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ANDREW LIND

DUAL-THREAT SIGNAL CALLER – Ohio State sophomore quarterback Justin Fields threw four touchdown passes and ran for two more scores in the 76-5 win over Miami (Ohio), becoming the first player to accomplish that feat in the first half of a game since Louisville quarterback Lamar Jackson in 2016.

Howard 'Hopalong' Cassady Dies At Age 85

By MARK REA
BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

University of Michigan sports information director Bruce Madej was sitting alone at a table in a New York City restaurant in mid-December 1991, waiting for freshly minted Heisman Trophy winner Desmond Howard to join him.

And Howard was late.

As Madej alternately looked out the restaurant window and at his watch, he was approached by an older man, who noted Madej's blue shirt adorned with the distinctive maize "Block M." After a minute or two of small talk, the man asked if the sports information director would like to join him and his friend for lunch.

When Madej said yes, the man ushered him to his table and then stuck out his hand.

"By the way," he said, "I'm Hopalong Cassady and this is my friend Vic Janowicz."

That small act of kindness toward a stranger, despite the fact he was wearing the colors of his alma mater's archrival, only serves to underscore the approachable, outgoing nature of Cassady, the 1955 Heisman Trophy winner from Ohio State who died Sept. 20 at his home in Tampa, Fla., at the age of 85.

"The best thing about Hop – and there were a lot of great things about him – was that he never met a stranger," said Mike Talis, president of Columbus-based Talis Sport & Event Marketing and Cassady's business representative for more than 25 years. "He had an ability to make you think you'd known him forever when maybe the two of you had just met. He was a great storyteller and just loved being around people. And people loved being around Hop."

It was that good-natured personality that allowed Cassady to forge a close relationship with two of the 20th century's most polarizing American sports figures while altering the history of both college football and Major League Baseball in the process.

The little freckle-faced kid who grew up amid humble surroundings on the west side of Columbus in the neighborhood called "The Bottoms" wound up being credited with saving Woody Hayes' job as Ohio State head coach as well as transforming George Steinbrenner's New York Yankees from contenders to World Series champions.

"To me, Hop was the one player you could count on to make the big play in the big game," OSU football historian Jack Park told BSB. "If you look back at the biggest games during his career at Ohio State, I think you'll find that more often than not, Hop Cassady made a big play – oftentimes more than one – in those games."

Ohio State Shakes Slow Start To Blow Out Miami

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

For all the talk leading up to the game about the talent disparity between Ohio State and Miami (Ohio) – particularly when RedHawks head coach Chuck Martin said the Buckeyes would have the first 85 picks if they were choosing teams at schoolyard recess – the game was pretty even through the first quarter.

Miami, which entered the game as a 38.5-point underdog, jumped out to an improbable 5-0 lead thanks to an offensive strategy that challenged Ohio State's defense in new ways. The RedHawks used quick slant passes to get a pair of first downs, something none of the Buckeyes' previous three opponents had been able to achieve on their opening drives.

The drive stalled around midfield, however, so Miami punted and pinned Ohio State at its own 2-yard line.

Two plays later, RedHawks linebacker Myles Reid powered his way past Buckeyes running back J.K. Dobbins and swatted the ball out of quarterback Justin

Fields' hands. It rolled out of the back of the end zone, giving Miami a 2-0 lead and Ohio State its first deficit all season.

The RedHawks marched down the field on the subsequent drive until the Buckeyes' defense tightened up and forced a field-goal attempt. It appeared – at least at that point – the game would be much closer than anyone predicted.

"The first five, six minutes of the game, it wasn't great," said Ohio State head coach Ryan Day. "There are a lot of things to clean up on film there. They hit us on some things, and we also gave up the safety."

From then on, though, the Buckeyes dominated in every facet of the game and scored 76 unanswered points.

Ohio State scored on all six drives in a 42-point second quarter – likely a school record for points in a quarter.

"To come out like that after three weeks and a week of a lot of people telling us how great we were, to come out and dominate like that is pretty impressive," Day said.

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FAN FORUM

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State thoroughly dominated all facets of a 76-5 win against Miami (Ohio). The victory had the starters out at halftime after a historic 42-point second quarter, which allowed backups to make some plays and have key contributions.

Here are the players whom the BSB staff, as well as members of The Forum on BuckeyeSports.com, selected as worthy of Buckeye Leaves in the week-four win.

Wyatt Crosher, BSB: After only slightly regressing in a big win against Indiana, quarterback Justin Fields looked like the struggles may continue, getting stripped for a safety to put Ohio State down 2-0.

But Fields turned it around in a big way, taking part in all six touchdowns Ohio State scored in the second quarter to get the Buckeyes a 49-5 lead at the half, which was the time the sophomore quarterback's day was over. Even in just two quarters, Fields completed 14 of 21 passes for 223 yards and four touchdowns while also rushing nine times for 36 yards and two touchdowns.

This was the type of game Fields needed to have to regain momentum, and he was more than up to the task.

Joe Dempsey, BSB: I am giving my Buckeye leaf to true freshman wide receiver Garrett Wilson for his tremendous performance in Ohio State's 76-5 win against Miami (Ohio). Wilson helped lead J.K. Dobbins to his 26-yard touchdown in the first quarter. Then, in the third quarter, Wilson took his first career punt return 52 yards all the way to the Miami 12, showcasing speed and elusiveness down the sideline.

With 9:08 left in the third quarter, backup quarterback Chris Chugunov threw a bomb down the far sideline to Wilson, who tipped the ball up to himself, bobbled it as he fell to the ground and hauled in the 38-yard touchdown, pushing the Ohio State lead to 56-5 with the ensuing extra point. The five-star recruit from Austin (Texas) Lake Travis finished the day with four catches for 54 yards and one touchdown.

Andrew Lind, BSB: Junior cornerback Jeff Okudah recorded his first career interception and very nearly had another in Saturday's blowout win.

Okudah's pick, which occurred on Miami's first drive of the second quarter, set the Buckeyes up with excellent field position and allowed quarterback Justin Fields to score just three plays later to give the Buckeyes a 21-5 lead.

Adding to that column in the stat sheet has been a long time coming for the South Grand Prairie, Texas, native, who after the game dedicated the play to his late mother. It's the first step in becoming a first-round pick next spring, too.

Patrick Mayhorn, BSB: Another week, another Buckeye Leaf for star defensive end Chase Young. The junior is up to seven sacks on the season through four games and looks primed to not just surpass Ohio State's single-season record of 14, but smash it easily.

He added two more in Ohio State's dominant victory over Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 21, though he did it with a little extra flair. Both of Young's sacks saw him get to the passer, land a hit and knock the football loose. Ohio State recovered both fumbles (Tyler Friday was credited with one, and Malik Harrison with another), and it was Young's sacks that ultimately changed the game from somewhat

competitive early to a blowout in the second quarter.

Young's play completely changes the way that Ohio State is able to play and can destroy essentially any opponent game plan. He's unblockable, and it would be surprising at this point if he doesn't beat Vernon Gholston's sack record.

Frank Moskowitz, BSB: I'm giving my Buckeye Leaf to Hop Cassidy. Many, many players had great games against Miami, as one would expect in a 76-5 victory. But few, if any of those Buckeyes will attain the legendary status of Cassidy. RIP Hop.

BSB Subscribers

These guys were not the main superstars, but I was happy to see some significant playing time for Chugunov and Gunnar. They had enough time to get comfortable and strut some stuff. I give them my leaves.

– PeyoteBuck

My leaf has to go to a reserve, because the starters barely worked up a sweat. And my reserve would be Garrett Wilson. His circus catch and long punt return bode well for the future of the OSU receiving room. Are we becoming Wide Receiver U?

– Mcarr

I would give leaves to the offensive line. We played a team that we totally had more talent but our offensive line I thought played really well. This line gets better, game after game.

– Terry Crider



From The Message Board

Following Ohio State's 76-5 win over Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 21, Buckeye Sports Bulletin asked the readers on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as staff members, how much they were concerned by the Buckeyes' slow start. Here are some of the responses:

"I wasn't concerned at all. We dug deep, finally started to not look ahead and dominated."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"At no point did I think Ohio State would win by less than four touchdowns. If Dobbins doesn't miss the block on the pass rusher in the end zone that resulted in the safety, I am not sure Miami ever scores a point in the game."

– Terrier Buck

"Not concerned at all. Just knew they were going to blow them out."

– Terry Crider

"No concern at all. They were not fired up for this team in the first quarter which is understandable, so they said ok, this is what we can do in the next three quarters."

– PeyoteBuck

"I was never worried the Buckeyes would lose and I stopped worrying that the game would even be a tussle when the RedHawks elected to go for the field goal and not six when they drove deep in the first quarter. A field goal was destined to be meaningless for Miami and not going for it broke any momentum they may have had."

– Mcarr

"There was never a question of which team would win the game. Preparation for kickoff is the concern. The first quarter was ugly. Miami threw the best they had at us, and we were not ready. Young had a sure

sack early which would have set the tone but tried to tackle high and the QB escaped to keep the drive alive. Kudos to the adjustments and the rest of the game."

– John Lanning

"I'm not super concerned, but there were some scheme things that gave me pause, given that Nebraska is likely to run a more athletic version of Miami's offense on Sept. 28.

"I would be much more concerned, however, if the Buckeyes hadn't fixed those scheme troubles. They did, quickly, and shut out the RedHawks for the rest of the game, which makes me think that Ohio State has both the versatility and adaptability to survive pretty much anything thrown at them."

– Patrick Mayhorn, BSB

"The 5-0 lead did not have me doubting in any shape or form the outcome of the Miami game, but it did, for a moment, have me wondering if Ohio State's defense could be tested by what the RedHawks were doing schematically. I think it will be a great teaching moment for Ryan Day to use and for the defense to adjust, but the Miami game was decided before either team showed up to play."

– Wyatt Crosher, BSB

"Was I concerned? Not really. I'll just chalk it up to the fact that it's hard to get up for a game against a five-plus touchdown underdog the week before what many perceive to be the most difficult game on the Buckeyes' schedule."

– Andrew Lind, BSB

Buckeye Sports Bulletin (USPS 705-690, ISSN 0883-6833.) is published 24 times a year (weekly September through November, biweekly mid-March through May and January through early March and monthly June through August and December) by:

Columbus Sports Publications
 1350 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 30
 P.O. Box 12453
 Columbus, Ohio 43212
 (614) 486-2202
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Periodical class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Subscription rates: \$99.95/year.

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2019-20 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 39)			
No. 1	Sept. 7	No. 13	Dec. 21
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The next issue (Oct. 5 cover date) will be mailed on Oct. 1.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin is a privately owned newspaper and is not affiliated directly or indirectly with The Ohio State University.

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Cassady In Select Company Among OSU Elite

The passing of Howard "Hopalong" Cassady got my mind to thinking about a lot of things – old-school players, legacies, bygone eras. Those who can play offense and defense have gone the way of the typewriter and telephone booth just as Cassady's death turns another page on the Woody Hayes era that is now – dare I say it? – more than 40 years in the rearview mirror.

Hop's passing also got me thinking about the Heisman Trophy and how much winning that 25-pound bronze statue has meant to players and their programs for so many years. Unfortunately, although Ohio State is tied with Notre Dame and Oklahoma for the most Heisman wins in the 84-year history of the award, I don't know when (or even if) the Buckeyes will ever win another.

Troy Smith is the school's most recent winner, of course, but looking back upon Smith's numbers from the 2006 season and weighing them against the astonishing statistics being piled up by today's college quarterbacks, they boggle the mind.

Smith completed 203 of 311 pass attempts for 2,542 yards and 30 touchdowns against only six interceptions in 2006 while leading his team to an undefeated regular season and the nation's No. 1 ranking. Last season, Dwayne Haskins connected on 373 of his 533 attempts, good for 4,831 yards and 50 TDs, and led his team to a Big Ten championship – numbers good enough only for third place in the Heisman balloting.

I mention this only because the services of Justin Fields and J.K. Dobbins – Ohio State's primary Heisman candidates in 2019 – were unneeded during the second half of their team's 76-5 beatdown of in-state rival Miami (Ohio). Fields finished his day against the RedHawks with 223 yards and four touchdowns through the air as well as 36 yards and another pair of scores on the ground, while Dobbins rushed for 52 yards and a touchdown.

Around the same time, former Ohio State quarterback Joe Burrow was throwing for 398 yards and six TDs during LSU's 66-38 win against Vanderbilt, and last year's Heisman runner-up, Tua Tagovailoa of Alabama, was totaling 293 yards and five scores through the air during his team's 49-7 victory against Southern Mississippi.

And then there was the 67-63 shootout between UCLA and Washington State won by the Bruins, a game in which each team's quarterback topped the 500-yard mark. Dorian Thompson-Robinson of UCLA threw for 507 yards and five touchdowns, which paled in comparison to Anthony Gordon of the Cougars, who piled up 570 yards and nine touchdowns.

Through just four games this season, Gordon has already thrown for 1,894 yards and 21 TDs – numbers that are roughly 75 percent of Smith's totals for the entire 2006 season. Burrow isn't too far behind with 1,520 yards and 17 TDs, the same number of scoring tosses for Tagovailoa this year despite the fact the Crimson Tide had barely worked up a sweat in any of their four games so far. Alabama is beating its opponents by an average of 39.3 points; Ohio State's margin of victory is slightly better at 44.5 points per game.

In recent years, Heisman Trophy candidates have largely devolved into hype-driven campaigns. Neither Tagovailoa nor Oklahoma QB Kyler Murray, last year's winner, had more passing yards or touchdown passes than Haskins, yet the Ohio State quarterback was a distant third in the Heisman voting.

Of course, bringing home a Heisman is always nice for the old alma mater's trophy case, but a national championship trophy is much nicer, and that is the area where Ohio

State might have the upper hand against any of the aforementioned players and their teams.

Fields' 880 passing yards ranks only 47th in the nation – tied with Oklahoma QB Jalen Hurts, who was the man at Alabama until Tagovailoa came along – but the OSU quarterback's 13 touchdown passes tie him for sixth best in the country. Meanwhile, Dobbins was fifth in the nation in rushing yards with 477 through games of Sept. 21.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Still, if the Buckeyes are to make noise in the national championship hunt, and possibly elevate their top offensive stars to Heisman-level status, it will probably be the defense that is responsible. After all, it was that unit and its exploited flaws that led to lopsided losses at Iowa in 2017 and at Purdue last season, ugly defeats that conspired to leave Big Ten champion Ohio State as an afterthought when discussions for the last two College Football Playoff tournaments began in earnest.

How good is this year's OSU defense? It's unclear based upon the competition so far, but here's an example as good as any other. Through this season's first four games, the Ohio State defense has surrendered only six plays of 25 yards or more, and each of those has been through the air. After four games last season, the Buckeyes had already given up 15 plays of 25 yards or more, including runs of 78 and 80 yards.

The longest run given up so far this season by Ohio State is 23 yards, and that came during the first quarter against Miami. After that gain, the RedHawks tried to run the ball 31 more times against the Buckeyes and totaled exactly four yards.

All of those offensive numbers I quoted earlier – they're nice and they still grab the headlines. But as Bear Bryant used to say, "Offense gets the girls, defense gets the rings."

If Ohio State is to add to its trophy case in 2019, the heavy lifting will likely be done by the demolition firm of Chase Young & Co.

About That Latest Win

I'm not sure how much one can really glean from a 71-point victory against an outgunned and undermanned opponent. Therefore, here are some numbers and observations from the Buckeyes' latest victory.

- Did my eyes deceive me or was that an honest-to-goodness quarterback sneak executed by Fields early in the second quarter? On fourth-and-2 at the Miami 13, the Ohio State quarterback lined up under center and bulled his way forward for a 4-yard gain and a drive-sustaining first down. It's kind of refreshing to every once in a while see the offense go old-school on the opponent. Who was the last OSU quarterback to do that effectively? Seems to me it might have been Craig Krenzel.

- Freshman receiver Garrett Wilson had himself quite a day. In addition to leading the OSU receiving parade with four catches for 54 yards and a touchdown, Wilson returned a punt 52 yards early in the third quarter. As unbelievable as it might seem, it was the longest punt return for the Buckeyes since Jalin Marshall took one back 54 yards for a touchdown in 2014 during a 42-27 win against

Indiana.

- A lucky 13 Ohio State players caught at least one pass in the game. That included senior Binjimen Victor, who totaled three receptions for 42 yards and a touchdown. Victor bumped his career receiving yardage to 1,019 and became the 36th player in program history to break the 1,000-yard mark in receiving yards.

- Fellow senior K.J. Hill continues his climb up the school's all-time receiving charts. Hill had two catches for 78 yards and a touchdown against Miami and now has 159 receptions for 1,875 yards. Hill leapt past Brian Robiskie (1,866, 2005-08), Ken-Yon Rambo (1,849, 1997-2000) and Jeff Graham (1,809, 1988-90) and now trails Dane Sanzenbacher (1,879, 2007-10) by just four yards for 11th place on OSU's career list in receiving yards.

- Another week, another couple of sacks for Young. Each of the junior defensive end's sacks against the RedHawks were second-quarter strip sacks of backup quarterback Jackson Williamson, and each led to an Ohio State touchdown. Young now has at least one sack in each of his last six games, seven already in just four games this season, and 21 for his career, good for ninth all-time in program history.

- When sophomore walk-on kicker Dominic DiMaccio pushed his PAT attempt wide right following Ohio State's final touchdown, it ended a streak of 201 consecutive PAT kicks for the Buckeyes. The last time an OSU kicker failed to convert an extra point came in 2016 when Tyler Durbin missed during the second quarter of a 24-21 loss at Penn State.

- The 71-point margin of victory was the largest for Ohio State since a 76-0 win against Florida A&M in 2013.

- The 76 points were not the most allowed by the RedHawks in their six-game series against Ohio State. In the first-ever meeting between the two schools, the Buckeyes rolled to an 80-0 victory in 1904. OSU has now outscored Miami by a 276-45 margin in the series.

- Ohio State topped the 70-point margin for only the 16th time in history, and four of those have occurred since 2013. Before the 76-0 shutout of Florida A&M in 2013, it had been 17 seasons since the Buckeyes had scored 70 or more points in a game. They recorded a 70-7 win against Rice in the 1996 season opener, took a week off and then blew out Pittsburgh by a 72-0 final.

- The Buckeyes had scored exactly 76 points just two other times in their history. That was a 76-0 win at Western Reserve (now Case Western Reserve) in 1934.

- The 42 points scored by Ohio State during the second quarter represented the team's best single-period output since at least 1950. The previous best during that span was 35 points tallied in the first quarter against Iowa during an 83-21 victory in 1950. According to the NCAA, the modern record for most points scored in a single quarter is 49, a mark that has been reached three times, the most recent by Fresno State during a 94-17 win against New Mexico in 1991.

- In case you wondered, the all-time NCAA record for most points scored in a single quarter is 63, a record that belongs to Georgia Tech, who actually did it twice in the same game. The Yellow Jackets (then known as the Engineers) scored 63 points in the first quarter of a 1916 game against Cumberland and then proceeded to score 63 more in the second period on their way to a 222-0 victory, the most lopsided win in college football history.



get. Ohio State will enter the matchup sitting at 4-0, while Nebraska has lost just once, to Colorado, putting Scott Frost's Cornhuskers at 3-1 overall.

Buckeyes Shift In AP Poll

For the first time since week two, when the Buckeyes fell from fifth to six to accommodate a rise to fourth for LSU, Ohio State moved back up in the AP poll after a 76-5 win over Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 21. The Buckeyes jumped over Oklahoma in the Sept. 22 rendition of the poll, with the Sooners falling to sixth after an off week. The top four remained the same with Clemson leading the way, followed by Alabama, Georgia and LSU.

Behind the Sooners in the AP poll sat Auburn, up one spot after its 28-20 win over Texas A&M, Wisconsin, up five after beating Michigan 35-21, Florida and Notre Dame, down from seventh following its 23-17 loss to Georgia.

There were six Big Ten teams in the poll, with Ohio State and Wisconsin leading the way, followed by Penn State at 12, Iowa up from 18 to 14, Michigan down from 11 to 20, and Michigan State back into the poll at 25. Minnesota was the only other Big Ten team receiving votes, with five.

While Ohio State saw a slight rise in the AP poll, it had no such luck in the coaches poll. The Buckeyes remained sixth in that poll after week four, and the rest of the top six also remained the same. Clemson was atop the poll, followed by Alabama, Georgia, Oklahoma and LSU. Auburn was seventh in this too, up two spots. Florida remained eighth, Wisconsin was up five

2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2019 Record
Aug. 31	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	W, 45-21	FOX	2-2 (0-0 Conference USA)
Sept. 7	CINCINNATI*	W, 42-0	ABC	2-1 (0-0 American Athletic)
Sept. 14	at Indiana	W, 51-10.	FOX	3-1 (0-1 Big Ten)
Sept. 21	MIAMI (OHIO)	W, 76-5	BTN	1-3 (0-0 Mid-American)
Sept. 28	at Nebraska	7:30 p.m.	ABC	3-1 (1-0 Big Ten)
Oct. 5	MICHIGAN STATE*	7:30 p.m.	ABC/ESPN	3-1 (1-0 Big Ten)
Oct. 18	at Northwestern*	8:30 p.m.	FS1	1-2 (0-1 Big Ten)
Oct. 26	WISCONSIN*	TBA	TBA	3-0 (1-0 Big Ten)
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	TBA	TBA	2-1 (0-0 Big Ten)
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	1-2 (0-1 Big Ten)
Nov. 23	PENN STATE*	TBA	TBA	3-0 (0-0 Big Ten)
Nov. 30	at Michigan*	12 p.m.	FOX	2-1 (0-1 Big Ten)
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

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

Ohio State-Nebraska Set For 7:30 p.m. Kick

Ohio State's first prime-time kickoff of the 2019 season will be a road bout for the fifth straight year, going all the way back to the Buckeyes' 42-24 victory over Virginia Tech in 2015 that kicked off at 8:00 p.m. While it was largely assumed that Ohio State's matchup with Nebraska on Sept. 28 would be a late start in Lincoln, it was officially confirmed on Sept. 16.

This means that Ohio State will have three straight prime-time kicks, because the Buckeyes will host Michigan State at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 5 and travel to Northwestern for an 8:30 p.m. kick on Friday, Oct. 18.

Unlike most of Ohio State's marquee matchups this season, the Buckeyes and Huskers will play on ABC, rather than the usual Fox packaging that Big Ten teams

spots to ninth, and Notre Dame fell three spots to 10th.

There are just five Big Ten teams in the coaches poll, again led by the Buckeyes and Badgers. Penn State came in at 11, Iowa is at 14 and Michigan dropped from 10 to 20.

Michigan State received 82 votes, while Minnesota picked up nine and Nebraska grabbed seven.

Buckeyes Without Three Defensive Line Contributors

Ohio State's lengthy early-season injury report list picked up two significant additions prior to the Sept. 21 matchup with Miami (Ohio). With defensive end Jonathon Cooper already on the list, the Buckeyes lost two more defensive linemen for the win over the Redhaws, and possibly for longer: defensive tackle Robert Landers and defensive end Tyreke Smith.

Landers had been listed as the backup nose tackle behind Davon Hamilton through Ohio State's games against Cincinnati and Indiana. He was the starting nose tackle against FAU, with Jashon Cornell out at end and Davon Hamilton in Cornell's usual spot. Landers has four tackles and ½ sack on the year. His playing time against Miami went primarily to Tommy Togia and Haskell Garrett.

Smith suffered a new injury against Indiana on Sept. 14 according to Ryan Day, which means that he did not re-

gravate a groin injury that had sidelined him for most of fall camp and forced him to have surgery over the summer. Smith played against Cincinnati and Indiana and started against the Hoosiers before leaving the game in the third quarter. He resurfaced later on the sidelines in street clothes. Smith has two tackles on the year and one sack, all of which came against Cincinnati.

Neither player has an estimated time frame for a return.

Jahsen Wint Back To Full Health

While Ohio State suffered some attrition up front, the defensive backfield got a boost prior to the 76-5 win over the Redhaws, because after missing the Indiana game with an undisclosed injury, safety Jahsen Wint was back on the depth chart against Miami. He recorded one tackle.

Wint serves as the primary backup for Brendon White at the bullet position and has three tackles on the season. He was joined by freshman tight end Cormontae Hamilton as the lone players who had sat out the week prior against Indiana to be declared healthy on Ohio State's Sept. 20 status report.

Dobbins Honored By Big Ten Conference

Following his 193-yard, one-score performance on just 22 carries against

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Cassady's Life And Career Recalled Through Reprints

Upon the passing of Howard "Hopalong" Cassady on Sept. 20, Buckeye Sports Bulletin ran reprints at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com of stories written about him in BSB through the years. Included are not one, but two stories with Cassady from BSB's long-running "Michigan Memories" series.

These reprints were in addition to those that ran on our usual Reprint Thursday on Sept. 19. That installment featured stories from Ohio State's first conference confrontation with Nebraska, played in Lincoln on Oct. 8, 2011, a game that turned on an injury to OSU quarterback Braxton Miller.

Access to BuckeyeSports.com is free to all BSB print subscribers and is a good way to keep track of the breaking news between print issues of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

Don't miss news from Ryan Day's Tuesday press conferences or practice during the week. Also enjoy Reprint Thursdays and our popular Staff Predictions the day of each game.

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. Subscribers can also read the entire print issue of BSB before it has even hit the post office.

