, loved it. I don't like the fact that they don't have the basketball (games) down there now, but oh, I loved playing there. You come out and the crowd is going wild, the kids are excited. It was awesome."

BSB: You made your return to St. John Arena in Stanford's season opener against Ohio State for 2017-18. What was that homecoming experience like?

VanDerveer: "It was pretty emotional, I have to tell you, to play at Ohio State. We didn't have – that particular (Stanford) team – our best team. We were young, but I really had fun. There were about 50 former players that I saw before the game. They all lined up along the baseline and I gave them

all a hug, but it was like, 'I'm crying before the game.' It was really fun to see everybody. I had a great time. And then I went back (to Columbus) for the Final Four, and the Final Four was really fun to see."

BSB: What did you think of how Columbus hosted the Final Four? Phyllis told me she never even thought there would be a Final Four in college women's basketball, let alone in Ohio State's back yard.

VanDerveer: "It was fabulous. I loved it. And I saw Phyllis when we were back there. And a lot of players like Barb Smith and Yvette Angel and Tracey Hall. It's just like – it was a little bit weird. You're seeing all these people that I remember as college freshmen and sophomores, and now they're 50 and married with children. And I'm like, 'Wow. How did this happen so fast?'"

BSB: You mentioned that game at Iowa. People were getting turned away at the doors, there were people sitting up and down the aisles. I asked Phyllis about it, and she said you came back to Ohio after the game and you said you thought you were in a beehive because there was so much black and yellow. That game, how wild was it? Can you take me back to that game? What do you remember from it?

VanDerveer: "We were going to the game, it was on a Sunday, and we're in a bus or vans, and I turn to one of my assistants and I said, 'What's with the traffic? It's Sunday. Did church just let out?' And my assistant said, 'Tara, these people are going to our game.' I'm like, 'Oh, my God.' But we had actually done, with our sports psychologist back then, some training to get ready for playing in front of a big crowd because we weren't really used to playing in front of a big crowd. And I think that helped us get ready for it, because I told our team, 'It's going to be a big crowd.' We worked and got ready for it. And then afterwards, I remember people coming up to me in the airport. We were leaving to go home and they were like, 'That's the best game I've ever been to.'"

"C. Vivian Stringer was the coach and

she's at Rutgers now, and she had a great (Iowa) team. We stood outside (before the game). I think they were playing the national anthem or something and we're just looking at each other, like, 'Wow. Can you believe this?' It was awesome. And at that Final Four that year, all the coaches were in a luncheon or something, and they said, 'All right, stand up if you had more than 1,000 people at your game,' and then all these people stood up. Then they went all the way up. They said, 'How about 3,000? What about 5,000? Anyone for 10,000?' And then the two of us were just standing and everyone was clapping, so it was just really great and exciting."

BSB: How much do you think that game against Iowa helped grow women's basketball, especially at the college level?

VanDerveer: "I think it helped a lot. People just kind of had to get out of the mind-set that this is just friends and family coming. We obviously still have a long way to go, but people like watching women's basketball. Ohio draws well. There's still those kind of games that are happening all around the country that have never had that kind of crowd. It's exciting for people to go and watch and be a part of that."

BSB: I want to turn the clock back a little bit now to when you left Ohio State for Stanford. How did that opportunity come about and what were your emotions when you told Phyllis of the decision to leave?

VanDerveer: "In 20/20 hindsight, I had a fabulous job at Ohio State. And quite honestly, Andy Geiger – who recruited me to Stanford – it just started out with losing in the (1985) regional final game to Old Dominion and there had been some opportunities. It was kind of a different situation. When I was first hired at Ohio State, they didn't have a budget for women's basketball. So they said to me, 'Well, let's just see how much it costs.' So it was a different time. When we got a new athletic director four years later, it was like, 'Wow, I'm way over my budget.' Well, nobody really had a budget because, when I was first hired, they said, 'Well, you need to get uniforms. You

need to do recruiting. You need to do things that we've never done before.' So they were in a kind of cutback mode at the time in my last year at Ohio State.

"It was at the time when we went from the big ball – same as men – to the small ball. And then there were just some things, like, 'Hey, wait a minute, this is Ohio State.' And I think some, maybe, lack of communication. But I just decided, 'I'm going to look and see what's out there.' At this point, I had no intention of leaving Ohio State. I loved Ohio State. I loved it. And we had great players. So I just interviewed. I actually interviewed at Arizona, Stanford and Washington. just to see what's out there. And I basically said, 'I'm not going to leave Ohio State for something that's a big state university in another town.'"

"But Stanford was very intriguing. It's a different place, different school and Andy Geiger is extremely persuasive. And quite honestly, he offered me the job and I said, 'No.' And so he said, 'Well, what can change your mind?' And I said, 'Well, I don't know if I can change my mind.' But he said, 'Will you come back?' I said, 'Well, OK. I'll come back.' And I just went back, in my mind, to say, 'I'm not leaving Ohio State.' But I learned a lot about recruiting from Andy Geiger. I really did. He just did not take 'no' for an answer. I just really connected with him and said, 'Look, here's what's really important to me.' And it was a little bit financial, but ... it really just felt, at the time, Stanford women's basketball was really important and that you could really make a difference.

"And I was physically ill making a decision to leave Ohio State. This was in the day before cell phones. I wouldn't even answer my phone. (Geiger) was calling me. Finally, he said, 'I need an answer.' And I was just like, 'Wow.' I broke out in hives. I was so stressed. But I just realized this was a very hard decision. It's worked out pretty well. I loved working at Stanford and I'm a good fit for it. Both my parents were teachers and academics. You recruit from all over the country.

"And actually, my last year at Ohio



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State, we recruited a young woman from Michigan and her name was Emily Wagner. And she was interested in Stanford and Ohio State. We played Stanford my last year at Ohio State. We beat them by 30. Easily. And Emily decided to go to Stanford and I thought, 'Oh, my gosh. That's a great decision academically, but you're going to get your basketball brains beat in.' It's just a different experience.

"But (the decision process) was agonizing. And I just loved to go on campus at Ohio State. I love going back. I've been back for football games. I haven't been back for a basketball game, except for ours. But I follow the (athletics). I'm excited for Amy going to Ohio State. I said, 'You will love it. The people are fantastic. There are not any better fans. Buckeyes love sports.'"

BSB: You mentioned Andy Geiger. He hired you at Stanford (1979-90) in 1985 and then left five years later for Maryland (1990-94) before his tenure as Ohio State athletic director (1994-2005). What was your reaction when Andy left?

VanDerveer: "He left Stanford and I wish I could tell you I was really mature. I put my head on my desk and cried. He kind of coined a phrase, in some ways, "shelf life." Everyone has some shelf life. As an athletic director, you can go in and make some changes and then go somewhere else and be effective.

"I hated to see him go. I absolutely hated to see him go. So then they hired Ted Leland (1991-2005), Bob Bowlsby (2006-12). So this is my fourth athletic director at Stanford. Bernard Muir is the fourth athletic director (since VanDerveer came to Stanford). I can't even tell you how many presidents. I think I'm on the fourth president."

BSB: What was it about Andy that you had such a close relationship?

VanDerveer: "He just really sold me on the fact that women's basketball was important and he was going to support it, and he did. It wasn't just money. I remember my first year. We really had a lot of work to do. We had to recruit hard. We turned it around, but it was really, really challenging to find kids who, academically, fit the athletic program's profile. Thankfully, we recruited Jennifer Azzi with Katy Steding as one of two Olympians in the first class. But I've never coached any better players than I

coached at Ohio State."

BSB: Why do you say that?

VanDerveer: "Oh, they were just terrific athletes. Terrific people. And I coached Olympians. Tracey Hall, Francine, Carla Chapman, Yvette Angel, Jodi Roth – they could play with anybody. And in some ways, I think I would be better for them now because I feel like I've learned a lot more. But I loved coaching them. Toni Roesch, Teresa Bush – all of them. Every one of them, the whole team. They were great, great young women."

BSB: Your highlights at Stanford came with building its program up. You're still there. What went into that process and how fulfilling has the success been over these past few decades?

VanDerveer: "I don't think there's anything more rewarding than putting a team on the map. Going to the Final Four for the first time (in 1989-90), when we won the first regional championship to go to the Final Four, I could have just rolled over right there. I don't think I could have ever been happier than that. And then we went to the Final Four and I said, 'We're here. We might as well win.' We won it and I went, 'Wow.'"

"But then I realized – we've won again and gone to the Final Four – it's not really about that. It's more about just the love you have for the people you coach. I really enjoy that, just getting to know (the student-athletes).

"I used to take piano lessons and I thought I could teach myself, and my piano teacher takes me places I could never go by myself. And that's what I want to do as a coach. I want to be a coach that helps a player do something they can't do without you. And it's really rewarding to see the improvement of a team, to see that just camaraderie. To see kids graduating and then calling you, they're getting married or they're having children. And you're part of their life. It's exciting."

BSB: You've built up Stanford into an elite program. Why do you think it's been so difficult for other programs to break that blue-blood barrier as well in college women's basketball?

VanDerveer: "That's the way it is in men's sports, too. You've got Ohio State in football. You've got Kentucky, Kansas or North Carolina in men's basketball. You've

got certain teams in soccer and tennis. Stanford is a really, really special place. With this year, we won six national championships. That's incredible.

"But our team, I think we just have a formula. I can go back to Coach Knight. We have a formula. We work really hard to recruit high-character people, and they have to be excellent students, too. And I think, as a coach, more than anything, I remember, as a player, I remember how much I loved to play. I don't ever want to take the joy away. I want people on our team to love to play and to practice, and to be excited with making that pass or setting that screen or getting that rebound and being caught up in the team aspects of basketball."

BSB: From the time you got to Ohio State to now at Stanford, how much have you seen the game of women's basketball evolve?

VanDerveer: "Things are so much more sophisticated, in terms of scouting. The use of video. It's just so much more sophisticated, the game itself. When I used to first coach, we didn't have a three-point line. I love the three-point line. We've always had the 30-second (shot) clock, but just little rule changes. I think the three-point line has been the thing that's been most exciting to have."

BSB: How long have you known Kevin McGuff? As someone who's been in his shoes at Ohio State, what do you think of the job he's done as head coach of the Buckeyes since the 2013-14 season?

VanDerveer: "This is a real different time now. I knew him when he was at Washington (2011-13) and also, I think, we played against each other when he was at Xavier (2002-11). And if you talk to him, don't bring up that (2010 NCAA tournament Elite Eight) game (when Dee Dee

Jernigan missed two wide-open layups with less than 15 seconds left and the score tied 53-53 before Stanford beat Xavier, 55-53 with a coast-to-coast layup at the buzzer and advanced to the Final Four), because it was a bad, bad finish. We ended up squeaking it out, but it was a miracle.

"I think he loves Ohio. He's from there. His family's from there. I think he works really hard at recruiting. They've had some great players, obviously. It's a different time, but it's hard to win. And the league is different now, too. I was good friends with Jim Foster (OSU coach from 2002-13), Nancy Darsch (1985-98). Nancy Darsch was on my Olympic staff, so she was my head assistant for the Olympics and I really respect the job that she's done. So I think that I probably did it differently. They have more transfers now. You've kind of got to do what you can to work as hard as you can to have the best team possible. Different people do it different ways."

BSB: You worked for Phyllis, who had an enormous impact on women's athletics. To you, what is her legacy?

VanDerveer: "She was one of the leaders of women's athletics. She's a great representative of Ohio State. She was a wonderful, wonderful boss. She was wonderful to work for. She's very intelligent, very hardworking. I think she had a difficult time because there was a lot of sexism. There's no other way to put it. She had to deal with a lot of negative attitudes towards women in sports. She had to fight tooth and nail for everything, for every penny to help women to be able to play. We didn't fly all over the place. In fact, we drove more. But she fought for things for women. She's a warrior for women's sports. She's a wonderful, wonderful person, and I'm so glad our lives crossed."



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Phyllis Bailey Pioneered Women's Sports At OSU

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Phyllis Bailey never envisioned a career in athletics, but early in her childhood, she developed a love for sports. A passion for education took the Painesville, Ohio, native to Earlham College, where she graduated in 1948 before eventually pursuing a Ph.D. at Ohio State.

Her career took another big leap in 1956 when Ohio State named her the first head coach of the women's basketball team – a spot she never saw coming.

Bailey embraced being a head coach, leading the Buckeyes on the hardwood from 1956-69 before transitioning to an administrative role in OSU's athletic department.

Upon her promotion, she oversaw the development of Ohio State's women's athletic programs, elevating many from club status to Division I while giving the women's basketball team its necessary resources.

Bailey's program-altering hire of head women's basketball coach Tara VanDerveer

in 1980 put the Buckeyes on the map nationally, competing with Iowa and other Big Ten powerhouses before the team made school history in 1993, when Katie Smith helped lead Ohio State to its first Final Four.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin recently caught up with Bailey, who lives in the Columbus area and turned 93 years old May 10, to discuss her unlikely rise through the ranks of athletics and the impact she had on OSU before retiring in 1994.

BSB: You became the first women's varsity basketball coach at Ohio State in 1956. How did you get to Ohio State?

Bailey: "I got to Ohio State to be a student. I was going to try to get my doctorate. So that's where I first was. I was in the school of education and physical education, and during that time, they said, 'No, we need to have you there as a professor rather than to be a student. Will you be willing to do that?' And I had to think about that for a while because I thought that I was going to have to have a Ph.D. in order to get any kind of a job that I might want to have.

"They told me what they wanted me to be doing, and I said, 'Well, that's what I came here to have the degree to be able to do that,' and they said, 'You don't need to have that degree because you had enough experience at that time. Are you willing to just drop the idea of being a student and just take this job?' And I really had to kind of think about it because I thought that if I didn't want to stay at Ohio State or if Ohio State didn't want me after some time, then I said, 'Well, what about that?'"

"And they said, well, they didn't think that was going to happen. I would have had enough experience in my profession already that they wanted to have me to do the job that they were giving me. So that's just the way it went.

"At that time, there were hardly any of the colleges or the universities having women's teams. So it was just there. They just said, 'Hey, we'd like to try to have a team, and we'd like you to be the coach. Will you forget about your student part of it and just take this job?' And that's what happened."

BSB: Were you surprised they wanted you to fill that role?

Bailey: "Yes, I was."

BSB: You mentioned your Ph.D. What were you originally pursuing? What did you originally want to do with that degree?

Bailey: "Well, I wanted to be able to do exactly what I finally got without having the Ph.D. You know, there wasn't much that young women had ever had. As a matter of fact, I never had a basketball with anybody telling me how to use it until I was in college. We didn't have it in high school – we didn't have it in even, oh, maybe down

to the fifth or sixth grade. We just didn't have that. So I was just lucky, a very lucky woman who loved sports. My father loved sports and my mother liked them, too, and they encouraged me. And I said to them, 'I don't think I really want to be in the field of sports.' And they both said, 'Why?' And I said, 'Well, I don't want to be called one of those tomboys.' Which was kind of, you know, a bad thing at that time. And they said, 'Do what you want to do. You need to do the things that you think you're going to be happy with. So don't worry about what people are saying. Just go on and do it.' And I just had great parents, a mother and father who felt that way about it, and that's how we all went."

BSB: You mentioned that women's sports weren't really as big back then. How did you see women's sports grow over the years you were the coach at Ohio State and when you eventually became an administrator?

Bailey: "Well, any of the young women at any colleges were overshadowed by men. They didn't have anything like (those sports programs). That was just the time after that when it came along to Title IX and they said, 'This is something that's happening for the girls. We're going to have to have the young women have the same things that the young men at these colleges and universities have. We have to give them the programs.'

"They wanted me just because they thought I could help grow the program. And I said, 'I haven't had the experience for it.' But they said, 'Well, we think you can do it anyway. We want you to try it.'"

BSB: When you were coaching, did you play 3-on-3 basketball – three on

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offense and three on defense? If so, why was that even such a thing?

Bailey: "Yes. That was all the girls and women had, was half of a court. You had six people. You were either on defense time or on the offensive time, and you just had to make the idea of what you were going to do and picked it up. And that's the way it started."

"I think they were being pushed that way. You look at the history of what was going on at that time about girls and women, young women. Every woman was having to be looked at like the man and to be equal. We were all just good humans."

BSB: You were the head women's basketball coach from 1956-69 and then bumped up in the athletic department. How did you become an administrator?

Bailey: "I asked my mother once, 'I don't know what in the world's happening to me.' And my mother said, 'Phyllis, you have some things that people see that you don't know about your own self.' And that's just the way it was. I just dropped in. It's a crazy thing to say this, but I just got adopted into our country at the time it did."

"When I was a basketball coach, they moved me up until I had the position that I had the responsibility of all of the women's teams. And I said, 'Well, I've never had any work like this.' And they said, 'Neither has anyone else.' And that was just the time when they needed to have somebody who, I guess, they thought had maybe a loud enough voice that people would listen to me."

BSB: While you were an administrator, you hired Tara VanDerveer as Ohio State's head women's basketball coach in 1980. Why did you hire her? What do you remember about her that stood out?

Bailey: "Tara, I saw her as a player. Tara was a player at Indiana University. And I don't know why I knew she was good about women's basketball, but I was in a family that knew a lot about sports. You had some kind of idea of what a person might be able to do. So that was my first hire, and then by gosh, that's the best thing I ever did. She was a great one."

BSB: Why do you think VanDerveer was able to be so successful at Ohio State from 1980-85? What did she do that she ended up being able to thrive?

Bailey: "I think (her personality stood out most). She was a happy girl. She really wanted to play. She wanted to let other people be able to play. When I had gotten her, I worked seven days a week right along because I was frustrated as a little kid. I couldn't get anything that our girls get now. Just out of frustration, I was willing to say, 'Doggone, I'm going to dedicate my life to try to get people to have that chance.' And that's my story."

BSB: VanDerveer left Ohio State for Stanford in 1985, a position she still holds today. Did you try to keep her? What was that conversation like when VanDerveer told you she was going to leave?

Bailey: "Well, she was going to get (more money there). I worked very hard at Ohio State to try to get the people above me to give me the money and the position that I needed to have to carry Tara. And they said, 'No, we don't want to do that here at Ohio State.' Well, it's people who are in positions of power at times – whether they like something or they don't like it, or they think it's not worth something for women to do or not do – and we've gone a long life. I've had a long life anyway, but it's gone a long way since then."

"I know that it was a money issue. I didn't want to let Tara go. I tried my best to get the money for Tara. But the athletic director at that time (Rick Bay) said, 'We

don't have that much money.' And I kept saying, 'I don't believe that, because we have all of that money coming out of the football team.' But the football has to have a lot of that money, he told me. And I said, 'They're getting more than they're giving me.' He said, 'No.' And that was just it."

BSB: What do you remember about when Ohio State women's basketball played Iowa in the 1980s and there was a good rivalry going with Iowa when VanDerveer led the Buckeyes against head coach C. Vivian Stringer and the Hawkeyes? One game Feb. 3, 1985, both teams were atop the Big Ten – Ohio State unbeaten and Iowa with one loss – when Carver-Hawkeye Arena's 15,500-capacity seating had 22,157 people show up and cram the building for the Buckeyes' 56-47 win over the Hawkeyes.

Bailey: "Oh, it was like Ohio State and Michigan in football. I mean, because in Iowa, the girls had a lot of high school teams in Iowa. And in Ohio, we didn't have the same resources. We just had to catch up, that was all."

"When Tara was my coach, when she came home from Iowa, she came in and she said, 'My gosh, I felt like I was in the middle of a beehive.' And I said, 'Why?' And she said, 'It was so loud and there were so many people in yellow and black. And I just thought I was around a whole bunch of bees.' And I laughed and said, 'Well, that was a good way to tell me, anyway.'"

BSB: Do you still talk to Tara at all? Does she still check in with you? She was back Nov. 10, 2017, for the season opener between Ohio State and Stanford – an 85-64 win for the Buckeyes over the Cardinal – at St. John Arena.

Bailey: "We do. She was here last year and we had several meals together, and she's busy and I'm not, but I'm not going to bother her. But if she picked up the phone and talked to me, I'd be glad to talk with her. I was happy to see her and talk to her for several times. I was proud of her. She was my hire. My gosh, why wouldn't I want to see her?"

"But I just stepped aside. I retired and when I retired, I said to myself, 'Don't ever put your nose back in there. Just don't. When you retire, you step out of this program and it's over.' And that's just me. That's just the kind of person I am."

BSB: Since you retired in 1994, how much involvement have you had with Ohio State athletics, if any? Do you still follow the women's basketball program?

Bailey: "No, I haven't. I don't know. I think the last two (coaches) weren't people I have anything to do with. And I wasn't going to go down there to watch them and have them thinking that maybe I was just sneaking around."

BSB: The Katie Smith era from 1992-96 elevated Ohio State women's basketball. What do you remember about Smith?

Bailey: "Oh, she was the best player at Ohio State. She was down there in Logan and they're down there in the hills. So the kids down there, the girls just got the ball and they played, too, because they had to do something. So it just grew."

"She understood the game and she had the skills. She was just like the boys. She played out on the playground and played with them, and she got to make herself a good player."

BSB: So you could tell Smith was going to be special when Ohio State recruited her? Why?

Bailey: "Absolutely. At that time, it wasn't even like Ohio State thought about calling young women into here to play sports."

"That's right. She evolved women's sports. And when I got there, which was

well before she came about, they had what they called – and they still do – what they called sport clubs. They didn't have any coaches or anything. They were just sport clubs that played together."

BSB: Led by Smith, Ohio State women's basketball went to the Final Four at the end of the 1992-93 season. What are some of your memories from how Ohio State fared there?

Bailey: "I sure do remember that because I was at Ohio State and Ohio State was a strong athletic program, nationally. Oh, my gosh. We lost on the last game and that's, as far as my job, that's the type of thing that hurt me most. Oh, gee, why not? If you're somebody who's in sports, you always want to win. And we were so close, but we didn't have a chance to. We just didn't get it to happen."

"But it grew. I said I didn't do it on my own – and I didn't do it on my own – but I had to walk up the steps and walk up the steps, and pretty soon the university had to say, 'Hey, we've got to get going on this platform. Michigan and Iowa and others are

doing this (competing at a high level). We can't (not compete). We've got to (let the student-athletes) do it."

BSB: The women's basketball Final Four took place last spring in Columbus. Did you ever think that would be a possibility?

Bailey: "Oh, it's grown. It's grown and grown. I have just been thrilled with it. When the Final Four was here last year, it was just great to me. I didn't think I'd ever live to see something like that for young women."

"I never thought I'd see that. I never even thought there'd be a Final Four for women's basketball, let alone in Columbus. That was just one of the wonderful things of my life. It was the best. I was on the NCAA basketball committee for seven years, and that one we had here was the best they've ever had. We were lucky to have such a good one."

"Think about it. Why are you talking to me? Because I'm talking to you about women's sports. Twenty years ago, would anyone be calling me or any other women to talk about the Final Four?"



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40 Years On Ohio State Beat With Bob Hunter

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Bob Hunter started working for The Columbus Dispatch in 1975 and began covering Ohio State football and men's basketball as a staff writer within a few years. After many years on the beat, Hunter became a columnist in 1993, switching to sports opinion pieces. Hunter's career at the Dispatch came to end when he retired in 2016, but he has not stopped writing. The Ohio University graduate is currently constructing a book featuring 136 of his stories and columns, titled "Players, Teams and Stadium Ghosts: Hunter on Sports" to be published by the Ohio University Press. Hunter is also the author of "Thurberville," a 2017 book about Columbus writer James Thurber, "Saint Woody: The History and Fanaticism of Ohio State Football" (2012), "A Historical Guidebook to Old Columbus: Finding the Past in the Present in Ohio's Capital City" (2012), "Chic" (2008) and "Buckeye Basketball" (1981).

BSB: What sparked your interest in becoming a writer, and why did you get into the newspaper business?

Hunter: "I always liked to write, and I was interested in sports, so that was kind of a perfect marriage. When I went to college, I went to Ohio University and I went into journalism, actually did some radio work when I was a freshman. I knew I wanted to get into media somewhere, wasn't exactly sure, but the fact that I really liked to write pushed me toward newspapers."

BSB: When did you start at The Columbus Dispatch, and when did you begin covering Ohio State sports?

Hunter: "I started at the Dispatch in April of 1975, and I covered high schools then. The first OSU things were Ohio State basketball games in the Kodak Classic in New York, because at the time, we just had one person who covered both beats, football and basketball. And at the time, the guy who was covering football went to a bowl game and the basketball team was playing in the Kodak Classic, so I went there and covered them a couple of days, which was when Kelvin Ransey was a freshman. That was '76. And in the fall of '77, I started covering football and basketball. So

I covered Woody Hayes' last two years."

BSB: What do you remember about Woody Hayes, and which stories stick out to you about him?

Hunter: "Well, how much time do you have? Woody is a very interesting guy, as you probably could imagine – a much more complex guy than people think of him. People think of him tearing up downs markers and hitting Charlie Bauman and his fits of temper and that kind of stuff. But there were these two distinct characters. One was the short-tempered, wild-man temperament. He would rip baseball caps at practice and punch shoulder pads and do all this kind of stuff, but the other part was that he really cared about the players.

"I'll give an example: They had word power classes for his players once a week at (the athletic facility). There's a classroom and he'd herd all these players in there, and they would have to learn vocabulary words. The reason that he did that was because he thought they needed to have a good vocabulary when they got out of school and went out and got jobs, which is a pretty amazing thing if you think about it. In all of the stuff that's going on with football and all of that, he was worried about them getting good jobs and them having good vocabulary and that kind of stuff.

"He also did a lot of hospital work. He didn't want any credit for it, didn't want anyone to know it, but he was constantly visiting people, little kids and sick people in hospitals and doing all this kind of stuff. So there's these sides of him that are – I think people know about it – but it's not what you think about when you think about Woody Hayes.

"In those days, only three, four or five people covered practice in the media. There were like no people at practice. And the reporters, you'd have usually at most three, the guy from the Citizen-Journal, a guy from the Dispatch and the AP, maybe. And a lot of times you might be the only person at practice, so you'd go into Woody's office every day, sometimes just you and Woody.

"I was a young guy, and there were days when he would come in there and he would say, 'Bob, I've got this magazine article I think you ought to read, I think it would help you.' I mean, it was this kind of teacher in him that people don't think about. There are always these other things.

"They practiced in the stadium one day, which they used to do once in a while, and I'm standing there on the side with Tom Pastorius from the Citizen-Journal, and they left all these field seats in there. And some of these players are out there practicing, and some of the players on the sidelines are sitting in these field seats. And Pasty says to me, 'I don't think the old man's going to like this, if he sees them sitting in those field seats.'

"And sure enough, there's this point in practice where somebody throws an interception or something, and Woody starts ranting and raving out there, and he's stomping around and he's yelling at the quarterback and he's yelling at the quarterbacks coach. And then he turns around – like he's been waiting for this moment – and spots the people sitting in the field seats and then comes charging over like this raging maniac, and the players are running and jumping out of the way and he's throwing these seats. We cleared out too, we're like 30 yards away, and we're standing there watching this and Pasty says, 'I didn't think he would like it.'

"He would always get on these military discussions where he would start talking about military history and telling you this stuff. And one day – you could never get in there Michigan week – you couldn't get to the practice field, couldn't get anywhere. They would let you in the entrance down there at the Woody (Hayes Center), the old entrance on the west side there, you could stand there in the lobby and Woody would come down there after practice for a few minutes and answer

questions. Of course, he wouldn't say anything, but he would come down and answer questions. I'm standing down there with another reporter and Woody never had anything to say, and he starts telling this military thing. He starts telling us this WWII story and he's going into this, and we're both scribbling this down, he's going on and on, finally he stops us, and he says, 'What are you writing this down for?' 'Coach, we don't know that you're telling the story and you're going to say and that's why we're going to beat Michigan.' 'No, this is just about WWII.' It was a pretty amazing experience.

"I don't know how much of the stuff he did at practice was for show, I don't know if he was really mad. I know he used to cut the bills of hats so he could rip the bill off in practice. And he had these cheap watches, which he would pull his watch off, throw it in the ground and stomp it. His practice sessions were pretty amazing considering you could never see this today. He's a very physical guy, which is why it's not kind of surprising that he would end up hitting a player. Because he was a boxer when he was a young guy, but he'd pound shoulder pads and he'd stomp around out there and he yelled at his assistant coaches. And at the time, it was just the way it was. You didn't think much of it. If you turned around and watched him do that today, you would think, 'He can't do that, what's he doing?' But in those days, it was OK."

BSB: What is your perspective on the Gator Bowl and the subsequent firing of Woody Hayes after he had punched Clemson's Charlie Bauman?