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From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

For Keith Byars, Ohio State's 45-26 win over Iowa on Sept. 22 was a personal redemption. A year earlier, Byars had watched helplessly as the Hawkeyes topped OSU after he had been knocked out of the game late in the second quarter with a bruised knee.

"I've been wondering for a whole year now what would have happened if I had played the whole game," he said following the Buckeyes' successful Big Ten opener. "So I had a little added incentive to play the whole game and help out my team as much as possible."

Not only did the junior tailback rush for 120 yards and two touchdowns, but he caught five passes for 55 yards and another score.

30 Years Ago – 1989

Ohio State head coach John Cooper admitted to finding a few new gray hairs in the mirror after his team's heart-stopping 34-29 victory over Boston College.

"That might have been the longest ballgame I've ever been involved in in my life," said Cooper, whose Buckeyes led 31-7 at the half. "We feel very, very fortunate to win, especially after the way we played in the second half. It looked like we played two entirely different halves of football."

"In the first half, offensively, we couldn't do anything wrong. We had a lot of total offense and scored a lot of points,

"Then, we gave up too many big plays on defense again today. There were too many jump balls that went to the other team. They got momentum in the second half when they changed quarterbacks and really kept us off balance. We were fighting for our lives."

25 Years Ago – 1994

The so-called "good old days" of running up the score early and getting the reserves in made a return to Ohio Stadium, at least for one week, when Houston served as the Buckeyes' final nonconference foe of the season and were most accommodating visitors.

OSU rolled to a 52-0 victory over the Cougars in a game that could have been much worse if the Buckeyes had wanted to play their regulars more than a quarter and a half as the Buckeyes jumped out to a 36-0 halftime lead and then extended it with a pair of second-half touchdowns and a field goal.

"Frankly, I don't mind having a game like this," said Ohio State quarterback Bobby Hoying. "I think it's good for your program and it's good for some of the guys who normally don't get to play. We went into this game as heavy

favorites, and we came out and took care of business. We did what we should have for the most part, and I think the score reflected that."

20 Years Ago – 1999

The head coach had just secured his 100th win at Ohio State, but for the second consecutive week, he showed up for his postgame press conference like a death row prisoner granted an 11th-hour reprieve by the governor.

Cooper sounded more like the losing coach after his team's 34-20 triumph over Cincinnati Sept. 25 at Ohio Stadium.

"We've got to get better," Cooper said after his team rallied to defeat a supposedly lesser in-state opponent for the second straight week. "We gave up way too many big plays. Our tackling was very, very poor."

Cooper's comments did not sound like he was the coach of a 3-1 team on the cusp of the top 10 nationally.

What's worse is that he had to wonder what would happen next as the Buckeye prepared to open Big Ten play with defending Rose Bowl champion Wisconsin.

15 Years Ago – 2004

Tressel ball still worked, despite a major overhaul in personnel over the previous two seasons.

There was never a more perfect example of the perfect Jim Tressel game plan than the way Ohio State went about its 22-14 victory at North Carolina State on Sept. 18. Almost from the outset, the Buckeyes played the field-position game then played superior special teams and strong defense to secure the victory.

Even Tressel couldn't resist pointing that out to reporters after his team had registered its third win in as many games and its third consecutive 3-0 start.

"I don't think there's any secret that we like to play that way," the OSU coach said. "Superior special teams play, outstanding defense and mistake-free, opportunistic offense – that's our formula."

10 Years Ago – 2009

There were plenty of demons in need of exorcising when Ohio State took the field Sept. 26 to host Illinois.

The last time the Buckeyes had set foot on the turf inside Ohio Stadium, a late touchdown allowed USC to pull out a last-minute victory. Adding to the situation, the last time the Fighting Illini traveled to Columbus, they had knocked the top-ranked 2007 Buckeye squad from its unbeaten perch – and started a postgame melee in doing so.

It was no surprise then that senior defensive tackle Todd Denlinger said the atmosphere in the locker room following

OSU's 30-0 victory against the Illini in the Big Ten opener was unlike any he had seen during his tenure on the team.

"I've never seen the locker room so excited after a game," he said. "It's a great day to be a Buckeye."

Five Years Ago – 2014

Jalin Marshall and Dontre Wilson had been closely associated with one another since arriving on campus as members of the 2013 recruiting class. Both were highly rated skill players who were recruited by just about every power in the nation, and both were pegged to be the dynamic athlete head coach Urban Meyer had been looking for to fill similar roles within his offense.

After Marshall redshirted the previous season, the pair were being used as interchangeable parts by the coaching staff, sharing a spot atop the depth chart at the hybrid "H" position, often lining up in the slot, and also sharing responsibilities as punt and kick returners.

Through three games, Wilson had a team-high 419 all-purpose yards while Marshall had 102, and prior to the Cincinnati, game, a 50-28 Buckeye victory, Marshall said the pair needed to do more.

"It definitely tells us that (Meyer) has confidence in us and that he is starting to use us more, but we have to develop more trust by making more plays," he said. "We have to go out there this week and make more plays."

One Year Ago – 2018

Unranked Tulane entered Ohio Stadium with a 1-2 record. The Green Wave left with a 1-3 marker after a 49-6 shellacking at the hands of Ohio State. For the Buckeyes, beating up on an overmatched opponent was no big deal, at least not under normal circumstances. But this time around, the circumstances weren't normal.

Meyer was with his team for the first time of the season after serving a three-game suspension for mishandling the employment of former assistant coach Zach Smith. He had watched from home as Ohio State dispatched Oregon State, Rutgers and TCU.

After co-offensive-coordinator-turned-acting-head-coach Ryan Day led the Buckeyes to an undefeated start, Meyer took the reins, coaching the Buckeyes in the Horseshoe for the first time since Nov. 18, 2017 – a rainy, 52-14 win over Illinois.

"My family is completely ingrained in this community, they love this place, I love this university," Meyer said after the win. "Walking into that Skull Session and seeing Buckeye Nation's support, myself and our team – that was something overwhelming, and I appreciate that. I'm very appreciative of it."

Indiana, Ohio State junior halfback J.K. Dobbins was named co-offensive player of the week in the Big Ten on Sept. 16.

Dobbins put up the second-highest yard total of his career (just behind a 203-yard showing against Maryland in 2018), though he was not alone in the week's recognition. He was joined by Minnesota wide receiver Tyler Johnson, who put up 140 yards and three scores on 10 receptions in the Golden Gophers' 35-32 win over Georgia Southern.

It marked the first time that Dobbins has been named to the Big Ten player of the week list and the 11th time in his career that he passed the century mark in yardage, including the second time this season.

Snyder Wins Bronze In Kazakhstan

Former Ohio State star wrestler Kyle Snyder secured yet another world medal on Sept. 22 as he won a bronze medal at the Senior Men's World Freestyle Championships in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. Snyder defeated Elizbar Odikadze of Georgia, 3-0. The medal was his fifth World or Olympic medal in five years.

Although Snyder was able to medal,

the result may come as some disappointment because the 23-year-old was expected to either win the title or participate in the title match against rival Abdurashid Sadulaev of Russia. Instead, Snyder fell to Sharif Sharifov of Azerbaijan in the semifinals.

Snyder's bronze was still enough to qualify the United States for the 2020 Olympics at 97 kg, though not qualifying would have been a massive shock for Snyder and the country.

Eddie George's Number Retired By Tennessee Titans

The Titans were without a Buckeye on the field in their Sept. 15 loss to the Colts, but that doesn't mean that there was no Ohio State representation for the team led by former Buckeye player and coach Mike Vrabel and aided by former OSU assistant Kerry Coombs.

At halftime of the game, Eddie George had his No. 27 uniform officially retired by his former team, alongside the late Steve McNair's number nine.

George gave an emotional speech and even showed off his theater chops, citing Hamlet in his first line:

Continued On Page 6

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INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

“Hamlet says, those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel.”

He went on to express love and gratitude to both his teammates in Tennessee and the fans of the Titans.

George played eight of his nine NFL seasons with the Titans (and their predecessor, the Houston Oilers) and racked up 10,009 yards and 64 touchdowns on 2,733 carries. George was a member of Tennessee’s 1999 team that came up just inches short of a Super Bowl victory against the then St. Louis Rams, 23-16.

Cornelius Greene To Be Honored

Former quarterback and Ohio State legend Cornelius Greene is set to be inducted into the Rose Bowl Hall of Fame 2019 class. Greene, who played in four straight Rose Bowls from 1972-1975, starting in the latter three, is one of four inductees to the latest class. He is joined by USC quarterback Matt Leinart, Washington running back Jacque Robinson and Harvard halfback Eddie Casey.

Greene’s Buckeyes went 1-3 in the Rose Bowl, though he was the starting quarterback in the 1974 rendition against USC, a 42-21 win that Woody Hayes considered to be the best game Ohio State ever played.

The class will be officially recognized on

Dec. 31, 2019, a day prior to the 106th Rose Bowl game.

Terry McLaurin, Other Buckeyes Shine In Week Two

For the second straight week to open his NFL career, Terry McLaurin was able to haul in a touchdown reception from Washington quarterback Case Keenum. The former Buckeye put up five receptions for 62 yards in a 31-21 loss to the Dallas Cowboys, though his 1-yard touchdown reception brought Washington within 10 late in the fourth quarter and gave at least a semblance of hope to the Redskins.

McLaurin wasn’t the only former Buckeye receiver to get some press in week two, because Devin Smith made his surprising return to the NFL for the Cowboys and managed to snag a touchdown in the process. Despite two ACL tears that very nearly derailed his career, Smith was able to catch on with the Cowboys in the off-season, secure a roster spot and, against Washington, reel in a 51-yard touchdown reception, his first since 2015.

Smith finished the day with three receptions for 74 yards and the score.

He wasn’t the only Buckeye to make an impact on the Cowboys side of that Dallas-Washington matchup, because star running back Ezekiel Elliott racked up 111 yards and a score on 23 carries as well as nine yards on two receptions. After finally signing a contract extension, Elliott has shown his worth early in the year, with 164 yards and two scores on 36 carries through two Dallas wins.

Elsewhere, another Buckeye rookie scored his first points, as Parris Campbell snagged a 12-yard touchdown pass from Jacoby Brissett in Indianapolis’ 19-17 win over Tennessee. Malik Hooker and Tyquan Lewis contributed for the Colts as well, with three and one tackles, respectively.

The best team performance was probably, as usual, from the New Orleans Saints. With their five Buckeyes, the Saints were unable to grab a win, dropping a 27-9 game to the Rams, but it was through no fault of those Ohio State alums. Ted Ginn led the way with seven receptions for 101 yards, Michael Thomas added 89 yards on 10 receptions, and defensively, Eli Apple had

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seven tackles while Marshon Lattimore and Vonn Bell both picked up five.

Interestingly, the best individual Buckeye performance of the week probably came from Miami linebacker Jerome Baker, even as the Dolphins were blanked by the Patriots, 43-0. Baker picked up 11 tackles in the game, next to another familiar face, Raekwon McMillan, who had four tackles.

As usual, former Ohio State defensive linemen made an impact in the NFL, as the Bosa brothers, Johnathan Hankins, Jalyn Holmes, Sam Hubbard, Cameron Heyward and John Simon all put on good performances. Joey Bosa had six tackles in the Los Angeles Chargers’ 13-10 loss to the Detroit Lions, Nick Bosa had three for San Francisco in 41-17 victory over Cincinnati, while Hubbard posted five tackles in defeat. Holmes tallied three tackles for the Minnesota Vikings in a loss, as did Heyward for the Pittsburgh Steelers as his team dropped another game, this time to the Seattle Seahawks, 28-26. Hankins had five tackles for the Oakland Raiders against the victorious Kansas City Chiefs (28-10). Simon wraps up the group with the lone sack, for the New England Patriots.

The last significant contributors of the week were Carlos Hyde for the Houston Texans and Curtis Samuel for the Carolina Panthers. The Texans beat Jacksonville 13-12 behind 90 yards from Hyde, while Samuel put up 91 yards on five receptions, though Carolina couldn’t avoid a 20-14 loss to Tampa Bay.

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Oct 12 - First Bye Week
Oct 18 - at Northwestern Wildcats
Oct 26 - Wisconsin Badgers
Nov 2 - Second Bye Week
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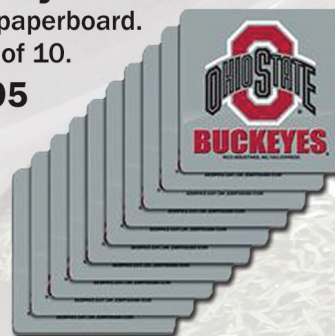
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Defensive Highlights Sparked Buckeyes' Offense

Continued From Page 1

Aside from the strip-sack safety, which Day was quick to point out wasn't his quarterback's fault because the play took time to develop downfield, Fields continued to impress with his play. He accounted for all six of the Buckeyes' second-quarter touchdowns – four through the air and two on the ground.

"I wasn't worried about (the fumble) at all," Fields said. "I had faith in the team. When that happens, you can't really do anything about it. You just move on to the next play. I wasn't worried about it personally, and the offense didn't seem worried about it, so we were good."

"I think that was kind of the first time we hit a little bit of adversity this year. So just seeing that bounce-back, that was great. Coach always tells us that we're going to eventually get punched in the face, so it's about how we respond. I think we responded in a great way. I think we did a great job in the second quarter executing and doing our job. We just have to keep doing it."

Fields – who completed 14 of 21 passes for 223 yards and rushed nine times for 36 yards before he gave way to backup Chris Chugunov after halftime – will get a lot of the credit, but Ohio State's offensive burst was just as much the product of a defense and special teams unit that gave the Buckeyes great field position all afternoon.

Junior cornerback Jeff Okudah's first career interception gave Ohio State the ball at Miami's 41-yard line, then junior defensive end Chase Young's strip sack on quarter-



JOSH WINSLOW

OUT OF HAND QUICKLY – Sophomore cornerback Sevyn Banks blocked a punt in the second quarter, which gave Ohio State the ball at the Miami 20-yard line. The Buckeyes scored three plays later to go 42-5.

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back Jackson Williamson two drives later was recovered by the Buckeyes at the RedHawks' 28-yard line. Sophomore cornerback Sevyn Banks blocked a punt – marking the second straight week in which Ohio State recorded a blocked punt – to give the Buckeyes the ball at the Miami 20-yard line on the following drive, before Young forced another fumble that was recovered at the 18-yard line.

"We were opportunistic in those situations," Day said. "I thought going into the game we had opportunities to get turnovers – in other games that we weren't quite there, we got them today so that was good.

"I think anytime your defense can do what they did – which is shut them down, create turnovers like that and then flip a short field – you can turn the momentum. It can flip fast, and I think that's what happened."

When the game was called with 2:40 left in the fourth quarter after a lightning strike in the area, Miami had mustered just 130 yards of total offense. It was a stark contrast from how easily the RedHawks moved the ball early on.

"I thought the coaches did a great job preparing them, and I'm really proud of the way the guys came out and played," Day said of his team.

Ohio State was never truly in danger of losing to Miami, but Day knows his team cannot afford to have a similar start when the Buckeyes travel to Nebraska on Sept. 28 (7:30 p.m. on ABC).

"A job well done, but it's what have you done for me lately," he said. "We have a lot of things to clean up if we're going to go beat those guys. We're already onto those guys and focused on preparing for them next week."

Fields, who will certainly face his stiffest test as a starting quarterback, echoed those sentiments. He believes the Buckeyes will be prepared for the Cornhuskers.

"I think this team is mentally and physically prepared, so we'll get in the film room tomorrow, see what we can get better at and just get ready for Nebraska."

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Buckeyes Convert Turnovers Into Touchdowns

Much like a good basketball team, Ohio State played sound defense and forced turnovers that it converted to points on the other end.

The Buckeyes took a 14-5 lead against Miami (Ohio), and on the next play, they got the ball back. Miami freshman quarterback Brett Gabbert dropped back to pass at his own 25-yard line on first-and-10 and threw an interception to Ohio State junior cornerback Jeff Okudah at the 41, marking the first of his career.

GAME NOTEBOOK Joe Dempsey

"I'm feeling pretty good about that, just to kind of get a monkey off my back, so to say," Okudah said. "But I'm just excited about the future the Silver Bullets defense holds more so."

The Scarlet and Gray converted Okudah's pick into points, working with a short field. They drove 41 yards in just 29 seconds, with Fields running the ball in for a 7-yard touchdown.

Two RedHawk possessions later, with the Buckeyes leading 28-5, Miami faced a third-and-10 from its own 35-yard line. Sophomore backup quarterback Jackson Williamson dropped back to pass, and Ohio State junior

defensive end Chase Young met him seven yards in the backfield, strip-sacking him.

Senior linebacker Malik Harrison jumped on the ball at the Miami 28. Under a minute later, the Buckeyes turned that turnover into points as well when Fields found Chris Olave for a 13-yard score.

On Miami's ensuing possession, Ohio State forced a three-and-out, setting up Kyle Kramer to punt from his own 25-yard line. Sophomore cornerback Sevyn Banks shot past the Miami front like a bullet and blocked the punt, which the Buckeyes recovered at the Miami 20.

In just 26 seconds, Ohio State scored a touchdown, had it called back, and scored again on third-and-20. Fields hit Binjimen Victor for a 30-yard touchdown near the back of the end zone.

Leading 42-5 with 2:14 until halftime, the Scarlet and Gray kicked off to the RedHawks again. On Miami's first play, Young met Williamson in the backfield and punched the ball out again. Sophomore defensive end Tyler Friday pounced on the ball this time, and following an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty from Okudah, Ohio State started at the Miami 33.

Once again, the Buckeyes converted a turnover into points. Olave reeled in his second touchdown from Fields, and OSU led 49-5 after generating four turnovers and six touchdowns in the second quarter.

Young, a perfectionist by nature, said he was more concerned about the sack he felt like he missed early in the game than his two strip sacks.

"You know how I am – the one I missed – I was really mad at myself on that one," Young said. "You've got to forget about it – next play. That's what I try to do – next play – and the plays came."

Co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison, who is a former defensive line coach, liked what he saw from Young but was not surprised.

"The thing that he does a great job of – Coach Johnson teaches that – they drill the fact that when you come from behind the quarterback or you come from the side, you secure the tackle with one arm and you strip with the other," Mattison said. "And he's done a great job of that."

Head coach Ryan Day, who calls the offensive plays, made a point to credit the defense for helping the offense get rolling against the RedHawks.

"Anytime your defense can do what they did, which is shut them down, create turnovers like that and then flip a short field," Day said, "anytime that happens, you can turn the momentum. It can flip fast."

Freshman Wideouts Stand Out

One of many positive takeaways from the Buckeyes' 76-5 trouncing of Miami came in the performance of a pair of true freshman wide receivers, Garrett Wilson and Jameson Williams.

With backup Chris Chugunov in at quarterback on the Buckeyes' third drive of the second half, Ohio State moved the ball to the Miami 38 on a 14-yard run by Master Teague. Chugunov took the first-and-10 snap and launched a bomb down the far sideline into single coverage, where Wilson tipped the ball up to himself and somehow hauled it in while falling to the ground.

"It was a one-on-one go ball that Chris kind of underthrew a little bit, but he gave him a chance by putting a lot of air on it," Day said. "And then it was just unbelievable talent, going over the top, making – getting his hands on it over the top of the corner, but also somehow making some sort of circus catch. That was things we've seen in practice, but that one was pretty unreal."

The catch was incredible, but Wilson's teammates have become so accustomed to him reeling in highlight-tape receptions that they were not as impressed as everyone else.

"Garrett, that was a good catch, but he's definitely had better catches in practice," Fields said of Wilson. "That wasn't surprising to see."

Fellow outside receiver Chris Olave, a sophomore, has taken on a leadership role as an underclassman, helping the freshmen such as Wilson deal with the mental stress of playing at a big-time program like Ohio State. He was proud to see the freshman stand out against Miami.

"Garrett's a freak," Olave said. "He's one of a kind. I told him once he gets his opportunity, he's going to shine. Today he got his opportunity, and you see what he can do. It's an everyday thing in practice, and I was waiting for him to get an opportunity."

More praise of Wilson came from an unexpected source in Okudah, a cornerback. While he wasn't ready to admit that the freshman can make those plays against him in practice, Okudah is well aware of the talent possessed by Wilson, a fellow former five-star recruit.

"He has the best ball skills on this football team, as far as his body control," Okudah said of Wilson. "It's kind of weird because when he makes those plays in the games, you'll see that guys aren't really too surprised because we all know he's capable of doing that. It's cool to see him do it on Saturdays."

Including the long touchdown, Wilson finished with four catches for 54 yards, and he added an exciting 52-yard punt return, which he nearly brought back to the house before being tackled at the Miami 12. The Austin (Texas) Lake Travis product did not represent the 2019 class alone as fellow freshman wideout Jameson Williams enjoyed a coming-out party at Ohio Stadium.

Gunnar Hoak replaced Chugunov when Ohio State got the ball back with 25 seconds left in the third quarter. On second-and-6 from the OSU 39, Hoak fired a pass to Williams on a slant, which may have been a 10-yard gain for most players but the speedster ran 61

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Game Analysis

What Worked Well

The Ohio State passing attack worked masterfully against Miami. Three Ohio State quarterbacks combined for 374 passing yards and seven touchdowns through the air, completing 22 of their 30 attempts. Sophomore starter Justin Fields connected on 14 of his 21 tries for 223 yards and four touchdowns, while adding 36 rushing yards and two ground scores. Chris Chugunov thrived in relief, completing 6 of 7 passes for 86 yards and two touchdowns, including a 38-yard bomb to Garrett Wilson. Gunnar Hoak continued the aerial assault against the RedHawks, throwing for 65 yards and a 61-yard touchdown to Jameson Williams on 2-of-2 passing.

What Didn't Work

The start of the game did not go as well as Ohio State hoped. The Buckeyes forced Miami to punt on its opening possession and the RedHawks downed the ball at the OSU 2. After J.K. Dobbins lost a yard on his first-down carry, Fields attempted to hit Binjimen Victor on a post corner. Dobbins got beat by Miami linebacker Myles Reid in pass protection, and Reid

stripped the ball from Fields on a sack, with the ball bouncing out of the end zone for a safety. Then Miami proceeded to drive the ball 66 yards on 14 plays down to the OSU 2. Despite facing first-and-goal from the 2-yard line, Miami could not punch the ball in and settled for a field goal, giving the visitors a 5-0 lead.

Play Of The Game

Ohio State made many exciting plays in its 76-5 victory against Miami, but the play of the game is one that changed the course of the game. Following K.J. Hill's 53-yard touchdown with 14:36 left until halftime, Miami took over trailing just 14-5. How the RedHawks would respond would alter the trajectory of the intrastate matchup. On first down, Miami quarterback Brett Gabbert threw an interception to Jeff Okudah at the Miami 41, setting up the Buckeyes in great field position. Ohio State took full advantage and did not look back, scoring its second touchdown of six in a dominant second quarter. Okudah's pick gave the Buckeyes momentum, which helped them cruise to victory.

– Joe Dempsey

yards for a touchdown.

"Jameson, on that slant, when he kind of stopped and started running, I already knew right away he was going to score because he's definitely one of the fastest guys on the team," Fields said of Williams. "His explosiveness – he's going to be a great receiver in the future."

Williams, who broke Ezekiel Elliott's Missouri state record in the 300-meter hurdles, showcased his elite speed on his burst to the end zone, which put OSU up 70-5 with the ensuing extra-point make. Olave was beaming with pride when talking about his freshman mentee.

"I'm a very big fan of Jameson," Olave said of Williams. "He's a good guy and we have a great relationship, so Jameson's my guy and his talent is out the roof. I can't wait for him to get his opportunity, and he's going to shine with it."

Well aware of the potential both freshman wideouts possess, Day said their day-in, day-out consistency has led them to more opportunities and, in turn, success.

"Really two weeks, both of them have been practicing, and that doesn't guarantee anything," Day said of the duo. "You can practice well, but it doesn't guarantee you anything. But if you don't practice well, you don't have a chance."

"Both of those guys have practiced harder. Their approach to the game has been better and their attitude has been better. And lo and behold, here we go. Now we start to see some things happening. It's good to see the growth of those guys, and it's a good start to see those guys make some plays."

Fields Keeps His Cool

Ohio State faced turmoil for the first time

this season when Fields was sacked and stripped in the end zone for a safety on its first possession of the game.

Then the Buckeyes let the RedHawks drive 66 yards down the field before the visitors stalled out and settled for a field goal, giving them a 5-0 advantage.

"Coach always tells us that we're going to eventually get punched in the face, so it's about how we responded," Fields said. "We responded in a great way. We just have to keep doing it."

The Ohio State response came in the form of a 26-yard rushing touchdown by J.K.

Dobbins and six second-quarter touchdowns from Fields (four passing, two rushing).

"It was a pretty good stretch," Fields said of the 42-point second quarter. "I don't know about the best stretch we've had, but it was a good stretch. And we did a great job in the second quarter executing and doing our job."

Fields finished with 223 passing yards and four scores on 14-of-21 passing, adding 36 yards on the ground and two rushing touchdowns, while playing only in the first half.

Sophomore center Josh Myers has been impressed with Fields' ability since he stepped on campus, but what has opened

his eyes even more to his quarterback's elite potential is his composure.

"He's done an unbelievable job," Myers said of Fields. "Our offense is not an easy one to pick up like he did. And he picked it up extremely fast and has done an outstanding job with it."