Hunter: "At the time that the Gator Bowl happened, I was covering OSU basketball. So, when the time came for the Gator Bowl, and obviously, they're in the Gator Bowl, it hasn't been a great year. And the basketball team was really good, and the basketball team was playing No. 1 Duke in Madison Square Garden. So, it didn't seem like much of a decision – I'm going to go to Madison Square Garden, they're playing Duke. I'm going to go to New York instead of Jacksonville or whatever, and it's the Gator Bowl, what can happen, right?"

"So that happens. The Buckeyes upset Duke in overtime in MSG and the game was before the Gator Bowl, so we finished and went over to the Statler Hotel across the street from Madison Square Garden and we're sitting in the bar watching the Gator Bowl when Woody hit that guy. It was like, 'Oh my God, are you kidding me? I can't believe we're sitting here and that happened.' I'm not surprised they fired him; they had to fire him. And I think it's unfortunate that that's the way his career ended, although you could make a pretty good case as volatile as his personality was that that was like the natural thing to have happened."

BSB: What do you remember about the hiring of Earle Bruce as Woody Hayes' successor and his reception from fans?

Hunter: "The interesting thing about Earle is that we came to know Earle after he was a coach, when he was a really outspoken guy when he was on WTVN and he was really good at that. But when he was a coach, he was very close-mouthed, just wasn't giving out anything, didn't offer a lot of opinions about much. Once he stopped coaching, he became much more vociferous about things, he just had a lot more to say about anything than he did and I guess that's probably true for most coaches. But he was pretty close to the vest when he was a coach. He was a good guy – he was always a good guy.

"It was the same thing when I covered Earle, there was still nobody covering the team. So, it was the same thing. You'd go into Earle's office after practice and you might be the only person in there, which if you cover OSU football now, it's hard to imagine that that's the way it was, and it

used to be like that. That's part of the frustration with the older guys that have been around for a long time. It's just like, 'You get Urban for how long on what day?'

"And you used to do this where you went to practice every day. Once in a while they would close practice for some reason. Something would happen and they'd shut it down, they wouldn't let you in, but if you covered the team, you could go to practice every day. You could stand there on the sidelines the whole practice, and then after practice, you could grab players and talk to players.

"So, the idea that now you go to the head coach's press conference and then you go into the indoor practice field and stand in there with 30 guys around one player is like, 'Are you kidding me?' We used to be able to just pull some guy aside and talk to him. When you could do that, you actually had a rapport with guys. You could talk to guys, you could feel like you're actually having a conversation – without you ask a question and somebody else asks a question, somebody over there asks a question, and then you try to get back to your question, or whatever. It's kind of nuts.

"And the same way with the coaches. That was the thing I remember about Earle. Even though Earle didn't have a lot to say, sometimes you would go in there and he would tell you off the record that he thought he got screwed by the officials or whatever, because you knew it was you and him and you weren't printing this. And it probably wouldn't work today because there's so many websites and so many people, but the one reason you don't really have trust for people is because those coaches aren't dealing with people on that level – it's a mass of people and they don't know who to trust and who they can't trust, and who's an honorable guy and who isn't.

"So, I guess what I'm saying to some extent is the players and coaches have lost in that deal too because by not being able to have those one-on-one conversations all the time, they can't make good judgments on – they just don't say anything."

BSB: What is your perspective on the hiring of John Cooper, and why do you think he and Ohio State fans got off on the wrong foot?

Hunter: "I was actually there the night the bowl game they played in L.A., he was at Arizona State, it was his last game at Arizona State and he was becoming the Ohio State football coach. I remember talking to him on the field. I think a couple of big issues: One, he wasn't an Ohio State guy, he wasn't an Ohio guy. Two, he couldn't hide the fact that he wasn't an Ohio State guy. He had that Tennessee accent and the whole thing – he immediately reminds you that he's not an Ohio State guy.

"But then the other thing was, they hired him because Earle wasn't very dynamic. They felt like they needed to come up with the times and have this real outgoing guy who was going to get them all this publicity and do all this stuff. It was like a radical departure. The media welcomed that initially because it was like, wow we're going to get good quotes and we're going to get all this stuff. But he comes in and he does the hot tub ad, which is kind of famous. He becomes the coach and he's on TV doing these hot tub ads with his family, and that immediately cast him in the light of he's this mercenary who is coming in here to make all the money he can on this position.

"I'm sure he wasn't thinking that. That wasn't the way he was thinking. He had these opportunities for endorsements or whatever, and hey, he hit the lottery by becoming the Ohio State football coach and he was just taking advantage of it. But I don't think that should have affected his coaching or any of that, other than the public immediately had this perception that, 'This guy isn't an Ohio guy, he's coming here from Tennessee. Is he just here to make a bunch of money or what's his story?'

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“And then when they start having trouble beating Michigan, and all of that, then it immediately becomes an issue. I mean, obviously, I think none of that would have been an issue if he gets the job and goes 11-0 and wins a national championship. Nobody cares where he’s from, nobody cares whether he’s an Ohio guy – it was just kind of the perfect storm, where he got here and he was a very sought-after guy when they hired him, and they thought this is what we need. We need to change from – Earle was kind of this colorless guy and here’s this dynamic guy.

“And he’s got this personality and he’s going to be chatting it up on TV, and he’s going to be doing all this stuff. But I just think when you don’t win, when you don’t have success, losing the Michigan game every year was a disaster for that, because then immediately, ‘He doesn’t understand them, he’s not from here, he doesn’t understand the OSU-Michigan thing.’

“The anger out there for him not beating Michigan is still out there. I mean, it’s unbelievable, when he was up for the College Football Hall of Fame, or made it into the College Football Hall of Fame, I wrote this column about him and basically said, he should be in the Hall of Fame. If you look at the other guys he was up against, and if you look at the guys who had gotten in there prior to him, he clearly belonged in there with those guys – his record, his accomplishments. And I just got this barrage of emails from angry people, ‘This guy does not belong in the Hall of Fame, he couldn’t beat Michigan, blah, blah, blah.’ They were just livid about this, and I’m thinking, ‘Come on, the guy is retired, he’s no threat to anybody at this point.’”

BSB: What did you think of the hiring of Jim Tressel and his “310 Days” speech?

Hunter: “I thought it was a risk, honestly, when they hired him. Just because he was obviously very successful at Youngstown State, but Youngstown State isn’t OSU. And Ohio State has its own unique set of circumstances. He’d been there so he was aware of that. But it was a little bit like what I thought when they hired Ryan Day, who is obviously a really good coach, obviously, a very smart guy, obviously, a lot of things going for him – but Ohio State football is kind of a monster.

“Not everybody is going to be able to handle this. And until you are actually in that position, and have to do it, all the other stuff – all the good things you can say about him, you don’t really know. And that was kind of the way it was with Tressel. The Minnesota coach at the time, Glen Mason, had been at OSU for a long time, he had been successful at Minnesota and Kansas, and he had run these big programs. And to me, he seemed like a safer bet.

“Tressel came in and he came to the introductory press conference, and he hit all the right notes, said all the right things. He was kind of a reassurance to everybody that maybe he was the right guy. And as I said, there was nobody I know that thought, ‘Well, this guy isn’t smart enough or he’s not a good enough coach,’ or all that. But he’s never run a major program, so can he do it? That seems hard to believe that you would say that about him now, knowing the way he is and knowing him.

“He came in and gave that guarantee of beating Michigan, and that wasn’t instantly seized upon by everybody. And there again, this is the difference between Tressel and Cooper, Tressel had been here. Tressel is an Ohio guy, Tressel knew that Michigan thing was huge, and he knew the frustrations, the whole story of it. He’d been in Ohio the whole time, so he knew that was on everybody’s mind. Cooper was gone because he couldn’t beat Michigan. That was a natural thing to do, and it was a smart thing to do. But I remember they beat Michigan in Ann Arbor and Tressel had his press conference and he hugged his daughters and he said, ‘Oh boy.’ I don’t know if that was relief or what it was. The ‘Oh boy’ seemed to indicate that this was easier said than done.”

BSB: When OSU won the national championship in 2002, what were your expectations for that team and how surprised were you that it went all the way and beat Miami?

Hunter: “I don’t remember specifically what my expectations were, although I know my expectations weren’t for a national championship. And at no point during that season was that my expectation. That was a pretty incredible season where there were close calls, there was no point during that season until that Miami game, where you felt like these guys are unbelievable, they’re going all the way – that wasn’t the feeling you had with that team.

“They were incredibly resilient. They did some amazing things. That game in Cincinnati against U-C where there were two chances right at the end of the game, where balls were dropped where U-C could have won the game, which is just kind of incredible when you think about it. The thing about that season as it went along, and they get to the national championship, if you had been there the previous 10 years, they had a couple teams that were better teams than that one, more talented teams, where you thought this team might win the national championship. And this team didn’t seem like that team, but they did all of that. And then going into that game against Miami, Miami was a pretty heavy favorite for a national championship game like that. Most people, not Buckeye fans certainly, but most unbiased observers thought Miami would win that game.

“That’s when Miami was kind of invincible, but then when the game started, you could see this was not a mismatch that some people may have thought it was. Immediately OSU was making all these tackles, making all these plays, and it was like, wait a minute now, this is like a totally different thing, this is not what you might have expected.”

BSB: What is your perspective on Tattogate?

Hunter: “I can’t believe that Tressel lied about that. I think that Tressel thought that he could handle it. I think these coaches get in this position where they’re like running their own little world there where they’ve got all this stuff going on and they think that they’re better able to handle this than anybody, ‘I’m going to take care of this.’ And I haven’t had any long conversations with him about it, but knowing him and the way he operated and the way he ran things, I don’t think this is malicious, I don’t think he has this malicious. ‘I’m trying to hide this stuff.’ I think Tressel thought, ‘I can handle this better. I can punish these guys. I’ll take care of this.’ But it is always astounding to me – you’re not going to get fired for those violations, it’s when you lie about it. So, it always struck me as unbelievable that he lied to the NCAA, because that puts the university in a really bad position, and you just can’t do this. It surprises me because he’s a very intelligent guy. I would think that he could have stepped back and looked at this situation, and said, ‘I’ve got to come clean on this, we’re going to make this worse,’ but I don’t think at any point that he thought it was going to get to that.”

BSB: What was your perspective on the 2014 national championship season?

Hunter: “It was obviously a really good team, but the way that season ended was one of the more incredible things ever, just the way going into those last few games with injured quarterbacks, you really don’t know what’s going to happen. Who would have ever thought that would develop like that? And those games were amazing, all three of those, the Big Ten championship and then the Alabama game and the Oregon game, all kind of surreal in a way that it all came together that way.

“And you certainly couldn’t be surprised that Urban would lead them to a national championship. When they got him, he was ‘the guy.’ He had had all this success at Florida; we knew the program would take this immediate upturn. You can’t really be surprised that he won that title.

But under the circumstances with quarterbacks going down and ending up the way they did – they ended up playing better in those games. The case was made, and I think it was probably true, that Cardale’s arm strength gave them this new dimension that put them over the top – made them unbeatable in those games. Who would have thought?”

BSB: What will Urban Meyer’s legacy be, and where does he rank among OSU football coaches?

Hunter: “I think in the long run, the turmoil at the end will be pretty much forgotten. I don’t think that’s going to be this lingering stain on his legacy. I think he had a pretty incredible run. He won 90 percent of his games, and I think if there is any kind of downside to what he did, it’s that he quit so early, which is probably not going to be that unusual in the future with coaches with the money they make.

“There’s no question that his reign there was incredible. The question for me would be, when you quit like he did, kind of in the middle, we don’t see whether he could have sustained that. If you look at Tressel, he won that national championship and early in his career, he always won the big games. He won all of these bowl games, all these big games against big opponents. He had this incredible record until he went into that national championship game against Florida and then got beat, and it started to unravel. And to that point, he looked like he was invincible. It’s kind of an incomplete picture with Urban, but you certainly can’t deny what he did. What he did was incredible.”

BSB: You wrote a book on OSU basketball. What stood out to you the most about the men’s basketball team that won the national championship in 1960?

Hunter: “The unselfishness of it. Jerry Lucas was clearly the star, he was the scorer. He had been this huge high school All-American, and he was a three-time All-American in college. And he was the big man. John Havlicek for example, could have been a really good scorer, but he came there and he recognized that on that team, they needed defense and so he became this really, really good defensive player.”

BSB: Why is Fred Taylor not held in as high regard as Woody Hayes?

Hunter: “I can tell you Fred had a saying that he always used, ‘It’s only basketball.’ Because that was the feeling of being at Ohio State – football was the king. Fred talked about being on the basketball team in the late-40s, where the basketball team couldn’t start practicing – they couldn’t use the fairgrounds, which is where they played, because as long as football season was going on, the grounds crew took care of Ohio Stadium for the football team, and they didn’t take the time to put up the floor in the fairgrounds. ... Fred was one of the best five or six coaches in the country while he coached. He was one of those top-dog coaches, but I don’t think he got that much recognition here because it wasn’t football. And I think toward the end he became embroiled in this dispute with the athletic department. He would ask for things and they wouldn’t give him what he wanted, and meanwhile football was getting everything. Fred got more and more bitter, and he stopped recruiting as much.”

BSB: What do you think about the arguments for compensating players?

Hunter: “I think they should be compensated. I think it’s outrageous that coaches can make five or six million dollars a year, athletic directors can make a million-plus a year, the university can rake in all this money, fund your programs, all this stuff, and the guys that people are paying to see, they just say, ‘We’re giving them a scholarship.’

“I honestly have never really understood how the system can be so unfair and how the administrators can stand there with a straight face and talk about student-athletes and all this stuff, and at the same time be raking these millions upon millions of dollars off of them, and demand that this be kept as this pure, almost

Olympic-like sports. It’s bizarre to me, and I don’t have the answer, believe me.”

BSB: Moving to another book, what was the significance of Chic Harley in Ohio State football history?

Hunter: “I think you can legitimately make the case that if Chic Harley hadn’t come along, Ohio State football that we know today would not be what it is. Before Chic got to OSU, OSU was a decent program, but they drew generally 3,000, 4,000, 5,000 people to the games. It didn’t have this long tradition. It wasn’t thought of as the most important thing in town.

“They joined the Big Ten but they weren’t one of the top dogs. And Chic got there, they beat Illinois the first year, which I like to refer to as the big bang of OSU football, because he was a sophomore, and up to that point, there were really no real expectations for OSU football. And they went over to Illinois and they won this game at Illinois, which no one thought they would win. And whenever they played the next game, they had this huge crowd. They were erecting temporary bleachers at Ohio Field because they didn’t have enough seats, and they started drawing 12,000, 10,000, 13,000, doubling the size of these crowds.

“And all the while Harley played, they won all those games in 1916, 1917, and the crowds kept getting bigger. And they kept adding to the seats, and then there was a war year, and then 1919 they came back and they won all the games in 1919 until the last game they lost to Illinois – Harley was hurt and he played anyway. That game they had 18,000 people, which Ohio Field barely 10 years before they were drawing 4,000 people or whatever. They’ve got people in the trees, people all over the place, and they decided to build Ohio Stadium to accommodate.

“Suddenly there was this vision for Ohio State football that was way beyond what it had been 10 years ago. If Harley had not come along, they would not have built Ohio Stadium. They would’ve ended up building a stadium, don’t get me wrong. They wouldn’t have kept playing at Ohio Field. They were in the Big Ten and at some point, if that team hadn’t been that good and they hadn’t gotten all that enthusiasm, they would have built a 40,000-seat stadium, or whatever somewhere. But that was where everything started with OSU football.

Editor’s note: Bob Hunter had much more to say on a variety of topics than space allowed. We will be compiling some of his other comments and posting them on BuckeyeSports.com in the near future.



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California CB Among Many June Commitments

Ohio State snapped its drought on defense and special teams for the 2020 recruiting class in June, climbing into double-digit members with a Big Ten flip along the way.

After the staff spent April 15 through May 31 on the road for the spring evaluation period, the Buckeyes' potential for major progress was evident.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Garrett Stepien

"This month is a big month for us," head coach Ryan Day said during a June 5 press conference. "There are a couple of positions of need on offense and we're working through all those, but it's really what we're going to be at the end of June. That's when I think we'll have a better handle on the whole class."

With momentum from May 31 when Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia wide receiver Julian Fleming (6-2, 199), the 247Sports composite's No. 1 wide receiver, committed for 2020, Ohio State rode its biggest pledge in the past year into June.

The pivotal month saw the Buckeyes bring in nine more commitments, highlighted by an enormous addition in the trenches and a top-50 overall player at a position of need from a talent-rich region outside Ohio.

Below is a breakdown of OSU's breakthrough month on the trail, from the commitments to visitors and other movements.

OSU Flips Top OT From PSU

After the Buckeyes pulled Fleming, who lives less than 100 miles from Beaver Stadium, out of Penn State's back yard, Ohio State hit the Nittany Lions again June 9 when Grant Toutant flipped from PSU to OSU.

The three-star offensive tackle from Warren (Mich.) De La Salle took to Twitter late in the evening and shared the unexpected news, which came with an attached graphic of a message next to him in a scarlet and gray uniform.

"As I look back on my recruitment journey, I know it had developed me into a completely different person and athlete than I was a year ago, a month ago, even a week ago," Toutant said. "In life, as in football, you learn, grow and change from experiences and opportunities, which impacts the outcome of the game."

"With that said, I would like to thank Coach (James) Franklin, Coach (Matt) Limegrover, Coach (Mark) Dupuis and all the Penn State staff for supporting and first believing in me throughout this recruitment process."

"However, I have made the decision to formally announce my decommitment from Penn State University to pursue an opportunity that is best fit for me and my future."

"Thank you, to my family and especially my mom and dad, for their continued support and guidance."

"With much thought and prayer, I would like to announce my decision to pursue an academic and athletic career at THE Ohio State University!"

The 6-7, 320-pounder's pledge to the Buckeyes was big, both literally and figura-

tively. Not only did OSU land a devastating blow to PSU (Toutant, who originally committed Nov. 24 as the first for Franklin in 2020), but it filled another spot at a position of need.

"I really don't think there's a difference between being the first or the fifth O-lineman," Toutant told Jeremy Birmingham of Lettermen Row. "Once we get there, we're all just going to put in the work and we're going to have to work hard and earn our spot."

As the 247Sports composite's No. 395 overall prospect, No. 32 offensive tackle and No. 10 player in Michigan for 2020, Toutant is Ohio State's fifth offensive lineman of the cycle. He joins Cincinnati Princeton five-star Paris Johnson (6-7½, 295) as one of the Buckeyes' two true offensive tackles. The in-state three-star tackle duo of Cincinnati Elder's Jakob James (6-5, 275) and Norwalk's Trey Leroux (6-8, 355) may be molded into guards, while Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional four-star/guard Luke Wypler (6-3½, 285) rounds out the future offensive linemen.

"They just said I was going to play tackle," Toutant said. "They didn't specify left or right. They said I'm definitely not a guard, so I'm definitely going to play tackle."

Toutant took an unpublicized visit the weekend of June 7-9 before he reached his decision, spending time with freshman interior offensive linemen Harry Miller (6-4, 310) and Enokk Vimahi (6-4, 270) at the house of sophomore center Josh Myers (6-5, 310). The week prior, he wrapped his camp circuit June 2 at Grand Valley State's Best of the Midwest Football Academy, where offensive line coach Greg Studrawa got an up-close look at Toutant in action.

"I wouldn't say (Studrawa) got to work with me a lot, but I would say he was definitely watching me a lot," Toutant said. "He was pretty much next to me the whole camp. He got really, really excited warming up. We're just doing high knees and the next thing, he's jumping up and down, giving me a high five and stuff. He was just really excited to see how I worked."

After he committed to Penn State, Toutant added offers Jan. 17 from Ohio State and Michigan State. Auburn added an offer April 11, in the midst of multiple visits with the Nittany Lions - Feb. 2 for junior day, March 16, April 13 and May 18.

"On Coach Day's first recruiting cycle, he came to one of my basketball practices, and he was really impressed," Toutant said. "He and (co-defensive coordinator/SAM linebackers coach and area recruiter Greg) Mattison were there. He really liked the way I moved, how flexible I was, and Ohio State had always been one of my dream schools to go to, so I had to give it a shot and see if it was everything I thought it was."

Ohio State Secures California 4-Star CB

Before he started his official visit June 21 with Ohio State, Clark Phillips became a part of the Buckeyes' class for 2020 when he announced his commitment in the afternoon.

The four-star cornerback from La Habra, Calif., took to CBS Sports HQ, a free online 24-hour sports news network, and shared the news.

"First of all, I would like to thank God for allowing me to be in the position I am today," Phillips wrote on Twitter. "I would like to thank my parents and everyone

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

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

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Lejond Cavazos	CB	6-1	196	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy
Jarion Fleming	WR	6-2	199	★★★★★	Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia
Ty Hamilton	DE	6-3	250	★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) Central
Darrion Henry	DT	6-5	279	★★★★	Cincinnati Princeton
Jakob James	OG	6-5	275	★★★	Cincinnati Elder
Paris Johnson	OT	6-3	211	★★★★★	Cincinnati Princeton
Trey Leroux	OT	6-8	355	★★★	Norwalk, Ohio
Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Clark Phillips	CB	5-11	178	★★★★	La Habra, California
Gee Scott	WR	6-31	207	★★★★★	Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic
Jake Seibert	K	6-1	190	★★★	Cincinnati La Salle
Cody Simon	OLB	6-1	218	★★★★	Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peters Prep
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	6-1	188	★★★★	Rockwall, Texas
Grant Toutant	OG	6-7	320	★★★	Warren (Mich.) De La Salle
Luke Wypler	C	6-4	285	★★★★	Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional

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

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jayden Ballard	WR	6-2	175	★★★★	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Ben Christman	OT	6-6	299	★★★★	Richfield (Ohio) Revere
Jack Sawyer	DE	6-6	220	★★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) North
Kyle McCord	QB	6-3	204	★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's

who has supported me throughout this progress. I would love to say thank you to all of the schools (that) recruited me thus far and treated me as (an) extreme priority. I can only choose one school. I will be attending The Ohio State University. #GoBuckeyes."

As the 247Sports composite's fourth-best cornerback and No. 46 overall prospect for 2020, Phillips' pledge to OSU is critical. After the 2019 class resulted in no commitments at cornerback, a miss Ohio State was able to afford with so much depth still at the position, the 2020 cycle is needed to reload the secondary.

The Buckeyes took a step in the right direction April 12 when Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star safety Lejond Cavazos recommitted to Day and the Buckeyes.

Cavazos is considered the 247Sports composite's No. 253 overall prospect, No. 20 safety and No. 37 player in Florida for 2020, but OSU recruited him as a cornerback.

Ohio State offered the 5-10½, 178-pound Phillips on Jan. 24 and moved fast up his list of preferences. Phillips visited the Buckeyes March 28 and included them with California, Notre Dame, Oregon and UCLA in his top five May 1.

Phillips gave OSU its third commitment on defense at the time. While the unit had only Cavazos as its other pledge early in the month, co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley, whom Day hired Jan. 7 after a three-year stint with the San Francisco 49ers from 2016-18, dismissed the notion that the staff should be concerned without results on the defensive side of the ball.

"I don't feel we're behind," Hafley said June 5. "Personally, we had a little bit of a later start since some of these guys are being recruited in September and I'm working to play the Rams in September. But that's OK."

"I think the staff, the defensive guys and even the offensive guys helping, that's the cool thing. It's not like it's just defensive guys recruiting defensive guys. I think everyone's doing a really good job. We've got some pretty good guys coming in for

a visit, and we'll swing away. I'm not concerned. It's Ohio State. We'll be OK."

Buckeye Legacy Jumps On Commitment Opportunity

Less than a month after he received his offer from Ohio State, Pickerington (Ohio) Central 2020 three-star defensive end Ty Hamilton pulled the trigger June 16 when he took to Twitter and announced his commitment to the Buckeyes.

"First off I would like to thank God for giving me the gift of my football ability, but I also want to thank my family, all the coaches who believed in me in this process, and my trainers who pushed me to work hard everyday," Hamilton said. "Lastly I would like to thank Pickerington Central for them letting me be a part of the school and that being said, I HAVE COMMITTED TO THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY #GoBucks!!!"

The 6-3, 250-pounder is the younger brother of senior defensive tackle Davon Hamilton and started an official visit over the weekend of June 14. Davon Hamilton told BSB June 14 at OSU's seventh annual job fair that Ty Hamilton was "definitely well beyond" what he was in his high school tenure "by far."

Ty Hamilton earned an offer May 28 and camped June 6, working individually with defensive line coach Larry Johnson throughout the afternoon on the outdoor practice fields of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

"They want me to be a strong (side) end or three-tech (tackle)," Hamilton said June 6. "So it could be either of those two positions. I feel good about it. I want to be able to play everywhere on the line, so you need to be able to do everything, all around."

Pickerington (Ohio) North 2021 five-star defensive end commitment Jack Sawyer (6-5, 230) was also at the camp June 6 and told BSB that he had been working hard on recruiting Hamilton, whom Sawyer trains with.

"I work out with Ty every day," Sawyer said. "Up at D1 Columbus, we're up there working out together. So me and Ty have a good relationship. He's kind of a quiet dude until you get to know him, but he's a great player, great dude."

Hamilton had officially visited Penn State the previous weekend, June 7-9, before making the local visit with Ohio State, which

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

entered the race just in time. He was originally locked into an Indiana official visit before the Buckeyes swooped in. The third and final official visit was set for Michigan the weekend of June 21-23 with a commitment planned shortly afterward, but Hamilton arrived at his decision early, and Johnson was at the forefront of the process.

"The big takeaway is just learning from (Johnson) as a coach," Hamilton said. "Being a possibility of going to Ohio State, just learning how he coaches, how he coaches me, personally. It's a big decision for me to have that experience with the coaches."

Hamilton is the 247Sports composite's No. 920 overall prospect, No. 47 strongside defensive end and No. 31 player in Ohio. He became another addition on the defensive side of the ball.

"Anytime you coach at Ohio State University and you're recruiting great kids, you have a chance of getting them," Mattison said of landing players on defense. "And I think our coaches have done a great job. The thing I'm finding is everybody works together to get the players. It's not about, 'I'm recruiting this guy,' and, 'You're recruiting that guy.' It's a team effort because, when they get here, they're all Ohio State defensive players. I think, right now, we're doing well. Our players – if you're a recruit and you come around and watch our defensive players, you have to be excited. I know I am. They're young kids with great character. They love the game, and if I'm a recruit and I'm seeing that, I'm liking it."

Buckeyes Lock Down State's Top Offensive Tackle

Ohio State landed a commitment from one of the top-rated rising juniors in the state on June 26 when Richfield (Ohio) Revere four-star offensive tackle Ben Christman pledged his services to the Buckeyes.

The 6-6, 290-pound Christman is considered the ninth-best offensive tackle and No. 44 prospect in the class of 2021, as he earned third-team all-state honors after racking up more than 60 pancake blocks last season. He picked Ohio State over nearly two dozen offers from programs such as Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, LSU, Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Penn State, West Virginia and Wisconsin, among others.

Like most in-state kids, Christman grew up rooting for the Buckeyes, and an offer from offensive line coach Greg Studrawa in early February instantly put the program at the top of his list. He visited campus for the first time in March and then again on June 21 for the program's inaugural Bash & BBQ, which is when he decided Columbus was the place to be.

Christman is the fourth member of Ohio State's 2021 recruiting cycle, joining Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer, Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard and Philadelphia St. Joseph's four-star quarterback Kyle McCord. The Buckeyes now hold commitments from three of the top five in-state prospects in the class. And although it's still very early in the process, this haul gives Ohio State the top-ranked class in the Big Ten and third-best class in the country.

Simon Adds To Defensive Haul

Jersey City, N.J., St. Peter's Prep four-star linebacker Cody Simon committed to Ohio State on June 29. His announcement came just one week after he completed an official visit with the Buckeyes.

The 6-1, 218-pound Simons is considered the 10th-best outside linebacker and No. 154

30 Years Ago – 1989

After the Ohio State recruiting class of 1989 signed 23 players, head coach John Cooper placed an emphasis on the Buckeyes getting ahead once again for the 1990 cycle.

"It's an ongoing thing," Cooper said. "We had a good recruiting year this year, but that doesn't mean a thing for next year. Next year, we'll have to work even harder."

One of OSU's early targets was Euclid, Ohio, running back Robert Smith (6-2, 187), who turned heads as arguably the best available in-state prospect.

"I've been coaching for 24 years, and he's the best I've ever coached or seen," said Euclid head coach Tom Banc. "He's electrifying. He is the kind of kid you see once every 20 or 30 years."

As a junior in 1988, Smith took 177 carries for 1,564 yards (8.8 average) for the Panthers, who finished with a 9-1 record.

25 Years Ago – 1994

The final member of Ohio State's 1994 recruiting class was hoping to show that the Buckeyes saved the best for last before his summer arrival in Columbus.

A two-way signee at defensive back and wide receiver from Olympic Heights, Fla., Central McClellion (6-0, 180) embraced his opportunity at OSU, and his high school coach provided a ringing endorsement.