"The biggest thing for him is the level of calm he has. When you get all riled up and get all excited sometimes, that's when mistakes happen. He's done a really good job of being even-keeled at all times – in the huddle, on the field, after touchdowns, the whole thing. He's handled it like a pro."

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Buckeyes Spot RedHawks Early Lead Then Roll

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

There was no panic, just resolve when No. 6 Ohio State fell behind Miami (Ohio) 5-0 midway through the first quarter. It was stunning in that the Buckeyes were about a six-touchdown favorite in their final tuneup before playing at Nebraska on Sept. 28.

If the 103,190 fans in Ohio Stadium were squirming, the OSU players weren't. "It didn't bother us. It was early," said junior linebacker Baron Browning. "Everybody that's going to play us is going to give us their best shot, so it's really about how we responded."

Did the Buckeyes (4-0) ever bounce back. They used six touchdowns accounted for by sophomore quarterback Justin Fields, all in the second quarter, to overwhelm the RedHawks 76-5 on Sept. 21.

OSU erupted for 42 points in the second quarter, the most points for Ohio State in a quarter since at least 1960. The previous best in that time span was 34 vs. Florida A&M in the first quarter of a 76-0 win exactly six years earlier on Sept. 21, 2013.

Fields, the Georgia transfer, had four TD passes and ran for two more scores, and he did not play the final two quarters. He was 14 of 21 for 223 yards and had 36 yards on nine carries.

For the season he has 19 touchdowns (13 passing, six rushing).

Miami (1-3) fell apart in the second quarter, when the Buckeyes blocked a punt, had an interception and recovered

two fumbles on quarterback sacks caused by junior defensive end Chase Young.

The RedHawks had 113 total yards in the first quarter but just 17 the rest of the game.

The game was called by mutual consent with 2:40 left in the fourth quarter because of lightning strikes in the area.

Second Chance

Miami used a page from the OSU model of success – special teams and defense – for a stunning 5-0 lead at the 7:25 mark of the first quarter.

A RedHawks 45-yard punt by Kyle Kramer was downed at the 2 on their first possession. Junior running back J.K. Dobbins was tackled for a yard loss, and on second down linebacker Myles Reid stripped Fields. The ball rolled out of the back of the end zone for a 2-0 lead at 12:00.

After the ensuing free kick, Miami marched 66 yards, using 14 plays and 4:28 before settling for a 21-yard field goal by Sam Sloman. The RedHawks got a fourth-and-1 conversion on a 2-yard run by quarterback Brett Gabbert and an additional 10 yards on a holding call against junior linebacker Tuf Borland on the same play to move the ball to the OSU 48.

Later, Maurice Thomas ran for 16 and the RedHawks eventually got first-and-goal at the 2 after pass interference on junior linebacker Pete Werner, but three plays netted minus-1 yard.

The Buckeyes took the lead on the next series, going 75 yards in seven plays and 2:09 of the clock, capped by Dobbins' 26-yard TD run for a 7-5 lead at 5:16.

Dobbins had 38 yards on four carries on the drive, and the Buckeyes were aided by a personal foul that put the ball on the Miami 32 after senior Binjimen Victor's 6-yard grab. Dobbins ran for 6 yards then on the next play burst down the right sideline for the score.

The Buckeyes upped the score to 14-5 with relative ease 24 seconds into the second quarter when Fields used play-action to freeze the defense, allowing senior receiver K.J. Hill to be open at the 21, and Hill ran in for the 53-yard score, which represented career longs for him and Fields. The drive was three plays, 67 yards in 37 seconds.

It was the OSU defense's turn to make a play, and junior cornerback Jeff Okudah intercepted Gabbert at the Miami 41. Fields immediately passed 9 yards to freshman Garrett Wilson followed by a 25-yard slant to Hill. From there, Fields kept the ball and scored from the 7 as the Buckeyes used a tidy 29 seconds to go ahead 21-5 at 14:04.

Fields made it 28-5 at 8:37 to finish a methodical nine-play, 70-yard, 3:57 possession, thanks to his 6-yard run. It began with 24-yard reception by sophomore tight end Jeremy Ruckert and included a 10-yard run by junior Demario McCall, a roughing-the-passer penalty and a Fields quarterback sneak for 4 yards on fourth-and-2 from the Miami 13.

Miami backup QB Jackson Williamson was victimized when the RedHawks got the ball back, and it led to the next OSU score. Young had the strip sack that caused a fumble that was recovered by senior linebacker Malik Harrison at the RedHawks 28.

Fields passed to redshirt freshman back Master Teague for 17 yards, and two plays later Fields rolled right and lofted a 13-yard TD pass to sophomore Chris Olave at 5:06. That drive for a 35-5 lead took 54 seconds, the next used 26 and suddenly it was 42-5.

First came a blocked punt – OSU's second in as many games – by sophomore Sevyn Banks that was recovered by redshirt freshman defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste at the Miami 20. A holding call on left guard Jonah Jackson negated a 20-yard TD catch by senior Austin Mack. OSU faced a third-and-20, but Fields threw a rope down the middle and Victor got his right foot down at the back of the end zone for the six points with 2:14 left in the first half.

Another defensive gem led to the 49-5 halftime score. Young had another sack of Williamson that led to a fumble recovery

by sophomore defensive end Tyler Friday at the Miami 18, but an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on Okudah pushed the ball back to the 33.

OSU needed 3 yards on fourth down to keep the short drive alive, and Fields connected with senior tight end Rashod Berry for 16 yards to the 10. Olave had a 10-yard TD reception on the next snap as OSU needed 1:13 to score.

"If you're on the other side of the ball and you see that a couple of times, that can take your heart away and I think it did," OSU head coach Ryan Day said of Young's two sacks.

OSU graduate backup Chris Chugunov threw two TD passes in the third quarter for a 63-5 lead. With the Buckeyes starting from their own 48 with 9:21 to go in the third period, Teague rushed for 14 yards. Chugunov followed with a 38-yard scoring strike to Wilson, who made a juggling catch in the left corner. The two plays spanned 21 seconds of game time.

Chugunov completed a 10-play, 70-yard, 4:38 possession with a 7-yard TD to freshman back Marcus Crowley with 2:15 left in the third.

The next QB in line, Kentucky transfer Gunnar Hoak, hooked up on a catch-and-run for 61 yards and a score with freshman receiver Jameson Williams at 13:59 of the fourth. Williams caught the ball at the 50 and took off. The drive consumed 1:26 to go 79 yards in four plays.

Freshman Steele Chambers rushed for a 2-yard score with 3:02 left at the end of a 10-play, 76-yard, 6:03 drive. Sophomore backup kicker Dominic DiMaccio missed the extra point.

Numbers

The Buckeyes had seven scoring drives of 1:26 or less, including five of less than a minute. ... Chambers had eight carries for 63 yards and a TD to lead the Buckeyes in rushing. ... Dobbins ran eight times for 52 yards and a score. ... Chugunov was 6 of 7 for 86 yards; Hoak completed both passes for 65 yards. ... Gabbert was 5 of 15 for 48 yards and the pick before leaving the game in the second quarter. ... OSU had 601 total yards (374 passing, 227 running). Miami had 130 (60, 70). ... The Buckeyes had five sacks. ... Ohio State has won 43 consecutive games vs. Ohio schools dating to a 7-7 tie with Wooster in 1924 and is unbeaten in its last 49 in-state games. Ohio State's last loss occurred in 1921 to Oberlin, 7-6.

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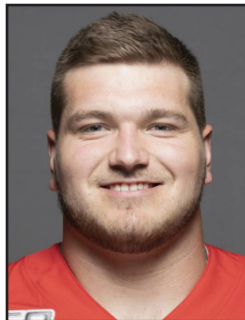
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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 76, Miami (Ohio) 5

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on the atmosphere late in the game: "To see the student section and a lot of people still there at the end was really neat for our guys. It was kind of a long game there with the rain and everything, and to see the student body still there on both sides was awesome for our guys. So that was really great. I just want to thank everybody for that."

Day on throwing deep more against Miami: "It's always part of our game. We have something in our game plan called Shots. They came up and were bringing a bunch of guys. They were loading the box up, which most people do against our run game. We kind of expected that after last week, the way we ran the ball. And anytime you can get one-on-one matchups on the outside with our guys, we think we've got a good shot."

Day on the upcoming matchup against Nebraska: "I haven't watched them a bunch on film. We're trying to stick to the mantra of winning this game and focusing on this game. But (Nebraska coach) Scott (Frost) does a really good job, and their defensive staff is really good. They have a really good quarterback. And that's a hard place to play. It's a real place to go on the road and try to win. So that's a big challenge for us."

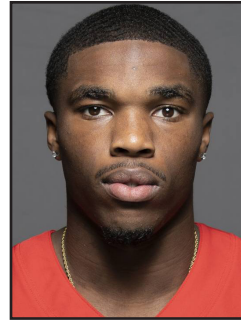


Josh Myers

Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields on his role when the backups come in: "I think those guys do a great job in the film room. I don't really have to coach those guys up at all. But it's really getting the whole offense, the whole second-, third-string offense energized and just kind of ready to go, because it's late in the game, the game's pretty much over. But just kind of getting those guys in getting reps, working on their craft, that's what I try to do."

Ohio State center Josh Myers on what to take from the first four weeks into Nebraska: "I think the biggest thing we can do is take what we've learned to this point with us to Lincoln next week and from there just slowly progressing. Each week, we're trying to get better, and that's the point, to get better each and every week. I think we've done that."

Ohio State wide receiver Chris Olave on Garrett Wilson's acrobatic touchdown catch: "That's what happens daily in practice from him. He's a real freak. When he gets his opportunities, he'll shine. When he gets the go ball or fade ball, it's not really a 50-50 ball, it's kind of an 80-20 ball to him."



Jeff Okudah

Ohio State co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison on defensive end Chase Young: "I love the attitude he plays with, and I love the technique he plays with. Great things will happen for a young man who plays like he plays."

Ohio State cornerback Jeff Okudah on the first interception of his collegiate career: "I definitely think it's a monumental moment and just kind of getting this monkey off my back."

"Like as crazy as a story it is, last night I had a dream that I got the first interception, so I woke up with a smile like 'Maybe today's the day.' So it was kind of crazy just to kind of bring that to fruition and get that first one."

Miami head coach Chuck Martin on his thoughts following the brutal loss to Ohio State: "If you have an ounce of competitiveness in your body, it'll be tough to sleep tonight. Again, I don't discount who the hell we played. They're a great football team, but I didn't discount that."

"If you told me we were going to turn the ball over that many times, I was going to say they're going to short-circuit the scoreboard like they did."

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Decision To Return Paying Off For Damon Arnette

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

Prior to his fifth-year senior season, Damon Arnette contemplated forgoing his final campaign and moving on to the NFL.

Under the influence of longtime family friend and Buckeye great Cris Carter and a convincing conversation with co-defensive coordinator and secondary coach Jeff Hafley, Arnette elected to return.

Leading up to his final season, players and coaches alike raved about the difference in demeanor from the starting cornerback and how he had excelled in practice, hyping him up for a big year. But as Arnette would be the first to admit, talk is cheap. The former three-star recruit from Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas needed to prove his decision to come back was the right one.

As the season began, Arnette displayed vast improvement, and opposing offenses rarely tried to test the three-year starter. Once Big Ten play opened against Indiana in Bloomington, the Hoosiers made the mistake of throwing Arnette's way, and he made them pay. With the Hoosiers facing third-and-goal from the Ohio State 7-yard line, Arnette jumped in front of a Peyton Ramsey pass, made a spinning catch at the 4 and weaved through would-be tacklers for a 96-yard touchdown.

While Arnette's big play surely made him ecstatic, the corner said his role in the exciting pick-six represented just one piece of the puzzle.

"That was the biggest play I made in my life," Arnette said. "The thing is I just know how hard the D-line was rushing – they do it every play. I was really just a pawn in that whole play."

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day expressed his excitement to see one of his players' hard work pay off.

"I'm really proud of that kid," Day said of Arnette. "He's been through a lot. He had to take a bunch of classes academically last spring, this summer. And to press reset, he's given himself completely to Jeff Hafley, and now he's practiced really, really well. He's prepared well, and then to see him make that play was awesome."

"Just a few plays before, he was out. He got banged around, and at that point in the game, he could have taken himself out. He went right back in and makes that play. I'm really happy for him. He deserves that play. He's been through a lot, and it's great to get that play for him."

Day said he wanted to punt the ball due to his excitement from the pick-six. When Arnette was asked about it, he saw it as a challenge.

"He gets that from me," Arnette said of Day's excitement. "It's motivating because you want to do it again and make him hype again. He said that, and I was like, 'All right, we're going to get another one, see if you really do it.' It's just fun. It's a lot of fun out there. Coach Day makes a strong emphasis on knowing when to have fun and knowing when to lock in, and I feel like we do a great job of both."

Arnette's pick-six garnered much praise from the Ohio State coaching staff and his fellow teammates, including a fellow three-year starter, safety Jordan Fuller.

"I felt like I just had a pick-six when he ran it back," Fuller said of Arnette's big play. "I was trying to throw a block for him, but he just kept zigzagging. I ran as fast as I could just to go congratulate him and celebrate with him. It was a big moment."

Arnette earned Ohio State's defensive player of the week honors against Indiana, adding two pass breakups and two solo tackles to his 96-yard interception return. Was the big-time performance enough to convince him he made

the right decision in staying at OSU?

"That interception just reminded me like, 'You see, I told you, you should have come back,'" Arnette said. "But the first time I realized it was just the first game, getting ready for FAU. I was like, 'This is what you came back for – to be here with all your brothers. I look around and see everybody I wanted to be here with, so that first game coming out of the tunnel was when I made the right decision.'"

Arnette admitted there is more work to be done and more success to come.

"After the game I was like, 'All right, it's the start now,'" Arnette said. "Everything that's happening right now, I saw it happening when I decided to come back to school. You're all just seeing it right now and your eyes are going to continue to keep on getting bigger because we've got some more stuff to do, for real."

Part of Arnette's confidence comes from his new coach. Hafley spent the past seven years in the NFL before joining the Ohio State staff. He earned rave reviews from All-Pro players such

as San Francisco 49ers cornerback Richard Sherman for his extensive preparation and elite football IQ. Arnette has enjoyed this, too.

"Working with Coach Hafley, he's definitely improved my knowledge on understanding formations and concepts and everything like that," Arnette said. "When you can recognize formations when they come out, that slows everything down for me, because it's like eliminating certain things. And just understanding football a little bit better, that's what he's helped me do."

The Ohio State defense drew a lot of criticism a year ago for its lackluster play, but the 2019 Buckeyes have elected to ignore those outside voices and listen to their own instead.

"Everybody's out there with a different mentality," Arnette said. "We're not into proving people wrong anymore, we're into just proving ourselves right. Because if we're trying to prove ourselves right, that's an everyday thing. If you're trying to prove somebody wrong, you can wake up the next day, they're proved wrong, then what? As long as we know how

good we are, we know what we can be, we're just going to keep going, keep on rolling."

Arnette was asked if he would like to address his own critics after his solid start to the season and his 96-yard interception return for a touchdown.

"Oh no, they've just got to keep watching," Arnette responded with a smile. "I don't really want to say anything, for real. Because I know how Buckeye nation is – it's love, it's hate – they just want greatness. And when they don't know how to express that they want greatness, they just can be mean sometimes. But I can be mean, too, so I'm not tripping."

In addition to the pick-six, Arnette is tied for the team lead with three pass breakups and has posted 10 tackles (seven solo) through four games. But while the stats and the wins against lesser opponents are nice, the determined cornerback has his eyes set on bigger goals.

"I'm just excited because I think we're going to win the Natty," Arnette said. "I'm just speaking it into existence."



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Cassady's Career Defined By Win Over Wisconsin

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"I talked with him a few times over the years, and it is my regret that I didn't get to know him better. But on those occasions when we did get to sit and talk, he always seemed very giving of his time. Some people just have a way of putting you at ease when you're in their company, and Hop was certainly one of those people."

Named for his paternal grandfather, Howard Albert Cassady was born March 2, 1934, in Columbus to parents Pearl and Vivian Cassady. Pearl worked as a carpenter and wallpaper hanger and on weekends was an avid bowler. His son, however, wasn't content to stay indoors for any length of time, and he quickly became adept at nearly every sport he tried.

Despite a lack of size and a shock of fire-engine red hair perched atop a dappled face that made him look even younger than he was, Cassady soon became a multisport star at Central High School in downtown Columbus. When thoughts turned to his future after high school, however, he figured he would just follow in his father's footsteps.

"I never figured I would go to college because nobody in my family ever went to college," Cassady said in 2013. "Why would I go? But I played football, basketball and baseball, and I pole-vaulted on the track team at Central, and suddenly I realized I had a chance to go to college someplace.

"I knew I wanted to play baseball in college as well as football, but there were times when I didn't figure I was good enough for football because I was never that big. I only weighed about 155 pounds, and everybody in college football was so much bigger than me."

Enter Hayes, who was looking for something to help turn the tide of criticism after his first year as head coach at Ohio State. Hayes had been a compromise candidate in February 1951 for university officials looking to replace Wes Fesler, who had resigned after four seasons, and the Buckeyes hadn't exactly distinguished themselves in their first year under new management. The team capped a 4-3-2 season with a 7-0 loss at Michigan, marking the seventh straight year Ohio State fans had been unable to celebrate a victory over its hated archrivals to the north.

Eager for something – anything – to breathe some life into the program, boosters and alumni turned against Hayes in the fervent hope the university could somehow coax former coach Paul Brown into returning from the pro ranks. They even rewrote the first verse of "Carmen Ohio," the school's alma mater, and loudly sang at games, "Oh, come let's sing Ohio's praise, and say goodbye to Woody Hayes!"

Hayes seemed unfazed, although he knew recruiting and signing Columbus-born and -bred Cassady would at least help stem some of the local criticism. Not that Cassady was all that interested in the Buckeyes.

Growing up in the shadow of Ohio Stadium, he knew all about Ohio State, sneaking his way with friends into the Horseshoe a few hours before kickoff and then staying on the move in fear of getting caught without a ticket. But there were other programs that had caught his attention, most specifically Notre Dame and Kentucky. Cassady also took notice of the fact those two schools had long-established head coaches – Frank Leahy with the Fighting Irish and Paul "Bear" Bryant at Kentucky.

In the end, it wasn't Hayes' sales pitch that sold Cassady on the Scarlet and Gray. It was a lack of confidence.

"I wasn't sure at all that I could play college football," Cassady said, "but I figured if I didn't make it at Ohio State, at least I was home."



OHIO STATE FOOTBALL/TWITTER

RUNAWAY WINNER – In 1955, Howard "Hopalong" Cassady became the first player to ever exceed 2,000 points in Heisman Trophy voting, having received more than three times as many votes as the other finalists combined.

Changes in college football rules implemented beginning with the 1952 season meant Cassady would be eligible to play as a freshman, but Hayes had already formulated his starting backfield and little rookie halfbacks weren't part of the equation – especially freshmen who claimed baseball as their first love. So, the future Heisman Trophy winner donned a ragged practice jersey for his first fall camp as a collegiate player and began work as a fifth-stringer on the scout team.

As two-a-day practices gave way to game-week drills in preparation for the season opener against Indiana, Cassady copied the style of the Hoosiers' running backs so well that Hayes decided the diminutive freshman could dress for the opener.

"I never had a uniform until two days before that first game, and by that time, 13 and 40 were all that was left," Cassady remembered. "Well, I sure as hell didn't want 13, and I knew Route 40 ran right through Columbus, so that was how I got my number."

In that first game against Indiana, Cassady might have been in uniform, but he was as far from the field as he could get, relegated to a seat on the end of the bench as the Buckeyes trailed 7-6 after the first quarter. With seemingly nothing going right and precious little to lose, Hayes finally yelled, "Get the little redhead up here."

Cassady responded by spearheading a come-from-behind 33-13 victory during which he scored three touchdowns. Suddenly, the little kid from Columbus who had been known throughout his childhood simply as "Red" had a new nickname.

Cassady had earned the nickname of "Hopalong" while still in high school, a reference to the character of Hopalong Cassidy of literary, radio, television and movie fame, and the nickname stuck when after his debut against Indiana, Columbus sportswriters wrote that he had "hopped all over the field like the performing cowboy."

More importantly, Hayes had a go-to player around which he could build his program

the next four years. Behind an offensive line anchored by future College and Pro Football Hall of Fame guard Jim Parker, Cassady terrorized opposing defenses with a mixture of slashing moves and blazing speed. The Buckeyes won six games in both '52 and '53 and then captured the 1954 national championship with a perfect 10-0 record that included a 21-7 victory over Michigan as well as a 20-7 win against USC in the Rose Bowl.

The team would not repeat as national champs in 1955, but Cassady still had a superlative senior season by leading Ohio State to another Big Ten championship, the program's first back-to-back titles in 36 years. His final home game was an emotional one with a record crowd of 82,701 filling the Horseshoe to bid farewell. Cassady, who ran onto the field in front of the Dads' Day crowd accompanied by his proud father, electrified the crowd the first time he touched the ball with a 45-yard touchdown run early in the first quarter. The touchdown erased an early 3-0 Iowa lead, and the Buckeyes went on to a 20-10 victory.

Cassady, who accounted for two more touchdowns in the game, was hoisted onto the shoulders of his teammates as the final gun sounded. In the gathering dusk, the huge throng surged toward the field to catch one last glimpse of their hometown hero, while those who couldn't get close simply stood where they were and cheered as Cassady – his red head bare, his rugged face flushed and squinting back the mist in his eyes – was borne toward the sideline one final time.

The following week, Cassady completed his college career with 146 yards during a 17-0 win at Michigan, moving his career rushing total to a school-record 2,466 yards. He also scored 222 points as a Buckeye, a school mark that stood for more than two decades. He was named on every All-America team, won the Heisman Trophy by a vote total higher than the next three nominees combined, and was voted Male Athlete of the Year for 1955 by The Associated Press, beating such luminaries as heavyweight boxing cham-

pion Rocky Marciano and Cleveland Browns quarterback Otto Graham.

Career-Defining Moment

Cassady provided Ohio State fans with many highlight-reel moments during his four seasons on campus, including playing a vital role as a freshman in 1952 during a 23-14 victory against No. 1 Wisconsin, the Buckeyes' first-ever win over a top-ranked team, as well as three victories in four tries against Michigan and a victory in the 1955 Rose Bowl.

But perhaps the biggest play during Cassady's college career came during the 1954 game against Wisconsin, a team coached by Ivan "Ivy" Williamson and led by senior fullback Alan Ameche, an indefatigable power runner who was nicknamed "The Horse." Ameche was on his way to the Heisman Trophy in 1954, and Williamson had earlier in the season called his team "the best the school has ever had."

Coming into that game, the undefeated and second-ranked Badgers were peaking. They were coming off back-to-back wins over ranked competition – a 13-7 victory over No. 11 Rice and a 20-6 pounding of No. 5 Purdue.

Wisconsin had an added incentive because it hadn't beaten Ohio State since 1946 and hadn't enjoyed a victory in Columbus since 1918. Also, newspaper accounts at the time said that Williamson considered the game a personal challenge because he hadn't beaten the Buckeyes in his five previous seasons in Madison.

The game drew national attention with press, radio and movie coverage setting a new stadium record. The contest was broadcast live by 19 different outlets, including three national networks that sent their feeds to more than 400 stations throughout the country.

Hall of Fame announcers Mel Allen and Curt Gowdy called the action for NBC while CBS and Mutual also broadcast the game. Newsreel accounts were filmed by Fox Movie-Tone, Paramount, Universal, Tele-News and Sports Vision, and there were national magazines such as LIFE, Colliers and Sports Illustrated in attendance.

University officials anticipated an overflow crowd for the homecoming contest and installed temporary bleachers in the open, south end of the stadium. That helped pack 82,636 fans into Ohio Stadium, the third-largest crowd in its 27-year history.

Weather forecasts had called for winter-like conditions, but when morning came on Oct. 23, 1954, fair skies greeted both teams with temperatures in the mid-50s.

Although he was destined for greatness later in the day, things didn't begin promisingly for Cassady. On the Buckeyes' second play from scrimmage, he mishandled a pitch from quarterback Dave Leggett, and the OSU quarterback had to pounce on the loose football to retain possession. Had the Badgers been able to come up with the fumble, they would have had a first down inside Ohio State territory at the 45.

Four plays later, Cassady took another pitch and set up for an option pass. But he couldn't find anyone open downfield and had to eat the ball for a 5-yard loss.

It was like that for OSU and its star halfback for much of the first part of the game. Fortunately, the defense was holding Wisconsin and tilting the field position ever so slightly in favor of the Buckeyes. And when Ohio State got the ball back near the end of the first quarter, it finally did something with it.

Cassady got things started with a 13-yard punt return to give OSU the ball at its own 37.

HOWARD CASSADY (1934-2019)

After fellow halfback Jim Roseboro plunged over center for 3 yards on first down, Cassady blasted through the line at almost the same spot and picked up 10 yards.

Later, on a crucial third-and-1 play, Cassady plunged behind Parker for a 2-yard gain and a first down. That kept the drive alive, and the Buckeyes eventually reached the Wisconsin 23-yard line. But Leggett misfired on passes to end Dick Brubaker and Cassady before fullback Hubert Bobo was stopped for a short gain on a third-down draw play.