"He will probably become a factor for Ohio State by the end of August," Olympic Heights head coach Franks Kuns told BSB. "He's definitely a blue-chipper. He's also a good team player. He should help the Buckeyes right away."

20 Years Ago – 1999

Camp season attracted more than 2,400 players to Columbus in June and led Ohio State to four commitments for

its 2000 recruiting class.

The pledges included Stone Mountain, Ga., linebacker Jamal Muhammad (6-1, 230); Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne wide receiver John Hollins (6-2, 185); Dayton Colonel White running back Terry Pogue (6-2, 220); and Charleston (W.Va.) Capital linebacker Darrion Scott (6-3, 244).

"I thought Ohio State was a really good program, and I thought I could not go wrong with them," Muhammad said. "I like the coaches and everything."

15 Years Ago – 2004

On June 28, Brian Hartline jumped on his chance to join Ohio State's 2005 recruiting class, committing just two days after he camped June 26 and earned an offer June 27.

The 6-2, 174-pound wide receiver from Canton (Ohio) GlenOak was the sixth commitment and fifth Ohioan in the Buckeyes' class.

"At the very beginning of this process, I was thinking, 'I'm Ohio State's,'" Hartline told BSB. "Then the process started going a little bit more, and I started to think maybe it wasn't the place for me. But I went down to the camp and stayed with Dustin Fox, I got to work out in the facility for five days and I just decided that it was the place to be. The coaches are awesome, and I fit in really well there."

Hartline chose OSU over offers from Iowa, Michigan State, Pittsburgh, Stanford and Vanderbilt.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Ohio State broke a dry spell on the recruiting trail in late June and early July, securing three commitments.

The pledges included Wheaton (Ill.) North quarterback Taylor Graham (6-4, 211); Fort Wayne (Ind.) Paul Harding four-star running back Roderick Smith (6-2, 216); and

Chillicothe, Ohio, kicker Drew Basil.

The three newest members of the 2010 class brought the Buckeyes' count to eight.

Five Years Ago – 2014

Another big recruiting month loomed for Ohio State in July, with several top targets from the 2015 class set to decide.

Among the priority prospects on the Buckeyes' board was Cleveland Benedictine four-star linebacker Jerome Baker (6-1, 205), who had also been considering Florida, Florida State, Miami (Fla.), Michigan State, Notre Dame, Penn State and Tennessee.

Baker's choice was slated to follow decisions by Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star linebacker Justin Hilliard (6-1, 225) and St. Paul (Minn.) Cretin-Derham Hall four-star defensive end Jashon Cornell (6-3, 245), who were both set for decisions July 2.

One Year Ago – 2018

Ohio State caught fire on the recruiting trail in June, securing seven commitments spread across the classes of 2019 and '20.

The Buckeyes gained pledges from Buford, Ga., four-star center Harry Miller (6-4, 310); Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne three-star athlete Craig Young (6-4, 200); Oak Park, Mich., four-star quarterback Dwan Mathis (6-4, 197); and Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star safety Jordan Battle (6-1, 187) for the 2019 cycle.

OSU also added three top targets to its 2020 group in Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star defensive back Lejond Cavazos (6-0, 186), Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson (6-7, 285) and Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star quarterback Jack Miller (6-4, 210).

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5-Star CB Lists Ohio State Among Top Schools

Continued From Page 27

prospect overall in the class of 2020, recording 89 tackles, 14 tackles for loss, five sacks, four pass breakups, two fumble recoveries, one forced fumble and one pick-six for the Marauders last season.

Simon landed an offer from Ohio State in early May, so his recruitment went rather quickly. He chose the Buckeyes over finalists Nebraska, Penn State and Virginia, among a handful of other offers.

With his decision, Simon became the 14th member of Ohio State's 2020 recruiting class, joining the aforementioned Cavazos and Phillips on the defensive side of the ball.

Buckeyes Land State's Top Defensive Lineman

Less than two hours after Simon committed to Ohio State, Cincinnati Princeton four-star defensive tackle Darrion Henry pledged his services to the Buckeyes, too.

The 6-5, 275-pound Henry is considered the 11th-best defensive tackle and No. 121 prospect overall in the class of 2020. He recorded a team-high 61 tackles, 8½ sacks, three forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries for the Vikings last season. He picked Ohio State over finalists Cincinnati, Georgia, Kentucky, LSU and Tennessee.

Henry landed an offer from defensive line coach Larry Johnson during Junior Day in February 2018, and most assumed it was only a matter of time before he committed to the Buckeyes. Numerous trips to Columbus for games, practices and camps only furthered that train of thought, but Henry ultimately took his time with the process and made multiple visits with each of his finalists.

Much has been said over the last year about a potential package deal featuring Henry and two of his close friends and teammates, five-star

offensive tackle Paris Johnson Jr. and four-star linebacker Jaheim Thomas. And while Johnson has been committed to Ohio State since last summer, Henry and Thomas strongly resisted that notion throughout the process – the latter actually left the Buckeyes off his top schools list in early June.

Rather than play together at the next level, all three simply wanted to find the best place for themselves. It just so happened that Henry picked the same school as Johnson.

The 15th member of Ohio State's 2020 recruiting class, Henry's pledge bumped the Buckeyes up to fourth in the 247Sports Composite team rankings, while Simon's commitment earlier in the day helped Ohio State pass Michigan for the top-rated class in the Big Ten, but with five fewer commits.

Top-Rated Kicker Commits To Buckeyes

Fifteen days after he announced an offer May 20 from Ohio State, Jake Seibert jumped on his chance to join the Buckeyes' 2020 recruiting class June 4 when he announced his commitment.

The 6-1, 190-pounder from Cincinnati La Salle, the same high school as junior punter Drue Chrisman (6-3, 220), projects to become OSU's leg of the future behind junior kicker Blake Haubeil (6-3, 230).

According to Chris Sailer Kicking, Seibert is the No. 1 kicker in the nation for 2020.

"Jake is a special kicking talent," Seibert's evaluation read. "He is an amazing athlete with a big-time leg and natural ability. He hits a great ball off the ground on field goal. He has 60+ yard range and gets excellent lift on his ball. His kick-offs are D1 ready right now. Jake drives the ball deep into the end zone with 4.0+ hang time. He is a competitor that thrives under pressure. The sky is the limit here. Jake is a fine young man with a great attitude and work ethic."

Seibert racked up scholarships after he completed his junior season of high school, starting Feb. 19 when Temple offered. More came throughout the spring from Pennsylvania (March 16), Akron (April 6), Air Force (April 17), Michigan State (May 3), UCLA (May 8) and Ohio State. He officially visited the Bruins the weekend of May 10-12.

Seibert's recruitment kicked off under former special teams coordinator/cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson in 2018. He visited Nov. 3 for the Buckeyes' 36-31 win over Nebraska at Ohio Stadium. OSU continued its interest once Day took over in January and hired Matt Barnes as special teams coordinator.

Seibert returned to Columbus March 23 for the Buckeyes' Student Appreciation Day at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

Ohio State Among Ringo's Top Choices

Saguaro, Ariz., five-star cornerback Kelee Ringo included Ohio State among his top five schools alongside Alabama, Georgia, Oregon and Texas on June 27.

The 6-2, 205-pound Ringo is considered the top-rated cornerback and No. 9 overall prospect in the class of 2020. He recorded 31 tackles, one tackle for loss and one interception while leading the Sabercats to the state championship last season.

Ringo visited campus for the first and only time for the Buckeyes' 30-14 win over Minnesota last October. He has no timetable for a final decision but is expected to take an official visit to Columbus before making an announcement.

Ringo is among a quartet of top-rated prospects from Arizona whom Ohio State hopes to land. The Buckeyes already hold a pledge from Scottsdale Chaparral four-star quarterback Jack Miller, and they are also pursuing five-star running back Bijan Robinson and four-star safety Lathan Ransom, who both attend Tucson Salpointe Catholic.

That said, it's believed Ohio State trails both Georgia and Texas in its pursuit of Ringo at this time.

Official Visitors Flock To Ohio State

Ohio State's consecutive weekends of visitors brought big-time recruits in the 2020 class to Columbus, where the latter 48-hour window featured a different approach than past years.

The first weekend featured the aforementioned Robinson; Houston Cy Ridge four-star defensive tackle Vernon Broughton (6-5, 286); Duncanville, Texas, four-star safety Chris Thompson (6-2, 195); Charlotte (N.C.) Providence Day School four-star defensive tackle Jacobbe Cowan (6-5, 277); Baltimore St. Frances four-star running back Blake Corum (5-9, 180); Olney (Md.) Good Counsel three-star outside linebacker Mitchell Melton (6-3, 235); Wypler; and Hamilton as the official visitors.

The Buckeyes also hosted Brooklyn (N.Y.) Erasmus Hall 2020 three-star athlete target William "Apache" Mohan (6-1, 195); Virginia Beach (Va.) Princess Anne 2021 four-star cornerback target Tony Grimes (6-0, 180); Cornelius (N.C.) Williams Amos Hough 2021 four-star running back target Evan Pryor (5-10, 190); Hutto, Texas, four-star defensive end Landyn Watson (6-3, 240); and Westerville (Ohio) South 2022 athlete prospect Kaden Saunders (5-10, 155).

The following weekend was loaded with official visitors for 2020, including Henry; Ransom; Deerfield Beach, Fla., four-star running back Jaylan Knighton (5-9, 185); Charlotte

(N.C.) Providence Day School four-star defensive end Kedrick Bingley-Jones (6-4½, 266); Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco four-star outside linebacker Kourt Williams (6-1, 216); West Bloomfield, Mich., four-star safety Makari Paige (6-3, 182); Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic four-star running back Sam Adams (6-2, 200); Muskegon, Mich., three-star athlete Cameron Martinez (6-0, 195); Dedham (Mass.) Noble three-star tight end Cam Large (6-5, 240); Cincinnati Elder three-star tight end Joe Royer; Beech Grove, Ind., three-star interior offensive lineman Josh Fryar (6-5, 294); Paris Johnson; Phillips; and Toutant.

OSU additionally welcomed Christman; Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic 2020 four-star wide receiver commitment Gee Scott (6-2 ½, 207); Houston North Shore 2020 five-star running back Zachary Evans (5-11, 200); Katy (Texas) Tompkins 2021 four-star defensive end target Turnmise Adeleye (6-3, 260); Dublin (Ohio) Coffman 2021 four-star safety target A.J. Kirk (6-0, 200); West Bloomfield, Mich., 2021 four-star running back target Donovan Edwards (5-11, 190); and Pickerington (Ohio) Central 2021 four-star wide receiver target Lorenzo Styles (6-1, 170) among the unofficial visitors.

Rather than host Friday Night Lights, however, Ohio State went a different route and brought recruits to Ohio Stadium for its June 21 "Buckeye Bash and BBQ." Unlike Friday Night Lights, the annual camp held by the Buckeyes on the second-to-last Friday of every June, the event was closed to the media.

OSU may still conduct Friday Night Lights on another date. The camp could take place in July before the team begins fall camp, but logistic hurdles remain to be determined. Big Ten media days take place July 18-19 in Chicago and the program picks up practice shortly afterward.

Buckeyes End Camp Season With Offers

Despite no Friday Night Lights in June, Ohio State made use of the month with five days for camps, with the Buckeyes making new offers to recruits.

At its June 6 skills/big man camp, OSU offered Bowling Green, Ky., 2021 three-star tight end Jordan Dingle (6-4, 230), Kirk and Royer. Ohio State also offered Monroe (N.C.) Sun Valley 2021 three-star offensive tackle Michael Gonzalez (6-4, 280), who camped with high school teammate and fellow Buckeyes target in 2021 four-star wide receiver Gavin Blackwell (5-11½, 164).

OSU continued June 12-13 with its overnight fundamentals camp, a two-day event that hosted prospects in dorms. Ohio State offered a trio of 2021 campers in Cedar Rapids (Iowa) John F. Kennedy four-star offensive tackle Connor Colby (6-5, 270), Jacksonville (Fla.) Episcopal three-star tight end Nick Elksnis (6-5, 220) and Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy three-star tight end Christian Burkhalter (6-5, 215).

The Buckeyes then held their one-day position camp June 15, where they offered a handful of underclassmen. The group included Lexington (Ky.) Frederick Douglass 2021 three-star wide receiver Dekel Crowdus (5-10, 165); Cincinnati La Salle 2021 safety Jaylen Johnson (6-1, 205); Alexandria (Va.) Episcopal 2021 safety Bryce Steele (6-1, 195); Deerfield (Mass.) Academy 2021 tight end Bennett Pitcher (6-9, 250); and Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic 2022 quarterback Steve Angeli (6-3, 185).

OSU wrapped its camp slate for the month June 17 with a 7-on-7 tournament, but no offers were reported.

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ASK AN ANALYST

With Buckeye Grove's Marc Givler

Between camp offers and class commitments, June has historically been a big recruiting month for Ohio State. How much has camp season evolved over the years?

"In regards to camp season, it's just become important for them. I think they just find it so important to see kids in person. And I think they do a lot in the spring evaluation period now to try and get out and watch guys in person. But if you look at them, historically, there are very few kids – the vast majority of their class, they're guys that they were able to evaluate in person. So there's an emphasis to get them there. I think there's an emphasis to especially get guys, like the young guys, there. They want to see the next wave and get an early idea of what direction they want to go in '21 and maybe even in some cases '22, and then it's a good opportunity. During the season, there's only so much they can do. They're kind of focused on their own team. So it's an important evaluation. Film only tells you so much at the high school level because of the different competition levels, depending on where a kid's from. So they really do put an emphasis on this.

"(The 7-on-7 camp on June 17) was new. For me, it's more of a thing where, with the 7-on-7, you're seeing maybe a little bit more. Not that 7-on-7 is real football, but you get a little bit better of a feel for more of the skill guys in a 7-on-7 setting than maybe a 1-on-1 drill. I think it's good for the relationships with high school coaches. You're inviting teams at that point, and it's good to build relationships with the high school coaches, especially in Ohio, and have a nice little event for them.

"The one-day camps (on June 6 and 15) have always been a big thing for them. Before that, it was a little bit different. Really, it's about spreading out. You get 'X' amount of camp days that you're allowed. You're spreading them out to get the most opportunities as possible for kids, especially out of state, to get up on a camp day.

If you have a camp that day, even if it's for the overnight camp (on June 12 and 13), a lot of those kids didn't stay overnight, but they camped the first day and were allowed to work out. So it's really about just to spread out the dates, give enough dates and big of a window for guys to come in and the staff can look at them. Really,

that's the strategy."

One of Ohio State's commitments last month came from Warren (Mich.) De La Salle 2020 four-star offensive tackle Grant Toutant (6-7, 320), who surprisingly flipped June 9 from Penn State.

What went into Toutant's decision, how much does it help OSU head coach Ryan Day and did it lead to a domino effect for PSU head coach James Franklin, who subsequently lost two more commitments – the Fort Washington (Md.) National Christian Academy 2020 four-star duo of offensive guard Aaryn Parks (6-4, 320) and cornerback Joshuah Moten (5-11, 165) – in the next four days?

"They've been on Grant for probably six months. I know Ryan Day and (co-defensive coordinator and area recruiter) Greg Mattison went up there, I think in January, and they offered him. They just kept plugging away. From my understanding, it's simply that he did make a couple visits that went unpublicized. I don't think he misled Penn State. I think they were aware of these visits.

"I just think he didn't publicize them, just to maybe not embarrass Penn State or whatever. It just feels, to me, from everyone I've talked to, that he just felt very comfortable with the rest of the class at Ohio State and there was just a good bond there with the players and that was kind of that.

"It's a little bit closer to home and Ohio State needs tackles. They have a little bit of a shortage there. They have (Cincinnati Princeton 2020 five-star) Paris Johnson (6-7½, 295), but a lot of these other guys are probably guards. All those things factor in. It puts Ohio State in position where there's one offensive line spot left, probably. (Beech Grove, Ind., 2020 three-star target) Josh Fryar (6-5, 294) came in (the weekend of June 21-23) and that's an interesting one. I think that's probably their top remaining guy, in terms of realistic targets.

"With Penn State, I think it's more of a cumulative thing. They've lost three or four guys now – not more than a day or two after Toutant left. Parks is a really good player. So Penn State's got some issues there with attrition and things like that, so it's definitely – between

Toutant and Parks – a big loss for them.

Ohio State's now going to try to find a sixth guy. Hitting the number is important, too. They didn't hit the number (of offensive linemen) they wanted last year (for 2019) and they didn't hit the number the year before (for 2018), so that is a shortage. But it looks like they're in good shape to get the sixth that they want."

Ohio State has just about filled its needs for 2020 along the offensive line, but the Buckeyes have only five defensive commitments in the class with Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star cornerback Lejond Cavazos; La Habra, Calif., four-star cornerback Clark Phillips; Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep four-star linebacker Cody Simon; Cincinnati Princeton four-star defensive tackle Darrion Henry; and Pickerington (Ohio) Central three-star end Ty Hamilton.

How does OSU build momentum on that side of the ball with four new assistant coaches – Mattison, co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley, special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes and linebackers coach Al Washington – coming aboard?

"I think the floodgates are about to open here. Certainly, maybe the next 6-8 weeks – we're talking the rest of the summer here – I do think they're going to be in much better shape on defense. I don't think it's going to be much longer. They've had a chance to get the new coaches up to speed, those guys have been able to go out in April and May and evaluate a lot of the targets and form their board.

"You're talking about a guy like Jeff Hafley, he wouldn't have known who his top guys were. There's only so much to study on film, especially with the defensive backs. A lot of kids aren't getting thrown at. So you want to go out, take your opportunities in April and May and watch these guys in person, and then you can start to figure out, 'OK, this is my guy,' or, 'Maybe this guy was a top guy for the previous defensive staff, but he doesn't fit what I want to do.' So all of those things have kind of come to a head now as they get to their visits.

"Like I said, I think, gosh, I can see five or six defensive commitments between now and Aug. 1."

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OSU Opens State-Of-The-Art Covelli Center

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Covelli Center officially opened and will serve as the new home for the Ohio State wrestling, gymnastics, fencing and volleyball teams.

Adjacent to Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium on Ohio State's athletic campus, the state-of-the-art facility extends more than 100,000 square feet and includes locker rooms, training and treatment areas, coaches' offices and more.

With a capacity of 3,700, the Covelli Center will host home matches for the wrestling squad and both volleyball teams, as well as gymnastics and fencing. Additionally, the venue will occasionally host women's basketball games as well as local camps and tournaments.

Attached to the Covelli Center is the Jennings Family Wrestling Practice Facility, which features five practice mats and areas for weightlifting and cardio. The wrestling team will train in Jennings, while the volleyball teams will train in Covelli. Gymnastics and fencing will continue to train at the Steelwood Athletic Training Facility.

Ohio State welcomed media members on a tour of the new facilities June 3, just two weeks after the coaches and student-athletes were introduced to their new home.

Head wrestling coach Tom Ryan expressed his gratitude toward the administration and the generous donors who made the long-term project a reality.

"I love the sport of wrestling, I love the people in the sport of wrestling, I love my



OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

BRAND NEW DIGS – The Covelli Center features 3,700 seats and will be home to the Ohio State fencing, gymnastics, volleyball and wrestling programs.

team, I love the wrestling community, and this is the world's finest wrestling complex ever built," Ryan said.

Geoff Carlston, who is entering his 12th season as the head women's volleyball coach, also emphasized his gratitude, which is one of the pillars of his program.

"When you walk into a place like

Covelli, it's really easy – almost impossible – not to be grateful," Carlston said. "For us, we couldn't be more excited to be able to get in here and play in front of thousands of people come fall."

The women's volleyball team had a rough end to its season, dropping 12 straight contests and finishing 12-20 over-

all. Perhaps a fresh start in a new home is what the Buckeyes needed.

"It's humbling," Carlston said. "It's also inspiring, and the expectations are there."

The men's volleyball squad has famil-

Continued On Page 32

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New Facility Will Help Buckeyes' Recruiting Efforts

Continued From Page 30

arity with high expectations as well. After winning back-to-back national championships in 2016 and 2017, the men's volleyball program came up short in 2018 and struggled through an injury-riddled 10-19 season in 2018-19.

Hall of Fame coach Pete Hanson retired in April, opening the door to his former assistant coach Kevin Burch to begin his head-coaching tenure in the new facility.

"I'm starting off my first year as head coach in the best facility for a men's volleyball program in the country," Burch said. "To be in a place like this, it was so well thought out, from everything from the service space to the practice courts, to the amount of cameras, and the technology that we have in here is second to none. And we have a ton of gratitude."

The technology Burch alluded to will benefit all of the athletic programs who use the facilities. The cameras send footage directly to the film room – which could be mistaken for a mini movie theater – giving the student-athletes and coaches immediate access for film evaluation.

Expanding beyond sport performance, the Covelli Center features lounge areas for the student-athletes to relax, play video games and do homework.

During the construction of the facilities, Ryan spent a lot of time setting up and familiarizing himself with both the Covelli Center and Jennings Family Wrestling Practice Facility. Carlston and the women's volleyball team, on the other hand, wanted to experience everything with fresh eyes.

"Our players went almost two months not being on social media," Carlston said. "They didn't want to see any posts about this place, they didn't want to see any pictures about this place, because they wanted to be surprised. And so when we had that reveal last week, it was really neat. And we had a lot of tears and a lot of hugs."



OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

BRAND-NEW DIGS – The Covelli Center has various configurations specifically designed for each competition. That includes a removable wrestling mat, as shown above.

Carlston expressed his excitement for the future of the women's volleyball team, with the world-class facility serving as a premier recruiting tool.

"We have a top-five recruiting class coming in that was built on the dream that is now a reality," Carlston said. "And so our freshmen are coming in here, they were the first group that knew the ground has been broken, it's actually happening. We were able to bring in an amazing group this year based off of this from all over the country."

The new facilities will help each of the coaches in recruiting, with the amenities attracting top-tier student-athletes to Ohio State. Ryan compared the high quality of the wrestling team's new home to some

of the high schools that his recruits come from.

"Often they're from the school that the wrestling room was the music room, and you pushed the piano to the side, and you rolled out some mats and you have practice," Ryan said. "And after practice, you rolled the mats up and you put the pianos back in place."

"I started wrestling as a seventh-grader in 1982. I have been in the wrestling room pretty much every day of my life since that time. And I have never been in a wrestling room with a single window, not one window. So, this place has 14-foot windows, 75 yards of them, so I'm in heaven – and they face the East."

After leading the wrestling team to

a national title in 2015, Ryan coached his squad to a third-place finish and three consecutive second-place finishes at the NCAA championships. Under his tutelage, Ohio State wrestling is a powerhouse program.

What may have seemed like a pipe dream 10 years ago became a reality for Ryan and the Buckeyes with the construction of the new facilities.

"When was the right time for a place like this? It was always the right time for student-athletes to be in a place that is as cool as they are," Ryan said, "and as special as the lives that many of them live. So, it was always the right time, but it took the leadership of this current administration."

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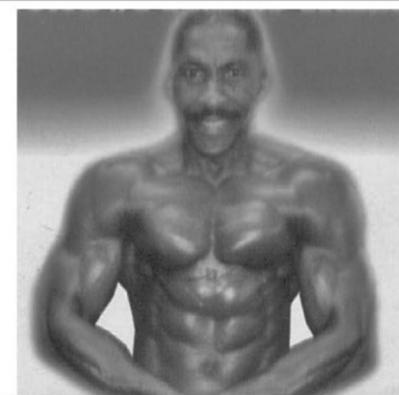
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Holtmann, Buckeyes Ready For Challenging Schedule

"Time and John Havlicek never stood still" was the saying a long, long while back.

Havlicek, the former Ohio State and Boston Celtics great who died April 25 at the age of 79, was a picture of perpetual motion in his Hall of Fame career.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

So it is with the ever-changing sport landscape. That notion came to mind when recalling the words of Ohio State men's basketball coach Chris Holtmann the afternoon of June 5 when discussing what is shaping up to be a challenging 2019-20 nonconference schedule for the Buckeyes.

"I had one of our staff guys say to me – we were talking about who to scrimmage – and he said, 'We may as well scrimmage the Warriors, given our schedule,'" he said, drawing laughs.

That was even before the announcement the following day of whom the Buckeyes would be playing in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

He spoke hours before Game 3 of the NBA finals in which the best-of-seven series between the Golden State Warriors and Toronto Raptors was tied 1-1. It seemed inevitable that the Warriors – despite damaging injuries to stars Kevin Durant and Klay Thompson and key reserve Kevon Looney – would continue their dynasty by winning their fourth championship in five seasons.

Obviously, that didn't happen as Toronto finished off Golden State in six games to win its first title.

So, should it be Raptors or Warriors for the scrimmage? In either case, Holtmann's joke took on new meaning June 6 when it was revealed that OSU would play North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C., on Dec. 4.

The Tar Heels, as is usually the case, are projected to be a top-10 team and join an already robust schedule.

OSU will host Cincinnati in Value City Arena on a date to be determined in what likely will be the season opener. Then there's the Nov. 13 home game vs. 2016 and '18 national champion Villanova in the Gavitt Tipoff Games.

The Buckeyes also play Kentucky at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas on Dec. 21 in the CBS Sports Challenge, and West Virginia on Dec. 29 at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse (formerly Quicken Loans Arena) in the inaugural Cleveland Classic. The two Wildcats – Kentucky and Villanova – should be highly ranked in the preseason polls, and West Virginia under coach Bob Huggins is usually competitive, although the Mountaineers' 15-21 record last season was Huggins' first below .500 season since 2012-13 (13-19).

Holtmann said at the June 5 press conference that he has almost full say, "100 percent pretty much" in the scheduling and he wants the Buckeyes to be tested going into the conference slate.

"I thought last year's was going to be a harder nonconference (schedule)," he said. "It just so happened that we played some teams that maybe didn't quite have the years that we thought they would. But I would like a harder, more challenging nonconference. I would."

OSU last played the Tar Heels on Nov.

29, 2006, when the No. 3 Buckeyes, in the only season for freshmen Mike Conley and Greg Oden (who was injured and did not play against UNC), lost to No. 7 North Carolina 98-89. Ohio State would finish 35-4 and lose in the Final Four title game to Florida.

The Heels are 12-2 against Ohio State, winning the last seven times.

The Buckeyes are 7-11 in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge with five straight losses since beating visiting Maryland 76-60 on Dec. 4, 2013.

Of note, OSU calls the interconference series the Big Ten/ACC Challenge. North Carolina, naturally, favors the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

No Three-Peat

Continuing the change theme, the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel announced June 5 it approved moving the three-point line to the international distance of 22 feet, 1¾ inches in men's basketball. The previous line was 20-9.

It will be implemented for Division I for the 2019-20 season and the following season for Divisions II and III.

Teams were making 35.2 percent of their shots beyond the arc in the 2018-19 season. The deeper line was used as an experiment in the 2019 National Invitational Tournament, and teams hit 33 percent.

The new marking can be a blessing or a curse for the Buckeyes depending on if they can improve their long-distance shooting from 34.1 percent to rank 198th nationally last season. If the Buckeyes can adapt, in theory there will be more room for junior post Kaleb Wesson to operate near the hoop.

"Definitely floor spacing is a big thing, but for it to be a big thing, you've got to hit shots," said Wesson's brother, senior forward Andre Wesson. "It can definitely space the floor, but it can also shrink the floor on (Kaleb) real quick if we're not hitting shots."

The top returning three-point shooter is sophomore Justin Ahrens at 38.8 percent (19 of 49).

By the way, the NBA line is 23-9. The corners are 22 feet.

On The Move

Former Ohio State point guard Mike Conley is reportedly on the move after he was traded from the Memphis Grizzlies to the Utah Jazz on June 19. The deal is expected to become official with a new league year on July 6.

The Grizzlies – who selected Murray State point guard Ja Morant with the No. 2 overall pick in the June 20 NBA draft – will receive a package of forwards Grayson Allen, Kyle Korver and Jae Crowder, the rights to draft pick Darius Bazely (who was promptly traded to the Oklahoma City Thunder in exchange for an earlier selection) and a future first-round pick in exchange for Conley.

The No. 4 overall pick in the 2007 NBA draft, the 31-year-old Conley leaves Memphis as the Grizzlies' all-time leader in games (788), points (11,733), assists (4,509) and steals (1,161). He also led the team to seven playoff appearances in 12 seasons, including a berth in the Western Conference Finals in 2012-13.

Another Buckeye reportedly set to be on the move was Evan Turner going from the Portland Trailblazers to Atlanta for Kent Bazemore on June 24.

Turner, 30, averaged 6.8 points, 4.5 rebounds and 3.9 assists, mainly off the bench in 2018-19. He left OSU a season early for the NBA after leading the Big Ten in scoring and winning numerous national player of year awards in

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commits

Players in the class of 2021 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Kalen Etzler	PF	6-8	195	★★★★	Convoy (Ohio) Crestview

2010, including the Wooden and Naismith.