Faced with fourth-and-9, Hayes decided to allow kicker Tad Weed to attempt a field goal. The diminutive Weed stood only 5-5 and weighed barely 150 pounds – and he hadn't attempted a field goal all season. But he had kicked 17 consecutive PATs dating back to the 1953 season, and Hayes figured his team needed to get on the scoreboard in the nip-and-tuck battle.

Weed jogged into the huddle and was immediately swallowed up by his larger teammates. But when they broke for the line of scrimmage, the OSU kicker was left in the middle of the field, head down, arms gently waving back and forth. The snap was true and Weed knocked the football just barely over the crossbar but through the middle of the uprights, giving the Buckeyes a 3-0 lead only 16 seconds into the second period.

That lead held until late in the first half when Wisconsin quarterback Jim Miller connected with split end Pat Levenhagen for a 28-yard touchdown, and the Badgers carried a 7-3 advantage into the locker room at halftime.

The momentum that Wisconsin had seized at the end of the first half continued well into the third period. The Badgers marched into Ohio State territory on their first possession of the second half before turning the ball over on downs and then pushed as far as the OSU 36 on their second possession.

When Wisconsin got the football for the third time in the second half, Miller and Levenhagen hooked up again, this time for 12 yards to get the ball to the Ohio State 40. Then after a 4-yard burst up the middle by Ameche, Miller went back to the air and found sophomore Jim Reinke for 10 yards and a first down at the 26.

The Badgers went back to Ameche on the next play, and he responded with a 6-yard pickup over left tackle before Miller faded back for another pass. This time, however, the Wisconsin quarterback made the mistake of trying to throw into an area patrolled by Cassady.

Miller's throw was a good one – on target toward Reinke near the sideline but just a split-second too late. Seemingly out of nowhere, Cassady flashed in front of the Badgers receiver at his own 12-yard line to snag the ball out of the air. Already in full stride, the OSU speedster tucked the football under his right arm, clenched his left fist and immediately began looking for blocking support.

Cassady flew up the sideline and picked up a convoy of teammates who picked off three separate would-be tacklers. Then Cassady did the rest on his own. Levenhagen had the Badgers' last shot near midfield, but Cassady weaved slightly to his right before faking a sharp cut back to his left. Levenhagen went for the fake, and when Cassady pivoted and continued on toward the middle of the field, the Badger was left sprawling to the turf and grasping only at air.

As Ohio Stadium threatened to rise from its foundation, Cassady sprinted the final yards into the end zone with the 88-yard touchdown return. The crowd still hadn't settled back into its seats when Weed came on to add the extra

point, giving the Buckeyes a 10-7 lead with 2:08 remaining in the third period.

The play was the shot of adrenaline Ohio State had been seeking all afternoon, and it proved to be the death blow for Wisconsin. Obviously unnerved by Cassady's huge interception and touchdown return, the Badgers gave up three touchdowns in rapid-fire succession to turn what once was a tight contest into a 31-14 blowout.

"Right place at the right time, I guess," Cassady said years later when asked to dissect his interception return. "Actually, it was good coaching on the part of Woody and the staff. We had seen Wisconsin run that play several times and had practiced against it a lot. When I saw that formation, I knew beforehand what was happening. After that, all I had to do was catch the ball and run like hell."

After the game, Williamson told reporters that he felt sure his team was going to score and wrap up the game, but he added he wasn't too surprised about Cassady's performance. After all, the OSU speedster had sparked the Buckeyes to the win over the Badgers during his freshman season and intercepted a pass as a sophomore that ensured a 20-19 victory in Madison.

"Cassady has been the big guy every year against us," Williamson said. "He does these things all the time and just when they hurt the most."

The day after the game, each of Columbus' newspapers trumpeted Cassady's exploits. The front page of The Columbus Citizen screamed "Bucks Bomb Wisconsin" and adorned the headline with a graphic of three long-stemmed roses and the line "Cassady Rose Up And Bowled 'Em Over." At the same time, the Dispatch published a crackling photo of Cassady in full stride during his interception return. It was so sharp in detail that it provided a close-up view of the determined look on the Ohio State star's face right down to the bloody battle scar on the bridge of Cassady's nose, the result of a broken nose suffered the week before against Iowa.

The most important result stemming from the victory over Wisconsin was the fact that it had enabled the Buckeyes to take a stranglehold on the 1954 Big Ten championship race. They finished the regular season with wins over Northwestern, Pittsburgh, Purdue and Michigan and went on to take care of USC in the Rose Bowl.

Cassady led the Buckeyes in rushing with 701 yards and six touchdowns in 1954, including 92 yards in a 20-7 win over USC in a rain-soaked Rose Bowl that secured the school's first undisputed national championship in 12 years.

Hooking Up With Steinbrenner

Cassady went on to a seven-year NFL career after the Detroit Lions made him the third overall pick in the first round of the 1956 player draft. He played primarily as a defensive back but still finished his career with 1,229 rushing yards, 1,601 receiving yards and 24 touchdowns.

Upon his retirement from pro football, Cassady became a manufacturer's representative who sold steel to Steinbrenner's American Shipbuilding Co.

The two had originally met at Lockbourne (now Rickenbacker) Air Force Base in Columbus, where Cassady was in ROTC and Steinbrenner was a lieutenant.

"He was doing some graduate work at Ohio State when I was there," Cassady said. "But my sophomore year, he went to Northwestern to coach under Lou Saban, so I'd see him on the sidelines."

The future Yankees owner remembered that encounter in 2005.

"We went to play Ohio State and thought

we had a pretty good chance," Steinbrenner said. "I tried to act standoffish, and when he came over to shake my hand, I said, 'Get outta here you little (bleep)! You're on the other team!' First thing I know, we fumble, he picks up the ball in the end zone and is suddenly running past me at the 50. He was a great, great player."

It was a relationship that eventually paved the way to Steinbrenner hiring Cassady, whose various duties with the Yankees included a stint as conditioning coach for the big-league club beginning in 1976. That year, the team reached the World Series for the first time in a dozen years, and the Yankees then won back-to-back Series championships in '77 and '78.

"We had a lot of fun with Hop, but he got people in shape," said former player and manager Lou Piniella, who won two World Series rings as an outfielder with the Yankees and a third as manager of the Cincinnati Reds in 1990. "He got our attention and made everybody work. He used his knowledge of training from his football exploits to help people get ready to play baseball."

Cassady also spent several seasons as first base coach for the Columbus Clippers, who were then the Triple-A affiliate of the Yankees.

Upon his retirement from the Yankees, Cassady became a frequent staple of auto-graph shows, Ohio State reunions and the annual Heisman Trophy presentation weekend in New York City. He also participated in several Buckeye Cruise for Cancer fundraising trips along with his wife, Barbara.

"They would basically hold court," Talis told The Columbus Dispatch. "It was like watching Forrest Gump on the bench. People would come and go, and Hop and Barb would still be sitting their telling stories, laughing,

singing OSU songs, taking pictures. He just loved people."

In recent years, however, Cassady was content to stay close to his home in Tampa, surrounded by memorabilia that included the last Ohio State jersey he wore, family pictures (including son Craig, who played defensive back at OSU as well as five NFL seasons in New Orleans), a framed letter from Steinbrenner and, of course, the Heisman Trophy.

Cassady nearly lost the trophy in the mid-1980s when his home was burglarized and many of his awards were stolen. Fortunately, the thieves didn't realize what they had and discarded the 25-pound bronze statue in a trash bin where it was found a few days later by an alert garbage collector.

"Apparently the guy who took the trophy didn't think it measured up to the other stuff he took, so he kept the silver and dumped the rest," Cassady said. "The price of silver was way up back then and they just didn't realize the value of the Heisman."

It was quickly returned to his possession, where it remained the centerpiece of the Cassady home.

"It's certainly a sad day to think that he's gone now because he was such a great link to an era of Ohio State football that is slowly fading away," Park said. "People often ask me about the greatest players in Ohio State history, and I always list Archie Griffin, Chic Harley and Vic Janowicz as my top three. But in my opinion, there is no question you could make the case that Hop Cassady belongs right there with those three."

"Time and again during his career, he was the one who made the clutch play when it had to be made. If that doesn't define you as a great player, I guess I don't know what does."



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DE Chase Young Proves Superstar Potential

By WYATT CROSER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

"You're not going to see the numbers, the numbers aren't going to jump out at you, but he changes the game when he's in it ... He is an elite college football player that's going to show his skill set the entire year and going to be a very high draft pick."

This was said by Howard Griffith, a Big Ten Network Analyst who named Chase Young the most indispensable player on any team in the Big Ten. It is just one of the many incredibly positive things that have been said about Young, Ohio State's star junior defensive end, and the team has played only four games this season.

The former five-star prospect may not be new to the expectations, but Young heads into the final two-thirds of the regular season with widespread belief that he is one of the best players on either side of the ball in college football.

But Young knew that 2019 was his time to shine.

"It's just that time for me to step up and just be the player that I want to be," he said before the season. "I feel like this year is that year."

Through four games, it was hard to disagree with him.

Young was up to seven sacks through the first third of the regular season, 14 total tackles and 7½ tackles for loss as well as a pass breakup, two forced fumbles and a blocked field goal. These numbers included

two 1½-sack performances to open his season, one of which also included a blocked field goal, a two-sack game in Ohio State's first road game against Indiana and a pair of strip sacks against Miami (Ohio).

Even with impressive numbers at this point in the year, much of Young's impact transcends the stat sheet. The junior defensive end consistently has found his way into the backfield to rush throws, and when he hasn't, it can often be attributed to a double-team that has given the other, more-than-capable members of the defensive line a chance to make their marks.

In those ways, Young can be largely responsible for a defense that ranks No. 2 nationally in total defense and No. 3 in scoring defense.

At this point, the Ohio State defense appears to be in top form and really gaining its stride under new coordinators Greg Mattison and Jeff Hafley. But after the 51-10 win against the Hoosiers, Young was not ready to buy into his own team's hype, at least not entirely.

"We still have things we can improve on," Young said. "Obviously you saw 10 points on the board, so I guess if they score on us, obviously we have things to improve on, and we just want to go back and watch film and get those corrected."

Two games into the season, Young said the defense had "almost touched the surface" of what it could be. That week, he also said he thought he was unblockable and that was something he would strive to show everybody for the rest of the season.

At 6-5, 265, Young has been proved right so far, but with the tougher matchups on the horizon beginning on the road against Nebraska, those sorts of statements will get their first true tests.

Helping to keep the team up for bigger matchups, Young is a captain for this Ohio State defense, and his leadership has been seen clearly in his performance but also in motivating the younger players on the sidelines following big plays.

Those two primary components are what, as Young said before the season had started, makes him a strong leader for the Buckeye defensive line.

"I feel like when you make plays on the field, people, especially young guys, they're watching what you do, they're trying to copy everything you do on the field, off the field," Young said. "I just think you definitely have to make plays on the field, that's a big reason why people respect you."

"Just doing everything right, and that's what I try to do, definitely being vocal on the field, showing people you're there, I think that's the biggest part that I had to do."

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day echoed Young's sentiments on what makes the defensive end from Hyattsville, Md., such a strong presence for the defense.

"Some guys can be leaders in certain ways, but when you're strong and in front of the team and play the way he does, that's the sign of a great leader," Day said.

Young has become a leader of the Ohio State defense both with his play and with his ability to bring together the team off

the field. Now, the only thing he has left to lead is the single-season sack chart.

With 10½ sacks in 2018, Young was only 3½ shy of the program record set by Vernon Gholston in 2007. Sitting at seven sacks though four games this season, Young needs to match that total over the final eight regular season games — plus any additional games such as the Big Ten Championship, bowl game or College Football Playoff — to equal the record.

To this point, Young is soaring past the pace, but with difficult in-conference opponents looming, the road may get tougher.

But broken record or not, Young has established himself as the next superstar defensive end at Ohio State, one who easily competes with both Nick and Joey Bosa, who came before him.

In the middle of last season, defensive line coach Larry Johnson even said Young consistently "picks Nick's brain" on how to improve his pass rush, something that impressed the veteran coach.

"Chase has got some high expectations for himself, he really does, and I think that's cool when a guy who really wants to be a great player, and everything he does is based on that and he's a great learner, he wants to learn everything," Johnson said. "I think that's what you want in a player who is a highly competitive guy and wants to be a great player."

Now, all that is left for the five-star prospect is to live up to the expectations in what is likely his final season in scarlet and gray.



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OSU Chasing History

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

With Chase Young adding two sacks to his season total in the 76-5 win against Miami (Ohio), the junior defensive end has seven sacks on the year. That number puts him halfway to the Ohio State single-season sack record of 14, set in 2007 by Vernon Gholston.

Only four games into the season, Young is easily on pace to surpass that number and even has an outside chance to compete for the FBS record of 24 set by Arizona State's Terrell Suggs in 2002.

At his current rate, assuming Ohio State makes the Big Ten Championship Game and plays in a bowl game, Young is on pace for 24½ sacks, a pace that could be helped further if the Buckeyes managed a run to the national championship.

But Young is not the only Buckeye looking to put his name in the record book. Here are some storylines to look out for the rest of the season:

K.J. Hill: The fifth-year wide receiver hauled in two catches for 78 yards and a touchdown against the RedHawks. The two receptions put Hill 32 away from tying David Boston's career record of 191 catches set in 1998.

Hill also now has a reception in 38 straight games, and in a 14-game season, Hill could tie Gary Williams' program record of 48 straight games with a catch, with a 49th – and potential record-breaking – game coming with a national title run.

Hill's 53-yard touchdown catch was also the longest of his collegiate career.

J.K. Dobbins: With Dobbins' had a relatively quiet performance of eight carries for 52 yards and a touchdown, the junior running back sits at 2,933 career rushing yards, good for No. 14 on the all-time program rushing list.

With just 42 rushing yards against Nebraska, Dobbins would jump all the way to No. 11, and with a big day of 144 yards on the ground, he could move his way into the top 10.

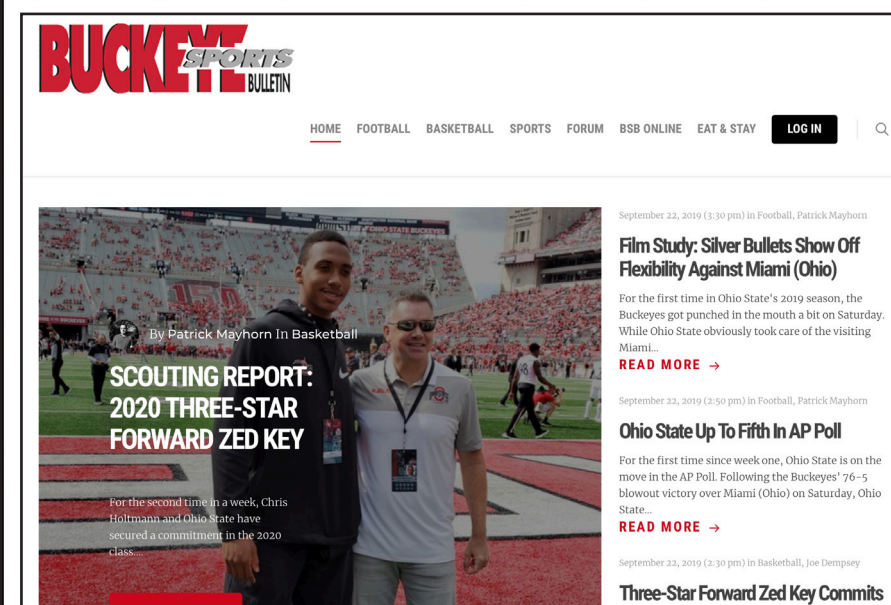
Ryan Day: Day continues to add to his Ohio State head-coaching win steak, making it now seven games with a win to start his time at the helm. That number inches him closer to Earle Bruce's 11-game win streak to start his tenure, as well as Carroll Widdoes' 12-game streak, but Day still has quite a few games to go before he can compete with the No. 1 win streak to start: Urban Meyer's 24-game run.

Single-game records: The 76-5 Miami victory was a historic blowout in a variety of ways. The 42-point second quarter is the most points Ohio State has scored in a quarter since at least 1916, potentially ever.

With all six touchdowns coming at the hands of quarterback Justin Fields, he became the only FBS player in at least the last 20 seasons to be responsible for six touchdowns in a single quarter.

The victory made it 43 straight wins for Ohio State over in-state opponents, and the 76 points were the most scored by the Buckeyes since they put up 77 against Oregon State a season ago.

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The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo and navigation links: HOME, FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, SPORTS, FORUM, BSB ONLINE, EAT & STAY, and a LOG IN button. Below the header are three article teasers:

- Film Study: Silver Bullets Show Off Flexibility Against Miami (Ohio)** - September 22, 2019 (3:30 pm) in Football, Patrick Mayhorn. Teaser: "For the first time in Ohio State's 2019 season, the Buckeyes got punched in the mouth a bit on Saturday. While Ohio State obviously took care of the visiting Miami..."
- SCOUTING REPORT: 2020 THREE-STAR FORWARD ZED KEY** - By Patrick Mayhorn in Basketball. Teaser: "For the second time in a week, Chris Holtmann and Ohio State have secured a commitment in the 2020 class..."
- Ohio State Up To Fifth In AP Poll** - September 22, 2019 (2:50 pm) in Football, Patrick Mayhorn. Teaser: "For the first time since week one, Ohio State is on the move in the AP Poll. Following the Buckeyes' 76-5 blowout victory over Miami (Ohio) on Saturday, Ohio State..."

At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a section for "Three-Star Forward Zed Key Commits" dated September 22, 2019 (2:30 pm) in Basketball, Joe Dempsey.

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Wyatt Davis Brings Toughness To Offensive Line

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Wyatt Davis did not earn the starting right guard position for Ohio State this season because of his pedigree. Yes, he comes from a football-playing family, but that's not the reason he's opening lanes for running back J.K. Dobbins and protecting quarterback Justin Fields.

Davis has the type of physicality and snarly attitude that head coach Ryan Day covets from his offensive line, especially one that lost four of five starters and was a question mark going into the season.

"That's been the emphasis since fall camp," Davis said on Sept. 17. "We want to change the culture and the assumptions people were already making about us before the season even started (that) we're inexperienced and we lost a lot of guys."

"We've been trying to get up on teams early and set the dominance as early as we can in the game. I think we've done a pretty good job of doing it. We've definitely been trying to play physical. I think we've been doing a fair job of that."

Davis, a 6-4, 313-pound third-year sophomore, has been doing his part to exert his strength on the defense. Offensive line coach Greg Studrawa during the fall camp had a unique perspective on Davis' toughness.

"I love the kid," he said. "If there was somebody that, if I had my car parked at night and was walking out of a bar late, I'd be like 'Wyatt, are you here?' Then, I'd feel comfortable getting in my car."

"That's how much I think of him. He is a fighter. He is a technician. He is a perfectionist."

"He wants to do it perfect and if he doesn't He drove a guy 6 yards the other day and turned around and said, 'Coach, I don't like that.'"

"You love to coach those kids because they love playing the game of football."

The scary good part for the Buckeyes is that Davis is just beginning to fulfill the potential of a five-start recruit and No. 24 player nationally, according to 247Sports,

from Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco.

After redshirting as a freshman, he was stuck behind incumbent senior Demetrius Knox last season. Then-head coach Urban Meyer wanted Davis on the field so they designed a package where he would occasionally play tight end.

Davis played in all 14 games but didn't make a start at right guard until the 13th, which happened to be the Big Ten title game in Indianapolis against Northwestern.

No pressure there.

Knox had injured his foot in the previous game vs. Michigan, but Meyer had no qualms about inserting Davis with the championship on the line.

"Wyatt is a guy that you heard us talking about him for quite a while," Meyer said prior to the Northwestern game. "If this was a year ago, we would have a problem. But we're excited, because he's earned playing time."

The second start for Davis was a dream come true, playing in the Rose Bowl on New Year's Day against Washington.

The Southern California native had attended the game growing up but couldn't have imagined that someday he would be suiting up for a team from across the country.

He wanted to play for an elite program and an elite coach in Meyer, so he said goodbye to his family and friends and headed to Columbus, continuing the family tradition of playing college football.

His father, Duane, was a three-year letter winner at Missouri (1980-82) as a tight end and became an actor with roles in the movies "The Program" and "Necessary Roughness" among others.

Wyatt's brother, David, was a two-time letter winner as a defensive lineman at California (2014-15).

Then there's Wyatt's uncle, Willie Davis. The Grambling College (now State) star played his first two NFL seasons in 1958 and '59 with the Cleveland Browns before being traded to the Green Bay Packers.

Before retiring in 1969, he won five NFL championships and the first two Super Bowls playing for legendary coach Vince Lombardi while being an All-NFL selection five times. Davis was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1981.

Wyatt Davis was ready when he was called upon to replace Knox. Studrawa said he saw a change in him about the time Ohio State had an open weekend last season on Oct. 27.

"There comes a time with offensive linemen, they know they have to learn, and there's a learning curve," the coach said in November. "But also, there comes a time when the light goes on in your head and you go, 'I'm sick and tired of sitting. I don't want to sit anymore. I don't want to watch him play anymore.'"

"That switch went off."

It's stayed on even though Davis knew opposing teams wanted to test him at the start of the season because of his lack of starts. He and graduate right tackle Branden Bowen were targeted by the Indiana coaches as areas to exploit. Bowen missed last season because of an injury.

The duo was part of a punishing effort against the Hoosiers on Sept. 14 when the Buckeyes rushed for 306 yards with an average of 7.3 yards per carry.

"I try not to focus on stuff that comes from outside the team," Davis said. "I understand that. There's probably going to be multiple comments like that throughout the season."

"If you look at it, Bowen started for a season, but he also got hurt and was out. For me, I don't really have that many game reps. I could see how teams say that."

Day doesn't lose any sleep thinking about the pair.

"I think Branden Bowen and Wyatt Davis are two of the better linemen in the country," he said.

Davis said he and Bowen are just getting started.

"We're getting better as the weeks go

on. We're meshing very well," he said. "It's very fluid. We're all on the same page as far as play after play goes."

It's also important to develop chemistry with sophomore center Josh Myers.

"Me and Wyatt have been close for a long time now," Myers said. "Last season we were together all season long because we were second string together. We're so comfortable next to each other, and I'm so confident in his ability. It makes it easy."

Davis was proud of his second-level block in the Indiana game which helped spring Dobbins for a 26-yard touchdown run.

"It was something we schemed for," Davis said. "I was accountable for that linebacker. It just so happened that when I stayed and tried to finish the block I got in the way of the defender. That's what our coaches have been preaching to us the whole year, to just finish the block because you never know if your block is the one to kind of spring things open."

His performance in the game earned a nod on Instagram from former Ohio State lineman Michael Jordan, a rookie with the Cincinnati Bengals.

"It feels really good especially coming from Michael Jordan," Davis said. "When I came into this program that was a guy who took me under his wing and I looked up to."

Davis and the other four linemen all graded champions by the coaches the first three games.

"We celebrate the wins and stuff like that," he said. "All of us grading out as champions is a cool thing. It's exciting but we out that out of our minds and focus on the mistakes we made in those games that we can improve further on."

"It's more so cool to think about that we're all executing at a high level and if we continue on that path it can be something special."

With that success comes pressure – in a good way – to not let the others down.

"It adds our own little rivalry," Davis said. "Obviously, if the whole line is grading out champion, you don't want to be that guy (that didn't), so it pushes you to work harder and that makes you go harder in the game."



Wyatt Davis

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"Your Head to Toe Buckeye Source"

Ohio State Seeks Redemption Against Nebraska

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

It may not be fair, given the large-scale shift of staff and personnel in the offseason, but there's still a stigma around Ohio State and prime-time games against mediocre opponents. Given that the Buckeyes faltered against Iowa and Purdue the past two seasons, two teams that finished a combined 14-12, in such a significant and stunning fashion, the fear does make some sense. Those kinds of failures rarely happen once, and the Buckeyes suffered the same fate in back-to-back seasons.

It's that stigma that has sparked a pang of anxiety from Buckeye fans and a barrage of questions from the college football world as Ohio State enters its fifth game of the 2019 season: a prime-time, road battle with a decent Nebraska team. The Cornhuskers seem to have all of the elements that Purdue did last season, from a fast-paced, dangerous offense, a young rising head coach, an electric home atmosphere and even a blackout uniform.

The questions, however, aren't about Nebraska. Ohio State's projection against the Huskers, as it is against essentially every team on the schedule, revolves around the Buckeyes. Last year, Ohio State beat itself against Purdue. To avoid a three-peat, the only real key for Ohio State is staying out of its own way.

That isn't to say that Nebraska isn't at least a competent team. Head coach Scott Frost, in his second year, has built an interesting collection of skill talent and seems to have the team at least ready to contend for a bowl, if not compete for the Big Ten title game out of a weak West division.

Quarterback Adrian Martinez is perhaps the most valuable piece on the roster. His playmaking ability alone puts him in the upper echelon of Big Ten quarterbacks and makes him one of the two or three best quarterbacks Ohio State will face this regular season, if not the best quarterback. Martinez has had a pretty solid start to the season, tossing for 1052 yards and seven scores through four games. Now, those games weren't exactly against elite defenses (South Alabama, Colorado, Northern Illinois and Illinois), but the sophomore did what was expected of him.

Martinez has a pretty solid receiver room to throw to as well. Led by junior J.D. Spielman and freshman Wan'Dale Robinson, the Huskers have the ability to gash teams underneath but lack a serious deep threat after losing Stanley Morgan to the NFL after last season. That's fine, given Frost's heavy reliance on run-pass options with quick throws attached to them, but it could hurt Nebraska against an Ohio State defense that has proved impervious to quick hitters underneath through its first four games.

Outside of the short passing game, Nebraska has talent at running back but not a ton of production. Junior Georgia Tech transfer Dedrick Mills (246 yards, five touchdowns) and sophomore Maurice Washington (268 yards, one touchdown) have mostly shared the backfield to this point in the season, but neither has seen a ton of carries in any of the first four games. In fact, the leading rusher (for carries) on the team is actually Martinez, with 61 carries for 234 yards.

While Nebraska has plenty of talent on the outside and at the flashy positions, none of that matters without line play, and through four games, the Cornhuskers have had too many struggles up front to seriously threaten Ohio State's defensive

Get To Know ... NEBRASKA

About Nebraska

- **2019 record:** 3-1 (1-0 Big Ten).
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 3-4; Starters Returning – Offense 5, Defense 5, Specialists 2.
- **Head Coach:** Scott Frost, 5-9 in two seasons at Nebraska., Two years at UCF: 19-7.
- **Series History:** 8th meeting; Ohio State leads 6-1-0.
- **School Facts:** Location – Lincoln, NE; Enrollment – 26,079; Nickname – Cornhuskers; Color – Red; Conference – Big Ten (West Division); Stadium – Memorial Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity – 90,000).

Top Offensive Returners

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Adrian Martinez	61	234	3.8	3
Dedrick Mills	46	236	5.3	5
Maurice Washington	35	268	7.7	1

Passing	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Adrian Martinez	67-109	61.5	1,052	7-2

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
J.D. Spielman	18	383	21.3	1
Wan'Dale Robinson	17	195	11.5	2
Jack Stoll	10	153	15.3	1

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 38.0
Rushing Yards Per Game – 214.8
Passing Yards Per Game – 270/5
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 485.3

2019 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Aug. 31	SOUTH ALABAMA	W, 35-21
Sept. 7	at Colorado	L, 34-31
Sept. 14	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	W, 44-8
Sept. 21	at Illinois	W, 42-38
Sept. 28	OHIO STATE	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 5	NORTHWESTERN	TBA
Oct. 12	at Minnesota	TBA
Oct. 26	INDIANA	TBA
Nov. 2	at Purdue	TBA
Nov. 16	WISCONSIN	TBA
Nov. 23	at Maryland	TBA
Nov. 29	IOWA	2:30 p.m.
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.

Top Defensive Returners

Def. Leaders	Solo-Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Mohamed Barry	18-15	33	1.0-7	1.0-7
Will Honas	13-11	24	4.0-15	1.0-7
Marquel Dismuke	15-5	20	1.0-4	0-0

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Cam Taylor	2	57	28.5	0	48
Eric Lee	2	38	19.0	1	38
Braxton Clark	1	9	9.0	0	9

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 25.2
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 116.9
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 240.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 356.8

front. The line has allowed 10 sacks through four games and has really only found its footing in run blocking once, in a 33-carry, 238-yard team performance against NIU.

Defensively, the Cornhuskers have similar struggles up front, paired with far less skill talent than on the offense. They're allowing 356.8 yards per game and were gashed by the only truly good offense they've played so far, allowing 34 points and 464 yards, including 375 through the air to Colorado quarterback Steven Montez. Unless defensive coordinator Erik Chinander is able to draw up some plays to confuse Justin Fields to create a turnover or two, it seems unlikely that Nebraska's defense will be able to keep Ohio State out of the end zone.

Players To Watch

Martinez is the greatest threat to Ohio State's defense, and really the only player on Nebraska who can truly gash the Buckeyes. His ability as a runner makes him the first real dual-threat that Ohio State's new-look defense has faced this season, and his quick release in Scott Frost's RPO system could allow him to get the football out before Ohio State's defensive line can get to him.

Spielman has put up 383 yards on 18 catches to this point in the season, while Robinson sits at 195 on 17. Those aren't quite Rondale Moore numbers, but both players are dangerous with the football and could give Ohio State a little trouble if the Buckeye defense is too aggressive and leaves openings underneath their zone. If Nebraska's offense is working at all against Ohio State, it will be because Martinez is having success pulling the ball on RPOs and either running or throwing short passes and screens to these two. Tight end Jack Stoll (10-153) is worth mentioning too, but he isn't as good as FAU's Harrison Bryant, whom Ohio State mostly contained (six receptions for 79 yards) in week one.

There really isn't much of anything up front offensively for Nebraska. Tackles Brenden Jaimes and Matt Farniok are the only two returners from last year's starting lineup, and none of the three new faces (left guard Trent Hixson, center Cameron Jurgens and right guard Boe Wilson) have really impressed to this point. So much inexperience inside could mean a big game for Davon Hamilton, Robert Landers and Jashon Cornell.

Defensively, Nebraska has one star and a bunch of good-not-great contributors. Linebacker Mohamed Barry is one of the best in the conference and already has 33 tackles through four games. He leads the team in tackles and will likely be tasked with trying to keep Ohio State's interior rushing attack under wraps.

Senior defensive end Carlos Davis is Nebraska's most dangerous pass rusher, with two and a half sacks and three tackles for loss through four games, though he has a bit of a tendency to disappear at times. Nebraska may look to move him around the line in an attempt to get him the best possible matchup, but it will likely take multiple blitzers for the Cornhuskers to get any serious consistent pressure. With that as the case, look for Chinander to dial up a relatively conservative approach, with lots of zone in an attempt to test Justin Fields' ability to read a defense and to keep the running game in check.

In the backfield, cornerbacks Dicaprio Bootle (six tackles, four PBU) and Lamar Jackson (ten tackles, seven PBU) provide experience and leadership, but Nebraska has two brand-new safeties in junior Marquel Dismuke (20 tackles, three PBU) and sophomore Cam Taylor-Britt (14 tackles, two interceptions) that Ohio State will likely look to pick on with more play-action post plays. Eric Lee Jr. (11 tackles, two interceptions) will shift in at safety as well, though he mostly serves as a ball-hawking nickelback, rotating with JoJo Domann (17 tackles, four for a loss).

Punter Isaac Armstrong isn't so much a player to watch as he is a name to be aware of, because if the game comes down to a kick, he'll become crucial. He handles both kicking and punting for the Cornhuskers, and while he's put up solid punting stats this season (18 punts, 45.9 avg), he's hit on just two of his five kicks on the season.

The Cornhuskers have a bright future, a good coach, and some very interesting, talented pieces, but this is still a team that went 4-8 last season, and 4-8 the year before. Frost has the talent to build a great program, and he has the fancy, flashy players on the roster, but the foundation is still being built. The lines have plenty of work to be done, and against a team such as Ohio State, that's a weakness that will be tough to overcome.

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Projected Depth Charts

How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. NEBRASKA RUSH DEFENSE

What's wrong with the Buckeyes' running game? One week after J.K. Dobbins ran for 193 yards and backup Master Teague added 106 at Indiana, OSU had a mere 227 on 5.4 yards per carry in the 76-5 wipeout of Miami (Ohio). Well, there's nothing the matter. With five scoring drive of 53 yards or less and facing a porous pass defense, there simply weren't that many opportunities to run. Dobbins had 52 yards and a touchdown on only eight rushes (6.5 average) while sitting the second half. The good news is he'll be fresh going into the game against Nebraska. Teague had 34 yards on 11 totes (3.1) but if he's going to spell Dobbins in big games, he can't afford to lose a fumble as he did against the RedHawks. More good news for the Buckeyes – Illinois ran for 221 yards (5.8) vs. the Cornhuskers on Sept. 21 after Nebraska entered the game yielding about two yards per rush. The Huskers rank 41st nationally in rush defense (116.8 yards per game). OSU is 13th in rushing offense (262.0) and averages 5.9 yards per carry. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

NEBRASKA RUSH OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Cornhuskers will offer a varied attack beginning with quarterback Adrian Martinez. He is 15th nationally in total offense with 234 of his 1,286 yards coming on the ground for a 3.8 average with three touchdowns. The wild card is Maurice Washington. He had 89 yards on 10 carries but left the Illini game with an injury in the second quarter. His 268 yards this season have come on a 7.7-yard average. He has one TD and a long run of 60. True freshman Wan'Dale Robinson stepped in during the Illinois game and posted 89 yards and a score from 19 carries. He also had eight catches for 79 yards and two TDs. He might be Nebraska's version of Purdue's Rondale Moore, who torched the Buckeyes for 170 reception yards and two TDs and ran for 24 more last year. The Huskers average 219.5 yards to rank 34th. The OSU rush defense is seventh (60.3). **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. NEBRASKA PASS DEFENSE

Justin Fields has 13 TD passes against zero interceptions. He is completing 69.5 percent of his passes for 880 yards. His ability to scramble creates plays, and his downfield running forces the defense into making decisions that usually end up bad for opponents. The other problem in trying to stop Fields is that he has numerous targets. One game it's K.J. Hill. The next time it's Chris Olave or Binjimen Victor, et al. The tight ends even had three catches vs. Miami. The Buckeyes average 264.5 yards through the air while Nebraska gives up 270.5, a stat lowered by limiting Illinois to 78 yards on 9-of-23 passing. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

NEBRASKA PASS OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

As mentioned earlier, Martinez is a gifted dual-threat QB. In the Illinois game he had a career-high 445 total yards, including 22-of-34 passing for 327 yards. He tied his career best of three passing TDs without throwing an interception. His total yardage was the third best in program history. For the season he is averaging 263.0 yards per game through the air with a completion rate of 61.5 percent (67 of 109) with seven touchdowns and two picks. Receiver J.D. Spielman had seven grabs for 159 yards vs. the Illini, the 25th straight game he's had at least two catches. Martinez will be looking for the big plays vs. the Buckeyes, who are 19th nationally in pass defense (161.8) with four INTs. The Buckeyes lead the nation with 20 sacks. **EDGE: NEBRASKA**

SPECIAL TEAMS

With kicker Barrett Pickering missing his fourth straight game due to injury, Nebraska struggled with a blocked extra point and a missed 27-yard field goal vs. Illinois. The Cornhuskers did not put any of their first six kickoffs into the end zone, and Illinois' Dre Brown had 179 return yards on five tries. The Buckeyes in the past three games have blocked a field-goal attempt and two punts. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

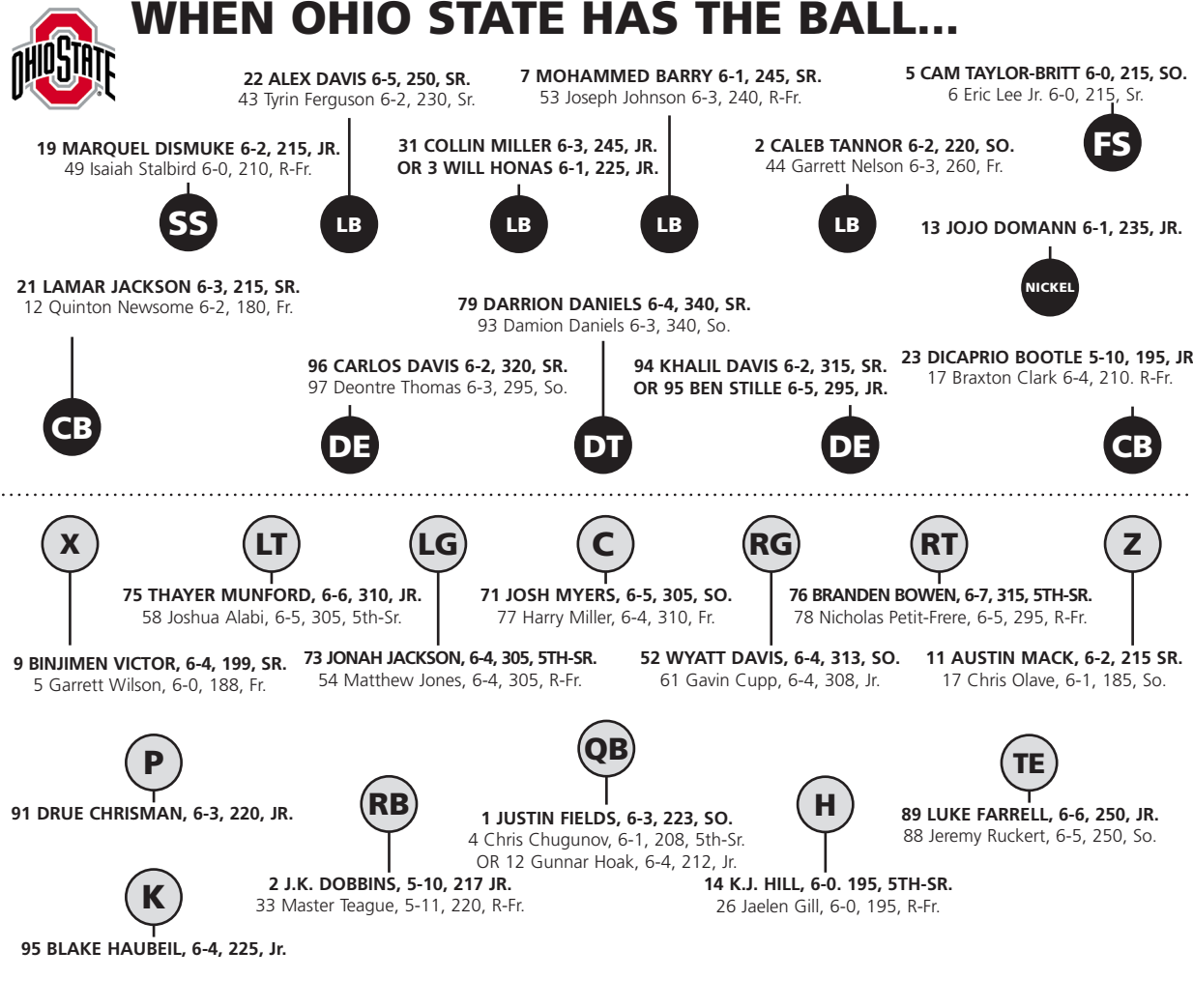
INTANGIBLES

The Cornhuskers were unimpressive against Illinois but, yes, they might have had one eye on the Buckeyes' visit to Lincoln. Nebraska lost four fumbles and had 11 penalties for 119 yards one game after having just one penalty against Northern Illinois. This is the type of game former OSU coach Urban Meyer lamented, a night game on the road. Sometimes (Purdue, 2018) his fears were realized. The Buckeyes under Ryan Day seem to have a better focus game by game, and so far, he's kept them grounded. **EDGE: EVEN**

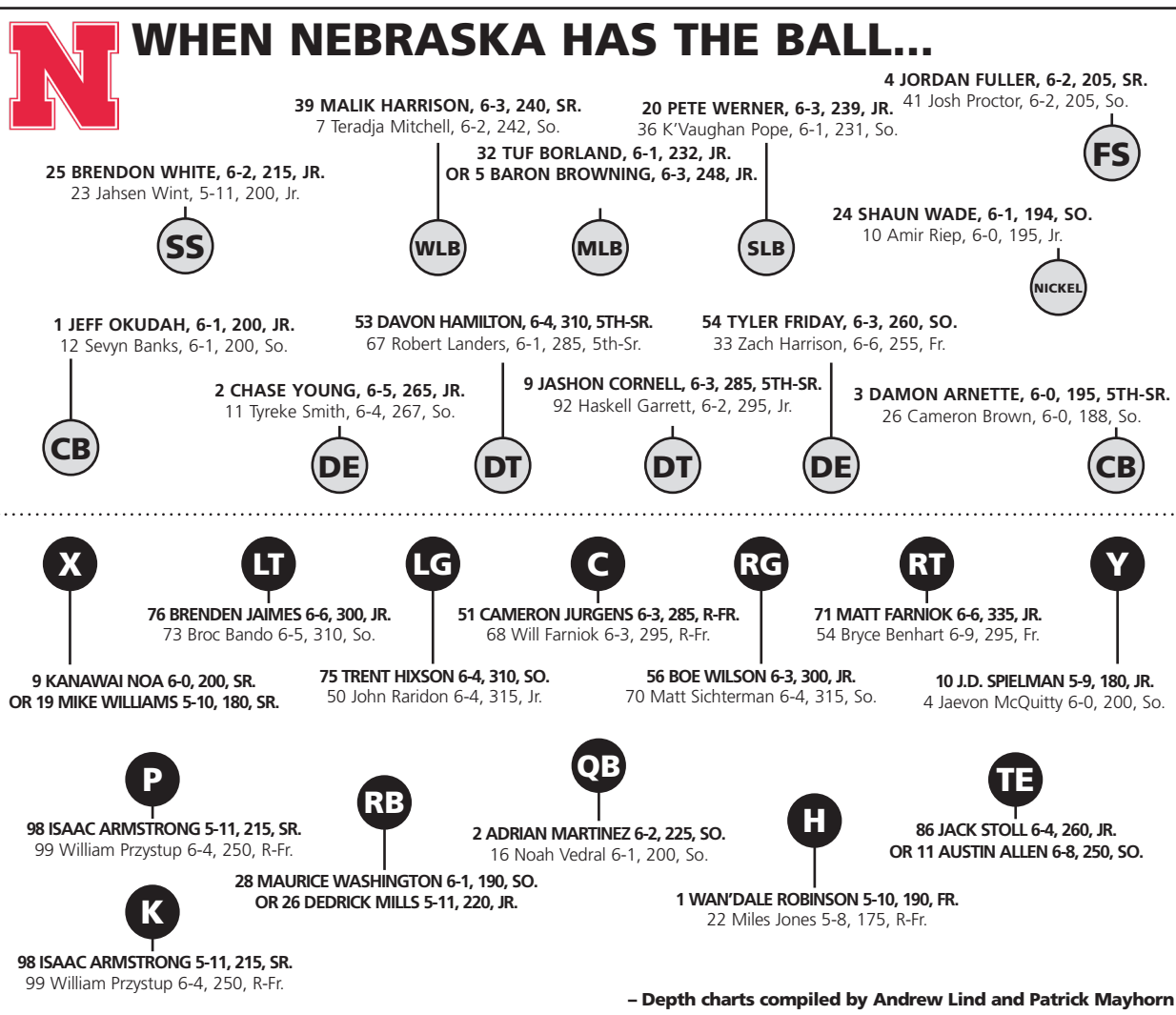
STAFF PREDICTION

This is Day's most challenging road test as head coach. Memorial Stadium will be rockin', and remember that a not-so-good Huskers team led the Buckeyes 21-16 at the half in Columbus last season before succumbing 36-31. Expect more thrills this time around. **OHIO STATE, 38-27**

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



WHEN NEBRASKA HAS THE BALL...



- Depth charts compiled by Andrew Lind and Patrick Mayhorn

Revisiting Ohio State's 2011 Collapse In Lincoln

By WYATT CROSER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State football's 2011 season is often looked at as a dark point for the program.

The team finished with a 6-7 record, and it was a season filled with plenty of controversy following the aftermath of Tattogate and the Jim Tressel coaching resignation, leading to Luke Fickell taking over late in the spring.

"A lot of unknowns, a lot of, I don't know, anxiety was the best word, I think, for a lot of people," Letterman Row contributor Tim May, who was a writer at The Columbus Dispatch during the 2011 season, said of that transitional year. "Because it wasn't just Luke Fickell. I mean they were playing without five or six of their best players."

Some of those players included quarterback Terrelle Pryor, running back Daniel "Boom" Herron and wide receiver DeVier Posey, who were each suspended the first five games of the season following violations that included selling memorabilia for cash and getting free tattoos.

The violations were enough for Pryor to head to the NFL supplemental draft in the offseason, but Herron and Posey stuck around, and after five games and a 3-2 record for the Buckeyes, Ohio State seemed ready to spark a turnaround in the final half of the season.

During this 3-2 stretch, Ohio State was beginning to move away from quarterback Joe Bauserman, instead leaning heavily on true freshman Braxton Miller to lead the offense with his dual-threat capabilities.

All of this was the buildup to a matchup against Nebraska, a game that was not only the first time since 1956 the two teams had faced off, but the first time Ohio State had ever played in Lincoln and the first in-conference home game the Cornhuskers had ever played as a member of the Big Ten.

"We weren't overly confident at all," Ohio State historian Jack Park told BSB. "The week before we had lost to Michigan State 10-7 in what was really an ugly game. I mean it was really an ugly loss there."

"Going into the Nebraska game, it was kind of a wait-and-see type of thing."

That "ugly" game saw both Bauserman and Miller struggle to get it going, with the pair



FILE PHOTO

BUCKEYES SQUANDERED BIG LEAD – Ohio State led Nebraska by as many as 21 points on Oct. 8, 2011, before quarterback Braxton Miller was injured in the third quarter. The Cornhuskers then rallied to win the game 34-27.

combining to gain exactly 100 yards of offense between them and with the only points on the day for the Buckeyes coming from a touchdown pass by Bauserman to Evan Spencer from 33 yards out with 10 seconds to play to pad the stats.

"Ohio State was considered, at that point, just an average team, at best, in the Big Ten," May said.

But the turnaround was supposed to happen against Nebraska, even with the Cornhuskers ranked No. 14. The team was supposed to gain those star playmakers in Herron and Posey who could help either quarterback get the offense on track.

Instead, on Oct. 3, five days before the matchup, Herron and starting offensive lineman Marcus Hall were hit with another game suspension, and Posey was hit with five more games, leaving all of those key contributors out for the Buckeyes' first trip to Lincoln.

"It's like imagine Ohio State right now having to play without Justin Fields and J.K. Dobbins and maybe Binjimen Victor," May said. "Imagine that team right now, as good as

it is, imagine it without those guys."

Without all that talent, May said it was one of the few times in his 40-plus years covering the team when he went in expecting Ohio State to lose.

"Nebraska joined the Big Ten, this is the first game there, and there was a lot of sense of excitement around that game from the Nebraska side," May said. "I remember distinctly that I didn't think Ohio State was going to win the game. I was feeling like I had gotten it all wrong at halftime."

Starting Out Strong

Ohio State got the ball first and, with Miller at the helm, drove 56 yards in nearly eight minutes of play to set up a 41-yard Drew Basil field goal. Nebraska responded with three points of its own, but the Buckeyes scored touchdowns on each of their next two drives, one on a 32-yard throw from Miller to tight end Jake Stoneburner and another on a 63-yard run by running back Carlos Hyde on the first play of the drive.

All of a sudden, Ohio State, without attempt-

ing a single pass in the second quarter, burst out to a 17-3 lead, and a field goal from each team made it 20-6 at halftime. The Buckeyes led in total yards 246-117.

"The great thing about Braxton Miller was he was a threat every time he had the ball in his hands, which opened it up for a lot of other guys," May said. "I remember Carlos Hyde had a hell of a run in that game in the first half, and you're just kind of going, 'Oh my goodness.'"

"Even Braxton was too tough to tame, at least until he got whacked, and then it was a totally different deal."

'A Tale Of Two Halves'

The third quarter started out as the first two had for the Buckeyes. After a Nebraska three-and-out deep in its own territory, Miller led the Buckeyes on a seven-play, 47-yard drive to make the game 27-6 with a 1-yard Hyde touchdown run.

Another Cornhuskers punt, and it looked like the game was over.

But three plays into the next drive, Miller fumbled on the Ohio State 24-yard line, and

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Nebraska recovered, and a quick score made it 27-13 with plenty of time remaining in the game.

All still seemed fine for the Buckeyes to hold on, but on the next drive, Miller went down with an ankle injury and he would not return for the remainder of the game. He left with 91 yards on 10 rushes and with five completed passes on eight attempts for 95 yards and a touchdown.

Bauserman then came in but could not keep the drive going, and thus started one of the worst collapses in program history.

The then-senior quarterback would complete a pass later in the third quarter, a 13-yard throw to Corey Brown for a first down, but would miss all nine of his other attempts for a dismal stat line of 1 for 10, 13 yards, zero touchdowns and an interception. Those numbers were worse when just the fourth quarter is factored in: 0 for 7, zero yards and an interception.

"They were up 27-6, I mean it was crazy, and then, bless his heart, Joe Bauserman came in," May said. "This was not a team equipped for throwing the football. That's not making fun of anybody, that's just the facts."

Many of Bauserman's incompletions came in the form of throwaways, something that was made into a comical chart on social media and that still lives on as a memory from this historic game.

Bauserman cannot get all the blame, however, as the Buckeye's defense also began to crumble as the game progressed.

After allowing a touchdown on the Miller fumble with a shortened field, Ohio State gave up 80 yards in seven plays after Bauserman's first snaps, quickly bringing the game back within one possession, 27-20, just over nine minutes after going up by three scores.

The Cornhuskers' offense was led by quarterback Taylor Martinez and running back Rex Burkhead, with the former scoring both touchdowns in the third quarter. The first was an 18-yard run to the end zone, and the other was a 36-yard throw, with his unorthodox style, to Quincy Enunwa.

"I mean everybody made fun of him because he threw the ball, it looked like he was throwing the shotput when he threw the ball," May said of Martinez. "But that was one of his, maybe that might have been his best moment ever as a collegian."

After punts from both teams, it was Burkhead's time to shine through, catching a pass from Martinez and going 30 yards for a touchdown to tie the game 27-27 with 7:35 to go in the fourth quarter.

Three plays from scrimmage later, Bauserman threw an interception that led to a four-play, 78-yard drive capped off with a 17-yard scoring to give Nebraska its first lead of the game with 5:10 remaining.

A Bauserman sack and two Bauserman incompletions later, and Ohio State punted with just over four minutes left in the game. The Buckeyes would not get the ball back again.