Former Ohio State point guard D'Angelo Russell was set to hit free agency on June 30, but has reportedly agreed to a sign-and-trade deal that will send him from the Brooklyn Nets to the Golden State Warriors.

The news came just hours after the Nets reportedly agreed to terms with the aforementioned Durant and former Boston Celtics point guard Kyrie Irving.

Russell is coming off an all-star season in which he averaged a career-best 21.1 points, 7.0 assists and 3.9 rebounds per game. Now he joins a team with five straight NBA Finals appearances.

On The Trail

Keon Johnson, the No. 5 shooting guard in the 247Sports composite for the class of 2020, made an official visit to Ohio State the weekend of June 27-29.

Johnson (6-5, 180) is a four-star prospect from The Webb School in Bell Buckle, Tenn., who will choose between Tennessee (considered the front-runner), the Buckeyes and Virginia on Aug. 6 according to his Twitter account. He 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 Tennessean's Boys Basketball Player of the Year on May 31.

The Buckeyes have one opening for

the 2020 class, and it has yet to be filled. However, the number of available scholarships is always subject to change. Trying to project the number of spots beyond next year is tough as well, but Holtmann already has a May 12 verbal commitment from four-star Convoy (Ohio) Crestview junior forward Kalen Etzler (6-8, 195) for 2021.

OSU hosted an unofficial visit for 2020 Fairmont (W.Va.) forward Jalen Bridges (6-7, 180) on June 28. He is the 80th ranked player nationally, third in the state. Pittsburgh, Xavier and West Virginia are early favorites for him.

Later that day he posted on Twitter: "Beyond blessed to have received an offer from The Ohio State University after an amazing visit today!!"

On June 26, class of 2021 forward J.R. Konieczny (6-6, 170) of South Bend (Ind.) St. Joseph's came to Columbus for an unofficial visit. He is not ranked by 247Sports. Bradley, Butler and Iowa are among those who offered, and he's taken an unofficial visit to Indiana.

He is friends with 2021 center Logan Duncomb (6-9, 215), who was offered by the Buckeyes on June 7. Duncomb averaged 7.7 points and 4.1 rebounds when Cincinnati Moeller won the Division I state title in March. The hometown Cincinnati Bearcats and Xavier Musketeers have also shown interest in him.

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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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| June 24 | July 23 | August 6 | August 19 | |

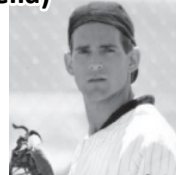
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|---------|---------|-----------|------------|
| May 25 | June 8 | June 22 | July 4-5-6 |
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Former Buckeyes Compete In Basketball Tournament

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

After falling short of the \$2 million prize the last two summers, several Ohio State alumni will return to the hardwood later this month to participate in the annual The Basketball Tournament, a single-elimination, five-on-five tournament that features dozens of former NBA and college basketball players.

Carmen's Crew – previously named Scarlet & Gray – will serve as the host of one of eight regionals. The games will take place July 19-21 at Capital University in Bexley, Ohio.

The Columbus Regional will also include Big X, another TBT team featuring several former Buckeyes.

"Having The Basketball Tournament in Columbus last year was unbelievable," said Scoonie Penn, Ohio State director of player personnel and Carmen's Crew head coach. "It was surreal to see the amount of support the tournament received while here. Columbus is a city that embraces basketball, especially when Buckeyes are involved. Having the tournament back in Columbus this year, I'm sure, will be even better and something the community is eager to experience."

Guards Aaron Craft (2010-14) and Lenzelle Smith Jr. (2010-14) and forwards David Lighty (2006-11), Jon Diebler (2007-11), Deshaun Thomas

(2010-13) and Evan Ravenel (2011-13) are among the former Ohio State basketball players suiting up for Carmen's Crew, while guards C.J. Jackson (2016-19) and Keyshawn Woods (2018-19) and forward Jae'Sean Tate (2014-18) will team up on Big X with former guard and student assistant Andrew Dakich (2017-18), who will serve as their head coach.

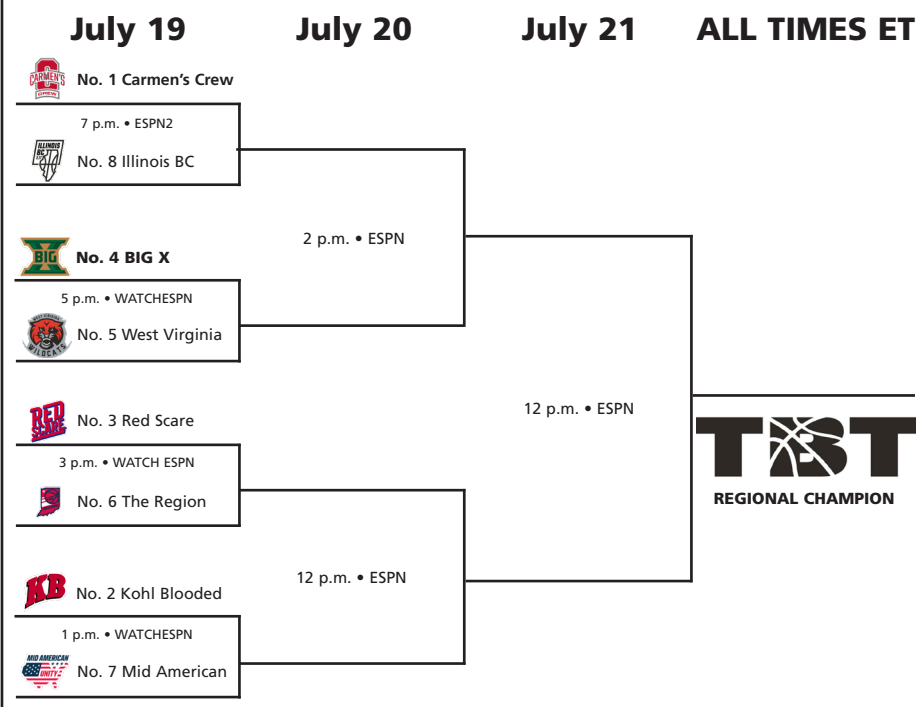
Though they participated in the last two tournaments, forwards William Buford (2008-12) and Jared Sullinger (2010-12) were not listed on the initial roster for Carmen's Crew for this year's event. Portland Trail Blazers forward Evan Turner (2007-10) will return as an assistant for the team, though.

To make things even more interesting, the No. 2 seed in the Columbus Regional will be made up of several former Wisconsin Badgers. Kohl Blooded – aptly named after Wisconsin's basketball and ice hockey arena – features Badger alumni Vitto Brown and Nigel Hayes, among others.

The Columbus Regional tips off Friday, July 19, as Big X takes on the West Virginia Wildcats at 5 p.m. and Carmen's Crew battles Illinois BC at the conclusion of the first game. Both games will be broadcast live on the ESPN family of networks.

Big X and Carmen's Crew could play against one another on Saturday, July 20, at 12 p.m. provided both teams win the opener. The winner of that will then

The Basketball Tournament July 19-21, 2019 • Capital University • Bexley, Ohio



compete in the Columbus Regional Championship, which is set for Sunday, July 21, at 12 p.m., with a chance to head to Chicago for The Basketball Tournament's Super 16.

The Super 16, quarterfinals, semifinals and championship game will be held Aug. 1-6 at Wintrust Arena at McCormick Square, home to the DePaul men's and women's basketball programs.

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BIG TEN NOTES

Warren To Lead Big Ten

The Big Ten on June 4 announced that Kevin Warren, the chief operating officer of the NFL's Minnesota Vikings, will become the conference's sixth commissioner. He will begin on Sept. 19 and work alongside commissioner Jim Delany, who will officially retire on Jan. 1, 2020, after a 30-year career with the conference.

"I am absolutely honored to become the sixth commissioner of the Big Ten, a con-

ference with such rich history, tradition and respect," Warren said. "The opportunity is an incredible and unique blend of my lifelong passion, commitment and experience. Positively impacting the lives of young adults has always been part of the fabric of my family, and I will work tirelessly with our member schools to ensure that we are providing every possible best-in-class resource to enhance our students' educational and athletic experience, as well as empower them for success upon graduation."

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

The 55-year-old Warren is the highest-ranking African-American executive in the NFL and first African-American COO in league history. Under his leadership, the Vikings built a state-of-the-art stadium and team headquarters.

"We were all impressed with Kevin's broad experience, his extraordinary level of commitment and his vision for our collective future," said Michael V. Drake, president of The Ohio State University and a member of the executive search committee. "This is an important moment for our conference and for intercollegiate athletics. Kevin is the right person at the right time to lead us forward."

"I am absolutely honored to become the sixth commissioner of the Big Ten, a conference with such rich history, tradition and respect," Warren said. "The opportunity is an incredible and unique blend of my lifelong passion, commitment and experience. Positively impacting the lives of young adults has always been part of the fabric of my family, and I will work tirelessly with our member schools to ensure that we are providing every possible best-in-class resource to enhance our students' educational and athletic experience, as well as empower them for success upon graduation."

Six B1G Players Selected In NBA Draft

The Big Ten was well-represented in the 2019 NBA draft, with six players from the conference selected. Nine other men's basketball players were added to NBA Summer League rosters as undrafted free agents.

Indiana guard Romeo Langford came off the board first among the Big Ten prospects in the draft when the Boston Celtics took him at No. 14. Langford averaged 16.5 points, 5.4 rebounds and 2.3 assists as a true freshman for the Hoosiers. He will likely miss the summer league while recovering from surgery on his thumb, an injury he played through at Indiana.

The Golden State Warriors selected Michigan guard Jordan Poole at No. 28. As a sophomore, Poole averaged 12.8 points, 3.0 rebounds and 2.2 assists per game.

The Celtics took the 2018-19 Big Ten leading scorer Carsen Edwards with the third pick of the second round (No. 33). A second-team All-American at Purdue, Edwards averaged 24.3 points, 3.6 rebounds, 2.9 assists and 1.3 steals as a junior.

Following Edwards, the Philadelphia 76ers drafted Maryland center Bruno Fernando with the fourth pick of the second round (No. 34). A native of Luanda, Angola, Fernando averaged 13.6 points, 10.6 rebounds, 2.0 assists and 1.9 blocks per game as a sophomore for the Terrapins.

Nebraska forward Isaiah Roby was selected No. 45 overall by the Dallas Mavericks. Roby averaged 11.8 points, 6.9 rebounds and 1.9 assists per game. Known for his defense,

Roby added 1.9 blocks and 1.3 steals per contest for the Cornhuskers.

The New York Knicks drafted Michigan forward Ignas Brazdeikis No. 47 overall, following his one season for the Wolverines. Brazdeikis averaged 14.8 points and 5.4 rebounds as a true freshman, shooting 46.2 percent from the field and 39.2 percent from three-point range.

The Chicago Bulls signed Wisconsin forward Ethan Happ as an undrafted free agent, while the Los Angeles Clippers added Minnesota guard Amir Coffey. Michigan State forward Nick Ward went to the Atlanta Hawks, and Indiana forward Juwan Morgan signed with the Utah Jazz. The Orlando Magic brought in Northwestern guard Vic Law, the Mavericks added Penn State guard Josh Reaves and the Denver Nuggets signed Iowa guard Tyler Cook. The Detroit Pistons acquired Michigan State guard Matt McQuaid, and the Minnesota Timberwolves added Minnesota forward Jordan Murphy.

Minnesota Wrestlers Remain Suspended

Two Minnesota wrestlers, Gable Steveson and Dylan Martinez, who were arrested on suspicion of criminal sexual conduct will remain suspended from team activity due to the school's student-athlete code of conduct while authorities continue to investigate, according to The Associated Press.

The Hennepin County attorney's office said June 17 that an investigation of Steveson and Martinez is ongoing, but "no charges can be brought at this time." The office faced a noon deadline for a charging decision.

The University of Minnesota athletic department issued a statement saying the athletes will remain suspended while the criminal investigation proceeds.

Martinez and Steveson, who is one of the top heavyweights in the country and an aspiring Olympian, were arrested in an alleged incident early June 15, but a police report gave few details of the allegations.

Attorney Christa Groshek said Steveson denies the allegations, while Martinez does not have an attorney who could comment on his behalf to her knowledge. Groshek said Steveson was surprised when he was arrested and cooperated with police.

Steveson and Martinez were released June 18, after having been arrested the night of June 15. Groshek said she still has little information because the investigation is ongoing.

Michigan State Basketball Players Cleared In Rape Case

Michigan State University announced on July 1 that three unnamed former basketball players have been cleared of wrongdoing in connection with allegations that they raped a female student in 2015, one week after the Spartans lost to Duke in the Final Four.

Bailey Kowalski alleged the players took her home from an East Lansing, Michigan, bar the evening of April 11, 2015, and took turns raping her in a bedroom. She never reported the alleged sexual assault to police but alerted a counselor at the Michigan State Counseling Center. She claims the counselor implied it would not be in her "best interest to report the incident to law enforcement."

Michigan State launched a Title IX investigation and did not find violations of university policy. School investigators questioned Kowalski's credibility because she misidentified one of the players she said took part in the alleged assault while the two other players said the sex was consensual.

Good Chance Day Goes Undefeated In First Year

If history tells us anything, there's a 50-50 chance that Ohio State will go undefeated this season. At least that's how it's gone in the post-Woody Hayes era under new Buckeye coaches.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

Earle Bruce, longtime fans will recall, directed the Buckeyes to an 11-0 regular season during his first season in 1979 before a one-point loss with the national championship on the line against Charles White and the USC Trojans.

Then there was the inaugural season of Urban Meyer in 2012. OSU went 12-0 – a season ended prematurely because the Buckeyes were on probation and prohibited from post-season play.

Those were two pretty good seasons, coming off mediocre years by Buckeye standards.

The Buckeyes were 7-4-1 in 1978, the last season for Hayes. Those four losses were more than any Buckeye team had since a 6-4 record in 1971.

And in 2011, the year before Meyer, Ohio State went 6-7 under interim coach Luke Fickell.

The 2011 team had the first losing record for an OSU team since 1988, which brings up another point related to rookie coaches.

Meyer and Bruce had undefeated regular seasons in their first years at Ohio State. The other two recent Buckeye coaches did not get off to such swell starts.

The 1988 team with the losing record noted earlier (4-6-1) was the first of John Cooper's 13 teams at Ohio State. And the record that season was the worst of his 13 years.

Things didn't immediately improve when Jim Tressel took over for Cooper, starting in 2001. Tressel's first team was just 7-5. (Of course, year two was much better for Tressel. He won a national championship with a 14-0 record.)