Nebraska won the game 34-27, sealing a 21-point comeback, the largest in the program's history.

Ohio State had 13 plays in the fourth quarter on offense that went for a combined 17 yards. Nebraska had 26 plays in the final quarter that totaled 187 yards.

"One touchdown and Ohio State would have been it, but they didn't come close. I mean they didn't sniff it after Bauserman went in," May said. "You just kind of went, 'Wow, this season isn't working for Luke Fickell and Co. It's not all his fault, but people aren't going to look at it that way.'"

Park said a crushing loss in that fashion meant more than just an extra tally in the wrong part of the win-loss column.

"It was just so disappointing at the end, I mean to be up as we were, 27-6, and then have a fourth quarter like that, and it just took a lot of air out of what might otherwise have been a pretty good season."

The Aftermath

Ohio State, with the return of Herron and Hall, recovered well from the loss in Lincoln,

winning its next three games, two of which came against ranked opponents in a 17-7 victory against No. 16 Illinois and a 33-29 win on Homecoming night against No. 12 Wisconsin, punctuated by late-game heroics from Miller.

But after climbing back up to a 6-3 record, the good fortune came to an end, with the Buckeyes dropping their last four games, including a 24-17 loss in the Gator Bowl, to close out the season at 6-7. It was the first time Ohio State had ended a season with a losing record since 1988, and it hasn't happened again since.

But both May and Park agree that Fickell shouldn't be blamed entirely, if at all, for this historically rough season in his lone year at the helm, especially with the current Cincinnati head coach not knowing he would be taking over Tressel's position until the end of May.

"I think that Luke Fickell should be given a lot of credit for what he did for Ohio State football in that season given the circumstances," Park said. "Let's say Luke had taken over as head coach around the third or fourth of January, it would have been a whole different situation, and he might have made some changes in the coaching staff too. Who knows?"

May echoed that sentiment and went further in saying there likely would have been many changes to the coaching staff if Fickell had been named head coach earlier.

"Luke had been stuck with Jim Tressel's offensive coaches," May said. "He probably would have made, if he'd been named in January, he would have probably made some wholesale changes on the offensive side, and he didn't have time to do that."

"The best term I've heard is Luke Fickell took one for the team. I mean that's the best way of summing up what happened there."

But how much would a win, on the road, against a ranked Nebraska team have helped shift the tides?

Neither May nor Park seems convinced it would have made a significant impact on the

four-game losing skid at the end of the season, especially with how much the team rebounded in the Illinois and Wisconsin matchups.

For May, while he does think the loss to the Cornhuskers was "the beginning of the end for Luke Fickell's first run as a head coach," he said it was a different loss that came later on in the season that officially ended Ohio State's chances of redeeming a lost year, a 26-23 loss to a Purdue team that came in with a 4-5 record.

"I thought the loss to Purdue was the one that cemented the fact that they were going to look elsewhere," May said of Fickell's chances of keeping his head-coaching spot. "When they lost at Purdue later, that was it. I mean Ohio State was unofficially officially in the market for a new head coach, presumably Urban Meyer, but I think up until the midpoint of the season, until things kind of went south, I thought Luke had a hell of a shot."

But even if a different outcome in one game in October – the first of its kind ever between Ohio State and Nebraska, who were new in-conference foes – didn't change the course of history for Fickell and the 2011 Buckeyes, one thing is almost certain: Removing just one injury from that game could have changed its outcome.

If Miller hadn't hurt his ankle, the dual-threat quarterback likely would have kept Ohio State ahead, as he had done all game long, and he likely would not have gone 1 for 10 down the stretch as Bauserman did.

And if Ohio State had survived in Lincoln and the rest of its schedule remained the same, the Buckeyes would have won three straight games against ranked opponents and kept their 23-year streak of winning records intact.

"Let's be straight-up here, Braxton Miller doesn't get hurt they beat Nebraska, and who knows then where they're going," May said. "They win that game in Nebraska, he doesn't get hurt I think they do win the game, and who knows?"

"But that's ifs and buts, brother."

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Quarterback Justin Fields Gains Teammates' Trust

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Whenever a player joins a new team, especially a reigning conference champion, he must acclimate himself to gain credibility.

Justin Fields arrived from Georgia as a sophomore transfer and the highest-rated recruit to ever represent the Scarlet and Gray. Fields' massive hype train followed him to his new team, which had gone 13-1 with wins in the Big Ten Championship Game and the Rose Bowl a season before.

"The more that we practice – you see talent – but really what you want to do is see him earn the respect of his peers," Ohio State offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson said of Fields Aug. 21, "because no one is anointed in this game. You have to go earn it."

Passing game coordinator and quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich met with the media before the Buckeyes' fourth game against Miami (Ohio) and was asked about Fields' down-to-earth demeanor.

"Every leader on a team needs some street credit," Yurcich said Sept. 17. "You have to produce to a certain degree, and he's produced. He feels more comfortable commanding the troops and taking control. That confidence has always been there, but now it's more outward. It's not just inner confidence. People can see that. He's got a swagger or a presence about him that his teammates take to, and there is that reliance on your teammates and the confidence that they have in him and that he has in them as well."

Fields quickly gained his teammates' confidence, guiding them to a 4-0 start with 880 passing yards and 13 touchdowns and 150 rushing yards and six touchdowns. The efficient dual-threat quarterback completed 66 of 95 passes through four games.

Following practice on Sept. 18, Fields joined the media scrum surrounding senior wideout Binjimen Victor, prompting a reporter to ask Victor if his quarterback was overrated.

"No, my quarterback is pretty good," Victor responded with a smile.

"I like that answer," Fields said while walking away.

Victor has enjoyed an excellent start to his senior season, hauling in 15 catches for 242 yards and two touchdowns. He was asked about developing chemistry with Fields, who arrived on campus in January.

"All of our receivers, we've been working with Justin since he got here," Victor said. "It's no surprise that we're connecting and making those plays when we need to, so we're good."

Fields and Co. have been "good" since the season opener against Florida Atlantic, when the sophomore signal caller tied Dwyane Haskins' record for most touchdowns responsible for in a first start at quarterback with five (four passing, one rushing).

Then Fields led Ohio State to a 42-0 demolition of Cincinnati, completing 80 percent (20 of 25) of his passes for 224 yards and two touchdowns along with 42 rushing yards and two ground scores.

Proving the first two games weren't a fluke, Fields posted four touchdowns (three passing, one rushing) at Indiana in his first Big Ten matchup before adding six more (four passing, two rushing) against Miami (Ohio).

Head coach Ryan Day said Fields was light-years ahead of where he expected the talented quarterback to be. He clarified what he meant when questioned about what Fields had to fix to have advanced so far in his progress.

"When somebody with that little experience comes into a situation like playing quarterback at Ohio State, there are just a lot of things that go on," Day said. "There are a lot of things that he needs to handle, and so far, he's handled them."

"But he's going to quickly learn here that at Ohio State, the more you win, the more the stakes get higher and higher and the more is expected. That all comes with it, but he's got a good head on his shoulders. I think he handles it well. He's got good poise, and he and (Yurcich) have

got to get in that room and just keep on working on getting better."

It may be difficult to imagine the quarterback who has accounted for 19 touchdowns through four games could still have a lot to work on, but his coaches see plenty of room to get better.

"What we're trying to do is just find ways to improve every day – off every practice, off every game film that we review, find ways to get better," Yurcich said. "And how can we help him become the best quarterback that he can be? We're not there yet, and the best part is he knows that there's a lot of room to improve."

Considering Fields has begun his sophomore campaign at a Heisman-caliber pace, averaging 220.0 passing yards, 37.5 rushing yards and 4.8 touchdowns responsible for per game, one might expect him to get a big head and overlook the importance of practice. That's not how Fields was raised in Kennesaw, Ga.

"I've been like this my whole life," Fields said. "My dad has always told me to stay humble, so I'm just going to keep doing the same things I've been doing, before the first game, before all this noise from the outside came up anyway. That's my plan, and I just feel like as a team we're just going to keep doing that and just work each and every day."

Not only is Fields the highest-rated prospect to ever play for Ohio State, he is rated the eighth-highest recruit according to 247Sports since Internet rankings began. At 6-3 and 223 pounds, Fields runs a 4.38 40-yard dash and could surely coast off his athleticism alone, but he's a grinder and a student of the game.

"When you look at the way he approaches his work, he handles it like a pro in terms of knowing when he steps on the field, he can take a meeting to a field," Day said of Fields. "That's important for a quarterback. There's a lot of guys who are talented out there, but when you need to take 20 reps to run a play, that's not good."

"We throw a lot of offense at him. We're doing a lot of things on offense right now, and whether it's the spread stuff or the 12

stuff or under center or shotgun, I would say right now we're probably doing more stuff now overall than we've ever done just in terms of variety, and so for him to be able to handle all that is strong."

Because of both Fields' elite athleticism and his intelligence, Day, Wilson and Yurcich can rely on the young quarterback to handle a dense playbook with the capability of running many different types of plays.

The Ohio State coaching staff is not the only group of Buckeyes taking notice of how Fields' vast physical and mental talents give the team a variety of options in play calling. The sophomore gunslinger has developed some credibility among his first-year teammates.

"He brings a lot to the table," Victor said of Fields. "He can throw, he can run. He opens up the offense pretty well. There's a lot of things he can do well."

"They can't really pack the box because we've got outside guys, and they can't really play off because our receivers are pretty good, too. Justin brings a lot to the table, and they've got to respect the run and the pass."

Ohio State entered the season with a lot of question marks from outside observers, primarily pertaining to its first-year head coach and untested sophomore quarterback. Fields answered any doubters, excelling in four convincing wins in four tries.

While many may have been surprised by Fields' hot start, especially those who wrote the Buckeyes off before the season, the former five-star recruit knew success was coming.

"It's kind of what I expected," Fields said. "I came in here with the mind-set where I have to do all that I can to be the best player I can be. Seeing myself where I am right now, it's not surprising, but I'm just glad to be in the place I am right now."

Fields' play has spoken for itself, but the Kennesaw (Ga.) Harrison product has continued to develop as a leader since arriving in Columbus. The quarterback position inherently demands leadership, and Day said instead of trying to be a replica of Haskins or J.T. Barrett, Fields must be comfortable in his own skin.

"There's certain characteristics that all leaders have that really good quarterbacks have and traits and virtues," Day said. "but at the end of the day, you have to believe in who you are, and you have to be yourself. J.T. was very different than Dwayne, and Justin is very different than Dwayne or J.T., and so you have to just be yourself in the end."

"There are certain things that we're all working on to make him be the leader that we need him to be in the end, but that's with any young quarterback, so we'll keep working at it. He's good. He takes to coaching. He's very intelligent, and all we can ask is that he gets better every week."

While Fields has been preoccupied with mastering an immense playbook, scoring touchdowns and enhancing his leadership skills, he's earned significant street credit in the process.

"He's still adjusting to it, but he's taking more of the role early because he's making plays and getting more confidence and being able to do that," fifth-year senior receiver K.J. Hill said of Fields. "He's got our trust and the O-line's trust, so we just follow in behind him."



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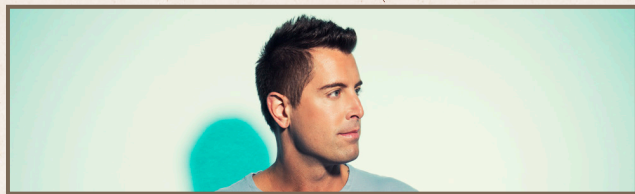
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TUESDAY — 6:40

- Bark In The Park, presented by Kroger, Rachael Ray™ Nutrish® & Milk-Bone®. Exclusive packages available at Reds.com/DogDay

WEDNESDAY — 6:40

THURSDAY — 12:35

- Senior Days, presented by Humana
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FRIDAY — 7:10

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- Fireworks Friday, presented by Adams Recovery Center

SATURDAY — 4:10

- Ken Griffey Jr. 150 Series Bobblehead, presented by Kroger (first 20,000 fans)
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- 2019 Reds Team Photo (all fans)



SEPT. 24-26

TUESDAY — 6:40

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- Reds Handheld Radio, presented by Kroger and Laura's Lean Beef (first 20,000 fans)



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Ohio State Welcomes Oklahoma CB Commit

Ohio State's 76-5 win over Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 21 served as the backdrop for one of the more intriguing visitor lists of the current recruiting cycle, as the Buckeyes hosted Little Elm, Texas, four-star cornerback Ryan Watts – an Oklahoma commit – for an official visit.

The 6-3, 187-pound Watts, who is considered the 19th-best cornerback and No. 255 prospect overall in the 2020 recruiting class, has been committed to Oklahoma since April.

However, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day and co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley have maintained contact with Watts in hopes of flipping the talented prospect from his pledge to the Sooners.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Andrew Lind

Aside from an unofficial visit to Columbus back in early June, Watts had kept his recruitment relatively close to the vest. He'd given no indication that his commitment to the Sooners was wavering, either, but it's now hard to deny his interest in the Buckeyes after two trips to campus in a matter of four months.

Ohio State is actively looking to bring on one more cornerback this cycle to put alongside Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star Lejond Cavazos and La Habra, Calif., four-star Clark Phillips, and Watts is probably a more realistic option than Cavazos' teammate at IMG, LSU five-star pledge Elias Ricks.

It will be interesting if the Sooners can get Watts back on campus – though they don't have a home game for several weeks (West Virginia on Oct. 19) – or if things quickly turn in the Buckeyes' favor and he flips his pledge in the coming days.

WR Commit Mookie Cooper Attends Win

It's been an interesting summer for St. Louis Pattonville Senior four-star wide receiver Mookie Cooper, who committed to Ohio State on July 8.

As previously reported in Buckeye Sports Bulletin, Cooper transferred from St. Louis Trinity Catholic in late August in order to graduate early.

It's a fairly common practice for elite student-athletes who hope to make immediate impacts at their colleges of choice to enroll in the winter, but most private schools across the country do not allow high school seniors to finish their coursework ahead of schedule.

A similar situation unfolded this offseason with Ohio State five-star offensive tackle commit Paris Johnson, who transferred from Cincinnati St. Xavier to Cincinnati Princeton in May. But unlike Johnson – who is dominating in the trenches for the Vikings this fall – Cooper is still awaiting word on his eligibility for this season.

The hope, according to multiple reports, is that the issue will be resolved in the next week so that Cooper can suit up for the Pirates at their next game on Sept. 27.

In the meantime, Cooper used the time away from his new teammates to his advantage and took an official visit to Ohio State for the win over Miami. It was his first time on campus during a game day, as his previous visits bookended the recruiting dead period (June 24-July 25).

While on campus, Cooper and his mother spent time with wide receivers coach Brian Hartline and quality control coach Keenan Bailey, who could be seen sharing tips with Cooper on the sideline before the game.

Other commits who attended the game on Sept. 21 include the aforementioned Johnson; 2020 Beech Grove, Ind., three-star offensive guard Josh Fryar; 2020 Pickerington (Ohio) Central three-star defensive end Ty Hamilton; 2020 Norwalk, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Trey Leroux; 2021 Pickerington (Ohio)



ANDREW LIND

TAKING IN THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS – Ohio State four-star wide receiver commit Mookie Cooper was among the handful of recruits to attend the Buckeyes' 76-5 thrashing of Miami (Ohio).

North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer; Richfield (Ohio) Revere four-star offensive tackle Ben Christman; and Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard.

The Buckeyes also welcomed 2021 Warren (Mich.) Mott three-star defensive end Tyson Watson and 2021 Twinsburg, Ohio, three-star cornerback Alex Branch, among a handful of other lesser-known prospects.

CB Henry Gray Commits To Nebraska

There was a point in time where it

seemed as if Ohio State was sure to land a commitment from Miami Central four-star cornerback Henry Gray.

The Buckeyes welcomed the 6-0, 172-pounder to campus for an unofficial visit on March 23, which coincided with Student Appreciation Day at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. It went so well that a number of teams stopped recruiting Gray altogether because they believed his recruitment was locked up.

"It exceeded my expectations," Gray told Buckeye Sports Bulletin shortly after the visit concluded. "The school is great, and the facilities are awesome. I can't wait

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A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1989

Ohio State had an excellent recruiting season in 1989 but managed to lure only two inside linebackers to play for the Buckeyes. Head coach John Cooper and his staff had recruited Don Davis from Gahanna (Ohio) Lincoln and Steve Tovar from Elyria (Ohio) West to the team the previous spring. Tovar was one of the team's leading tacklers in the early season, while Davis was likely to be redshirted. While the two represented the future for the Buckeyes at inside linebacker, the team was faced with some depth problems at that position after the 1989 season.

Derek Isaman and Orlando Craig were seniors, leaving only Judah Herman, Brent Johnson and Tony Closson to join Tovar and Davis at inside linebacker. Andy Gurd was also set to return but had lost substantial time to a shoulder injury. Fortunately for the Buckeyes, Ohio was stocked with plenty of high school stars at inside linebacker.

Recruiting experts generally agreed that the top players at that position in the state included Derrick Terrell of Middletown, Randy Mitchell of Cleveland East Tech, Trevor Walker of Lancaster and Ryan Wilson of Dayton Meadowdale.

25 Years Ago – 1994

Juan Wolfe might have been a budding young football player, but he knew a thing or two about tradition.

An impressively built inside linebacker (6-3, 240) at Campbell (Ohio) Memorial High School, the highly recruited Wolfe said he was already focused on just three schools – Ohio State, Penn State and Illinois. Of course, Wolfe liked that trio for its very recent reputation at linebacker.

His hero was current Buckeye linebacker Lorenzo Styles. "He's a big role model for me," Wolfe said of Styles. "I'd have to say Lorenzo is number one and Derrick Brooks (of Florida State) is right behind him in my mind."

20 Years Ago – 1999

Mentor, Ohio, tight end Jason Caldwell became OSU's 13th verbal commitment Sept. 21.

Caldwell (6-5, 265, 4.76) received his first scholarship offer of any kind Sept. 18 on the Ohio Stadium turf from OSU coach John Cooper before the Buckeyes faced Ohio University.

"It really took me by surprise," Caldwell said. "It was the first offer I've had."

It was not a surprise that Ohio State was the first to take a chance of Caldwell, though. He first came to the light of day during OSU's summer camp. There, he turned in a respectable 40-yard time and also jumped 29 inches in the vertical leap. Campbell was a testament to the power of impressing the OSU coaches in person at their camp.

"I would never have been lucky enough to get a Division I offer in football – I'd probably be going to Division II or III – if I'd never been seen down at the camp," Caldwell said.

15 Years Ago – 2004

Ever since Athol Springs (N.Y.) St. Francis defensive end Doug Worthington visited the Ohio State campus during the OSU football camp over the summer, he maintained that the Buckeyes were at or near the top of his list but that he wanted to visit other schools before making up his mind.

Come the middle of September, Worthington realized that he had found everything he was looking for in Columbus. That prompted him to decide to issue a commitment to the program Sept. 15, making him the 11th member of Ohio State's class of 2005.

"Every time I think of what I want out of the school I go to, Ohio State is at the top of my categories," Worthington told BSB. "I know that Ohio State is a school I'm very interested in so I thought, 'Why waste my time?' There's a whole bunch of things I want to do my senior year, and Ohio State has everything to offer."

10 Years Ago – 2009

Ohio State had no intention of taking Drew Basil or any other kicking specialist in its recruiting class of 2010. In addition to the fact that kicker/punter Ben Buchanan was currently enjoying his redshirt freshman season and had three more years of eligibility, space was limited in a class that was expected to total only around 17 members.

During the tail end of Basil's junior year at Chillicothe, Ohio, his head coach, Bill Davidson, was speaking with OSU defensive coordinator Jim Heacock. Heacock, Davidson's position coach in college, did not like his chances of pitching Basil to OSU head

coach Jim Tressel.

"He told me that Drew was really, really good, but they had (Buchanan)," Davidson told BSB. "Coach Heacock told me, 'We love him, but we don't think Coach Tressel is going to let us give that scholarship away.'"

Undeterred, Basil trekked to Columbus in late June to take part in Ohio State's kicking camp. A few days later, Davidson received a phone call from Heacock with a decidedly different tone.

"The next thing I know Ohio State has made an offer," Davidson said. "The answer was that Drew was just so good that they really didn't feel they had a choice."

Basil committed to the Buckeyes on July 2.

Five Years Ago – 2014

Cleveland Benedictine four-star linebacker Jerome Baker (6-1, 205) committed to Florida on July 11, but he appeared to at least be taking a second look at the school that was once his No. 1 choice.

Baker took an unofficial visit to Ohio State for the Cincinnati game. His proximity to the capital city made it possible to visit unofficially – in fact, the Bengals had played at Columbus Bishop Watterson the night before the Cincinnati contest – meaning he could use a future visit to Ohio State as an official visit.

"It's always exciting to go and watch an Ohio State game," he said before visiting. "I'm still committed to Florida, though, and my situation is good with them. I'm going to be taking my official visit on Oct. 11, and that's the LSU game, which will be a fun time. I am 100 percent committed to Florida."

One Year Ago – 2018

Defensive end Jack Sawyer made an unofficial visit to Ohio State for the Tulane game. The 6-5, 220-pounder returned to the campus from nearby Pickerington North for the first time since his camp experience in June. The Buckeyes had offered April 6.

Urban Meyer, Larry Johnson, Alex Grinch and defensive coordinator Greg Schiano had established a relationship back then with Sawyer. Before his return to campus, he looked forward to further building those bonds with OSU's coaching staff.

"Just getting to see everybody again," Sawyer told BSB, "Coach Johnson, Coach Meyer, Coach Grinch, Coach Schiano.

to get back there soon."

Fast-forward six months, though, and things have changed considerably.

Gray took quite the tumble down the Buckeyes' priority chart in recent months, so he committed to Nebraska on Sept. 19 – just a few days after he took an official visit with the Cornhuskers.

How did Gray go from sure thing to someone Ohio State will have to face every

year for the foreseeable future? Coaches build new relationships, higher-rated prospects land offers and so forth.

The Buckeyes – particularly the aforementioned Hafley, co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison and special teams/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes – simply liked Cavazos and Phillips – both of whom committed this spring – more than Gray.

Ricks and Watts would fall into that

category, as well, which is why Gray started taking visits elsewhere this summer and into the fall. Florida, Michigan and Penn State were also in the running until Nebraska made a sudden push in his recruitment.

Georgia Tech Commit Sets Ohio State Official

Ohio State's nationwide search for a

running back rages on, but the lack of a commit at the position for the current recruiting cycle could be resolved in the next month or two.

It is already known that Lancaster, Texas, four-star Kevontre Bradford and Dallas Jesuit four-star E.J. Smith – the son of NFL Hall of Famer Emmitt Smith – will

Continued On Page 30



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Top-Rated Cornerback Remains Interested In OSU

Continued From Page 29

take their official visits on Oct. 5 and Nov. 23, respectively. But now Dalton, Ga., three-star Jahmyr Gibbs can be added to the list, as he'll attend the game against Maryland on Nov. 9 in an unofficial capacity.

The fact that three higher-rated, uncommitted prospects have either visited campus – including Dublin (Ohio) Coffman four-star Michael Drennen, who attended the win over Cincinnati on Sept. 7 – or have already scheduled official visits would suggest Gibbs is a bit lower on the priority chart.

However, if the Buckeyes were to miss out on someone like Bradford, for example, running backs coach Tony Alford might push a little harder to flip Gibbs from his commitment to Georgia Tech.

Gibbs, who has been committed to the Yellow Jackets since May, has rushed for 829 yards and 17 touchdowns in just three games of his senior season.

Ohio State Offers In-State Running Back

On Sept. 21, just one day after he rushed for 165 yards on 18 carries in a 34-0 win over Cincinnati Moeller, Cincinnati Winton Woods three-star running back Miyon Williams landed an offer from Ohio State.

The 5-10, 210-pound Williams – who is considered the 51st-best running back and No. 758 prospect overall in the class

of 2020 – has been on Alford's radar since February. He visited campus for the first and only time for the spring game back in April.

Williams, who was the Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association Division II Player of the Year and runner-up for Ohio's Mr. Football award as a junior last fall, has rushed for 5,387 yards in his career.

He committed to Iowa State in July over offers from programs such as Boston College, Cincinnati, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Purdue, Rutgers and Toledo.

Williams was not in attendance for the Buckeyes' win over the RedHawks on Sept. 21, but sources within the program have told Buckeye Sports Bulletin he's in the process of setting up an official visit for a game in the coming weeks.

Ohio State Hands Out Flurry Of Offers

With Ohio State's self-imposed recruiting restrictions for a minor rules violation in the rearview mirror, the coaching staff hit the recruiting trail hard beginning on Sept. 15.

The Buckeyes extended more than a dozen offers to prospects from the class of 2021, the most notable offers going to Pinson Valley, Ala., five-star cornerback Ga'Quincy McKinstry and Texarkana (Texas) Pleasant Grove five-star defensive end Landon Jackson.