So, four times the Buckeyes have hired new full-time coaches since the 1978 firing of Woody Hayes. Including postseason play, OSU was 23-1 under Meyer and Bruce, and 11-11-1 under Tressel and Cooper in their first seasons.

Safe to say, expectations for all four were high at the time.

Expectations For Ryan Day

I expect Ryan Day's first team to win the Big Ten championship and advance to the playoffs. Is that a prediction with overwhelming confidence? No. But it's a reasonable prediction.

At the very least, OSU should contend for the Big Ten title, and contending for the Big Ten title means contending for a

spot in the playoffs.

What's different about Day's roster than those of first-year coaches Bruce, Cooper, Tressel and Meyer is that Ohio State is loaded beyond previous standards – the product of year upon year of outstanding recruiting and development under Meyer. Ohio State never lost more than two games in a season under Meyer. His coaching has a lot to do with that. So do the players on the roster.

Combine that with the fact that Day showed he was capable of leading Ohio State in tough situations while filling in for Meyer last season.

TCU didn't turn out to have a great season (7-6), but that was a pressure cooker in Dallas on Sept. 15, when Ohio State rallied under Day to beat No. 15 TCU, 40-28.

In three games under Day – against Oregon State, Rutgers and TCU – Ohio State outscored its opponents 176-62, setting the stage for what would go on to be a 13-1 season.

Day has the talent at key positions for another run at a playoff invitation this season. There's the quarterback – Justin Fields, inexperienced but much ballyhooed and the hand-picked transfer to be Day's first QB. There's a running back, J.K. Dobbins, who rushed for 1,000-plus yards in each of his first two seasons at Ohio State. There's depth and talent at receiver.

And the defense, one would presume, can only get better after ranking 59th nationally for points allowed, 72nd for yards allowed and 113th in the red zone among 129 teams, according to the NCAA.

Favorable Schedule

Plus, there's no marquee nonconference opponent on the schedule this year.

Cincinnati, highly regarded for a mid-major school, could pose a trap game on Sept. 7. Otherwise, Florida Atlantic and Miami of Ohio make up the rest of the nonconference schedule. All three games are at home.

There are dangers, of course, in the Big Ten. Remember Purdue last season? But that's any year. Among the biggest threats are trips to Nebraska, Northwestern and Michigan. At home, beware of Michigan State, Wisconsin and Penn State.

Ohio State likely will be favored in every game until possibly against Michigan on Nov. 30.

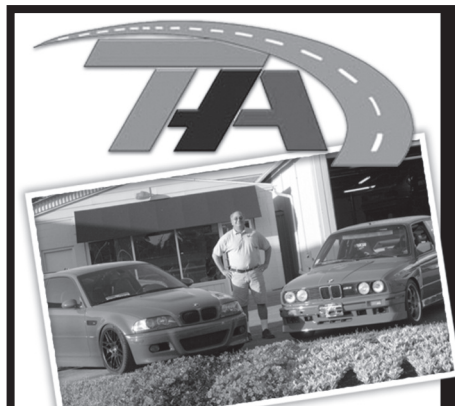
Having said all this, however, look out for Day critics if Cincinnati, Nebraska or Michigan State pulls an early-season upset.

Money Ball

Ex-Buckeye basketball player D'Angelo Russell is about to join one of the highest-profile teams in the NBA and receive a huge new contract – a reported \$117 million over four years. Not bad for a guy who has yet to average more than 21.1 points a game.

After one season at Ohio State, Russell was the second pick in the 2015 NBA draft by the Los Angeles Lakers, who shipped him to the Brooklyn Nets before the start of the 2017-18 season. Now the Nets are trading Russell to the Golden State Warriors.

Russell's career averages in four seasons: 16.5 points, 5.1 assists and 3.7 rebounds while shooting just under 42 percent from the field.



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Interview Issue Provides Trip Down Memory Lane

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

I have never made it a secret that I love our annual Interview Issue. Every year our staff finds an eclectic bunch of people associated with Ohio State athletics, always led by athletic director Gene Smith, who is kind enough to take time out from his busy schedule to give us a “state of the department,” as well as his thoughts on a variety of other topics.

The Interview Issue is unfiltered. True, the staff comes up with the questions, but we don’t selectively choose the quotes to be used. It is the subject in his or her own words. I enjoy reading the interviews because it’s not like you are reading a story about a game that we have all seen. I am as entertained and surprised by the answers as I hope the readers are.

First and foremost, I am so thrilled that Garrett Stepien had a chance to speak with former Ohio State athletic administrator Phyllis Bailey. We have been trying for a year to get Phyllis, who has been quite kind to me through the years and I consider a friend. It’s not just anyone whom you can call a pioneer and I am sure she would be uncomfortable with me calling her such, so I will let another one of our interview subjects, Hall of Fame coach Tara VanDerveer, speak of the now 93-year-old Bailey, once her boss:

“She was one of the leaders of women’s athletics,” VanDerveer said. “She’s a great representative of Ohio State. She was a wonderful, wonderful boss. She was wonderful to work for. She’s very intelligent, very hardworking. I think she had a difficult time because there was a lot of sexism. There’s no other way to put it. She had to deal with a lot of negative attitudes towards women in sports. She had to fight tooth and nail for everything, for every penny to help women to be able to play. We didn’t fly all over the place. In fact, we drove more. But she fought for things for women. She’s a warrior for women’s sports. She’s a wonderful, wonderful person, and I’m so glad our lives crossed.”

I will always hold a special place for VanDerveer. She got the head coaching job at Ohio State right around the time I started Buckeye Sports Bulletin. I felt like we were growing up in our respective professions at the same time. Of course she is in the basketball Hall of Fame, and I am still bumbling around at BSB.

That Hall-of-Fame career may have come as a surprise to her father. As a youth, VanDerveer would spend hours by herself practicing basketball.

“He just didn’t see any future in basketball,” she said of her dad, “so he would call me in and tell me, ‘Come in and do your algebra homework. Basketball is never going to take you anywhere.’ And I was like, ‘Uh, algebra’s never going to take me anywhere.’”

“I had been all over the world because of basketball, so I sent him postcards, like, ‘P.S., I’m in Russia. P.S., I’m in China. P.S., I’m in Australia.’”

I love stories about people and their parents, especially when you know that they are proud parents.

The thing that comes through in the VanDerveer interview is her love for Ohio State, even though she is more than 30 years removed from Columbus and has become an institution at one of the premier universities in the world.

She has coached some of the greatest women’s basketball players in history, including Olympians, yet still touts the ability of her players at Ohio State. But in a true note of humility, VanDerveer acknowledges that those Buckeyes might have been even better if they had been coached by the VanDerveer of today.

“Oh, they were just terrific athletes,” she said of her Buckeyes. “Terrific people. And I coached Olympians. Tracey Hall, Francine (Lewis), Carla Chapman, Yvette Angel, Jodi Roth – they could play with anybody. And in some ways, I think I would be better for them now because I feel like I’ve learned a lot more. But I loved coaching them. Toni Roesch, Teresa Bush – all of them. Every one of them, the whole team. They were great, great young women.”

I usually suggest questions to our writers before their interviews, and it was my question to ask the coach about a prep game that pitted No. 2 Mansfield (Ohio) Malabar’s Lewis, dubbed “Francine the Machine,” and 6-6 Georgeann Wells of Columbus Northland in the winter of 1982. I knew VanDerveer was there because I was there. It was a really big deal, and I maintain it was the game that put girls basketball on the map in Ohio – the top two teams in the state, one led by a great player with the great nickname, the other led by a girl 6-6 tall and talented. Malabar won 66-54. Lewis had 34 points and 20 rebounds, while Wells had 16 points and nine off the boards.

Of course I was looking at the game as a newspaper man. VanDerveer looked at that game like a coach and pointed to another game played at around the same time, instead.

“The game I really remember is Francine’s team playing Jodi Roth’s team (Shelby, Ohio), because they both came to Ohio State,” she said when asked about the Lewis-Wells matchup. “The gym was electric and Francine was a senior, I think Jodi was a junior. It was basketball at the highest level. Francine was a magician. They called her Francine the Machine. She was awesome. Jodi Roth is a cerebral player and just an incredible talent.”

More than 30 years later, Roth is still ranked 21st in career scoring at Ohio State with 1,249 points, while Lewis is 30th with 1,134 points, eighth in career rebounds (747) and ninth in career blocks (124). Wells ended up at West Virginia.

It seems that the coach and I also share a fondness for St. John Arena.

“We played in St. John Arena,” she said. “I love St. John, loved it. I don’t like the fact that they don’t have the basketball (games) down there now, but oh, I loved playing there. You come out and the crowd is going wild, the kids are excited. It was awesome.”

Which brings me to Bill Davidge. Twenty years ago, few outside the Ohio State or Miami (Ohio) hockey communities would have known who Davidge was. That was before he moved into the broadcast booth for the fledgling NHL Columbus Blue Jackets. In the early days of the franchise, Davidge and George Matthews were the Marty Brennaman and Joe Nuxhall of the Blue Jackets, using their unique chemistry to entertain and educate fans as the team struggled to build. I know I listened to those early broadcasts to hear the duo, not to hear the Jackets lose night after night.

Davidge would eventually move over to the television side but maintained his popularity among Blue Jackets fans before hanging up the mic after the team’s recent season.

So what does Davidge have to do with VanDerveer and St. John Arena and the Schottenstein Center? It has to do with the

antiquated OSU Ice Rink. When Davidge played for the Buckeyes in the mid-70s, the team was promised a new arena.

“They pulled out the blueprint and told me that a facility would be built my junior year,” he recalled. “It was right on the spot where the Schottenstein is today. They told us we would be part of something special. It only took 30 years after the fact.”

My point is that if they had built a hockey facility back then, they could have designed the Schottenstein Center strictly for basketball and it might not have proved the cavernous, lifeless arena it is today. Of course they would have had to build The Schott somewhere else, because, according to Davidge, the hockey arena would have been at the same corner of Lane and Olentangy.

Davidge and I both seem to have fond memories of the undersized OSU Ice Rink, however.

“The old rink was home-ice advantage,” he explained. “I wasn’t very big. Being 5-9, 175 pounds, I thought I was 6-4, 220. I came in hard in that rink.”

“I took no (bull). We were one of the toughest teams in the CCHA. We were tough. It was our little rink. It was what it was, but we were promised the glory of a new one in ‘75.”

One of OSU’s athletic administrators when Davidge played at Ohio State was Jim Jones, another interview subject. Jones has always been a great friend to Buckeye Sports Bulletin. In fact, we were struggling to find a good phone number for Jones when, out of the blue, he called to renew his BSB subscription.

Jones saw so much in his time at OSU, from Woody Hayes to the 1968 national football championship, to the firing of Hayes, the hiring and firing of Earle Bruce, the hiring of John Cooper and much, much more.

The thing that surprised me the most in his interview was his revelation that he was the football team’s first academic counselor. That just stunned me that there had not been one previously. From there he steadily worked his way up the ranks until he was named athletic director in the wake of Bruce’s firing and AD Rick Bay’s resignation. That made his first major act in the big chair the hiring of Bruce’s successor.

I had always believed that the goal in finding Bruce’s replacement was to bring in somebody from outside what I called the “Good Old Ohio Boy” network. According to Jones, it was more specific than that.

“I met with the board of trustees,” Jones recalled, “explained to them what we were doing and what we were looking for because they were very interested in making sure that whomever we chose had nothing to do with Earle Bruce. I’m not sure I understand that, to this day, but it is what it is.”

Eliminating anyone who had any association with Bruce would have all but eliminated anyone from the Ohio coaching community, and Jones and his committee eventually selected Arizona State’s John Cooper, a move that was met with great fan approval at the time.

“John, I think, was a good football coach and a damn good recruiter,” Jones said. “Unfortunately, he had two or three things going against him. One, he had a Southern

accent. Two, he didn’t beat Michigan, which doesn’t help you in Ohio. In fact, I don’t think, until John Cooper, any football coach had ever survived more than two losses in a row to Michigan.”

Speaking of outsiders, Jones was also AD when OSU basketball coach Gary Williams left for Maryland. Jones confirmed a suspicion I’ve always had – that one of the reasons the fiery Williams left was because he couldn’t stand the fact that OSU basketball was second fiddle to football.

“Why did he leave? I think part of it was he got sold a bill of goods Rick Bay when we hired him, but I don’t know that that’s fair in that he came from a school, Boston College, where football was more important and hockey was more important than basketball. And I don’t think he was looking for that to happen again. And it turned out that’s exactly what happened.”

Two athletic directors later, Smith talked about how new football coach Ryan Day’s “audition” while Urban Meyer served his three-game suspension affected his hiring process. As it turned out, it wasn’t just about Day’s 3-0 performance on game day.

“It’s interesting because that audition, so to speak, provided me some insight into how he would lead,” Smith explained. “Besides winning the games, I thought the most important thing was that he held it together. If you look back over the history of time in any situation similar to this, the thing that can be most challenging is the team. The team could become fragmented, it could implode. Whether or not you win or lose, the dynamics of the team could be pretty fragmented. Ultimately, they held strong. The culture we built – that Urban built – was sustained.”

I’ve made no secret that I am not a particular fan of the College Football Playoff system because I believe it devalues the other bowl games. I was pleased to see that Smith, who until recently served on the CFP selection committee, seems to agree with me.

“I’ve always felt that the BCS wasn’t as bad as most people thought it was – especially since we were in it every year,” Smith said. “And I’m kind of old school, true to the bowl games. I always thought the top-tier bowl games were unbelievable experiences for young people. When we moved to the CFP, and I shared this before, but the bowls would be devalued – and they are. Now we’re starting to see a different behavior. Attendance is going down and players are not wanting to play in those games, and I see that continuing.”

My suggested question again, this time to J.T. Barrett. Did he make the first down against Michigan in 2016?

“At first it was like, ‘I got it,’ but then where I landed and looked, it’s like, ‘Oh my,’ so I feel like that was my initial thought on the field,” he recalled. “During the play, like, ‘All right I got it,’ then when you land and turn and look it’s like, ‘Oh snap,’ a little uncertainty creeps in.”

That plays to my feeling about the play. I’ve looked at it many times from many angles and have always thought he made it. Regardless, and J.T. seems to back me up on this, it was too close to overturn the call on the field. Sorry, Jim Harbaugh.

Well, here I am out of space and I haven’t even gotten to retired Columbus Dispatch columnist Bob Hunter or Ohio State football graphics guru Sammy Silverman. Those two interesting interview subjects will have to speak for themselves.

Enjoy the Interview Issue. I know I did.

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

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