Other offers include Aledo, Texas,

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
Paris Johnson	OT	6-8	295	★★★★★	Cincinnati Princeton
Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Luke Wypler	OC	6-4	285	★★★★	Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	6-1	188	★★★★	Rockwall, Texas
Gee Scott Jr.	WR	6-3	207	★★★★	Sammamish (Wa.) Eastside Catholic
Jakob James	OG	6-5	275	★★★	Cincinnati Elder
Trey Leroux	OT	6-8	355	★★★	Norwalk, Ohio
Lejond Cavazos	CB	6-1	190	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy
Julian Fleming	WR	6-2	199	★★★★★	Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia
Jake Seibert	K	6-1	190	★★★	Cincinnati La Salle
Grant Toutant	OT	6-7	320	★★★	Warren (Mich.) De La Salle
Ty Hamilton	DE	6-3	250	★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) Central
Clark Phillips	CB	5-11	178	★★★★	La Habra, Calif.
Cody Simon	OLB	6-1	218	★★★★	Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep
Darrion Henry	DT	6-5	279	★★★★	Cincinnati Princeton
Joe Royer	TE	6-5	225	★★★★	Cincinnati Elder
Mitchell Melton	OLB	6-3	235	★★★	Olney (Md.) Good Counsel
Cameron Martinez	ATH	6-0	183	★★★	Muskegon, Mich.
Josh Fryar	OL	6-6	305	★★★	Beech Grove, Ind.
Mookie Cooper	WR	5-9	193	★★★★	St. Louis Trinity Catholic
Lathan Ransom	S	6-1	193	★★★★	Tucson (Ariz.) Salpointe Catholic
Kourt Williams	ATH	6-1	216	★★★★	Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco

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
Jack Sawyer	DE	6-6	220	★★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) North
Kyle McCord	QB	6-3	204	★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's
Jayden Ballard	WR	6-2	175	★★★★	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Ben Christman	OT	6-6	299	★★★★	Richfield (Ohio) Revere
Reid Carrico	LB	6-3	225	★★★★	Irontown (Ohio)

four-star wide receiver JoJo Earle; Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Cardinal Gibbons four-star wide receiver Troy Stellato; Royse City, Texas, four-star wide receiver



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ASK AN ANALYST

With Buckeye Grove's Marc Givler

Ohio State is looking to add at least one more cornerback to its 2020 recruiting class. What are the chances the Buckeyes can flip either Elias Ricks from LSU or Ryan Watts from Oklahoma?

"There has been confidence from a lot of people both in Ohio State's camp and down on the ground in Texas that the Buckeyes can flip Ryan Watts (6-3, 187).

"Getting Watts — a four-star prospect from Little Elm, Texas — on campus for the official visit was very telling, and there was a previous unreported unofficial visit over the summer, so the interest there is very real and a flip is absolutely possible.

"Ricks (6-2, 192) on the other hand is much more of a long shot, and the strong start by LSU to the season should only help the Tigers in keeping him in the fold.

"That said, Ricks — who hails from Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy — is such a special talent that you don't give up until he has signed elsewhere."

Though the details have been rather vague, there was a recent report of contact between Texas and Ohio State four-star wide receiver commit Jaxon Smith-Njigba. Do the Buckeyes have anything to worry about with the in-state Longhorns poking around?

"Smith-Njigba and his family have denied any interest in pursuing Texas as the Longhorns have tried to pick up communication there recently.

"Texas was pretty late to the party on Jaxon the first time around, and I think that has stuck with them and rubbed some people the wrong way. It would be a surprise to me if Smith-Njigba didn't sign with the Buckeyes."

Ohio State is set to welcome Lancaster, Texas, four-star running back Kevontre Bradford to campus for an official visit next month. Where do you think the Buckeyes stand with Bradford, and are there any other running backs we should keep an eye on?

"Right now, I think Ohio State is probably the team to beat for Bradford, with Wisconsin and LSU also in the mix.

"This upcoming visit for the Michigan State game will be big. Ohio State needs to spend a few days around Bradford to get to know him better, and Bradford needs to spend a few days in Columbus to get a feel for the place, but all things are trending in the right direction at this point.

"There are still several other guys to keep an eye on, including Miami (Fla.) Columbus three-star Henry Parrish, Dublin (Ohio) Coffman four-star Mike Drennen, Dallas Jesuit four-star E.J. Smith

and Ramsey (N.J.) Don Bosco Prep four-star Jalen Berger, just to name a few. It is still a pretty broad search right now for Ohio State."

Aside from Columbus Walnut Ridge three-star athlete Quin Magwood, who was featured in the last issue's edition of Ask An Analyst, are there any other in-state prospects from the class of 2020 who could factor into Ohio State's plans late in the process?

"Magwood is probably the top guy to watch, but Chris Scott of Pickerington North, who is playing some defensive back this year, is worth keeping an eye on.

"Additionally, while the Buckeyes look full at offensive line, Branson Taylor from Elyria is another player that continues to garner some attention.

"I'd also keep an eye on the running back situation. Never say never on Drennen, Cincinnati Winton Woods three-star Miyan Williams or Fairfield, Ohio, three-star Jutahn McClain, though the last two are committed to Iowa State and Kentucky, respectively.

"I don't like the odds for Westerville Central three-star safety Rickey Hyatt Jr., who committed to the Wildcats on Sept. 18, or Iowa tight end pledge Luke Lachey, who hails from Grandview Heights, Ohio, but they aren't completely out of the picture and are still being evaluated."

er Ketron Jackson; Austin (Texas) Lyndon B. Johnson four-star cornerback Latrell McCutchin; Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star offensive tackle

J.C. Latham; Savannah (Tenn.) Hardin County four-star tight end Hudson Wolfe; Hopewell, Va., four-star athlete Treveyan Henderson; Livonia (Mich.) Detroit

Country Day three-star offensive tackle Caleb Tiernan; and Gaithersburg (Md.) Quince Orchard three-star defensive tackle Marcus Bradley.

Ohio State also extended an offer to 2022 Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy running back Kaytron Allen, who is not yet ranked by any of the recruiting services.

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Dantonio Becomes Spartans' All-Time Wins Leader

Michigan State head football coach Mark Dantonio became the all-time winningest coach in Spartan history with a 31-10 victory at Northwestern on Sept. 21. With the clock ticking down to Dantonio's record win, his players hoped to celebrate the feat in a traditional manner.

BIG TEN NOTES

Joe Dempsey

"We wanted to pour some water on him," fifth-year senior quarterback Brian Lewerke said, "but they dumped out the coolers before we could."

Dantonio, who is no stranger to water-cooler showers, expected the players to try to douse him.

"I was ready for that," Dantonio said with a smile. "I was watching them. I wasn't going to get water dumped on me."

With the victory, he improved his overall record to 110-52 in 13 seasons at the helm at Michigan State, passing Duffy Daugherty (109-69-5 in 19 seasons from 1954-72) as the program's all-time winningest coach. Dantonio passed Daugherty in his second attempt, losing 10-7 to Arizona State on Sept. 14.

"You can't get there by yourself," Dantonio said. "You need family that's very supportive, especially in this position. You need players that will buy in and you need administrators to give you the opportunity and support when things are tough, and then you also need people that are supporters of the program, whether that be vocally or financially, to do all that they do. I'm appreciative of everybody

that's gone in that direction."

In addition to career wins, Dantonio has also won more Big Ten titles (three) and bowl games (five) than any coach in Michigan State history. Spartan players were presented with green hats featuring white stitching reading "MSU Spartans, 2007-19, #110."

Senior linebacker Joe Bachie especially enjoyed his coach's special moment.

"That was huge," Bachie said. "We walked into that locker room, we see (Dantonio's) family's in there – the smiles, the hugs, the kisses, everything like that. It's awesome. From the guy who recruited me to come here, to see him do that in my time here is awesome."

Mercurio, Pankowski In Running For Woman Of The Year

Nebraska track and field student-athlete Angela Mercurio and Wisconsin women's ice hockey standout Annie Pankowski have been named top-30 honorees for the 2019 NCAA Woman of the Year award.

The NCAA Woman of the Year award has been presented annually since 1991, recognizing the top senior female student-athlete across the country who has excelled in the award's four pillars of academics, athletics, service and leadership.

Nebraska volleyball standout Billie Winsett-Fletcher is the only student-athlete from a current Big Ten school to have been chosen as NCAA Woman of the Year, receiving the award in 1996.

Mercurio was one of the two Big Ten nominees this year, along with Rutgers rower Sarah Johaneck, while Pankowski was nominated by the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA), since the Big Ten does not sponsor the sport of women's ice hockey.

"This year's 30 honorees are remarkable women, representing well the thou-

sands of women competing each year in college sports," said Karen Baebler, chair of the Woman of the Year selection committee and assistant athletics director for sport operations at the University of Washington. "They have excelled in sports and academics while serving their peers and communities, and we congratulate them for their many achievements."

Mercurio, a native of Kitchener, Ontario, was a two-time Google Cloud Academic All-America second-team selection for the Cornhuskers' track and field team.

A superb student, Mercurio was a three-time Big Ten Distinguished Scholar and four-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree.

Excelling in the classroom, Mercurio received both the NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship and the Big Ten Postgraduate Scholarship, graduating from Nebraska in May with a 3.99 GPA as a double major in biochemistry and women's and gender studies.

As a competitor, Mercurio was a four-year letter winner and a three-time second-team All-American in the triple jump. She took home the Big Ten crown in the event at the 2019 Big Ten Indoor Championships before placing ninth in the triple jump at the 2019 NCAA Indoor Championships.

Pankowski, who was a 2019 Big Ten Medal of Honor honoree as well as a Big Ten Postgraduate Scholarship recipient, graduated with a bachelor's degree in zoology and is continuing her postgraduate studies at Wisconsin in the UW School of Veterinary Medicine.

An exceptional student, Pankowski was a two-time Big Ten Distinguished Scholar and four-time Academic All-Big Ten selection. The Laguna Hills, Calif., native was a finalist for the 2019 Hockey

Humanitarian Award for her work with OccuPaws, a nonprofit organization that trains and pairs service dogs with the visually impaired.

A dominant force for the Badgers, Pankowski, was a three-time All-American and a three-time finalist for the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award, which is given to the nation's top player.

The Badger captain earned first-team All-American accolades in 2019 after helping Wisconsin to its fifth NCAA national championship while leading the team with 50 points (28 goals, 22 assists).

Beyond collegiate competition, Pankowski earned her third international gold medal as a member of the U.S. Women's National Team at the 2019 International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) World Championships in Finland.

The top 30 honorees, which include 10 from each of the three NCAA divisions, came from a pool of 151 conference nominees for consideration to receive the award.

The NCAA Woman of the Year selection committee will pick nine finalists – three from each division – from among the top 30 honorees, with the finalists revealed in early Oct.

The NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics will ultimately select the 2019 NCAA Woman of the Year recipient from those nine finalists, also recognizing the top-30 honorees and announcing the winner at a ceremony Oct. 20 in Indianapolis.

Big Ten Football Weekly Honors Awarded

Following Big Ten football games on Sept. 14, the Big Ten named co-offensive, defensive and special teams players of the week and co-freshmen of the week.

Minnesota wide receiver Tyler Johnson and Ohio State running back J.K. Dobbins earned co-offensive player of the week honors for their big-time performances.

Johnson hauled in 10 passes for 140 yards and three touchdowns in Minnesota's 35-32 victory against Georgia Southern. The senior receiver from Minneapolis caught a career-long 73-yard touchdown reception and a 2-yard score with 13 seconds left to secure the victory.

Johnson won his first offensive player of the week award, becoming the first Golden Gopher since Rodney Smith (Oct. 24, 2016) to receive the honor.

The Minnesota wideout shared the award with Ohio State's Dobbins, who gouged Indiana for 193 yards and one touchdown on 22 carries, along with two catches for 14 yards and another score. The OSU junior captain had posted 175 rushing yards at halftime of the Buckeyes' 51-10 win, giving him 316 combined first-half yards rushing yards against Cincinnati and Indiana.

A La Grange, Texas, native, Dobbins, also earned his first offensive player of the week honor. He became the first Buckeye since Dwayne Haskins (Nov. 26) to take home the weekly award.

Northwestern defensive lineman Joe Gaziano earned defensive player of the week for his effort in the Wildcats' 30-14 victory against UNLV. The Scituate, Mass., native notched nine tackles, including 2½ tackles for loss, 1½ sacks, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery.

Gaziano, a senior, recorded his 22nd career sack, putting him in sole posses-

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Two Commits Put Ohio State Over 2020 Class Limit

The Ohio State men's basketball team entered the week of Sept. 16 with no commitments for the 2020 class and ended it overflowing.

When three-star power forward Zed Key's pledge on Sept. 22 followed that of four-star guard Eugene Brown III six days earlier, it put the Buckeyes at 14 scholarship players for the 2020-21 season, one more than the maximum.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

With those two coming in and only forward Andre Wesson exhausting his eligibility after this season, it's still unlikely OSU coach Chris Holtmann is concerned about over-signing.

That's because there's a good possibility junior forward/post Kaleb Wesson, Andre's brother, will declare for the NBA draft after this season. He explored the option this summer but retained his eligibility when he opted to return to Ohio State.

Then there's the trend of players transferring, especially among freshmen who feel like they should be playing more.

Look no further than former OSU coach Thad Matta's 2015 class, which was ranked fifth nationally and first in the Big Ten. Daniel Giddens, Austin Grandstaff, A.J. Harris, Jaquan Lyle and Mickey Mitchell all left the program at some point for other schools.

The only frosh to transfer after last season was Jaedon LeDee, who enrolled at TCU. Junior forward Micah Potter transferred to Wisconsin before the start of the 2018-19 season.

"Rosters are so fluid in college basketball, there's so many changes made," Holtmann said. "Back in the day you could project you have two scholarships

in this class and four here, three here. Those days are over.

"You just don't know so you try to add people and players you think fit your program and then kind of figure it out from there.

"We're obviously not going to sign four early here this year, but there's so much fluidity in rosters that if there's a good player you can add, in most cases, you'll do that."

Key (6-7, 215), from Glen Head (N.Y.) Long Island Lutheran, is one those players. He is rated 158th nationally and 31st at power forward in the 247Sports composite. He was considered a Marquette lean, but a visit to Ohio State the weekend of Sept. 6 swayed him.

He was supposed to visit Marquette the weekend of Sept. 20 and had scheduled Florida as well but canceled both trips in advance of his announcement on the afternoon of Sept. 22.

Key's commitment moved the Buckeyes from 45th to 24th in the nation for the 2020 class.

Meanwhile, the courtship of Brown (6-6, 185), of Decatur (Ga.) Southwest DeKalb, began last year with former assistant Mike Schrage.

When Schrage left in early April to become the head coach at Elon, Jake Diebler was hired on April 22 from Vanderbilt, where he had been recruiting Brown.

Brown made a visit – his second after going to Mississippi State on Aug. 28 – with his family to Columbus the weekend of Sept. 14, and there was no indication going into it that he was ready to commit.

He had already scheduled a combination of official/unofficial visits beginning with Texas A&M on Sept. 21. Louisville, Georgia and Georgia Tech were on the docket in October with his decision expected by the end of that month. He canceled those visits.

By the time he left Columbus he had made up his mind, and credit goes to the persistence of the staff with Holtmann, Diebler and assistants Terry Johnson and

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commits

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

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Eugene Brown	SG	6-6	185	★★★★	Decatur (Ga.) Southwest DeKalb
Zed Key	PF	6-7	215	★★★	Glen Head (N.Y.) Long Island Lutheran

Players in the class of 2021 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball 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
Meechie Johnson	CG	5-11	160	★★★★	Willoughby (Ohio) Andrew Osborne

Ryan Pedon making an in-home visit prior to Brown's trip to Ohio State.

It also didn't hurt that former Buckeye Keita Bates-Diop, the 2018 Big Ten Player of the Year who plays for the Minnesota Timberwolves, was on campus to meet Brown and his family.

Brown, who was offered by the Buckeyes in June, has been under the radar with a national ranking of 112 in the 247Sports composite. He is the No. 17 shooting guard and the seventh-best Georgia prospect for 2020.

Those numbers don't look impressive, but Brown sustained a broken leg during his junior season and played five games – averaging 13.4 points, 5.4 rebounds and 2.8 assists. He is expected to make a full recovery for his senior season playing for his father, Eugene Brown II, and his ratings should rise.

In other recruiting news:

- With Key's pledge, a visit by 2020 four-star Huntington (W.Va.) Prep center Zach Loveday (7-0, 200) was canceled. He's ranked 119th nationally and 15th at his position for the 2020 cycle.

- The Buckeyes hosted 2021 top-rated center Chet Holmgren (7-0, 190) from Minneapolis Minnehaha Academy the weekend of Sept. 20. Holmgren, a five-star recruit, is ranked the fourth-best player overall.

- The Buckeyes are making a priority of Franklin (Mich.) St. Mary's four-star

shooting guard Julian Roper (6-3, 183). He was offered by OSU and conference rivals Iowa, Northwestern and Wisconsin, but neither Michigan nor Michigan State has offered.

- Also, Ohio State was reported to have visited five-star Max Christie (6-6, 185) from Rolling Meadows, Ill. He's the No. 1 shooting guard for 2021. He holds an OSU offer.

- With the May 12 commitment of Convoy (Ohio) Crestview four-star power forward Kalen Etzler (6-8, 195) and the Aug. 13 pledge of Willoughby (Ohio) Andrews Osborne Academy four-star guard Meechie Johnson (5-11, 160), the Buckeyes have the top-ranked 2021 recruiting class according to 247Sports.

There are still two scholarships available.

Not Messin' With Wessons

Stephanie Wesson was one proud mom when she tweeted on Sept. 13. "This is so incredible. God is Good. Andre Wesson and Kaleb Wesson as the cover."

She referred to the Street & Smith's 2019-20 season preview regional cover that had the Wesson brothers featured.

It's been quite the offseason for the sons of former OSU player Keith Wesson (1983-87). Kaleb was the cover boy for Athlon Sports' preview issue, and Andre was likewise for Lindy's Sports.

Interestingly, Kaleb's cover shot for Street & Smith's was an action photo from last season while the Athlon Sports cover was a studio portrait with him appearing slimmer.

Holtmann said Wesson lost a lot of weight and is in the best shape of his career. A recent nearly two-minute video of him working out confirms the changes. The 6-9 Wesson had a listed weight of 270 last season, but a new number has not been posted on the school's website.

"Kaleb looks great," Holtmann said Aug. 27. "He's at his lowest body composition that he's been at since he's been here. He is at his lowest weight that he's been since he's been here."

One thing Holtmann is keeping an eye on is that Kaleb doesn't lose too much bulk.

"He gets that part of his strength is his ability to be a big body and a big presence," the coach said. "He understands that that's an advantage for him at times. I've encouraged this for him (losing weight). I think it's a positive for him. I think if it looks like it's getting to a point where it's going to impact his effectiveness or looks like he's getting too thin or wasting away, we'll have that conversation with him. But he looks great right now. I'm really proud of Kaleb."

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Satterfield Has Program-Building Mind-set

Before Kaelynn Satterfield was even born, simply her name created an expectation.

Satterfield is the daughter of former NBA player Kenny Satterfield, a guard who went to the University of Cincinnati for two seasons, averaging 14.1 points, 4.7 rebounds and 5.1 assists per game in his sophomore year before being selected No. 53 overall in the 2001 NBA draft by the Dallas Mavericks.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

Eventually, Kenny Satterfield found himself playing in Europe, Asia and South America.

Kaelynn Satterfield started off against the game of basketball due to its oversaturation in her life as a child.

"Because my dad played, I don't know, I just didn't like it," Kaelynn Satterfield told *Buckeye Sports Bulletin*. "I was like 'No, not going to be me.'"

Eventually, her attitude changed.

Around the age of 7, Satterfield went to an after-school program and saw a girl playing basketball, and that ended up being a motivating factor in her decision to give the sport her father is known for a legitimate chance.

"She was the only girl, and I was like 'I'm going to try,'" she said.

That "trying" eventually led her to pick basketball over dance at the age of 11 after there was too much running around between the two.

It also eventually led her to become the standout star at Christ the King High School in Middle Village, N.Y., a school that went to the Division-AA diocesan championship during Satterfield's final three seasons, with Christ the King winning two of them.

Before the two titles came a heartbreaking loss in Satterfield's sophomore season,

one that led to the eventual domination that came in her junior and senior years.

"I think sophomore year we were a young team and playing on varsity as a freshman, all my freshman friends were coming up to varsity," Satterfield said. "I had to show them the way, and so that third year I feel like they were more comfortable, and we just got it done."

The four-star wing prospect, who averaged 17.3 points and 6.5 rebounds per game in her senior season, was ranked the No. 16 wing and No. 88 overall prospect in the 2019 class by ESPN. But she did not feel locked into her home state as much as many other recruits do and not as much as three Ohio State commits – Kierstan Bell, Madison Greene and Jacy Sheldon, all of whom came from in state – did.

"I never really wanted to stay in New York," Satterfield said. "I've been there like my whole life, and I feel like I want to represent for my city somewhere else."

Satterfield was offered at colleges that include LSU, Marquette, Michigan and North Carolina. Still, Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff knew that the New York guard was not looking at location as a key deciding factor and saw an opportunity to get a player who he said would be a great fit within his program.

"She was pretty open from the beginning about just kind of trying to find the right fit," McGuff said. "Geography wasn't much of a factor. I saw her kind of early, and I really liked her game."

While in high school, Satterfield said she would not want to go to a program like the University of Connecticut, a known powerhouse in women's basketball, instead saying she likes "the idea of going somewhere I can start it up."

This sort of mentality, seeing the Buckeyes' freshman group fill out as she waited in making her decision and finding incoming Ohio State players she can jell with all were factors in getting Satterfield to Columbus.

But that mind-set she has on building from the ground up is not a new thing.

"I've been like that since I was young,"

she said. "Like when I was little if people asked me, I would just be like, 'Oh I want to go to Notre Dame, because I don't want to go to UConn because that's where everybody goes.'"

McGuff also liked where Satterfield's mind was as well as her ability, saying he thought "her competitive spirit would be a real boost" to the program.

"She's really versatile," McGuff said. "She can play around the basket, she can play on the perimeter. The thing I really love about her though is she makes other people better, and she has a great understanding of the game. She comes from a great high school program. She's used to winning."

Satterfield said having such a wide variety of freshmen has been more of a positive than a negative at this point, with the group of seven hanging out all the time and growing chemistry.

"I feel like it's easier, because if we were coming into a team that already had a lot of veterans, we'd have to kind of adjust to them," she said. "Now, all of us coming in, we're kind of seeing what works best for us."

The style of college practices is nothing new to Satterfield, but she said that the conditioning and the weightlifting are the most difficult adjustments she has had to make since coming from a high school team.

There are plenty of new faces on this team, each fighting to earn meaningful minutes for Ohio State in what is looking like the start of a new era for the women's basketball team. But McGuff has seen plenty that he has liked from Satterfield

early on, and a lot of it, he said, should be intangibles that can help the 6-0 guard contribute right away.

"She just makes a lot of winning plays, and I saw that in high school and that's got me really excited about what she can do to contribute here," McGuff said. "I think she'll be able to contribute just because her basketball IQ and her ability to make people around her better is really going to help her contribute, I think immediately."

Satterfield's desire to be a factor in growing a team into a championship contender paid off in high school and is the type of mentality that brought her to Ohio State in the first place.

It's that mentality that is put on display when Satterfield was asked to discuss her expectations for the upcoming 2019-20 season.

"It's the first year, so I'm going to be realistic," Satterfield said. "I'm not going to come in here and say 'Oh, we're going to win the national championship.' I feel like we can definitely make the (NCAA) tournament and we can definitely take the Big Ten."

But if you were to ask 7-year-old Kaelynn Satterfield if over a decade later, she would be following in her dad's footsteps, traveling from New York to an Ohio school in order to pursue her dreams in basketball, she likely would have called you crazy.

The Fresh Seven is a seven-part series about the seven freshman players entering their first season for Ohio State women's basketball.

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Fischer Leads Resurgence

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Fresh off of its first two wins of the season – 1-0 over Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 13. and 3-1 over Ohio on Sept. 15 – Ohio State's women's soccer team entered a Sept. 19 matchup against one of the best teams in the Big Ten, Michigan State, with the chance at a season-changing victory. A win over the Spartans would erase the concerns about a start to the season that had the Buckeyes drop four games and tie just once.

With the Big Ten Network in Columbus for the prime-time matchup, Ohio State rode a late Kayla Fischer goal to what could be the most important win of the season.

While Ohio State's 1-0 win over Michigan State serves as big win, it may be far more important because of what it could mean for the rest of the season. A win over a top team to open Big Ten play serves as a proof of concept for a Buckeye team that seemingly needed confidence above all else. Now, off three straight wins, they've gathered that confidence.

"You have to wipe the slate clean when you start conference play," said Ohio State head coach Lori Walker-Hock. "Every Big Ten game is difficult, and you have to find a way to grind through it. That's what we did. I wouldn't say this was the prettiest soccer I've ever seen, especially the last 20 minutes, but we found a way to get on the board and not give up a goal. That's all that matters in the end."

A lot of that confidence and a large contribution in each of the first three wins of the season have come from the lone goal scorer, Fischer, a sophomore forward from Kent, Ohio, who has jumped onto the scene for a Buckeye team that needed a spark.

Fischer doesn't just lead the Buckeyes in confidence but in essentially every statistical category. Through eight games, she's picked up 10 points — four goals and two assists — and it has been her sudden turn from good to great in the last three games that directly led to three wins for the Buckeyes.

Fischer scored a 39th-minute goal, the only score of the game in Ohio State's win over Miami, tallied a 56th-minute goal that essentially sealed the win for the Buckeyes against Ohio and knocked through the biggest goal of her career against the Spartans.

With the MSU game still very much hanging in the balance, tied at zero with just over 14 minutes to play, it certainly looked as though no one would break through. Both teams had spent the evening in a defensive deadlock, with neither looking to give or take an inch.

Just as she had in the prior two games, it was Fischer who provided that attack, slashing through the Spartan defense, taking in a pass from Olivia Petit and delivering a strike into the top right corner, easily past the MSU keeper and just inside the posts. Another few inches wide and Ohio State would have opened Big Ten play with a tie rather than a win. Another few inches, and the sudden momentum around the program would have evaporated before it ever existed.

With momentum finally on its side, Ohio State will likely need to continue to

lean on Fischer as it goes further into Big Ten play. The Buckeyes have plenty of talent, as was reflected by lofty preseason expectations, but a difficult early-season slate exposed a scoring weakness in the lineup. Ohio State has lots of leadership, lots of passing and lots of talented defenders, but it was seemingly without a truly creative scorer until the past three games.

"We talk about execution, we can talk about it on the individual level, the unit level and the team level, and I think there's no substitute for individual ability, and that's something that Kayla brings," Walker-Hock said of her forward. "She's unpredictable. Sometimes she breaks to the end line, sometimes she breaks to the inside. She's able to pass and to shoot and be dynamic on the end line. It's difficult for defenses to deal with. I love the fact that she has the personality to want to put the game on her back and take that responsibility, because that's not something that you see in every soccer player."

While Fischer was the focus of the game, and will likely be concern number one for every Big Ten team moving forward, it may have been Ohio State's game control that secured the win. In fact, it could be that team defense and ball control that keeps the Buckeyes in games all year, just long enough for Fischer or her teammates to deliver goals and wins.

"We have to be calm, we have to make our people in front of us feel calm," Buckeye midfielder and captain Izzy Rodriguez said of Ohio State's defensive approach. "That was something we really wanted to focus on — setting the play from us, making others feel comfortable and then moving the ball from there to start the attack."

Ohio State's road doesn't get easier as the Buckeyes go further into Big Ten play, but that's all by design. The conference is considered one of the nation's best, and with three ranked teams (Rutgers, Iowa, Penn State) and a fourth right outside the rankings (Wisconsin), the Buckeyes are really only getting started. The Buckeyes now embark on a stretch bookended by a trip to Madison on Sept. 27 and a home battle with the 23rd-ranked Nittany Lions on Oct. 6.

The Buckeyes miss Rutgers, the best team in the Big Ten, but battles against the Badgers and Nittany Lions as well as a season closer against Iowa on Oct. 27 all loom large.

Those battles would loom much larger for the now surging Buckeyes if it weren't for the way Ohio State started the season, with losses, sure, but losses to top teams such as Texas A&M and TCU. Fischer says that those games serve as the best preparation for the Buckeyes.

"Our coaches schedule hard games on purpose, because we know that the Big Ten is a big conference that has good teams, so by playing hard teams in the nonconference we're ready for Big Ten play, instead of coming undefeated into the Big Ten."

While the Buckeyes have momentum and a potential star player, there's still plenty of work to be done. But with Fischer, with that momentum and with one of the best defenses in the conference, Ohio State looks primed to finish its season far better — and far more on par with expectations — than it started.



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Long Day In The 'Shoe For The Miami RedHawks

Everyone including the Miami RedHawks knew what the final outcome of the game would be, just not the score. Obviously outmatched at every position on the football field, Miami would have had to have a Herculean effort to beat the Buckeyes. As a matter of fact, they would have needed Hercules himself to have any prayer of being competitive with Ohio State for four quarters.

COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

Even though the final score was extremely lopsided, the RedHawks played with grit and determination through the first quarter of play. After all, Miami is the "Cradle of Coaches," and the RedHawks have a proud history to live up to each time they take the field. Greats of the coaching profession including Woody Hayes, Paul Brown, Bo Schembechler and Ara Parseghian, just to mention a few, stalked the Miami sidelines at some time during their careers. The Miami University's football Hall of Fame is a who's who of exceptional college football coaches. Miami in its prime wasn't afraid to take on anybody, but it hasn't beaten a Power Five team since a victory over Syracuse in 2007.

They did, however, win three Tangerine Bowls in a row from 1973-75 by defeating Southeast Conference opponents Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. For many years Miami owned the MAC no matter who was the head coach. Even though Miami football is not the Miami of old, it is still a program rich in tradition and success.

The Miami squad that came out of the locker room Saturday didn't seem intimidated at all by the heavily favored Buckeyes in Ohio Stadium. It was the first game of the season that Ohio State was not the early aggressor, and it wasn't until 7:25 left in the

first quarter that the Bucks would start their second drive of the first half with Miami holding a 5-0 lead.

That's when the men of the Scarlet and Gray woke up and decided to get serious. By the time the half ended, the Buckeyes had run off 49 points and Miami realized its worst nightmare, the Buckeyes were for real. The second half was a game of mass substitutions with many of the number ones, like Justin Fields, hydrating themselves on the sidelines and cheering on their teammates. Ryan Day and his staff did everything possible to keep the score out of triple figures, and by the time the game was called due to a weather delay and a mutual decision by both head coaches to call it an afternoon, the Buckeyes would register another impressive victory over a nonconference opponent.

The Fuller Effect

As Fields has proved to be a difference maker and a true leader for the Ohio State offense, the same can be said about Jordan Fuller for the defense. As a free safety, Fuller is responsible for getting the secondary lined up pre-snap. He makes the necessary checks and adjustments to motion. His on-the-field communication and decision making must be decisive and correct.

He has developed into an excellent pass defender with the ability to play various zone coverages along with man free coverage. He also breaks on the ball quickly once it is thrown. To go along with his pass-defense skills, Jordan is outstanding as a run-support safety.

Fuller takes great angles to the football and is a sure open-field tackler. He displays good range by covering a lot of territory. He leads the team in tackles and is a steady performer each and every week. Look for Fuller to continue to play at a high level now and in his football future.

On To Nebraska

Ohio State heads to Lincoln for its first night game of the season against a Nebraska team that has offensive skill talent as good as any Cornhusker team from the past. Players

such as quarterback Adrian Martinez and receiver J.D. Spielman are dangerous to opposing defenses and give Nebraska big-play potential.

But for head coach Scott Frost, defense has been another story.

The Huskers have given up at least 21 points to every opponent except Northern Illinois. After leading Colorado 17-0 at half-time, the Nebraska defense allowed 24 fourth-quarter points, which sent the game to overtime, a game Colorado would go on to win.

The Buckeyes, however, can't go into Lincoln overconfident or not focused. The stadium will be loud, and Nebraska will give Ohio State its very best shot. The Cornhuskers are also confident coming off an emotional, come-from-behind victory over Illinois in Champaign late Saturday night. As the schedule gets tougher for the Buckeyes, improvement each week is crucial or a team like Nebraska could knock them off.

Remembering A Legend

On football Friday nights in the early 1950s, fans would swarm to the "Bottoms" of Columbus to see a gifted running back and defensive back perform his gridiron magic. Howard Cassady played for Central High School. He excelled in not only football but also baseball and basketball. He had his choices of colleges to attend but chose his hometown school, Ohio State, where he would sneak into games as a teenager to see the Buckeyes play. By going to OSU, Howard could play the two sports he loved

best, baseball and football.

Howard quickly excelled in both sports as a Buckeye. He was a darting and slashing halfback on offense and a fierce tackler and coverage man in the secondary for Coach Woody Hayes. In baseball, he excelled as a sure-gloved shortstop, home-run hitter and base stealer. But it was on the football field where No. 40 would earn his nickname "Hopalong" for his darting and dashing runs on offense and his game-changing interception returns on defense.

He and his teammates were responsible for bringing Ohio State an undefeated season and a national championship in 1954. He won multiple individual honors during his collegiate career for the Buckeyes including the 1955 Heisman Trophy. He was also selected the Associated Press male athlete of the year, beating out baseball greats Willie Mays and Mickey Mantle as well as boxer Rocky Marciano.

"Hop" would go on to play primarily with the Detroit Lions of the NFL after his college days and would later coach and scout for the Yankees organization in baseball. "Hopalong" Cassady the football player, not the television cowboy, will be remembered as the guy from the "Bottoms" who made it all the way to the top.

Known as one of the top recruiters in college football, Bill Conley is a national championship-winning coach and player at Ohio State who suited up for Woody Hayes and spent 17 years on the staffs of Earle Bruce, John Cooper and Jim Tressel.

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Buckeyes Looking Like Big Ten's Best Early On

We learned a lot during Ohio State's four-game preseason. Now let the games begin.

EXNER POINT

Rich Exner

While channel flipping, we learned Michigan isn't very good, at least not yet.

We learned Army's near upset was no fluke because Michigan was clearly over-matched by Wisconsin. So dominating was Wisconsin's run game and defense that by the half, not only did Wisconsin have the game in hand, 28-0, it had controlled the football for 23 of the first 30 minutes.

We learned Wisconsin is for real, shutting out its opponents for 10 straight quarters to start the season. The bad luck for

Ohio State is that it might have to beat Wisconsin twice this year – in the regular season and the Big Ten title game – to make the playoffs.

We learned that we really can talk about playoff considerations for Ohio State, despite the lack of competitive opponents to date.

A dominating, sure-tackling, much-improved defense plus high-quality players at quarterback (Justin Fields), running back (J.K. Dobbins) and receiver (too many to fit in the space here) make Ohio State legit for any playoff talk.

In four games for Fields – 13 touchdowns passing, six running – we've learned that all the advance billing was correct. This is the type of guy a team needs at quarterback to make a run at a national championship.

Is he fully there yet? No. But he has all the tools. There's no reason to believe he won't get there soon. Maybe some quicker decisions, a faster release. But that's nitpicking at this point. He has 880 yards passing in four games, plus another 150

running. He put up these numbers despite being so good that he sat the entire second half of the Miami game and a lot of time in other games.

We learned that the J.K. Dobbins of 2019 (7.0 yards per carry to date) is more like the 2017 version of Dobbins (very, very good) than the 2018 version (good but not great).

On the defensive side of the football, we've learned that this team can tackle, play tight coverage and prevent big plays. A season ago, no matter the competition, preventing big plays and long touchdowns was a serious problem that finally got to OSU at Purdue.

There has been no sign of that this year. This team gets to the football on time, and angry. But perhaps just as big of question for the defense was how it would adjust to not entering a season with a Bosa dominating line play for the first time since 2013 (43½ sacks in a little over five seasons). We've learned that Chase Young (seven sacks) has filled the void.

In fact, for his career, the junior Young now has more sacks (19) than Nick Bosa in his career (17½). Even Joey Bosa's mark (26 career sacks) is within reach. We're starting to see Bosa-level play by someone not named Bosa.

We've learned that Ohio State has a long list of very good veteran receivers – K.J. Hill, Binjimen Victor, Chris Olave and Austin Mack.

But we've also seen just enough of ballyhooed freshman Garrett Wilson to know there is truth in advertising.

Wilson's juggling 38-yard touchdown catch, after he swiped the ball off the Miami defender's shoulder, just might be the best TD catch in all of the 39 years Buckeye Sports Bulletin has been reporting on Ohio State football.

This guy needs more playing time soon, both as a receiver and punt returner. (His one punt return this season went for 52 yards in dazzling, speed-burst and shifting fashion against Miami.)

We've learned that teams thought to be potentially challenging (Cincinnati) and non-challengers (Florida Atlantic, Indiana

and Miami) really were of no impediment to Ohio State.

Now things get a least a little more, if not a lot more, difficult.

What we don't know yet is whether this team can sustain success, game after game – no Michigan States of 2013 and 2015, no Penn States of 2016, no Iowas of 2017, and certainly no Purdues of 2018. For as much as Ohio State has not been tested yet, a number of games ahead could be much tougher.

It starts at Lincoln, Neb., on Sept. 28.

Then there is the old nemesis, Michigan State, at home on Oct. 5. Recently, as mentioned, there are the losses to MSU in 2013 and 2015 – when OSU entered the games ranked second nationally. For older Buckeye fans, none might be tougher than 1998 when the best team of John Cooper's era (and ranked first at the time) was stunned by the Spartans in Ohio Stadium, 28-24, the Buckeyes' only loss that year. And it was 45 years ago now that No. 1 Ohio State lost to Michigan State, 16-13, in a controversial ending that wasn't decided by officials until 46 minutes after the final play.

The scariest of the tests, it would seem now, is at home against Wisconsin on Oct. 26. Then the regular season wraps up with a home game Nov. 23 against Penn State and a trip to Ann Arbor on Nov. 30.

Take care of business in all of those games, and the nation will know Ohio State is a real threat to win the national championship.

Who Are The Contenders?

So, we've just laid out the case for Ohio State being a legitimate playoff contender in 2019. Who are the others, based on what we've seen so far?

My list is short, with Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, LSU, Ohio State, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. Others could still work their way into contention, but those are the standouts to date, broken down this way:

Top of the list – Alabama, Clemson and Ohio State.

Next grouping – and not very far behind – Georgia, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. Why not in the first group? Two things about Georgia concern me. Why didn't they have an easier time with Notre Dame (the answer might be that ND is really good), and Georgia most likely still has to get by Alabama. As for Oklahoma, I want to know that the Sooners have a defense this year. For Wisconsin, perhaps unfairly, it is just that they haven't sustained success before long enough to make the playoffs.

Then there is popular pick LSU and quarterback Joe Burrow (who can't like Joe Burrow the way he has played and carried himself after transferring from Ohio State?). There are no questions about the LSU offense. I'm concerned about how Texas torched LSU for 38 points.

But it's early. These are just September impressions with a week of September games still to play.

Top 10

- Here's my Top 10:
1. Alabama (4-0)
 2. (tie) Clemson (4-0) and Ohio State (4-0)
 4. Georgia (4-0)
 5. (tie) Oklahoma (3-0) and Wisconsin (3-0)
 7. LSU (4-0)
 8. Notre Dame (2-1)
 9. Auburn (4-0)
 10. (tie) Penn State (3-0) and Florida (4-0)

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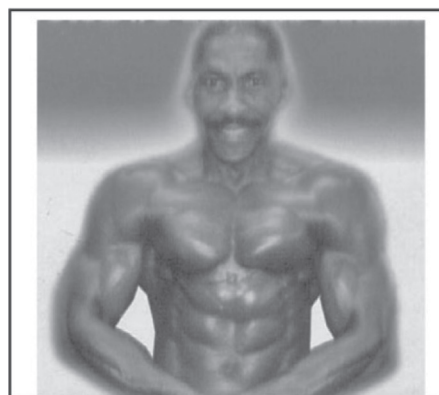
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Remembering Howard “Hopalong” Cassady

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

I'm glad Ohio State had Miami (Ohio) on the schedule this week and, as anticipated, blew them out, which saved me from having to provide my expert analysis of the game (Ohio State had superior talent at every position, two and three deep and accordingly beat the RedHawks offensively, defensively and on special teams), leaving me room to talk about Howard “Hopalong” Cassady, one of the true giants of Ohio State football.

All of Ohio State's Heisman Trophy winners were great players and highly regarded, even beloved, among Buckeye fans. But there was just something about Hop Cassady. Maybe it was his nickname. Maybe it was his flair for the big play. Maybe it was his rise from local humble roots. Whatever it was, it left him a bright star among the galaxy of such players who have worn the scarlet and gray.

Growing up in Washington, D.C., I knew of Hop Cassady. Though his collegiate career had ended when I was only 3, I was a student of records and award lists that I pored over in the World Almanac and Street & Smith's magazines.

But it wasn't until I moved to Columbus in 1976 that I realized what an idol Cassady was to Ohio youth growing up in the '50s. Time and time again, people would tell me of joining the Boy Scouts to work at Ohio Stadium, just to see Cassady play. Someone, it may have been Phil Harrison, whom many of you may know as the organizer of the popular Meet the Buckeyes nights that they used to have in Toledo, told me of vividly recalling lying underneath a large radio on legs at his youthful home, listening to Cassady's exploits.

I am confident it was longtime friend to BSB and sometimes contributor Steve Siegfried, one of the first people I met in Columbus, who first told me of Cassady's impact on youth in the Buckeye State, especially in its capital city.

Siegfried's family owned a market at the corner of Sullivant Avenue and Davis Street in Columbus, not far from Central High School, where Cassady first made his name as a three-sport star.

“If you were a kid in Columbus, you knew who Hop Cassady was,” Siegfried explained to me upon hearing of Cassady's passing. “If you grew up in the westside Bottoms, Hop Cassady was who you wanted to be.”

“My family's market was catty-corner from Fred's Club Café, which was what passed for a sports bar back then. Hop went there to shoot pool occasionally. Kids weren't supposed to go into bars or pool halls, so we'd wait for him to come out just to say, ‘Hi, Hop.’”

As mentioned, it may have been his rise from humble roots, not just geographically and financially, but also in physical stature, that helped Cassady build his legend, especially in The Bottoms.

“The story goes that at under 100 pounds as a high school freshman, Hop was too small to play, so he became a team manager,” Siegfried recalled. “If you could call (late Columbus Dispatch sportswriters) Dick Otte or Paul Hornung, they might know if Hop really was the hardest working student manager ever at Central High. One of them likely wrote that story.”

“As kids, that's what we were told, and nobody could tell us anything different. We all knew Hop was the best.”

Add Siegfried to the list of Hop's legion of Boy Scouts working at Ohio Stadium.

“I pretty much stuck with the Boy Scouts for three years because we ushered at the stadium,” he said. “Those were great teams.”

“My troop's section was in the closed end of the stadium. When they ran a sweep around Dean Dugger's end with Jim Roseboro and the fullback in front of Hop, the play came right at

you,” Siegfried said, recalling it as if they ran the play last week.

Steve and I have swapped many, many stories through the years, including about such things as autographs. He and I stood in a lengthy line together at the old Cooper Stadium (it was probably still Franklin County Stadium at the time) to get Mickey Mantle's autograph when the Yankee great made a personal appearance in Columbus, so I am surprised that this story had never come up before.

“I had three dollars in my wallet when it was stolen at the swimming pool,” he recounted. “Even though three dollars would buy something back then, it shouldn't have been that big of a deal. I was too young for a driver's license, and those were the days before kids had credit cards. What made the loss a big deal was the scrap of paper inside with two autographs on it: (former Buckeye kicker) Tad Weed and Hop Cassady.”

Speaking of Cooper Stadium, more than 20 years after winning his Heisman Trophy, Cassady would work out of that near westside ballpark as a coach for the Columbus Clippers, then an affiliate of George Steinbrenner's New York Yankees. I was fairly new to Columbus at the time, and it was Steve who explained to me the significance of Cassady returning full circle to his old neighborhood. There was no need to explain it to those who still lived in The Bottoms or even those who had lifted themselves out of that neighborhood to less gritty surroundings but never forgot their roots or their hero.

As mentioned, I grew up in Washington, D.C. I'm sure when we passed the football around we pretended we were Sonny Jurgensen. Our managing editor emeritus, Mark Rea, often tells me of Ohio kids of his generation dreaming of being former Buckeye quarterback Rex Kern.

But for one generation of Buckeye fans, there was only one football idol, and that was Howard “Hopalong” Cassady.

Elsewhere in this issue of BSB, Mark describes Cassady's feats on the gridiron and in later life. Perhaps some of our readers will share their recollections of Cassady from their youth. Please send them to “Letters to the Editor” at P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212, or email them to BSB@BuckeyeSports.com.

From The Pages Of BSB

We've probably written as many stories on Hop Cassady through the years in Buckeye Sports Bulletin as we have anyone from the pre-BSB era. Upon learning of Cassady's death, we ran reprints of several of those stories at the BuckeyeSports.com website. It's a testament to Hop's stature that we ran two stories on Cassady for our popular Michigan Memories series, something I believe to be unprecedented and probably just an accounting error on our part. But if anyone deserved two, it was Hop, whose teams posted a 3-1 record against their rivals from 1952-55.

We reprinted both the Memories, which ran in 1992 and 2000.

But the reprinted article that really caught my attention was one by former Columbus Dispatch columnist Dick Fenlon, who wrote a column for BSB in the early 2000s. In 2002, the Buckeyes were in the midst of a march to the national championship, spurred in part by Chris Gamble playing on both offense and defense for Ohio State. Fenlon noted in a piece for the Nov. 16, 2002, BSB that this would not have been

a big deal for Cassady, who like most players of his day played both ways – including in the national championship year of 1954.

And according to Fenlon, Cassady was one of the biggest fans of Gamble and his two-way efforts.

“I think he's great,” Cassady, then 68, told Fenlon of Gamble. “He's a tough player. He's involved in everything. He goes after the ball. He tackles. For a player, it's a lot more fun to play both ways than just one way. If you're a good athlete, you should be playing both ways.”

Fenlon acknowledged, both for himself and Cassady, that with the rare exceptions of players such as Gamble, the days of going both ways were long gone.

“It's a losing argument, of course, and even Cassady – who by doing so won the Heisman Trophy and became the Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year in 1955 – knows it,” Fenlon wrote.

“The game has long since gone modern from its iron-man past. The old arguments for and against have long since been decided – except, perhaps in the minds of those who played it the old way.”

And play it the old way, Cassady did. “How can you call someone a great football player when they never made a tackle, never intercepted a pass, never returned a punt, never returned a kickoff?” asked Cassady, who presumably had done all of those things. “You've got to play both ways in judging the great, great, great players.”

Fenlon's article, along with the others chronicling Cassady's career, are archived at BuckeyeSports.com, a free service to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers. If you are not already enjoying the website, see the simple sign-up instructions page 4.

Changing Of The Guard

When Urban Meyer announced his upcoming retirement in early December of last year, the Ohio State brass elected to go for continuity rather than conduct a national search for a new coach. “If it ain't broke, don't fix it” seemed to be the approach of the OSU powers that be, which seemed to include Meyer, as they promoted Ryan Day from within even though he had no head-coaching experience save his brief audition while Meyer was serving his three-game suspension for his role in the Zach Smith affair.

The most important part of the strategy was to maintain the existing support staff. After all, the Buckeyes were in the midst of what would be a 13-1 season that would include demolishing Michigan, winning the Big Ten Championship Game and defeating Washington in the Rose Bowl.

So far, the results of the decision to stay the course have been successful, with the Buckeyes off to a 4-0 start and looking good in the process and Day looking comfortable in the head role.

What I find interesting is that the one area where the Buckeyes did scrap the old model has proved to be the area of most improvement on the team – the defense. After four games, Ohio State is second in the country in total defense, giving up 222.0 yards per game, No. 7 in rushing yards allowed (60.3) and 19th in passing yards allowed (161.8), and the Buckeyes are third in scoring defense, yielding just 9.0 points per game (only 5.0 in the last three games). Not surprisingly, Ohio State is third in the country in sacks with 4.8 per game. Or is it surprising

because they aren't ranked higher? Virginia and Florida each average 5.0 per game.

This is in such stark contrast to the disaster that was the Ohio State defense last season. I guess you can shake some things up while still maintaining the overall structure of the program.

By the way, Miami coach Chuck Martin can take some satisfaction in the fact that at least the RedHawk offense was balanced against the Buckeyes. Miami racked up 70 yards rushing and 60 yards passing.

That's sarcasm, folks.

Ask And You Shall Receive

I got some of my wishes in Ohio State's big win over the RedHawks.

On a fourth-and-2 at the Miami 13 in the second quarter, Justin Fields lined up under center and executed a quarterback sneak, gaining four yards to move the chains. Two plays later, Fields called his own number and scored from the 6. There's nothing wrong with going old-school with something like a QB sneak once in a while, and Day seems willing to do that.

The Buckeyes also went back to the tight end again after a two-game absence, converting another fourth down on a 16-yard pass from Fields to Rashod Berry to set up yet another score. In all, the tight ends had three receptions for 49 yards, including a 24-yarder from Fields to Jeremy Ruckert.

The Buckeyes have been mixing it up on offense as it is, but I think it would keep defenses even more off balance if Ohio State used the tight ends more consistently – not to mention make Buckeye fans and observers like me happy.

And finally, I have been clamoring for reserve quarterbacks Chris Chugunov and Gunnar Hoak to get more action. They need the experience, and the coaches need the game-action film to evaluate what each of them can do.

Each of the reserve quarterbacks played roughly a quarter, and the results were encouraging. Judging from the fact that Chugunov has been the first reserve QB to take the field in each of the first four games, the coaches must have him ahead in the battle to back up Fields.

Chugunov was 6 of 7 for 86 yards and two touchdowns, including a 38-yard score that came on a spectacular catch by freshman receiver Garrett Wilson. Hoak completed both of his passes for 65 yards, and he, too, hooked up with a freshman for a dazzling play, as Jameson Williams turned on the jets for a 61-yard catch and run.

I don't think anyone mistook either of the reserve quarterbacks for Fields. But they certainly didn't embarrass themselves. If Fields were to go down, I think most would agree that chances of a national championship might go out the window, but with good defense, the season probably would not be lost.

All the more reason to applaud the fact that the two quarterbacks were in there for the entire second half. Fields needs as much experience as possible, but the more he is out there, the more he exposes himself to injury.

And Finally . . .

Did anyone besides me cringe when they stopped the game with 2:40 to play because of lightning? With the Buckeyes leading by 71, I don't think anyone wanted to sit around, waiting for the skies to clear – least of all the RedHawks, who surely wanted to get on the bus and go home.

Fortunately, saner heads prevailed and the game was called, right then and there.

And yes, I thought about the 1990 game, when John Cooper famously conceded the contest with USC under similar weather conditions.

Game Day. Beach Day.



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